

Academic integrity standards: Aligning policy and practice in Australian universities

1. Abstract

This project will develop a shared understanding across the Australian higher education sector of academic integrity standards with the aim of improving the alignment of academic integrity policies and their implementation. As academic integrity is fundamental to assessment practices, it is critical that it is dealt with consistently by staff and taught to students. This project will review policies and procedures and the ways that universities educate students and staff about their academic integrity expectations. We will provide an overview of current responses to student breaches of academic integrity by analysing Australian universities' online policies, and collaborating with stakeholders from the six universities represented by the project team, as well as a Colloquium of national and international experts. This overview will inform the establishment of exemplars, and the development of teaching and learning resources that align academic integrity policy with good practice. Australian universities will be encouraged to adapt these exemplars/resources to their own contexts to facilitate consistent academic standards.

2. Overview

The proposed project responds to the Australian Teaching and Learning Council's focus on academic standards and is situated under the broad objectives of *Topic A: academic standards, assessment practices and reporting* in Priority 1 of the ALTC Priorities Projects Program. Most Australian universities have well-developed policies relating to academic integrity, but these policies are not always matched with procedures that meet the variation and complexity of academic integrity breaches. This project will (1) investigate the range of Australian universities' academic integrity policies and practices, (2) identify examples of good practice in responding to breaches of academic integrity as well as instances where inconsistencies between policy and practice might usefully be addressed, (3) develop exemplars of good practice that can be adapted across a range of learning, teaching and policy contexts, and (4) provide teaching and learning resources to enable universities to foster a culture of academic integrity that will both pre-empt breaches, and in the case of misconduct, ensure consistent and clear responses.

Because the relevant policies on academic integrity focus largely on breaches of academic integrity, this project will also address these in order to arrive at ways of enhancing academic integrity in the university community. In particular, we will look for instances where academic integrity is successfully promoted in teaching and learning practice, and explore ways that this activity can inform future policy. In order to do this, we will also explore the grey areas between policy and practice, where policies are not as effectively enabled as originally intended. Exemplars of successful alignment of policy and procedures, together with case studies of context and discipline-specific practice, will provide a strong foundation for the shared understanding of academic integrity standards in the Australian higher education sector.

Academic integrity breaches are most often associated with student plagiarism. However, academic dishonesty may also include cheating in exams or assignments, collusion, theft of other students' work, paying a third party for assignments, downloading whole or part of assignments from the Internet, falsification of data, misrepresentation of records, fraudulent publishing practices or any other action that undermines the integrity of scholarship and research. It is our contention that attention needs to be given not just to policy development but also to educative and social measures to foster a culture of academic integrity amongst students and staff who may subscribe to academic integrity in principle, but in practice may not be familiar with the effective implementation of these policies. In this application, although the focus is on student breaches of academic integrity, we use the broad definition as follows:

Academic integrity is about mastering the art of scholarship. Scholarship involves researching, understanding and building upon the work of others and requires that you give credit where it is due and acknowledge the contributions of others to your own intellectual efforts. At its core, academic integrity requires honesty. This involves being responsible for ethical scholarship and for knowing what academic dishonesty is and how to avoid it. (University of Tasmania 2010)

Although they have different experiences of scholarly practice, these core principles of academic integrity apply to all students: undergraduate and postgraduate, coursework and HDR. In addition, we consider it important to acknowledge that “academic integrity is multi-dimensional and is enabled by all those in the educational enterprise, from students to parents, instructors and administrators” (APFEI 2010).

The intention of this project is not to provide a standardised model for approaches to academic integrity. As Dr Nicholls, CEO of ALTC, recently pointed out, defining standards does not necessarily mean standardisation (ALTC News 2010). Instead, this overarching investigation into the alignment of academic integrity policy and practice will offer a context for more specific implementations of the assessment of academic integrity, such as that currently being investigated by the ALTC Web 2.0 Authoring Tools Priority Project (2009-2010). Our project progresses the UK benchmarking research on academic misconduct penalties (Tennant, Rowell & Duggan 2007) as well as the benchmarking of Australian and New Zealand plagiarism policies by Australasian Council of Open, Distance and E-Learning (ACODE 2005).

The proposed project addresses three of the ALTC objectives (a) “promoting strategic change in higher education institutions”, (b) “developing effective mechanisms for the identification, development, dissemination and embedding of good individual and institutional practice”, and (c) “sharing and benchmarking learning and teaching processes”. By developing and disseminating exemplars of good practice, this project will contribute to a shared understanding of academic integrity across the Australian higher education sector, and promote strategic change for closing any gaps between academic integrity policy and practice in a variety of institutional contexts and for a variety of stakeholders.¹

3. Project Outcomes and Rationale

Rationale

The complexity and importance of academic integrity has become a widely discussed and researched topic in Australasia (Bretag 2005, 2007; Bretag & Green 2009; Bretag & Mahmud 2009; East 2005, 2006, 2009; Green, Williams & van Kessel, 2006; McGowan, 2005a, 2005b, 2008), North America (Bertram Gallant 2007, 2008, 2010; Howard & Robillard 2008; McCabe 2005a, 2005b) and Europe (Carroll 2002, 2003; Macdonald & Carroll, 2006). All Australian universities have developed policies which constitute a public statement of their response to the perceived problem (Grigg 2009).

