

A08: Misconduct in Assessment Policy

1.0 Purpose

NZSEG is committed to ensuring that assessment is fair, valid, reliable and authentic. Within the academic year, there are instances where there may be doubt about the authenticity of work submitted for assessment or suggestions of misconduct during examinations. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that processes are in place to detect and prevent academic misconduct in assessment.

For further guidance on the use/misuse of Artificial intelligence (AI) in assessment, see policy A20: Generative AI Policy.

2.0 Objectives

This policy provides for the consistent interpretation and application of processes to detect and manage academic misconduct in assessment.

Specifically, this policy covers:

- Provision of information to learners
- Guidance and training in appropriate academic conduct
- Management of assessment submissions
- Detection of academic misconduct
- Management of suspected academic misconduct.

3.0 Principles

- 3.1** Learners will receive guidance in appropriate academic conduct to ensure they understand the need for honesty and integrity when completing assessments.
- 3.2** Learners are expected to follow the principles of academic integrity in all assessment activities and are to submit assessments for marking on the basis that they are their own work or a group's work and that the assignment was prepared with integrity.
- 3.3** Learners will be required to provide assurance about the authenticity of any work submitted in their names for assessment. Learners must ensure that any work that is not their own is acknowledged in the accepted manner for tertiary education.
- 3.4** Academic staff will support learners to reference sources appropriately, providing formative learning opportunities and materials to assist in understanding of all aspects of correct referencing to ensure the integrity of the work.
- 3.5** Heads of School/Academic Director (Seafield) are responsible for ensuring that learners are provided with guidelines regarding authenticity, referencing, plagiarism, copying, cheating and copyright infringements. Academic staff will remain up-to-date with variants of cheating that emerge with technology and changing learner contexts.
- 3.6** Instances of assessment misconduct will be managed following the principles of promptness, natural justice, impartiality, consistency, non-punitiveness and fairness.
- 3.7** Instances where a learner freely acknowledges assessment misconduct will be managed by the Head of School/Director of Studies.
- 3.8** Instances of serious or unacknowledged misconduct will be referred to the Head of School/ Academic Director (Seafield) and managed through the learner discipline process.

- 3.9** Learners will be expected to receive academic counselling when plagiarism is unintended such as using unacknowledged references.
- 3.10** Academic staff will follow the process detailed in this policy when they have doubts about the authorship of learner work on the basis of observed copying or illicit exchange of information, absent referencing, differences in level of language, recognition of previously published text, or any other indicator. For instances of serious cheating or repeated plagiarism, see section 4.2.5 of this policy.
- 3.11** Electronic plagiarism detection software (such as Turnitin) and associated training and guidelines will be available to both academic staff and learners to assist with preventing and detecting plagiarism.

4.0 Procedures

4.1 Learner Information and Guidance

- 4.1.1** At the start of each programme/course learners will be provided with information and guidance about what constitutes academic misconduct, cheating and plagiarism, expectations that learners do not engage in any activity that constitutes academic misconduct and the consequences and penalties that apply to those found to be engaged in this activity.
- 4.1.2** Information and resources will include:
- How to reference and acknowledge sources and resources
 - Providing information about research and how to write assignments
 - Explaining to learners the measures used to identify plagiarism including the need to submit assignments through plagiarism detection software
- 4.1.2** Information and guidance will be provided in the Student Handbook, Academic Policies, Course Outlines/Programme Outlines, in the academic orientation sessions provided to learners at the start of their course, when assessment tasks are set and discussed, and during the discussion of ethics and expectations of the vocational sector learners will be entering.
- 4.1.3** All learners will be required to sign a declaration for each piece of work submitted, that the work is original to the learner, authentic and free of plagiarism.

4.2 Assessment Design

Well-designed assessments reduce opportunities for learners to cheat, including the unauthorised use of AI tools for generating assessment answers/content. The principles of assessment design for each course and programme will be documented by the Programme Committee. These may include:

- Using unique data, contexts or case studies that are as specific as possible
- Changing all or at least aspects of the assessment from semester to semester
- Using online testing with built in safeguards such as reordering of questions
- Designing assessments to cross-check that learners understand the content e.g. by including live presentations, questioning, requiring working portfolios to be submitted, requiring checkpoints and formative feedback.

