

Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct Policy

2023-2025

The purpose of this policy is to maintain the integrity of the assessments and provide a consistent approach in dealing with plagiarism and student misconduct issues in the academic works.

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Relevant Standards

SRT0 2015: 1.8

Linked Documents

Student Handbook
Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
Student Agreement
Student Code of Conduct

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to maintain the integrity of the assessments and provide a consistent approach in dealing with plagiarism and student misconduct issues in the academic works.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all the students of the RTO. The policy applies to all types of student misconduct including general misconduct, academic misconduct and administrative misconduct.

3. Definitions

Plagiarism: Plagiarism occurs when a student tries to pass off another person's work or ideas as their own. Plagiarism includes copying of work from internet, books, other student's work or any other published or unpublished source without appropriate citation and acknowledgement. Students commit plagiarism if they do not acknowledge the source of a direct quote, or a specific piece of writing that they have paraphrased, or even if they describe an idea or concept that they have heard or read somewhere without a reference or acknowledgement.

Enabling plagiarism contributes to plagiarism and therefore will be treated as a form of plagiarism by the RTO. Enabling plagiarism means allowing or otherwise assisting another student to copy or otherwise plagiarise work by, for example, allowing access to a draft or completed assignment or other work.

Collaboration: The RTO recognises that workplace assessments often require completion by a team people in the workplace. That team may include students also enrolled in the qualification. Work that is submitted in this context will not be considered a plagiarism by the RTO.

Collusion: Collusion occurs when a student collaborates with others to complete the work but presents the same work as their own.

Misconduct: Misconduct is an act or omission committed by a student on RTO property, or involves the use of RTO resources including computer resources, or otherwise involves the student's relationship with the RTO community. Misconduct includes administrative misconduct and academic misconduct.

General and Administrative Misconduct

General and Administrative Misconduct Incidents are those which in the opinion of the General Manager may be adequately addressed within the RTO. The following conduct, in the absence of any circumstance of aggravation may be treated as Simple Misconduct;

- Impeding the ability of any student or member of the RTO to study or participate in any RTO activity
- Acting in a manner which is threatening, intimidating, disrespectful or unprofessional towards any trainer, assessor or other staff member, student or other member of the RTO community
- Wilful damage, wrongfully dealing with or interference with property of any member of the RTO community
- Any act or omission which disrupts the peace and good order of the RTO

Serious Misconduct

The following conduct may be treated as Serious Misconduct;

- Any of the incidents in Simple Misconduct committed with a circumstance of aggravation
- Sexually harassing, discriminating against, and/or racially vilifying any member of the RTO community
- Fraudulent representation of grades or awards for prior learning including through the unauthorised use of any RTO name, seal or trademarks
- Any other types of misconduct as deemed by the RTO to be Serious Misconduct from time to time

Academic Misconduct

The following conduct may be treated as Academic Misconduct;

- Any act or omission by a student which attempts to circumvent or pervert the RTO's assessment process
- Plagiarism
- Collusion in the preparation of a response to a piece of assessment

4. Legislative Context

The RTO acknowledges its obligation under various federal and state government acts and regulations including the below and any subsequent versions:

- National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (Commonwealth)
- Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth)

5. Policy

5.1 PI highly values academic honesty and integrity and places a great emphasis on ethical behaviour of its students. It does not tolerate any behaviour which diminishes the academic reputation of the RTO, impairs the ability of students to participate in any legitimate RTO activity or disrupts the peace or good order of the RTO and its learning environment.

5.2 Academic integrity is viewed as fundamental to the very nature of the RTO. Academic misconduct by students in examinations or in other forms of assessment is unacceptable.

5.3 PI investigates and deals with incidents of misconduct among its student community in a consistent manner, affording natural justice and applying penalties which are appropriate, fair and just.

5.4 The RTO treats plagiarism as cheating. Cheating and plagiarism is a serious offence, and will be treated seriously. The RTO imposes severe penalties on students who cheat and plagiarise.

5.5 All the academic staff must inform the students about plagiarism policy and penalties arising from plagiarism.

5.6 All the academic staff have the responsibility to maintain integrity and fairness of the assessments and try to minimise the instances of plagiarism and any staff member reporting plagiarism must also produce evidences of plagiarism to support the allegation.

5.8 In the first instance when plagiarism is suspected, staff members should first determine if it is intentional or unintentional. Appropriate academic penalty must be applied to unintentional plagiarism. Where it is found that a student has plagiarised with an intention to cheat, the student must be reported for plagiarism.

