

# Students - Breach of Academic Integrity Procedures

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## INTRODUCTION

The University wishes to provide an environment conducive to the pursuit of academic and scholarly activities by promoting high standards of academic integrity.

## COMPLIANCE

This is a compliance requirement under the:

- [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\)](#);
- [Standards for Registered Training Organisations \(RTOs\)](#); and
- [National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students](#)

## INTENT

To provide a consistent and transparent set of procedures for resolving allegations of breaches of academic integrity through:

- A commitment to resolve allegations informally where appropriate;
- A transparent, effective and consistent three-stage resolution process; and
- Easily accessible advice and support to all parties.

## RELEVANT DEFINITIONS

In the context of this document

**Academic integrity** means uprightness and honesty in the pursuit of scholarly activity. It is based on the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility ;

**Appeal** means a request to the University Appeals Panel for a review of a decision;

**Balance of probabilities** means that something is more likely to have happened than not to have happened;

**Counselling** means a process to discuss concerns and obligations and to devise strategies to meet them;

**Collusion** means a form of deception based on inappropriate collaboration involving working with others to produce work which is presented as being one's own independent work or allowing others do so;

**Examination** means a form of assessment conducted under the University's Higher Education Examination Policy and Academic and Assessment and Moderation Policy;

**Exclusion** means a student is denied enrolment in a course for a specified period of time. Exclusion may be applied as a result of unsatisfactory academic progress as outlined in the [Higher Education Students Academic Progression Procedures](#) or serial breaches of academic integrity;

**Expulsion** means an immediate termination of enrolment on a permanent basis on disciplinary or academic grounds where, because of the serious or repeated nature of the offence, a penalty greater than suspension or exclusion is called for. It may be applied in the case of a breach of disciplinary probation. Expulsion is the strongest penalty that can be applied by the University;

**Further assessment** means a student may be required to undertake a further piece of assessment, conducted in the same format as the original, where a doubt about the student's performance needs to be resolved. This doubt may occur as a result of the hearing of alleged breach of academic integrity. Except in circumstances in which leniency is warranted, this requirement may only be applied in conjunction with Disciplinary Probation;

**HE** means Higher Education;

**Paraphrase** means to restate the sense of another person's work;

**Procedural Fairness (also called "natural justice")** means the basic principles considered central to fair decision making and which can be summarised as follows:

- The opportunity for all parties to be heard;
- The respondent having full knowledge of the nature and substance of the grievance;
- The right to an independent, unbiased decision maker; and
- A decision based solely on evidence provided;

**Plagiarism** means the use of another person's words or ideas as if they were one's own. It may occur as a result of lack of understanding and/or inexperience about the correct way to acknowledge and reference sources. It may result from poor academic practice, which may include poor note taking, careless downloading of material or failure to take sufficient care in meeting the required standards. It may also occur as a deliberate misuse of the work of others with the intent to deceive. It may include, but is not restricted to:

- Presenting extracts, without quotation marks and/or without appropriate referencing, from books, articles, theses, other published or unpublished works, films, music, choreography, working papers, seminar or conference papers, internal reports, computer software codes, lecture notes or tapes, numerical calculations, data or work from another student. In such cases, it is not adequate merely to acknowledge the source. This applies to material accessed in hard copy, electronically or in any other medium;
- Close paraphrasing of sentences or whole paragraphs with or without acknowledgement by referencing of the original work;
- Adopting ideas or structures from a source without acknowledgment;
- Using source codes and data from another's work without acknowledgement;
- Arranging for someone else to undertake all or part of a piece of work and presenting that work as one's own; and/or
- Submitting another student's work whether or not it has been previously submitted by that student;

**PVC** means Pro Vice-Chancellor;

**Register** means the records relating to Breaches of Academic Integrity stored in the University's on-line Complaints Management System and records system;

**Staff member** means anyone employed by the University and includes all continuing, fixed-term, casual, adjunct or honorary staff or those holding University offices or who are a member of a University committee; and

**VET** means Vocational Education and Training.

## PROCEDURES

### Identification

A University staff member may identify an instance of alleged breach of academic integrity by a student. Breaches of academic integrity include but are not limited to:

- Plagiarism;
- Committing an act of collusion;
- Falsifying or fabricating data, results, references, sources, or other information;
- Cheating or attempting to cheat in examinations or other forms of assessment including but not limited to:
  - Dishonest or attempted dishonest conduct such as speaking to other candidates or communicating with them by any means whatsoever;
  - Taking into, or using in connection with, any assessment session any unauthorised textbook, notebook, memorandum, or other written material or mechanical or electronic device;
  - Consulting any personal materials without permission to do so;
  - Leaving answers exposed to view, or persistent attempts to read other student examination answers;
  - Behaving in a manner that compromises the integrity of the assessment process; and
  - Acquiring, attempting to acquire, possessing, or distributing examination materials and information without the authorisation of the appropriate officer;
- Impersonating or allowing himself or herself to be impersonated by any person in, or for the purposes of, any assessment item;
- In Higher Education, reusing an assessment already submitted in the same or another unit;
- Behaving in any manner that may provide a misleading basis for assessment;
- Tampering or attempting to tamper with examination scripts, class work, grades or class records or official testamurs;
- Acquiring/receiving and/or using copies of confidential worked solutions; and/or
- Voluntarily and consciously assisting another student in the commission of one or more of these breaches.

