

## Introduction

The Academic Board Resolution *Academic Honesty in Coursework* was approved by the Academic Board on 14 November 2001. It develops (and presumably supersedes) the University's policy statement on plagiarism, which is set out in Part 7 of the Academic Board Resolution: *Assessment and Examination of Coursework*. In the more recent Resolution, plagiarism is set within the larger context of academic honesty.

## Purpose of this Document

The purpose of this document is to summarise the provisions of the Academic Board Resolution *Academic Honesty in Coursework* and their implications for the USydMP. References in this document are to the Academic Board Resolution unless otherwise specified.

Recommendations for Faculty action arising from the Resolution are identified as footnotes, and are collated at the end of this document.

This document is intended as a summary of the Resolution. Members of the Faculty should refer to the Resolution as the authoritative document.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is broadly defined as the presentation of the work of others as one's own without acknowledgment of the source of the work. (Part 2, Section 2.)

Plagiarism is always unacceptable in academic work, and may arise either from lack of academic competence or from an intent to deceive.

**Lack of academic competence** includes:

- ? a failure to follow customary practices of referencing;
- ? the unwillingness or inability to paraphrase or to write in one's own words.

It may be anticipated that lack of this particular academic competence will be uncommon in a graduate-entry program. However, where it is detected, it should be treated as an educational problem.

The Resolution requires that Faculties, Departments and academic staff:

- ? ensure that students are aware of the University's policy on plagiarism;<sup>1</sup>
- ? counsel students about proper referencing practices;
- ? emphasise and encourage development of the skill of paraphrasing ideas and expressing them in the student's own words.

---

<sup>1</sup> Recommendation 1: that the Faculty bring the existence of the Academic Board Resolution and its implications to the notice of all students (and academic staff) in the Faculty.

In ensuring awareness, the Faculty may wish, for each written summative assessment, to require students to complete a declaration to the effect that the student is aware of, and has complied with, the University's policy in relation to academic honesty.<sup>2</sup> It should be understood that such a declaration would be part of the educational strategy, and should not be mistaken for a guarantee that there has been compliance with the policy.

Academic work which contains plagiarism, but where no intent to deceive can be discerned, should be judged on the basis of its academic merit, and graded as Fail if that is the appropriate grade for the work submitted (but not as a punishment for plagiarism).

Plagiarism which is undertaken with an **intent to deceive** an Assessor is a different matter, and is a form of academic dishonesty. The Academic Board Resolution sets out the attributes of a piece of work which may be indicative of plagiarism with intent to deceive (Part 2, Section 3). Other forms of academic dishonesty are identified in Part 2, Section 4.

### Effective Management Procedures

Part 3 of the Academic Board Resolution sets out the requirements for the processes for identifying and dealing with academic dishonesty, which are summarised below.

**In all cases, the importance of maintaining contemporary written records of all activities relating to these procedures cannot be over-emphasised.**

#### 1. The Role of the Assessor

1.1 An Assessor may detect or become aware that plagiarism or academic dishonesty has occurred if either of the following questions can be answered in the affirmative:

1.1.1 Is there evidence that submitted work:

- ? has been copied from the work of another student or former student?
- ? has been copied from published work without attribution or acknowledgment?
- ? has been written or researched by another person?
- ? has been submitted by a student who has received a previous warning about plagiarism?

---

<sup>2</sup> Recommendation 2: that the Faculty require the insertion and completion of such a declaration on the cover sheet of each written summative assessment, and that the Assessment Unit bring to the Assessment Committee a series of proposals as to how this policy decision may be implemented.

- ? has been recycled from previously submitted material?<sup>3</sup> or
- ? contains fabricated data?

Or

1.1.2 Is there evidence that:

- ? an assessment has been completed by a person substituting for the enrolled student?
- ? communication between students has occurred during an assessment?
- ? prohibited materials have been brought into an assessment?
- ? attempts have been made to read the work of others during an assessment?
- ? an assessment has been completed in consultation with another person, or outside the confines of the examination room without permission?
- ? specific regulations in relation to an assessment instrument have been breached?<sup>4</sup>

Awareness of the possible occurrence of academic dishonesty may arise from the Assessor's own observations, or from reports provided by assessment invigilators.