5.9 Collusion will also be considered as cheating.

5.10 Any student lending his/her work to another student to copy will be considered a party to plagiarism and treated with academic penalty

5.11 The RTO recognises its obligation to educate students in the definition, identification and avoidance of plagiarism

5.12 Plagiarism offence may have an impact on student enrolment conditions, and the student, and the RTO will exercise utmost care and diligence in determining plagiarism cases with a focus on student welfare and wellbeing.

5.12 Reporting of Plagiarism

5.12.1 Where the assessor identifies minor lapses in referencing and/or use of source, whether by text matching, similar software or other means, the assessor shall treat the incident as an assessment matter, and may reduce the overall mark or grade for the assessment task, and/or may permit re-submission.

5.12.2 Where plagiarism is suspected, the assessor shall document the reasons and evidence for this suspicion and refer the matter to the General Manager.

5.12.3 The General Manager, after assessing the evidence of the case, takes one of the following actions:

- If there is sufficient evidence to warrant it, request the student to attend a formal hearing, the purpose of which shall be to investigate and discuss the matter with the student as a means of deciding what further action, if any, should be taken.
- If the evidence appears to indicate a very serious breach of discipline, refer the matter to the CEO for appropriate action.

5.13 Penalties for Plagiarism

If the student is found guilty of the charge of plagiarism, the General Manager shall determine the appropriate penalty taking into account:

- The extent of the plagiarism (e.g. which could range from minor lapses in referencing to copying substantial parts of published work including work from the Internet, or another person's work);
- The seriousness of the plagiarism (e.g. theft of another person's work; paying another person to do the assessment task)
- Whether it is a repeat offence
- Any mitigating circumstances in the particular case

The General Manager may impose one or more of the following penalties;

- Any proven plagiarism case will result in an immediate "Not Yet Competent" (NYC) result in the respective unit and the student will need to re-enrol in the unit. No re-assessments will be allowed.
- Repeated plagiarism offences may result in review of student's enrolment in the RTO.

5.14 Penalties for Misconduct

General, Administrative and Academic Misconduct

Any of the following penalties may be applied depending on the nature, intent and severity of the incident and as deemed appropriate by the General Manager:

- Written warning with reprimand
- Order to attempt the assessment item again
- Order to attempt the assessment item again with a capped mark
- NYC grade for the item of assessment
- NYC grade for the course
- Mandatory counselling
- Academic probation with a requirement to attend and complete to the satisfaction of the General Manager and complete counselling and remedial courses on code of conduct, plagiarism and academic integrity as directed
- Withhold results for a maximum of one term
- Order for compensation or restitution on such terms as are deemed fit and proper
- Entering into a written undertaking regarding offending behaviour
- Impose any combination of these penalties

5.15 Serious Misconduct

Any of the following penalties may be applied depending on the nature, intent and severity of the incident and as deemed appropriate by the General Manager:

- All the penalty options described in the General, Administrative and Academic Misconduct and;
- Entering details on the student's permanent record; or
- Suspension from the RTO; or
- Expulsion from the RTO

All Misconduct complaints which are Academic Misconduct matters may be investigated and finally determined by the CEO.

All Misconduct offences which are not Academic Misconduct matters may be investigated and finally determined by the General Manager.

All Serious Misconducts matters may be investigated and finally determined by an appropriate committee set up by the CEO which will include an independent member not directly connected with the management or operations of the RTO.

6. Appeals

The affected parties will have access to RTO's Complaints and Appeals processes if they think that the decisions made by appropriate authorities are not just and fair in their opinion.

7. Responsibility

The RTO is responsible for;

- Making this policy available to all the academic staff members and students
- Ensuring that its academic and administrative staff members know how to deal with plagiarism and misconduct issues
- Providing students with an opportunity to appeal any decision arising from plagiarism or misconduct cases

The academic staff are responsible for;

- Advising students on plagiarism policy and penalties for plagiarism
- Providing appropriate information on referencing requirements to all the students
- Providing examples of referencing techniques
- Distinguishing between intentional and unintentional plagiarism and providing a candid feedback to the students
- Reporting instances of plagiarism to the General Manager

Students are responsible for;

- Maintaining academic integrity and produce their own work which is appropriately referenced
- Maintain an ethical behaviour
- Protecting their own work and not allowing other student to copy
- Understanding the implications of plagiarism and misconduct and its impact on their academic performance
- Asking the academic staff for help if they are not sure about appropriate use and referencing requirements of information from other sources

The General Manager is responsible for effective implementation and management of this policy as well as provision of information on ways to resolve complaints of breaches of this policy.

The CEO has overall responsibility for the implementation and review of this policy.

Any complaints or breaches in relation to this policy should be reported to the Chief Executive Officer in person or by email to: ceo@peopleimprovers.com.au