Academic Integrity and Ethical Academic Conduct Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) Academic integrity, honesty, and a respect for knowledge, truth and ethical practices are fundamental to the business of the University. These principles are at the core of all academic endeavour in teaching, learning and research. Dishonest practices contravene academic values, compromise the integrity of research and devalue the quality of learning.

(2) This Policy has been developed in accordance with advice from the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC).

(3) This policy supports the Student Conduct Rule, the Student Code of Conduct and the Staff Code of Conduct and must be read in conjunction with those documents.

Section 2 - Purpose

(4) This policy sets the expectations to uphold the standards of academic and research integrity at the University.

(5) This policy:

a. supports the University's commitment to being truthful, sincere, and direct in intentions and actions, acting lawfully and with academic integrity; and
b. provides a statement of good practice to be observed in addressing teaching and learning and the academic behaviour of its staff and students.

Section 3 - Scope

(6) This policy applies to:

a. all students at the University in all modes of study and in all locations, including undergraduate students, postgraduate coursework students, and Higher Degree by Research candidates;
b. arrangements with third parties involved in the provision of higher education; and
c. all staff of the University.

Section 4 - Definitions

(7) In the context of this document, the following definitions apply:

a. “academic integrity” is the moral code of academia. It involves using, generating, and communicating information in an ethical, honest, and responsible manner (HES Framework). It can also be defined as 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).

b. “concerning behaviour” is as defined by the Student Conduct Rule;
c. “contract cheating” is as defined by the Student Conduct Rule;
d. “corrupt conduct” is as defined by the Public Interest Disclosures Policy;
e. “non-academic misconduct” is as defined by the Student Conduct Rule;
f. “plagiarism” is defined by the Student Conduct Rule. For the purposes of this document, the Student Conduct Rule definition of plagiarism applies to staff; and
g. “research misconduct” is as defined by the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

Section 5 - Academic Integrity Principles

(8) The upholding of academic integrity is the responsibility of all staff and students at the University. The University's governing body (Council) and academic body (Academic Senate) are accountable for academic and research integrity under the Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2015.

(9) All forms of academic dishonesty, misconduct and unethical academic conduct are unacceptable.

(10) All staff are responsible for reinforcing high standards of academic integrity and ethical academic conduct. This includes, but is not limited to:

a. preventing unauthorised access to student records;
b. reporting matters or suspected matters that may be a breach of the University's academic integrity and ethical academic conduct principles;
c. complying with the University's policies and procedures; and
d. acknowledging others when using their text, images, videos, and other artefacts in teaching.

(11) Assessment related tasks must be developed by staff in a manner that upholds the principles of academic integrity and the values of fairness and respect. Students must undertake these assessments in an honest way.

(12) Students must:

a. aim to uphold academic integrity throughout their studies;
b. always provide appropriate acknowledgement when representing the work of another person or re-using their own work;
c. understand and avoid contract cheating, plagiarism, non-academic misconduct, research misconduct, collusion, and cheating;
d. refrain from relying on any form of artificial intelligence or paraphrasing tools for the completion of their assessment tasks, unless the prescribed assessment task specifically allows this;
e. refrain from sharing their completed assessment tasks with other students;
f. seek support from an appropriate academic staff member if placed in a situation or experiencing a situation where academic integrity values may be challenged.

(13) Suspected academic dishonesty, misconduct or unethical academic conduct by a student should be reported in the first instance to the relevant Student Academic Conduct Officer (for coursework related matters) or the Director, Graduate Research (for Higher Degree by Research matters).

(14) A report concerning the unethical academic conduct or misconduct of a staff member, where such conduct

constitutes corrupt conduct, may be reported in accordance with the Public Interest Disclosures Policy which may afford the discloser with some protections under law (please refer to Public Interest Disclosures Policy). Matters that may not constitute corrupt conduct, but are considered unethical must be dealt with in accordance with any relevant University policy or procedure, and the provisions of the relevant employment contract and/or University Enterprise Agreement.

Section 6 - Research Integrity

(15) The Responsible Conduct of Research Policy establishes the University's governance and management arrangements for research at the University with the intent of ensuring research integrity. Students and staff undertaking research are expected to understand and comply with the requirements of this policy.

(16) The Student Conduct Rule establishes processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct by a student and establishes actions and penalties that may be applied.

(17) The Research Breach Investigation Procedure provides mechanisms for identifying and responding to potential breaches of the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research by University staff.

