Academic Integrity Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish a framework to maintain high academic integrity of the educational services offered by Foundation Education Pty Ltd, also referred to as FE throughout this policy (RTO 22557).

Academic integrity is defined as 'the moral code of academia. It involves using, generating, and communicating information in an ethical, honest, and responsible manner' (Monash University, 2013). This definition applies to the behaviour of students, trainers, assessors, workplace supervisors, employers, or others who are engaged in any form of educational training and assessment activity.

2. Policy Scope

This policy applies to:

•   Students (enrolled or prospective)

•   Students' supervisors/employers

•   RTO's Trainers & Assessors

•   RTO's Student Support Officers

•   RTO's Management

3. Responsibilities

3.1   Management

Management must contribute to a culture of academic integrity that benefits both students and FE.

3.2   RTO Employees

1. All FE employees need to employ correct acknowledgement practice in their training and assessment when they are using text, images, videos and other sourced information from others. Such acknowledgement practices may be accommodated in or modified by prevailing copyright, licensing and intellectual property requirements, which should be accessible to staff and students who may need to be aware of those requirements

2. FE Trainers & Assessors must uphold the academic integrity policy by clearly communicating expectations for assignments, providing proper guidance on citation and referencing, and ensuring fair assessment. They also have a responsibility to identify and address instances of academic dishonesty, while also being held accountable under the policy itself.

3.3   Students

All FE students are expected to adhere to the academic integrity policy by submitting their own work, properly attributing sources, and following the rules and guidelines set for assessment, tasks, and projects.

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4. Definitions and Acronyms

Term	Definition
Academic integrity	Is defined as 'the moral code of academia. It involves using, generating, and communicating information in an ethical, honest, and responsible manner' (Monash University, 2013).
Academic Misconduct	Refers to a breach of academic integrity; cheating, plagiarism, collusion, fabrication, or falsification are examples of such breaches. A breach may be any act, practice or behaviour which can compromise the integrity, accuracy, validity, and fairness of the assessment process.
Plagiarism	Is the act of using someone else's ideas, words, creative works, or intellectual property without proper acknowledgment or permission and presenting them as one's own. It involves deliberately or unintentionally copying, paraphrasing, or closely imitating content from sources such as books, articles, websites, or other media, and failing to give appropriate credit to the original author or creator.
Cheating	The act of using dishonest or unethical methods to gain an unfair advantage in academic assignments, tests, exams, or other learning-related activities. It involves attempting to present work or knowledge as one's own when it is the result of unauthorized collaboration, copying, plagiarism, or using prohibited resources.
Collusion	Refers to the act of collaborating with others in an unauthorised or unethical manner to produce academic work, assessments, or assignments that are meant to be completed individually. Collusion involves working together to achieve a shared outcome without proper attribution or acknowledgment.
Fabrication	Refers to the act of inventing or making up information, data, results, or details and presenting them as genuine or factual. This could involve creating fictional sources, data points, experiments, or research findings to support an argument or claim.
Falsifying	Involves altering or manipulating existing information, data, or evidence to misrepresent the truth or create a false impression. This can include changing numbers, results, quotes, or other elements within an academic work to fit a desired narrative.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	(In the context of studying) refers to the application of advanced computational techniques and technologies that aim to replicate human-like cognitive processes and decision-making abilities in machines or computer systems.
RPL	Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is a process that assesses competency—acquired through formal and informal learning—to determine if the student meet the requirements for a unit of study. (ASQA)

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5. Compliance Requirement

As outlined in the ASQA Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2025,

- Standard 1.3: The assessment system is fit-for-purpose and consistent with the training product. complies with the assessment requirements of the relevant training package or VET accredited course.
- Standard 1.4: The assessment system ensures assessment is conducted in a way that is fair and appropriate and enables accurate assessment judgement of VET student competency
- Standard 1.5: The assessment system is quality assured by appropriately skilled and credentialled persons through a regular process of validating assessment practices and judgements.
- Standard 1.6: VET students with prior skills, knowledge and competencies are supported to seek recognition of prior learning to progress through the relevant training product.
- Standard 1.7: VET students who have completed an equivalent training product are supported to obtain a credit transfer.

