

# Academic Integrity Policy

## Section 1 - Purpose

- (1) This policy states requirements for staff and students of Charles Sturt University (the University) to practise, promote and defend academic integrity.
- (2) This policy is intended to ensure the following:
- a. All staff and students understand academic integrity as fundamental to effective learning, teaching and research.
  - b. The whole university community understands their shared responsibility for practising, promoting and defending academic integrity.
  - c. All staff and students involved in learning, teaching or research conduct these activities with integrity.
  - d. All academic decisions are made with integrity.
  - e. Staff model and promote academic integrity as part of teaching, academic supervision and research.
  - f. All staff and students understand academic misconduct and research misconduct as behaviour that:
    - i. undermines the purposes and value of learning, teaching and research;
    - ii. impairs students' learning and their ability to achieve the University's graduate attributes, and risks their success in life;
    - iii. harms the reputation of the person who behaves in this way;
    - iv. harms the reputation of the University's awards and research; and
    - v. if discovered by the University, will be addressed as misconduct.
  - g. Instances of suspected academic misconduct or research misconduct are referred for investigation under, as relevant, the [Student Misconduct Rule 2020](#), the [Research Misconduct Procedure](#) or the disciplinary process under the enterprise agreement.
  - h. The University is compliant with:
    - i. the academic integrity and research integrity requirements of the Australian [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#); and
    - ii. the research integrity requirements of the Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research, 2018.

## Scope

- (3) This policy applies to:
- a. all staff and students of the University;
  - b. all adjunct staff and academic or research visitors to the University;
  - c. anyone external to the University who participates as a researcher or administers research on behalf of the University;
  - d. all students enrolled in, and all staff teaching in, Charles Sturt University courses or subjects delivered in partnership with another institution or organisation;
  - e. all assessment and research for courses and subjects offered by the University;

- f. all research carried out by staff or students of the University or research by adjunct staff, visiting staff, consultants or contractors that will be identified as Charles Sturt University research; and
- g. all academic decisions about students.

(4) Although this policy discusses research integrity as a subset of academic integrity:

- a. the [Research Policy](#) states detailed definitions of research integrity; and
- b. the [Research Misconduct Procedure](#) states the process for considering allegations of research misconduct by staff.

(5) The [Student Misconduct Rule 2020](#) states:

- a. the processes for deciding allegations of student misconduct including academic misconduct and research misconduct;
- b. the positions of the University that are authorised to decide whether academic misconduct or research misconduct has occurred and to apply penalties for them;
- c. the penalties that may be applied to students who are found to have committed them; and
- d. the process and decision-makers for student appeals against academic or research misconduct decisions and penalties.

(6) The Subject Outline tool provides mandatory text for each subject outline to include information about academic integrity.

(7) The [Course and Subject Design\(Coursework\) Procedure](#) includes requirements for course design to provide opportunities for students to achieve ethical and sustainable practice in their discipline or profession: this includes helping students to develop an understanding of academic integrity.

## References

(8) Where a rule, policy, procedure, guideline or supporting document is named in this policy, it will be listed in the associated information tab.

## Section 2 - Glossary

(9) For the purposes of this policy, the following terms have the definitions stated:

- a. Academic integrity – as defined in the academic integrity section of this policy.
- b. Academic misconduct – as defined in the [Student Misconduct Rule 2020](#); but see also the description of types of breach of academic integrity in this policy.
- c. Cheating – as defined in the [Student Misconduct Rule 2020](#); but see also the description of types of breach of academic integrity in this policy.
- d. Collusion – as defined in the [Student Misconduct Rule 2020](#); but see also the description of types of breach of academic integrity in this policy.
- e. Contract cheating – as defined in the [Student Misconduct Rule 2020](#); but see also the description of types of breach of academic integrity in this policy.
- f. Coursework course – a course with no research component or with a research component weighted at less than 66% of the total credit points required to complete the course.
- g. Coursework subject – a subject on a specified topic for which students engage with texts, learning materials and/or resources, and complete assessments; not a research component.

