1 Policy Statement
Academic integrity, honesty, and respect for truth and knowledge are fundamental values in higher education. Dishonest academic practices devalue the quality of learning, and threaten the standards of teaching and learning at AMPA. This policy provides information about academic dishonesty and sets out a systematic approach to dealing with academic misconduct if and when it is detected.

This policy applies equally to students enrolled in VET and Higher Education courses where appropriate.

2 Definitions
Academic misconduct includes any dishonest academic practices such as - plagiarism, cheating, fraud, collusion and falsifying or misrepresenting information or findings. It also includes unethical or improper behaviour and the misuse of confidential information.

2.1 Plagiarism - is the representation of another person’s work or ideas as one’s own. It includes the unacknowledged word for word use or paraphrasing of another person’s work; and/or the inappropriate, unacknowledged use of another person’s idea/s. It can include working with other people, and then without permission, presenting the resulting work as though it were completed independently (also known as collusion).

2.2 Cheating – the illicit and unauthorized use of information during tests and examinations; or collusion with others by using their work in what should be a student’s own work for assessment purposes.

2.3 Academic Fraud - is the falsification and fabrication of, or dishonesty in reporting information, findings or research.

2.4 Misrepresentation - is the giving of false or misleading information in academic matters. The act may include falsely claiming credit for past study; falsely stating that thesis material has not been used in another thesis or dissertation.

2.5 Improper Behaviour - is behaviour that interferes with students or staff in the pursuit of their academic endeavours. It includes disruptive behaviour in class or institutional facilities such as libraries.

2.6 Unethical Behaviour - is behaviour that breaches accepted ethical standards. It includes failing to observe the terms of an ethical approval to conduct research, and/or misuse of confidential information obtained in field education.
3 Policy Objectives
To ensure that –

- All students are clearly informed about academic misconduct, and told that it is unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action;
- All students are provided with information on plagiarism and how to avoid it;
- All academic staff have guidelines on strategies to help prevent opportunities for plagiarism;
- All staff have guidelines for dealing with plagiarism;
- The penalties for plagiarism are clear and easy to understand.

4 Strategies for the Prevention of Academic Misconduct
AMPA employs a range of coordinated strategies to encourage academic integrity -

Orientation Information
During orientation period (Week #1 of each semester) students are provided with information on academic misconduct, particularly on the area of plagiarism. They are also taught that plagiarism is a form of cheating that may include copying someone else’s work, unacknowledged material from the Internet, or presenting the ideas of a teacher or peer as one’s own.

Specialised Teaching/Learning Unit
Students are clearly made aware of safe and appropriate practice in the compulsory first year, first semester unit Academic Writing.

Expectations as per Unit Outlines
Students receive outlines for each unit which specify clearly what the assessment expectations are, and are in turn reminded of the penalties for academic misconduct.

Assessment Approaches
Lecturers attempt to devise assessment approaches that increase students’ engagement with their study and build their confidence in submitting their own original work for assessment. Staff will explain the aims and purposes of assessment tasks, provide prompt, detailed, and constructive feedback to assignments and examinations, and act as role models in encouraging students to follow sound practice in both protecting intellectual property and sustaining their own academic integrity.
5 Detection of Plagiarism

Plagiarism is essentially an ethical issue rather than a legal one. AMPA views dishonest plagiarism as a grave offence against universal and fundamental academic principles.

Academic staff distinguish between unintentional plagiarism which has occurred from a student’s lack of understanding, preparation, skill or care, and that which arises from an intention to deceive.

Where academic misconduct is detected, the process used to address it will offer a scale of successive stages for its management; not disadvantage one group of students over another; and be consistent with information provided to all students. Students will be given an opportunity to respond to any allegations and proposed disciplinary action.

6 Management of Academic Misconduct Offences

Any person who has direct knowledge of academic misconduct may make a complaint against a student of AMPA. Where plagiarism is suspected, the reasons and evidence for this suspicion will in the first instance be referred to the Campus Dean. Within ten (10) working days of receiving the allegation, the Campus Dean must either dismiss the allegation because it is deemed to be unwarranted or lacking in supporting evidence, or notify the student of the allegation and request a response. The Campus Dean usually meets with the student to informally investigate and discuss the matter to clarify issues and decide what further action should be taken, if any. The student may bring a support person to the meeting, or may elect not to attend a meeting.

