

A08.3 Academic Misconduct

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1 Introduction

1.1 Policy Statement

Academic integrity relies on the application of honesty as the foundation of excellence in scholarship and learning. Students and staff of SAE Institute will conduct themselves in their academic studies honestly and ethically and are expected to carefully acknowledge the work of others in all their academic activities, in creative endeavours, in the production of knowledge through research and in the reproduction of knowledge through scholarship and teaching.

1.2 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide directions on matters of academic honesty and academic misconduct. Students and staff are expected to adhere to the provisions of relevant legislation, and to the rules, policies, regulations, procedures and guidelines of SAE, the accepted ethical practices of the higher education community, and the standards of relevant academic disciplines and professional practice. SAE Institute will take action against any staff member or any student who breaches the provisions of this policy or contravenes any assessment rules or regulations through negligence or deliberate intent in any form of assessment.

2 Scope

This policy applies to all work submitted by students of SAE Institute campuses which are involved in the delivery of validated programmes, including students of self-accredited diplomas or short courses.

2.1 Related Policies and Documents

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and procedures:

- A03 Student Record Management and Data Processing
- A08.2 Scribes and Proofreaders
- A14 Complaints Policy
- A18 Student Code of Conduct
- A20 Intellectual Property and Copyright Policy.

3 Definitions

3.1 Definitions and Categories of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is behaviour that contravenes the values of academic integrity, which breaches rules, policies, direction and guidelines at SAE Institute in relation to assignments and assessment, and which normally includes action taken with the intention of gaining an unfair advantage for self or others. It includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, collusion, cheating and fraud.

Plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the work of others without due acknowledgement, deliberately or inadvertently, and proclaiming it or allowing it to be considered as one's own for academic or other purposes.

Collusion. Collusion is a type of plagiarism that includes but is not limited to presenting the product of unauthorised collaboration to an examiner as independent work. Collusion also occurs when a person knowingly allows his or her work to be copied and passed off as the work of another person.

Cheating. Cheating is improper conduct in examinations or other assessment tasks. It includes but is not limited to:

- Taking unauthorised study material and aids into an examination room.
- Copying from another student.
- Sitting an examination for another student.
- 'Recycling' work that has been prepared for one unit by presenting it as original work for another unit, or re-presenting work previously submitted for an incomplete or failed unit (unless specific permission is given, and the assignment is substantively re-worked).
- Presenting a false reference list or bibliography.

Fraud. Fraud is a form of cheating that includes, but is not limited to creating false data, and falsifying collected data from systematic enquiry and research investigations.

Academic misconduct is taken to be deliberate when a person has had the opportunity to gain an understanding of the practice of academic integrity before the misconduct has occurred but may be inadvertent when the person does not have an understanding of the practice of academic integrity.

4 Need for Confidentiality

Confidentiality is a vital element of all processes related to academic misconduct, as an accusation may result in disruption or failure of studies, in that person being unable to practice their profession or with serious consequences for an individual's reputation and employment prospects. Therefore, confidentiality is essential in any matters relating to a suspicion of academic misconduct. Any person suspecting a person of a breach of this policy should ensure that they have read the policy thoroughly and must maintain confidentiality at all times.

All records of information, proceedings and outcomes will be maintained with care as to their security and will be provided only to those who have a legitimate reason to know about them.

4.1 Guidance for Students

In the preparation of work submitted to meet course requirements, students must take great care to distinguish their own ideas and language from information derived from other sources. These include published primary and secondary materials, the Internet, and information and opinions gained directly from other people. Whenever ideas or facts are derived from someone else's work as part of reading and research, that material must be cited properly. In general students should provide references in the following circumstances:

- *Direct quotation*: whenever another author is quoted verbatim by a phrase, a sentence or a paragraph, the words should be placed in single quotation marks and their source should be identified.
- *Paraphrasing*: whenever another person's words are summed up in the student's own words, they should be identified through an appropriate reference.

- *Multiple summation*: similar to paraphrasing, it involves the summary of several authors' works into a single paragraph in the student's words.
- *Statistics*: indicate the sources of any statistics used in an assignment or project.
- *Controversial facts*: acknowledge the source since it is not a commonly accepted historical fact.

Students who are unsure of the acceptable standards of scholarly writing should seek guidance from their lecturers before beginning assignments and projects.

Group work can be a useful form of peer learning. Directed or approved legitimate cooperation does not per se constitute plagiarism or collusion, but students working as a group must adhere to academic standards and any instructions provided in their unit outlines regarding collaboration in assessment items. It is not acceptable for members of a group to submit identical sections or answers to assignments or projects by simply copying the work done as a group.

With the above exceptions, all assignments and projects must be submitted individually, and the examiner is entitled to consider identical layout, identical mistakes, identical argument, and identical presentation as evidence of possible collusion.

Students may not copy another student's assignment or project, computer program or parts of a program, or any part of another student's examination paper. No communication is allowed between students during an examination and no student is permitted to keep books, papers, calculators, computers or notes during an examination except with the explicit permission of the unit coordinator.

The use of AI tools (such as ChatGPT) to generate written or practical outputs for assessment will generally be considered under academic misconduct, other than in exceptional circumstances where the assessment design has deliberately incorporated the use of AI tools. Students are advised to avoid the use of AI, especially for written submissions; or if AI is used, to properly identify and reference any AI-generated material as not their own original work.

It is expected that all work submitted for an assignment will have been done solely for that assignment, unless formally approved otherwise. A student may not submit the same or similar work for another assignment without obtaining the prior written permission of the relevant coordinator.

