

## Higher Education Academic Honesty and Misconduct

### Policy and Procedure

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| Code and Version Control:            | ID140 v4.3                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Policy Owner:                        | Director of Higher Education                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Date Approved by Board of Directors: | 23 June 2026                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Scheduled Review Date:               | June 2029                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Related Policies and Documents:      | APAC Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure<br>APAC Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure<br>APAC Staff Code of Conduct<br>APAC Student Code of Conduct<br>APAC Academic Freedom and Ethical Conduct Policy & Procedure<br>TEQSA Guidance Note: Academic Integrity 2024 |

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### Legislative and Regulatory Compliance

This Policy and Procedure is informed by and aligned with the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021, particularly Standards 1.2.2(a)(b), 1.3, 2.4.3, 5.2.1-4, 5.3, 6.2.1(j), 6.3.2(d) and 7.2.2(c,d), 7.3.3(b,c). It also reflects obligations under the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 in relation to international students and relevant Commonwealth legislation.

### Purpose

This Policy and Procedure articulates APAC's framework for promoting academic honesty, safeguarding academic standards, and managing allegations of academic misconduct in a manner that is fair, transparent, educative, and compliant with regulatory requirements. The Policy seeks not only to respond to misconduct but to foster a culture in which academic integrity is understood, valued, and consistently upheld.

### Scope

This policy applies to all members of APAC's higher education community and applies to all activities under APAC's authority. This includes but is not limited to coursework, assessments, examinations, research activities, scholarly output, governance and all professional communication. APAC expects all staff and students to act with integrity and honesty when developing, creating and using information and ideas, and to conduct themselves with the highest ethical standards in all aspects of their work.

### Policy

APAC fosters a whole of institution culture in which academic honesty is respected, valued and upheld. It is considered a collective responsibility of the APAC community and APAC educates students and staff about academic honesty and the behaviours it requires.

Improving and enhancing students' understanding of academic honesty and the behaviours it requires is a key feature in their orientation and transition and is consolidated through continuing education over the duration of their course.

A culture of academic honesty supports APAC's academic reputation and contributes to the future success of its students. APAC's approach to academic honesty is regularly reviewed and tested against external reference points.

### **Prevention, Education and Risk Mitigation**

Academic honesty is embedded across APAC's policies, curriculum design, assessment standards, and support systems to minimise the risk of breaches. Units and assessment tasks are intentionally designed to reduce opportunities for misconduct while strengthening students' understanding of the behaviours and responsibilities academic honesty requires. Academic staff reinforce these expectations through their teaching practice and unit materials.

Education about academic honesty is integrated throughout the student lifecycle, including orientation, transition activities, course documentation, the Student Handbook, Learning Management System modules, and ongoing student and staff development initiatives.

APAC also maintains clear systems for detecting and managing breaches. Responses incorporate an educative focus particularly for a first breach, while allowing for appropriate sanctions where required. Together, these measures form a structured and proactive approach to mitigating academic risk.

### **Managing Breaches**

A breach of academic integrity may be characterised as academic misconduct and dealt with under APAC's Code of Conduct, Academic Freedom and Ethical Conduct. Allegations of breaches of academic honesty will be dealt with expeditiously, and investigations will be fair, transparent, accord with principles of natural justice, and appropriately respect the privacy of those involved. The response to a student's first breach of academic integrity will be more educative than punitive. International Students may risk cancellation of their Confirmation of Enrolment (CoE) due to misconduct and may be reported to the Australian Government for unsatisfactory course progress.

When student academic misconduct is suspected, the matter is referred to the relevant Head of Discipline (HoD) or the Head of Postgraduate Studies (HoPS). The Academic Board is responsible for maintaining oversight of academic integrity, including the monitoring of breaches and processes and mechanisms to mitigate potential and actual academic risks, including biannual reports of academic risks to the Finance, Audit and Risk Management Committee. When staff academic misconduct is suspected and the Director of Higher Education (DoHE) determines that a potential case of academic misconduct exists, the matter is formally referred to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), together with a written report and all relevant supporting evidence. The CEO initiates a formal investigation and may appoint additional individuals to assist in conducting the investigation.