Following receipt of a student’s response to the allegation of academic misconduct, the Campus Dean will write to the student within 10 working days to state that, either:

- the case is not substantiated, or
- the allegation constitutes an initial and/or minor offence, and award an appropriate penalty, or
- the allegation appears to be substantiated and deemed to be significant and/or repeated and advise the student that the matter will be referred to the Teaching and Learning Committee, keeping a secure record of this written advice.

The Campus Dean will report to the Teaching and Learning Committee summaries of minor offences and penalties, without identifying the students involved, and forward all documentation to Administration for confidential filing.

Table 1: Management of Academic Misconduct flowchart of the process
**Table 1: Management of Academic Misconduct**

**LECTURER/Other source**

ALLEGATION of academic misconduct made against a student.

**CAMPUS DEAN**

ASSESS the allegation and take action within 10 working days.

**CAMPUS DEAN**

NOTIFY student of the allegation and request a response, MEET with the student (in person or via email) and informally INVESTIGATE.

Within 10 working days respond to the student in writing.

**DISMISS** the allegation.

**MINOR** and/or INITIAL OFFENCE and appropriate penalty awarded.

Action reported to T&LC.

**SIGNIFICANT** and/or REPEATED OFFENCE referred to the T&LC.

**CAMPUS DEAN**

NOTIFY student that the T&LC will be held, INVITE the student to attend or submit a written response.

**TEACHING & LEARNING COMMITTEE**

MINOR and/or SIGNIFICANT and/or INITIAL and/or REPEATED OFFENCE and appropriate penalty awarded.

**CAMPUS DEAN**

NOTIFY student of T&LC response within 5 working days.
7 Academic Misconduct and Penalties

The management of academic misconduct is dealt with in two parts: plagiarism and cheating.

The issue of inadvertent versus deliberate offences is determined by a student's capacity to comprehend the nature and implications of their actions, and their familiarity with academic processes. Consequently, academic misconduct occurring in the first semester of a degree is regarded less harshly than misconduct occurring in subsequent semesters. It is assumed that students who have successfully completed their initial semester are familiar with AMPA’s policies and procedures and are fully aware of the consequences of a breach of policy. However, it is also appreciated that the level of understanding, or appreciation of the consequences of academic misconduct may vary from student to student, as well as the circumstances underlying any particular misconduct.

7.1 Plagiarism

Any work submitted by students for assessment as part of their studies should be their own work. Where work submitted by a student incorporates material from other authors and sources such as the Internet, the reference to these authors and sources such as Internet websites should be clear and unambiguous.

It is essential that:

- quotations from published and unpublished sources are indicated and acknowledged clearly;
- sources of illustrations, photographs maps and statistics are acknowledged clearly;
- web-based materials should not be directly downloaded into an assessment and should be referenced fully like any other source material;
- students must not incorporate materials purchased or acquired from Internet sites or commissioned from sources that write assignments for payment;
- paraphrasing of material from others must be referenced clearly;
- unless students have been instructed to produce a group assignment, students will be expected to produce work which is their own;
- students are frequently referred to appropriate sources of information on plagiarism and good practice in the production of assessments.

7.1.1 Types of Plagiarism Relevant to this Procedure

Inadvertent Plagiarism

In order to be considered as inadvertent, an instance of plagiarism must not be repeated plagiarism, and must be found to be no more than the inclusion of relatively small amounts of the intellectual property of others, which must be deemed to be the result of negligence, ignorance and/ or poor academic practice. This applies when there is no cited reference accompanying the copied content, even if the source is included in an accompanying bibliography; or if work is cited verbatim without the use of quotation marks.
**Deliberate Plagiarism**
The inclusion of large amounts of other people’s work, including but not limited to blocks of text, musical scores and charts, audio files, concepts and procedures which clearly detracts from the originality of the student’s work will be considered as deliberate plagiarism. This applies when there is no cited reference accompanying the copied content, or if work is cited verbatim without the use of quotation marks.

