

STUDENT ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

Policy owner	Education Committee
Policy category	Academic
Policy status	Approved
Approval body	Academic Board
Last amended	8 th May 2023

PURPOSE

MIECAT values excellence in teaching and learning that is achieved in an intellectual environment where academic integrity is highly valued and carefully upheld. Accordingly, in common with tertiary institutions throughout Australia, MIECAT regards academic misconduct as a serious matter. The purpose of this policy is to outline MIECAT's approach to ensuring its students and staff act with integrity in the performance of their academic work. This policy defines academic integrity and various forms of academic misconduct, describes the procedures for investigating allegations of academic misconduct, and outlines consequences that will apply where allegations are proven.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students enrolled in MIECAT accredited courses of study, all MIECAT academic staff and staff involved in the administration of the accredited programs of study. The policy covers both coursework and research programs of study.

POLICY AND PROCEDURES

1. Principles

1.1 Teaching and learning at MIECAT aims to advance the understanding of the integrated flow of knowing, being and values that are constructed in relationship. Work submitted for assessment purposes can be the product of co-construction, but work presented must acknowledge appropriately the intellectual and or practical/experiential work of others that have been party to the collaboration. The pedagogical emphasis is on experiential learning, reflexivity and intersubjective inquiry.

1.2 Academic integrity means acting with the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility in learning, teaching and research. It is important for students, teachers, researchers and all staff to act in an honest way, be responsible for their actions, and show fairness in every part of their work. MIECAT'S values uphold integrity broadly as honesty, transparency, fairness and accountability in all personal behaviour and community practices. MIECAT aims to foster a culture of exemplary academic integrity. A range of programs and information is maintained to educate in academic integrity. These include dissemination of information on what constitutes academic misconduct, information on ethical conduct of research and academic study skills, stated expectations for assessments.

1.3 Academic misconduct is undertaking academic activity, either deliberately or imprudently, that can result in unmerited advantage. It may take several forms including, but not limited to, plagiarism, cheating and collusion as defined below.

1.3.1 Plagiarism

Examples of plagiarism include:

- submission of work in which ideas, words or other work are copied directly or paraphrased from a source, published or unpublished (for example AI, a website, computer program, another student's essay or presentation, a book or journal article, a lecture, a performance piece), and presented as if they are the student's own, without appropriate acknowledgement of the original author;

- recycling i.e. submission of work by a student that has already been assessed in another subject without disclosing that fact;
- unintended failure of a student to appreciate appropriate referencing conventions.

MIECAT distinguishes between plagiarism which has occurred from negligence (minor) and that which is dishonest (major).

Minor plagiarism is defined as uninformed omissions of details, which are minor in nature and by themselves are unlikely to alter the student's overall grade (e.g. omissions of a limited number of referencing details or incorrect referencing details). It is acknowledged that these minor omissions and errors are more likely to occur in the student's initial period of study and are normally due to inexperience or a lack of understanding and could be seen as being predictable. Therefore, responses should be more educative at that time, and in such cases MIECAT staff will work with the student to ensure any breaches do not recur.

Major plagiarism is defined as an attempt to circumvent assessment requirements by drawing on unacknowledged sources in such a way as to improve the grade, strengthen the research project or publish a piece of work.

1.3.2 Cheating

Cheating occurs before, during or after an assessment when a student seeks to obtain an unfair advantage or assist another student to do so. It can include but is not limited to fabricating or falsifying data or inventing references or submitting the same work or recycling work without prior permission of the subject coordinator or research supervisor.

1.3.3 Contract Cheating

Contract cheating involves contracting a third party – paid or unpaid – to prepare or contribute to a research or assessment task or part of assessable work on the student's behalf. It may also involve the person acquiring or commissioning for services related to the preparation of assessable work with the intention to cheat, misrepresent and/or plagiarise. A third party may include: a friend; a family member; a fellow student; a staff member; or commercial services, such as: a tutoring

company; a document sharing website; an editing service; or an assignment writing service, also known as 'ghost writing'.

1.3.4 Solicitation

Solicitation occurs when an individual offers, encourages, induces or advertises for a student to contract, commission, pay, procure, or complete on their behalf, research or assessment tasks and items that are likely to result in their use for the purpose of cheating, misrepresentation and/or plagiarism.

1.3.5 Collusion

Collusion, unlike collaboration, which encompasses positive co-learning, is when two or more candidates/students, or a candidate/student and any other person(s), work together on individual (not group work) assessable work with intent to cheat, plagiarise or engage in academic misconduct.