Implementing the Rules of Evidence as part of valid assessment; the evidence used to make a decision about competence must be valid, sufficient, authentic, and current. Particularly, to meet the rule of **Authenticity**, RTO should:

a. Ensure that evidence gathered 'belongs' to the student being assessed and provides evidence of that person's skills and knowledge. For example, group assessments may not provide authentic evidence for each student involved in the group assessment.

b. Verify that the person we are enrolling, training and assessing is the same person that will be issued with a qualification or statement of attainment. This can be particularly challenging for the online training provider where there are more opportunities for students to submit the work of others than there are in a 'traditional' classroom setting. An identifying check during practical assessment (such as work placement) could be used as a way of verification.

c. Where portions of the evidence submitted are gathered through independent study (e.g., assignments or projects) rather than through direct observation, consider using online systems to check work submissions for plagiarism and identical content in other submissions.

At a Certificate III level, students may source and cite websites and learner material. It is recommended that students quote or cite sources of information in their responses.

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6. Practice

6.1 Commitment

FE is committed to creating a culture of academic integrity and will:

1. Cultivate an environment where honesty, integrity, and ethical behaviour are celebrated and valued.

2. Set clear expectations through policies, procedures, communication, and example.

3. Provide proper guidance to avoid unintentional plagiarism and clarify any doubts students might have.

4. Acknowledge the importance of professional development and support for staff to identify signs of cheating, promote fair assessment practices, and effectively address cases of academic dishonesty.

5. Encouraging regular open discussions about academic ethics and integrity to reinforce their importance.

6. Apply diverse assessment methods, such as role play, projects, workplace supervisor verification, practical observation and demonstration, to reduce the likelihood of students and assessors relying on dishonest practices.

7. Consistently apply consequences outlined in this academic integrity (and other relevant) policy when cases of misconduct are confirmed.

8. Investigate thoroughly, following established procedures, and ensure a fair and unbiased process for all parties involved when misconduct is identified or reported.

9. Provide timely and constructive feedback that helps students improve their work and understand areas where they might have inadvertently or directly deviated from academic integrity.

6.2 Breaches

What constitutes a breach of academic integrity?

Breaches of academic integrity regarding courses of study include, but are not limited to:

1. Failures of correct acknowledgement practice.

2. Contracting or paying for another person to prepare or undertake an assignment.

3. Submitting (for assessment or review) work prepared by another person.

4. Offering or accepting bribes or gifts (money, sexual or other favours) for enrolment or outcome.

5. Fabrication or falsification of information or student identity.

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6. Copying someone else's work, answers, or signatures and submitting them as your own, without proper attribution or authorization.

7. Collaborating on assignment or assessment when it is explicitly prohibited, resulting in work that does not reflect an individual's understanding or effort.

8. Using notes, textbooks, websites, or other materials that are not allowed during assessment or assignment.

9. Presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as your own without proper citation or acknowledgment.

10. Seeking help or assistance from others during assessment or assignment when it is not allowed.

11. Using other people's work for RPL evidence.

12. Impersonation:

   - having someone else take an assessment or complete an assignment on your behalf, or by logging into someone else's online educational platform, with or without their permission.

   - Pretending to be someone else by using their login credentials to access their accounts or systems.

13. Inventing or falsifying data, research findings, RPL evidence or sources to support your work.

14. Forging signatures of workplace or placement supervisors to support your work.

Other considerations

- Automated Text Generation – AI-powered text generation tools can produce essays, reports, or other written content. Students might misuse these tools to create assignments without understanding the content or plagiarise from various sources.

- Language Translation Tools – Students might use AI translation tools to convert content from one language to another and then claim it as their own, even if they don't understand the content.

Any of these practices undermine the integrity of assessment of students' work and thus place the credentialing authority of the RTO at risk.

6.3   Identification

To mitigate risk and uphold quality, the FE will undertake several processes by which academic misconduct may be identified. The purpose of these ongoing and continuous improvement practices is to recognise signs or symptoms of actual or potential systemic issues.

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Formal identification processes may include:

1. Audits; random but regular internal and external audits

2. Verification of qualifications and statements of attainment from other institutions.

3. Moderation of assessments aimed to bring assessment judgments into alignment.

4. Validation of the assessment process to ensure that the training package requirements are met.

5. Validation of assessment judgements to gain feedback for improving processes, outcomes, and assessor practices.

6. Monitoring online portals and timelines for inconsistent or suspicious misuse of LMS login.

7. For online learning or assessment, enforcing the practice of students using the webcam, microphone, and screen-sharing for authenticity.

