AUSTRALIAN COLLEGE
EXPANDING YOUR HORIZONS

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Academic Integrity and Conduct Policy

Scope

This policy applies to students and staff of Australian College, hereby referred to as 'the College'.

Specifically, this policy applies to both current and former students. It also applies to situations where a person has evidence that suggests a student may have engaged in Academic or Non-Academic Misconduct.

Purpose

Australian College is committed to ensuring a positive learning experience for its students. We aim to provide a learning environment that fosters the qualities of independent learning and academic integrity.

This policy seeks to encourage ethical conduct and to inform Australian College students and staff about its standards of academic integrity in their work. Students must not cheat in assessment and must ensure that they do not plagiarise.

The Academic Integrity and Conduct Policy provides:

- Information regarding academic integrity and expected student conduct aimed at preventing incidences of Misconduct.
- Principles that underpin the investigation of alleged Misconduct; and
- A fair, equitable and confidential framework for investigating and resolving alleged cases of student Misconduct.

Policy Statement

Australian College has a strong commitment to ensuring and upholding academic integrity as it is important to maintaining the academic quality and academic standing of the College's nationally accredited qualifications.

This policy defines the College's principles and commitment to academic integrity and provides guidelines for investigating breaches of academic integrity amongst students and staff.

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Definitions

Academic Integrity – is 'a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage. From these values flow principles of behaviour that enable academic communities to translate ideals to action'. (International Centre for Academic Integrity, 2014 *https://academicintegrity.org/*)

Academic Misconduct – refers to any form of dishonesty by a student relevant to the student's learning experience at the College which may result in the student gaining an unfair advantage over other students.
Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, including chatbots such as ChatGPT are defined as computer programs that are designed to simulate human intelligence, including but not limited to natural language processing, decision making and the production of content.

Assessment – An assessment refers to any work submitted for appraisal, judgement or evaluation including an examination, assignment or another task.
Ghost writer – A ghost writer is a service provider engaged to write part or all of an assessment for which the student will be credited.

Legitimate Cooperation – refers to authorised methods of cooperative work between students and may include:

- discussion about a subject and/or its materials, or an approach to an assessment task;
- work produced with other students with other students as part of a group exercise or assignment, with acknowledgement of the source and methods used;
- work which incorporates or is based on templates or examples provided by the College, with acknowledgement of the source and methods used.

Misconduct – refers to ither or both (as the context requires) Academic Misconduct or Non-Academic Misconduct.

Non-Academic Misconduct – is any action by a student relating to people or property, which is contrary to the generally accepted standards expected at the College.

Policy

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Australian College values empowerment and growth and expects its students to accept responsibility for their own actions and work performance. Therefore academic misconduct of plagiarism, cheating or collusion, in any form, will not be tolerated.

Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct means seeking to obtain academic advantage by dishonest or unfair means, or knowingly assisting another student in doing so. Academic misconduct may include, but is not limited to:

- plagiarism or assisting another student to commit plagiarism
- cheating
- collusion
- taking unauthorised information, materials or aids into an assessment activity
- falsifying or fabricating information or data
- failing to give accurate acknowledgement to others' works (referencing) when instructed
- tampering or attempting to tamper with assessment items, results or academic records
- discussing practical workplace assessments already undertaken with another student, prior to them undertaking the same assessment activity

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of misrepresenting as one's own original work the ideas, interpretations, words or creative works of another. These include published and unpublished documents, designs, images, photographs computer codes and ideas gained through working in a group. These ideas, interpretations, words or works may be found in print and or electronic media.

Cheating

Cheating is copying; sharing or doing someone else's assessment work such as assessment answers, essays and tests.

Collusion

Collusion occurs when a student uses another student's work without adequately crediting the other student's work whether the other student has given consent or not to use the work or not. Unintentional collusion can arise from group activities, study groups and group based assessments where students are unsure about the boundaries between what Trainers/Assessors consider acceptable group work and collusion.

Common Knowledge

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In every field, there is a body of knowledge and material that has become part of the public domain and which can be drawn on without specific acknowledgement. Common knowledge includes facts that are generally known, such as common facts of history, common sense information, accepted folklore and aphorisms that have been adopted as part of common English language.

As examples, it would not be necessary to reference the following:

- that John Howard was prime minister of Australia (common fact of history)
- that humans need food and water to survive (common sense observation)
- that the "bunyip" is a man-eating Australian animal that lives in in water-holes, swamps and creeks (accepted folklore)

Minimise Instances of Academic Misconduct Plagiarism, Cheating and Collusion

Australian College will foster a culture of responsibility for ones' own actions and work performance in students by:

- ensuring students during assessment processes are provided with direction and feedback regarding academic misconduct matters;
- avoiding group assessment;
- ensuring that the College staff adhere to this policy when investigating and actioning matters if academic misconduct of plagiarism, cheating and/or collusion.

