PR_AC_040 Academic Integrity Procedure

1. Scope

This procedure applies to all students enrolled in one or more courses at THINK. It also informs academic and professional staff about preventative approaches which support students’ acting with academic integrity, and in dealing with breaches of academic integrity.

2. Definitions

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

**Academic misconduct:** 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 misconduct are considered to be misconduct as defined under the Student Conduct Policy.

As outlined in the Academic Integrity Policy, examples include:

- plagiarism and self-plagiarism,
- cheating in examinations,
- collusion,
- contract cheating,
- falsification of results,
- impersonation.

**Procedural fairness:** a fair and proper procedure appropriate to the circumstances, where decisions are made without bias and are supported by evidence and communicated with reasons.

3. Preventative approaches

The following list provides an overview of key initiatives currently in place to support students in meeting academic integrity requirements:

3.1 Curriculum design

The THINK course and subject summit process for curriculum and assessment design process ensures that, for all new courses, a set of common principles is deployed in the design and development of
learning experiences. In relation to academic integrity, these principles (in turn drawing directly on the Principles of Learning and Teaching) include:

- **Industry relevance**: ensuring that learning experiences in relation to academic integrity are delivered within/made relevant to the career outcome context.

- **Drawing on the unique individual prior experiences**: setting assessment tasks that require students to build on their personal prior experiences and knowledge.

- **Process is given as much emphasis as final output**: staging assessment tasks where the process is an integral part of the learning experience, contextualised in terms of industry/career outcomes, with active reflection and recording by students alongside active discussion and observation by learning facilitators and peers.

- **Drawing on unique data sets**: staging assessment tasks where the topic/subject matter/brief is continuously refreshed, e.g. use of a live industry brief, different case studies, question banks etc.

- **Focusing on competencies and soft skills**: staging assessment tasks that emphasise the active demonstration (and observation) of competencies and soft skills.

- **Collaborative and peer to peer work**: staging assessment tasks where students are required to collaborate as part of a community of learners.

3.2 Assessment design

Assessment strategies used to eliminate or minimise opportunities for students to gain an unfair advantage through academic misconduct may include:

- design of authentic and specific assessment tasks unique for the subject,

- provision of question banks, case studies and data sets for random allocation when required for assessment tasks,

- well-constructed assessment tasks that have clearly explained assessment briefs, supported by well-designed marking criteria/rubrics,

- consideration of turnaround time to complete and the weighting of the assessment,

- use of continuous assessments and formative feedback cycles,

- for written submissions, include measures that eliminate or minimise the possibility of contract cheating by, for example:
  - making an oral presentation,
  - requiring outlines or drafts,
  - oral examination,
  - demonstration of ability and knowledge via supervised examination.

- for non-written submissions, include measures that eliminate or minimise the possibility of academic misconduct, such as requiring the assessment to include:
  - the demonstration of skills and application of knowledge,
  - evidence of research and findings,
  - drafts or preparatory work.

- clear instructions and expectations for individuals participating in group work,
- redesigning assessment tasks in which breaches of academic integrity previously occurred, and
- redesigning assessment tasks or examination questions so that students with knowledge or prior experience of those tasks cannot gain an unfair advantage for themselves or others.

### 3.3 Student orientation

Comprehensive orientation programs are provided, both online and on campus, for all new domestic and international students and are held twice each study period. Students are guided to policies and procedures and Academic Skills and Library resources available within the Learning Management System (LMS) and on the Library and Academic Skills web sites. Students have easy access to resources and workshops that introduce and inform on Academic Integrity, why it is important and how to conduct their studies in line with academic integrity protocols.

### 3.4 Educatice approach

Best practice in the development of an institution-wide culture that understands and supports the objectives of Academic Integrity is based on an educative approach.

A number of formal elements are included in the educative approach to build awareness and understanding of the requirements and purpose of Academic Integrity for both students and staff.

For students, the approach involves:

1. an introductory module on Academic Integrity which is completed by all students post enrolment and prior to the study period commencing (e.g. Epigeum).
2. proactive contextualised classes, which are run throughout each study period and include work on Academic Integrity.
3. an online workshop, regularly scheduled as part of the Study Success series [https://library.torrens.edu.au/academicskills_studysuccess](https://library.torrens.edu.au/academicskills_studysuccess).
4. an Academic Integrity Week, which is held across all campuses and online in Week 4 of each study period. This event is managed by the Academic Skills Team from Learning Services.
5. Studiosity being made available 24 x 7 for all students.