Policy documents enshrine core principles such as honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility (Center for Academic Integrity 2010). These principles are interpreted as standards of academic integrity and are embedded in the curriculum implicitly as learning outcomes, or explicitly as assessment marking criteria (eg students' own work, independent research, acknowledgement of sources). While the principles are upheld in policy, they are enabled in practice via teaching and learning activities, as well as administrative processes that respond to breaches of academic integrity. The focus of these can vary depending on the contextual interpretation of the procedures relating to that policy, as either educative or punitive (see Hartle, Kimmins & Huijser 2009). However, academic integrity remains surprisingly elusive. Using the

¹ For the purposes of this project, ‘academic integrity stakeholders’ include students (domestic, international, undergraduate and postgraduate), educators (teaching academics, researchers, learning advisers, librarians and academic developers), institutional managers and policy administrators.

case study of one Australian university, in which the policy rhetoric was not well synchronised with practice, East (2009) has convincingly demonstrated how policy, practice and process on academic integrity can be more effectively aligned.

Aligning policy, practice and process is important for teaching and learning, and for a university's reputation. Students can be concerned about inconsistent standards, and they can fear arbitrary or even unjustifiable punishment for errors (see Breen & Maasen 2005). Teaching staff can also be concerned and even cynical when decisions about breaches of academic integrity are not appropriately and consistently administered (Bretag, 2005; Lim & Coalter, 2006). Research by Hall (2006) and Yeo and Chien (2005) further suggest that penalties for academic integrity breaches are not consistent across Australian universities. These concerns, as well as strategies to mitigate the impact of them, will be canvassed in the project's focus groups.

A focus on standards and benchmarking in the second cycle of AUQA will expect universities to demonstrate the alignment of their academic integrity policies with practice. In a recent example, the AUQA audit of La Trobe University found "inconsistent practice in the application of academic honesty information and testing across the faculties" as well as lost opportunities to educate students about academic integrity, and potentially inconsistent application of penalties (AUQA 2010). While universities will be interested in protecting their own reputations, it is imperative for the reputation of Australian universities as a whole that they are seen to deliver a reliable approach to academic integrity, particularly as closer ties are being formed with more international partners who may have differing educational and cultural approaches.

In the UK, the call to examine consistency in academic integrity came from the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education who declared that variation in penalties for plagiarism across the higher education sector was indefensible. This led to the development of the project, 'Academic Misconduct Benchmarking Research (AMBeR)' (Tennant et al 2007), which this ALTC proposal seeks to extend in the Australian context. However, the current project will take the focus beyond 'penalties' by looking at broader institutional approaches to academic integrity. While the AMBeR project was not able to offer recommendations, this ALTC project will offer real outcomes via collegially developed exemplars of good practice and teaching and learning resources that can be adapted according to local contexts.

The key challenge underlying this project is whether there should (or could) be a common definition that would articulate cross-institutional standards of academic integrity. We are keen to develop something beyond a policy-level mechanism that presumes to cut across the sector, at intra- and inter-university levels, and across courses and disciplines. Instead, we are confident that the opportunity provided by examination and discussion of potential cross-institutional standardisation will lead to individual institutional reflection of how their academic integrity policies might be better enhanced and implemented. This will therefore encourage a more nuanced and effective understanding of academic integrity in the Australian higher education context. The project has the following research questions that will allow us to identify useful approaches to the complex issues of academic integrity, and then to build on these approaches to develop exemplars for adaptation across the sector. These questions are premised on the understanding that how a university defines academic integrity in its policy will affect the way it is taught and embedded in the curriculum. It therefore follows that policies, procedures, teaching and assessment practices are all inter-connected.

Research questions:

1. What are Australian universities' policies and procedures for academic integrity?
2. What responses to breaches of academic integrity are actually implemented in practice?
3. What is good practice in aligning academic integrity policy with teaching and learning strategies?

4. How could a culture of academic integrity be more effectively fostered in the current Australian higher education context, and what shared understandings can provide a foundation for this culture?

Outcomes

The overarching aim of our project is to foster a culture of academic integrity in the Australian higher education sector, but our specific project outcomes include exemplars of interpretations of policy and procedure, resources that enable the teaching and learning of academic integrity, and most importantly, opportunities for critical reflection, comparison and discussion of policy and practice that will lay the groundwork for the ongoing enhancement of the culture of academic integrity at policy, course and curriculum levels. The project will therefore work with a range of academic stakeholders including policy makers, breach decision-makers,² teaching staff and students. We will not only collect data from these stakeholders, but we will also involve them in discussions about findings from the analysis of that data, the comparison of good practice across the six universities, and then in the development of exemplars and useful and adaptable resources.

While Australian universities all have policy, teaching and learning practices, decision making and review processes relating to academic integrity, these aspects do not always align in a way that reflects a shared understanding of standards of academic integrity, either at intra or inter-university levels. The project's examination of the six partner universities' activities will provide an opportunity to explore agreed standards and map how they are implemented in practice at each institution, which will then provide opportunities for reflective comparison. This examination of good practices from six universities will provide an opportunity for the remaining 32 Australian universities to re-energise the review of their own academic integrity policies and practices, while accessing our project's findings and resources.

The success of the project will be measured, both as the outcomes are developed in the project implementation and as they emerge at project end, by indicating the standards that have been developed and adopted, the extent of uptake across (at least) the six partner universities, and the extent to which they have already shown indications of facilitating better practice. The key deliverable will be the establishment of collegially developed exemplars for good practice, coupled with teaching and learning resources to foster academic integrity. The uptake of the project resources will be tracked, measured and evaluated following the Colloquium (see page 8 below) via the ALTC website and a link to a dedicated discussion forum on the Asia Pacific Forum on Educational Integrity (APFEI) website.