Section 7 - Ethical Academic Conduct

(18) The University acknowledges the following responsibilities towards its students and ensures these responsibilities are upheld by staff:

Ethical environment	Maintain a safe, positive, harmonious, and cooperative teaching and learning environment by ensuring that students have: - access by appointment to academic staff to discuss program matters; - timely, fair, and constructive assessment of work; - the prompt addressing of concerns and complaints, especially where they relate to academic standing and progress; and - work and study areas that comply with work health and safety legislation.
	Deal with all students and their academic work with honesty and integrity, to maintain ethical academic standards and to provide helpful and appropriate feedback in a timely manner.
	Acknowledge student's intellectual property rights.
	Uphold information privacy principles relevant to students personal information in accordance with applicable legislation.
Inclusivity and Voice	Provide a work and study environment free from discrimination or harassment based on race, nationality, sex, gender, age, political conviction, sexual orientation, marital status, religious belief, disability, family responsibilities or carer’s responsibilities. This environment will take account of the different characteristics of students and their varying cultural and educational backgrounds, including those of Indigenous Australian students.
	Provide support services which take into consideration the needs of equity group students, including Indigenous Australian students.
	Ensure that students have the opportunity to provide input into academic staff teaching performance appraisal.
	Where appropriate and possible, have student members on University committees.

Accessible Information	Before enrolment, provide information on courses in a variety of formats that is accessible to all students, especially students with disabilities and sufficient to allow an informed decision on the programs and courses to be undertaken.
	Ensure that information on timetables for lectures and tutorials is generally available on enrolment and confirmed prior to the commencement of term. Detailed and accurate information about all relevant aspects of the courses chosen by students is provided within two weeks of the commencement of the term in which the courses are offered.
	Inform students of the common conventions and requirements in relation to proper referencing and acknowledgement of sources as well as providing information on the specific requirements of the College, School, or other teaching area.
	Make information freely available on policies and procedures which affect students in any aspect of their life at the University.
Academic Attainment	Encourage a respect for knowledge and excellence, and support students to reach a high level of academic attainment.
	If changes are made to existing courses or programs, ensure that adequate arrangements are made so students who are undertaking them are not disadvantaged.
	Address concerns and complaints of students, and provide access to suitable appeal and grievance mechanisms.
	Provide access to special consideration rescheduled examinations, alternative assessments, replacement assessments or extension of time for assessments where academic performance has been adversely affected by illness or other serious cause beyond the student's control.
	Ensure the availability and appropriate timing of compulsory courses and sufficient optional courses to enable program completion within the specified minimum time, provided that the standard rate of progress in the program is maintained.

(19) The University expects students to participate in their study and the University community and environment in an ethical manner. Students responsibilities are:

Ethical environment	Contribute to a work and study environment free from discrimination or harassment.
	Respect knowledge, scholarship, and truth, and act with honesty and integrity in all levels of academic life.
Inclusivity and Voice	Always act in a way that respects the rights and privileges of others and shows commitment to freedom of expression in accordance with the Code for the Protection of Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom; and in particular to be sensitive to cultural diversities.
	Participate in the functioning of the University and provide constructive feedback on the teaching and learning environment.
Accessible Information	Be aware of all University rules and regulations pertaining to their rights and responsibilities as students.
	Be aware of their individual rights and responsibilities regarding the proper use of copyright material.
	Be aware of all unit or course information made available to them and to raise any questions or concerns with the appropriate academic staff member in a timely manner.
Academic attainment	Participate actively and positively in the teaching and learning environment by: - attending classes as required; - maintaining steady academic progress; - complying with workload expectations; and - submitting required work on time.
	Monitor their own progress in the teaching and learning environment and the academic program, in the context of reasonable access to academic staff for assistance and to the various academic support services.
	Cooperate in remedial options to improve their academic performance and maintain adequate progress in a course or program.

Section 8 - Preventative Measures

(20) Program Convenors and Assistant Dean's (Education Innovation) will ensure that mechanisms are in place to provide students with education about academic integrity, including (but not limited to) the compulsory Academic Integrity Module (AIM), and the use of electronic text-matching software as a learning tool where appropriate.

(21) To support academic integrity principles, all students are required to complete the Academic Integrity Module (AIM) within the first term of enrolment in a program.

(22) The University will provide orientation and training for all newly appointed Student Academic Conduct Officers to ensure a consistent response to academic integrity allegations and breaches. The Student Academic Conduct Officer Coordinator is a senior SACO appointed by the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global). The Student Academic Conduct Officer Coordinator works closely with SACO's to develop relevant training materials and resources, and to provide training and support for SACO's through workshops and consultations.

