Definition of Organisation

Skilled Services Australia Pty Ltd trades as:

- Skilled Services Australia
- Skills Institute Australia (SIA)
- Skills College Perth

For the purposes of this policy, any reference to Skilled Services Australia, SIA, or the organisation, should be considered a reference to any of these respective trading names.

Purpose

Skilled Services Australia, Skills Institute Australia (SIA) Senior Management and all training staff are committed to identifying all plagiarism, cheating and collusion and other related misconduct by students undertaking any assessment activities and applying corrective actions to prevent cheating, plagiarism or collusion and other related misconduct contributing to a competency outcome.

Cheating scandals in both the vocational and higher education has highlighted the problem of online assessment sites, contract cheating sites (i.e. MyMaster as noted in TEQSA reports), and file-sharing sites being used by students to complete assessments.

SIA has undertaken and continues to undertake activities to address these problems and have strengthened information and advice to students and staff about the penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism and collusion and other related misconduct.

This policy has been developed to define the instances that constitute cheating, plagiarism and collusion and other related misconduct within the organisation's context and to outline the procedures SIA will implement to respond to these issues.

The policy outlines SIA's commitment to upholding academic integrity and dealing with breaches of academic integrity.

Documents referenced for information (it is accepted that these documents relate to higher education, however, there is relevance for the vocational sector:

Good Practice Note: Addressing contract cheating to safeguard academic cheating (TEQSA October 2015)

Report on student academic integrity and allegations of contract cheating by university students (TEQSA 2015)

Definitions

Plagiarism – this is a broad term that refers to any account of an individual drawing on another person's ideas, words or intellectual property without acknowledging their source. It is a form of cheating that involves the use of published or unpublished works of others and misrepresenting the material as one's own work. Examples of plagiarism may include, but are not limited to:

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RTO 32473
CRICOS 03328G
ABN 34 150 413 219
www.skills.qld.edu.au

Brisbane: 3431 Pacific Hwy, Slacks Creek, QLD 4127 Ph. 07 3208 3182 Email: enrol@skills.qld.edu.au
Perth: 74 Walters Drive, Osborne Park, WA 6017 Ph. 08 9228 8542 Email: perth@skills.qld.edu.au
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- Copying out or summarising sections from someone else's work without referencing the original author
- Incorporating ideas from someone else's work and not attributing them to the original author
- Presenting the work of another person as one's own
- Copying ideas, concepts, research data, images sound or text and presenting it as one's own work
- Asserting that work carried out in collaboration with other people was a solo project
- Presenting one's own work which has been submitted for assessment previously
- Certain printed, electronic or audio-visual material
- Non-attribution of sources
- Not making it apparent when quoting directly from a source
- In group work where the student claims credit for the work but has not substantially contributed, or,
- In a collaborative assessment piece – submitting material that is substantially the same as another student's
- Acquiring or commissioning work and claiming is as the student's own – such as ghost-writing.

Cheating – is the practice of committing deceptive acts for the purpose of obtaining a competency result in any assessment activity. Cheating also includes assisting another student to deceptively obtain a competency result.

Collaboration – involves the authorised working partnership of two or more people, such as on a project or assignment. It is important to make the distinction between collaboration and collusion. Generally, it is considered that if students are required to produce assessment items these should be done independently, except when they are asked to participate in a group project requiring a joint group response to a task. Avoiding unauthorised collaboration is every student's responsibility and trainers and assessors are required to ensure students understand the parameters of their assessment tasks.

Collusion – means the agreement between two or more people for a deceitful or fraudulent purpose. This includes unauthorised collaboration on assessible written, oral or practical work with another person or persons. Collusion is said to occur when a student works with others to produce work, which is then presented as the student's own work, or the work of the other person(s) or where a student collaborates without the authority of other students and submits work which is substantially not the student's own work.

Impersonation – means falsely representing oneself as another person and includes:

- Impersonating another student in an exam
- Submitting assessment that was written by others
- Impersonating someone in an online environment where that person is contributing to input into the course or to posts that contribute to assessment or to the completion of online assessments.

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Student academic misconduct includes but not limited to the student conduct in relation to academic fraud, plagiarism, cheating or other dishonest academic practice to gain academic or general advantage. It also includes dishonesty in the preparation or presentation of any assessable work is regarded and student academic misconduct.

Scope

This policy applies to all students (domestic and international) enrolled at SIA and applicants wishing to apply for enrolment with the organisation. The policy also applies to all SIA trainers and assessors, staff and contractors and any third parties engaged in any activities for and on behalf of SIA. The policy applies to all modes of training and assessment, and any location where training and assessment is undertaken.

Responsibility

The SIA Director Studies in consultation with the Senior Management is responsible for implementing strategies to avoid plagiarism, cheating, collaboration, or collusion.

Policy Statement

This policy has been implemented to ensure that incidents of plagiarism, cheating, collusion, impersonation do not occur at SIA wherever possible.

The policy sets out procedures intended to assist SIA training staff, contractors and any third parties engaged in any activities on behalf of SIA to implement the procedures and information and ensure that all students are fully aware of the intentions and details of the policy and the consequences of any breaches by them or others.

For the purposes of this policy plagiarism, cheating, collaboration, or collusion may be termed academic misconduct.

Procedures

Plagiarism, cheating and collusion and similar misconduct can be the result of a lack of understanding or poor practice and is harmful to SIA's reputation as well as the student's learning activities and course progression. In cases of deliberate plagiarism, it is considered cheating and all practices are unacceptable, however the consequences may be different depending on the circumstances of the breach.