The project will deliver exemplars for breach responses and their application, including both reactive and proactive educational measures from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Importantly, this will shift the current focus in higher education from paranoia about student plagiarism and 'risk management' to one which emphasises responsibility, trust and respect. For students, insecurities about arbitrary and unpredictable academic integrity decisions will be reduced. For staff, there will be shared guidelines about embedding academic integrity education in the curriculum, responding to breaches, applying sanctions, and implementing educational measures. For Australian universities, the development and application of consistent standards will send a message to all stakeholders, including offshore partners and potential students, that student performance will be assessed in a way that is fair, consistent and justifiable.

² Universities have decision-making processes and positions unique to their contexts. Using our existing networks and Reference Group, our task will be to locate the person or group specifically responsible for determining outcomes/penalties for academic integrity breaches. These people are generically referred to in this document as 'academic integrity breach decision-makers'.

4. Approach

Theoretical framework

The project will extend the 2009 theoretical work of one of the team members, Julianne East, which provides a framework for aligning academic integrity policy with practice. Extending East's approach, we argue that in order to inculcate and foster academic integrity, universities need to align 1) policy; 2) teaching and learning practices; 3) decision-making about breaches; and 4) review processes. We maintain that a culture of academic integrity is central to all aspects of policy and practice. The four aspects identified by East (2009), rather than operating as discrete categories, in fact revolve around and contribute to the fostering of academic integrity culture, and are in turn, informed and transformed in a continuous cycle of reflexivity. A shared understanding of and mutual commitment to core principles of academic integrity across the Australian higher education sector will both underpin intra-university alignment and contribute to inter-university consistency.

Research design

The project will take a four stage approach, using both quantitative and qualitative methods:

1. Academic integrity policy data collection and analysis (all Australian universities).
2. Academic integrity breach data collection and analysis (from the six universities represented by the project team including University of South Australia, University of Wollongong, University of Western Australia, University of Newcastle, University of Adelaide and La Trobe University).
3. Interviews and focus groups of academic integrity stakeholders and a student survey at the six partner universities to determine good practice in responding to breaches and to identify factors which might impede or facilitate the shared understanding of standards of academic integrity
4. Drafting of exemplars in collaboration with team members, academic integrity breach decision-makers and Colloquium experts; development and dissemination of teaching and learning resources.

It is anticipated that the four stages will overlap. For example, analysis of policy documents will occur as they are being collected and in conjunction with analysis of actual breach data, the development of the exemplars will occur before, during and after focus group discussion, and the dissemination of outcomes for this project (in the form of exemplars that will include different disciplinary perspectives to common issues of academic integrity) will be shared and disseminated as they are collaboratively developed (see Appendix 1), via the APFEI website, conference presentations and journal articles. Furthermore, the exemplars and resources will be continually refined throughout the 16 month project in consultation with a Reference Group comprised of Australian and international experts on academic integrity (Appendix 3). This Reference Group will have opportunities for online discussion and will meet at a Colloquium mid-way through the project. The four stages will follow standard ethical protocols, including strict confidentiality for all participants. While participating institutions will be broadly identified in the project (via the project team members' institutional affiliations) we will de-identify and safeguard the anonymity of individual responses.

5. Value/Need for Project

As educators and researchers in this relatively new field of academic integrity, the team members on this proposed project have seen a massive shift in the last decade or so, from outrage and paranoia about student plagiarism to a much more nuanced approach which recognises the complexity of academic integrity issues (Bretag 2008). For some, however, academic integrity continues to be regarded as a relatively simple matter which can be 'fixed' by the mere existence of policies, or with technological solutions such as text-matching software. Our project will not impose a standardised approach to academic integrity. On the contrary, this research has an

inclusive and collaborative agenda which aims to address the needs of the diverse student population.

The project team's networks with international scholars provide the advantage of first-hand knowledge of best academic integrity practice in a range of countries, and this knowledge which will inform every step of this project. The research will build on our understandings of the Academic Conduct Officer model originally devised at Oxford Brookes University in the UK (Carroll 2004), the role of Student Honour Councils in many U.S. universities (McCabe 2005a), and the mandatory Academic Integrity Seminars that form part of a comprehensive and integrated academic integrity approach at the University of California, San Diego (Bertram Gallant 2010). This project will therefore combine best international practice with feedback from key stakeholders in the Australian context.

This project will deliver resources for Australian universities to deal consistently with academic integrity breaches, thus alleviating students' fear of unjustifiable punishment, and reducing concerns about academic standards. The long-standing commitment of the project team to academic integrity research and education will ensure that the key deliverable of the project, exemplars/resources of best practice, will be disseminated via online platforms such as the APFEI and AALL websites (see dissemination strategies) the Unilearn discussion list, and eventually the ALTC website. The exemplars will be developed to meet the changing contexts of academic integrity in higher education, and will account for increases in distance education, internationalisation and the expanding potential of digital media for academic research, writing and program delivery.

6. Project Management and Milestones

The project's four stages begin after the literature review and ethics approval from the lead institution. Figure 1 below provides a representation of the project milestones (Appendix 1 provides further details relating to timing).

