



Document ID:	ACD 5.6 Academic Misconduct
Responsibility:	Manager, Academic Development
Version	1
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POLICY TITLE: ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

AMENDMENT HISTORY:

Issue Date:	Summary of Changes
12/05/2009	Initial Version



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PURPOSE:

This document outlines the policy relating to the management of ACN's Academic Misconduct Policy.

SCOPE:

ACN staff and students must comply with ACN Academic Misconduct Policy.

POLICY

1.0 ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

1.1 Academic Honesty, Cheating, and Plagiarism

La Trobe University regards academic honesty as the foundation of teaching, learning, and research and scholarship. It requires its academic staff and students to observe the highest ethical standards in all aspects of academic work. The University demonstrates its commitment to these values by awarding due credit for honestly conducted scholarly work, and by penalising academic dishonesty and all forms of cheating.

ACN, as a provider of La Trobe University courses, the ACN Academic Misconduct Policy is consistent with La Trobe University's Academic Misconduct Policy (REFERENCE ACD 5.6 R2)

Responsibility:

- It is the responsibility of the academic staff to conduct research and scholarship according to ethical standards of scholarship, and to teach their students ethical learning and research and scholarship practices;
- It is the responsibility of the students to acquire a clear understanding of how to avoid unethical practices, and to employ this knowledge in their work submitted for assessment.

Academic staff or students who engage in fraudulent or unethical research and scholarship practices will become subject to the disciplinary procedures of ACN and La Trobe University, as will students who cheat in tests, examinations, essays, or any other assessable work, or conspire with others to procure such a result.

1.2 Plagiarism

One form of academic cheating is plagiarism, the reproducing of someone else's words, ideas or findings and presenting them as one's own without proper acknowledgment. There are many forms of plagiarism, including the following:



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- direct copying of sentences, paragraphs or other extracts from someone else's published work (including on the Internet and in software) without acknowledging the source;
- paraphrasing someone else's words without acknowledging the source;
- using facts and information derived from a source without acknowledging it;
- using ideas directly derived from an identifiable author without acknowledging the source;
- producing assignments which should be the student's own independent work in collaboration with and/or using the work of other people (e.g. a student or tutor).

Assisting another person to plagiarise material may be punished as severely as is plagiarism itself. Assisting plagiarism may involve a student lending work (or by posting it on the Internet for sale) which is intended for submission for assessment, or which has already been submitted, so that it can be copied and handed in by another student as that student's own work.

Students may find it helpful to discuss assignments with other students and their tutors. Students are encouraged to communicate with one another in constructive ways about the learning process. Students may choose to assist each other, for example in discussing the approaches that might be taken to assignment topics, or helping with the availability of reading materials. They should, however, write their assignments independently, except when they are asked to work on a project as a member of a group which is to submit a joint report, as equal contributors. In this case, except where the final written work consists of sections for which particular individuals take sole responsibility, the group as a whole assumes responsibility for it and the proper acknowledgment of any use made of the words or ideas of people outside the group.

The vigilance in regard to plagiarism is in response to the perceived growing incidence of plagiarism. The recommended penalties reflect the value ACN and La Trobe University place on academic honesty and how seriously it regards plagiarism offences.

2.0 DEFINITION

Minor Offences are limited instances of academic misconduct for example, breaches in referencing/ collaboration/contravening examination rules which in the case of first year students are normally due to inexperience/ lack of understanding and could be seen as being predictable. In respect of later year students, the actions or omissions would typically be isolated and not systematic or significant.

Serious Offences are those where the extent, magnitude, repetitiveness and/or blatancy of the misconduct for example referencing/ collaboration/contravening examination rules are significant and there is:

- a clear intention to obtain an unfair academic advantage whether the advantage occurs or not; or
- a clear disregard of the University's requirements for academic honesty; or
- negligence in respect of submitted work which is inconsistent with the experience of the student.



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3.0 POLICY

3.1 Responsibility of ACN

ACN recognises its obligation to educate students in the definition, identification and avoidance of plagiarism. As an international institution it acknowledges that different cultures have diverse attitudes to scholarly authority and originality. Students entering ACN will be informed clearly of the academic standards expected in courses and units, and the precise requirements of referencing that apply in particular disciplines.

The following practices, which constitute the strategy to reduce the incidence of plagiarism as part of its commitment to quality education, will be observed uniformly across all courses:

- ACN will ensure that all students are made aware of its policy on plagiarism for all commencing students;
- there will be an emphasis in the Foundation Studies as well as the first year of undergraduate study on teaching students the skills they need to avoid plagiarism;
- students will be informed that rigorous standards in referencing and acknowledgment of sources will be required in their academic work, and that these standards and practices could differ from those they may have acquired previously in secondary schooling.