For Academic Staff, the approach involves:

1. all staff completing Academic Integrity awareness training (e.g. Epigeum Academic Integrity staff module) either as part of the new staff on boarding process or at the commencement of each study period.
2. formal training sessions on the interpretation of similarity reports and the Academic Integrity process being made available.

All students found to have breached academic integrity will be required to attend a mandatory academic integrity workshop, run by Academic Skills Facilitators and scheduled throughout the study period. These workshops will focus on:

- what academic integrity is and its importance,
- interpreting similarity reports, and
- skills development and introduction to the tools available to students.

Invitations will be managed by the Vertical AI Academic Services Officer and attendance records will be reported back to the Vertical Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) or designated academic.
3.5 Library and Learning Services resources and workshops

Learning and academic skills resources are available to students from the LMS, the Library and the Academic Skills website. These resources include a range of topics that support students in all areas of academic study including Academic Integrity, why it is important and how to work/study in an academic environment to meet Academic Integrity requirements. The Academic Writing Guide includes information on academic integrity, how to write to an academic standard, and instruction on how to correctly paraphrase or quote directly, and the requirements for properly acknowledging sources used to avoid plagiarism.

Students have access to resources, workshops and third party products such as Studiosity that can guide them in all areas of academic work, which complements the support offered by learning facilitators.

3.6 Self-checking and similarity software

THINK provides students with the similarity detecting software. Learning Facilitators introduce students to this software in the first weeks of the study period. Students are advised to use this software as a tool for self-assessment prior to submitting their written work for marking, and are urged to rectify any issues identified with the similarity of their work with others. Some assessment briefs may include the use of this software as a requirement, and require students to submit a report to verify this has been done. Academic staff may also use this software if plagiarism is suspected in work submitted for marking. Learning Services provides training sessions for academics and workshops for students on how to interpret similarity reports accurately.

3.7 Academic integrity declaration

As part of the process for submitting assessments via LMS, students must declare that the work being submitted is their own, and it has not been plagiarised. Making a false declaration is deemed as a serious offence, and will be taken into consideration if a breach of academic integrity has taken place.

3.8 Examination procedures

Examinations are to be conducted as outlined in THINK Examination Procedures.

3.9 ELICOS

ELICOS students are introduced to academic integrity from the start of their ELICOS courses as preparation for further study, including an introduction to the Academic Writing Guide. ELICOS students are also required to have their work submitted through the similarity software provided (e.g. Safe Assign).

4. Penalties for academic misconduct

4.1 Initial and minor academic misconduct

Based on available evidence, any academic misconduct that is not deemed significant will be deemed minor.

If deemed appropriate as outlined in the Academic Integrity Policy, a penalty may apply. Possible outcomes are:

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<th>TYPE OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT</th>
<th>The student receives a warning</th>
<th>The student revises the original assessment and resubmits for marking without penalty</th>
<th>Student receives a downgrading of mark or Unsatisfactory outcome for the assessment task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial and minor misconduct</td>
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</table>
• the breach will be recorded on the student’s file,
• the student must attend an Academic Integrity workshop within two weeks of a notification of the breach or further penalty may apply,
• the student will be provided with a notification that a subsequent finding of academic misconduct, regardless of severity, may result in a Fail/Not Yet Competent result of the relevant subject.

4.2 Initial and significant academic misconduct

Based on available evidence, an academic misconduct event is deemed significant if it:
• is or appears to be deliberately planned, and/or
• is or appears to be substantial in scale or scope,
• involves contract cheating.

Given the significant nature of the breach, a penalty will apply. One or more of the following penalties may be imposed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT</th>
<th>The student receives a downgrade of the mark or unsatisfactory outcome for the assessment task</th>
<th>The student revises the original assessment and resubmits for marking with a maximum grade of 50% for the assessment able to be achieved</th>
<th>The student receives a Zero mark or unsatisfactory outcome for the assessment task</th>
<th>The student receives a downgrade on the final grade for the subject</th>
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<tr>
<td>Initial and significant misconduct</td>
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<tr>
<td>*If deemed to be Contract Cheating</td>
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</table>

- the breach will be recorded on the student’s file,
- the student must attend an Academic Integrity workshop within two weeks of a notification of the breach or further penalty may apply, and
- the student will be provided with a notification that a subsequent finding of academic misconduct, regardless of severity, may result in a Fail/Not Yet Competent result of the relevant subject, probation, suspension or exclusion.