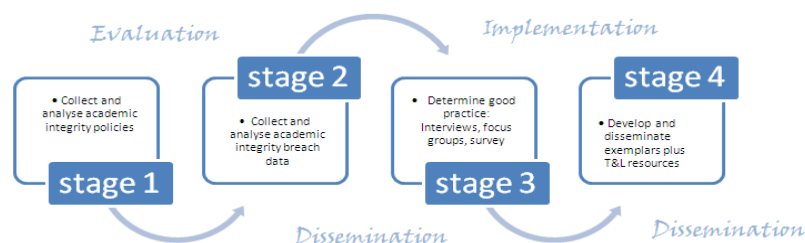


Figure 1: Flowchart of project milestones

While the milestones are illustrated as a flowchart, we have constructed this project so that each stage is not dependent on the completion of the previous stage. For example, if for any reason, there is a delay to the completion of Stage 2, this will not prevent the subsequent stages from going ahead.

Stage 1: What are Australian universities' policies and procedures for academic integrity breaches?

Collect and analyse academic integrity policies available online, as well as any publicly available statements or reviews of process from all Australian universities. At this point in the project we will examine policies and statements of process and analyse differences in how universities define academic integrity, embed academic integrity education, and state how they will deal with breaches of academic integrity. The types of academic integrity breach will be categorised according to severity and in light of the current literature.

Stage 2: What responses to breaches of academic integrity are actually implemented in practice?

Collect and analyse academic integrity breach data to determine how universities actually respond to breaches of academic integrity in practice with an aim to identify examples of good practice in responding to breaches of academic integrity as well as instances where inconsistencies between policy and practice might usefully be addressed. Drawing on the expressed support of the DVC:A from each of the universities represented by the project team, we will collect data on recorded breaches and outcomes over the last three years. This data will be represented in percentage terms rather than whole numbers (for example, if academic integrity breaches equal 100%, regardless of the number of breaches, then each of the sub-categories such as plagiarism would represent a percentage proportion of that 100%). Collecting the data in this way will ensure that universities are not required to release potentially sensitive information regarding the actual number of academic integrity breaches. A small pilot study drawing on percentage data of academic integrity breaches from one university faculty has already been completed successfully by project team members Bretag and Green (2009; 2010). The sample of breach data from six partner universities will provide a snapshot of how universities actually respond to breaches of academic integrity, and this will be juxtaposed against the policy directions identified in Stage 1 above. We will also collect information relating to how each of the universities record, store and manage its academic integrity data.

Stage 3: What is good practice in aligning academic integrity policy with teaching and learning strategies?

An important part of this stage in the research will be early dissemination to academic integrity stakeholders in and across our participating universities of the findings from Stages 1 and 2 as a means of stimulating discussion and collegial information exchange. We will do this in relevant committee meetings and emails to key participants. Dissemination will also occur as we undertake interviews and focus groups of academic integrity stakeholders at the six universities represented by the project team to determine good practice in responding to breaches. We will start with interviews of academic integrity breach decision makers: these interviews will include DVC: As, Deans: Teaching and Learning, and Heads of School in each of the six partner universities. It is anticipated that the project team members will conduct 6-8 interviews of these stakeholders at each of their respective universities.

Focus groups will be set up to invite participation from academic integrity stakeholders with some knowledge and/or experience of the academic integrity processes at their respective universities. It is anticipated that the project team members will each conduct 4-6 focus group discussions at each of their respective universities. To ensure adequate representation at the focus groups, a wide range and number of participants per focus group will be invited. They will include groups of:

- academic integrity breach decision-makers and administrative officers and staff
- teaching staff, including program directors, course coordinators, supervisors and lecturers
- learning advisors, educational developers, and librarians
- undergraduate, postgraduate coursework and HDR students

We will start by conducting an online anonymous survey of all students at each of the six partner universities, seeking their perspectives on what constitutes good practice in dealing with breaches of academic integrity. At the end of this survey, students will be invited to participate in follow-up focus groups, which will also be advertised by flyers posted around campus. In addition, we will target student representatives on education or university committees as they are potentially more likely to be knowledgeable about university policy processes and implications. We have chosen to include HDR students in our project because although we acknowledge that the specific processes for dealing with their academic integrity breaches is usually different to

those of undergraduate and masters coursework students, we maintain that the core principles of academic integrity apply equally, and to exclude them would be to weaken the project's aim of articulating shared understandings of academic integrity. However, to address their unique issues, we will run separate focus groups for this cohort.

Importantly, we will canvas the views of students who have had experience of the academic integrity breach process, in the form of either targeted focus groups or individual interviews, of the two strands of students (coursework and HDR). While the focus groups of general students described above will act as a control group, we will also carefully solicit the participation of more immediately invested students, keeping in mind issues of confidentiality and sensitivity. We are mindful of the fact that permission to approach this particular cohort of students may be problematic, and their inclusion is therefore subject to ethics approval. The budget includes funds for administrative support for each team member (other than Bretag, Walker and Green who have been allocated teaching relief) to conduct the focus groups and interviews.

Stage 4: How could a culture of academic integrity be more effectively fostered in the current Australian higher education context and what shared understandings can provide a foundation for this culture?