### **Types of Academic Dishonesty**

APAC endeavours to detect, and appropriately respond to, all types of academic dishonesty. Behaviours that undermine academic integrity include:

- plagiarism, which is submitting work that is not one's own as if it is one's own, and without acknowledging, citing or referencing the original source of the work
- recycling, which is submitting work that is one's own, but which has already been assessed, and failing to clearly indicate this

- fabrication, which is making up information, such as experimental or interview data, inventing sources of data, inventing citations or references
- collusion, which is engaging in illegitimate cooperation with other students to complete assessment tasks that are meant to be done individually
- cheating in exams, such as by writing notes on one's body or materials taken into the exam room, copying from other students, communicating with other students or people outside the exam room while the exam is in progress, using electronic devices to access information related to the exam while the exam is in progress, or bringing prohibited items textbooks into the exam room
- contract cheating, which is illegal commercial cheating where one pays someone else, or one accepts payment from someone else, to complete part or all an assessment item.
- unauthorised use of, or failure to appropriately acknowledge, content generated or substantially derived from translation tools or artificial intelligence in assessments.
- offering bribes or inducements to gain an academic advantage, and accepting bribes or inducement to give an academic advantage
- providing false information or fraudulent documentation, such as academic transcripts and medical certificates, to gain an academic advantage.

### **Use of Technology and Artificial Intelligence**

APAC identifies Microsoft Copilot as its preferred generative AI tool to support student learning, as it offers safeguards that assist in protecting authorship and intellectual property.

Any unauthorised, inappropriate, or unacknowledged use of technology or artificial intelligence platforms may constitute academic misconduct and may breach APAC's acceptable use of IT requirements. Such use must be avoided.

Students must submit via Moodle, a completed APAC AI Use Disclosure Statement for every assessment in which AI use is permitted. Providing incomplete documentation (inputs and outputs from AI tool) will result in a deduction of marks for academic integrity non-compliance. Failure to submit a completed AI Use Disclosure Statement is a breach of academic integrity.

APAC adopts an educative approach to ensure that students and staff clearly understand the permitted and legitimate applications of artificial intelligence in academic work, are aware of institutional expectations relating to artificial intelligence and academic integrity and are equipped to engage with AI tools in a critical, ethical, and responsible manner.

### **Levels of Student Academic Misconduct and Determining Penalties**

APAC's approach to academic misconduct allows that some breaches of academic honesty have more to do with students being insufficiently aware of academic practices and conventions.

Plagiarism, for example, is a breach of academic honesty and is academic misconduct. However, the seriousness of the misconduct is determined, in part, by whether the conduct is intentional or unintentional. Intentional plagiarism involves an intent to deceive and is therefore serious misconduct. Unintentional plagiarism involves no intention to deceive and may occur due to lack of familiarity with academic practices and conventions, and the specific requirements academic honesty. At its first occurrence unintentional plagiarism is not considered serious academic misconduct and the appropriate response is educative not punitive.

There are three levels of academic misconduct, with each level having appropriate responses and/or penalties. In determining the level, academic staff will consider relevant factors such as:

- The knowledge and experience of the student.
- The type of misconduct.
- Whether the misconduct was intentional or unintentional.
- Whether misconduct has occurred before.

| <b>Breach</b>            | <b>Definition</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | <b>Academic Penalty</b>                                                                                                                                                        | <b>Investigator / Decision Maker</b>                                                     |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Level 1- Minor</b>    | Assessed as unintentional and due to lack of knowledge or experience. Examples include plagiarism of less than 10% of an assignment due to poor referencing or using paraphrasing that is too close to the original and unacknowledged or copying of a few sentences without referencing.                                                                                                                                          | The student may be issued with a warning, or some marks may be deducted for the assessment. Further disciplinary action in the form of support and or training may be decreed. | Head of Discipline / Head of Postgraduate Studies / Director of Higher Education (staff) |
| <b>Level 2- Moderate</b> | Assessed as intentional or, if unintentional, more extensive than is reasonably allowable in virtue of insufficient understanding of academic practice and conventions. Examples include moderate plagiarism of between 10-25%; fabricating or falsifying data in an assessment other than a thesis; colluding with other students and submitting work as individual work. Repeat minor breaches (2) constitute a moderate breach. | Marks may be deducted for the assessment, or a mark of zero may be awarded for the assessment. Further disciplinary action may be decreed.                                     | Director of Higher Education                                                             |
| <b>Level 3- Major</b>    | Assessed as intentional and constitutes a serious and substantial breach. Examples include cheating in examinations; major plagiarism of more than 25%; fabricating or falsifying data in a thesis. Repeat minor breaches (3) constitute a major breach.                                                                                                                                                                           | A mark of zero may be awarded for the assessment or for the unit. The student may be reported and excluded from continuing study.                                              | Academic Board / CEO                                                                     |

## Procedure

### Student Academic Misconduct

When an academic staff member suspects academic misconduct, they must refer the matter to the relevant Head of Discipline (HoD) or the Head of Postgraduate Studies (HoPS). The referral must include a provisional assessment of the level of misconduct, together with all relevant evidence and background information.

