

Definitions

Please refer to the University's Glossary of Terms for policies and procedures.

Academic Lead means a member of the Integrity and Compliance Unit (ICU) with extensive learning and teaching experience and expertise in assessment practices in a Higher Education environment. The Academic Lead (or their delegate) acts as the Investigator under these procedures.

Balance of probabilities means a standard of proof established by a preponderance of evidence that suggests that something was more likely to have occurred than not occurred.

Prima Facie means on first appearance such that for the purposes of these procedures prima facie evidence is evidence which, on first appearance, is sufficient to prove the necessary elements of student academic misconduct.

1. Purpose of Procedures

1.1 These procedures relate to investigating any allegations of student academic misconduct in coursework, which is described in the Student Academic Integrity - Governing Policy and should be read in conjunction with that policy.

1.2 These procedures do not apply to students undertaking a Higher Degree by Research (HDR), except for any coursework, e.g. a research methods course. In cases of research misconduct, refer to the University's Responsible Research Conduct - Governing Policy and Managing and Investigating Breaches of Responsible Research Conduct - Procedures.

1.3 The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) can make a determination if an activity undertaken by a student constitutes academic misconduct and should be considered under these procedures.

2. Academic integrity training modules

2.1 As members of a University community that values academic integrity, it is vital that students act with honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility in all academic activities.

2.2 All students undertaking a coursework program at the University must successfully complete academic integrity training modules before the end of their first enrolment period. The modules will be available through the University's Learning Management System (Blackboard).

2.3 Failure to meet this requirement will result in the withholding of a student's grades for that and subsequent enrolment periods. The student's grades will be released when the modules have been successfully completed.

3. Detection of suspected student academic misconduct

3.1 When a member of staff or a fellow student has reason to suspect student academic misconduct, that person must inform the relevant Course Coordinator as soon as practicable. The report of suspected student academic misconduct can be made either verbally or in writing to the Course Coordinator all available supporting evidence must be provided at that time.

3.2 In the case of suspected student academic misconduct in an examination, the incident must be reported immediately to the Invigilator or the Course Coordinator. Refer to Section 10 regarding alleged misconduct in central examinations.

3.3 The University has available a range of tools, such as the SafeAssign text matching tool, as part of the Blackboard Learning Management System, to assist in the identification of possible cases of plagiarism and collusion. Reports generated by software tools must be examined thoroughly in context, and the academic judgement of the teaching staff is relied upon to determine whether or not material is plagiarised, or collusion occurred.

4. Preliminary analysis of suspected student academic misconduct

4.1 A Course Coordinator who receives a report or identifies suspected student academic misconduct, must make a preliminary analysis to determine if either:

- (a) there is no case for the student to answer and the matter proceeds no further; or
- (b) there is sufficient evidence that the matter should be investigated.

4.2 As part of the preliminary analysis, the Course Coordinator:

APPROVAL AUTHORITY

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

RESPONSIBLE OFFICER

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

DESIGNATED OFFICER

Director, Centre for Support and Advancement of Learning and Teaching

FIRST APPROVED

6 October 2009

LAST AMENDED

2 September 2019

REVIEW DATE

21 April 2021

STATUS

Active

- (a) examines any documentation relating to the incident, including any report;
- (b) checks the information provided to students on the assessment item;
- (c) analyses the assessment item; and
- (d) may contact the student or another person directly involved, advising that a concern has been raised and returning a copy of the student's assessment item, keeping the original (where applicable) for investigation.

4.3 The Course Coordinator should at this stage take care to avoid any pre-judgement of the student or the veracity of the suspected student academic misconduct and in particular should not seek or take into consideration any previous records or knowledge about previous allegations or findings of student academic misconduct related to the student. Evidence of recidivism, if any exists, should only be considered by the Academic Lead/Investigator when determining penalties.

