Staff Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure

Associated information

Approving body	Academic Board
Date approved	17 Apr 2025
Date of effect	Commencement of operation
Next scheduled review	Three years from when policy commences
Policy owner	Academic Dean
Policy contact	Academic Dean
Related Documents	Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure Academic Freedom Policy Human Resource Management Policy and Procedure Intellectual Property Policy and Procedure Quality Assurance Framework Records and Data Management Policy and Procedure Staff Code of Conduct Learning and Teaching Plan ICT and Cyber Security Management Policy and Procedure TEQSA Understanding Academic Integrity
Higher Education Standards Framework (HESF) 2021 (Cth)	Standard 3.2 Standard 5.2 Standard 6.1 Standard 6.2 Standard 6.3 Standard 7.2 Standard 7.3

Purpose

1. This document outlines the approach of **Zenith Innovation Institute** (**Zenith / the Institute**) to staff academic integrity. This Policy and Procedure defines academic integrity and categories of academic misconduct and provides guidance for identifying, preventing, and responding to instances of academic misconduct pertaining to staff.

2. For academic integrity pertaining to Zenith / the Institute students, please refer to the Student Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure.

Scope

3.   This Policy applies to:

(a)   all academic staff, whether full-time, part-time, sessional or contract;

(b)   academic visitors to the Institute when engaging in any academic work associated with Zenith / the Institute; and

(c)   the full range of academic activities and practices conducted by academic staff, including scholarship and teaching.

Policy

Principles

4.   Zenith / the Institute does not tolerate academic misconduct and expects students and academic staff to observe the highest ethical standards in all academic endeavours.

5.   Academic staff play a key role in cultivating scholarly practices.

6.   Where the academic integrity of staff work is in question, Zenith / the Institute will follow a consistent process of investigation to ensure procedural fairness is afforded in all processes.

7.   Academic staff will be informed of their rights and the process for investigating the alleged academic breach.

8.   Where academic misconduct is established, Zenith / the Institute will apply appropriate responses and/or penalties.

9.   Academic integrity will be maintained in higher education arrangements with any other party involved with the Institute, including scholarship informing learning and teaching practices.

10.   Zenith / the Institute will utilise resources TEQSA has developed to help strengthen academic integrity at Australian higher education institutions.[1]

11.   All information associated with reports, investigations and outcomes associated with individual instances of academic misconduct are confidential and will be treated as per the confidentiality policy.

Approach

12.   Zenith / the Institute adopts a risk-based approach to academic integrity. As illustrated at Figure 1, key strategies for managing academic integrity risk include:

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[1] https://www.teqsa.gov.au/students/understanding-academic-integrity/what-academic-integrity

Figure 1 | Approach to Academic Integrity
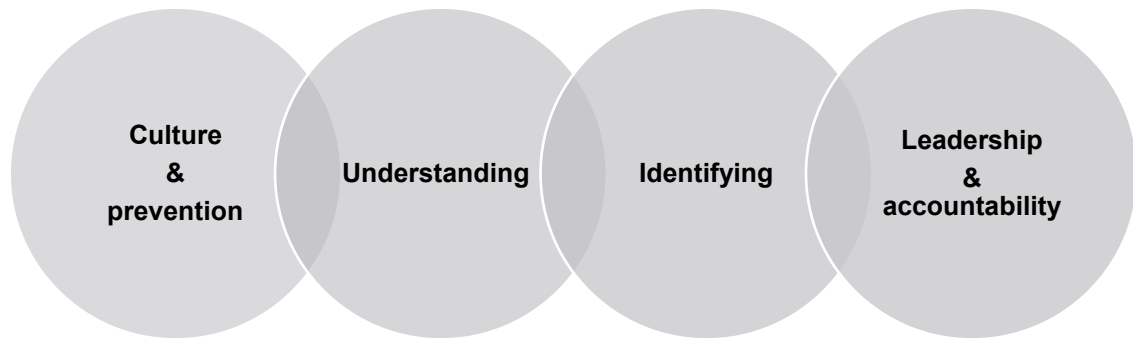
Culture and prevention: Fostering a culture of academic integrity through a process of awareness, training, external referencing including benchmarking, and monitoring of trends.

Understanding: Academic integrity risk factors that facilitate or contribute to breaches of academic integrity is maintained.

Identifying: Academic staff can identify current and emerging trends that present a risk to academic integrity.

Leadership and accountability: Senior staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to academic integrity.