5 Rights of Students

Students at SAE Institute have the right:

- To have access to information and learning about academic integrity and the implications of academic misconduct.
- If suspected of academic misconduct, to have the case investigated in a way that observes procedural fairness and confidentiality.
- To bring a support person (but not a legal representative) to any hearing into alleged academic misconduct. A support person does not have a role in the proceedings or the right to speak without approval but may assist a student to clarify the processes involved during any hearing.

6 Alleged Misconduct Investigation

The procedure for an investigation into alleged misconduct is detailed in Appendix A.

6.1 Appeals

A student may appeal any decision in relation to this policy in writing or by e-mail as appropriate either to the regional Quality Manager, or the Dean, within ten days of being notified of that decision, setting out the grounds for appeal. The recipient of the appeal shall consult with the Dean or their nominee as appropriate, and shall consider carefully and review all aspects of the case and the procedures followed in relation to this policy. The decision of the Dean or their designated nominee in relation to all matters in the case and the application of this policy shall be timely and final.

7 Records

Records shall be kept of all academic dishonesty investigations as well as a profile of outcomes and the maintenance of conformity to this policy, and a summary report shall be forwarded to the regional Quality Manager and reference to them shall be included in the annual reporting processes, both internal and where applicable, with the University partner for the programme in question. More detail on this record keeping can be found in A03 Student Record Management and Data Processing.

8 Policy History

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| Policy Created: | August 2021 |
| Date of Last Revision: | March 2023 |
| Approved by: | Academic Standards and Quality Committee, March 2023 |

Appendix A Procedure for Alleged Misconduct Investigation

1. The Academic Coordinator will normally conduct an investigation into any allegation of serious academic misconduct. If the Academic Coordinator has had any involvement with the assessment of the student's work in the module, which is the subject of investigation, then the matter shall be referred for investigation to another Academic Coordinator, Learning Manager, or Quality Manager. The Academic Coordinator or the person conducting the investigation would normally meet informally with the student and separately with the relevant staff member to determine the facts of the matter. Ignorance of this policy is not a mitigating circumstance.

In cases where apparent plagiarism is detected by electronic means (e.g., Turnitin), great care should be taken to distinguish between carelessness with respect to (1) the inclusion of inadequately referenced factual, contextual information, and (2) substantial plagiarism of the direct expression of others' ideas or arguments. In many cases careless referencing will more appropriately be dealt with by tutorial advice than by formal proceedings, except where there are repeated incidents.

2. If the person conducting the investigation finds that there are reasonable grounds to proceed with the allegation, then they shall consult with the Quality Manager, and after that consultation, they shall write to the student(s) concerned:
 - to put the allegation
 - to request a written statement from the student explaining their view of the matter, and giving the student the opportunity to state any mitigating circumstances which may be taken into account when considering a penalty (authenticated evidence to be provided where appropriate)
 - to request a reply within 10 working days of the date on which the letter is sent and explaining the consequences of failure to reply
 - to enclose a copy of this policy
 - if appropriate, to provide the student with any relevant materials or other evidence that is available, at the discretion of the investigator in order to protect the rights of other students.
3. If a written reply to the allegation is not received from the student within ten working days of the date when the letter was sent, or if the student replies accepting the

allegation, then the investigator will recommend a penalty as appropriate to the Quality Manager, whose decision shall be final.

If the student does reply within the time limit denying the allegation, then a panel hearing shall be convened expeditiously, and the student shall be given at least five working days' notice of the time and place of the hearing.

4. If it is decided to proceed to a panel hearing, the panel shall comprise the person who has conducted the investigation thus far as Chair, together with two other members of staff who shall have had no prior involvement in the matter. The student may attend the hearing in person or via video link. If the student declines to attend the hearing, it shall proceed in their absence.

A companion, who may be either a relative or friend, or an SAE Institute staff member or student, but not a member of the legal profession, may accompany the student at the hearing. The companion is present as a support to the accused student and is not permitted to act as an advocate or spokesperson for the student. In exceptional cases, for example a student with disability, which affects his or her communication, permission may be granted by the Chair for the companion to speak on behalf of the student. Neither the student nor any other person participating in the hearing is entitled to be legally represented, and SAE Institute will not respond to any communications from legal representatives.

The Chair may call witnesses to give evidence at a hearing or may call for and receive written statements of evidence. If the Chair deems it appropriate, or if the student requests it, the Chair may require persons to attend the hearing and to answer questions. The student may ask questions of any witnesses in attendance at the hearing.

The student may make verbal submissions to the panel after the evidence of all witnesses has been given, but the student shall not be present for the deliberations of the Chair or the panel following the student verbal submission at the end of proceedings.

5. The campus shall hold notes of the investigation and/or hearing from the Chair, but these shall remain strictly confidential, and may not be disclosed to the student or any other party.

6. Possible outcomes include:
- dismissing the allegation
 - seeking further information
 - providing the student with a warning together with advice about what is acceptable academic conduct
 - deciding that the student is guilty of academic misconduct and imposing an appropriate penalty.

The student shall be informed in writing of the decision, together with reasons, within five working days of the hearing, and may be informed by the Chair verbally at the end of the hearing.

7. The penalties for academic misconduct may include one or more of the following, and the most serious penalties may be considered in the case of repeated misconduct:
- The issue of a formal written warning.
 - A reduction in marks or grade for the relevant assignment.
 - A requirement for the student to resubmit the assignment by a specified date (the maximum mark possible being a Pass grade).
 - The student may be required to undertake additional or alternative assessment (the maximum mark possible being a Pass grade).
 - A grade of Fail may be recorded for the assessment task, with no resubmission/referral allowed.
 - A grade of Fail may be recorded for the unit or module, with no resubmission/referral allowed.
 - The student may be suspended from the course for a period of specified time.
 - The student may fail in the course overall and be withdrawn from SAE Institute.