



**PROCEDURE FOR MANAGING BREACHES OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

<b>Section</b>	Academic
<b>Contact</b>	AVC Academic and International
<b>Last Review</b>	November 2010
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<b>Approval</b>	AB10/110

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this procedure is to provide staff with an outline of the way to manage breaches of academic integrity by students. The principles underpinning the process are primarily educative but also disciplinary; both approaches are needed in a context of high academic expectation.

Academic integrity comprises all forms of scholastic honesty.

**Scope:**

This policy applies to all types and levels of breaches of academic integrity by students regardless of whether the breach occurs in taught or research papers or research documents.

**Definitions:**

Any reference to the Policy means the Student Academic Integrity Policy.

Any reference to the Procedure means the Procedure for Managing Breaches of Academic Integrity.

Any reference to the Regulation refers to the Student Disciplinary Regulations previously called the Disciplinary Procedures for Students.

Any reference to the Proctor means that person who is authorised by the University to investigate Level 3 breaches of Academic Integrity.

Academic Integrity comprises all forms of scholastic honesty. Examples of breaches include but are not limited to:

- Plagiarism. This is defined by the university as:
  - Copying of sentences, paragraphs, computer files, research data, creative products that are the works of other persons, without appropriate acknowledgement.
  - Closely paraphrasing sentences, paragraphs or themes without appropriate acknowledgement.
  - Submitting one’s own previously assessed or published work for assessment or publication elsewhere, without appropriate acknowledgement and/or approval.
  - Substituting material obtained from internet based essay depositories (paper mills) or similar sources.
  - Submission of work overly reliant on model answers or sample solutions provided in the course materials.
- Cheating in any examination or test. For example, use of crib cards, cell phones or study notes in an examination setting.
- Submitting an assignment written entirely or in part by another person (e.g. ghost writing and collusion).



- Presenting data with respect to laboratory work, clinical placements, practica, field trips or other work that has been copied or falsified.
- In the case of collaborative projects, falsely representing the individual contributions of the collaborative partners.
- Presenting data obtained improperly. e.g. data collected without ethical consideration
- Any misrepresentation in relation to academic achievement or records.
- Any assistance given by a current student to be dishonest or fraudulent with academic assessment.
- Disclosing or assigning Intellectual Property in which the University can reasonably be said to have an interest outside the channels prescribed by the University's Intellectual Property Policy.
- Any breach of the Code of Responsible Research Conduct (note: student research misconduct is managed through the process described in this policy. Staff research misconduct is managed through the disciplinary process described in the Code of Responsible Research Conduct).

## **Procedure for identification of possible breach of academic integrity**

### **1. Initial investigation.**

This initial assessment is merely to determine if there is a case to answer. The initial investigation will involve an analysis of any evidence gathered from assignments, text matching software, or information gathered from other students or staff.

Any interview with the student/s involved should be done in accordance with the rules of natural justice. This means that the student is entitled to:

- a) be given notice of the complaint and the process to be used;
- b) be given the opportunity to respond to the complaint;
- c) the decision-maker(s) must act impartially, honestly and without bias at all times;
- d) have the right to representation, including legal representation

(It is intended that Level 1 breaches will be conducted in an informal manner)

### **2. Determine the level of seriousness of any allegation of a breach of academic integrity**

There are three levels of seriousness (Levels 1, 2, and 3). The level of seriousness dictates which staff member is responsible for dealing with the allegation. In addition, the range and severity of possible outcomes also increases as the level increases.

#### **Level 1**

A level one breach is the lowest level and is typically managed informally by the staff member involved, in consultation with the academic unit Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) if required. A breach of the academic integrity policy at this level is usually managed in an educative manner giving the student the option of revising and resubmitting with no other formal outcome imposed. Attendance at a remedial learning exercise conducted through the Student Learning Development Services (SLDS) may be required (student attendance at such a programme may be in person or on-line).