### Consultation

In cases of an alleged breach of academic integrity, the University staff member will contact the unit coordinator/team leader with the allegation and any supporting evidence.

### Discussion

The unit coordinator/team leader will contact the student/s involved to seek a resolution. This will be accomplished via a discussion between the student/s and the unit coordinator/team leader. This discussion may be face-to-face or by telephone. Only in exceptional circumstances will it be via email or other mode of communication.

Either party may seek guidance from the Complaints Officer on how to express their concern.

Based on the evidence presented and the discussion (refer to [Principles for Addressing Student Grievances Guidelines](#)), the unit coordinator/team leader will determine if there is sufficient evidence to support the allegation of a breach of academic integrity.

### Outcomes of discussion

In all cases, the student will be counselled about appropriate academic practice including providing information on accessing University student support resources e.g. [Study and Learning Skills](#) Online and CDU Referencing Guide.

If appropriate, the student will be referred to the Office of Student Administration and Equity Services and/or to the Academic Language and Learning Support Program (SALL) for further assistance in addressing concerns affecting academic performance.

Where the unit coordinator/team leader determines there is insufficient evidence of a breach of academic integrity, the allegation will be dismissed.

If the allegation is supported, prior to determining further appropriate interventions, the unit coordinator/team leader will contact the Complaints Officer to request a report on breaches recorded in the Register.

The Complaints Officer will provide a summary of previous Register entries for the student/s involved. This summary will only include type, number and dates of any previous entries.

**Educative interventions:** Where there are no previous entries in the Register and the unit coordinator/team leader believes the breach has resulted from misunderstanding, inexperience or carelessness, the unit coordinator/team leader may determine that the work is to be resubmitted with a maximum possible grade of Pass, or that the work is to be marked taking full account of the deficiencies in achieving the intended learning outcomes. These interventions are part of the education process and will provide the student with comprehensive feedback on current deficiencies and strategies for addressing these deficiencies. The student will be advised that a confidential record of the breach will be kept in a secure location.

In cases when:

- There are previous entries in the Register, and/or
- The unit coordinator/team leader believes the breach has NOT resulted from misunderstanding, inexperience or carelessness, and/or
- The breach is related to examinations, and/or
- The student maintains denial of a breach of academic integrity in the face of evidence that on the balance of probabilities would lead a reasonable person to conclude that a breach had occurred, and/or
- The student requests escalation of the matter,

the unit coordinator/team leader will escalate the allegation to the Head of School (or relevant PVC if the Head of School is the unit coordinator).

### Documentation of process

The allegation, a brief description of the nature of the alleged breach, and the type of intervention will be recorded on the Register by the unit coordinator/team leader. The unit coordinator/team leader will attach all supporting documentation including a copy of the student's work and any plagiarism detection or other

relevant reports. A copy of the allegation and supporting documentation will be provided to the student and academic staff member.

Records related to breaches of academic integrity and/or appeals will be kept separately from Academic Records. Files will be disposed of according to the relevant University Records Disposal Schedule.

### Escalation to Head of School

If the unit coordinator/team leader cannot resolve the alleged breach of academic integrity through discussion, the allegation will be referred to the Head of School for investigation.

While support, guidance and advice on this process may be sought from the Complaints Officer, unit coordinators/team leaders are expected to produce their own documentation.

### Review of allegation

The Head of School will make a thorough review of the allegation (refer to [Principles for Addressing Student Grievances Guidelines](#)). In the interests of procedural fairness, the student/s must be provided with an opportunity to be heard and due regard given to information provided by the student/s.

Relevant information from other sources will be included in the investigation.

Based on the evidence presented, Head of School will determine if there is sufficient evidence to support the allegation of a breach of academic integrity.

### Outcome of the review

Where the Head of School determines that there is insufficient evidence of a breach of academic integrity, the allegation will be dismissed.

If the allegation is supported, prior to determining further appropriate interventions, the Head of School will contact the Complaints Officer to request a report on breaches of a similar nature recorded in the Register against the student/s concerned.

The Complaints Officer will provide access to the student's records, if any, on the Register.

