



# Academic Integrity Policy

## Purpose

The policy outlines the framework and process that Victorian School of Commerce (VSC) uses to maintain and safeguard academic integrity. It outlines how VSC will address the potential threats to academic integrity through academic misconduct and the measures taken to uphold the highest standards of integrity in accordance with the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*.

## Scope

The policy applies to all students enrolled in any course at VSC and to all staff engaged in teaching, learning, research and other academic activities.

## Definitions

**Academic Board (AB)** – The Board responsible for academic governance at VSC. The AB reports to the Board of Directors on matters of academic activity, and oversees all academic activity associated with teaching and learning, student outcomes, and academic policies.

**Academic Integrity** – refers to ethical academic conduct that upholds the highest principles of honesty, trustworthiness and fairness and that respects the intellectual property rights of others. It 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 behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideals to action” (*International Centre for Academic Integrity, 2014*) TEQSA.

**Academic Misconduct** – occurs when there is a breach of academic integrity and may include cheating, plagiarism, collusion, contract cheating or falsifying of research or other documents in order to gain recognition.

**Academic Staff** – All staff, permanent and casual who are engaged in higher education, teaching and learning and involved in the delivery of education.

**Cheating** – Acting in an unethical manner through copying the work of another, taking unauthorized support into examinations, presenting another’s work as one’s own or any form of collusion with another to gain results in a dishonest way.

**Collusion** – Occurs when two or more students work together on an individual assignment, plagiarise, or give each other an assignment to copy and engage in academic misconduct. It is presented in such a way as to be claimed as one’s own when it is the work of another.

**Contract Cheating** – Submitting a task or assignment as one’s own when it has been written or purchased from another – whether that be another student, a commercial site or a business.

**Copying** – Reproducing and submitting the work of another student with or without their knowledge. If a student fails to take reasonable precautions to prevent their own original work from being copied, this may also be considered an offence (INQAAHE)



**Copyright** – is defined in Australia as the legally enforceable rights of creators of creative and artistic works and is governed by the Australian Copyright Act (1968). Copying or sharing must only be for educational purposes and must be attributed – this is allowed under the *Statutory Education License* dealt with under Division 4 of Part IVA of the *Copyright Act 1968*.

**Data Fabrication and Falsification** – Manipulating or inventing data with the intent of supporting false inclusions, including manipulating images. (INQAAHE)

**Impersonation** – Falsely presenting oneself, or engaging someone else to present as oneself, in an in-person examination. (INQAAHE)

**Plagiarism** – the act of presenting scholarship, assignments or work as one's own when it has been taken from another, and the original source has not been acknowledged. When a student submits their own work on multiple occasions this is known as self-plagiarism.

## Policy

VSC upholds that academic integrity is essential in the work of higher education and is vital to the teaching and learning of the Institute. VSC uses clear educative approaches to communicate to its students and academic/teaching staff the requirements of academic integrity and also explain that any failure to maintain academic integrity is considered as academic misconduct and will be dealt with accordingly.

All Staff and students are expected to act in an honest and ethical manner in their endeavours. “Scholarly communities flourish when community members “live” the fundamental values...Academic communities of integrity advance the quest for truth and knowledge through intellectual and personal honesty in learning, teaching, research, and service” (*The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity*, (Fishman,(ed)).

Academic integrity is embedded in all aspects of the curriculum. Staff are expected to act as role models for students in learning, teaching and research. The Institute takes an educative approach to academic integrity and provides staff and students information relating both to academic integrity and to breaches of it which constitute academic misconduct.

In addition, freedom of intellectual inquiry is also valued (*Freedom of Intellectual Inquiry Policy*). However, all staff and students must uphold the highest principles of academic integrity in their pursuit of knowledge and research. (*See Code of Conduct*)

Any breach of academic integrity is a serious threat to academic integrity and impact negatively on the education and training provided by VSC, and as such VSC will not tolerate any breaches. Such breaches will be investigated in accordance with the *Academic Integrity Procedure*.

### Academic Freedom

At VSC Academic Freedom includes the rights of all students and staff to:

- Pursue both responsible and critical open inquiry for the purpose of teaching, designing curricula, writing assignments all in accord with the highest ethical, legal and professional standards.