#### **Level 2**

A Level 2 breach occurs when any of the three criteria used to categorise academic integrity breaches (namely the extent, nature or expectation of the student) are higher than a Level 1 offence. It is likely that the outcome being considered for such an allegation is more severe than those allowed for Level 1 misconduct.



## Level 3

A Level 3 breach refers to a significant breach of the Student Academic Integrity Policy where either the extent, nature, student expectation; or a combination of any of the three are such that the breach should be heard by the University's highest academic misconduct authority, namely the AVC(A&I) or AVC(R). The possible range of outcomes is increased for this level to include exclusion for the university. Level 3 breaches of the policy are preceded by an independent investigation by a Proctor who will determine if there is a case to answer. Level 3 breaches are expected to be conducted in a formal manner.

Examples of level three allegations could include:

- Large scale misrepresentation of material submitted for assessment. This could include collusion, fabrication or falsification of data.
- Purchase of assignments from a paper mill or other internet site.
- Theft of intellectual property.
- Any Doctoral student misconduct regardless of the extent.

## Criteria

There are three criteria for determining the level: extent of the misconduct, nature of the misconduct and the experience of the student. Defining the level merely determines who manages the allegation and by default, what level of penalty can be applied. This is a qualitative assessment only. Staff should consult their college AIOs if any difficulties are experienced. Guidance is provided in the table on page 8. The three criteria include:

### Extent

The extent relates to the proportion of material in an assessment that is alleged to be inappropriately used. This often relates to plagiarism and refers to the proportion of an assignment that is matched against secondary source. There is no hard and fast rule to apply to the proportion that is unacceptable and the Turnitin Similarity Index should only be used as a guide, however, if greater than approximately 10% of the work is copied inappropriately or not acknowledged, then the allegation should be managed by an AIO as a Level 2 breach of the Academic Integrity Policy. Large segments of an assignment may be either directly or very closely matched against other secondary sources and the conventions for acknowledging the author are not followed.

### Nature

The nature of the breach involves students participating in any deceptive practice or misrepresenting the originality or ownership of the material submitted for assessment. Examples include but are not limited to:

- One or more students caught cheating in a term or other non - invigilated test.
- Submission of a computer file or research data that appears to be fabricated.
- Poor paraphrasing that may resemble nothing more than word substitution.
- Collusion with one or more other students.

### Expectation

Expectation refers to the reasonable expectation of staff concerning a student's understanding of academic integrity matters. For example an academic Integrity breach may not amount to a significant proportion of an assessment; however, if the student through the length of time at Massey University is expected to understand the required academic integrity conventions, then the breach may be considered at a higher level.

## 3. Conduct of the Hearing

There are various procedures to follow depending on the level of the breach of academic integrity. These are summarised in Appendixes 1, 2 and 3. The Level 3 process is referred to in the Student Disciplinary Regulations and the detailed process is described in Appendix 4 of that Regulation.



**4. Academic Misconduct Register (AMR)**

The University maintains a register (AMR) of previous cases. All level 2 and 3 allegations of breaches of academic integrity are to be entered onto the AMR by the AMR Manager.

