

RTO: 21710

Policy and Procedure – Academic Integrity: Cheating, plagiarism, and Artificial Intelligence.

Purpose

This policy and procedure exist to ensure St Joseph's College has clear, fair and consistent mechanisms in place to prevent, detect, investigate and respond to instances of academic misconduct, including cheating, plagiarism, collusion, contract cheating and the unauthorised use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in assessment. It supports the integrity of all qualifications issued by the College.

Legislative Framework and Regulatory Compliance

This policy and procedure are informed by and gives effect to the following:

- AQTF Essential Conditions and Standards for Continuing Registration – Standard 1, Element 1.5: Assessment is conducted and assessed in accordance with the requirements of the training package or accredited course
- Standards for Registered Training Organisations 2015 (Commonwealth) – the national standards framework governing RTO registration, quality of training and assessment, and client services
- VRQA Guidelines for VET Providers
- Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Amendment (Prohibiting Academic Cheating Services) Act 2020 (Commonwealth) – which makes the provision of contract cheating services a criminal offence
- Education and Training Reform Act 2006 (Vic)

Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled in VET courses at St Joseph's College, and to all trainers, assessors and staff involved in the delivery and assessment of those courses. It applies to all assessment activities, whether submitted in hard copy, electronically, or completed in supervised or unsupervised conditions.

Definitions

Cheating

Cheating includes but is not necessarily limited to:

- Submission of work that is not the student's own for papers, assignments or examinations
- Submission of work which has been stolen, purchased or borrowed
- Submission or use of falsified data
- Collaboration in the preparation of an assignment, unless such collaboration is specifically permitted or required by the assessor
- Use of unauthorised material including textbooks, notes or computer programs during an examination or assessment

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- Submission of the same work for credit in two or more courses
- Impersonation – having another person complete an assessment on your behalf, or completing an assessment on behalf of another student

Plagiarism

Plagiarism means to take and use another person's ideas or work without acknowledgement. Whether inadvertent or deliberate, plagiarism includes:

- Word-for-word copying of sentences or whole paragraphs from one or more sources, or presenting substantial extracts from books, articles, internal reports, lecture notes, CDs or the internet, without clearly indicating the origin
- Using very close paraphrasing of sentences or whole paragraphs without due acknowledgement in the form of reference to the original work
- Use of another person's ideas, work or research data without acknowledgement
- Copying computer files without clearly indicating their origin

Collusion

Collusion occurs when two or more students work together to produce work that is then submitted by one or more of them as individual work, without the assessor's knowledge or permission.

Contract Cheating

Contract cheating occurs when a student arranges for another person or service – whether paid or unpaid – to complete all or part of an assessment task on their behalf. This includes the use of essay mills, academic writing services, and similar platforms. Note: under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Amendment (Prohibiting Academic Cheating Services) Act 2020 (Commonwealth), the provision of such services is a criminal offence in Australia.

Unauthorised Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI tools include any software capable of generating text, images, code or other content in response to a prompt (such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot, or similar). Unauthorised use of AI in assessment includes:

- Submitting AI-generated text, responses or content as the student's own original work
- Using AI tools to complete assessment tasks without explicit permission from the assessor
- Using AI to paraphrase, restructure or disguise plagiarised content ('AI washing')

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Note on acceptable AI use: Some limited uses of AI tools may be appropriate, such as grammar checking, brainstorming ideas, or generating a structural outline – but only where the student’s own thinking, analysis and work remain the primary component of the submission. Students are encouraged to ask their trainer/assessor if they are unsure whether a particular use of AI is permitted for a specific task.

Policy Statement

St Joseph’s College is committed to upholding the integrity of all VET qualifications it issues. Academic misconduct undermines the value of those qualifications and is unfair to students who complete their work honestly. The College will take all reasonable steps to prevent, detect and respond to academic misconduct, and will ensure that all processes are fair, transparent and consistent.

Students found to have engaged in academic misconduct will be subject to appropriate penalties. Staff who knowingly assist students to engage in academic misconduct will also face disciplinary action.