4.4 Following the preliminary analysis, the Course Coordinator may determine that:

- (a) there is no case for the student to answer, and no formal investigation is required;
- (b) the case is at a low level (Category 1) and the student undertaking remedial/education action is an appropriate response rather than a penalty; or
- (c) there is prima facie evidence to support a suspicion of student academic misconduct and the case should be referred to the Integrity and Compliance Unit for further investigation.

4.5 Refer to Section 13, which provides information on remedial/education activities that may be required to be undertaken by the student.

4.6 Where the Course Coordinator, has determined that the case is at a low level (4.4(b)):

- (a) the Course Coordinator must complete a Student Academic Misconduct Details Form and send this form to the Integrity and Compliance Unit; and
- (b) if the student concerned was contacted regarding the suspected student academic misconduct, the Course Coordinator must immediately inform the student of this outcome.

4.7 Where the Course Coordinator determines that there is prima facie evidence to support a suspicion of student academic misconduct (4.4(c)), the Course Coordinator:

- (a) completes the Student Academic Misconduct Details Form and submits it to the Integrity and Compliance Unit;
- (b) removes any result for the assessment item (if submitted) and replaces it with a null result; and
- (c) if the student concerned was contacted regarding the suspected student academic misconduct, the Course Coordinator immediately informs the student of this outcome.

4.8 When a Course Coordinator refers a case to the Integrity and Compliance Unit for investigation, the Course Coordinator has the option to also provide a recommendation for an appropriate penalty should the case be proven. The recommendation should include a rationale referring to 14.2 Factors determining application of penalties. The Academic Lead/Investigator may take the recommendation into consideration when determining the penalty.

4.9 Course Coordinators must ensure that records of any correspondence generated throughout a preliminary analysis is captured and should accompany the Student Academic Misconduct Details Form when sent to the Integrity and Compliance Unit.

4.10 In the case of the Course Coordinator not been an on-going member of USC staff, the Head of School (or delegate) may act on the Course Coordinator's behalf.

5. Initial examination

5.1 On receipt of a suspected case of student academic misconduct, the Academic Lead/Investigator in the Integrity and Compliance Unit will make an initial examination to determine if the case:

- (a) should be considered as an allegation of student academic misconduct;
- (b) should be referred back to the Course Coordinator for clarification of the details;
- (c) should be dismissed, and the Course Coordinator informed that no further action will be taken.

5.2 If the initial examination determines alleged student academic misconduct may have occurred, the Academic Lead/Investigator will investigate further.

5.3 If the determination is 5.1(a), the student will receive a Notice of Allegation as detailed in Section 7. below

6. Investigation of an alleged case of Student Academic Misconduct

6.1 The task of the Academic Lead/Investigator is to make enquiries and gather evidence that will enable a determination to be made on the balance of probabilities, as to whether some or all of the misconduct occurred. This process may include gathering oral evidence (recollections

from witnesses, which should be documented), documentary evidence, and expert evidence (e.g. technical advice on data, text-matching reports, etc.). The Academic Lead/Investigator should be mindful of the principles of natural justice (procedural fairness) highlighted in Section 8 of the Student Academic Integrity - Governing Policy.

6.2 The Academic Lead/Investigator must ensure that a complete record of the investigation is captured by documenting every step, including all discussions, phone calls, interviews, decisions and conclusions made during the course of the investigation. These records must be stored securely to maintain confidentiality. Refer to Section 16. Recordkeeping.

7. Notice of allegation

7.1 A notice of allegation should be sent by the Integrity and Compliance Unit normally within 10 business days of notification of the alleged misconduct by the Course Coordinator, using the specified templates associated with these procedures.

7.2 All notices to students are sent to their USC email address and clearly identify the details of the allegations of student academic misconduct. A notice emailed by the University to a student's USC email address shall be deemed to have been received by the student.

7.3 The allegation notice must include a copy of any documentary evidence related to the allegation of student academic misconduct and links to the relevant University policies and procedures. The University's policy and procedures include advice on the potential outcomes of a substantiated finding that student academic misconduct has occurred, including potential consequences if, on further investigation, the allegation is referred to a more senior decision maker.