1. The HoD/HoPS will review the student's academic record to determine whether any previous instances of academic misconduct have been recorded.
2. The HoD/HoPS will decide based on the evidence, the background information, and the record of academic misconduct, to either take remedial action or to escalate the matter to the DoHE, within seven (7) working days.
3. If escalated, the student is invited, via email and formal letter, to attend a meeting with the DoHE to discuss the matter. The correspondence advises the student that:
  - they must respond in writing to the allegation within twenty (20) working days; and
  - they may bring a support person to the meeting.
4. If the student does not respond within twenty (20) working days, the DoHE will:
  - determine whether a penalty will be imposed
  - determine what the penalty is, and
  - determine whether academic or counselling support is required.
5. If the student submits a written response and attends the meeting, the DoHE will consider both the written response and the discussion before:
  - determining whether the allegation is substantiated
  - determining any penalty; and
  - determining whether academic or counselling support is required.
6. Where multiple instances of academic misconduct have occurred, the DoHE may refer the matter to the Academic Board. The Academic Board may
  - suspend the student's enrolment, or
  - expel the student from APAC.

Fees paid for any period of enrolment affected by suspension or expulsion as a result of misconduct are not refundable.

7. A formal written notice of the decision is provided to the student together with information outlining their right to appeal under the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.
8. For international students, any notice of intention to suspend or cancel enrolment must:
  - clearly state the intention to suspend or cancel enrolment;
  - provide detailed reasons for the decision;
  - advise the student to seek advice from the Department of Home Affairs regarding potential visa implications; and

- inform the student of their right to appeal within twenty (20) working days from the date the intention to suspend or cancel has been received.
9. Copies of the notice and subsequent actions are sent to relevant administrative and academic staff to ensure that the details of the decision are recorded on the student's file, and assessment results are adjusted where relevant. All documentation relating the investigation is retained in a secure place for a period of at least seven (7) years.

## Disciplinary Action

The decision maker will decide on whether disciplinary action should be taken based on evidence and any documented compassionate or compelling circumstances. Potential outcomes for substantiated breaches are, but not limited to:

- a. no case for misconduct found
- b. written warning
- c. suspension from class
- d. request for apology
- e. referral to counselling
- f. student monitoring
- g. mediation
- h. removal from class with supervision from another APAC staff member, other than the lecturer
- i. cancellation of enrolment (limited to level 3 misconduct).

## Complaints and Appeals - Students

Enrolled students may lodge a complaint or appeal if they are dissatisfied with any aspect of APAC's decision-making on academic honesty assessments or breaches through the complaints and appeals process outlined in the Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.

## Staff Academic Misconduct

Staff are responsible for maintaining high ethical standards in their research and scholarly activities in accordance with APAC's Academic Freedom and Ethical Conduct Policy. They must promote academic honesty within the APAC community, including educating students about the behaviours and standards required to uphold academic integrity and modelling best practice by acknowledging others when using their text, images, videos and other artefacts in teaching. Staff are also responsible for identifying and reporting suspected student academic misconduct.

1. A staff member identifies and reports suspected staff academic misconduct to the DoHE, or to the CEO where the allegation concerns the Director, providing all relevant evidence.
2. If the DoHE determines that a potential case of academic misconduct exists, the matter is formally referred to the CEO, together with a written report and all relevant supporting evidence.
3. The CEO initiates a formal investigation and may appoint additional individuals to assist in conducting the investigation.
4. The staff member concerned is notified in writing of the specific allegations and is provided with all relevant evidence. The staff member is given twenty (20) working days to submit a written response, including any material that addresses or refutes the allegation.

5. The CEO convenes a meeting with the staff member, the DoHE, and a member of the Academic Board to discuss the allegations and evidence. The staff member may be accompanied by a support person, who is not a practising lawyer or barrister.
6. Following consideration of the discussion and available evidence, the CEO determines whether additional information is required. If further evidence is sought, it is provided promptly to the parties, and a further meeting is convened to consider that evidence.
7. After reviewing all evidence and submissions, the CEO prepares a formal report to the Academic Board outlining the findings, the evidence considered, the conclusions reached, and any recommended actions.
8. The Academic Board reviews the report and determines the outcome, which may include taking no further action, requesting additional information, or imposing disciplinary measures.
9. All documentation associated with the investigation is securely retained for a minimum period of ten (10) years following the completion of the matter or the cessation of the staff member's employment, in accordance with APAC's Records Management Policy and Procedure.

## **Complaints and Appeals – Staff**

A staff member who is dissatisfied with decisions resulting from an academic misconduct investigation and the resultant penalty may appeal those decisions under the Staff Grievance Policy and Procedure.