### 7.1.2 General Procedure and Penalty

**Initial and Inadvertent Plagiarism**
The penalty is to fail the offending assignment with a mark of zero.

Alternatively, the student may be given the opportunity to resubmit the assignment, with a penalty of downgrading the marks for item(s) of assessment dependant on the degree of plagiarism. The penalty percentage to be applied is to be reported to the Campus Dean.

The Campus Dean may also recommend and arrange Academic Counselling for the student.

The offending assessment will be returned to the student, together with a letter of warning from the Campus Dean informing the student that a subsequent finding of plagiarism will be considered deliberate and may result in the failure of a unit of study or expulsion from AMPA.

**Initial and Deliberate Plagiarism**
The penalty is to fail the offending assignment with a mark of zero.

Alternatively, the student may be given the opportunity to resubmit the assignment receiving no more than 50% for for the item(s) of assessment.

The Campus Dean may also recommend and arrange Academic Counselling for the student.

A letter of warning from the Campus Dean will be sent informing the student that a subsequent finding of deliberate plagiarism may result in failure of the relevant unit of study and/or expulsion.

**Repeated and Inadvertent Plagiarism**
The penalty is to fail the offending assignment with a mark of zero. The penalty will be reported to the Campus Dean. The Campus Dean may also recommend and arrange Academic Counselling for the student.
A letter of warning from the Campus Dean will be sent informing the student that a subsequent finding of deliberate plagiarism may result in failure of the relevant unit of study and/or expulsion.

**Repeated and Deliberate Plagiarism**

The penalty is to fail the offending unit with a mark of zero. Cases of repeated and deliberate plagiarism must be brought to the attention of the Teaching and Learning Committee. Where the Teaching and Learning Committee and the Campus Dean are of the opinion that the offence warrants suspension, the proposal may be that the student be suspended for a period to be determined by the Committee, but for no less than one semester. The Committee may also recommend and arrange Academic Counselling for the student.

The Committee may decide that instead of suspending the student, the student should fail the unit and be placed on probation, for a period of no less than one semester. If the student is found to have committed deliberate plagiarism once more during this period, then expulsion from AMPA will be automatic. The student may be asked to respond in writing to a ‘show cause’ request as to why they should remain in the course in the case of both suspension and expulsion.

### 7.2 Cheating

It is essential that:

- mobile phones, laptop computers, and all portable electronic devices (unless specified) are not taken into examinations;
- students only take permissible materials into an examination.

#### 7.2.1 General Procedure and Penalty

**Initial Cheating**

The penalty is to issue a fail grade for the examination with a mark of zero.

Alternatively, the student may be given the opportunity to re-sit the examination, receiving no more than 50% for the item of assessment.

The Campus Dean may also recommend and arrange Academic Counselling for the student.

The offending assessment will be returned to the student, together with a letter of warning from the Campus Dean informing the student that a subsequent finding of cheating will be considered deliberate and may result in the failure of a unit of study or expulsion from AMPA.
Repeated Cheating
The penalty is to issue a fail grade for the unit with a mark of zero. Cases of repeated and deliberate cheating must be brought to the attention of the Teaching and Learning Committee.

The Teaching and Learning Committee may decide that instead of suspending the student, the student should fail the unit and be placed on probation, for a period of no less than one semester. If the student is found to have cheated once more during this period, then expulsion from AMPA will be automatic. The student may be asked to respond in writing to a ‘show cause’ request as to why they should remain in the course in the case of both suspension and expulsion. The Committee may also recommend and arrange Academic Counselling for the student.

7.3 Other Academic Misconduct

7.3.1 Types of Other Academic Misconduct Relevant to this Procedure

Minor Offences
Minor offences are small breaches which are normally due to inexperience or lack of understanding. Offences are not considered minor where there is intent to deceive or be disruptive.

