



## ACS Academic Misconduct Policy

### Preamble

ACS regards academic misconduct as a serious form of professional misconduct and will not accept unfamiliarity with academic conventions as reason to mitigate penalties. As participants within the Professional Year (PY) or Digital Skills Cadetship Trial (DSCT), students have completed an IT qualification and are to be aware of the ethical requirements when completing and submitting coursework.

ACS recognises that appropriate academic conduct is a learning process for some students and will therefore treat instances of academic misconduct as opportunities to promote professionalism and professional behaviour.

As part of the information provided during non-accredited program delivery, including Professional Year Orientation or DSCT's Introduction to SFIA, students are required to read and acknowledge the following documents:

- Student Code of Conduct
- Complaints and Appeals Policy
- Academic Misconduct Policy

Students will not be able to proceed with their ACS studies until they have read and acknowledged these policies.

### Definitions

**Program of Study** includes all non-accredited delivery such as programs and courses offered by the ACS as part of the Professional Year or Digital Skills Cadetship Trial, including, but not limited to, Online Orientation, Introduction to SFIA, Professional Environments, and the Work Integrated Learning (WIL) Program.

**Student** or Participant is used interchangeably to refer to an individual who undertakes any Program of Study offered by ACS.

**Academic Misconduct** includes actions such as plagiarism; breaches of assessment procedures; repeated missed deadlines, falsification or misrepresentation of academic records; behaviour disruptive to the learning of other students; inadequate progress through a program of study; and other actions that contravene the principles of academic integrity and professional ethics.

**Plagiarism** is a specific form and serious act of academic misconduct. For the purposes of this policy, ACS defines plagiarism as:

- a) direct copying of the work of other person/s, from one or more sources, without clearly indicating the origin. This includes both paper-based and electronic sources of material;
- b) using close paraphrasing of sentences or whole clauses without due acknowledgment in the form of reference to the original work;
- c) submitting another student's work in whole or in part, when it is not expressly permitted in the subject's information materials;
- d) use of another person's ideas, work or research data without acknowledgment and/or permission, including but not restricted to graphics, flow charts, diagrams, software applications, executable program code and routines, or any activity that could be defined as a data breach;
- e) submitting work that has been written by someone else on the student's behalf;
- f) in any way appropriating or imitating another's ideas and manner of expressing them where such assistance is not expressly permitted in the subject's information materials.



**Proven Similarity** is defined as the sum of both digital tracing (Turnitin) and analogue records comparison using ACS internal file records of previous student work. Similarity ratings take account of both text, style of expression (grammar, idiom, etc.) and formatting similarities, as well as ideas, concepts and analytical tools used.

**Severe Plagiarism** is identified when a student has repeatedly or wilfully plagiarised as outlined in one or more of the following scenarios:

- a) A student submits assessments (at least two in total) in one module of a course of study that have a proven similarity rating over 80%.
- b) A student submits assessments (at least two in total) in more than one module of a course that have a proven similarity rating over 80%.
- c) A student ignores a Trainer's offer to resubmit material suspected of being plagiarised for more than 72 hours or is not able to provide a reasonable excuse for an extension prior to the deadline.
- d) A student received previous and documented informal warning(s) from a Trainer regarding any assessment that has a similarity rating over 80% and, notwithstanding any resubmissions on that advice, the student submits further and/or additional material in any module of a course of study that has a similarity rating over 80%.

**Inadequate Progress** through a program of study refers to repeated failure, including failure-to-complete, of a requirement, activity, or topic. In some programs of study, this may include exhausting the maximum number of attempts to satisfy a requirement.

**Academic Misconduct Committee** consists of the ACS Education Manager and/or the Director, a senior member of the ACS Education Team, and (when applicable) a representative from the student's education provider.

### **Policy Statement**

ACS will consider academic misconduct in light of:

- the extent of the misconduct;
- the student's intention and/or motivation;
- contextual factors such as stage/level in a program and the student's learning background;
- information provided to the student about academic integrity as part of their program; and
- where applicable, information about a student's prior academic misconduct, whether through ACS or with the education provider.