(23) The Student Academic Conduct Officer Coordinator will draw relevant issues to the attention of the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) and provide advice to SACO's, Heads of School, Director, Graduate Research (for Higher Degree by Research issues), and Pro Vice-Chancellor Student Experience, Pro Vice-Chancellor Education Innovation and College Pro Vice-Chancellors on issues of concern.

(24) All staff are responsible for identifying foreseeable risks to academic and research integrity and ensuring they are addressed in accordance with the University's Risk Management Framework.

(25) The Office of the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global) is responsible for promoting academic integrity and ethical academic conduct across the University, as considered necessary and appropriate, and for analysing and identifying recurring issues.

Section 9 - Actions, Penalties and Appeals

(26) The University may impose serious measures on staff or students who are found to have breached this policy.

(27) The University's Enterprise Agreements detail the processes to be undertaken in the event of staff misconduct or serious misconduct, including research misconduct.

(28) The Student Conduct Rule details the processes that will be undertaken for alleged student misconduct, penalties and actions, and mechanisms for appeal.

(29) Students under investigation for student misconduct will not be eligible to graduate until the matter is resolved under the provisions of the Student Conduct Rule.

(30) Before any penalties are applied to students enrolled in the Bachelor of Medicine (JMP) program, appropriate consultation must be held between Course/Unit Coordinators and SACO (University of Newcastle) and Head of School (University of New England).

Section 10 - Retrospectivity

(31) Where student academic misconduct or student research misconduct is detected after results have been finalised, the SACO or Director, Graduate Research may open an investigation into serious cases of misconduct in accordance with the Student Conduct Rule.

Section 11 - Acknowledgements

(32) The following documents were referenced in the preparation of this Policy:

a. TEQSA Guidance Note: Academic Integrity;
b. TEQSA Good Practice Note: Addressing contract cheating to safeguard academic integrity;
c. University of Newcastle: Code of Ethical Academic Conduct Policy, effective date 25 June 2008;
d. Western Sydney University: Student Code of Conduct, effective date 12 May 2022;
e. Monash University: Assessment and Academic Integrity Policy, effective date 1 January 2021.

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Belinda Yourn Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic & Global)
Enquiries Contact	Nathan Scott Student Academic Conduct Officer (SACO) Coordinator Academic Division

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Academic Integrity Module (AIM)" - A short course undertaken to develop skills and understanding of the norms and conventions that underpin scholarly work. Academic Integrity Modules may vary from School to School but must cover those details listed in the current Student Academic Integrity Policy (academic fraud, research misconduct, plagiarism etc).

"Academic staff" - A person employed as an academic staff member or appointed as an academic honorary appointee (including adjunct, clinical conjoint, visiting, honorary and conjoint appointments), but does not include persons who are employed solely as teachers or professional staff.

"Course" - When referring to a course offered by the University, a course is a set of learning activities or learning opportunities with defined, assessed and recorded learning outcomes. A course will be identified by an alphanumeric course code and course title. Course types include core courses, compulsory courses, directed courses, capstone courses and electives. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Personal information" - Has the same meaning as in the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW).

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Student misconduct" - Academic misconduct, non-academic misconduct and/or research misconduct.

"Postgraduate" - Any qualification being at the level of Graduate Certificate or above.

"Program" - When referring to learning, a program is a sequence of approved learning, usually leading to an Award. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Research" - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

"School" - An organisational unit forming part of a College or Division, responsible for offering a particular course.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"Term" - When referring to an academic period, term means a period of time aligned to an academic year for the delivery of a course in which students enrol and for which they are usually charged fees for example semesters, trimesters, summer, winter or full-year term. The academic year for a term is determined by the academic year in which the course commences, not concludes. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Undergraduate" - Refers to any qualification up to and including the level of a Bachelor Honours degree.

"Unit" - When referring to an academic unit, unit means the proportional amount of academic credit allotted to a course. This term is used to define the requirements for a program award of the University and indicate a student's enrolment load. For all other uses of this term, the generic definition applies.

"Intellectual property rights" - All present and future rights to intellectual property including any inventions and improvements, trademarks (whether registered or common law trade marks), designs, copyright, any corresponding property rights under the Laws of any jurisdiction and any rights in respect of an invention, discovery, trade secret, secret process, know-how, concept, idea, information, process, data, or formula.

"College" - An organisational unit established within the University by the Council.