

Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure		
Code: A1.15	Area: Academic	
Policy Owner: Academic Board	Version #: 1.6	Date: 21 May 2021
Policy Developer/Reviewer: QAM	Review date: 24 Nov 2023	

## VERSION HISTORY

Version	Updated by	Approval Date	Details
1.0	Academic Board	31 May 2018	Policy approved by the Academic Board.
1.1	PRG	18 Feb 2019	Updated the staff member who reviews academic misconduct.
1.2	PRG	13 Jan 2020	Added a definition of academic integrity to the Overview and information about the <i>Copyright Act 1968</i> .
1.3	Academic Board	16 Jul 2020	Added Appendix 1 (Guideline); clarified Registrar's responsibility to maintain misconduct registers.
1.4	PRG	10 Aug 2020	Clarified how plagiarism percentage is calculated.
1.5	Academic Board	29 Sep 2020	Added section on exam supervision, deleted the clause allowing case study info to be used for different assessments.
1.6	Academic Board	25 Nov 2020	Reduced the number of times a student could commit academic misconduct before it is automatically classified as major from 3 to 2; corrected the deadline for lodging appeals (10 days not 5).
1.7	PRG	21 May 2021	Year 1 students who commit unintentional plagiarism must attend an academic support meeting.

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The aim of this policy is:

- Detail the levels of academic misconduct as determined by SITCM.
- Ensure that students have a clear understanding of what constitutes Academic Misconduct and what are the definitions and standard parameters of Plagiarism, Cheating, Contract Cheating, Collusion, Enabling Plagiarism and Cheating, and Falsification and Fabrication.
- Detail the range of responses when students are determined to have been culpable of academic misconduct.

This policy applies to all students at the Sydney Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SITCM) and covers all forms of academic misconduct including but not limited to plagiarism and cheating.

## 1 OVERVIEW

At the Sydney Institute of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SITCM), students are expected to uphold the principles of academic integrity in all scholarly endeavours, including their classwork, examinations and written and oral assessments. This includes the ethical obligation

to act with honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage in learning<sup>1</sup>. In doing so, an environment conducive to the goals of teaching, learning and service can be maintained.

Academic misconduct will not be tolerated at SITCM and penalties may be applied to students who are determined to be culpable of misconduct. SITCM recognises that the seriousness of misconduct varies and has structured a two-tier approach to dealing with academic misconduct depending on the level of seriousness.

This policy has been informed by the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015*, particularly Section 5.2 Academic and Research Integrity.

Staff misconduct is covered under the *Staff Misconduct Policy and Procedure*. Misconduct that is not academic in nature is covered under the *Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure*.

## 2 POLICY

### 2.1 TYPES OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic misconduct is (but is not limited to) the following:

#### 2.1.1 PLAGIARISM

- 1) Plagiarism is the action or practice of taking and submitting or presenting the thoughts, writings or other work of another person as though it is your own work.
- 2) Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, any of the following when presented as original material and without full and appropriate acknowledgement of the source(s):
  - a. The whole or part of a written work from any source, such as books, journals, newspaper articles, lecture notes, current or past student work, another person's work, information from a website or database;
  - b. The close paraphrasing of another person's work;
  - c. The use of audio, visual, graphic and photographic work, animations, code.
- 3) Plagiarism also includes the preparation, production, submission or presentation of assignments or other work in conjunction with another person or other people when that work should be the student's own independent work.
- 4) Plagiarism also includes the reuse of a student's assessment that has been used in other assessments.
- 5) Plagiarism may comprise copyright infringement, which entitles the copyright owner to take legal action under the *Copyright Act 1968*.
  - a. Section 40 of the *Copyright Act 1968* specifies circumstances in which a work may be copied for research or study purposes without constituting a copyright infringement.

#### 2.1.2 CHEATING

- 1) Cheating is the attempt to deliberately circumvent examination or assessment rules or regulations.
- 2) Examples may include, but are not limited to:
  - a. Bringing of unauthorised material into an examination;
  - b. Accessing material illicitly during examinations;
  - c. Disguising work in a deliberate attempt to conceal its origins;

---

<sup>1</sup> International Centre for Academic Integrity. [n.d.] Fundamental values of academic integrity. Retrieved from <https://academicintegrity.org/fundamental-values/>

- d. Fabricating information.