When ACS staff (trainers, mentor, and administration) suspect academic misconduct by a student, an informal enquiry will be undertaken by the appropriate staff, in some cases in consultation with the ACS Education Manager. If the informal enquiry fails to discover a satisfactory explanation for the student's behaviour, or a satisfactory outcome to the behaviour, a formal enquiry will be undertaken.

A student has a right of appeal against formal outcomes by initiating [ACS's Student Complaints and Appeals Policy](#). At any time, the student may seek external advice by contacting the Council of International Students Australia ([www.cisa.edu.au](http://www.cisa.edu.au)) or the Department of Home Affairs ([www.homeaffairs.gov.au/](http://www.homeaffairs.gov.au/)). However, once ACS has provided a final resolution regarding a student complaint or appeal, this decision is final and cannot be contested.



## Plagiarism Monitoring

Plagiarism is a serious form of academic misconduct. Extensive guidance is provided to students regarding plagiarism; what it is and how it can be avoided in all ACS programs of study. Therefore, plagiarism is not tolerated, just as it is not tolerated in the professional workplace.

Students must complete a plagiarism declaration statement with each major assignment or activity. Once work is submitted, ACS utilises a plagiarism detection software to check student work against all previous submissions and other online content.

Students will receive a similarity rating at or immediately following submission of an assessment. It remains the student's responsibility to check these ratings and, where they appear significant, make appropriate modifications to their work to ensure its originality and appropriate attribution of sources, including to other students' work, websites, or text-based references as required.

ACS investigates and reviews all reports of plagiarism according to principles of fairness and equity, employing both digital and analogue processes to assess and maintain a comprehensive record of all student submissions. Access to these records is protected by privacy legislation and regulatory conventions.

ACS reserves the right to investigate assessments of all work submitted by any student in any course at any time. This includes assessments previously submitted and marked by their Tutor/Trainer as satisfactory. Processes used in the discovery and investigation of plagiarism will not be disclosed to students beyond the plagiarism rating information made available via the similarity detection tool.

## Procedures

### Stage 1: Informal Enquiry into Alleged Misconduct

Where ACS has concerns that the actions of a student may involve academic misconduct, ACS Education (i.e. a trainer, mentor, administrator, and/or Education Manager) will seek to query, educate, and resolve the concern informally with the student. This may be completed through various avenues including, but not limited to, phone, email or face-to-face discussion. Should more than one student be involved in an act of misconduct, they will be informed and observed independently.

### *Possible outcomes of informal enquiry*

Following informal consultation with the student, ACS Education staff will determine that:

- a) no academic misconduct has occurred; therefore, no further action will be taken, and the student will be notified accordingly; or
- b) the action of the student constitutes academic misconduct. ACS Education staff will provide academic counselling to the student and may decide on a further course of action, including re-submission of an assessment, awarding zero marks for an assessment, or another outcome appropriate to the case; or
- c) a more serious or reoccurring offence has occurred. ACS Education staff will lodge notice to initiate a formal enquiry with ACS senior management.

Where these informal approaches resolve and/or correct misconduct, the agreed adjustments and changes will be implemented at that level. If the student chooses not to participate in the informal enquiry, ACS Education staff will decide on the most appropriate outcome.

If the student does not agree to the course of action proposed by ACS Education staff, the student may seek informal mediation or initiate ACS' Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.



## **Stage 2: Formal Enquiry into Alleged Misconduct**

Where informal resolution is not achieved in Stage 1, or the offence is of significant or ongoing concern, ACS Education staff will provide written notice to initiate a formal enquiry with ACS' senior management. Where further information is required, management may contact relevant parties not limited to the reporting staff, lead trainer, provider, or student.