7.4 The allegation notice provides an opportunity for the student to respond to the allegation and prescribes the period in which that response must be received by the University. Students are advised that they may respond by:

- (a) attending an interview at a time identified, or
- (b) providing a written response (by email) to the allegation, or
- (c) both (a) and (b).

The time set for an interview should normally be within 10 business days, from the date of the allegation notice.

7.5 If there is no response to the allegation notice within the prescribed period, the Academic Lead/Investigator must make one final reasonable attempt to contact the student, by telephone or email one business day prior to the scheduled interview. If there is still no response and the student fails to arrive at the scheduled time and place, the Academic Lead/Investigator will proceed to make a determination in the student's absence based on the evidence available.

8. Interview

8.1 A student academic misconduct interview is a synchronistic conversation between two people (the interviewer and the interviewee), as such it can be face-to-face, video-conference, or by telephone. An exchange of emails is not considered an interview process.

8.2 Where the student elects to participate in an interview, the purpose of the interview is to review the evidence available, allow the student the opportunity to respond to the allegation, discuss the matter with the student and allow the Academic Lead/Investigator to determine whether misconduct has occurred. The interview is conducted by the Academic Lead/Investigator from the Integrity and Compliance Unit.

8.3 Where the student elects not to participate in an interview, the student can submit a written response to the allegation. The student's written submission should be sent to the Academic Lead/Investigator prior to the date established for the interview.

8.4 Students may have a support person at the interview but are advised that this person must be a representative of the Student Guild or another person who is not legally trained. The student may confer with the support person, but the support person may not advocate on the student's behalf.

8.5 During the interview, the Academic Lead/Investigator records notes of the conversation and on conclusion creates a written summary of the interview. A copy of the written summary of the interview will be made available to the student if requested by the student.

9. Determination

9.1 Following the interview, the Academic Lead/Investigator may seek further information or advice as necessary before making the determination. However, the student must be given the opportunity to comment on any additional information prior to the determination being made.

9.2 If the Academic Lead/Investigator determines that the alleged student academic misconduct is not proven, the investigation is concluded. The Integrity and Compliance Unit informs the student and the Course Coordinator of this outcome. All relevant records should be captured (refer to Section 16. Recordkeeping).

9.3 Where the Academic Lead/Investigator is satisfied that, on the balance of probabilities, there is sufficient evidence that some or all of the alleged student academic misconduct occurred, the Academic Lead/Investigator makes a determination as to the penalty and any educative process or remedial activities to apply.

9.4 The Academic Lead/Investigator should take into consideration the factors identified under Section 14.2 before determining the penalty.

9.5 If the penalty determined is either Suspension or Expulsion, the Academic Lead/Investigator makes a recommendation for the penalty to be applied by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), as per the approval authorities set out in Section 10 of the Student Academic Integrity - Governing Policy.

9.6 The Integrity and Compliance Unit notifies the student in writing of the determination. The determination notice is posted to the student's official address for correspondence, and a copy is sent to the student's USC email address. The notice must:

- give the student full details of the determination, including the reasons for making the decision;
- advise that the student may contact the Academic Lead/Investigator to seek clarity about any remedial activities required as part of the determination (if identified); and
- advise the student of the option to seek a review of the decision and/or to lodge an appeal - refer to Section 13 of the Student Academic Integrity - Governing Policy. Students should be advised that they have 10 business days from the date of the determination notice to seek a review via the Student Grievance Resolution - Governing Policy and the Student Reviews and Appeals - Procedures, except where the determination is issued by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), in which case there is no Stage 2 review available, and the student is instead advised that they have 20 business days to lodge an internal appeal at Stage 3 of the Student Reviews and Appeals - Procedures.

9.7 In the case of an international student on a student visa, the University is obliged to advise the student that a penalty of suspension or expulsion for misconduct will be reported to the relevant Government department(s) and may result in the cancellation of the student visa.

9.8 The Integrity and Compliance Unit facilitates advice to:

- ET Support, C-SALT - regarding actions requiring the changing of results in individual assessment items;
- Student Services and Engagement regarding actions required a failing grade, to withdraw, suspend or expel students and/or notate academic transcripts.