**Educative interventions:** Where the Head of School believes the breach has resulted from misunderstanding, inexperience or carelessness, or there are sufficient mitigating circumstances, the Head of School will determine, in consultation with the unit coordinator/team leader, that the work is to be resubmitted with a maximum possible grade of Pass, or that the work is to be marked taking full account of the deficiencies in achieving the intended learning outcomes. These interventions are part of the education process and will provide the student with comprehensive feedback on current deficiencies and strategies for addressing these deficiencies.

**Disciplinary interventions:** Where the Head of School believes the breach has NOT resulted from misunderstanding, inexperience or carelessness, and/or there are not sufficient mitigating circumstances, and/or there are previous entries of a similar nature in the Register, the Head of School will either award zero marks for the piece of work/examination in which the breach has occurred; or award a Fail grade for the whole unit of which the piece of work concerned is a part. The Head of School may recommend to the Examinations Board that a supplementary assessment is not to be allowed.

However, in cases of serial breaches of academic integrity or in cases where the breach is substantial and serious (for example, the purchase or selling of assessment work, stealing of examination papers, leading collusion rackets etc.), the Head of School will refer the matter to the relevant PVC for hearing by a Board of Inquiry.

## Documentation of review

The Head of School will provide the unit coordinator/team leader and student/s with a written decision on the allegation including the basis for the decision within ten (10) working days of having received the written allegation.

If a decision cannot be reached within ten (10) days, the Head of School will provide the student with written notice of the steps being taken to resolve the allegation and an estimate of the time required until a decision can be provided. The Head of School will monitor the review, ensuring that the student is appraised in writing of the progress and provided with a written decision including the basis for the decision as soon as possible.

The Head of School will enter the outcome of the review, a rationale for the decision, a copy of the written notice to the student and any supporting documentation not already on record into the Register.

Records related to breaches of academic integrity and/or appeals will be kept separately from Academic Records. Files will be disposed of according to the relevant University Records Disposal Schedule.

## Escalation to a Board of Inquiry

If the Head of School refers the matter to the relevant PVC for hearing by a Board of Inquiry, or the PVC is dissatisfied with the progress of the matter and removes it for hearing by a Board of Inquiry, the student will be advised in writing of this escalation.

The PVC will establish a Board of Inquiry comprised of:

- The relevant PVC;
- Associate Dean, Learning and Teaching;
- HE Head of School from a Team/School not involved in the original allegation; and
- A student nominated by the CDU Student's Association.

In order to allow a comprehensive assessment of the allegation, the Head of School will provide all supporting documentation including a copy of the student's work and Register reports.

## Review by Board of Inquiry

The Board of Inquiry will make a thorough review of the allegation (refer to [Principles for Addressing Student Grievances Guidelines](#)).

## Outcome of the Inquiry

Where the Board of Inquiry believes there is insufficient evidence of a breach of academic integrity, the allegation will be dismissed.

**Educative interventions:** Where the Board of Inquiry believes the breach has resulted from misunderstanding, inexperience or carelessness, or there are sufficiently mitigating circumstances, the Board of Inquiry will determine, in consultation with the Head of School, that the work is to be resubmitted with a maximum possible grade of Pass, or that the work is to be marked taking full account of the deficiencies in achieving the intended learning outcomes. These interventions are part of the education process and will provide the student with comprehensive feedback on current deficiencies and strategies for addressing these deficiencies.

**Disciplinary interventions:** Where the Board of Inquiry believes the breach has NOT resulted from misunderstanding, inexperience or carelessness, and/or there are previous entries of a similar nature in the Register, the Board of Inquiry will either award zero marks for the piece of work/examination in which the breach has occurred; or award a Fail grade for the whole unit of which the piece of work concerned is a part. The Board of Inquiry may recommend to the Examinations Board that a supplementary assessment is not to be allowed.

In cases of serial breaches of academic integrity or a substantial serious breach, the Board of Inquiry may:

- Determine that the student be excluded from the University for a period of twelve (12) months from the effective date of exclusion; or
- Determine that the student be expelled from the University; or
- Recommend to the Academic Board that a degree or other award be rescinded.

Any disciplinary interventions imposed by the Board of Inquiry will not be implemented for a period of twenty (20) working days in order to provide the student with an opportunity to lodge an appeal. If an appeal is lodged, no intervention will be implemented until the appeal has been heard and an outcome determined.

### **Documentation of Inquiry**

The PVC will provide the student and Head of School with a written decision on the matter including the basis for the decision within ten (10) working days of having received the documentation.

The outcome of the review, a rationale for the decision, a copy of the written notice to the student and any supporting documentation not already on record will be submitted to the Complaints Officer for entry into the Register.

