

Academic integrity standards: Aligning policy and practice in Australian universities

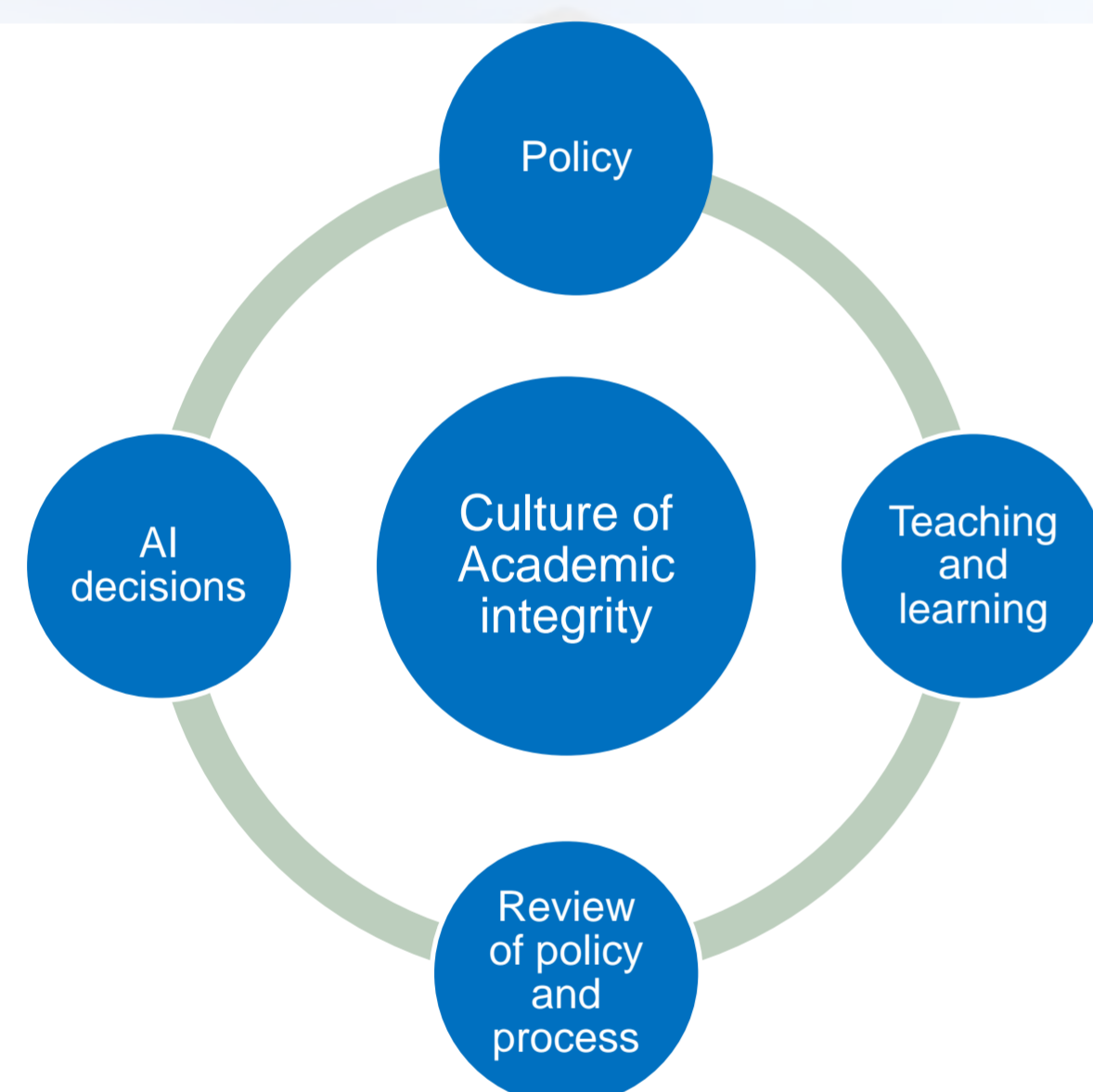
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Aim

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.

