Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure

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Approving Authority	Academic Board
Implementation	Academic Dean
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1. Purpose

The Academic integrity principles include academic honesty and a respect for knowledge. These principles are at the core of teaching, learning and research. Dishonest academic practices contravene academic values and compromise and devalue the quality of scholarly activities in teaching, learning and research. This policy is intended to reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in the Sydney Polytechnic Institute (SPI) academic environment.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all students and staff at the SPI.

3. Definitions

Academic Integrity means to act with honesty, trust, respect, fairness, in carrying out the responsibilities of academic scholarship..

Collusion means the unauthorised assisting, or accepting assistance from, another person, or persons, in order to obtain an unfair academic advantage by dishonest or unfair means.

Contract cheating means any activity where a student uses a third party to provide all or part of their assessable material. It includes but is not limited to: obtaining a completed or partially completed task from a third party and submitting it as original work; using a substitute person to undertake, in full or part, an examination or other assessment.

Examinations means formal examinations, informal examinations and quizzes.

Group Work means a formally established project to be carried out by a number of students working collaboratively together that results in a single piece of assessment or a number of associated pieces of assessment.

Recycling means submitting one's previous own work, or part thereof, for another unit assessment without relevant permission and/or without acknowledging the previous submission.

Legitimate cooperation means the beneficial educational practice that are promoted to enhance learning and research outcomes by fostering student and staff interaction, provided they adhere to the conditions specified in clause 4.2.2 of this policy.

4. Policy

4.1. Principles:

4.1.1. Procedural Fairness: SPI is committed to dealing with allegations of academic misconduct by students and staff in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness, including the rights of students to:

a) be informed of the allegations against them in sufficient detail;

b) have a reasonable period of time within which to respond to the potential allegations;

c) have the matter resolved in a timely manner;

d) be informed of their rights under this policy;

e) be treated impartially and with an absence of bias by the decision-maker in any enquiry or investigation process.

4.1.2. Detection: SPI will be proactive in detecting academic misconduct. The actions may include but not be limited to:

a) manual searches of resources, as well as the use of electronic text-matching software (e.g. Turnitin), to compare work submitted for assessment/examination against electronic text on the publicly accessible internet, in published works, on commercial databases, and in previously submitted student assignments;

b) monitoring and invigilation of examinations.

4.1.3. Information about allegations of academic misconduct will be accessed only by authorised staff in accordance with SPI *Records and Information Management Policy*.

4.2. Good Academic Practice

4.2.1. Good practice includes, but is not limited to:

a) following honest and responsible academic practices and style, such as acknowledging all sources and employing appropriate referencing

b) intellectual honesty in proposing, performing, and reporting research

c) accuracy in representing contributions to research proposals and reports

d) fairness in peer review

e) collegiality in scientific interactions, including communications and sharing of resources

f) transparency in conflicts of interest or potential conflicts of interest

g) protection of human subjects in the conduct of research

h) humane care of animals in the conduct of research,

i) minimising adverse impacts on the community and the environment, and

j) adherence to the mutual responsibilities between investigators and research participants (National Research Council of the National Academies, 2002).

4.2.2. Legitimate cooperation includes any or all of:

a) Collaboratively working as members of a group for a group-based assessment,

b) Engaging in discussion of general concepts of the unit, but not including any discussion of assessment task matters that may provide unfair academic advantage.

4.2.3. Students may use an external assistance including editors or proof-readers if the Unit Coordinator permits such a use of assistance. Such assistance may include software assisted tools. Students must acknowledge any assistance provided in completing work submitted for assessment.

4.3. Academic misconduct:

4.3.1. Academic misconduct is behaviour that intentionally or unintentionally infringes values and/or principles of Academic Integrity. Academic misconduct includes both unintentional misconduct and academic dishonesty.

4.3.2. Unintentional misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

a) unintentional plagiarism;

4.3.3. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to

a) negligent plagiarism;

b) dishonest plagiarism;

c) recycling

d) collusion

e) contract cheating

f) falsification and fabricating data, information or sources;

g) cheating in examinations

h) bribery

i) Unauthorised publication

j) Inappropriate use of Information Technology

4.3.4. Intention to deceive: Irrespective of whether or not an intention to deceive can be established, any matter of potential misconduct must still be handled in accordance with the procedures specified in this policy.

4.4. Plagiarism

4.4.1. Plagiarism of any form is unacceptable in academic work, irrespective of whether it is intended to deceive.

4.4.2. Plagiarism means presenting another person's work for assessment or publication as one's own work without appropriate acknowledgement of the source. Plagiarism includes presenting:

a) phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, or longer extracts from published or unpublished work without appropriate acknowledgement of the source; or

b) the work of another person, without appropriate acknowledgement of the source.

4.4.3. Plagiarism may be:

a) Dishonest: where the student has knowingly committed plagiarism with the intent to present the work as their own and/or deceive those reviewing the work;

b) Negligent: where the student has unknowingly committed plagiarism through a lack of understanding of acceptable practice, arising from their negligence in developing this understanding;

c) Unintentional: where the student has unknowingly committed plagiarism through a lack of understanding, and where this lack cannot be attributed to their negligence.

