A4.0 Academic Integrity Policy

1. Context

A key objective of Torrens University Australia is to foster integrity in the pursuit of knowledge and to produce graduates with a strong sense of professional ethics. It is the shared responsibility of the whole University community to create an intellectual environment where academic honesty, critical judgment, and independent scholarly learning are well understood and highly valued. Students have an obligation to work independently in examinations and apply scholarly academic conventions for evidence-based writing in all assessment tasks. Teaching staff have an obligation to educate their students in studying ethically and understanding the policies that govern academic integrity. Any form of cheating, plagiarism or collusion, or other forms of dishonesty, devalues the quality of student learning and undermines the academic standards of the University. There are serious consequences for students who do not act honestly and with integrity during their studies.

2. Definitions

**Academic integrity:** is a commitment to the embodiment of the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility in scholarship.

**Academic Misconduct Register:** is a register maintained by the Manager, Student Administration of all substantiated acts of cheating, collusion or plagiarism, including the name of the student, the nature of the dishonesty, whether the dishonesty was due to a misunderstanding, and the penalty imposed.

**Course Profile:** is a detailed description of a course provided to each enrolled student which includes course aims and learning objectives, assessment tasks and due dates, teaching staff contact details, course structure, and relevant University policies and procedures.
3. Scope

This Policy applies to all coursework students enrolled in one or more courses at Torrens University Australia and to all staff involved in the assessment of coursework students.

Academic honesty and integrity by higher degree research students are dealt with under the Research Code of Conduct.

4. Principles

This Policy reflects the following principles:

- academic honesty and integrity in assessment practices are fundamental to the nature of learning and quality at university level;
- all students and staff have an obligation to respect the rules and practice of academic honesty and integrity and uphold the high academic standards of the University;
- students will be provided with induction, and on-going guidance and support in understanding academic conventions and the requirement for independent learning;
- the procedures for addressing academic dishonesty will be applied fairly and consistently and will take into account intentionality, and any history a student has in breaching this Policy;
- current best practice will inform the regular review of this Policy and related procedures.

5. Academic dishonesty

Academic dishonesty takes place when students act dishonestly in an assessment task or examination in order to gain an unfair advantage for themselves or other students. Acts of academic dishonesty are considered to be misconduct as defined by the Student Misconduct Policy and breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy may be dealt with under the Student Misconduct Procedures.

Examples of academic dishonesty include:

5.1 Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when a student submits work for assessment which includes the words or ideas of others without appropriate attribution or reference to the original author. Students must make themselves aware of acceptable referencing practices as plagiarism is considered a serious breach of academic integrity principles. Some examples of plagiarism are:

- direct copying of sentences, paragraphs or other extracts from someone else’s work without appropriate acknowledgement. Such work includes published or unpublished documents, designs, sounds, images, photographs and films, data, and computer code;
- paraphrasing someone else’s work without acknowledgement by way of reference to the original work; and
- using facts, information and ideas directly derived from an identifiable source without acknowledging the source.

5.2 Cheating in examinations

Cheating in an examination includes any action or attempted action designed to gain an unfair or dishonest academic advantage. For example, cheating occurs when students:
• have access to unauthorised material during the examination;
• sit an examination on behalf of another student or permit another student to sit an examination on their behalf;
• read, copy from or otherwise use another student’s work, or knowingly allow another student to read, copy or otherwise use their work in an examination;
• assist any other student in an examination, either directly or indirectly;
• accept assistance from any person during an examination other than the examination supervisor.

The University’s Examination Procedures includes information about the conduct expected of students in examinations.

5.3 Collusion

Collusion occurs when there is unauthorised collaboration in the preparation and production of work for assessment which is presented as a student’s own individual effort. Collusion includes:

• inappropriately assisting other students in the production of an assessment task;
• accepting inappropriate assistance in the production of an assessment task;
• submitting work which is the same, or substantially the same, as another student’s piece of work for the same assessment task; and
• assisting another student to plagiarise material or cheat in an examination.

5.4 Other forms of academic dishonesty

There are many ways in which a student might attempt to deliberately gain an unfair advantage by dishonest means. Some examples are:

• submitting fabricated or falsified data as if they were genuine;
• inventing references, quotes or sources;
• submitting the same, or substantially the same piece of work for assessment in two or more different courses;
• buying an essay from the Internet or another student and submitting it as their own work; and
• falsely indicating attendance at an activity when attendance is an assessment requirement.

6. Responsibilities of students and staff

In general, student must maintain the highest standards of honesty in all aspects of their scholarly endeavours in order to preserve the value and quality of their learning. They must not submit another person’s work as their own, or submit work created with the assistance of others unless collaborative work is expressly allowed. All students must learn and observe the accepted academic referencing and other academic requirements of their field/s of study. The Academic Integrity Guidelines for Students provides advice on how to avoid unintentional breaches of this Policy.

Staff who assess students’ work have a responsibility to educate students in appropriate referencing techniques and clearly explain what constitutes plagiarism, collusion and other forms of cheating. The Course Profile for each course must inform students about the extent to which a piece of assessment may be collaborative, and set appropriate conditions and assessment guidelines for
group work. The Academic Integrity Guidelines for Staff provides good practice information for staff in carrying out these responsibilities.

7. Allegations and penalties for academic dishonesty

All allegations of academic dishonesty will be investigated, and may be penalised if substantiated, according to the Academic Integrity Procedures or the University’s Student Misconduct Policy and Student Misconduct Procedures. In any case where the conduct of the student constituting the alleged breach prejudices the interests of other students or the integrity of the assessment scheme itself, the conduct will be referred for action under the Student Misconduct Policy.

7.1 Unintentional academic dishonesty

A first-time substantiated breach of this Policy that is determined to be the result of a genuine misunderstanding by the student will be recorded, along with any penalties imposed, on the Academic Misconduct Register. The consequences for unintentional academic dishonesty may include:

- a deduction of marks; or
- a requirement that the student re-write the assessment task or sit a supplementary examination.

The student will also receive a written warning that further breaches of this Policy will not be treated as a result of a misunderstanding.

7.2 Intentional academic dishonesty

A first-time substantiated breach of this Policy that is determined not to be the result of a genuine misunderstanding will be recorded, along with penalties imposed, on the Academic Misconduct Register.

The penalty for the first breach of this Policy when the breach is not a result of a genuine misunderstanding is normally a mark of zero for the assessment task.

7.3 Second and subsequent breaches

A second substantiated breach of this Policy would normally result in a mark of zero for the assessment task and a fail in the course, with the breach and the outcomes for the student recorded in the Academic Misconduct Register.

For subsequent breaches the same penalties (a mark of zero for the assessment task and a fail in the course) would normally apply. The student will also be referred to the Academic Director for further action under the Student Misconduct Policy which may result in a penalty of suspension or exclusion from the University.

8. Appeals

Students dissatisfied with outcomes and penalties applied under this Policy have access to the appeals process outlined in the Academic Grievance Procedures of the University’s Student Grievance Management Policy.