Responsibilities of SIA:

The organisation will:

- Make available through the Student Handbook policies, at orientation, in class, and on assessment materials information on academic misconduct and details on how breaches will be handled.
- Ensure that students have every opportunity to be aware of their responsibilities and to clarify any questions they may have with their trainers and assessors, Lead Trainer or Director of Studies.
- Make clear to all trainers and assessors their obligations to address instances of academic misconduct.

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- Ensure that assessment submission processes are secure, and that assessment materials and resources are unable to be accessed or shared by others wherever possible.
- Provide information sessions for trainers and assessors and students on assessment standards including referencing (where appropriate) and attribution.
- Provide for trainers and assessors and students text matching software (Plagiarism software) to scan student assessments where required.
- Put in place short workshops delivered either face-to-face or online to provide information about understanding what academic misconduct is and what is "best practice: for acceptable referencing.

It is recognised that there are times where there is legitimate collaboration, where students will be required to co-operate and collaborate on projects as part of the training and assessment process such as when identified in assessment criteria the requirements for students to engage in group work to submit a single piece or multiple pieces of work for assessment where each student has contributed to it.

Academic Misconduct may include:

a) Cheating in an exam.
   i. Bringing into the exam material that is disallowed.
   ii. Assisting others to cheat.
   iii. Reading or copying (or attempting to do so) another student's work.
   iv. Using an electronic device (unless approved by the exam supervisor).
   v. Consulting with others outside the exam room whilst the exam is in progress.
   vi. Improperly obtaining prior knowledge of the exam.
   vii. Removing an exam paper without permission.

b) Plagiarism
   i. May include printed, electronic or audio-visual material.
   ii. Copying ideas, concepts, research data, images sound or text and presenting it as the student's work.
   iii. Non-attribution of sources.
   iv. Summarising another's work without attribution.
   v. Not making it apparent when quoting directly from a source.
   vi. In a collaborative assessment piece; submitting material that is substantially the same as another student's.
   vii. In group work where the student claims credit for the work but has not substantially contributed.
   viii. Acquiring or commissioning work and claiming is as the student's own; such as ghost writing.

c) Collusion.
   i. Where a student collaborates without the authority of other students and submits work which is substantially not that of the student.
   ii. Assisting others in plagiarism activities.

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d) Impersonation.
   i. Impersonating another student in an exam.
   ii. Submitting assessment that was written by others.
   iii. Impersonating someone in an online environment where that person is contributing to input into the course or to posts that contribute to assessment or to the completion of online assessments.

Detection and Reporting of Academic Misconduct

- Trainers and assessors that become aware of possible incidences of academic misconduct must report the details to the Director of Studies immediately.
- The Director of Studies will investigate the matter thoroughly using whatever means or tools required.
- All suspected and substantiated incidents of academic misconduct are to be reported to senior management and the Quality, Audit and Risk Committee.

Investigating Allegations of Misconduct

- Investigations will be conducted as quickly as possible after identification and will require the collection of all relevant materials.
- Natural justice and procedural fairness will prevail.
- Students involved and trainers and assessors will be informed of the substance of the allegations and the range of possible consequences if substantiated.
- Students will be provided with the opportunity to respond to the allegation and to any penalty to be imposed.

Penalties

A range of penalties may be imposed individually or in combination depending on the findings of the investigation and the severity of the breach:

- A reprimand or warning
- A NYC grade being awarded for the unit
- A requirement to submit an alternative assessment piece
- A request for a written apology
- Immediate withdrawal of the student from the unit of competency
- Imposition of probationary enrolment subject to the student's behaviour being satisfactory
- Withdrawal from the course
- Suspension of enrolment
- Withholding results
- Expulsion from SIA.

Any student under investigation for student academic misconduct will not be eligible to complete their course/qualifications.

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Before any penalties or sanctions are imposed on students, appropriate consultation between the trainer and assessor directly involved with the student, the Lead Trainer and the Director of Studies must be held.

Plagiarism Detection Procedures

SIA will utilise a variety of procedures to detect plagiarism including but not limited to:

- Upon the submission of all assessment tasks, students are required to sign an Assessment Cover Sheet that includes a declaration of the authenticity of the work
- Conduct checks using tools designed to detect plagiarism, cheating and collusion.
- Identify and investigate any possibility of plagiarism, cheating or collusion.
- Source evidence (through identification of the source) to support the allegation
- Providing professional development for trainers and assessors on recognising plagiarism.
- Taking immediate action if materials are recognised on "cheat sites" to have the materials removed and materials reviewed for ongoing use.

Risk Mitigation

- The Quality, Audit and Risk Committee of SIA will monitor all risks associated with academic misconduct.
- The senior management from recommendations of the Quality, Audit and Risk Committee will put in place any mitigation strategies necessary to contain the threat or number of incidences of academic misconduct.

Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines

- Trainer and Assessor Position Description
- Training and Assessment Strategies
- Trainer and Assessor Manual
- HR Manual Evaluation Feedback Policy
- Code of Conduct – Students
- Complaints and Appeals Policy

Statutory and Regulatory Compliance

- National Standards for RTOs 2015 and subsequent amendments

Policy Publication

All policies and procedures that are applicable to prospective and enrolled students (domestic or international) are made available on request at all times, and form part of the induction and orientation for students, staff and contractors. Policies and procedures are made available via the website (where appropriate), student administration systems, learning management systems and internal electronic systems.

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