### **2.1.3 CONTRACT CHEATING**

- 1) Contract cheating occurs when a student requests, commissions or offers for another party to procure or complete on their behalf, academic work that is likely to result in their use for the purpose of cheating, misrepresentation and/or plagiarism. Contract cheating occurs when a student seeks help with their academic work:
  - a. through another party that produces academic work for a fee to the student;
  - b. through another party who has offered to help.

### **2.1.4 COLLUSION**

- 1) Collusion (unauthorised collaboration) involves working with others without permission to produce work which is then presented as work completed independently by the student.
- 2) Collusion is a form of plagiarism. Students should not knowingly allow their work to be copied.

### **2.1.5 ENABLING PLAGIARISM AND CHEATING**

- 1) Enabling plagiarism means deliberately allowing or otherwise assisting another student to plagiarise one's own or another person's work, for example, by allowing that student to copy a part or all of one's own or another person's draft, completed assignment or other work.
- 2) Enabling cheating means deliberately allowing or otherwise assisting another student to cheat, for example, by allowing that student to copy a part or all of one's own examination script, by providing work to another student for the purpose of copying it closely or substantively for submission, or by providing individual information of a clinical assessment including a viva exam to another student for the purpose of achieving advantages.

### **2.1.6 FALSIFICATION AND FABRICATION**

- 1) Falsification is the deliberate misrepresentation or forgery of existing information or documentation and representing that to be real.
- 2) Fabrication is the deliberate creation of purported or non-existent information or documentation, and the representation of that as actual data.

## **2.2 LEVELS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

### **2.2.1 MINOR ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

- 1) Instances of academic misconduct are deemed minor where the misconduct may reasonably be judged to result from careless practices and/or neglect of the specific guidelines relating to assessment requirements by students.

### **2.2.2 MAJOR ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

- 1) Instances of academic misconduct are deemed major where the misconduct may reasonably be judged to result from an intentional breach of ethical scholarship and/or deliberate disregard of the specific guidelines regarding plagiarism and cheating.
  - a. Major Academic Misconduct includes, but is not limited to, collusion of all kinds, the provision of materials to another for the purposes of cheating or plagiarism, the deliberate OR persistent use of unattributed materials, and contract cheating.

- 2) If a student is found guilty of any kind of academic misconduct, all academic misconduct that they subsequently commit must be classified as Major Academic Misconduct regardless of how minor, careless or unintentional it is.

## 2.3 PREVENTION AND DETECTION OF PLAGIARISM

### 2.3.1 PREVENTION

- 1) All newly enrolled students must successfully complete an academic misconduct quiz on the learning management system Moodle.
  - a. If a student fails to complete this quiz by Census Date, their access to Moodle is suspended until the quiz is successfully completed.
- 2) The orientation and *Student Manual* include information about academic integrity.
- 3) Unit guides provide advice to students about referencing requirements and academic conventions for the use of others' work as well as advice on how to avoid plagiarism.
- 4) Academic staff have a responsibility to explain to students both good scholarly practice and the concept of plagiarism.
- 5) A free workshop on APA referencing style is run in the first month of each semester.
- 6) The SITCM website includes an [Academic Integrity](#) page.
- 7) Moodle contains a guide to APA referencing.
- 8) Posters about academic integrity are located around the SITCM Campus.
- 9) Students must upload their assessments through Turnitin<sup>2</sup> prior to the formal submission of an assessment to check their similarity score, which allows students to check their assessment for plagiarism.

### 2.3.2 DETECTION OF PLAGIARISM

- 1) All student assessments are submitted via Turnitin so that they can be subject to electronic scanning to detect plagiarism.
  - a. If Turnitin returns a similarity score of 25% or more, the lecturer for that unit of study must report the matter to the Course Coordinator. The matter may result in an allegation of academic misconduct.
  - b. If Turnitin returns a similarity score below 25%, academic staff may detect possible plagiarism, which must be reported to the Course Coordinator, by observing changes in formatting within a paper, including: a mixture of quotation marks; changes in writing style within a paper; suddenly improved writing style; a paper veering away from the topic; lack of recent reference sources or unusual or anachronistic references; and common phrases appearing in more than one paper.
- 2) When academic staff report plagiarism, they must complete the *Allegation of Academic Misconduct* form and provide it to the Course Coordinator for investigation.
  - a. Evidence supporting the claim must be provided with the completed form.
- 3) The only circumstance in which reporting to the Course Coordinator is not required is when unintentional plagiarism occurs in a Year 1 Semester 1 unit and the unit lecturer judges it to be only due to a lack of knowledge or skills in referencing.
  - a. In these circumstances, the unit lecturer must:
    - i. Refer the student to this policy,

