

320-PP-MEGA Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct Policy

Relevant Standards

SRTOs 2015: 1.8
The National Code 2018: 2.1, 6.3
Student Visa Conditions

Linked Documents

Student Handbook
Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
Student Agreement
Student Code of Conduct

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to maintain the integrity of the assessments and provide a consistent approach in dealing with plagiarism and student misconduct issues in the academic works.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all the students of MEGA. The policy applies to all types of student misconduct including general misconduct, academic misconduct and administrative misconduct.

3. Definitions

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism occurs when a student tries to pass off another person's work or ideas as his or her own. Plagiarism includes copying of work from internet, books, other student's work or any other published or unpublished source without appropriate citation and acknowledgement. Students commit plagiarism if they do not acknowledge the source of a direct quote, or a specific piece of writing that they have paraphrased, or even if they describe an idea or concept that they have heard or read somewhere without a reference or acknowledgement.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- Direct copying of paragraphs, sentences, a single sentence or significant parts of a sentence
- Direct copying of paragraphs, sentences, a single sentence or significant parts of a sentence with an end reference but without quotation marks around the copied text
- Copying ideas, concepts, research results, computer codes, statistical tables, designs, images, sounds or text or any combination of these
- Paraphrasing, summarising or simply rearranging another person's words, ideas, etc. without changing the basic structure and/or meaning of the text
- Offering an idea or interpretation that is not one's own without identifying whose idea or interpretation it is
 - A 'cut and paste' of statements from multiple sources
 - Presenting as independent, work done in collaboration with others
 - Copying or adapting another student's original work into a submitted assessment item.

Enabling plagiarism contributes to plagiarism and therefore will be treated as a form of plagiarism by MEGA. Enabling plagiarism means allowing or otherwise assisting another student to copy or otherwise plagiarise work by, for example, allowing access to a draft or completed assignment or other work.

Collusion:

Collusion occurs when a student collaborates with others to complete the work but presents the same work as their own.

Misconduct:

Misconduct is an act or omission committed by a student on MEGA property or involves the use of MEGA resources including computer resources, or otherwise involves the student's relationship with MEGA community. Misconduct includes administrative misconduct and academic misconduct.

General and Administrative Misconduct:

General and Administrative Misconduct Incidents are those which in the opinion of the Academic Manager or the Campus Director may be adequately addressed within MEGA or by the Campus Director. The following conduct, in the absence of any circumstance of aggravation may be treated as Simple Misconduct:

- Impeding the ability of any student or member of MEGA to study or participate in any MEGA activity
- Acting in a manner which is threatening, intimidating, disrespectful or unprofessional towards any Trainer, Assessor or other staff member, student or other member of MEGA community
- Breaching any State or Commonwealth laws or any MEGA policies on privacy, internet and computer use and copyright
- Causing any member of MEGA to hold reasonable fear for their safety or physical or psychological well-being
- Committing an act or making an omission which has the capacity to endanger the safety or health of any member of MEGA community
- Assaulting any member of MEGA community
- Wilful damage, wrongfully dealing with or interference with property of any member of MEGA community
- Tampering with a medical certificate issued in the student's name
- Any act or omission which disrupts the peace and good order of MEGA.

Serious Misconduct

The following conduct may be treated as Serious Misconduct:

- Any of the incidents in Simple Misconduct committed with a circumstance of aggravation
- Sexually harassing, discriminating against, and/or racially vilifying any member of MEGA community
- Fraudulent representation of grades or awards for prior learning including through the unauthorised use of any MEGA name, seal or trademarks
- Making a fraudulent representation involving any medical certificate where the original certificate was stolen or not issued in favour of the student
- Breach of assessment conditions and processes
- Any other types of misconduct as deemed by MEGA to be Serious Misconduct from time to time.

Academic Misconduct

The following conduct may be treated as Academic Misconduct:

- Any act or omission by a student which attempts to circumvent or pervert MEGA's assessment process
- Cheating in an examination or test including speaking or communicating with other students, bringing unauthorised material into the examination room including a mechanical or electronic device, or consulting any person or materials outside the confines of the examination room without permission to do so, reading or attempting to read other students' answers, leaving examination or test answer papers exposed to other student's view
- Plagiarism
- Collusion in the preparation of a response to a piece of assessment
- Tampering with examination or assessment materials.

4. Legislative Context

- National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (Cth)
- The ESOS Act 2000
- The National Code 2018

- ESOS Regulations 2001
- Privacy Act 1988 (Cth).

5. Policy

5.01 MEGA highly values academic honesty and integrity and places a great emphasis on ethical behaviour of its students. It does not tolerate any behaviour which diminishes the academic reputation of MEGA, impairs the ability of students to participate in any legitimate MEGA activity or disrupts the peace or good order of MEGA and its learning environment.

