Academic integrity standards: Aligning policy and practice in Australian universities

Project leader: Tracey Bretag, University of South Australia tracey.bretag@unisa.edu.au
Saadia Mahmud and Margaret Green (University of South Australia), Ruth Walker and Margaret Wallace (University of Wollongong), Colin James (University of Newcastle), Julianne East (La Trobe University), Ursula McGowan (University of Adelaide), and Lee Partridge (University of Western Australia)

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
1. Collect and analyse academic integrity policies
2. Collect and analyse academic integrity research
data
3. Determine good practice interventions, focus groups, forum
data
4. Develop and disseminate exemplars and best practices

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.

Project progress
• 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.

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