

# Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure

<b>Supporting plans, policies and procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic Integrity Committee Terms of Reference</li> <li>• Academic Progress and Student At-Risk Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Academic Assessment and Moderation Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Code of Conduct</li> <li>• Course and Subject Development and Continuous Improvement Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Student Handbook</li> <li>• Student Orientation Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Freedom of Intellectual Enquiry Policy</li> <li>• Learning and Teaching Policy</li> <li>• Records, Data and Information Management and Security Policy</li> <li>• Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Staff Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Staff Professional Development and Scholarly Activity Policy and Procedure</li> <li>• Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure</li> </ul>
<b>Related legislation and references</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher Education Standards Framework 2015</li> <li>• Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency (TEQSA) Act 2011</li> <li>• TEQSA (2020). Academic Integrity Toolkit, <a href="https://www.teqsa.gov.au/toolkit/">https://www.teqsa.gov.au/toolkit/</a></li> <li>• INQAAHE, TEQSA &amp; QBBG (2020). Toolkit to support quality assurance agencies to address academic integrity and contract cheating</li> <li>• TEQSA (2020). Guidance Note: Academic Integrity Version 1.2, 28 March 2019, <a href="https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-academic-integrity/">https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-academic-integrity/</a></li> <li>• TEQSA (2017). Good Practice Note: Addressing contract cheating to safeguard academic integrity, 4 October 2017, <a href="https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/articles/teqsa-outlines-ways-cut-contract-cheating/">https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/articles/teqsa-outlines-ways-cut-contract-cheating/</a></li> </ul>
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0.1	Draft prepared by Learning and Teaching Committee (LTC)	
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## Background and Scope

This document details how MIHE prioritises academic integrity and outlines the principles, policies and procedures that underline it. MIHE’s focus on academic integrity is built on MIHE’s values of quality, intellectual freedom and respect. This document also outlines the procedures, roles, and responsibilities of maintaining academic integrity at MIHE and provides guidelines and processes to report, investigate, and appeal academic misconduct decisions. It covers integrity involving learning and teaching.

This policy and its related procedures apply to all the MIHE stakeholders including students enrolled in accredited courses as well as academics, contractors and partner organisations.

## Definitions

<b>Academic Integrity</b>	The moral code of academia. It involves using, generating and communicating information in an ethical, honest and responsible manner <sup>1</sup> .
<b>Academic Misconduct</b>	Breaches of the MIHE’s policies, procedures or guidelines, detailed in this Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures, course requirements, Australian Law, and any other relevant MIHE policies in the course of their study, work, or research. Areas of misconduct include cheating, collusion, intellectual property infringement, fraud or plagiarism.

<sup>1</sup> See *TEQSA (2020). Guidance Note: Academic Integrity Version 1.2, 28 March 2019*, <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/publications/guidance-note-academic-integrity>

