4.30.1 Academic Integrity and Honesty

Overview

Academic integrity means being honest in academic work and taking responsibility for learning and applying the conventions of scholarship. This policy is intended to
- define and articulate the importance of maintaining academic integrity
- provide a framework that assists in identifying failure to maintain academic integrity
- outline methods of determining what constitutes major or minor cases of failing to maintain academic integrity.

1. Academic Excellence

UQ College is committed to excellence of learning experiences and outcomes for its students. It aims to provide a learning environment that fosters and instils in all students the qualities of independent scholarly learning, critical judgment, academic integrity and ethical sensitivity.

Ethical and honest behaviour and treatment underpin the College’s relationship with its students and preserve the value and quality of learning.

All UQ College community members share responsibility for maintaining the academic standing of UQ College awards.

It is the College’s task to encourage ethical scholarship and to inform students and staff about the institutional standards of academic behaviour expected of them in learning, teaching and research. Students have a responsibility to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity in their work. Students must not cheat in examinations or other forms of assessment and must ensure that they do not plagiarise.

The College is committed to providing clear guidance and assistance to students to ensure that they understand the requirement to maintain academic integrity and are aware of the consequences of a failure to do so.

Any actions or practice by a student which undermines or defeats the purpose of assessment will be regarded as a failure to maintain academic integrity and will be dealt with as student misconduct under the procedures set out in 4.30.3 Student discipline.
This policy applies to all students undertaking studies at UQ College. Academic integrity issues will be dealt with through the relevant Programs Coordinator/teacher and the General Manager, Education and Training for administrative purposes.

**Description**

2. **Academic Integrity**

One of the core attributes that UQ College aims to develop in its graduates is critical judgement: the ability to apply critical reasoning to issues through independent thought and informed judgement and to evaluate opinions, make decisions and to reflect critically on the justifications for decisions. Implicit in this goal is that learning rests on and builds on the work and ideas of others. However, it is important that students in their learning acknowledge, through appropriate referencing, earlier work and research from which they have drawn conclusions or interpretations or might advance new ideas. This is fundamental to the concept of academic integrity in the western tradition.

Referencing demonstrates that the student has read widely, is aware of authoritative scholarship in the field and has based his/her ideas on earlier research or evidence. This is central to research-based learning. Failure to reference appropriately will be considered unethical academic behaviour and could result in allegations of misconduct.

2.1 **Poor academic practice**

There will be instances when a student unintentionally fails to cite sources or to do so adequately. For example, a student

- may clearly recognise the need for referencing but references carelessly or inadequately for the context of the relevant discipline;
- has undertaken extensive research but, in the process, loses track of the source of some material;

Careless or inadequate referencing or failure to reference will be considered poor academic practice and a demonstration of carelessness in research and presentation of evidence. The student may be required to correct the error or may lose marks.

Academic staff have a responsibility to educate students about appropriate citation practices in the context of their discipline and provide clear examples of what is acceptable.

2.2 **Common knowledge**

In every discipline, there is a body of knowledge and material that has become part of the public domain and which can be drawn on without specific acknowledgment. Students should receive an early introduction to the concept of 'common knowledge' and be engaged in a discussion of what is considered common knowledge in the context of their discipline.

Common knowledge also includes facts that are generally known, such as common facts of history, commonsense information, accepted folklore and aphorisms/clichés that have been adopted as part of common English language.

As examples, it would not be necessary to reference the following:

- That Neil Armstrong landed on the Moon in July 1969 (common fact of history)
- That Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin (common fact of history)
- The definition of photosynthesis (common knowledge in the discipline)
- That humans need food and water for survival (commonsense observation)
- That Count Dracula lived in Transylvania (accepted folklore)
- *Life wasn't meant to be easy* (aphorism/cliché)
2.3 Collaboration and Collusion

While collaborative learning is now encouraged, it can inadvertently lead to collusion and allegations of misconduct unless students appreciate the distinction between collaboration and collusion, are given very specific instructions about assessment requirements, and are informed about what and how they will be assessed.

To minimise the potential for collusion, staff should –

- make very clear to students what they consider to be the difference between permitted collaboration (or cooperation) and prohibited collusion; and remind students that collusive behaviour may result in allegations of misconduct
- through the Course Profile
  - clearly inform students about the extent to which a piece of assessment may be collaborative and/or must be solely the work of the student
  - set appropriate conditions for group work and make clear the distinction between group work and individual work
  - where a group submission is permitted, remind students that the extent of any collaboration must be acknowledged and inform students how individual contributions will be assessed.