---

<sup>2</sup> SITCM uses the automatic plagiarism detection software Turnitin. Turnitin is online web-based text-matching software that electronically compares submitted assessment papers to content located on the internet.

- ii. Explain to the student why their assessment contains plagiarism and how they can prevent this from happening in the future,
    - iii. Refer the student to an Academic Support Officer, and
    - iv. Require that the assessment be resubmitted without plagiarism.
  - b. The lecturer will only accept the resubmission after the student has met the Academic Support Officer to discuss the unintentional plagiarism.

### 2.3.3 EXAM SUPERVISION

- 1) The Office Manager arranges for all SITCM exams to be supervised by SITCM staff.
  - a. Every time a student takes a paper (on campus) exam, the Office Manager must ensure that at least one exam supervisor is present for the entire duration of the exam.
  - b. Every time a student takes an exam online, their webcam must be turned on and monitored by the Administration Office.
- 2) Exam supervisors must ensure that all exam rules outlined in the *Student Assessment Policy and Procedure's* Section 2.5.2 are adhered to, and must:
  - a. Ensure that all student desks are separated such that an exam supervisor can comfortably walk between any two desks.
  - b. Ensure that all student bags are kept at the front or back of the room.
  - c. Ensure that only permitted objects (as outlined in the *Student Assessment Policy and Procedure*) are present on each student's desk.
  - d. Follow the *Examination Supervisor Guide*, including by reading information out loud to students as required.
  - e. Continuously patrol the room and closely monitor students to deter and/or identify cheating.
    - i. If a supervisor sees cheating, they will immediately require the student to leave the examination room and a grade of zero will be allocated to the student for the exam.
    - ii. If a supervisor sees suspicious activity, they will in the first instance give the relevant student a warning. In the second instance, they will immediately require the student to leave the examination room and a grade of zero will be allocated to the student for the exam.

## 2.4 PUBLICATION

- 1) This policy is published on the SITCM website and learning management system Moodle.

## 2.5 DETERMINING ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

### 2.5.1 INVESTIGATION

- 1) The Course Coordinator will investigate allegations of academic misconduct.
  - a. If the Course Coordinator is unavailable, another senior academic staff member may be nominated for this role.
  - b. The investigator will protect the alleged's identity if so requested.
- 2) Allegations of academic misconduct must be based on evidence.
- 3) When alleged academic misconduct relates to exam plagiarism, the Course Coordinator will send the IT Officer a written request for the relevant CCTV footage.
  - a. The IT Officer must provide the requested CCTV footage within two (2) working days of the request.

- b. If CCTV footage is erased after being requested by the Course Coordinator but before it is provided to the Course Coordinator, a staff misconduct investigation is automatically triggered.
- 4) When alleged academic misconduct relates to assignment plagiarism, the Course Coordinator will review the components of the assessment's Turnitin similarity score to determine what percentage of the assessment (if any) was plagiarised.
- 5) When alleged academic misconduct relates to contract cheating, the investigation will be guided by TEQSA's [Substantiating Contract Cheating: A Guide for Investigators](#).
- 6) If no evidence of academic misconduct is found by the Course Coordinator, there is no requirement to contact the student.
- 7) If evidence of academic misconduct is found by the Course Coordinator, the student must be notified within five (5) working days of the allegation and asked to attend a compulsory meeting with the Course Coordinator within the next ten (10) working days.
  - a. At the meeting, the student will be advised of the particulars of the suspected academic misconduct and associated penalties, and given a chance to respond to the allegation.
  - b. The student has the right to be represented by a support person at the meeting.
  - c. In cases where it is impracticable for a student to attend a meeting and the allegation does not relate to contract cheating, the academic misconduct may be put to the student in writing, and the student must respond within five (5) working days from receipt of the written communication.