<p><b>Cheating</b></p>	<p>Engaging in dishonest or unfair actions in order to gain an advantage over the course of study, work, or research including, but not limited to, the following:<sup>2</sup></p> <p>a) Study</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• plagiarism and failures of correct acknowledgement practice</li> <li>• contract cheating or paying for another person to prepare an assignment or providing contract cheating services</li> <li>• submitting (for assessment or review) work prepared by another person</li> <li>• all forms of cheating in examinations and other assessment tasks such as bringing unauthorised material or aids into exams, tests, or quizzes in order to gain an unfair advantage</li> <li>• offering or accepting bribes (money or sexual or other favours), e.g. for admission or for grades, and</li> <li>• fabrication or falsification of information or student identity.</li> <li>• Interfering with the work, study or research of others to disadvantage them in any way</li> </ul> <p>b) Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheating</li> <li>• Plagiarism</li> <li>• Fabrication or falsification of data</li> <li>• Unauthorised disclosure of personal information</li> <li>• Harming or disadvantaging those who take part in research</li> </ul>
<p><b>Contract cheating</b></p>	<p>Contract cheating occurs when students employ or use a third party to undertake their assessed work for them and these third parties may include: essay writing services; friends, family or other students; private tutors; copyediting services; agency websites, or 'reverse classifieds' (Lancaster &amp; Clarke, 2016, p. 639)<sup>3</sup>.</p>
<p><b>Collusion</b></p>	<p>Working with one or more other individuals to complete an assignment, in a way that is not authorised (INQAAHE, TEQSA &amp; QBBG, 2020, p. 6)<sup>4</sup>, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) writing the piece of work together;</li> <li>b) determining the method or approach to question or assessment task together;</li> <li>c) sharing answers or giving access to questions and answers or completed assessment tasks (e.g. knowingly allowing personal work to be copied by others).</li> </ol>
<p><b>Intellectual Property</b></p>	<p>Copyright in Australia is governed by the Australian Copyright Act of 1968 under Australian Law. Any actions in breach of this Law, and any use of copyrighted work without permission, as ordained by the Australian Copyright Act of 1968, is a violation of the MIHE's Academic Integrity Policy. Any other unauthorised appropriation of intellectual property for academic or commercial purposes is forbidden by this Policy. Unfair use of the work of others constitutes intellectual property theft.</p>

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> See *TEQSA (2017). Good Practice Note: Addressing contract cheating to safeguard academic integrity, 4 October 2017.* <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/articles/teqsa-outlines-ways-cut-contract-cheating>

<sup>4</sup> Source: INQAAHE, TEQSA & QBBG (2020). Toolkit to support quality assurance agencies to address academic integrity and contract cheating

<b>Fraud</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any actions intended to steal or deceive, through any means.</li> <li>Faking qualifications, language ability assessment or previous academic results.</li> <li>Providing fraudulent medical certificates.</li> </ul>
<b>Plagiarism</b>	<p>Any attempt to present another's work as one's own without appropriate and clear acknowledgement of the work's source is considered plagiarism.</p> <p><i>The definition below is from an excerpt from Griffith University's Institutional Framework for Promoting Academic Integrity among Students<sup>5</sup>.</i></p> <p>Plagiarism occurs when the work of another is represented, intentionally or unintentionally, as one's own original work, without appropriate acknowledgement of the author or the source. This is an act of academic misconduct and includes but is not limited to acquiring or commissioning a piece of work, which is not his/her own and representing it as if it were, by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>purchasing a paper from a commercial service, including internet sites, whether pre-written or specifically prepared for the student concerned;</li> <li>submitting a paper written by another person, either by a fellow student or a person who is not a member of MIHE.</li> </ol>
<b>Research Integrity</b>	The trustworthiness of research due to the soundness of its methods and the honesty and accuracy of its presentation (cited by TEQSA, 2020).

Also refer to the Glossary of Terms.

## Policy Principles

The key principles informing this policy are:

<b>Centrality of Academic Integrity</b>	Promoting and enforcing academic integrity is central to the reputation that MIHE has and to the value it offers. Failure to observe academic integrity badly affects not only the perpetrator, but the MIHE community as a whole.
<b>Proactive Strategies</b>	<p>MIHE will proactively take steps to prevent or mitigate the risk of violation of this policy through a number of strategies. These strategies include, but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>training all new students, academics, staff, contractors and partner organisations about MIHE's Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct Policy as appropriate to their role.</li> <li>training all staff in what signs to look out for to identify academic misconduct;</li> <li>training students how to use plagiarism detection software or other means of checking for plagiarism in order to check their work before submission for assessment;</li> <li>requiring teaching staff to model academic integrity to students;</li> <li>creating an open and honest environment of study and work at MIHE,</li> <li>having strict procedures in place to address academic misconduct,</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> Source: Excerpt from Griffith University's Institutional Framework for Promoting Academic Integrity among Students, which clearly defines outsourcing of assessment as a form of plagiarism - [policies.griffith.edu.au](https://policies.griffith.edu.au) (referenced in *TEQSA (2017). Good Practice Note: Addressing contract cheating to safeguard academic integrity, 4 October 2017.* <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/articles/teqsa-outlines-ways-cut-contract-cheating>)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ensuring security of academic processes, such as research work, examinations, and submissions. MIHE must also take steps to prevent the recurrences of breaches.</li> </ul>
<b>Clear Communication</b>	<p>MIHE must clearly promote and communicate academic and research integrity in courses and units of study. MIHE must also communicate violations of this policy and take actions in accordance with its procedures. This communication can be conducted through any means that MIHE deems necessary, such as classroom sessions, webinars, online forums, etc. As appropriate to their roles, all stakeholders must be provided with training on what constitutes academic and research integrity including misrepresentation, fabrication, cheating, plagiarism and misuse of intellectual property.</p> <p>MIHE must make its Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure available to all stakeholders including through the MIHE website and in student and staff handbooks.</p> <p>Frequent and visual reminders regarding academic integrity generally, and contract cheating specifically, must be part of a holistic approach to promote integrity on campus (such as during Orientation and just before exams with visual posters on campus providing visual reminders).</p>
<b>Vigilance</b>	MIHE must make efforts to ensure that its administrators, academic staff, students, and partners are vigilant to ensure that signs of academic misconduct are identified, reported and dealt with appropriately.
<b>Accountability</b>	MIHE must endeavour to be accountable to the values of quality, intellectual freedom and respect. This means that staff and students are accountable in promoting and upholding the standards and to manage any breaches of academic integrity in accordance with this Policy and Procedure.
<b>Transparency</b>	MIHE must make its Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure available to all the MIHE community and includes (and limited to) it being available on the MIHE website and in student and staff handbooks. MIHE must ensure that it responds to any evidence of academic misconduct in a consistent manner following published procedures.
<b>Timeliness</b>	In the interest of fairness to those against whom misconduct allegations have been made, it is desirable to resolve MIHE's response to allegations as soon as possible. While practical issues may intervene, normally allegations should be resolved within 30 working days of them being made.
<b>Fairness</b>	All persons have a right to procedural fairness, to be accorded natural justice and to have their privacy protected. This includes people who are alleged to have flouted MIHE's academic integrity policy, those who report such behaviour and all MIHE stakeholders. All decisions will be reviewed internally within MIHE and be subject to appeal.
<b>Academic Freedom</b>	<p>Academics and students should be free to express their opinions and ideas about any matter, in any forum; such actions must not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>harm others;</li> <li>make defamatory allegations; or</li> <li>unfairly impugn the reputation of MIHE.</li> </ul>
<b>Repeated breaches</b>	A student, academic or contractor who has been found to have committed repeated breaches of academic integrity, even if of a minor nature, shall be deemed to have committed major misconduct.

This Policy is primarily related to the assessment of learning, the submission of assignments, tests, reports and theses and the conduct of research. The *Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination, Sexual Assault and Sexual Misconduct Policy and Procedure* covers other behaviours of students, staff and contractors.

This Policy also considers TEQSA Good practice guidance notes addressing contract cheating to safeguard academic integrity<sup>6</sup>.

### **Actions to mitigate risks to academic integrity**

MIHE will take actions to mitigate risks in relation to contract cheating including a range of preventative measures that take into account the student life cycle from (pre)admission through to graduation. Students, teachers and academic integrity decision-makers are not the only stakeholders in relation to academic integrity. Librarians, Student Welfare and Support Officers, Counsellors and other support staff all need to be informed about contract cheating.

MIHE will conduct training in academic integrity and the Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure beginning at Student Orientation and provide ongoing information to reinforce students awareness of this issue. . MIHE students and staff will be provided with information on how to use text-matching software such as Turnitin for identifying issues with plagiarism and contract cheating. In addition, self-study resources will be available on the Learning Management System (LMS) for educating the students.

MIHE recognises that its students come from a variety of educational, cultural, social and economic backgrounds with differing motivation and achievement levels and will seek to identify students who may require additional assistance as early as possible in their study with MIHE. Targeted academic skills and personal training and attention, as applicable, are offered to assist and support satisfactory learning outcomes<sup>7</sup>.