4.4.4. Plagiarism may result from, but is not limited to:

a) poor referencing;

b) errors in quoting;

c) an inability to appropriately paraphrase;

d) an inhibition about writing in one's own words.

4.5. Examination cheating

4.5.1. Cheating in examinations, includes, but is not limited to;

a) communicating, by any means, with another candidate during an examination, except where this is permitted;

b) attempting to read another student's work during an examination;

c) writing an examination paper, or consulting with another person about the examination, outside the confines of the examination room without permission;

d) copying from another student during an examination;

e) inappropriately using electronic devices to access information during an examination;

f) bringing into an examination or other assessment forbidden material or devices.

4.6. Unauthorised publication

4.6.1. Unauthorised publication may include any or all of:

a) Uploading teaching materials to a website, or a file-sharing or similar online platform;

b) Uploading assessment materials, including questions and published answers to a website, or a file-sharing or similaronline platform.

4.7. Inappropriate use of Information Technology

4.7.1. Inappropriate use of any digital or Information Technology for completing assessment tasks, includes, but is not limited to:

a) The unauthorised generation of content using artificial intelligence; or

b) Using paraphrasing or translation software to conceal plagiarism, collusion, contract cheating or other breaches of academic integrity.

4.8. Prevention of Misconduct

4.8.1. The Academic Dean shall be responsible for ensuring the implementation of initiatives to proactively prevent academic misconduct. This shall include, but not be limited to:

a) Professional development for staff;

b) provision of information on expectations related to academic integrity within course information for prospective students, in letters of offer for prospective students, and in educational modules appropriately accessible to students;

c) information programs for students at orientation;

d) constant reinforcement at lectures or other teaching activities.

4.9. Allegations of academic misconduct

4.9.1. Whenever a SPI staff member or student becomes aware of a potential case of academic misconduct then they must raise it in accordance with the procedures outlined in this document.

4.9.2. Whilst an allegation of misconduct is being resolved, the student or staff member should be entitled to continue with all other academic activities.

4.10. Penalties

4.10.1. The Academic Board will approve a schedule of penalties. This schedule will be managed and maintained by the Registrar.

4.10.2. The schedule of penalties shall list the penalties that can be applied for cases of academic misconduct and the circumstances that are relevant to the application of any particular penalty, including, but not limited to:

a) The severity of the misconduct

b) Any previous cases of proven academic misconduct by the student

c) The stage of the course in which the student is enrolled

4.10.3. The permitted penalties include, but shall not be limited to:

a) A requirement to undertake specified academic integrity education and development activities;

b) Awarding a reduced mark, or a fail grade, for an assessment item or an entire unit;

c) Imposing a suspension, with or without conditions, for a specified period;

d) Imposing an exclusion, with or without conditions, for a specified period, after which the student will be required to apply for re-admission to SPI;

e) Expelling the student from SPI;

4.10.4. Where a case of misconduct is proven and the appropriate penalty is not defined in the schedule of penalties then the Registrar shall determine an appropriate penalty consistent with those in the schedule. This penalty shall then be proposed to the Academic Board for ratification and addition to the schedule of penalties. The Academic Board may:

a) Ratify the applied penalty and add it to the schedule;

b) Ratify the applied penalty but add an alternative to the schedule;

c) Rescind the penalty and determine a revised penalty to be applied and added to the schedule.

4.11. Monitoring and reporting

4.11.1. The Registrar shall provide an annual report on academic misconduct to the Academic Board. This report shall outline:

a) all cases of potential or actual academic misconduct and the outcome of such cases;

b) any patterns in misconduct cases and steps that are being taken to address potential causes.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1. The Academic Dean shall:

a) promote the values and principles of academic integrity;

b) ensure that students and staff are provided with resources designed to support students in developing the skills required to uphold the values of Academic Integrity;

c) take preventative action to mitigate foreseeable risks to Academic Integrity;

5.2. The Registrar shall:

a) determine penalties to be applied to cases of academic misconduct;

b) provide students with access to appeal decisions involving academic misconduct.

c) provide an annual report to the Academic Board outlining all cases of potential or actual academic misconduct and the outcome of such cases.

5.3. Course Coordinators shall:

a) undertake investigations into alleged academic misconduct and make determinations regarding whether the allegation has been proven;

b) notify the Registrar of all cases and the outcome of their investigations;

5.4. Unit Coordinators shall

a) design the learning and assessment tasks in a way that supports academic integrity and minimises the risk of breaching this policy.

b) provide clear guidance to students around the expectations of each assessment task and around what resources are able, and not able, to be used to support the completion of the task.

c) specify precise requirements for students' group work and make clear distinction between group work and individual work.

5.5. All staff shall:

a) be familiar with SPI's Academic Integrity Policy;

b) be actively involved in implementing policies or procedures related to Academic Integrity;

c) ensure Academic Integrity in their teaching, research, and professional practice;

d) guide and inform students on the expectation of Academic Integrity and minimise the risk of potential Academic Integrity breaches;

e) identify and report suspected breaches of Academic Integrity with reference to this policy.