### ***Possible outcomes of formal enquiry***

Following review, management may determine that:

- a) the formal enquiry has insufficient evidence or alleged misconduct has been disproven. No formal action will be taken. Reporting staff will be advised and may be directed to liaise with the student informally. No information about the case will be noted on the student's record; or
- b) the action of the student constitutes academic misconduct (whether with or without intent), and is deemed an offence where standard disciplinary action is applicable (See Table 1 for standard disciplinary action by program of study). The student, associated provider, and ACS Education staff will be sent notification. Information about the case will be noted in the student's record; or
- c) the action of the student constitutes academic misconduct and is deemed an extreme offence. An Academic Misconduct Committee will convene to review the evidence. A representative of the committee will contact the student and invite them to provide evidence regarding the allegation. Following review, the student may be asked to meet with the committee at a physical location or video conference. The formal enquiry may proceed whether or not the student responds or attends. All outcomes and action plans determined by the committee will be formally advised in writing and noted on the student's record.
- d) the student is found to have repeatedly or wilfully plagiarised as per the definition of Severe Plagiarism. Their case may be provisioned and referred to ACS for immediate investigation without prior notice to the student. The outcome of any such investigation can include a range of penalties up to and including course exclusion with no warning (4 demerit points). The student will be notified via email of the outcome.

If the student does not agree to the course of action determined by the formal enquiry, the student may initiate an appeal against the decision (see ACS Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure).



**Table 1: Standard Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Action by Program of Study**

PROFESSIONAL ENVIRONMENTS ONLINE COURSE (PE ONLINE)			
First Warning	Second Warning	Third & Final Warning	Course Exclusion
*Plagiarism Misconduct Escalation		First & Only Warning	Course Exclusion
<p><b>*If a student is found to have repeatedly or wilfully plagiarised, they may be subject to <b>immediate course exclusion with no warning</b>. The student will be notified via email.</b></p> <p><b>Following PE Online Course Exclusion</b>            If a student wishes to complete the program, they will be required to re-enrol in a new PE Online course at their own expense. ACS will allocate students to the next available course resulting in a delayed graduation. For more information regarding re-enrolment processing and required fees, students should contact their education provider.</p> <p><b>Course Attempt Limit = 2 Maximum</b>            If formally excluded from the course due to Academic Misconduct, a student is only allowed to re-enrol in the PE Online course ONCE. Repeated Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated, and no further attempts will be permitted should the student be unsuccessful in a second attempt.</p>			
WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAM (ACS WIL)			
All Misconduct Escalation		First & Only Warning	Program Exclusion
<p><b>If a participant is found to have repeatedly or wilfully plagiarised, they may be subject to <b>immediate program exclusion with no warning</b>. The participant will be notified via email.</b></p> <p><b>WIL Program and Professional Year Program Exclusion</b>            Participants have <b>one</b> enrolment attempt to successfully complete all WIL Program requirements to satisfy the Professional Year Internship component. Repeated Academic Misconduct will not be tolerated, and no further attempts will be permitted should the student be unsuccessful in their first attempt. If a participant is excluded from ACS WIL due to misconduct, they will not complete the Professional Year Program in ICT.</p>			



**End of Document  
ACS Academic Misconduct Policy**

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**Version History**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Revision History (reason for change)</b>	<b>Author /Reviser</b>
<b>October 2018</b>	1	<b>Original document completed</b>	GA
<b>June 2019</b>	2	<b>Revised document to reflect only Professional Year’s non-accredited policy</b>	GA, BKS, BG
<b>March 2021</b>	2.1	<b>Revised document to support PY WIL Program delivery including updating Table 1</b>	BG, PG
<b>Feb 2023</b>	3.0	<b>Revised document to support broad ACS non-accredited course delivery and added new Severity Provision</b>	BG, PG, GA

**Approvals**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Date of Issue</b>	<b>Version</b>
<b>Louise Smith</b>	Director Education and Workforce Development	<b>20/6/19</b>	<b>2</b>
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<b>Siobhan Casey</b>	Director, Migration Pathways	<b>15/2/23</b>	<b>3.0</b>

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