In order to support the practice of academic integrity and to improve learning outcomes MIHE staff will foster personalised teaching and learning relationships with students by:

- clarifying assessment requirements through task instructions; scaffolding, interactive discussions and assessment or marking rubrics;

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<sup>6</sup> See *TEQSA (2017). Good Practice Note: Addressing contract cheating to safeguard academic integrity, 4 October 2017*, <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/articles/teqsa-outlines-ways-cut-contract-cheating>

<sup>7</sup> Source: Adapted from Monitoring Academic Progress – International students, CQUniversity, referenced from *TEQSA (2017). Good Practice Note: Addressing contract cheating to safeguard academic integrity, 4 October 2017*, <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/latest-news/articles/teqsa-outlines-ways-cut-contract-cheating>

- allowing drafts of written assessments submitted progressively;
- being accessible to students for learning help and support;
- providing constructive, meaningful and timely feedback for each student and
- modifying and altering assessment tasks to prevent students from sharing assignment from previous semester.

### **Minor and Major Misconduct - Treatment of initial versus subsequent breaches**

MIHE staff will provide extra support to students when allegations of academic misconduct results in a student's first breach of MIHE's Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures to strengthen the relationship with students and teach them about academic integrity.

A minor misconduct occurs when all the following criteria apply:

- the student has no prior record of academic misconduct, and
- the student is in the early stages of their academic study at MIHE, defined as the first eight units studied at MIHE, and
- the extent of the misconduct is considered to be within the acceptable reason as determined by the Unit Coordinator and/or Course Director and/or Dean.

It will be made clear to students that subsequent or repeat breaches will be treated as a major misconduct.

### **Submitting Work for Assessment**

In submitting work for assessments (such as assignments, tests and reports), whether electronically or by hard copy, students are required to declare that the assessment item submitted is entirely their own work and where they use or make reference to the work of others, that this is acknowledged.

### **Academic Integrity Committee (AIC)**

The AIC is the body responsible for developing this Academic Integrity Policy and implementing its Procedure. Details of the AIC and its purposes are to be found in *Academic Integrity Committee Terms of Reference*.

The AIC is responsible for the content the MIHE website dealing with academic integrity, designing mechanisms to facilitate reporting of alleged misconduct, providing mandatory training to all academic staff starting employment with MIHE and promoting academic integrity throughout MIHE. The AIC will establish and maintain a centralised management system to keep secure and confidential records of all cases of alleged academic misconduct and the outcomes of investigations.

The AIC, through the Dean, is responsible for reporting to AB on proposed changes to policy and for regular reporting of its activities.

## **Procedures for Dealing with Alleged Academic Misconduct**

All allegations of academic misconduct must be brought to the attention of the Academic Integrity Committee. For the purpose of investigating these claims, it will form ad-hoc sub-committees to investigate the allegations and recommend remedies and/or penalties, if required. The sub-committees must conduct themselves in accordance with principles of natural justice and procedural fairness. Once an investigation has been initiated, it should normally be concluded within 15 working days of the formal allegation being lodged.

### **Reporting**

Any person, student, member of staff, partner organisation or person involved in any program conducted in partnership with MIHE can report an allegation of misconduct. Once reported, all allegations must be investigated by the AIC. Persons can file an official report of academic misconduct in writing to the AIC or online through the MIHE website. Where available, supporting evidence must be provided which may include (but are not limited to) a text similarity report from detecting software, similarity of work submitted by another student or by the same student for another assessment, inconsistency between student's class performance and performance in the assessment.

### **Investigation of Alleged Misconduct**

Once a formal allegation of academic misconduct has been lodged, the AIC must begin an official investigation within 10 working days. Its first task is to inform in writing the person or persons against whom allegations are made about the nature of the allegation and possible penalties in the case of a major or minor breach. The identity of the complainant must at all times be confidential. The person or persons complained about will be given the opportunity within 10 working days, should they wish, to respond to the complaint in writing and/or to put their case to a meeting of an AIC sub-committee established to evaluate the allegation.