8. Trainer & Assessor observation:

- When reviewing written questions, assignments, and projects of student work they may identify inconsistencies, irregularities, or suspicious similarities in students' work.

- Peer comparison, in cases where multiple students submit similar or identical work, the Assessor might compare these submissions to determine if academic misconduct has occurred.

Informal identification may look like:

9. Other students, supervisors, employer, or team members might report suspected cases of academic misconduct to FE.

6.4 Reporting

If any of the previously mentioned breaches of academic misconduct are identified or suspected, they are to be treated as a serious matter and will be reviewed and acted on a case-by-case basis.

To report a concern, the following steps will be followed to ensure that a fair and unbiased approach is taken:

1. Review this Policy, code of conduct in Student Handbook and guidelines to understand the reporting process, responsibilities, and potential outcomes.

2. Inform the appropriate individuals or departments.

3. Collect all relevant evidence of the misconduct or any documentation that supports the claim.

4. Document a detailed account of the observed misconduct, including dates, times, locations, individuals involved, and a description of the offense.

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5. Ensure that the information is handled confidentially and with sensitivity, respecting the privacy of all parties involved.

6. The relevant department Manager initiates an investigation into the reported misconduct. This may involve reviewing evidence, interviewing parties, and conducting a thorough analysis.

7. If the investigation finds evidence of misconduct, the individual accused of the misconduct is informed of the allegations and provided with an opportunity to respond.

8. Depending on the severity of the misconduct, the case may be resolved through various means, such as a meeting with the Assessor, the employer / supervisor to agree on a fair and equitable outcome for all parties. (i.e., in cases where the student is an apprentice or trainee, and their employment is dependent on the progress of studying.)

9. After reviewing the evidence and hearing from all parties, a decision is made regarding the student's responsibility for the misconduct. Appropriate consequences are determined.

10. The individual is informed of the outcome of the investigation, including any consequences that will be imposed as a result of the outcome.

6.5 Consequences

When cases of misconduct are identified or reported, the RTO will conduct an investigation and individual will be assumed as innocent until the investigation has reached an outcome following established procedures and ensure a fair and unbiased process for all parties involved.

Depending on severity and circumstances, penalties of academic misconduct may include one or more of the following (i.e. sanctions may not be discrete):

1. Completion and resubmission of a new assessment task; and/or

2. All parties receiving a "Not Yet Satisfactory" result for the assessment task; and/or

3. Verbal or written warning; and/or

4. Suspension or expulsion from the course (in which case, the student is not eligible for refund).

5. Client records will be noted with all investigated and proven incidents.

All incidents related to a student will be reviewed in a timely manner by the Education Manager. If the alleged misconduct is an RTO staff member, their reporting manager.

6.6 Ongoing Monitoring

Students or employees who have been found to engage in academic misconduct will be subject to random monitoring to prevent future instances of dishonesty and ensure the integrity of the learning environment. The monitoring procedure may vary depending on the severity of the misconduct and the RTO's policies.

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Depending on severity and circumstances, monitoring of academic misconduct may include one or more of the following:

1. Help the student understand the importance of honest academic practices and the consequences of future or ongoing misconduct.

2. Develop a monitoring plan for the student. This plan should outline specific expectations, goals, and actions the student needs to take to demonstrate improved conduct.

3. Implementing an intervention, such as a workshop or professional development session on academic integrity.

4. Schedule check-in meetings with the student to monitor their progress and adherence to the monitoring plan and academic integrity policy.

5. Maintain open communication with the student about their progress and any concerns that arise.

6. Periodically assess the student's work to ensure that they are adhering to academic integrity policy and making progress.

7. If the student has demonstrated improved conduct, work on transitioning them of the monitoring plan with continued support.

8. Keep thorough records of all meetings, communication, progress, and outcomes related to the student's monitoring.

7. References

ASQA Outcome Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2025, Outcome 1: Quality training and assessment engages VET students and enables them to attain nationally recognised, industry relevant competencies.

8. Inquiries

Queries about this Policy can be directed to Education or Quality & Compliance team.

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