5.02 Academic integrity is viewed as fundamental to the very nature of MEGA. Academic misconduct by students in examinations or in other forms of assessment is unacceptable.

5.03 MEGA investigates and deals with incidents of misconduct among its student community in a consistent manner, affording natural justice and applying penalties which are appropriate, fair and just.

5.04 MEGA treats plagiarism as cheating. Cheating and plagiarism is a serious offence and will be treated seriously. MEGA imposes severe penalties on students who cheat and plagiarise.

5.05 All academic staff, Trainers and Assessors must inform students about plagiarism policy and penalties arising from plagiarism.

5.06 All academic staff, Trainers and Assessors have the responsibility to maintain integrity and fairness of the assessments and try to minimise the instances of plagiarism.

5.07 Any academic staff, Trainers and Assessors reporting plagiarism must also produce evidences of plagiarism to support the allegation.

5.08 In the first instance when plagiarism is suspected, staff members should first determine if it is intentional or unintentional. Appropriate academic penalty must be applied to unintentional plagiarism. Where it is found that a student has plagiarised with an intention to cheat, the student must be reported for plagiarism.

5.09 Collusion will also be considered as cheating.

5.10 Any student lending his/her work to another student to copy will be considered a party to plagiarism and treated with academic penalty.

5.11 MEGA recognises its obligation to educate students in the definition, identification and avoidance of plagiarism.

5.13 MEGA has established a “Plagiarism Committee” to monitor and review of all students who have been identified by Trainers and Assessors to have committed a breach in the policy. The Committee is made up of the following staff and independent invitees:

- Academic Manager (VET) as the Chair for this committee
- Admissions Manager
- Education Adviser
- Chief executive Officer (CEO) and
- Invitees e.g. Trainers and Assessors.

5.14 The Committee will sit at the end each term or sooner where situation demands it to review and resolve all cases of Plagiarism. It will also review and make recommendation of any amendments as part of continuous improvements to the QAC and SMC for final review and implementation.

5.15 The Plagiarism Committee is also responsible for maintaining a register for all serious and repeated plagiarism committed by students for monitoring and provide counselling and support to these students to avoid future recurrence of breaching MEGA's academic integrity.

5.16 Plagiarism offence may have an impact on student visa conditions, and the student, and MEGA will exercise utmost care and diligence in determining plagiarism cases with a focus on student welfare and wellbeing.

5.1 Academic Review

All students have the right to request an academic review. Where a student is dissatisfied with the outcome or result of assessment of an assignment and or an examination, the student should discuss this informally in the first instance with their Trainer and Assessor.

If the issue cannot be resolved informally, a student may submit a request for a formal academic review in writing to the Academic Manager within twenty (20) working days of receiving the reviewed academic result. The request must outline why the student has requested a formal review of the result.

The Academic Manager will seek to resolve a formal academic review through the appointment of an independent and impartial educator to investigate and make a recommendation. The Academic Manager will make the final decision on all formal academic reviews.

All parties involved in any formal academic reviews will be advised in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the decision within twenty (20) working days from the date the review was lodged. If a student's formal academic review is successful, the academic result will be amended.

Where a formal academic review is not upheld by the Campus Director or CEO, the student will be advised in writing of the option to access the appeals process.

5.2 Reporting of Plagiarism

5.2.1 Where the Trainer and Assessor identifies minor lapses in referencing and or use of source, whether by text matching, similar software or other means, the Trainer and Assessor shall treat the incident as an assessment matter and may reduce the overall mark or grade for the assessment task, and or may permit re-submission.

5.2.2 Where plagiarism is suspected, the Trainer and Assessor shall document the reasons and evidence for this suspicion and refer the matter to the Academic Manager.

5.2.3 The Academic Manager, after assessing the evidence of the case, takes one of the following actions:

- If there is sufficient evidence to warrant it, request the student to attend a formal hearing, the purpose of which shall be to investigate and discuss the matter with the student as a means of deciding what further action, if any, should be taken
- If the evidence appears to indicate a very serious breach of discipline, refer the matter to the Academic Manager for appropriate action.

5.3 Penalties for Plagiarism

If the student is found guilty of the charge of plagiarism, the Academic Manager shall determine the appropriate penalty taking into account:

- The extent of the plagiarism e.g. which could range from minor lapses in referencing to copying substantial parts of published work including work from the Internet, or another person's work

- The seriousness of the plagiarism e.g. theft of another person's work; paying another person to do the assessment task
- Whether it is a repeat offence
- Any mitigating circumstances in the case.