- h. Group assessment work – an assessment task for which the instructions require collaboration by a group of students.
- i. Higher degree by research course – a course in which a research component makes up 66% or more of the course volume of learning.
- j. Plagiarism – as defined in the [Student Misconduct Rule 2020](#); but see also the description of types of breach of academic integrity in this policy.
- k. Referencing – the practice of acknowledging the sources of text, ideas or data produced by a person other than the author.
- l. Research component – one or more subjects for a higher degree by research course, a master by coursework and dissertation, or a bachelor (honours) course, in which students undertake a substantial piece of research involving a thesis, dissertation, portfolio or project.
- m. Research misconduct – as defined in the [Student Misconduct Rule 2020](#) and the [Research Misconduct Procedure](#); but see also the description of types of breach of academic integrity in this policy.
- n. Self-plagiarism – as defined in the [Student Misconduct Rule 2020](#); but see also the description of types of breach of academic integrity in this policy.
- o. Teaching faculty – the faculty that manages the course in question, or to which the teaching school belongs.
- p. Teaching school – the school that teaches the subject in question.

## Section 3 - Policy

### Academic integrity

(10) Academic integrity is a fundamental value of the University as a learning, teaching and research community. Academic integrity means:

- a. acting with honesty, fairness and responsibility in learning, teaching and research;
- b. honesty in acknowledging others' ideas, text and data presented in one's own work, or one's own previous work when re-used;
- c. fairness and honesty in staff and student dealings with one another; and
- d. striving for objectivity in academic decision-making, which includes:
  - i. not accepting inducements that may influence a decision; and
  - ii. declaring possible conflicts of interest so that these can be recorded, assessed and managed.

(11) Academic integrity is essential to:

- a. a good student learning and teaching experience;
- b. effectiveness and credibility of learning, teaching and research;
- c. reliability of learning outcomes and research outputs;
- d. the reputation of the University and of its awards and research; and
- e. students' achievement of learning outcomes and the University's graduate attributes, in particular those relating to ethical practice.

### Integrity of academic decisions

(12) Academic integrity includes the integrity of staff academic decisions about students.

(13) Staff must make academic decisions about students fairly and objectively based on all the information available, and not based on inducements, irrelevant considerations, personal bias or ill-will.

(14) Such decisions include those about admission, course transfer, academic credit, enrolment flexibility, research supervision, marking, grading, assessment flexibility, academic progress, completion of course requirements, and reviews of and appeals against such decisions.

(15) Where staff have a conflict of interest, or what may be perceived as a conflict of interest, in relation to an academic decision, they must declare this by the process stated in the [Conflict of Interest Procedure](#).

(16) Where a student believes that a staff member breached integrity in an academic decision about them, they should seek a review of the decision by:

- a. following the appeal or review process for that type of decision as stated in the relevant academic policy; or
- b. where no specific appeal or review process is available, submitting a complaint in accordance with the [Complaints Management Policy](#) and [Complaints Management Procedure](#).

(17) Where staff are found to have breached academic integrity in academic decisions about students, they may be subject to disciplinary processes under the enterprise agreement.

### **Research integrity**

(18) Research integrity is part of academic integrity, but is governed by the following specialist policy and procedure:

- a. The [Research Policy](#) defines the University's requirements for responsible conduct of research, which include ethical conduct as well as matters of safety.
- b. The [Research Misconduct Procedure](#) defines the process for investigating allegations of research misconduct by staff.

(19) The [Student Misconduct Rule 2020](#) defines the process for investigating allegations of research misconduct by students or higher degree by research candidates.

### **Educative approach to academic integrity**

(20) The University takes an educative approach to academic integrity, because students:

- a. join the University from diverse backgrounds, by diverse entry pathways and at different stages of study;
- b. may not have gained an understanding of academic integrity in their previous studies;
- c. when they first undertake a research project, may not yet have received a thorough introduction to the responsible conduct of research; and
- d. need support to develop academic skills that will enable them to avoid breaching academic integrity.

(21) All students will be trained in academic integrity when they begin study at the University.

(22) All students will be trained in research integrity before they begin a research project, whether for a higher degree by research course, a research component of a coursework course or in a coursework subject that involves research with human subjects.

(23) All academic staff will be trained in academic integrity and in research integrity when they begin to work at the University, and will repeat these types of training every three years after that.

(24) Where professional staff have:

- a. a role that supports academic governance, assessment or learning and teaching, they will:
  - i. be trained in academic integrity when they begin the role, and

- ii. repeat the training every three years after that as long as they continue in such a role; or
- b. a role that supports academic governance of research, higher degree by research candidature or supervision, or staff research, they will:
  - i. be trained in academic integrity and in research integrity when they begin the role, and
  - ii. repeat the training every three years after that as long as they continue in such a role.