- Promote academic integrity in the design and development of its courses, and through its learning experiences and activities, enable students to demonstrate honest academic practices as they progress through the course.
- Uphold the VSC's *Quality Assurance Framework* in accordance with the *Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021*, Domain 5.2
- Encourage staff and students in maintaining academic integrity and discouraging any breach of this.
- Encourage and disseminate outcomes of vigorous debate and open inquiry.

*See Freedom of Intellectual Inquiry Policy*

### **Breaches of Academic Integrity**

Breaches of academic integrity include but are not limited to:

**Plagiarism** – the use of another person's intellectual output, presented without appropriate acknowledgement and which creates the impression that the work is one's own. Examples of plagiarism may include:

- Presenting someone else's work or research data as your own work.
- Copying parts of any work without acknowledging its source including some of the following:
  - Written texts (verbatim or paraphrasing)
  - Diagrams
  - Formulae
  - Sound files
  - Photographs
  - Audio-visual material
  - Graphics
  - Computer-based material
  - Mathematical proofs
  - Art or artefacts.
- “Washing” techniques which are used to disguise plagiarism, such as using a translation service to translate a plagiarised work into another language and then back into English, disguising that it has been plagiarised.

**Cheating and Contract Cheating** – a dishonest attempt to gain unfair advantage when submitting work and may or may not include payment to another party. Examples may include:

- Ghost writing – writing under the name of another person
- “recycling” work such as resubmission of work that has been previously submitted for another assessment
- Paying someone to complete work on your behalf, such as using an essay agency or friends
- Other forms of bribery
- Falsifying information
- Falsifying experimental data or observations



- Fabricating data used in an assessment
- Fabricating references

Refer to the document that TEQSA has provided its *Good Practice Note: Addressing Contract Cheating to Safeguard Academic Integrity (2017)*

**Collusion** – submitting work where there has been unauthorised collaboration with other students and then passing it off as one's own work. Examples may include:

- Allowing another student to copy your work
- Sharing answers with another
- Asking someone to write or substantially edit (not proofread) the work
- Offering to complete work for another

**Falsifying Information** – which may include:

- Providing incorrect or misleading statements about your academic qualifications
- Inventing or distorting data which you are using to support an argument
- Falsifying your identity or allowing someone else to falsely claim to be you

See *Academic Integrity Procedure* for processes for dealing with breaches of Academic Integrity.

### **Prevention or Mitigation of Academic Misconduct**

VSC will take actions to mitigate risks in relation to academic integrity including a range of preventative measures that take into account the student life cycle from (pre)admission through to graduation. Students, teachers, and academic integrity decision-makers are not the only stakeholders of academic integrity. Librarians, Student Welfare and Support Officers, Counsellors and other support staff all need to be informed about academic integrity.

Central to preventing academic misconduct VSC will take following actions to mitigate foreseeable risk to academic integrity:

- Educate and have clear communication. VSC is obliged to communicate its *Academic Integrity Policy* to all members of staff, those enrolled at VSC, and to any partnering institutions or individuals.
- Ensure students are fully informed of any activity that may be constituted as academic misconduct (See *Academic Integrity Procedure*)
- Design and develop assessment tasks that minimises the opportunity for academic misconduct.
- Communicate that violation of the Policy will be considered as Academic misconduct and will be treated accordingly.
- Develop teaching and learning activities and academic skills that support students in the achievement of good academic practice.
- Being accessible to students for learning help and support.



- Provide academic skills workshops during orientation and throughout the semester on the academic integrity standards that VSC expects.
- Communicate assessment requirements to students through task instructions; scaffolding, interactive discussions and assessment or marking rubrics to assist them in developing a clear understanding.
- providing constructive, meaningful and timely feedback for each student.
- Have an applied system of procedures and penalties for breaches of academic integrity (See *Academic Integrity Procedure*)
- Ensure that VSC academic staff are trained in detecting breaches such as cheating, plagiarism and collusion
- Have an ongoing review and monitoring system of courses to minimise the risk of academic misconduct.