In the latter event, the Principal Examiner may be required to attend the Examination Room e.g. to adjudicate and report on whether a student is in possession of "prohibited materials".

1.2 If an Assessor detects or suspects plagiarism or academic dishonesty, the Assessor may:

1.2.1 arrange a consultation with the student, or

1.2.2 refer the matter to the Chair of the relevant Theme Committee (Theme Chair) for further action if the student is in Stages 1 to 3 of the USydMP. (In Stage 4, refer to the Chair of the relevant Rotation, Elective or PreInternship Committee.)

1.3 If as a result of consultation with the student, the Assessor believes that the student acted without the intent to deceive, or was not acting dishonestly, the Assessor may:

---

<sup>3</sup> Where there is a particular risk of this practice, Assessors may also require the student to write on the assessment or assignment cover sheet such other information (e.g. a brief summary of the content) as is necessary to facilitate checking by Assessors that the content has not been recycled from previously submitted work.

Recommendation 3: for assessments where this additional information is deemed to be necessary to guard against recycling, the relevant Assessors meet to draw up a proforma cover sheet which can be used, with only minor modification, for all USydMP assessments where recycling is deemed to be a risk.

<sup>4</sup> For example, the no-look-back, no-look-forward requirement for Modified Essay Questions.

Recommendation 4: that the Faculty emphasise the legal basis of such requirements by enshrining them in some form of Assessment Regulation.

- 1.3.1 counsel the student, and / or
- 1.3.2 issue a written warning to the student. In such a case, the Assessor should forward a copy of the warning to the Theme Chair, who will forward it to the Sub-Dean or Associate Dean of the Clinical School, who will cause the warning to be placed in the student's personal file.
- 1.4 If the Assessor believes that the student acted with intent to deceive, or was otherwise acting dishonestly, the Assessor should refer the matter to the Theme Chair.
2. The Role of the Theme Chair
- 2.1 The Theme Chair may either interview the student and make a decision about the matter in accordance with the requirements of Part 3, Section 3 (2). Actions open to the Theme Chair are to:
- ? counsel the student and dismiss the case;
  - ? issue a written warning (and cause a copy to be placed in the student's personal file);
  - ? require re-submission or other remedial work;
  - ? require the student to undertake another form of assessment;
  - ? apply a Fail grade to the piece of work (which will normally result in a Fail grade for the Theme);
  - ? consult with the Chair, Personal and Professional Development Committee, as to whether a Fail grade may also be appropriate for that Theme;<sup>5</sup> or
  - ? refer the matter to the Associate Dean (Curriculum) for notification to the Registrar if (a) the student continues to deny a breach that has occurred, or (b) Failing the Theme is deemed to be insufficient to deal with the matter.
- 2.2 Or the Theme Chair may refer the matter directly to the Associate Dean (Curriculum) for notification to the Registrar, to be dealt with under Chapter 8 (Student Discipline) of the University of Sydney By-law 1999.

**As emphasised at the outset, the importance of maintaining contemporary written records of all activities relating to these procedures cannot be over-emphasised.**

---

<sup>5</sup> That the Faculty specifically enact that academic dishonesty may result in failure in the Personal and Professional Development Theme as well as the Theme in which the dishonesty occurred.

### Recommendations

- 1 That the Faculty bring the existence of the Academic Board Resolution and its implications to the notice of all students (and academic staff) in the Faculty.
- 2 That a declaration on academic honesty should accompany each written summative assessment paper completed by a student, and that the Assessment Unit bring to the Assessment Committee a series of proposals as to how this policy decision may be implemented.
- 3 That, for assessments where additional information is deemed to be necessary to guard against recycling, the relevant Assessors meet to draw up a proforma cover sheet which can be used, with only minor modification, for all USydMP assessments where recycling is deemed to be a risk.
- 4 That the Faculty emphasise the legal basis of such requirements as the no-look-back, no-look-forward rule for Modified Essay Questions by enshrining such requirements in some form of Assessment Regulation.
- 5 That the Faculty specifically enact that academic dishonesty may result in failure in the Personal and Professional Development Theme as well as the Theme in which the dishonesty occurred.

... end of document.