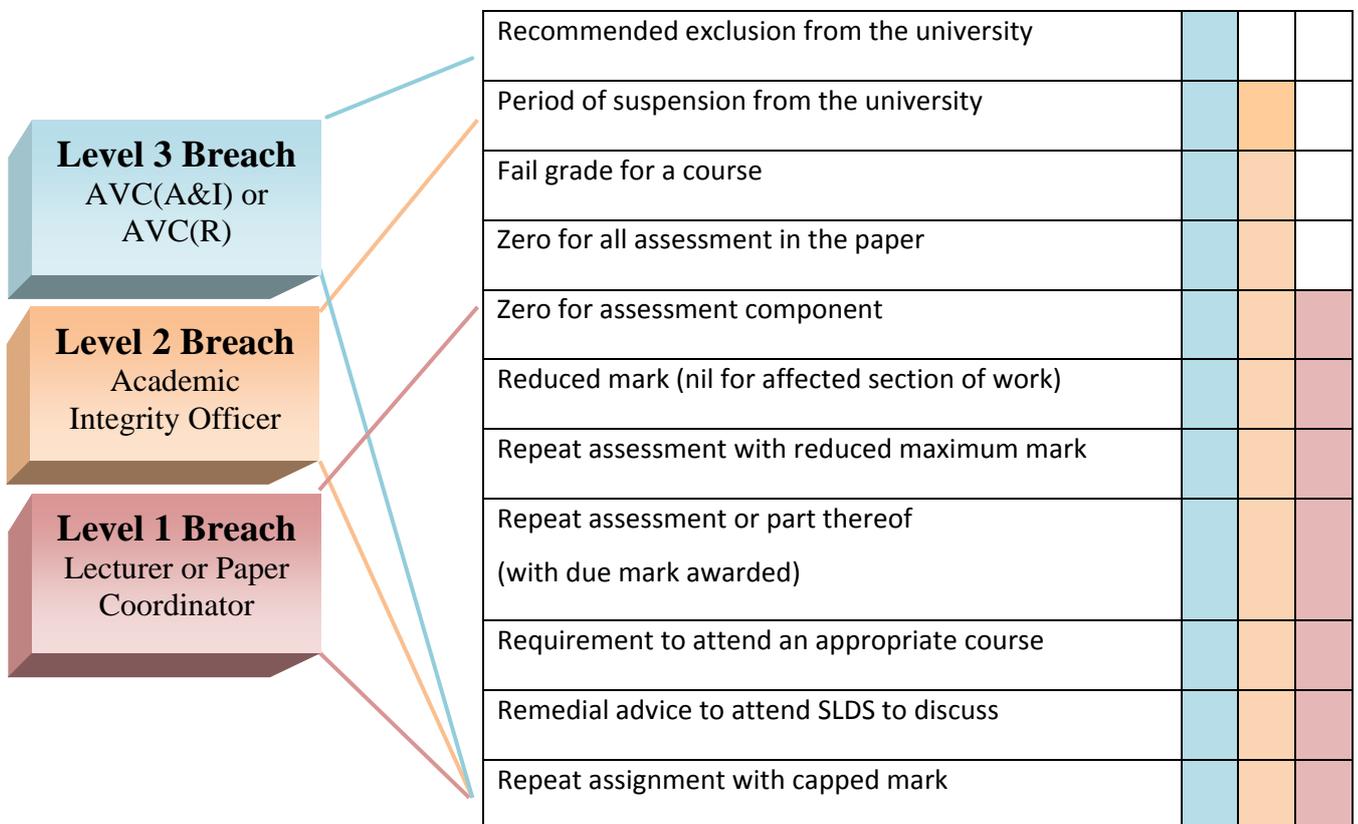
This record exists for three purposes:

- To determine that attendance at a specified course at the SLDS has taken place.
- To identify previous breaches so that escalation of outcomes can be considered.
- To provide an internal quality assurance mechanism to monitor the way we manage the process both in terms of consistency and frequency over time.

**Access to the database is available only to the Database Manager in the Office of the AVC(A&I). Information will only be given to AIOs, AVC(A&I) or AVC(R). Access is not permitted prior to determining an allegation. The database will only be viewed after the guilt has been determined and used only to determine if escalation of penalties should be considered, where previous offences exist.**

**5. Determining the Outcome**

The outcome options available for each level of breach are shown in the diagram below. The options increase in severity in line with the increase in level. The outcome list may also be augmented by *mandatory* remedial processes, i.e, that the student is required to attend a specific course at the SLDS.





## 6. Notify student of the outcome

Level 1 misconduct does not need a formal written notification although a template is provided if needed ([Appendix 4](#)).

Level 2 and Level 3 misconduct both require written notification to the student. Template letters are provided for the purpose ([Appendix 5 & 6](#)).

