

Academic Integrity Guide for Educators



This guide is your starting point for understanding how student academic integrity is supported at the University of Melbourne. Alongside the **Student Academic Integrity Network (SAIN) SharePoint**, it serves as your central reference for information and support. It provides an overview of key principles and processes and links you to the resources you need when teaching or responding to academic integrity concerns.

What is Academic Integrity?

At the University of Melbourne academic integrity means acting with the core values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage in all academic endeavours, ensuring ethical and transparent scholarship.

Maintaining academic integrity is fundamental to education and assessment. It ensures that student learning and achievements are evaluated fairly and accurately, and it underpins the validity of subject and course learning outcomes.

Educator Responsibilities

Academic staff are expected to model good scholarly practice and support a learning environment that upholds academic integrity. This includes guiding students to understand disciplinary standards and the expectations set out in the Student Academic Integrity Policy ([MPF1310](#)), and ensuring assessment design aligns with the Assessment and Results Policy ([MPF1326](#)) by reducing opportunities for academic misconduct.

You must communicate academic integrity requirements clearly across all subject materials, including assessment and examination instructions and the LMS. Expectations regarding the [permitted use of artificial intelligence](#) and translation technologies must be communicated clearly. Embedding these principles in your teaching and assessment supports fairness, transparency, and the integrity of student learning outcomes and the University's awards.

The University also offers a range of teaching, learning and assessment resources that can help support prevention and deterrence of academic misconduct. This information is available via the [Educators' Guide on Staff Hub](#).

Academic integrity incidents

The University categorises academic integrity incidents in two ways, **academic misconduct** and **poor academic practice**. Subject coordinators are responsible for determining whether an identified concern should be managed as poor academic practice or reported as suspected academic misconduct. Differentiation requires considering the intent, context and impact of the behaviour, guidance on how to make this assessment is outlined below.

Poor academic practice

Poor academic practice refers to minor, unintentional lapses in scholarly conventions arising from inexperience, limited academic skills, or a lack of understanding of academic expectations. Importantly, the student must not have gained — or attempted to gain — an academic advantage.

These incidents are **not academic misconduct** and may be managed as part of the normal assessment process, consistent with marking and assessment practices.

A range of resources are available on the dedicated poor academic practice [SharePoint page](#), including:

- A [process map](#) outlining how to distinguish poor academic practice from suspected academic misconduct,
- [Detailed guidance](#) on identifying and managing poor academic practice,
- [Case studies](#) demonstrating how to notify and support students when poor academic practice has been identified
- Contact details for your [Faculty Academic Integrity Officer](#), who can provide further advice.

Suspected academic misconduct

Suspected academic misconduct occurs when a student has gained or attempted to gain an academic advantage, when their behaviour appears intentional, and/or when the purpose or integrity of the assessment has been compromised.

As an academic staff member, you are required to report any suspected breach of student academic integrity. Submitting a report does not, on its own, constitute an allegation; it initiates a review of the incident under [the University's academic misconduct process](#).

A full list of behaviours that constitute [breaches of student academic integrity standards](#) is outlined in the Student Academic Integrity Policy ([MPF1310](#)).

Academic integrity process, roles and responsibilities

Process, roles and responsibilities

The University is committed to managing academic integrity matters transparently, fairly, and in line with the principles of natural justice.

All staff share responsibility for upholding academic integrity and for taking reasonable steps to prevent, identify, and respond to potential breaches. A fair and consistent process relies on clear separation between those who teach, those who manage cases, and those who make formal decisions.

Below is a brief overview of the academic integrity process and the key roles involved.



Subject coordinators are responsible for determining whether a concern is the result of poor academic practice and managed as an assessment matter or reported as suspected academic misconduct for further assessment and investigation. After reporting, subject coordinators may be contacted for clarification or additional information.

Case managers are responsible for conducting a preliminary review of the case details. You can find more information about what this involves [here](#). They also coordinate the administrative steps of the process, gather relevant information, communicate with students and staff when required, and ensure each matter progresses in accordance with University policy and timelines.

Faculty Academic Integrity Officers (FAIOs) oversee academic misconduct matters. They review preliminary case information, approve whether a formal allegation should be issued, and decide outcomes and penalties for allegations of academic misconduct. FAIOs also serve as members of the Student Academic Misconduct Committee.

Discussing academic integrity incidents with students

Students are expected to demonstrate authorship of the work they submit, including being able to explain both the subject matter and the process they followed in producing their assessment. Subject Coordinators should let students know early in the teaching period that these discussions are a normal part of teaching and learning and are intended to help them show their understanding and learning process.

There may be times when meeting with a student is appropriate to clarify concerns and decide whether the matter should be managed as poor academic practice or reported as suspected academic misconduct. These conversations must remain informal and exploratory. Their purpose is to give the student an opportunity to demonstrate authorship and authenticate their learning. The Subject Coordinator's role is to understand the student's approach and gather context, not to compel an admission of misconduct.

A range of resources are available on the dedicated [discussing academic integrity incidents SharePoint page](#), including:

- [Guidance](#) on how, when and what to record when conducting a discussion
- Contact details for your [Faculty Academic Integrity Officer](#), who can provide further advice.