Students are expected to:

- be aware of this policy and its procedures to educate themselves about how to avoid plagiarism, cheating and collusion.
- Attempt assessment activities independently unless the assessment activity requires group work.
- Reference assessment materials when used in the assessment task.
- Avoid placing themselves in situations that could be construed as academic misconduct.

Referencing

Referencing demonstrates that the student has read the issues material or has undertaken their own research in other sources. Failure to reference appropriately is considered unethical academic behaviour and will result in a student's work not being accepted.

Students should understand that assessments submitted for marking must consist of original effort. It is insufficient to simply copy work from other sources and submit it as their own. Work submitted by a student must have an original component. The following are examples of plagiarism where a student intentionally does not acknowledge or reference an author or source.

- Direct copying of paragraphs, sentences, a single sentence or significant parts of a sentence;

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- Direct copying of paragraphs, sentences, a single sentence of significant parts of a sentence with an end reference but without quotation marks around the copied text;
- Copying ideas, concepts, research results, computer codes, statistical tables, designs, images, sounds or text or any combination of these;
- Paraphrasing, summarising or simply rearranging another person's words, ideas, etc, without reference or explanation.
- Offering an idea or interpretation that is not one's own without identifying whose idea or interpretation it is;
- A 'cut and paste' of statements from multiple sources;
- Presenting as independent, work done in collaboration with others;
- Copying or adapting another student's original work into a submitted assessment item;
- Copying or adapting a student's own work submitted in a previous assessment.

Alternatively, there will be instances when a student unintentionally fails to cite sources or to do so adequately.
Careless or inadequate referencing or failure to reference when an assessment task requires it, will be considered poor practice. Where careless referencing is identified, the student will be required to correct the error and resubmit the assessment. When studying with Australian College, students are encouraged to apply the Harvard Referencing System when referencing sources however, other referencing formats such as the NCVER, APA or MLA will be accepted.

Procedures

1. All assessment activities include an Assessment Cover Sheet or other guidance, which includes a declaration of authenticity, which the student is required to acknowledge, as part of the submission process.

2. Students are informed of this policy at the time of enrolment and during the *Orientation Session*, completed online.

3. In case of suspected academic conduct, plagiarism, cheating and collusion, Australian College Trainers/Assessors or staff member will report the incident to the Head of Faculty and/or to the Quality and Compliance Manager, within five (5) working days using the 'Report of Alleged Misconduct' form available on the College's internal share drive 'SharePoint'.
   The Report of Alleged Misconduct contains specific details of the alleged misconduct. This includes the details and position of the person submitting the report, when the alleged misconduct occurred, the nature of the allege misconduct and other information as deemed relevant such as other people involved and any action already taken.

4. The Head of Faculty and/or the Quality and Compliance Manager, will conduct an investigation of the allegation and will notify the student within ten (10) business days of the

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case against them with an opportunity to provide comments on the allegations and may involve an interview with the student or other relevant parties to discuss the allegations and the evidence presented.
Should an interview take place with the student, the student is entitled to be supported by another person (other than a legal professional), but the student must advise the College in writing of the name of the support person prior to the interview. Where the investigation relates to assessment results, the student's results will be withheld until al proceedings relevant to the allegation have been finalised.
Should the student not respond or not make themselves available for the interview within the timeframe, the College will proceed with the investigation in consultation with the Trainer/Assessor and will determine if the academic conduct, plagiarism, cheating and/or collusion has resulted from poor academic practice or was intentional. This preliminary step may involve an informal interview with the student.

5. The Head of Faculty and/or the Quality and Compliance Manager and the Trainer/Assessor will:
    - Consider the extent of the plagiarism (noting that the more extensive the plagiarism, the more likely it was intentional);
    - Review assessment task information and instructions provided to students to determine if adequate information had been given;
    - Identify if the student has been previously warned of plagiarism;
    - Identify if the Student was informed of how to reference materials used to complete assessments;
    - Using licenced and approved Artificial Intelligence (AI) detection tools to identity if assessment tasks have been produced using AI relevant computer programs;
    - Determine whether the student is new to adult vocational education and training (it would be expected that continuing students would be more likely to understand plagiarism and its consequences).

6. If the above factors have been considered and it has been determined that the plagiarism has arisen from poor academic practice, the student will be requested to revise the work and resubmit it for the assessment.

7. If the investigation shows the submitted work is the student's own, support will provided to the student in addressing issues such as correct referencing.

8. If after consideration of the above factors it is determined that the plagiarism was intentional, the student's work will not be accepted.

    The student will be given a formal warning (in writing) by the Head of Faculty or the Quality and Compliance Manager explaining the seriousness of the incident and the consequences if the student is found to plagiarise again.