## 7. Adjust the student record

The paper coordinator will adjust the student's mark if required. If a result has been withheld (NF) pending the determination of an outcome of an allegation of breach of academic integrity, the paper coordinator should put through a change of grade form. No additional textual entry is to be entered onto the student record unless exclusion was the outcome of the hearing.

## 8. Notify the AMR Manager.

Notify the AMR manager of the outcome of the Level 2 or Level 3 allegation so that an entry can be included on the database for future reference.

### Appeal Procedure

Outcomes of either Level 1 or 2 breaches, where the penalty is resolved between the AIO and the respondent may **not** be appealed. Any other Level 1 or 2 complaint may be appealed in accordance with the Student Disciplinary Regulations.

### Audience:

All staff and students

### Relevant Legislation:

N/A

### Related Procedures or Documents:

- [Student Disciplinary Regulations](#)
- [Student Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Code of Responsible Research Conduct and Procedures for Dealing with Misconduct in Research](#)
- Template letters:
  - Level 1 invitation to attend SLDC ([Appendix 4](#))
  - Level 2 or Level 3 invitation letter ([Appendix 5](#))
  - Level 2 or Level 3 outcome letter ([Appendix 6](#))

### Acknowledgement

Permission was granted by Curtin University to allow us to use some aspects of their disciplinary guideline.

## Determining Seriousness of Academic Integrity Breaches

Student Name ..... Student ID ..... Date..... Nature of alleged Academic breach	Make an overall judgment about the level of seriousness. Final level, if level 2, must be ratified by AIO. Level 3 must be ratified by AVC(A&I) or AVC(R)  Staff member name .....		
Criteria	Level 1 Lecturer, Paper Coordinator	Level 2 Academic Integrity Officer	Level 3 AVC (A&I) or AVC(R)
<b>Experience of the student.</b>  Relates to the expectation you have that the student should be aware of the seriousness of their actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First year student or first semester of course</li> <li>Cultural considerations/mitigating circumstances eg.</li> <li>No prior instruction or unclear instructions given.</li> <li>Research students: draft submissions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student beyond their first semester of study</li> <li>Misconduct after having been given an instruction on avoiding academic misconduct</li> <li>Research students: In candidacy or early to mid-course thesis drafts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student nearing completion of an undergraduate degree</li> <li>Experienced student who is expected to fully understand</li> <li>Research students: in final thesis drafts or submitted thesis</li> </ul>
<b>Nature of the breach of the academic scholarship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Referencing not clear, adequate or has numerous errors</li> <li>Inappropriate paraphrasing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Copying segments of another students work</li> <li>Copying fragments of material from websites, books or other publications</li> <li>False indication of contribution to group work</li> <li>Fabricating references or citations</li> <li>Recycling parts of previous assignments</li> <li>Cheating in any examination or test</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whole works copied from any source</li> <li>Purchase of an assignment</li> <li>Stealing others work</li> <li>Research students; in final thesis draft or submitted thesis</li> </ul>
<b>Extent of the academic misconduct.</b>  The amount or proportion of assessment item or work that is not the student's own.  Or the extent to which the assessment process is compromised	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Few sentences, one paragraph, one graphic</li> <li>Few elements of computer source code</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two or three paragraphs or a segment of work or,</li> <li>Greater than approx 10% of the work is copied, inappropriately or not acknowledged, from a single source</li> <li>Segments of computer source code</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Significant appropriation of ideas or artistic work</li> </ul>



**Appendix 1**

**Procedure for Managing Level 1 Academic Integrity Breach.**

Level 1 breach is managed primarily by the paper coordinator (in consultation with the College Academic Integrity Officer, if preferred). The steps are as follows:

1. **Determine that the possible breach has occurred.** Assemble evidence, and determine extent and nature of problem (no discussion with the student is required at this stage).
2. **Determine the possible level of the breach** (refer to p 2 or the table on p 8 of this Procedure). Level of breach is determined by extent, nature and expectation. If possible breach is Level 1, proceed according to the steps below.
3. **Conduct a hearing.** Level 1 procedure is informal and managed by the academic staff member (and College AIO if required). A hearing is usually required but may take place informally. The process is explanatory and educational with the purpose of developing students skills and understanding. Any interview with the student/s involved should be done in accordance with the rules of natural justice. This means that the student is entitled to:
  - not answer any questions in relation to the case,
  - representation or informal support such as the student advocacy service,
  - view any evidence against them.
  - the right to representation.