9.9 The Integrity and Compliance Unit will advise the Course Coordinator of all determinations and advise the relevant Head of School in cases where the determination is Suspension or Exclusion.

9.10 The Integrity and Compliance Unit provides Heads of School with semester/trimester reports on the outcome of allegations of student academic misconduct investigated by the unit.

10. Student academic misconduct in central examinations

10.1 In central examinations, it is generally an Invigilator who detects cheating or an attempt to cheat.

10.2 The Invigilator may permit the student to complete the examination, provided that further infringing conduct can be prevented, or the unauthorised material is removed. The Invigilator should, if appropriate, issue new examination booklets or answer sheets, or sign the student's work to indicate the point at which the student is resuming.

10.3 Where a person is found to be impersonating a student for an examination, the Invigilator should, if possible, confiscate the student ID card of the student being impersonated and complete a Student Academic Misconduct Details Form for that student. The person present should be asked to identify themselves and provide their contact details. If the person is a current USC student, the Invigilator should complete a separate Student Academic Misconduct Details Form for their suspected Category 2 collusion. If the person is not a current USC student, the investigation should proceed under Section 12 of these procedures. Should the person leave the premises without being identified, CCTV footage may be able to be accessed for possible identification.

10.4 The Invigilator completes a Student Academic Misconduct Details Form on the incident and provides it to the Associate Director, Student Business Services or nominee, immediately after the examination. Any unauthorised material which is confiscated should accompany the Student Academic Misconduct Details Form. Upon receipt of the Student Academic Misconduct Details Form, the Associate Director, Student Business Services or nominee, forwards the Student Academic Misconduct Details Form and any other pertinent information to the Integrity and Compliance Unit. The Integrity and Compliance Unit notifies the Course Coordinator of the investigation, provides the Course Coordinator an opportunity to recommend an appropriate penalty if the academic misconduct is proven, and confirms that any materials confiscated would constitute prohibited materials under exam conditions for the course.

10.5 Following the receipt of a Student Academic Misconduct Details Form, the Integrity and Compliance Unit investigates the alleged case and makes a determination.

11. Collusion involving a USC student who is not enrolled in the course where the misconduct occurred

11.1 When the suspected student academic misconduct involves collusion with another USC student who is not enrolled in the same course in which the suspected misconduct occurred, the Course Coordinator refers the allegation to the Integrity and Compliance Unit, which will assign an Academic Lead/Investigator, following the same process as outlined above.

11.2 In such cases, the full range of penalties identified in Section 10.1 of the Student Academic Integrity - Governing Policy are unavailable as the student is not enrolled in the course in which the student academic misconduct was identified. The only penalties available are to issue a formal warning or reprimand for Category 1 offences; or for Category 2 offences: Suspension or Expulsion.

12. Collusion involving a person who is not a USC student

When a finding of student academic misconduct involves collusion with a person who is not enrolled in the University, the Academic Lead/Investigator should provide a report with recommendations to the Head of School and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic). The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) may seek appropriate legal advice to determine whether action against the person should be pursued.

13. Educational/remedial action

13.1 The educational/remedial actions required to be undertaken by the student should be relevant to their needs. The Course Coordinator or Academic Lead/Investigator should contact the student to discuss the issues of student academic integrity, student academic misconduct and how the student can implement strategies to avoid future cases.

13.2 The Course Coordinator or Academic Lead/Investigator may require the student to attend a session with an Academic Skills Adviser or to participate in a tutorial or online tutorial about Plagiarism and Referencing. Students may be required to show evidence of having undertaken the educational remedial action and be given the opportunity to have this action recorded as having been completed.

