Academic Integrity and Preventing Plagiarism Policy

Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) The purpose of this policy is to ensure:

   a. that students and staff are aware of the importance of acknowledging the work of others.
   b. that the University takes a consistent approach to academic integrity.

(2) This policy is supported by the Student Misconduct Regulations, Procedures and guidelines, training and support initiatives for staff and students.

Section 2 - Scope / Application

(3) This policy applies to all students and staff with respect to:

   a. Work submitted for assessment;
   b. Works submitted for publication;
   c. Works involving the use of the research data materials or research findings of others.

Section 3 - Definitions

(4) Academic misconduct- Has the definition given to it in regulation 4 of the Student Misconduct Regulations . Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct.

(5) Bibliography- This is a reference list that includes all the texts and websites that have been read for understanding, as well as those that have been cited in a piece of work.

(6) Collaboration — Academic work that is undertaken jointly by two or more students with the knowledge and consent of the teacher. Collaboration is not plagiarism.

(7) Collusion — This is a deliberate joint attempt by a student and another person or persons to deceive an assessor that work submitted is solely the student's own work. Collusion is a form of plagiarism and a breach of academic integrity.

(8) Paraphrasing — This involves a student/author using someone else's ideas but expressing them in his/her own words. As another person's intellectual output (ideas) are being used, they must be acknowledged, for example by a footnote.

(9) Plagiarism - Please see clauses (13) to (15) below.

(10) Reference List - This includes all of the sources that have been referenced through direct and indirect quotation in the work.

Section 4 - Policy Statement

(11) Academic integrity and honesty are integral to maintaining the academic standards and reputation of the University and its graduates. Victoria University is committed to upholding high standards of academic integrity and honesty.

What is academic integrity?

(12) Academic integrity is the ethical basis upon which academic work is produced. It comprises important values that shape the work of the University in teaching, research and engagement. These are:

   a. Respect for the participatory nature of learning and the work and perspective of others.
   b. Honesty, which involves acknowledging the work and ideas of others.
   c. Fairness, through realistic assessment expectations and clear standards that are applied consistently.
   d. Responsibility, which highlights that every person at the University has a duty to maintain academic integrity.

What is plagiarism?

(13) Plagiarism is the use of another person's intellectual output, presented without appropriate acknowledgement, which creates the impression that the work is being claimed as one's own. The following are examples of plagiarism:

   a. Word for word copying of sentences/paragraphs without acknowledgement or with insufficient or improper acknowledgement;
   b. Purchasing and/or downloading essays or assignments from the web and presenting these for assessment;
   c. Presenting another person's work or research data as your own work;
   d. Copying out parts of any work without acknowledging the source(s). This may be:
      i. written text (verbatim copying or paraphrasing)
      ii. structures within texts
      iii. diagrams
      iv. formulae
      v. sound files
      vi. still photographs
      vii. audio-visual material (sound and image files)
      viii. graphics/animations/multimedia objects
      ix. software and code, including mashed-up products or code
      x. other computer based material
      xi. mathematical proofs
      xii. art objects
      xiii. practical artifacts (ie apprenticeship pieces)
      xiv. other work as relevant.
   e. The use of someone else's concepts, experimental results, experimental conclusions or conclusions drawn from analysing evidence or arguments without acknowledging the originator of the idea(s) or conclusion(s).

(14) Use of one's own previous work in satisfaction of a new assessment requirement may also be impermissible. It is the responsibility of the University to ensure that students are given adequate information and tools to understand the originality requirement for assessment, and how it applies to their studies.

(15) Plagiarism is to be distinguished from incomplete attempts to acknowledge the words, works or ideas of someone

else, as for example when a student makes a genuine attempt to reference their work, but has inadequate referencing skills.

How is plagiarism detected?

(16) Plagiarism can be detected in a variety of ways relevant to the nature of the work being undertaken, including but not limited to:

   a. The use of pattern recognition software for textual written assessment or research materials;
   b. Expert identification of copied themes or ideas in visual arts, practical artifacts, performance pieces and other relevant activities;
   c. Creator or other expert identification of copied research data, formulae, software code or other non-textual material; or
   d. Examiner or peer reviewer noting of copied material in theses, works submitted for publication, or research findings.

(17) Collusion can be detected in a variety of ways relevant to the nature of the work being undertaken, including but not limited to:

   a. The use of pattern recognition software for textual written assessment or research materials;
   b. The identification by an asessor of substantially overlapping or identical assessment responses from two or more students in a unit; or
   c. Examiner or peer reviewer noting of substantially overlapping or identical material in theses, works submitted for publication, or research findings.

(18) In an assessment context, teaching staff carry the major responsibility for ensuring that breaches of academic integrity are detected and acted upon.