After the hearing, the paper coordinator, in consultation with the College AIO if required, should make a judgement of whether a breach of academic integrity has occurred.

4. **Reporting.** There is no central reporting for Level 1 allegations.
5. **Outcomes.** The range of outcomes for a Level 1 breach are listed on p. 5 of this Procedure. The paper coordinator should determine an appropriate outcome according to the Procedure, and again with reference to extent, nature and expectations of the student. At Level 1, notification should be informal (either in discussion with the student or by email) and the emphasis should be on remediation and education.
6. **Notify the student.** Students who are required to attend the Student Learning Development Services are to be notified using the template letter provided.
7. **Adjust the student record.** The paper coordinator should adjust the student's record in accordance with the outcome. If an NF grade had been entered for the student, the paper coordinator should submit a change of grade form as soon as possible.

**Appeal Procedure.** Outcomes at this level, where the outcome is resolved between the paper coordinator and the student, may **not** be appealed. Any other Level 1 breach may be appealed in accordance with the Student Disciplinary Regulations.



**Procedure for Managing Level 2 Academic Integrity Breach.**

A Level 2 breach is managed by the College Academic Integrity Officer. The steps are as follows:

1. **Determine that a possible breach has occurred.** Assemble evidence (in consultation with paper coordinator), and determine extent and nature of problem (no discussion with the student is required at this stage).
2. **Determine the possible level of breach** (refer to the table on p 8 of Procedure. The Level of breach is determined by extent, nature and expectation. Examples include but are not limited to:
  - One or more students caught cheating in a term or other non- invigilated test.
  - A submission of a computer file or research data that appears to be fabricated.
  - Poor paraphrasing based on simple word substitution.
  - Collusion with one or more other students in a single authored assignment.
  - 10% unacknowledged material *from a single source* in an assignment.
  - Cheating in any examination or test.
3. **Notify the student and conduct a hearing.** Student is notified in writing of the allegation as speedily as possible (see template letter # 2). The notification should include: particulars of the breach, the procedure that will be followed, any evidence that has been gathered, the likely outcome if the complaint is upheld. They also need to be told that an outcome will be imposed if they do not respond to this notification. Two possible scenarios are possible:

If the student either fails to respond or student accepts responsibility then the case can be resolved by the AIO and, if a breach is deemed to be proven, then the AIO should proceed to the next steps.

If the student does not accept responsibility and/or wishes to present a defence then a meeting should be arranged during which the details of the case will be presented by the AIO. During this meeting the student has the right to:

- not answer any questions in relation to the case,
- representation or informal support such as the student advocacy service,
- view any evidence against them,
- the right to representation.

After the hearing, the College AIO should make a judgement of whether a breach of academic integrity has occurred.

4. **Consultation with the Academic Misconduct Database.** The AIO requests information from the AMR manager who will indicate if other breaches have been registered in the database for this student. At this stage there are two possible scenarios:



- a) If three incidents of Level 2 or 3 breach are now registered for this student, an escalation in the penalty imposed for the current allegation can now be considered by the AIO.
  - b) If the incident is not a third recorded breach, the AIO will continue to take responsibility for the next steps in the process.
5. **Outcomes.** The range of outcomes for Level 2 breach of academic integrity are listed on p. 5 of the Procedure. The AIO should determine an appropriate outcome according to the procedure again with reference to extent, nature and expectations of the student.
  6. **Notifying the student.** At Level 2, notification is formal: ie in writing (using template letter # 3) and includes the outcome and the right to appeal.
  7. **Adjust the student record.** The paper coordinator should adjust the student's record in accordance with the outcome. If an NF grade had been entered for the student, the paper coordinator should submit a change of grade form as soon as possible.
  8. **Notify the AMR manager.** Notify the AMR manager of the details of this investigation for uploading to the database.

