

Academic Misconduct Senior Officer Response Guidelines

Intended to provide guidance and consistency in managing breaches of academic integrity at RMIT, subordinate to policy and procedure

Responsible Officer: Associate Director, Integrity and Assessment Support | Version 1.3 | Date: February 2022 | Review date: February 2023

Student advocacy and support

Students are to be advised of support services that are available to them as part of any investigation or outcome, e.g. Counselling, ELS, study support, RUSU advocacy.

Consideration should be given to all aspects of the misconduct report including, but not limited to:

- any prior breach, warnings or penalties
- student understanding of academic writing requirements (see example boxes below for more details)
- significance of breach
- any compassionate or compelling circumstances

Low level academic integrity breaches may be managed as assessment matters in accordance with the Academic Integrity Policy

Responsibility – Course Coordinator or equivalent.

Educative responses to low-level academic integrity breaches

Level 1 breaches of academic integrity

Determine whether the breach should be managed as an assessment or academic misconduct matter (plagiarism) using the considerations within clause 8 of the Academic Integrity Procedure. The below applies if an assessment matter.

Level 1 (examples only)

- inadequate or incomplete referencing
- paraphrasing without citation
- occurring in first semester or early stages of study
- lack of knowledge about academic integrity
- failure to follow assessment instructions.

Course Coordinator (or equivalent)

In responding to Level 1 breaches, Course Coordinators must:

- explain the breach
- have the student repeat the assessment task and/or deduct up to 20% of the mark for the assessment
- direct the student to engage in educational support services
- provide the student with a written warning noting that subsequent breaches will be handled as an allegation of academic misconduct that may result in more severe penalties
- have the warning recorded with the relevant school academic services team (or equivalent).

If a Course Coordinator suspects a repeat or higher order breach the matter must be referred to a Senior Officer as a potential instance of academic misconduct.

Repeat or higher order academic integrity breaches may be intentional, deliberately planned, organised or systematic and must be reported to a Senior Officer for management under the Student Conduct Policy as potential academic misconduct.

Responsibility – Senior Officer or Student Conduct Board.

Student Conduct responses to instances of academic misconduct

Course coordinator (or equivalent) to refer matter to Senior Officer to determine.

Level 2 breaches of academic integrity

Level 2 (examples only)

- sharing assessments
- extensive direct quotes, paraphrasing, using data without acknowledging source, washing and plagiarism
- submitting the same work or major portions for more than one assignment without appropriate acknowledgement
- breaches that occur after first semester of study (assuming earlier study included demonstrable opportunities to learn about referencing and plagiarism)
- behaving in any way that undermines the integrity of an assessment
- repeated Level 1 academic integrity breach/es.

Refer to a Senior Officer to conduct a hearing or request a written submission

Suggested Level 2 penalties may include:

- recording a failure for all or part of an assessment task
- written reprimand
- requirement to undertake academic integrity module
- other as deemed appropriate (in accordance with the Student Conduct Regulations and Student Conduct policy).

Record kept by School and ARG Integrity.

Level 3 breaches of academic integrity

Level 3 (examples only)

- misuse or unauthorised use of technology, equipment or materials during assessment
- collusion or unauthorised collaboration in the preparation or presentation of work, or during invigilated assessment
- falsification, fabrication, manipulation or misrepresentation of information
- failure to follow professional standards and compliance requirements
- behaviour that violates assessment instructions
- repeated Level 2 academic integrity breach/es.

Refer to a Senior Officer (SO) to consider or refer to the Student Conduct Board

Suggested Level 3 penalties may include:

- recording a failure for all or part of an assessment task
- written reprimand
- requirement to undertake academic integrity module
- fail grade or capped marks for the course
- suspension (SO and Board) or expulsion (Board only)
- other as deemed appropriate by the SO or Board (in accordance with the Student Conduct Regulations and Student Conduct policy).

Record kept by School (where SO decision is made locally) and ARG Integrity.

Responses to serious breaches

Level 4 breaches of academic integrity

Level 4 (examples only)

- any academic integrity breach committed after return from a related suspension
- involves/resembles criminal activity
- having a substitute take an examination or being the substitute (impersonation)
- unauthorised access and use of another student's work
- submitting the work of another person (contract cheating)
- completing an assessment task for another person
- uploading RMIT assessment materials to contract cheating sites
- attempting to gain an unfair advantage in a supervised assessment
- breach of academic integrity in higher research studies
- repeated Level 3 academic integrity breach/es.

Refer to the Student Conduct Board by a Senior Officer

Suggested Level 4 penalties may include:

- suspension or expulsion from RMIT
- imposing conditions on the student's enrolment
- fail grade for the course
- cancellation of results
- other as determined to be appropriate by the Board (in accordance with the Student Conduct Regulations and Student Conduct policy).

Record kept by ARG Integrity.