1.3.6 Other Academic Misconduct

Other forms of academic misconduct may include but are not limited to:

- tampering, or attempting to tamper, with research work, examination papers, class work, grades, class records, or other student documentation;
- acquiring, or attempting to acquire, possessing, or distributing examination materials or information without the approval of the lecturer;
- impersonating another candidate/student, or arranging for anyone to impersonate a candidate/student, in any examination or other assessment task;
- altering group assessment work that has been agreed as final by all participating students prior to submission without the collaborating students' consent;
- use of recorded lectures (audio and/or visual), PowerPoints, or other class notes in a way that infringes another person's privacy or intellectual property rights - for example, by publishing or distributing a recording without permission from the lecturer;
- offering or accepting bribes (money or sexual or other favours) e.g., for admission or for grades or research results;

- fabrication, falsification and misrepresentation of information (including research data and source material);
- not meeting required research standards, including conducting research without ethics approval or conducting research in an unethical manner.

1.4 Disciplinary action for academic misconduct will be taken in accordance with the following principles:

- allegations will be dealt with promptly;
- processes will be transparent and in accordance with procedural fairness;
- penalties will be appropriate and proportionate and may include exclusion from MIECAT;
- judgements of intentionality will be considered in determining any penalty that might be applied;
- confidentiality will be respected and maintained by all parties within the constraints of allegation, investigation and appeal processes, subject to any legal requirements for disclosure;
- anyone accused of academic misconduct can respond and/or appeal decisions, according to the MIECAT Grievance Policy;
- staff involved in misconduct or appeals processes will disclose actual, perceived or potential conflicts of interest as soon as they become aware of them.

2. Procedures

2.1. MIECAT will establish an Academic Misconduct Register that will record warnings and the outcomes of any accusations of plagiarism, cheating, collusion or research misconduct. A student's involvement in academic misconduct will be retained on the register while still enrolled in any course and academic staff will have access to this information when considering any subsequent allegations of academic misconduct. Staff involvement in academic misconduct will be recorded in the MIECAT Staff Academic Misconduct Register and will be available to the appropriate supervisor involved in reviews, appointments or subsequent allegations of misconduct.

2.2 Responsibility of MIECAT

MIECAT recognizes its obligation to educate students in the definition, identification and avoidance of plagiarism. MIECAT as an organization also is aware that different cultures have varied attitudes towards scholarly authority and value student originality differently. Students entering MIECAT will be informed clearly of the academic standards expected in courses and units, and the precise requirements of the required APA referencing style or selected style (in the case of the Professional Doctorate).

MIECAT is committed to the following strategies to reduce the incidence of any academic misconduct:

- Ensure all students are aware of the relevant MIECAT policies
- Teach students skills they need to avoid plagiarism.
- Students will be informed that rigorous standards in referencing and acknowledgment of sources will be required in their academic work
- Attention will be given to the role of reference lists, and full referencing within the body of the assignment
- Academic staff will ensure that their course and unit guides are prepared according to the same high standards of referencing that they demand of students

2.3 MIECAT follows a four-step process in these matters: detect, report, investigate, notify.

2.3.1 When academic misconduct is suspected, a staff member involved in the unit teaching and assessment is required to put the matter to the student, identify specifically the type of misconduct and all details related to the alleged incident and report the matter to the course coordinator. (If it is alleged that an internet site is the source of plagiarism, it would be advisable to print out the material in case the site is changed.)

2.3.2 If the course coordinator, in discussion with the student believes the incident has in fact occurred and is a minor offence, the student will be required to re-submit the assessment task with all appropriate corrections, referencing additions or deletions and will have their work monitored carefully in the assessment of subsequent assignments.

2.3.3 If the course coordinator believes, in discussion with the student that a serious breach of the guidelines has occurred, the course coordinator will investigate the matter and report to the Education Committee with their findings.

2.3.4 The student will be notified in writing by the Chair of the Education Committee, within seven days of the course coordinator's review and the Education Committee's decisions related to the academic misconduct according to this policy. The student will also be informed of the MIECAT Student grievance handling and resolution policy.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

Course Co-ordinators, Academic Access Coordinator, Education Committee, all MIECAT staff.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

All students and staff at MIECAT

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

MIECAT Student Grievance Handling and Resolution Policy

MIECAT Intellectual Property Policy

MIECAT Academic Misconduct Register

Higher Education Standards Framework (2021)

Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research (2018)

VERSION HISTORY

Date of Issue	Version	Author	Summary of changes
8 th May 2023	1.0	J. Mitchell	Draft for approval

Document uncontrolled when printed