Prevention

St Joseph’s College takes a proactive approach to preventing academic misconduct:

- Students will be informed of this policy – including definitions, expectations and consequences – through the College’s Student Handbook and at orientation
- All unsupervised assessment activities will require students to complete an Assessment Cover Sheet including a signed declaration of authenticity
- Staff will be informed of academic integrity requirements during orientation and induction, and will have ongoing access to this policy
- Where appropriate, specific details of assessment tasks (such as scenarios and questions) will be varied across cohorts and over time to reduce the risk of copying
- Students will be provided with guidance on appropriate referencing practices and on the acceptable and unacceptable use of AI tools in assessment

Detection

All staff have an obligation to identify and investigate any suspected academic misconduct. A staff member who suspects misconduct has occurred should first gather evidence to support their concern before proceeding. Detection methods may include:

- Comparison of the work with the work of other students
- Comparison of the work with electronic reference materials and internet sources
- Use of AI detection tools (such as ZeroGPT or similar) where AI misuse is suspected
- Oral questioning of the student about their submitted work
- Any other method deemed appropriate by the trainer/assessor

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Management Procedure

Step 1 – Initial Assessment

Where a trainer/assessor believes that a student may have engaged in academic misconduct, the trainer/assessor will:

- Gather and document the evidence
- Notify the Director of RTO
- Request that the student attend an interview with the primary assessor and an independent assessor. The student may elect to invite a support person to the interview

Step 2 – Interview Outcome: No Misconduct Found

If, because of the interview, the primary assessor concludes that no academic misconduct occurred, no further action will be taken, and no record of the interview will be kept.

Step 3 – Interview Outcome: Inadvertent Misconduct

Where the primary assessor and independent assessor conclude that the student's actions were an example of inadvertent misconduct (e.g. poor referencing practice rather than deliberate deception):

- The student will be counselled by the primary assessor
- A note will be placed on the student's file
- The student will be given the opportunity to revise and resubmit their work
- The Director of RTO will be informed of the outcome

Step 4 – Interview Outcome: Deliberate Misconduct

Where the primary assessor and independent assessor conclude that the misconduct was deliberate, and the student admits to this, or the evidence supports this conclusion:

- The matter will be referred to the Director of RTO
- The Director of RTO will undertake any additional investigation required and determine the appropriate penalty
- The student will be notified in writing of the finding and the penalty applied
- All evidence, interview records and relevant documentation will be retained on the student's file

Step 5 – Student Denial

Where the student does not admit to deliberate misconduct, but the assessors are satisfied that misconduct occurred, the matter will be referred to the Director of RTO for determination. The student retains the right to appeal any decision (see Appeals below).

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Penalties

A student found to have engaged in deliberate academic misconduct may be subject to one or more of the following penalties, depending on the severity and circumstances of the case:

- A formal written warning from the Director of RTO, with a notation on the student's file
- A result of Not Yet Competent for the assessment task or unit of competency, with a notation on the student's file, and an opportunity to resubmit
- A result of Not Yet Competent with no opportunity to resubmit for that task
- Termination of enrolment

Repeat offences: A student found to have engaged in a second or subsequent incident of deliberate academic misconduct will have their enrolment terminated.

Appeals

A student who believes they have been unjustly accused of or penalised for academic misconduct has the right to appeal the decision. Appeals must be lodged in writing with the Director of RTO within 10 business days of receiving written notification of the penalty. Appeals will be handled in accordance with the College's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.

Policy Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed annually in February by the RTO Management Team to ensure ongoing compliance with the VRQA Guidelines for VET Providers, the Standards for RTOs 2025, and any updates to relevant legislation, including those relating to AI and academic integrity. Reviews will also be triggered by significant changes in technology, regulatory requirements or an incident involving academic misconduct.

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Documentation Modification

The College will maintain a history of updates to this policy and procedure.

Date	Version	Comment
January 2014	V1.0	Developed by the RTO Management Team.
February 2015	V1.1	Annual review by RTO Management Team – No Change.
February 2016	V1.2	Annual review by RTO Management Team – No Change.
February 2017	V1.3	Annual review by RTO Management Team – No Change.
February 2018	V1.4	Annual review by RTO Management Team – No Change.
February 2019	V1.5	Annual review by RTO Management Team – No Change.
February 2020	V1.6	Annual review by RTO Management Team – No Change.
February 2021	V1.7	Annual review by RTO Management Team – No Change.
February 2022	V1.8	Annual review by RTO Management Team – No Change.
February 2023	V1.9	Annual review by RTO Management Team – No Change.
February 2024	V1.10	Annual review by RTO Management Team – No Change.
February 2025	V1.11	Annual review by RTO Management Team – No Change.
February 2026	V2.0	Major review by RTO Management Team. Document retitled to reflect expanded scope. Updated to align with Standards for RTOs 2025 (Outcome Standards 1.3, 1.4, 2.3, 3.1). Added definitions and procedures for: collusion; contract cheating (referencing the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Amendment (Prohibiting Academic Cheating Services) Act 2020); and unauthorised use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in assessment. Added guidance on acceptable AI use. Formalised five-step management procedure. Added explicit Appeals section. Added Policy Review section.