14. Implementation of penalties

14.1 The range of available penalties are set out in Section 10 of the Student Academic Integrity - Governing Policy.

Authorised approval of penalties

PENALTY	APPROVAL AUTHORITY
(b) The student is required to resubmit the assessment task, and the mark awarded for the work will not exceed 50 percent or a passing grade	Academic Lead/Investigator
(c) The student is required to undertake a substitute assessment task, and the mark awarded for the work will not exceed 50 percent or a passing grade.	Academic Lead/Investigator
(d) The student is awarded a mark of zero for the assessment task in which the misconduct occurred (which may or may not result in a failing grade for the course)	Academic Lead/Investigator
(e) The student is awarded a failing grade (FL or UF) for the course.	Academic Lead/Investigator
(f) The student is withdrawn from the course by the University.	Academic Lead/Investigator (delegated by the relevant Head of School)
(g) The student is immediately suspended from enrolment at the University for one calendar year.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
(h) The student is immediately expelled from the University.	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)

14.2 Factors determining application of penalties

The Academic Lead/Investigator determines a penalty for a particular student on the basis of the evidence and consideration of the following factors:

- (a) whether the misconduct was a deliberate act of deception or cheating;
- (b) whether the student is a relatively new and inexperienced higher education student;
- (c) whether the student has a history of student academic misconduct;
- (d) the extent to which educational/remedial actions relating to student academic integrity had been previously required with respect to the student;
- (e) the nature and extent of the misconduct; and
- (f) where the misconduct relates to a practical professional competency assessment task in a professionally accredited program.

14.2.1 In the situation, where a student has received a penalty in a case of student academic misconduct, and more information becomes available or a subsequent case of student academic misconduct is proven, the Academic Lead/Investigator can review the initial penalty with the option to propose a different penalty.

14.3 Clarification of penalties

14.3.1 Penalties (c) and (d) in the Penalties table in the Student Academic Integrity - Governing Policy, are not available if:

- the assessment item is a final examination; or
- the assessment task is related to professional competencies in a Limited Graded course.

14.3.2 In courses that use the standard grading scale, the maximum result that can be attained under such circumstances is 50 percent of the value of the assessment task. In courses with limited grading, the resubmitted task can only be assessed as Pass or Fail.

14.3.3 In the case of Contract Cheating, when an allegation is found to be proven on the balance of probabilities, it is deemed Category 2 and the minimum penalty that can be applied to the student is (g) Suspension.

14.4 Imposing a penalty of suspension or expulsion

14.4.1 If the determination is to impose a penalty of Suspension or Expulsion, the Academic Lead/Investigator makes a request in writing to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic), including a copy of the Student Academic Misconduct Details Form accompanied by a rationale for imposing the proposed penalty and in the case of Suspension, details of any conditions that would need to be completed prior to readmission.

14.4.2 For information on readmission after Suspension or Expulsion, refer to the University's Admissions - Procedures (Section 23).

15. Feedback to the Course Coordinator

In the case of an assessment task that results in significant incidents of student academic misconduct, the Academic Lead/Investigator may recommend that the Course Coordinator review the design of the task with a C-SALT Academic Developer.

16. Recordkeeping

16.1 All relevant records of investigations, for cases both proven and not proven, are captured in an approved records management system. Each record (e.g. letter, email, form, text-matching report) must be added digitally to the official file, and where physical records exist, these must be forwarded to Information Management Services.

16.2 As per information security set out in the Information and Records Management- Procedures, Student Academic Misconduct information and records are classified as confidential. This means that the information is intended strictly for distribution or use by a select group. Access requests are managed by the Integrity and Compliance Unit, and approval is authorised by the Director, C-SALT. The Integrity and Compliance Unit will notify the relevant system administrators of any changes to staff access.

16.3 The data collected in the University's records management system includes:

- student's name and ID
- form of misconduct (cheating, collusion, plagiarism, other)
- category of student academic misconduct (1 or 2)
- course(s) in which the misconduct occurred (separate entry for each course)
- Course Coordinator
- brief description of the case
- location
- teaching period and year
- the determination- the name of the Academic Lead/Investigator and/or decision maker and date of the determination.