### 2.5.2 DECISION

- 1) After the investigation, academic misconduct is to be determined by the Course Coordinator (or nominee) as follows:
  - a. Whether academic misconduct has been established or not established, on the balance of probabilities.
  - b. If established, whether the academic misconduct was minor or major.

## 2.6 PENALTIES

Once an allegation of academic misconduct has been investigated and found to be upheld, a determination will be made within ten (10) working days of the appropriate penalty based on the circumstances of the case.

### 2.6.1 MINOR ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

- 1) Where the Course Coordinator determines that academic misconduct was not intentional, they must generally warn the student, require resubmission, and generally mark the assessment item with or without penalty.
  - a. In determining the penalty for minor academic misconduct, the Course Coordinator has regard to the percentage of the assessment that was plagiarised, whether or not the student is in Year 1 Semester 1, and whether or not this was the first academic misconduct finding against the student.
  - b. "Percentage of the assessment that was plagiarised" may be calculated through manually counting every word that Turnitin highlighted for similarity which is actually plagiarism, and dividing it by the total word count.
  - c. *Appendix 1: Minor Academic Misconduct Penalty Guideline* outlines the penalties that are generally recommended.

- 2) The student may be required to attend an academic support meeting. Warnings and penalties must be communicated in writing to the student and will be kept on the student's file.
- 3) The student must be advised of their right to appeal the finding of academic misconduct and the penalty imposed.

### 2.6.2 MAJOR ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

- 1) Where Major Academic Misconduct has been established, the Course Coordinator may take one of the following actions:
  - a. A grade of Fail with a mark of 0/100 will be recorded for the assessment item;
  - b. A grade of Fail with a mark of 0/100 will be recorded for the unit of study;
  - c. The student is withdrawn from the course for a period of six (6) or more months;
  - d. The student is excluded from the course and expelled from SITCM.
- 2) Warnings and penalties must be communicated in writing to the student and will be kept on the student's file.
- 3) The student must be advised of their right to appeal the finding of academic misconduct and the penalty imposed.