This stage represents the most important and innovative aspect of this project. Having collected and collated data to provide baseline information, and having shared this information with academic integrity stakeholders and gathered and analysed their recommendations for how best to align academic integrity policy and practice, this stage moves towards strengthening Australian universities' culture of academic integrity. We will do this by developing exemplars of good practice that will clearly demonstrate how universities can coherently and consistently manage academic integrity in a range of specific contexts. The exemplars will be drafted in collaboration with project team members, academic integrity breach decision-makers and experts drawn from our project Reference Group. These exemplars will bring together information about policy/processes and pre-emptive teaching and learning strategies, with context and discipline-specific case studies. Complementary teaching and learning resources will also be developed to be used in conjunction with the exemplars. These may include classroom activities, online learning materials, embedded assessment tasks, or discipline-specific adaptations of the exemplars. Included in this package will also be staff support resources such as workshop outlines and Powerpoint presentations that will be both informative and useful for developing a consistent and sustainable culture of academic integrity. The exemplars and teaching and learning resources will be evaluated and refined by our Reference Group, which is made up of recognised Australian and international experts in the field of academic integrity (see Appendix 3) and with whom we will be in contact throughout the project implementation. These experts will also be invited to participate at the Colloquium.

National Colloquium

The aims of the national Colloquium planned for the 13th month of the project are multiple: 1) to formulate a shared understanding of academic integrity across the higher education sector via the input of key academic integrity researchers and practitioners; 2) to refine and finalise the exemplars emerging from the research; 3) to contribute to the development of practical teaching and learning resources which can be adapted according to context; and 4) to provide ongoing opportunities for participants to collaborate across universities to further the work of the ALTC project. The Colloquium will provide a unique opportunity for internationally recognised Australian experts on academic integrity to have immediate access to the outcomes of the project. Their contribution will facilitate the timely introduction, adaptation and embedding of the project outcomes in Colloquium participants' own institutional contexts, as well as adding authority to the overall project outcomes. The project budget has allocated funds for economy travel and accommodation of Australian participants where necessary. It also includes funds for venue hire, catering and administrative support.

7. Dissemination Strategy

Capacity building and dissemination of interim outcomes throughout the project will occur at every stage of the project via focus groups, interviews and online forums. Our objective in this project is not to create a standardised approach to academic integrity; instead, our intention is to be exploratory, supportive and sensitive to diverse contexts, with a focus on ‘practice sharing’ rather than ‘information sharing’.

Many of the recommendations for good practice will have already been disseminated and engaged with by the time the final report to the ALTC is presented. There will be numerous opportunities throughout the project for Australian and international academic integrity experts to further build a shared understanding of academic integrity, and in the process refine and finalise the exemplars. We will have identified specific target groups within each of the six partner universities who will be engaged with the project through all implementation stages, and who will be alerted by their respective institution’s project team member to timely opportunities to strategically disseminate findings to their institutions. This dissemination strategy will help to embed project outcomes and ensure that their practice is taken up in the higher education sector. Importantly, the case studies and teaching and learning resources will be designed to be open access and available to all academic integrity stakeholders.

Asia Pacific Forum on Educational Integrity (APFEI)

All the project team members are part of APFEI (see Appendix 4). Throughout the project relevant working documents will be made available for discussion and debate via the APFEI website <http://apfei.edu.au>, which will link to all the university academic integrity policies. Furthermore, using the academic integrity community networks and discussion forums already established through APFEI, team members will disseminate interim outcomes, as well as the final exemplars/resources to internal academic integrity discussion groups in major universities. The project budget has allocated funds for website design, hosting and maintenance, plus a small amount for administrative support of project team members otherwise not funded.

Other Forums

Exemplars of best practice in responding to breaches of academic integrity will be shared via a range of other forums including the annual *International Conference of the Center for Academic Integrity* in the U.S., the *5th International Plagiarism Conference* in the UK, and other national forums such as the *Australian Association for Research in Education*, and the *Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia*. No funds have been allocated for conference presentation as individual team members will seek funding from their respective universities in line with internal policies. It is anticipated that a number of refereed journal articles relating to the project findings, the exemplars and the teaching and learning resources will be published by project team members in journals such as *Higher Education Research and Development*, *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*, *Journal of Academic Ethics*, *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, and the *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice*.

8. Evaluation

This project has embedded evaluation processes at output, outcome and impact stages. The project incorporates opportunities for evaluation of interim and final outcomes at strategic points during data collection, analysis and production of exemplars and teaching and learning resources. At each of these points, the national and international members of the Reference Group invited to provide specific feedback. In Stage 3, the findings from Stages 1 and 2 will be shared with a range of academic integrity stakeholders at each of the six project team members’ universities via focus groups and interviews, as well as an online survey of students. Stakeholders will have opportunities to make recommendations on what they consider to be good practice. In Stage 4, the exemplars and teaching and learning resources will be evaluated and refined during the

national Colloquium. The success of the dissemination and acceptance of these resources will be evaluated via an online survey that will target participants from the focus groups and interviews in Stage 4, as well as participants from the national Colloquium. This final survey will seek to determine if there has been development in more consistent, clear and shared understandings of standards for academic integrity. Additionally, an independent evaluation of the project's progress has been scheduled for the end of the first year.

9. Conclusion

This project offers a much needed review and evaluation of current understandings of academic integrity in Australian universities, in response to concerns about the misalignment of policy and practice. This timely project will provide a safe and collegial forum for universities to interrogate and critically reflect on their own academic integrity processes, while contributing constructively to consistent practices across the higher education sector. The highly experienced and widely published research team will use its national and international links to both inform the research and to disseminate the outcomes. Most importantly, the key deliverables of this 16 month project will be exemplars of good practice, established in consultation with a broad range of academic integrity stakeholders. Resources that illustrate how these cases and policy/practice exemplars might be used in teaching and learning contexts will also be developed. It is anticipated that the use and adaptation of the resources by Australian universities to their own contexts will contribute to the development of a shared culture of academic integrity across the sector.