5.6. All students shall:

a) familiarise themselves with this Policy and undertake all Academic Integrity education required by SPI;

b) act in accordance with SPI's Academic Integrity Policy and avoid potential breaches of SPI's Academic Integrity Policy;

c) have a clear understanding of acknowledgement practices that are appropriate for their discipline;

d) submit original work which properly acknowledges the authorship and the use of any other sources, and meets the requirement of Aacademic integrity.

e) avoid lending or otherwise providing original work to others for any reason other than where work is provided to another student in group work assessment, and subject to any requirements imposed on students in connection with such collaboration.

f) be aware of the collective responsibility of proper source acknowledgement within group work tasks and be able to support their claims of authorship in group work.

g) encourage other students to uphold the values of academic integrity and discourage other students from carrying out any forms of academic misconduct.

6. Procedures

6.1. Determination

6.1.1. Upon a staff member becoming aware of a possible case of academic misconduct, they must report it to the Course Coordinator.

6.1.2. The Course Coordinator must first form a preliminary view of the potential allegation of academic misconduct. If the Course Coordinator forms a preliminary view that the alleged conduct warrants further investigation, the Course Coordinator will carry out the investigation by:

a) Issuing the student with a notice to show cause in relation to the allegation with advice that failure to respond within 10 days may result in confirmation of the allegation and imposition of a penalty;

b) Examining any materials, including, if appropriate, using electronic text-matching software or other methods of detecting dishonesty or plagiarism made available by SPI;

c) Considering any further evidence or representations deemed necessary to undertake an assessment of the matter.

6.1.3. If the Course Coordinator either forms a preliminary view or as a result of investigation forms a view that the alleged conduct does not represent academic misconduct, then:

a) the Coordinator must record 'no impropriety' as the decision; and

b) the work must be assessed according to its academic merit without penalty and according to the specified criteria.

6.1.4. If, after investigation, the Course Coordinator forms the view that the student conduct amounts to unintentional misconduct, then:

a) the Coordinator must record 'no impropriety' as the decision; and

b) the student will be required to undertake a program of education on proper academic conventions and techniques; and

c) the student will be permitted to re-attempt the assessment item without loss of marks.

6.1.5. If, after investigation, the Course Coordinator forms the view that the student conduct amounts to academic dishonesty then:

a) the Coordinator must record a formal finding of 'academic misconduct'; and

b) the case shall be referred to the Registrar for determination of an appropriate penalty.

6.2. Penalties

6.2.1. For a case of academic misconduct that has been confirmed, the Registrar shall determine the penalty based on the schedule approved by the Academic Board.

6.2.2. Where the appropriate penalty is not defined in the schedule of penalties then the Registrar shall determine an appropriate penalty consistent with those in the schedule. This penalty shall then be proposed to the Academic Board for ratification and addition to the schedule of penalties.

6.3. Recording outcomes

6.3.1. Once a determination has been made on a misconduct matter, the Course Coordinator and the Registrar will document the decision and relevant penalties being imposed if a finding of ‘academic misconduct’ is determined. The student will be informed in writing of the decision, including if a decision of ‘no impropriety’ is determined.

6.4. Appeal Process

6.4.1. A Student can lodge an appeal against a determination in a student misconduct matter. Appeals will be considered on the grounds that:

a) this policy and procedure have been inappropriately or incorrectly followed, or a breach of the general principles of procedural fairness has occurred; and/or

b) the decision was affected by a conflict of interest or personal bias; and/or

c) new information becomes available that could not reasonably have been provided prior to the investigation and it is probable that this information would have affected the decision.

6.4.2. An appeal against a determination made by the Course Coordinator may be made in writing by the Student to the Registrar within 20 days of Notice of the Decision. In the appeal, the grounds for appeal must be clearly set out.

6.4.3. Upon receipt of the Appeal, the Registrar shall undertake a preliminary review to determine the validity of the appeal. Once determined, and within 10 days of receiving the Appeal, the Registrar may:

a) Dismiss the Appeal if not valid.

b) Decide in relation to the Appeal.

c) Refer the Appeal to the Academic Board for determination.

6.4.4. The student will be informed in writing of the decision regarding the Appeal, accompanied by reasons for the decision. Relevant staff within SPI will also be informed of the appeal decision and records will be appropriately made.

6.4.5. The Appeal Decision is final and there is no further avenue of appeal within SPI. However, the student has the right to further appeal outside SPI as outlined in the *Complaint and Grievance Resolution Policy and Procedure*.

Notes

Related legislation:

TEQSA Guidance Notes: Academic Integrity

Related documents:

SPI Student Assessment Policy and Procedure
SPI Examinations Policy and Procedure
SPI Student Code of Conduct Policy
SPI Education Plan

Amendment History:

Version No.	Approved by	Effective date	Amendments
1.0	Academic Board	25/08/2021	New Policy
2.0	Academic Board	13/12/2023	Revamped Policy