### Assessment Submission

In submitting assignments, tests, and reports, whether electronically or by hard copy, students are required to declare that the assessment item submitted is entirely their own work and where they use or make reference to the work of others, that this is acknowledged.

### Responsibilities

**Board of Directors** – As part of its governance the Board is responsible for the monitoring of academic integrity and be able to demonstrate that these accountabilities are being met (HES 6.2). The Board will keep the evidence required to demonstrate how they are keeping abreast of any occurrences of academic misconduct, serious complaints or critical incidents (6.2.1 j & k)

**Academic Board** – As the Academic Board sets the institutional guidelines for education, they are responsible for ensuring the principles and practice of academic integrity are maintained, and will establish and maintain appropriate procedures to oversee and monitor the implementation of this policy and principles of academic integrity. (HES 5.2 and 7.3)

**The Dean** – will promote to all higher education staff and students the principles set out in this policy and in the Academic Integrity Procedure. The Dean will maintain the Academic Misconduct Register ensuring that all incidents or allegations of incidents are recorded fairly and objectively and reported to the Board of Directors through the Academic Board. The outcomes of any accusations of plagiarism, cheating, collusion or other forms of academic misconduct will also be recorded in the Academic Misconduct Register.

**Learning and Teaching Committee** – Be responsible for the implementation of the Policies and Procedures for Academic Integrity and misconduct. Be responsible for any reports of breaches, evidence of how it was proven and how it was dealt with. The LTC are responsible for close review and monitoring of its courses to ensure mitigation and prevention of any further academic misconduct. They may also be part of the Internal review process if academic misconduct is reported.

**Academic Staff** – The academic staff will maintain the highest ethical standards of academic integrity as a model for students in their teaching, teaching materials and classes. They will promote



and encourage the principles and values of academic integrity and educate their students in its importance.

If there is a concern of academic misconduct they will first discuss with, guide and mentor the student and notify them of possible breach or misconduct. If found they will report the occurrence to the Dean and follow the procedures outlined.

Academic Staff will ensure students are aware of plagiarism detection software and how to use it.

Academic Integrity is essential to excellence in all VSC's teaching, learning and research endeavours and any misconduct will be addressed in a fair, consistent and timely manner (See the *Academic Integrity Procedure*).

This Policy is closely linked to all Related Policies listed below and all Staff need to be familiar with these linkages.

Also refer to: [2019 TEQSA academic integrity workshop recording, slides, and resources](#)

## Related policy instruments

*Academic Integrity Procedure*

*Academic Progression and At-Risk Policy*

*Assessment and Moderation Policy*

*Code of Conduct*

*Course Creation and Development Policy*

*Course Review and Quality Assurance Policy*

*Board Charter – Terms of Reference*

*External Referencing Policy*

*Freedom of Intellectual Inquiry Policy*

*Professional Development Policy*

*Risk Management Policy*

*Scholarly Activity Policy*

*Staff Complaints and Appeals Policy*

*Staff Complaints and Appeals Procedure*

*Student Complaints and Appeals Policy*

*Student Complaints and Appeals Procedure*

*Student Orientation Policy*

*Student Orientation Procedure*

*Teaching and Learning Policy*

*Terms of Reference (Academic Board)*

*Terms of Reference (Learning and Teaching Committee)*

*Terms of Reference (Course Advisory Committee)*



## Related documents and legislation

*Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021– [Domain 5 Institutional Quality Assurance]*

*Australian Copyright Act 1968*

*Intellectual Property and Copyright Policy – Victorian State Government – Education and Training.*

*International Centre for Academic Integrity 2014.*

*International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Toolkit to support quality assurance agencies to address academic integrity and contract cheating – June 2020*

*The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity, (Fishman T. (ed).1999)*

*TEQSA, Good Practice Note: Addressing contract cheating to safeguard academic integrity (2017)*

*TEQSA Guidance Note: Academic Integrity (Beta Version October 2017)*

## Administration

### Revision History

Version	Approval date	Approval body	Review date
0.1	1/05/2020	Academic Board	
0.2	26/06/2020	Academic Board	
0.3	7/08/2020	Academic Board	
1.0	2/06/2021	Academic Board	30/06/2022