## **Responsibilities**

### *The Board of Directors*

- monitoring and overseeing formal complaints, allegations of misconduct, appeals processes for non-academic matters, and critical incidents.
- assuring itself that there is an effective system in place for ensuring academic honesty on the part of students and staff and an effective system in place which for managing student and staff academic misconduct, which are compliant with mandated standards, and which exemplify good practice.

### *The Academic Board*

- maintaining oversight of academic integrity, including the monitoring of breaches and processes and mechanisms to mitigate potential and actual academic risks, including biannual reports of academic risks to the Quality and Risk Management Committee.
- considering, where required, referrals for decision and written appeals regarding the outcomes of academic misconduct investigations and associated penalties.

### *The Director of Higher Education*

- implementing this Policy and Procedure.
- investigating, and making decisions regarding, cases of academic misconduct as required by this Policy and Procedure.
- considering, where required, written appeals regarding the outcomes of academic misconduct investigations and associated penalties.

### *The Head of Postgraduate Studies*

- overseeing the promotion and maintenance of academic integrity within postgraduate coursework and research programs.

- investigating and making determinations regarding alleged cases of postgraduate student academic misconduct at Level 1 and, where appropriate, Level 2 in accordance with this policy and procedure.
- ensuring that postgraduate assessment design, research supervision, and scholarly activities incorporate appropriate safeguards to mitigate academic risk, including risks associated with artificial intelligence and emerging technologies.
- referring serious or complex cases to the Director of Higher Education as required.
- contributing to the regular review of academic integrity practices within postgraduate programs to ensure alignment with sector standards and regulatory requirements.

#### *Heads of Discipline*

- investigating, and making decisions regarding, cases of academic misconduct as required by this Policy and Procedure.
- considering, where required, written appeals regarding the outcomes of academic misconduct investigations and associated penalties.

#### *Staff*

- educating and advising students regarding academic honesty.
- modelling academic honesty in their own academic, scholarly and professional activities.
- identifying and reporting suspected breaches of academic honesty.

#### *Students*

- ensuring that their academic work is their own.
- appropriately acknowledging the work and ideas of others.
- reporting suspected breaches of academic honesty.

## **Definitions**

- **Academic Honesty** - Acting in academic and scholarly contexts with truthfulness, trustworthiness, openness, transparency, fairness and respect.
- **Academic Integrity**: Is a way of describing how one demonstrates honest practice in their academic study and research in giving credit where it is due and acknowledging the contributions of others in their own intellectual efforts.
- **Academic Standards** - Benchmarks or indicators used to define a level or quality of achievement or performance in academic activities and academic outcomes, such as student selection, teaching, curriculum, assessment, learning outcomes, and research.



## Version Control and Document Owner

|                  |                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                    |                        |                |
|------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Policy Category  |                                | Academic                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Approval Date      | 23 June 2026           |                |
| Document Owner   |                                | Director of Higher Education                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | Approval Authority | The Board of Directors |                |
| Audience         |                                | Staff and Students                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | Review Date        | June 2029              |                |
| Revision History |                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |                    |                        |                |
| Version          | Author                         | Change Summary                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                    | Date Approved          | Date Effective |
| 1.0              | APAC                           | New document.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                    | 18 December 2015       |                |
| 2.0              | APAC                           | Update header, formatting, and grammar.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                    | 14 July 2020           |                |
| 2.1              | APAC                           | Version until approved. Contract Cheating Added.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |                    |                        |                |
| 3.0              | APAC                           | Review of procedure.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                    | 23 July 2021           |                |
| 4.0              | DVE Business Solutions Pty Ltd | Review and update of policy and procedure.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                    | 9 December 2022        |                |
| 4.1              | DVE Business Solutions Pty Ltd | Updates to sections 1.3, 3.1.2, 3.1.4, 3.1.5 and 4.3. 4.3. Addition of Academic Integrity to definitions and sections 3.1.3 and 4.4.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                    |                        |                |
| 4.2              | APAC                           | Update to section 3.1.1 providing an example of contract cheating.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |                    |                        | 05/01/2024     |
| 4.3              | DOHE                           | Reformatted document; Added the Head of Postgraduate studies; Added the ‘Use of Technology and Artificial Intelligence’ section; Made this “unauthorised use of, or failure to appropriately acknowledge, content generated or substantially derived from translation tools or artificial intelligence in assessments” a standalone point in the Types of Misconduct section. Added the following to the introduction of Staff Academic Misconduct “and modelling best practice by acknowledging others when using their text, images, videos and other artefacts in teaching.” |                    | 23 June 2026           | 23 June 2026   |