This will be achieved by:

- producing and distributing to all students enrolled in a given year clear written guidelines regarding the system(s) of referencing that will be required of students submitting assignments;
- students will be advised on effective methods of academic writing, particularly the requirements in quoting, summarising, and paraphrasing the sources they use; and
- attention will be devoted to the role of reference lists, and how use of these does not absolve the student from the duty of full referencing in essays.

This will form part of first-year training of students in how to analyse issues, think critically, synthesise ideas, use sources, and incorporate evidence into their written assignments;

- academic staff will ensure that their course and unit guides are prepared according to the same high standards of referencing that they demand of students;
- students will be taught why plagiarism is an unethical practice. The rationale for the severity of penalties applied to serious cases will be made clear to them;
- academic staff will ensure that assessment requirements in unit guides are clearly stated, and bring them clearly to students' attention;
- academic staff will ensure that student workloads are commensurate with unit credit point values (so that students are not tempted to plagiarise or cheat in order to meet unduly heavy workload demands);
- academic staff will be required to vary from year to year the major assessment tasks, essay topics and examinations they set in units;
- program guides/assignment manuals will contain the approved definition of plagiarism and its forms, and a warning that the University will use all means at its disposal to detect and punish serious cases of plagiarism. The measures employed by the University to detect plagiarism will be explained to students;



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- every unit guide will contain a reference to the definition of plagiarism, its forms, and the measures the University is using to reduce its incidence;
- warning about the penalties that may be imposed for plagiarism will be published in handbooks, and on noticeboards and web-sites;
- academic staff will only accept work for assessment where a signed statement of authorship is attached by the student, and in the case of essay-based assignments, that the assignment has been submitted to plagiarism detection software
- academic staff will be trained in the procedure of referring the work of students for electronic analysis for the detection of plagiarism.

3.2 Responsibility of the Student

Students have a responsibility to:

- observe in all respects the ethical approaches to learning that the ACN and La Trobe University fosters;
- declare all printed, electronic, graphs, works of art, and other kinds of sources in their work submitted for assessment, from which they obtain material or ideas;
- consult and use the guides and information provided by ACN and La Trobe University to instruct them in the avoidance of plagiarism;
- take part in the sessions on plagiarism avoidance and learning programs provided by ACN to enhance their writing and analytical skills, which will contribute to the diminution of plagiarism in their work;
- seek individual instruction from staff of the Academic Development Unit when they are counselled to do so;
- submit work for assessment with the appropriate statement of authorship, the consent to copying and transmission for electronic analysis for the detection of plagiarism, and declaration that the plagiarism avoidance advice issued for the unit or course has been read;
- retain copies of all assignments they submit for assessment;
- ensure that they do not knowingly or carelessly make their work available to other students in any form; and consult with staff when in doubt about any matter where plagiarism is or may be involved.

3.3 The ACN and La Trobe University's Strategy for Minimising Plagiarism

In addition to providing training opportunities for students in the avoidance of plagiarism as part of its ethical approach to teaching and learning and the promotion of quality in tertiary education, ACN will:

- provide students and academic staff access to effective text matching software, and advice on how to use it;
- run confidential tests through this software for a number of units per semester per faculty as a quality control measure;
- maintain a plagiarism and academic misconduct database, incorporating only cases where a penalty is applied.
- Information contained in the database must be collected, maintained and used in accordance with applicable privacy legislation;
- make the information from this database available to the university as required. Disclosure of this information is not otherwise permitted without the individual's consent unless the disclosure is in accordance with applicable privacy legislation;



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- follow the directives of the La Trobe University Academic Committee on any cases of academic misconduct reported to La Trobe University
- publicise that ACN and La Trobe University are committed to upholding the highest standards of academic honesty in its units and courses;

4.0 GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES

Cases of alleged academic misconduct are bound by procedures detailed in REFERENCE ACD 5.6 R1 - ACN Academic Misconduct Procedures

Cases of alleged academic misconduct in formal examinations are reported to the Head of School in accordance with the procedures outlined in REFERENCE ACD 5.6 R1 - ACN Academic Misconduct Procedures

REFERENCES:

Policy Number:	Policy Title
REFERENCE ACD 5.6 R1	ACN Academic Misconduct Procedure
REFERENCE ACD 5.6 R2	LTU Academic Misconduct Policy
REFERENCE ACD 5.6 R3	LTU Academic Misconduct Guidelines
REFERENCE ACD 5.6 R4	LTU Academic Misconduct Procedure
REFERENCE ACD 5.6 R5	Academic Misconduct Handout