### **Lodging of an Appeal**

If the student believes that procedural fairness has not been followed in relation to the alleged breach of academic integrity, and/or additional evidence is available, and/or that an intervention imposed has been unjust given the circumstances in which the breach occurred, an appeal may be lodged. If the appeal is on the basis of unjust intervention, the Academic Appeals Committee will rule only on the intervention.

The student contacts the Manager, Appeals and Review, OLOC to lodge an appeal. Appeals must be lodged within twenty (20) working days of the student being notified of the determination. The Manager, Appeals and Review may extend the deadline for the submission of an academic complaint in exceptional circumstances. The Manager, Appeals and Review enters the appeal on the Register.

### **Review by University Academic Appeals Committee**

The Manager, Appeals and Review will organise a meeting of the University Academic Appeals Committee.

The Academic Appeals Committee will follow the [\*Principles for Addressing Student Grievances Guidelines\*](#). The Committee may review documentation, seek clarification or request further information to support its deliberations.

The University Academic Appeals Committee will meet to make a determination as soon as possible and within twenty (20) working days of the lodging of the Appeal.

The student may at any time withdraw the appeal by writing to the Manager, Appeals and Review who will inform members of the Academic Appeals Committee.

## Outcome of Appeal

The Academic Appeals Committee may uphold the original decision or recommendation, or uphold the appeal and undertake such action as it sees fit.

All decisions of the Academic Appeals Committee are final. All penalties other than rescinding an award are implemented through the authority of the Academic Appeals Committee. If the finding of the Academic Appeals Committee is that an award should be rescinded, the case and grounds for the finding will be presented to Council for determination.

## Documentation of Appeal

The Academic Appeals Committee will provide the student with a written decision on the appeal including the basis for the decision within twenty (20) working days of having received the appeal. A copy of the decision and any associated recommendations will be sent to the appropriate Head of School. A copy will also be sent to the PVC Faculty if there was a Board of Inquiry.

If a decision cannot be reached within twenty (20) working days, the Academic Appeals Committee will provide the student with written notification of the steps being taken to resolve the appeal and an estimate of the time required until a decision can be provided. The Academic Appeals Committee will monitor the review, ensuring that the student is appraised in writing of the progress and provided with a written decision including the basis for the decision as soon as possible.

A copy of all documentation will be submitted to the Manager, Appeals and Review for entry into the Register.

## Retention of Documentation

Records related to breaches of academic integrity and/or appeals will be kept separately from Academic Records. Files will be disposed of according to the relevant University Records Disposal Schedule.

## External Avenues

If the student complainant is dissatisfied with the final outcome of the appeal, he or she may refer the matter to an external organisation which, depending upon the nature of the complaint could include:

- The Northern Territory Ombudsman; or
- A lawyer.

## ESSENTIAL SUPPORTING INFORMATION

### Internal

[Academic and Scientific Misconduct Policy](#)

[Academic Assessment and Moderation Policy](#)

CDU Grievance Complaint Form

CDU Referencing Guide

CDU Study and Learning Skills

[Equal Opportunity Policy](#)

[Higher Education Examination Policy](#)

[HE Students – Academic Progression Procedures](#)

[Principles for Addressing Student Grievances Guidelines](#)

Student Academic Appeals Form

[Student Conduct By-Laws](#)

[Students Policy](#)

## Document History and Version Control

<b>Last amendment:</b>	15 Dec 2017	<b>Next Review:</b>	Jan 2013
<b>Sponsor:</b>	Director, Strategic Services and Governance		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Manager, Complaints Management Unit		

Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Brief Description
1.00	28 Jan 2011	Academic Board	Creation of original document and upload to CDU website.
1.01	3 Jun 2011	Chair of Academic Board	Change "Grievance Officer" to "Complaints Officer" and insert "Manager, Appeals and Review" as appropriate to reflect positions now established in Office of Leadership and Organisational Culture.  Alter procedure for recording complaints and supporting documentation to reflect introduction of on-line entry into database, rather than use of paper forms.
1.02	14 May 2013	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Added and updated definitions</li> <li>● Updated and added hyperlinks</li> <li>● Removed references to NT Manager</li> </ul>
1.03	25 Jul 2013	Academic Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 'In Higher Education' added to definition of reusing assessment</li> </ul>
1.04	5 Aug 2013	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Assigned document number</li> <li>● Converted to current template</li> <li>● Updated and add hyperlinks</li> <li>● Minor changes to wording, grammar and formatting</li> </ul>
1.05	15 Dec 2017	Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Conversion to new template due to new University branding</li> <li>● Updated definitions</li> <li>● Updated hyperlinks</li> <li>● Amended Contact officer from Director, Office of Leadership and Organisational Culture to Manager, Complaints Management Unit</li> <li>● Added a Sponsor Director, Strategic Services and Governance</li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Used with permission: Flinders University [Policy on Academic Integrity](#)