4.3 Second and minor academic misconduct

Given the repeated nature of the breach, a penalty will also apply. One or more of the following penalties may apply:

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<th>TYPE OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT</th>
<th>The student receives a downgrade of mark or unsatisfactory outcome for the assessment task</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Second and minor misconduct</td>
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</table>
• the breach will be recorded on the student’s file,
• academic counselling will be provided in the interview, and
• the student will be provided with a notification that a subsequent finding of academic misconduct, regardless of severity, may result in a Fail/Not Yet Competent result of the relevant subject, suspension or exclusion.

A third instance of minor academic misconduct will be processed according to second and significant academic misconduct, or subsequent breaches regardless of the severity of the breach.

4.4 Second and significant academic misconduct, or subsequent breaches

A second and significant substantiated breach of the Academic Integrity Policy or a breach of any kind for the third or more time will be recorded on the student’s file and will result in one or more penalties.

Given the repeated and/or significant nature of the breach, the penalty will be a Fail or Not Yet Competent outcome for the subject, but having regard to the factors listed in section 8 of the policy may also be a more significant penalty, including but not limited to:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>TYPE OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT</th>
<th>The student receives a Fail for the final grade for the subject</th>
<th>Probationary period</th>
<th>The student is referred to the Student Conduct Policy for suspension, exclusion or expulsion.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Subsequent significant misconduct</td>
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5. Dealing with breaches of academic integrity

The following will be considered when determining the seriousness of an act of academic misconduct:
• type of academic misconduct,
• extent of academic misconduct,
• experience of the student,
• prior offences, if any (this will include prior offences in other courses at THINK), and
• the student’s stage or level in the course.

THINK is committed to dealing with allegations of academic misconduct by students in accordance with the principles of procedural fairness. All relevant staff members will follow the procedure as outlined.
Step 1: Detection

1.1 Learning Facilitator (LF)
Detecting potential breaches of academic integrity is fundamentally a judgement made by the LF, who is most aware of individual assessment requirements and a student’s abilities.

If an LF suspects there has been a breach of academic integrity, this suspicion needs to be based on available evidence, such as:

- a valid interpretation of a similarity report,
- similarity with work submitted by another student, or by the same student for the same assessment as a repeat attempt or by the same student for another assessment,
- non-submission of required outlines, drafts, or preparatory work, or as required in the assessment brief
- the student’s behaviour during an examination.

At this stage, the student is not to be informed of the LF’s suspicion, and no further information is to be requested from the student. The LF should note the student as Incomplete for the assessment in Grade Centre until notified of the outcome.

Incongruence between the student’s performance to date in class, coursework, and performance in prior assessments should be noted but is not sufficient evidence of itself.

Where allegations concern group work, the steps within this procedure must be undertaken separately in respect of each student involved.

Step 2: Investigation

2.1 Learning Facilitator (LF)
The LF reports the alleged breach to the designated academic or AIO within their Vertical using a reporting form (which may be electronic or online). The LF provides the following information:

- student name and ID number,
- full class code as it stands on the LMS,
- assessment number,
- type of academic breach, and
- indicators/evidence that apply to the identified breach.

2.2 Academic Services Officer (ASO)
The ASO collates the information from the Student Information System (SIS), and provides the designated academic or AIO with the student’s contact details and details of possible prior breaches.

2.3 Designated academic or Academic Integrity Officer (AIO)
After considering the evidence, an initial determination as to whether academic misconduct has occurred is made.

a) Where the evidence does not substantiate a breach of academic integrity, the allegation is dismissed and no further action is taken, and the LF is advised to mark the assessment as usual.
b) **Where the evidence suggests an instance of an initial minor plagiarism case, an educative rather than punitive approach will be taken.** The evidence will be validated through appropriate interpretation of the similarity report and indication of inadequate paraphrasing and/or referencing, or similarity with another source. The designated academic/AIO sends an outcome letter to the student and advises the LF.

The letter will:

- inform the student of the plagiarism,
- provide academic counselling on AI providing links to the Policy and Academic Writing & Referencing Guide, and
- include details of the AI workshop which must be attended within two weeks of the letter.

Attendance lists from the weekly AI workshops will be provided to the PD/designated academic and/or ASO for monitoring.

c) **Where there is sufficient evidence to indicate possible academic misconduct (that is not minor plagiarism), the designated academic/AIO calls the student to an interview (on campus or online).** The LF is also invited to attend if available (recommended but not mandatory).

The interview is to:

- inform the student of the details of the allegation,
- provide an opportunity for the student to respond,
- gather any additional evidence, and
- provide academic counselling in regards to the Academic Integrity Policy.

This is recorded on the interview form by the designated academic/AIO.