17. Student academic misconduct and student privacy

The student Privacy Statement and Enrolment Declaration provides the University with the student's consent to disclose student information in the context of student academic misconduct (and specifically in relation to reports of student academic misconduct sent to students where other students may be identified in the report).

A flowchart, staff guidelines, forms and templates are available on MyUSC (staff login required).

END

Schedule 1- Types of student academic misconduct

As per Section 6.2 of the Student Academic Integrity - Governing Policy, academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- (a) plagiarism, including using another's expression or ideas without appropriate acknowledgement; or submitting previously assessed work, which is known as 'self-plagiarism'
- (b) collusion, including giving, swapping or providing for sale, one's own work, or undertaking work for someone else (including sitting an exam or otherwise completing an assessment item for someone else, regardless of whether or not there was an exchange of money for the service);
- (c) cheating, including in examinations or by accessing restricted assessment materials; or submitting work undertaken by someone else and claiming it as one's own work, which is known as 'contract cheating';
- (d) academic fraud, including falsification or fabrication of data or work; or in any other way participating in activities which are intended to give the student an unfair or dishonest advantage in their learning activities, assessment or research.

The following provides examples of student academic misconduct under the four categories above:

usc.edu.au/policy

Types of Misconduct

Plagiarism

Presenting the thoughts, words, phrases or works of another as one's own, by:

- copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment
- using another's expression or ideas without appropriate recognition or due acknowledgement (e.g. by failure to use an academic referencing system)

Self-Plagiarism

Submitting assessment work that has been assessed previously and counted towards completion of another course.

Collusion

Jointly undertaking the whole or part of work that is to be presented for assessment in the knowledge that each student will claim that the work is wholly their own work.

Encouraging and assisting a student in committing, or in attempting to commit student academic misconduct by, for example:

- enabling the student to copy answers produced during an examination;
- providing the student with a copy of work which was completed by themselves or another student on the same or a similar assessment task;
- making available assessment items (for example essays, assignment answers, presentations) for use by others, whether for sale or otherwise.

Cheating

During an examination:

- taking unauthorised materials into an examination;
- communicating with other students undertaking the examination;
- reading or copying the answers of another student undertaking the same examination;
- failing to start or stop writing at the appropriate times, as directed by the examination supervisor or invigilator.

Contract Cheating

Engaging another party, whether paid or unpaid, to produce an assessment piece. Contract cheating could involve a student purchasing an assessment item online, engaging an online company to write a custom assessment piece, or asking a friend or family member to produce an assessment piece.

Academic Fraud

Falsification or fabrication of data

Altering data, or creating spurious data, obtained from experiments, interviews, surveys, or similar activities.

Misrepresentation

Participating in actions that are intended to give a student an unfair or dishonest advantage in learning activities and assessment, including but not limited to, purchasing, commissioning or exchanging assessment items.

Accessing restricted assessment-related material

Acquiring, attempting to acquire, possessing, or distributing (either physically, electronically or orally) restricted assessment-related material or information, such as examination questions or an examination question paper, without the prior authorisation of the relevant Course Coordinator.

Impersonation

Falsely representing another student in an examination or other assessment activity (e.g. undertaking an examination or a work placement for another student);

or making arrangements for another person to falsely represent himself or herself as someone else for the purpose of undertaking an examination or other assessment activity.

Non-compliance

Failure to comply with legal requirements or University policies and procedures, e.g. breaching code on ethical treatment of animals, surveying people without approved ethics clearance, etc.

END of Schedule 1

RELATED DOCUMENTS

[Administration of Central Examinations - Procedures](#)
[Data Management - Procedures](#)
[Disposal of Digitised Records - Procedures](#)
[Information and Records Management - Procedures](#)
[Information Management Framework - Governing Policy](#)
[Student Academic Integrity - Governing Policy](#)
[Student Grievance Resolution - Governing Policy](#)
[Student Review and Appeals - Procedures](#)

LINKED DOCUMENTS

[Student Academic Integrity - Governing Policy](#)

RELATED LEGISLATION / STANDARDS

[Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2015](#)