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9. The student will be given the opportunity to revise the work and resubmit the assessment.

   In some cases, students may be asked to attend an oral examination conducted online (virtually) when the Trainer/Assessor may be able to assess and ensure the student has acquired the knowledge and skills of the subject/unit of competency being alleged to be plagiarised.

10. Any student subject to a determination or penalty in relation to misconduct is entitled to appeal the decision.

    In the event the student feels they are being unfairly treated, they have the right to appeal the process in line with Australian College's *'Complaints and Appeals Handling Policy'.* Such cases will be handled in line with these requirements until the matter is resolved and a final decision made.

11. Confidentiality is to be maintained by all parties during this process.

Penalties for proven Misconduct

One or more of the following penalties or condition may be imposed on the student:

- A formal note to be recorded on the student's file with the College;
- A probationary period to be placed on the student and recorded on the student's file with the College;
- Expulsion from a course of study;
- The exclusion of the student from the College's course permanently or for a period of time, as specified;
- To make good any damage caused by the student to the standing of the College or reputation of a staff member or another student;
- Resubmission of the assessment item or participation in an oral examination;
- A result of 'Not Yet Competent due to Misconduct' is recorded on the student's record, and 'Not Yet Competent' result reported on any public record (such as a 'Record of Results') relating to that assessment item or subject, as relevant;
- In the event that the assessment results have ben finalised and notified, the College may reverse the assessment result (eg. 'Competent' to 'Not Ye Competent');
- If a student has already been awarded a Statement of Attainment, academic record or qualification, the College will recognise that it was issued in error and request the documents to be returned.
- If a student is part of an employer enrolled cohort, the employer may be notified of any confirmed misconduct and the outcome of any process related to that misconduct.

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The determination of the penalty will be communicated in writing to the student by the delegated staff member.

In cases where an expulsion from a course, notwithstanding any rights available to the student under Australian Consumer Law, whether or not a refund is granted is at the discretion of Australian College. A decision will be made in line with Australian College's *Fees and Refund Policy*. If a refund is granted, Australian College may deduct an administration fee from the amount to be refunded, for the time and resources used in providing administrative and other services to the student.

Any staff member found to have wilfully breached this policy may be subject to summary dismissal. Any contractor found to have wilfully breached this policy will be deemed in breach of contract and will not be invited to provide any further services for Australian College.

Responsibilities

Students

- Being aware of this policy and following the outlined procedures
- Understand this policy and procedure and seeking assistance if unsure;
- Take necessary actions to minimize plagiarism such as writing assessment responses using their own words, referencing assessment resources etc.
- Avoid lending completed work to other students of Australian College for any reason.

Administrative and Student Support Staff

- Inform students of this policy and procedures and Australian College's stance on academic misconduct;
- Educate students on methods to avoid plagiarism, cheating and collusion.

Trainers/Assessors

- Be vigilant when marking assessment to identify potential misconduct as outlined in this policy;
- Investigate suspected academic misconduct;
- Report suspected academic misconduct to the Head of Faculty and/or the Quality and Compliance Manager.

Head of Faculty and/or Quality and Compliance Manager

- Investigate allegation of suspected academic misconduct;
- Decide on the consequences of a student's training and enrolment if academic misconduct is confirmed;

CEO

- Makes final decision on appeals where and when the outcome of an appeal is being

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challenged by the student.

Documentation

The details relating to allegations of misconduct, bot academic and non-academic, will be documented in writing and recorded in the student's individual file. All records of the alleged misconduct will be retained for at least two (20 years from the time the student ceases to be enrolled with the College. The retention time may be longer in the case of an appeals or if the student is enrolled under a funded training program, such as Smart and Skilled.

Related Policies and Forms

- Student Handbook
- Orientation Session
- Assessment Policy
- Assessment FAQ's
- Complaints and Appeals Handling Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Fees, Charges and Refunds Policy
- Student Support Policy
- Privacy Policy
- Report of Alleged Misconduct Form

Relevant Legislation and Guidelines

- Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2025

Additional References

- Smart and Skilled Contract Terms and Conditions (current)
- Smart and Skilled Operating Guidelines (current)

Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed annually or amended following continuous improvement strategies implemented by the Australian College.

Version Control and Responsible Officers

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Responsible Officer:		Quality and Compliance Manager
Approved by:		Chief Executive Officer
Next review scheduled:		June 2026
Approved and commenced:		June 2025
Version	**Authored/Reviewed by**	**Brief Description of Changes**
V2.0	Quality and Compliance Manager	Fully rewritten policy. New branding. (July 2023)
V2.1	Quality and Compliance Manager	Reviewed and updated in line with Standards for RTO's 2025 requirements. (June 2025)