Defining academic misconduct as it applies to staff

13.   Any breach of the principles of academic integrity constitutes academic misconduct.

14.   Academic misconduct by staff may be characterised by, but not limited to the following:

(a)   disseminating false or dishonest information in relation to the performance (academic, teaching or scholarship) of other scholars and students;

(b)   biased marking of assessments;

(c)   plagiarising or presenting the thoughts, words, phrases or works of another as one's own, by:

(i)   failing to or incorrectly acknowledging text, images, videos and other artefacts sourced from others in teaching materials, works of scholarship or research outputs;

(ii)   copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment in teaching materials, works of scholarship or research outputs;

(iii)   using another's expression or ideas without appropriate recognition or due acknowledgement (e.g. by failure to use an academic referencing system) in teaching materials, works of scholarship or research outputs; and

(iv)   falsifying, fabricating or tampering with data or records obtained from experiments, interviews, surveys, or similar activities in works of scholarship or research outputs;

(d)   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; and

(e)   offering or accepting bribes in relation to academic conduct.

Categories of staff academic misconduct

15.   Allegations of staff academic misconduct will be classified into minor or major misconduct based on a number of criteria:

(a)   the type of misconduct;

(b)   the extent of the misconduct;

(c)   the experience of the person;

(d)   the intent of the misconduct; and

(e)   the impact of the misconduct.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and automation tools

16.   Zenith / the Institute is aware of the risks and opportunities that emerging 'artificial intelligence' (**AI**) tools present to higher education. The Institute will consider the implications of AI throughout its academic processes and take action to mitigate risk to academic integrity.

Opportunities and risks presented by emerging technologies	
Opportunities	**Risks**
AI may be capable of generating large quantities of outputs that may be used to inform academic outputs including scholarly activities.	Approaches to use of and regulation of AI may vary by discipline e.g., text and non-text-based content generated through AI. This may impact determining validity and authenticity of the output.
AI may be able to be used to increase the output of academic staff and allow them to take on more complex outputs (i.e. scholarly activity) through the automation of menial tasks.	This may impact determining validity and authenticity of the output.
The use of AI is not limited to education settings, and may become increasingly adopted by workplaces globally. Therefore, developing an understanding of effective and ethical use of AI tools may become a quality sought by prospective employers.	On completion of an academic output (i.e. scholarly activity), staff may not be able to authentically demonstrate the gaining new or improved understanding, appreciation and insights into a field of knowledge, be able to engage with or keep up to date with advances in the field.
AI could be used to generate lists of concepts or authors worth exploring of arbitrary length for the purposes of research or wide reading on a research topic. However, it is important	Academic or research integrity may be adversely affected or misconduct may occur if preventative action is not taken to mitigate foreseeable risks. Preventative actions

Opportunities and risks presented by emerging technologies	
Opportunities	**Risks**
to be aware that AI may not always be accurate in citing literature.	include providing staff guidance on what constitutes appropriate conduct.

Procedure

Establishing | Reporting, assessment and determination

Establishing → Penalties → Appeals
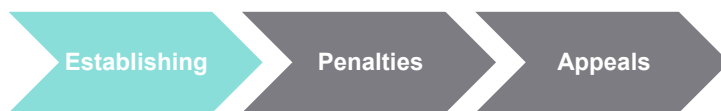
Reporting, assessment and determination of allegations

17.   Where academic misconduct is suspected, an immediate report of the alleged incident, together with accompanying evidence must be made to the Academic Dean, who will make a preliminary assessment of the allegation within 10 working days.

18.   Based on the information and evidence, the Academic Dean will conduct a preliminary investigation to determine whether there is:

   (a)   no case to answer, in which case, a record of the reasons for this must be maintained; or

   (b)   sufficient evidence to warrant further investigation.

19.   Where further inquiry is warranted the Academic will:

   (a)   notify the staff member against whom the allegation has been made (the **Respondent**) and the Chair of Academic Board; and

   (b)   appoint an independent investigator with sufficient academic seniority and expertise provide them with copies of all relevant documentation.

20.   Within 20 working days of being appointed the investigator will:

   (a)   review all relevant documentation;

   (b)   gather any additional evidence and conduct interviews as required; and

   (c)   provide a report on the findings to Academic Dean.

21.   Within five working days of receipt of the investigator's findings, the Academic Dean will advise the Respondent of the outcome.

22.   Where the finding is:

   (a)   in favour of the Respondent the matter will be deemed closed, the Chair of Academic Board will be advised, and all records will be filed; and

   (b)   of a possible minor or major offence, the Respondent has the right of reply in writing to the Academic Dean within 10 working days of receipt of the findings.

23. Where the Respondent:

    (a)   does not invoke the right of reply, the Academic Dean will advise the Chair of Academic Board to initiate action in the form of an appropriate penalty; and

    (b)   pursues the right or reply, the Chair of Academic Board will review all records pertaining to the allegation and provide a review report within 20 working days of receipt of the reply from the Respondent.

24. Within five working days of receipt of the review report the Academic Dean will advise the Respondent of the outcome.

25. Where the outcome of the review report is:

    (a)   in favour of the Respondent the matter will be deemed closed, the Academic Dean will be advised, and all records filed; and

    (b)   to uphold the original decision in relation to a minor or major offence the Respondent is advised of the outcome and their right of appeal under the appeal provisions of the relevant industrial award.