An aligned approach to academic integrity (see East 2009)



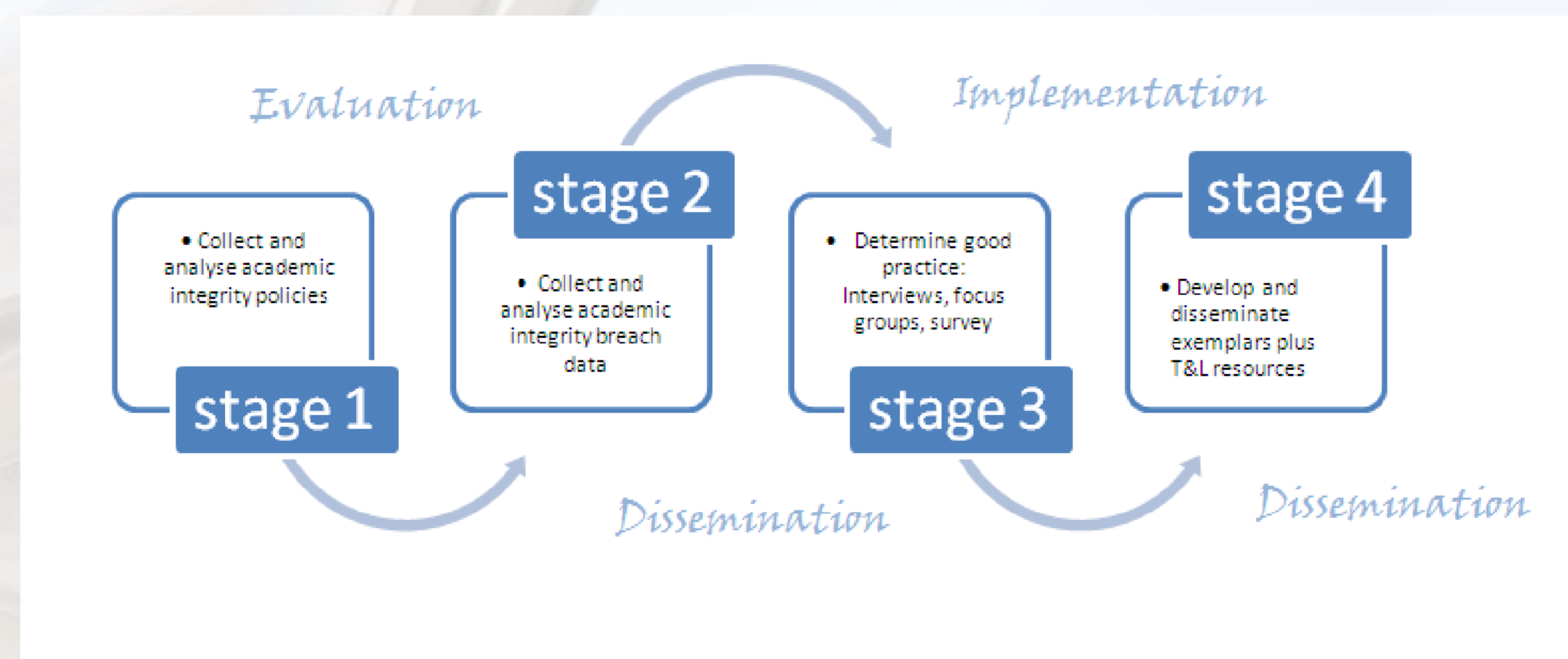
Research questions

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

Deliverables

- resources that enable the teaching and learning of academic integrity.
- opportunities for critical reflection, comparison and discussion of policy and practice.
- exemplars of interpretations of policy and procedure.

Project stages



Project progress

- Analysis of academic policies of 39 Australian universities available online completed. Project won award for 'Best Research Paper' at Australian Quality Forum 2011.
- Student survey completed (June-August 2011), 15,304 responses from students enrolled at the six project partner institutions received. Results being analysed.
- Majority of focus groups and interviews completed.
- National colloquium in February 2012.

Five core elements

No element privileged over another

Elements interconnected

Strength of the knot

Overarching commitment to academic integrity lies at the heart of an exemplary academic integrity policy



Access: easy to locate, read, concise, comprehensible.

Approach: Statement of purpose with educative focus up front and all through policy. Institutional commitment to academic integrity.

Responsibility: Details responsibilities for ALL stakeholders.

Detail: Extensive but not excessive description of breaches, outcomes and processes.

Support: Proactive systems to enable implementation of the policy.

Preliminary research findings

- 51% of the policies had 'misconduct' and 'plagiarism' as the key terms. 41% had academic integrity as the key term.
- 28% had a mixed approach of *both* educative and punitive elements.
- Only 39% of universities identified the institution as being responsible for academic integrity.
- Only one Australian university said that academic integrity is *everyone's* responsibility.

Reference: East, J. (2009). Aligning policy and practice: An approach to integrating academic integrity, *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, 3(1), A38-A51.

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