References

- Australasian Council of Open, Distance and E-Learning (ACODE) (2005). <http://www.acode.edu.au/> [retrieved 29 June 2010]
- ALTC News (2010) Protecting Australia's reputation for high academic standards <http://www.altc.edu.au/march2010-protecting-australia%27s-reputation> [retrieved 10 March 2010]
- Asia Pacific Forum on Educational Integrity (APFEI) (2010). *What is educational integrity?* <http://apfei.edu.au/tiki-index.php> [retrieved 25 June 2010]
- Australian Universities Quality Agency (AUQA) (2010). *Audits: Universities* <http://www.auqa.edu.au/qualityaudit/universities/> [retrieved 28 February 2010]
- Bertram Gallant, T. (2007). The complexity of integrity culture change: A case study of a liberal arts college. *The Review of Higher Education*, 30 (4), 391-411.
- Bertram Gallant, T. (2008). *Academic Integrity in the Twenty-First Century: A Teaching and Learning Imperative*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bertram Gallant, T. (2010). *UCSD Academic Integrity Annual Report 2008-2009* http://academicaffairs.ucsd.edu/ug-ed/academicintegrity/AI_2008-2009_Report.pdf [retrieved 8 March 2010]
- Breen, L. & Maassen, M. (2005). Reducing the incidence of plagiarism in an undergraduate course: The role of education. *Issues in Educational Research*, 15(1), 1-16. <http://www.iier.org.au/iier15/breen.html> [retrieved 12 February 2010]
- Bretag, T. (2005). Implementing plagiarism policy in the internationalised university, Chapter 3 in *Developing Internationalism in the Internationalised University: A Practitioner Research Project*, unpublished Doctor of Education thesis, University of South Australia.
- Bretag, T. (2007). The Emperor's new clothes: Yes, there is a link between English language competence and academic standards, *People and Place*, 15 (1), 13-21.
- Bretag, T. & Mahmud, S. (2009). A model for determining student plagiarism: Electronic detection and academic judgement. *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice*, 6(1), 47-60
- Bretag, T. & Green, M. (2009). Determining outcomes for academic misconduct: Is it more important to be consistent or fair? Refereed paper presented at *the 4th Asia-Pacific Conference on Educational Integrity: Creating an Inclusive Approach*, University of Wollongong, 28-30 September.
- Bretag, T. & Green, M. (2010). 'Factors integral to the case': Categorising qualitative factors used to determine academic integrity outcomes, Refereed paper presented at *the 4th International Plagiarism Conference*, Northumbria University, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK, 21-23 June.
- Carroll, J. (2002). *A Handbook for Deterring Plagiarism in Higher Education*. Oxford: OCSLD.

- Carroll, J. (2003). Six things I did not know four years ago about dealing with plagiarism. Paper presented at the *Educational Integrity: Plagiarism and Other Perplexities Conference*, University of South Australia, Adelaide, November 21-22.
- Carroll, J. (2004). *Deterring, detecting and dealing with plagiarism: A brief paper for Brookes staff for Academic Integrity Week*. http://www.brookes.ac.uk/services/ocsd/2_learnitch/plagiarism.html [retrieved 8 March 2010]
- Center for Academic Integrity (2010). *Fundamental values project*. http://www.academicintegrity.org/fundamental_values_project/index.php [retrieved 20 July 2010]
- East, J. (2005). Proper acknowledgment? *Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice, Academic Integrity Issue*, Vol 2(3a), 1-11.
- East, J. (2006). The problem of plagiarism in academic culture. *International Journal for Educational Integrity* 2 113 – 125. http://jutlp.uow.edu.au/2005_v02_i03a/east005.html [retrieved 28 February 2010]
- East, J. (2009). Aligning policy and practice: An approach to integrating academic integrity, *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, 3(1), A38-A51.
- Green, M., Williams, M., & van Kessel, G. (2006). How well do postgraduate students identify plagiarism? *Focus of Health Professional Education; A Multi-Disciplinary Journal*, 7 (3), 48-61.
- Grigg, G. (2009). Judgments about plagiarism and plagiarising students in institutional definitions, paper presented at the 4th *Asia Pacific Conference on Educational Integrity: Creating an Inclusive Approach*, University of Wollongong, NSW, 28-30 September, <http://ro.uow.edu.au/apcei/09/papers/4/> [accessed 29 March 2010].
- Hall, B. (2006). Australia needs an office of academic integrity, *MJA* 185 (11/12), 619-622.
- Hartle, R.T., Kimmins, L. & Huijser, H. (2009). Criminal intent or cognitive dissonance: how does student self plagiarism fit into academic integrity? Paper presented at the 4th *Asia Pacific Conference on Educational Integrity: Creating an Inclusive Approach*, University of Wollongong, NSW, 28-30 September, <http://ro.uow.edu.au/apcei/09/papers/5/> [accessed 29 March 2010]
- Howard R.M. & Robillard A. (2008). *Pluralizing Plagiarism: Identities, Contexts, Pedagogies*, London: Heinemann.
- Lim, C. & Coalter, T. (2006). Academic Integrity: An instructor's obligation. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 17(20), 155 – 159.
- McCabe D.L. (2005a). Cheating among college and university students: A North American perspective. *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, 1(1), <http://www.ojs.unisa.edu.au/index.php/IJEI/article/viewFile/14/9> [retrieved 29 June 2010]
- McCabe, D.L.(2005b). It takes a village: Academic dishonesty. *Liberal Education*, 26-31.
- Macdonald R. & Carroll J. (2006). Plagiarism: a complex issue requiring a holistic institutional approach. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 31, (3), 233-245.
- McGowan, U. (2005a). Academic integrity: An awareness and development issue for students and staff, *Journal for University Teaching and Learning Practice* 2 (3a). <http://jutlp.uow.edu.au> [retrieved 10 November 2005]
- McGowan, U. (2005b) Does educational integrity mean teaching students NOT to 'use their own words'? *International Journal for Educational Integrity* (1) <http://www.ojs.unisa.edu.au/index.php/IJEI/article/view/16/6> [retrieved 8 March 2010]
- McGowan, U. (2008) International Students: A conceptual framework for dealing with unintentional plagiarism. In: Tim S. Roberts (ed.) *Student Plagiarism in an Online Word: Problems and Solutions*. Information Science Reference, Hershey, New York, 92-107.
- Tennant P., Rowell, G. & Duggan, F. (2007). AMBeR Project. *JISC* www.jiscpas.ac.uk [retrieved 20 March 2008]
- University of Tasmania (2010) *Academic integrity*. <http://www.academicintegrity.utas.edu.au/> [retrieved 25 June 2010]
- Yeo, S. & Chien, R. (2005). The seriousness of plagiarism incidents: Making consistent decisions across a university, 2nd *Asia Pacific Educational Integrity Conference*. Newcastle 2-3 December.

