Academic Misconduct

An integrated approach

Academic misconduct

Objective of procedures:
• Maintain academic integrity at Victoria;
• Identify and address learning needs;
• Develop ethical/professional standards of behaviour and practice generally, and;
• Preserve the reputation and value of our qualifications for the sake of past, present and future students and staff.

Current situation

What is getting in the way?

• Poorly understood by staff and students;
• Staff roles and responsibilities unclear;
• Process is inherently punitive;
• Inconsistencies in escalation and penalties;
• Poorly integrated into academic integrity policy/learning and teaching objectives.

Academic integrity strategy

Underpinnings:

• Plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are not framed as isolated instances of aberrant behaviour;
• Scholarship, academic integrity and intellectual independence are seen as inseparable, and;
• Staff and students share responsibility for academic integrity.

A good fit with:

• partnership model of teaching and learning;
• development of the graduate attributes, and;
• principles of the student charter.
Co-ordinated and proactive:

- Shift emphasis away from avoiding, controlling or preventing misconduct;
- Prioritise development of understanding of research, scholarship and the ‘chain of knowledge’, and
- Maintain and strengthen a culture of academic integrity throughout the institution.

Building on existing strengths…

- Low level academic misconduct is addressed via educative path;
- Resources (such as the website and other materials) are refreshed to advance a more holistic approach;
- Centre for Academic Development and Student Learning Support Services work closely together, and
- Academic integrity issues inform all curriculum and assessment design.

Considerations in assessment design

- Prevention: making it harder to plagiarise
- Good teaching practice: assessment as a learning opportunity

Strategies

- Schedule assessments so that students are not overloaded
- Use a range of different assessment methods (e.g., a mix of tests, oral presentations, assignments, and exams)
- Avoid repeat use of assessments from year to year

Assignments

- Avoid descriptive assignment topics
- Avoid general assignment topics
- Vary the style and format of assignments
- Use staged/tracked assessment programmes

Useful websites

- CAD resources
  - University of Leeds: http://www.lis.leeds.ac.uk/plagiarism/design.php
  - University of Sussex: http://www.sussex.ac.uk/tldu/ideas/acadmiscon/staff/stag/ass
- Turnitin site including webcast