3. Maintaining academic excellence

3.1 Staff responsibilities

Program Coordinators should:

- inform all students of appropriate referencing techniques and provide clear examples of what is acceptable
- clearly explain academic expectations and what constitutes plagiarism to students in course profile literature.
- set realistic assessment loads and vary assignments and questions from semester to semester.
- set appropriate conditions for group work and make clear the distinction between group work and individual work.
- cultivate, with their students, a climate of mutual respect for original work.

3.2 Student responsibilities

Students should:

- submit only work that is their own or that properly acknowledges the ideas, interpretations, words or creative works of others.
- avoid lending original work to others for any reason.
- be clear about assessment conditions for assessment items.
- be clear about what is appropriate referencing and the consequences of inappropriate referencing in their discipline
- discourage others from plagiarising by observing the practices above.

4. Failure to maintain academic integrity

Failure to maintain academic integrity includes, but is not limited to, the following.

(a) Cheating in examinations
Cheating in examinations includes any action or attempted action on the part of a student which might gain that student an unfair advantage in the examination. Common methods of cheating include:

- bringing into the examination unauthorised material
- having access to unauthorised written notes either on paper or another object, or on the student’s body, during the examination
- communicating with others during the examination through speaking to others or via electronic or other means
- copying or reading another student’s work during the examination.

(b) Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves representing another person’s ideas or work as one’s own. It may also include resubmitting one’s own work for another assessment item.

Common forms of plagiarism include

- direct copying, summarising, or paraphrasing another person's work without appropriate acknowledgement of the sources (such acknowledgment must take the form required by the particular discipline)
- using or developing an idea or hypothesis from another person's work without appropriate acknowledgement
- representing the work of another person as the student’s own work
- copying non-word based material such as diagrams, musical score, audio-visual materials, art work, plans etc. and presenting them as one’s own work
- using another person's experimental results as one's own or without appropriate acknowledgment.

(c) Other forms

Other forms of failing to maintain academic integrity include, but are not limited to

- giving or providing for sale one’s own work to another person, company or web-site etc. for copying or use by another person
- misrepresenting, falsifying, misstating or fabricating data, for the purpose of assessment
- purchasing or otherwise obtaining assessment material through individuals, companies or web-based tools/services
- collusion or collaborating with others where not authorised in the assessment requirements.

5. Determining minor or major cases of failing to maintain academic integrity

For dealing with cases of failure to maintain academic integrity, it must be determined whether the case represents a minor or major breach.

The following considerations can be used to assist in assessing whether the breach is minor or major

- **Extent** – how much of the assessment item is in question (for example, a few sentences or several paragraphs); and what proportion of the marks for the entire unit does this assessment item physically represent (for example, 10% or 50-60%) and what impact does the proportion have on the overall outcome of the assessment
- **Level** – at what level is the student in their course and how long has the student been at UQ College
- **Knowledge** – the student’s exposure to the accepted practices, and cultural norms (for both domestic and international students)
- **Discipline and its conventions** – what are the accepted practices in the student’s discipline and the extent to which these practices have been made clear to the student
Recidivism – whether the student has been found to have breached the principles of academic integrity in the past

(a) Minor cases

Minor cases of failing to maintain academic integrity include, but are not limited to:

- incidental plagiarism (inadequate, incorrect or inconsistent citation and/or referencing of sources, paraphrasing too close to the original) including minor copying of material, such as copying up to a few sentences (note that this may sometimes be inadvertent, for example, if a student mistakes a verbatim transcript in their notes as their own words)
- copying of a small number of answers to questions at the end of laboratory practicals

Where it is determined that a minor breach of academic integrity has occurred, the Course Teacher should grade the student as appropriate to the criteria for the assessment item, and provide an explanation if lower marks have been given against specific criteria relating to appropriate referencing or acknowledgment of source material.

Procedures for dealing with minor cases are found at 4.30.3 Student discipline.

(b) Major cases

All other cases of failing to maintain academic integrity are dealt with as major misconduct in accordance with procedures set out in 4.30.3 Student discipline.

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