Appendix 1: Project Management and milestones

Activity	Month															
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Ethics Approval																
Website development and maintenance																
Stage 1: Collect and analyse academic integrity policy data All Australian universities																
Stage 2: Collect and analyse academic integrity breach data Sample from six project team members' universities																
Stage 3: Determine good practice <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Focus groups • Student survey Sample from 6 universities																
Independent evaluation (at end of first year)																
Stage 4: Develop and disseminate exemplars and teaching & learning resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Colloquium • APFEI 																
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up evaluation survey of project participants • Conference presentations (ongoing) • Journal publications (ongoing) 																
Report to ALTC																

Appendix 3: Reference Group

National

Name	Affiliation	Position
Prof Geoff Crisp	University of Adelaide	Director, Centre for Professional and Academic Development
Emeritus Prof John Dearn	Australian National University	Visiting Fellow, Centre for Educational Development and Academic Methods
Prof Gerlese Akerlind	Australian National University	Director, Centre for Educational Development and Academic
Prof Kevin McConkey	The University of Newcastle	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic and Global Relations)
Prof David Griffiths	University of Wollongong	Professor, Chemistry
Prof Nicholas Procter	University of South Australia	Chair, Mental Health Nursing, School of Nursing & Midwifery
Ms Jenny Martin	Griffith University	Student Academic Integrity Coordinator
Dr Wendy Sutherland-Smith	Monash University	Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Education
Dr Helen Marsden	Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research	Acting Manager, Sustainable Research Excellence Research
Assoc Prof Sue Saltmarsh	Australian Catholic University	Educational Studies, School of Education
Assoc Prof Chris Provis	University of South Australia	School of Management
Dr Clair Hughes	University of Queensland	Lecturer, Teaching and Educational Development Institute
Prof Margaret Hicks	University of South Australia	Director, Learning and Teaching
Prof Robert Crotty	Ethics Centre of South Australia	Director
Dr Kathleen Gray	Melbourne University	Senior Research Fellow, Health Informatics, Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences.
Assoc Prof Garry Allan	RMIT	Chair of Turnitin User Group Australia
Ms Bronwyn James	University of Wollongong	President, Association for Academic Language & Learning

International

Name	Affiliation	Position
Prof Rebecca Moore Howard	Syracuse University, USA	Professor of Writing and Rhetoric
Dr Teddi Fishman	Center for Academic Integrity, Clemson University, USA	Director
Dr Tricia Bertram Gallant	University of California at San Diego	Coordinator, Academic Integrity Office
Prof Dan Wueste	Clemson University, USA	Director of the Robert J. Rutland Institute for Ethics
Prof Don McCabe	Center for Academic Integrity, USA	Founding President and a Director
Dr James Lee	Queens University, Canada	Department of Geological Sciences & Geological Engineering,
Dr Lisa Emerson	Massey University, New Zealand	Lecturer in English, School of English and Media Studies
Dr Malcolm Rees	Massey University, New Zealand	Quality Management, Academic Management
Ms Jude Carroll	Oxford Brookes University, UK	Principal Lecturer, Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development

Appendix 4: Project Team

The applicants for this grant are committee members of *The Asia-Pacific Forum on Educational Integrity* (<http://apfei.edu.au>), an inter-organisational body based in Australia whose mission is to collaborate towards the research and promotion of educational integrity. The Forum provides a central point of reference where issues of educational integrity are discussed, researched, progressed and shared with the wider academic community. The project leader, Dr Tracey Bretag, was the elected Chair of APFEI from 2006-2009, and is current Deputy Chair (with Dr Ruth Walker). Bretag is also a member of the Advisory Council to the Center for Academic Integrity, Clemson University, South Carolina. She has written extensively about academic integrity issues and is also the founding Editor (since 2005, originally with Dr Helen Marsden) of the *International Journal for Educational Integrity* (<http://www.ojs.unisa.edu.au/index.php/IJEI>). Other members of APFEI also conduct research on academic integrity, ethical writing practices and student plagiarism. The group, which meets via teleconference six times per year, has been working together since 2003, when the first Educational Integrity Conference was held at the University of South Australia. APFEI have successfully convened and managed three other educational integrity conferences, attracting an increasing international audience (University of Newcastle 2003, University of South Australia 2007 and University of Wollongong 2009).