26. Where the Respondent does not exercise their right of appeal the Academic Dean is advised of the final outcome and authorises the initiation of all required action in the form of an appropriate penalty.

Staff | Penalty determination

Establishing → Penalties → Appeals
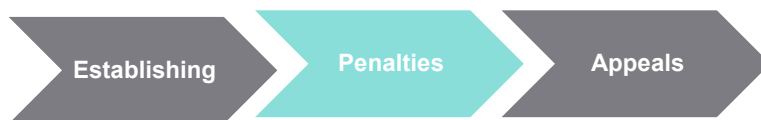
Determination of penalties

27. In determining the penalty for proven academic misconduct, the following circumstances are required to be taken into consideration:

    (a)   whether the person is relatively inexperienced;

    (b)   whether the person has a history of academic misconduct;

    (c)   any admissions by the particular person in relation to the misconduct;

    (d)   the nature and extent of the misconduct;

    (e)   whether the misconduct was a deliberate act of deception or cheating; and

    (f)   the extent to which the misconduct approximates an offence in the wider community that under law might lead to legal proceedings, e.g. theft, fraud, mis-appropriation of funds or false representation.

28. Where appropriate, disciplinary and/or termination proceedings may be implemented for proven academic misconduct, in accordance with the *Human Resource Management Framework* and the relevant industrial award.

Staff Grievances and Appeals

Establishing → Penalties → **Appeals**

29.   Staff dissatisfied with any action or outcome associated with this Policy may lodge a grievance under the relevant provisions of the *Human Resource Management Framework*.

Research misconduct

30.   Staff who conduct their own individual research as part of scholarly activity, or through enrolment in a higher degree by research, are expected to observe the standards of ethical and responsible conduct outlined in the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*.

31.   Any breaches of the Code (allegations of research misconduct) will be managed by the CEO and Academic Dean, or the Chair of the Governing Board (GB), as appropriate, according to the NHRMC *Guide to Managing and Investigating Potential Breaches*.

Responsibilities

Responsibility	Description
Academic Board	The Academic Board is responsible for: • overall monitoring of academic integrity at Zenith / the Institute and reporting to the Governing Board (**GB**) on breaches to academic integrity, with the parties involved de-identified to protect their privacy.

Academic Dean	The Academic Dean is responsible for:
	
	• general oversight of academic integrity matters at Zenith / the Institute, including the ethical use of AI tools;
	
	• reporting staff academic integrity matters to the AB. This report will de-identify parties involved; and
	
	• in relation to allegations of staff academic misconduct:
	
	   o making initial determinations as to whether an allegation has substance;
	
	   o appointing an investigator where an allegation appears to have substance;
	
	   o communicating outcomes at various stages of an investigation and review to the respondent and designated officers; and
	
	   o authorising the initiation of appropriate actions and penalties following the exhaustion of any relevant appeal processes.

Academic staff	Academic staff are responsible for:

Responsibility	Description
	- observing the principles of academic integrity in all their scholarship and teaching - reporting instances of potential academic misconduct in fellow staff.
Chair of the Governing Board (GB)	In the event of allegations that present a potential or perceived conflict of interest, the Chair of the Board may conduct a preliminary internal investigation.

Definitions

32.   For the purposes of this document, the following terms are defined as follows:

Term	Definition
Academic integrity	The ethical practice of academic activities centred on a commitment to values such as honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.
Academic misconduct	Breach of academic integrity and includes: - misrepresentation; - fabrication; - plagiarism; - dissemination of false or dishonest information in relation to the performance (academic, teaching or scholarship) of other scholars or students; - misuse of intellectual property; - biased marking of assessments (staff only); and - using Artificial Intelligence (**AI**) tools
Artificial Intelligence tools	Artificial Intelligence (AI) whereby the simulation of human intelligence processes by machines, especially computer systems are used as generators. AI tools such as text, paper and other medium generators without appropriate attribution producing non-genuine work.
Plagiarism	Intentionally or unintentionally using the work of another person, copying (in whole or in part) the work or data of another person, paraphrasing closely or presenting substantial extracts from written, printed, electronic or other media without due acknowledgment. Failing to or incorrectly acknowledging text, images, videos and other artefacts sourced from others in teaching materials, works of scholarship or research outputs. Copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment in teaching materials, works of scholarship or research outputs.

Term	Definition
	Using another's expression or ideas without appropriate recognition or due acknowledgement (e.g. by failure to use an academic referencing system) in teaching materials, works of scholarship or research outputs.
	Falsifying or fabricating data obtained from experiments, interviews, surveys, or similar activities in works of scholarship or research outputs.

Version control

Version	Changes	Approval Body	Approval Date
1.0	Original Version	Academic Board	17 Apr 2025