**The process then moves to the decision stage in Step 3**

If the student does not answer the telephone call, the designated academic/AIO invites the student via email to return the call within five days, or respond in writing.

- The email sent by the designated academic/AIO must:
  - inform the student of the details of the allegation,
  - provide the date by which the student needs to return the call or the date when the student must attend the meeting,
  - give the student an opportunity to make a written submission by the date of the meeting as an alternative to, or supplement to, the telephone call, and
  - advise that in the case of contract cheating, the student will be required to provide supplementary evidence to prove their authorship of the work.

- This communication is recorded within the academic integrity mailbox (ASO-managed email) together with ongoing correspondence with the student.

- Where the student does not respond to the meeting request or refuses to participate, the designated academic/AIO makes a recommendation based on the evidence.

**The process then moves to Step 3**
Activities within the SIS may require the support of the ASO.

**NOTE:** The ASO (or delegate) will create the Academic Process within SIS in accordance with the [Academic Integrity Recording Procedure: Work Instruction for Academic Services Officers](#) (for staff only).

### Step 3: Decision

After considering all of the evidence, the designated academic/AIO makes a recommendation in regard to whether a breach of academic integrity can be substantiated and whether it is a ‘minor’ or ‘significant’ breach, based on the interpretation of these terms in section 4 of this document.

#### 3.1 If recommended as substantiated minor academic misconduct (and not minor plagiarism as in 2.3 b):
- if minor’, whether ‘initial’ or repeated’, the designated academic/AIO recommends the penalty based on details within section 4 of this document,
- the Program Director reviews and either accepts or adjusts the outcome, and
- the AIO sends the outcome letter to the student and notifies the LF. The letter will:
  - provide academic counselling on AI providing links to the Policy and Academic Writing & Referencing Guide, and
  - include an invitation to the next AI workshop which must be attended within two weeks of the letter. *Non-attendance may lead to further penalty.

#### 3.2 If recommended for initial and significant academic misconduct:
- the designated academic/AIO recommends the penalty based on details within section 4 of the Academic Integrity Procedure.
- the Program Director and/or AI Vertical sub-committee reviews and either accepts or adjusts the outcome.
- the AIO sends out the outcome letter to the student and notifies the LF. The letter will:
  - provide academic counselling on AI providing links to the Policy and Academic Writing & Referencing Guide, and
  - include an invitation to the next AI workshop which must be attended within 2 weeks of the letter. *Non-attendance may lead to further penalty.

#### 3.3 If recommended as second repeat and significant:
- the designated academic/AIO recommends the penalty based on details within section 4 of this document,
- the PD can either accept or adjust the outcome or refer to an AI sub-committee for further review and a decision, and
- the designated academic/AIO sends out the outcome letter to the student and notifies the LF.

#### 3.4 If recommended as third or subsequent repeat and significant:
Think Education

- the designated academic/AIO refers the case to the AI sub-committee for a decision. If referral to the Student Conduct Policy for possible suspension or exclusion is also decided on, the Dean must also approve.
- the designated academic/AIO sends out the outcome letter to the student and notifies the LF.

The final outcome is recorded in the SIS, and communicated via email to the student and the LF. If the student disagrees with the outcome of the investigation, the student may access the appeals process outlined in the Student Complaints Policy.

**Academic Integrity Sub-Committee**

With the complexity of some academic integrity cases, investigations may require higher level discussion to support the decision-making process. In order to strengthen the decision making process and support the PD/designated academic with cases that are not clear, an AI sub-committee can be called upon at short notice so that a decision can be made efficiently and effectively.

1. Detection and investigation follows as per the current procedure.
2. If considered major/significant or perhaps complex, the PD or designated academic puts a call out to this sub-committee via email.
3. A sub-committee of three to four members (from the Vertical Learning and Teaching Committee) then meet, ideally within 48 hours, to discuss the case in line with the provisions of the Academic Integrity Policy and agree on a recommendation that the PD/designated academic can then action and the ASO records.
4. The sub-committee outcomes can be noted at the next Vertical Learning and Teaching Committee meeting.

**Step 4: Follow Up**

In response to breaches of academic integrity, the PD or designated academic ensures a review occurs of the assessment brief for which a breach occurred, and associated assessment practices, to determine if further developments are required to eliminate or minimise future occurrences.
## PENALTIES THAT MAY BE APPLIED FOR BREACHES OF THE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

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<th>The student is referred to the Student Conduct Policy with a recommendation of suspension, exclusion or expulsion from the course</th>
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