(25) The [Academic Integrity Procedure](#) states detailed requirements for training of students and staff in academic integrity and research integrity.

### **Similarity checking of assessment work**

(26) The University will use similarity checking software to check all text-based assessment work submitted by students, and all textual theses submitted by higher degree research candidates, for similarity with other texts and correct referencing of the work of others. Accordingly:

- a. all text-based assignments for coursework courses will be submitted:
  - i. in a digital format that can be checked by the University's similarity-checking software;
  - ii. using the University's online assessment submission system, unless the Associate Dean (Academic) of the teaching faculty approves an exception for a specific assignment or subject; and
- b. all higher degree by research theses will be submitted for examination in a digital format that can be checked by the University's similarity-checking software.

(27) Assessment work and theses submitted will be added to the database of the similarity checking software used by the University, for comparison with other assessment work or theses submitted for the same or subsequent assessment tasks.

(28) Students will be asked to agree to this similarity checking and the addition of their assessment work to the database of the similarity checking software as a condition of being able to submit the work for marking or examination.

### **Academic integrity of third party deliveries**

(29) Where a course or subject of the University is delivered in partnership with a third party institution or organisation, the Charles Sturt University teaching faculty will:

- a. collaborate with partner staff to monitor and ensure the academic integrity of the delivery;
- b. report any issues with academic integrity of the delivery, and how these are being resolved, to the relevant School Board(s), Faculty Board, Academic Quality and Standards Committee and Academic Senate; and
- c. report annually to the Academic Quality and Standards Committee on the academic integrity of each partnered delivery.

(30) Academic Quality and Standards Committee will:

- a. provide an annual collated report on academic integrity in partnered deliveries to Academic Quality and Standards Committee and Academic Senate, which will provide it to the University Council; and
- b. inform Academic Senate which will, in turn, inform the University Council, of any issues with academic integrity of partnered deliveries and how these are being resolved, as the issues arise.

(31) The [Academic Integrity Procedure](#) states detailed requirements for this monitoring and reporting.

## Breaches of academic integrity

### Types of breach of academic integrity

(32) The descriptions in this section supplement the definitions of the same terms in the [Student Misconduct Rule 2020](#) and [Research Misconduct Procedure](#). These descriptions are intended to explain the University's attitude to breaches of academic integrity:

- a. Where there is any inconsistency between these descriptions and the definitions in the [Student Misconduct Rule 2020](#), the [Student Misconduct Rule 2020](#) definition is the University's authoritative definition of the term.
- b. Where there is any inconsistency between these descriptions and the definitions in the [Research Misconduct Procedure](#), the [Research Misconduct Procedure](#) definition is the University's authoritative definition of the term.

(33) Academic misconduct and research misconduct are breaches of academic integrity.

(34) Academic misconduct is dishonest behaviour that misrepresents a person's level of academic achievement in assessment, or their scholarly achievement in a work of scholarship. Behaviours that constitute academic misconduct include:

- a. cheating: where a person seeks to gain an unfair advantage in an assessment task such as an exam or test, for example by:
  - i. copying the work of others undertaking the task and presenting it as their own;
  - ii. having help from others during the task that is not specifically permitted by the instructions for the task;
  - iii. having another person perform the task for them; or
  - iv. using resources during the task that are not specifically permitted by the instructions for the task.
- b. collusion: where a person:
  - i. collaborates with another person to prepare assessment work, beyond the extent of collaboration specifically permitted by the instructions for the assessment task. Where no instructions about permissible collaboration are provided, all of the work must be the student's own or acknowledged as another person's work; or
  - ii. collaborates with another person to enable cheating to occur.
- c. contract cheating: where one person pays another person or service, or offers them some other inducement, to write or develop assessment work that the first person presents as their own work;
- d. plagiarism: where a person uses another person's idea or data, or way of expressing an idea, without acknowledging the source, so that the idea, data or words are incorrectly or deceptively presented as their own;
- e. self-plagiarism: where a person presents text, ideas or data from their own previous scholarly work or work submitted previously for assessment, in a different context, as new work, without acknowledging the previous work as the source; and
- f. inappropriate help or supervision, where the teaching staff member or supervisor is in effect an unacknowledged co-author of an assignment, dissertation or thesis; or edits the work for the student or candidate to the extent that the student's or candidate's scholarship and writing ability are misrepresented.

(35) Research misconduct includes serious breaches of the University's code for the responsible conduct of research. That code and the different types and levels of breach are defined in the [Research Policy](#) and [Research Misconduct Procedure](#).