Deliberate Offences
Deliberate offences are those where the extent, magnitude, repetitiveness and/or blatancy of the misconduct are serious or have deliberate impact on other students, staff or AMPA.

7.3.2 General Procedure and Penalty

Initial and Minor Misconduct
With respect to matters of behaviour and ethics, the emphasis is less on penalty than understanding and insight. Students who engage in what is regarded as relatively minor improper or unethical behaviour in their first semester are to be counselled in all instances regarding the inappropriateness of their behaviour and the potential consequences for self and others, including potential expulsion for repeated improper or unethical behaviour. Unless the behaviour involves specific assessments not covered by other forms of academic misconduct, no academic penalty will apply.

Initial and Deliberate Misconduct
Where an initial instance of improper conduct causes major disruption to AMPA, the work of other students or the ability of academic staff to perform their duties, the offending student will be reported to the Campus Dean. A letter of warning will be sent informing the student that a subsequent finding of deliberate misconduct may result in failure of the current units of study and/or expulsion.
Repeated and Minor Misconduct
Where the Campus Dean is of the opinion that the offence warrants suspension, the Campus Dean may propose to the Teaching and Learning Committee that the student be suspended for a period to be determined by the Committee, but for no less than one semester. The Committee may also recommend and arrange Academic Counselling for the student.

The Teaching and Learning Committee may decide that instead of suspending the student, the student should fail the semester in which the misconduct occurred and be placed on probation, for a period of no less than one semester. The student may be asked to respond in writing to a ‘show cause’ request as to why they should remain in the course.

Repeated and Deliberate Misconduct
The Teaching and Learning Committee may decide to suspend the student for no less than one semester, or fail the student for the semester/s in which the offence occurred and expel the student from AMPA for a minimum of one year. If the student is found to have committed deliberate misconduct once more during this period, then expulsion from AMPA will be automatic.

A student against whom a complaint of misconduct has been established under these procedures may appeal by accessing the Academic Grievance Procedure within thirty (30) days of receiving the decision of the Teaching and Learning Committee. If a student lodges an academic grievance, all parties follow the Academic Grievance Procedure, and the implementation of any penalty will be stopped until the grievance is resolved.

7.4 Privacy and Confidentiality
AMPA regards student misconduct as a confidential matter. Staff involved in the student misconduct process must not divulge any information related to any allegations against an individual student to any unauthorized person.

7.5 Fairness of Process
All students who are the subject of recommendations or decisions with respect to allegations of misconduct are entitled to be treated with fairness and dignity. Each case must be dealt with on its own terms and merits and in accordance with its own circumstances.

7.6 Access to Advice
All students have an opportunity to seek advice. In some cases it may be appropriate for AMPA to make arrangements where there may be a need for translating services to be provided.
7.7 Appeal Against Findings
Students are entitled to appeal in writing to the Campus Dean against the process with respect to the original enquiry, and against the severity of the penalty imposed. Appeals must be made within ten working days of the student being informed.

7.8 Reporting Matters Related to Student Misconduct
Each semester the Campus Dean will report to the Teaching and Learning Committee on the recommendations and actions taken during the semester in relation to student academic misconduct.

\(^1\) The explanations in this section are drawn from the *Academic Misconduct Administrative Guidelines* of La Trobe University

Students are referred to the web site of Purdue University, Indiana, USA, as an exemplar of safe practice in academic writing

Staff are referred to the excellent resources of –

**RMIT University:**
*Plagiarism: Guidelines for Teaching Staff*

*Plagiarism: Resources for Staff*
[http://mams.rmit.edu.au/z8ual42k4e2.pdf](http://mams.rmit.edu.au/z8ual42k4e2.pdf),

Assessing Learning in Australian Universities website

References and related documents used to develop this policy
Wesley Institute Academic Integrity Policy & Procedure
Australian Universities Teaching Committee Assessing Learning in Australian Universities
RMIT University Plagiarism Policy
RMIT University Plagiarism: Guidelines for Teaching Staff
RMIT University Plagiarism: Resources for Staff

**Policy Details**

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