Project leader

Tracey Bretag, BA (Hons), MA, EdD (by research), Senior Lecturer and Academic Integrity Officer, School of Management, University of South Australia. Bretag brings extensive research experience on academic integrity to the group. Bretag's interest in the topic began with her own doctoral work, 'Implementing plagiarism policy in the internationalised university' (Bretag 2005). Her commitment to this emerging field, and her ability to manage a range of projects and people, are evident in the various positions of leadership she has held in recent years, both nationally and internationally (see above). Working closely with the 0.6 Research Associate, and with 0.2 teaching relief, Bretag will be responsible for ensuring that the project achieves timely outcomes relevant to each milestone. Her background in qualitative research methods will be useful during the analysis phase of the project.

Project Manager

Research Associate: The person in this role will administer the project by organising communication amongst team members, being responsible for data management, overseeing administrative details such as organising and distributing the student survey, booking rooms for focus groups, organising teleconferences, liaising with transcribers and website developers, and coordinating elements of the Colloquium.

Research team with teaching relief

Margaret Green, Dip Physio, MAppSc (Physio), Lecturer in Health Science, Academic Integrity Officer, University of South Australia. Green has been a core member of APFEI since 2003, and in 2007 Co-Chaired (with Bretag) the 3rd *Asia-Pacific Conference on Educational Integrity: Creating a Culture of Integrity*, at the University of South Australia. Green's background in Health Science brings to the research team an alternative perspective coupled with quantitative research methods. With 0.1 teaching relief, Green will assist in conducting interviews and focus groups, as well as work closely with Bretag and the SA based Research Associate.

Ruth Walker, BA (Hons), PhD, Learning Development, University of Wollongong. An Early Career Researcher, Walker co-chaired the 4th *Asia Pacific Conference on Educational Integrity* at UOW in 2009, is currently Deputy Chair of APFEI and the Guest Editor for the IJEI Vol 6(2). Walker was awarded an ALTC Outstanding Contribution to Student Learning Citation 2008 for "sustained work to collaboratively integrate contextualised academic integrity

into curricula". Walker's contribution to the project will draw on her research interests in affective theories of plagiarism and the impact of digital media to research and writing practices, as well as her commitment to collaborative cross-disciplinary project development. Walker will use her 0.1 teaching relief to coordinate interviews, focus groups and the student survey at the University of Wollongong, plus assist in the development of teaching and learning resources.

Other team members (each allocated \$1500 for administrative support)

Julianne East, BA, DipEd, PostGrad DipEd, MEd, PhD research (in process) La Trobe University; Chair, La Trobe University Turnitin Users Group; Resource Developer, Academic Integrity website La Trobe University. East has been an integral member of APFEI since it was formed in 2003, and has been instrumental in promoting academic integrity at La Trobe University. East's (2009) framework for aligning academic integrity policy and practice provides the theoretical foundation for the current project. East's current PhD research on student plagiarism and her extensive publication on academic integrity will be vital in the early stages of the project. She will conduct interviews, focus groups and the student survey at La Trobe University.

Colin James, BA, BJuris, LLB, MPhil, PhD, GCertPTT, Newcastle Law School, University of Newcastle. James is a lawyer/researcher, a senior academic, a member of the University of Newcastle Research Ethics Committee and a member of several management committees and community reference groups in the community sector. He has a strong interest in ethical practice, clinical legal supervision and professional responsibility. He has been a member of APFEI since 2005 and is responsible for drafting its constitution. His research interests include the intersections of mindfulness, emotional intelligence and professional development. James will conduct interviews, focus groups and the student survey at the University of Newcastle.

Ursula McGowan, BA (Hons), Dip Ed, Grad Dip Ed, MA, Deputy Director, Centre for Learning and Professional Development, University of Adelaide. McGowan has been researching and writing about academic integrity since the 1990s. Her professional focus on student learning will facilitate the inclusion of students' voices in this research project. McGowan will conduct interviews, focus groups and the student survey at the University of Adelaide.

Lee Partridge, BSc (Hons), Grad Dip Ed, EdD, Academic Developer in the University of Western Australia's Centre for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning. She has a particular interest in the areas of student experience and academic integrity and has played an integral part in the UWA response to developing students' sense of ethical scholarship. She will be co-convening the 5th *Asia Pacific Conference on Educational Integrity*, to be held at UWA in September 2011. Partridge will provide an important access point to Western Australian universities, and will conduct interviews, focus groups and the student survey at the University of Western Australia.

Margaret Wallace, BA, GradDipEd (Nursing), PostgradDipNursing (Midwifery), MEd, PhD, is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Indigenous Health at the University of Wollongong. Wallace co-chaired the 4th *Asia Pacific Conference on Educational Integrity* in 2009, and co-convened the Academic Integrity Symposium at UOW in 2007. She has been active in promoting academic integrity in the field of Health and Behavioural Science, and her current role as sub-Dean will contribute an invaluable perspective on governance and academic integrity policy implementation. Wallace will work closely with Ruth Walker at the University of Wollongong and will assist in conducting interviews and focus groups.