### Protection of those who report breaches of academic integrity

(36) Staff or students who in good faith report cases of suspected academic or research misconduct must not be victimised or discriminated against.

(37) To victimise or discriminate against someone for such a report is likely to constitute serious misconduct.

(38) Staff or students who feel unsafe in reporting academic or research misconduct within their subject, course, school or faculty may report an allegation of misconduct by a student directly to the central Student Conduct team, using the online form for this purpose.

(39) Alternatively, they may report academic or research misconduct by staff to senior staff responsible for maintaining academic integrity outside of the subject, course, school or faculty: for example to the relevant Head of School, Deputy Dean, Executive Dean, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) or Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research) as relevant.

### **Consequences of breaching academic integrity**

(40) If a student commits academic misconduct or research misconduct, they will be subject to penalties under the [Student Misconduct Rule 2020](#).

- a. Where the misconduct is repeated or severe, the penalties are likely to be correspondingly severe, such as a fail grade in a subject or exclusion from the course.
- b. In particular, cheating and contract cheating are likely to be subject to severe penalties.

(41) The academic and research misconduct decision-maker and penalty guidelines suggest, for different levels of severity of alleged misconduct:

- a. the appropriate appointed officers to whom allegations should be referred; and
- b. appropriate penalties if the decision-maker finds that the misconduct did occur.

### **Reporting of academic misconduct and research misconduct**

(42) All allegations of academic misconduct and research misconduct by students, their outcomes and penalties will be recorded on a university database of these allegations.

(43) The Manager, Student Conduct will report and publish de-identified data on the number of student academic misconduct and research misconduct allegations, findings of misconduct, and penalties as follows.

- a. They will provide a single annual report of data for the University as a whole to:
  - i. faculty assessment committees;
  - ii. faculty research committees;
  - iii. faculty boards;
  - iv. Academic Quality and Standards Committee;
  - v. University Research Committee; and
  - vi. Academic Senate.
- b. They will publish annual data for the University as a whole to the university community on a web page and announce it through university newsletters.

(44) Where an academic staff member is found to have committed academic misconduct, the Executive Director, People and Culture will provide a de-identified report of the finding and any disciplinary penalty to Academic Senate and to the committee(s) of Senate to which the type of misconduct is relevant.

(45) The Manager, Research Integrity will report de-identified details of staff research misconduct allegations, findings of research misconduct and disciplinary outcomes, to the University Research Committee.

## Responsibilities

(46) The University expects all members of the university community (that is, all those included in the scope of this policy) to contribute to:

- a. practising, promoting and defending academic integrity; and
- b. identifying and reporting suspected cases of academic misconduct or research misconduct.

(47) Teaching staff will model academic integrity in their teaching practice, educate students about academic integrity and report suspected cases of academic misconduct for investigation.

(48) Supervisors of students' research (including any research in coursework courses) will model research integrity, educate students and higher degree by research candidates about research integrity, and report suspected breaches of research integrity for investigation.

(49) Students:

- a. are expected to speak up for academic integrity and report suspected academic misconduct to staff for investigation; and
- b. will minimise opportunities for others to commit academic misconduct.

(50) Professional staff will promote academic integrity and support academic staff and students in maintaining it.

(51) The [Academic Integrity Procedure](#) states detailed, specific responsibilities for academic integrity of students and staff.

## Section 4 - Procedure

(52) The [Academic Integrity Procedure](#) states detailed requirements in relation to:

- a. responsibilities of students and staff for promoting, maintaining and defending academic integrity;
- b. requirements of information on academic integrity to be provided to applicants for admission;
- c. training in academic integrity and research integrity for staff and students;
- d. design of assessment tasks, subjects and courses to maintain academic integrity and minimise academic misconduct;
- e. conditions on which professional editors may help a student prepare assessment work or a thesis;
- f. ensuring academic integrity in third party deliveries of the University's courses and subjects; and
- g. aspects of the University's response to breaches of academic integrity.

## Section 5 - Guidelines

(53) Nil.



## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	1st July 2020
<b>Review Date</b>	1st July 2023
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Academic Senate
<b>Approval Date</b>	20th January 2020
<b>Expiry Date</b>	26th January 2023
<b>Unit Head</b>	Mark Bassett Director, Academic Quality and Standards
<b>Author</b>	Kerrilyn Toal
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Office of Academic Quality and Standards