### 2.7 OUTCOMES

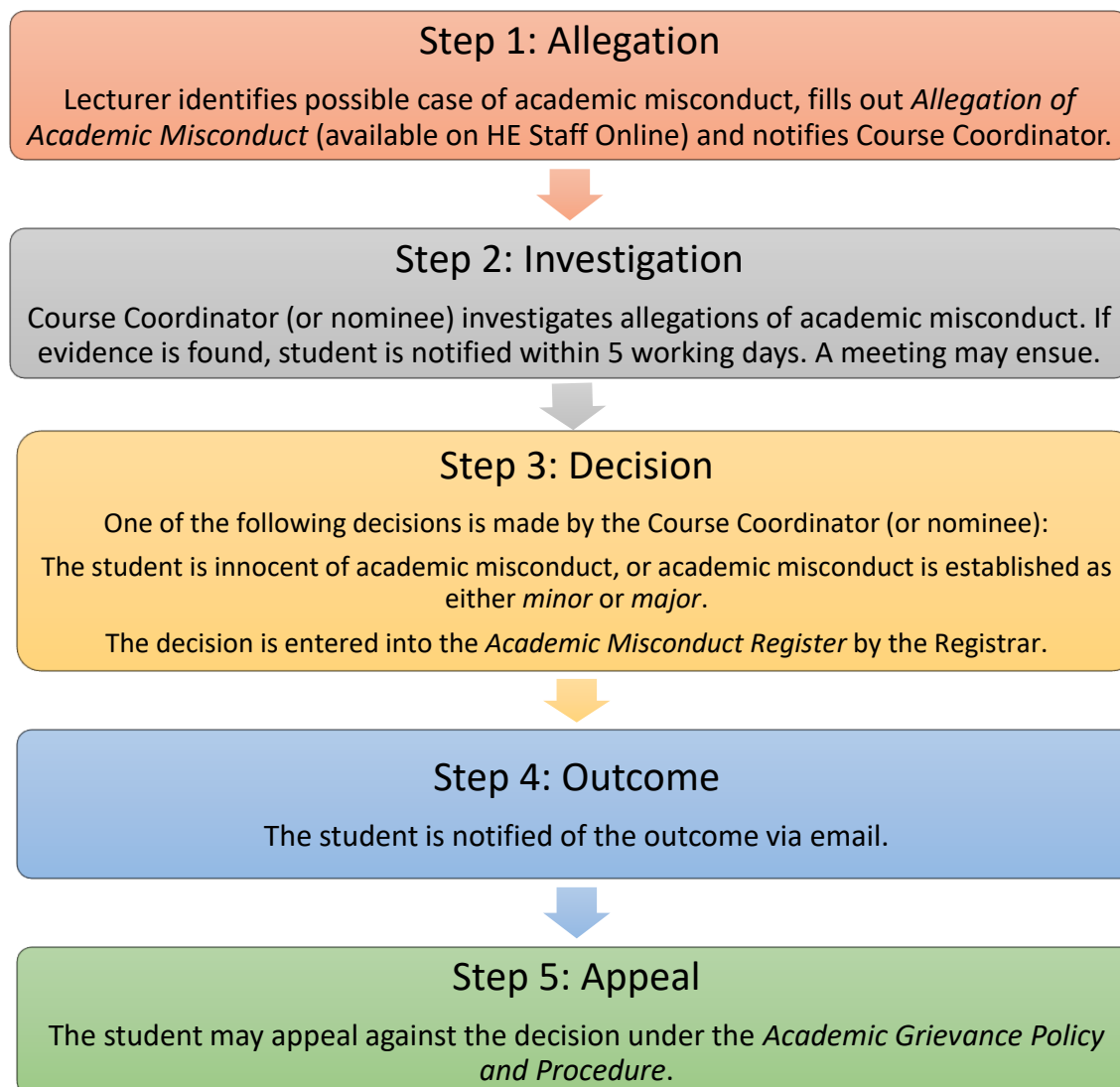
- 1) Students will be notified of the outcome of the investigation and any penalties that may apply in writing via email.
  - a. This notification will occur within twenty (20) working days of the commencement of the investigation.
  - b. Students may be required to attend a further meeting with the Course Coordinator to discuss the outcome of the investigation.
- 2) The Course Coordinator will ensure that all proven cases of academic misconduct are entered into the *Academic Misconduct Register*, which is managed by the Registrar.
  - a. The details of the *Academic Misconduct Register* are kept strictly confidential to comply with SITCM's *Privacy Policy*.
- 3) Any updates in the *Academic Misconduct Register* are reviewed by the Teaching and Learning Committee, with key cases then reported to the Academic Board.
- 4) The content of the *Academic Misconduct Register* will be used to draft an annual *Incident Report*. This report will be presented to the Academic Board and Board of Directors, who will consider the implementation of each recommendation contained within the report.

### 2.8 APPEALS

- 1) A student may appeal against a decision made under this policy within ten (10) working days of the formal notification of the outcomes of the investigation.
- 2) Students wishing to make an appeal should consult the *Academic Grievance Policy and Procedure*.
  - a. An appeal of an academic decision begins at Stage 3: Appeal (Internal Panel).
- 3) Appeals will be reviewed by the Teaching and Learning Committee.

### 3 PROCEDURES

#### 3.1 MISCONDUCT FLOWCHART



### 4 RELATED POLICY AND OTHER DOCUMENTATION

- 1) Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015.
- 2) E2.24 Staff Misconduct Policy and Procedure.
- 3) E2.08 Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.
- 4) Copyright Act 1968.
- 5) Student Manual.
- 6) Allegation of Academic Misconduct Form.
- 7) A1.06 Student Assessment Policy and Procedure.
- 8) Examination Supervisor Guide.
- 9) Academic Misconduct Register.
- 10) A1.14 Academic Grievance Policy and Procedure.
- 11) E2.16 Privacy Policy.
- 12) Incident Report.



**5 APPENDIX 1: MINOR ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT GUIDELINE**

	<b>Less than 5% Plagiarised</b>	<b>5-14.99% Plagiarised</b>	<b>15-24.99% Plagiarised</b>
<b>Year 1 Sem. 1 Student</b>	Without penalty	10-20% of max. available mark deducted	20-30% of max. available mark deducted
<b>Not a Year 1 Sem. 1 Student</b>	10-20% of max. available mark deducted	20-30% of max. available mark deducted	30-40% of max. available mark deducted