This sub-committee can have access to any relevant MIHE documents, including electronic documents, so long as confidentiality and privacy are protected. If the person or persons complained about wishes to do so, they may bring a support person to any meeting they attend, but this person shall not be a lawyer. The sub-committee is entitled to interview any other relevant



parties, or to seek such other evidence they deem necessary. Once the relevant evidence has been assembled, the sub-committee will make a judgement as to whether misconduct has occurred and if so, whether it was of a minor or major nature.

If the sub-committee finds that there are grounds to find that the misconduct might possibly violate Australian law, a recommendation can be made to the Dean to raise the matter to law-enforcement authorities.

- a) In the case of students, there are three possible outcomes:
- A finding of no misconduct, in which case all allegations will be dismissed without prejudice. If the allegation involves coursework, the course examiner will be asked to mark the coursework as if no misconduct has taken place.
  - A finding of Minor Misconduct, in which case the sub-committee has the choice to add an official reprimand to the person's record, or recommend more serious penalties, short of suspension, expulsion or dismissal. The recommended severity of the penalty is at the discretion of the sub-committee. Penalties include requiring the student to be counselled and take a course on academic integrity, a reduction in grade for an assessment, the awarding of zero marks for an assessment or the awarding of a fail grade for a Unit for which the assessment formed part.
  - A finding of Major Misconduct by a student, in which case the sub-committee may recommend suspension from MIHE, exclusion from the Course or expulsion from MIHE. The Dean must review the decision and the recommended penalties within 5 working days of the sub-committee completing its deliberations. The Dean has the right to reduce or dismiss the penalties to be applied. In the case of suspension, course exclusion or expulsion from MIHE, the Dean must recommend this decision to Academic Board, who will have the final say in the penalty, if any, to be applied.
- c) In the case of academics, the sub-committee must decide whether a breach has occurred, and if so, what remedies should be applied and what penalties should be recommended. Remedies include:
- In the case of plagiarism or intellectual property theft, the person will be required to correct any publication or document by properly acknowledging the ideas or work of others and advising the publisher or withdrawing the publication;
  - Where research has been falsified any resulting publication must be withdrawn;
  - Making written apologies to any parties adversely affected by the misconduct; or
  - Other remedies the sub-committee deems appropriate.

In terms of penalties, there are three possible outcomes:

- A finding of no misconduct, in which case all allegations will be dismissed without prejudice.
- A finding of Minor Misconduct, in which case the person must be counselled and take a training course on academic integrity. An adverse finding will be placed in the person's employment record.
- A finding of Major Misconduct, in which case the sub-committee may recommend a demotion or a termination of employment or contract with MIHE. The Dean must review the decision and the recommended penalties within 5 working days of the sub-committee completing its deliberations. The Dean has the right to reduce or dismiss the penalties to be applied. Dean must then recommend any penalty to the CEO who will have the final say. Academic Board must be notified as to the outcome.

The Dean must report to the next meeting of the AIC actions taken in respect of all sub-committee recommendations.

The outcome of the investigation must be communicated to the person or persons in writing, by letter and electronic communication as soon as practicable. Where a finding of misconduct is made and a penalty applied, the person or persons must be informed of their internal and external appeal rights. These rights of appeal are referred to in the *Student and Staff Complaints and Appeals policies and Procedures*.

### **Maintaining Records**

The Academic Integrity Committee and the Dean are required to keep detailed written records, including electronic records, of all proceedings. These records shall include, but not be limited to the following:

- Any coursework or research works within which any academic misconduct is alleged to have taken place;
- All records of any meetings, telephone calls, emails with all relevant parties, or any other details in any way connected with the allegation and inquiry;
- All records of correspondence, including official report allegation, all decisions made in writing and any response from any relevant parties; and
- Any record of appeals or decisions to appeal to external authorities.