(19) The University uses pattern recognition software (eg. Turnitin) to check written work for potential plagiarism. This is an important tool for use by staff and students that has many benefits for the University and its communities. These tools compare submitted text to a constantly growing and comprehensive database of work from across the world on a word by word basis.

(20) Originality Reports are not plagiarism reports, nor are percentage matches indicative of levels of plagiarism. They are simply a tool to assist in bringing work with matching text to assessors' attention. The report requires interpretation and interrogation, and a case by case examination of whether plagiarism has occurred or not must still be performed.

(21) This Clause has intentionally been left blank.

(22) Staff can use pattern recognition software to generate Originality Reports to assist in the identification of written work that may warrant further investigation for potential plagiarism. They can also use the tool as a teaching tool to assist in conveying good academic integrity practices to their students.

(23) Students can use pattern recognition software to generate their own Originality Reports and to self-educate about appropriate acknowledgment.

What is appropriate acknowledgment?

(24) When another's ideas are used they should be acknowledged so that work is not misrepresented as original. This is known as attribution.

(25) It is important that attribution is properly applied to all forms of use of another's work, whether the use is via direct quotation, paraphrasing of key ideas or assertions, use of another's data or findings to construct an argument, or incorporation of themes into one's own product.

(26) The means by which attribution takes place is citation. There are a range of styles of citation (also referred to as referencing), including:

a. In-text referencing
b. Footnotes
c. Endnotes
d. Program or associated notes accompanying practical or visual pieces

Academic apprenticeship

(27) The first year of every student at VU who is enrolled in a course at AQF Level 5 and above includes a period of 'academic apprenticeship'. This applies regardless of their prior academic experience. VU acknowledges that students' past exposure to academic integrity expectations may have been varied, and will work with students to help grow this understanding.

(28) The purpose of an academic apprenticeship is to introduce students to the conventions and language of academic writing as these apply to that unit of study. Typically, an academic apprenticeship will provide students with practical exercises designed to:

a. Develop language skills in a subject area. This may involve tasks requiring student to take ideas from different reading materials relevant to that subject area and to present these in written form using the appropriate referencing system;
b. Clarify referencing and quoting requirements;
c. Teach how to summarise; and
d. Introduce students to the requirements and expectations arising under this policy.

(29) The provision of academic integrity instruction during an academic apprenticeship should be documented by the academic area delivering it.

Part A - Levels of Response to Potential Plagiarism

(30) There are different levels of inadequate acknowledgment reflecting different levels of response to potential breaches of academic integrity. When dealing with suspected or potential plagiarism, the University will address the issue in a manner that is appropriate and proportionate to the severity of the conduct.

Educative Response

(31) An educative response by the teacher / lecturer or research supervisor should be provided to address inadequate or misleading citation, referencing or paraphrasing, or inadvertent collusion, arising mainly from a student's limited knowledge about plagiarism, or how to conform to academic conventions, or from carelessness or neglect rather than an intention to deceive.

(32) This Clause has intentionally been left blank.

(33) The decision to address inadequate acknowledgement in an educative manner does not result in a finding of Academic Misconduct and should not be recorded as an instance of misconduct or plagiarism.

(34) Educative response is, by its nature, non-punitive. An educative response does not include deduction of marks

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beyond the parameters of the usual marks allocated to the demonstration of referencing skills. (For example allocating a grade of zero is not an educative response).

(35) Educative responses may include:

a. Providing verbal or written feedback to the student
b. Providing the opportunity to redo and resubmit the assessment
c. Deducting marks allocated for referencing, with explanation of the reasons
d. Referring the student to one of the academic assistance programs available within the University
e. Providing the student with examples of plagiarised and non-plagiarised texts to assist them in understanding the difference

Plagiarism

(36) Plagiarism includes:

a. a deliberate attempt to deceive an assessor or other relevant person by claiming work as one's own; or
b. an unintentional breach of academic integrity in circumstances where:
   i. adequate knowledge of citation / attribution protocols should have been reasonably expected and has been supported by the University through its information and learning activities; and
   ii. the conduct is a serious deviation from acceptable standards.'

(37) Potential academic misconduct should be dealt with under the [Student Misconduct Procedure](#) or the relevant industrial instrument in the case of staff.

Serious Plagiarism

(38) Serious plagiarism includes copied or appropriated work arising from the clear intention to deceive an assessor or other relevant party, or premeditated cheating by way of plagiarism. The effect of the plagiarism is to seriously compromise the assessment or peer review process.

(39) The University will investigate allegations of academic misconduct involving plagiarism. Investigation will be conducted in accordance with the processes established in the [Student Misconduct Procedure](#) or the misconduct processes established under the relevant industrial instrument (for staff).

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