**Appeal procedure.** Outcomes resolved between the paper coordinator or the AIO and the student may **not** be appealed. Any other Level 2 outcome may be appealed in accordance with the Student Disciplinary Regulations.



**Level 3 Academic Integrity Breach Hearings**

Level 3 breaches of Academic Integrity are considered to be allegations of serious misconduct and hearings are conducted in accordance with the process described in the Student Disciplinary Regulations. Refer to that Regulation for the details.



**Template Letter. Level 1 invitation to attend SLDC.**

**Appendix 4**

Dear XXXX

In the process of marking your assignment, the markers noticed that parts of your assignment contained small sections of copied or badly paraphrased text from another source.

Copying text, or paraphrasing text by changing a few words, is considered to be plagiarism and is dealt with harshly by the University. Because the plagiarism in your assignment is minor, and probably caused by an inadequate understanding of what constitutes plagiarism or how to integrate sources into your work, there will be no major penalty.

No marks will be deducted for this assignment; however, you are expected to undertake work that will increase your understanding of how to use source material in your own writing. You may:

EITHER

1. make an appointment with me to discuss the issues more fully

OR

2. make an appointment with a writing consultant at the Student Learning Centre to discuss these issues

If you choose the latter option, I will need you to bring a letter from the SLC confirming that you have spent a session with a writing consultant. Your grades will not be released until I receive the letter.

I encourage you to read the sections in the course administration guide that deal with plagiarism and the requirements of this assignment. If you are having difficulty with making sense of the requirements for writing assignments in the future, I suggest that you make use of the university's Student Learning Centre. Details for contacting the centre are included in the course administration guide.

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

PAPER COORDINATOR



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Template Letter Level 2 or Level 3 Invitation

Appendix 5

Dear XXXX

In the process of [marking your *description of assessment*] [Who] noticed that parts of your [description of allegation]. This allegation is deemed to be a possible breach of the University Academic Integrity policy and is viewed as a serious matter by the University.

A meeting will be conducted on [time and date ] at which the allegation and evidence will be reviewed by a senior University staff member of the University and, if proven, may attract an academic penalty.

You are invited to attend this meeting, along with any support or other representation you organise (at your own expense), to present your side of the case. If you fail to attend the meeting, the outcome may be determined in your absence so it is in your interest to attend. I have attached for your information the evidence we have gathered.

The outcome may be recorded on the Massey University Academic Misconduct Register and that may result in the escalation of any subsequent instances.

Please confirm that you will attend this meeting and indicate whether you intend having a support person present.

Yours sincerely

[Staff Member Designation]



Template Letter Level 2 or Level 3 Outcome

Appendix 6

Dear XXXX,  
Student ID XXXXXXXX,

In the process of marking your assignment X, paper number XXX.XXX the markers noticed that parts of your assignment contained significant sections of copied or badly paraphrased text from another source. In your case, there is evidence that sections of text have been copied from the following source(s):

XXXXXXXXXXXX

Copying text, or paraphrasing text by changing one or two words, is considered to be plagiarism and is dealt with harshly by the University. The plagiarism in your assignment is significant enough that I have decided to penalise your mark by giving you zero marks for the offending sections in your assignment.

You need to be aware that the outcome of this breach of the Academic Integrity Policy has been entered onto our central Academic Misconduct Register and may be used to escalate any subsequent breaches of this policy.

I encourage you to read the sections in the course administration guide that deal with Academic Integrity (pages 31 and 32) and the requirements of this assignment (pages 27 to 29).

If you are having difficulty with making sense of the requirements for writing assignments, I suggest that you make use of the university's Student Learning Centre. Details for contacting the centre are included in the course administration guide (pages 52-54).

If you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Staff Member Name

Academic Integrity Officer,

College