Identifying academic integrity incidents

Detecting potential breaches involves recognising indicators that warrant further review. Some breaches, such as plagiarism, have been around for a while and are relatively straightforward to identify and report. Others relate to emerging threats, such as contract cheating and unauthorised or undisclosed use of technology and may require additional support or information to detect. Guidance on identifying and managing these breaches is provided below.

Unauthorised or undisclosed use of technology

While students may use Generative AI (GenAI) tools to support their learning, the University of Melbourne requires that, before using GenAI for any assessment-related work, students must confirm with their Subject Coordinator that such use is permitted. Rules on GenAI use are set at the subject level, and it is essential that students understand when its use is allowed and when it is not, particularly as these technologies continue to evolve and become embedded in various platforms.

To support clarity and consistency, the University has developed [guidelines for allowing GenAI use in assessment](#). These guidelines include statements defining several levels of permitted AI use, which Subject Coordinators can incorporate into their assessment instructions. Providing clear rules on acceptable use makes it easier to identify breaches involving unauthorised or undisclosed use of technology.

Identifying whether GenAI has been used in an assessment can be challenging. The University advises that, before submitting a report of suspected academic misconduct, you ensure sufficient information and evidence is available to support the claim.

If you have any additional questions, including any about Faculty or discipline standards, please contact your [Faculty Academic Integrity Officer](#).

Assessment outsourcing (contract cheating)

Assessment outsourcing, commonly known as contract cheating, refers to behaviours where students outsource the production of assessable work, in whole or in part, or assist another student to do so. Under the [Student Academic Integrity Policy \(MPF1310\)](#), this includes but is not limited to:

- purchasing, commissioning or selling assessable work
- engaging another person to complete an examination or any form of assessment
- allowing oneself to be impersonated or impersonating another student, in order to sit examinations, attend classes, engage in academic activities or gain access to university systems or services
- facilitating, promoting or advertising methods of academic misconduct or academic cheating services.

Providing contract cheating services is illegal under Australian law. The University takes this behaviour seriously and findings of contract cheating can result in serious consequences such as expulsion from the University or revocation of degrees.

Detecting contract cheating can be difficult, but certain indicators may warrant closer investigation. Detailed guidance is available in the [Identifying Contract Cheating](#) resource, which outlines common signs that may appear in a student's assessable work as well as in the document's metadata.

Reporting suspected academic misconduct

Anyone can [submit a report](#) of suspected academic misconduct; however, under the Student Academic Integrity Policy ([MPF1310](#)) all University staff are required to report any suspected breach of student academic integrity.

When submitting a report of suspected academic misconduct, it is essential to provide clear, comprehensive information along with any relevant supporting documentation. Doing so supports a fair and timely process for all parties involved.

A well-prepared report benefits:

- Case managers, who conduct the preliminary review and determine next steps
- Faculty Academic Integrity Officers, who assess whether the allegation has sufficient merit to proceed
- Students, as a clearly worded and well-evidenced report enables a timely investigation and resolution.

When submitting a report of suspected academic misconduct via [the webform](#), you will need to complete the Case Details section. This includes selecting the relevant breach type and providing a case description.

Completing the case description

Your case description should be specific, detailed, and evidence based. This means clearly stating what aspect of the student's work appears to breach academic integrity standards. Avoid vague statements such as:

“

The work has hallmarks of GenAI.

”

Instead, describe the exact issue and include supporting observations. For example:

“

Several sections of the essay are inconsistent with the student's usual writing style; the written expression is significantly more advanced than in previous assessable work. Additionally, multiple references appear to be fabricated. After noticing this, I checked the document properties and found the total editing time recorded as only two hours.

”

If the suspected breach relates to unauthorised or undisclosed use of technology (such as GenAI) or an assessment rule, you must also include the instructions provided to students about acceptable use. This should include evidence that these instructions were communicated, and details about how they were shared with students.

Provide any additional context or relevant background that supports your concern, such as:

- Previous submissions for comparison
- Observed discrepancies in writing style or technical accuracy
- Behaviour during assessment (e.g., unusual timing or communication)
- Describe in detail how the evidence provided supports the report

Attach and summarise evidence provided,

- Original student submission
- AI detection report (if relevant)
- Drafts, notes, or resource materials provided by the student
- Screenshots or documents (e.g., plagiarism matches)

For additional comprehensive guidance on what evidence can be provided for each breach type, please refer to the [Breach Types and Evidence Guideline](#). Additionally, if you require further information or assistance, contact your [Faculty Academic Integrity Officer](#).

Additional resources, information and support

If you need guidance at any stage, support is available. For queries about faculty-specific academic integrity matters, including discipline specific expectations or concerns, or the case management of incidents, please contact your FAIO or case manager. A contact list for each faculty is available on our [“Who can I contact?”](#) page.

For all other queries, please contact the Office of Student Academic Integrity (OSAI) at academic-integrity@unimelb.edu.au, including:

- Questions about any information in this guide
- Communications and information provided to students
- Reporting on broad trends or other concerns related to academic integrity.

You can access guidance, resources and additional information via [SAIN](#) and the [Academic Integrity website](#).

For broader teaching and assessment support, the [Educators' Guide on Staff Hub](#) provides further materials and information.