The Academic Manager may impose one or more of the following penalties:

- Any proven plagiarism case will result in an immediate "Competency Not Achieved" (CNA) result in the respective unit and the student will need to re-enrol in the unit. No re-assessments will be allowed
- Student will be placed on the Plagiarism register which will be available to all academic staff members
- Written warning of plagiarism and academic misconduct will be issued to student
- Repeated plagiarism offences may result in review of student's enrolment in MEGA.

5.4 Penalties for Misconduct

5.4.1 General, Administrative and Academic Misconduct

Any of the following penalties may be applied depending on the nature, intent and severity of the incident and as deemed appropriate by the Campus Director and or the Academic Manager:

- Written warning with reprimand
- Order to attempt the assessment item again
- "Competency Not Achieved" (CNA) grade for the item of assessment
- "Competency Not Achieved" (CNA) grade for the course
- Mandatory counselling
- Academic probation with a requirement to attend and complete to the satisfaction of the Academic Manager and complete counselling and remedial courses on code of conduct, plagiarism and academic integrity as directed
- Withhold results for a maximum of one term
- Order for compensation or restitution on such terms as are deemed fit and proper
- Entering into a written undertaking regarding offending behaviour
- Impose any combination of these penalties.

5.4.2 Serious Misconduct

Any of the following penalties may be applied depending on the nature, intent and severity of the incident and as deemed appropriate by the Campus Director and or the Academic Board:

- All the penalty options described in the general, administrative and academic misconduct
- Entering details on the student's permanent record; or
- Suspension from MEGA; or
- Expulsion from MEGA.

All Misconduct complaints which are academic misconduct matters may be investigated and finally determined by the Academic Manager, or nominee.

All Misconduct offences which are not Academic Misconduct matters may be investigated and finally determined alone by the Campus Director, or nominee.

All Serious Misconducts matters may be investigated and finally determined by an appropriate committee set up by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or the Senior Management Committee, which will include an independent member not directly connected with the management or operations of MEGA.

5.4.3 Natural justice

The principle of Natural Justice underpins the duty to act fairly includes two rules:

1. The fair dealing rule; and
2. The no bias rule.

This means that all parties must be given the opportunity to present their case, be fully informed about allegations and decisions made and have the right to be represented by another person.

In addition, a decision maker must have no personal interest, beyond the scope of their role in this process and must be unbiased. If the decision maker cannot meet these requirements they must immediately withdraw from the process. The procedure shall have regard to the duration of an overseas student's stay in Australia. In order to expedite the process, students shall also have regard for this and not unduly interfere with the mediation agent or the procedure. Should interference by the student affect the normal process of events, MEGA shall not be held responsible for the consequences.

6. Appeals

The affected parties will have access to MEGA's Complaints and Appeals processes if they think that the decisions made by appropriate authorities are not just and fair in their opinion.

7. Responsibility

MEGA is responsible for:

- Making this policy available to all Trainers and Assessors and academic staff members and students
- Ensuring that its academic and administrative staff members know how to deal with plagiarism and misconduct issues
- Providing students with an opportunity to appeal any decision arising from plagiarism or misconduct cases.

Trainers and Assessors and academic staff are responsible for:

- Advising students on plagiarism policy and penalties for plagiarism
- Providing appropriate information on referencing requirements to all the students
- Providing examples of referencing techniques
- Distinguishing between intentional and unintentional plagiarism and providing a feedback to the students
- Reporting instances of plagiarism to the Academic Manager.

Students are responsible for:

- Maintaining academic integrity and produce their own work which is appropriately referenced
- Maintain an ethical behaviour
- Protecting their own work and not allowing another student to copy
- Understanding the implications of plagiarism and misconduct and its impact on their academic performance
- Asking the academic staff for help if they are not sure about appropriate use and referencing requirements of information from other sources.

The Admissions Manager is responsible for effective implementation and management of this policy as well as provision of information on ways to resolve complaints of breaches of this policy.

The Academic Manager is responsible for maintenance of this policy in their respective academic areas.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) has overall responsibility for the implementation and review of this policy.

Any complaints or breaches in relation to this policy should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer in person or by email to: ceo@mega.edu.au

Revision History:

Version No:	Date	Description of modifications	Staff responsible
1	December 2017	First Review and alignment of PP to new National Code 2018 and SRTOs 2015.	CEO
2	January 2018	New PP approved	CEO
3	November 2018	Review of Policy and Procedures and change Academic Coordinator to Academic Manager	CEO
4	April 2019	Review of PP to be align with ASQA audit (18 and 19 Feb) report on plagiarism	CEO
5	October 2023	Review and update of PP	CEO
6	September 2024	Amend "Not yet Competent (NYC)" to "Competency Not Achieved (CNA)" per aXcelerate	CEO
7	March 2025	Review of PP	CEO