4.3 Detection of Misconduct

Practices to detect misconduct include looking for irregularities in learners' performance. These may include:

- Where possible using an invigilated in-house assessment to benchmark learners' other assessment work against
- Having one tutor mark all assessments or all responses to one question (strip marking)
- Comparing learners results and language across assessments and courses within their programme
- Comparing learners' oral responses with their written ones
- Keep a file of formative assessments as well as summative ones
- Tutor familiarity with learners' writing and responses/performance as well as attendance
- Using plagiarism-detection software to detect overuse of resources beyond the limit stated in the assessment information
- Paying attention to instances where the learner responses do not align with the questions asked
- Requiring learners to submit planning notes, keep a journal or portfolio recording their activities and thinking as they work through an assessment.

The identification of practices to detect misconduct are documented within the Programme Approval and Accreditation Document.

4.4 Investigation and Outcomes of Misconduct

All cases of misconduct will be investigated. Where learners are suspected of assessment misconduct the following process will be followed:

- 4.4.1** The tutor will assess the level/amount of suspected assessment misconduct, prepare evidence and discuss with the relevant Head of School/Director of Studies.
- 4.4.2** Where doubt persists, a meeting is to be arranged with the learner/s support person, relevant tutor and Head of School/Academic Director (Seafield) to present the allegation and evidence and to provide the learner with an opportunity to discuss the matter. Where the Head of School/Academic Director (Seafield) and tutor are one and the same, another Head of School/Academic Director (Seafield) within the Institute may be asked to participate. Written documentation is to be placed on the learner/s file/s in the Student Management System (SMS).
- 4.4.3** Where assessment misconduct is established and acknowledged by the learner/s, the learner/s may be instructed to resubmit the assessment as a second attempt if allowed by the programme regulations. Other actions can include awarding a reduced grade or awarding a fail mark/grade. The decision is to be notified in writing.
- 4.4.4** All cases of misconduct in assessment and their outcomes/consequences will be tabled at the programme committee, reported by the Head of School/Director of Studies and placed on the learner's academic record.
- 4.4.5** Learner/s appeal rights can be found in A04 Misconduct Policy and A10 Academic Appeals Policy.

5.0 Definitions

<i>Cheating</i>	Defined as a misconduct response whatsoever by learners to any item of assessment, including any action that may otherwise defeat the purpose of the assessment. This also includes accessing any non-approved sources of information such as the internet. This can include actions such as another person completing some or all of the assignment, paying for assignment answers, copying someone else's assignment with or without their permission, taking notes into a test or examination or receiving notes by cellphone.
<i>Deception</i>	The attempt by a learner to deceive or misrepresent their circumstances to an assessor to achieve an unfair advantage e.g. obtaining an extension by faking an illness. The act of taking and using another's work as one's own without proper acknowledgement and includes copying the works of another learner; directly copying any part of another author's work; summarising another's work.
<i>Plagiarism</i>	Plagiarism can be intentional (you mean to copy without acknowledgement) or unintentional (you are unaware you were copying without acknowledgement). Unintentional plagiarism is not seen as a defence against plagiarism but if misconduct is found it will be taken into account in formulating the outcomes. Passing off AI-generated material as your own is plagiarism.
<i>Other misconduct</i>	The submission of work for an assessment that has previously been submitted elsewhere.
<i>Serious misconduct</i>	Repeated or blatant instances of assessment misconduct and especially cheating within examinations.
<i>Turnitin</i>	A version of software used to detect plagiarism that is used at NZSEG.

6.0 Document Control

6.1 Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Academic Board is responsible for monitoring and evaluating this policy.

Version	Type of Change	AB Reference	Approval Date	Effective from
1	Development of Policy	AB Action Item 54	23 June 2015	23 June 2015
2	Minor Review and Re-format of Policy	Approved by AB	20 October 2015	20 October 2015
3	Inclusion to NZSEG QMS and Policies.	Approved by the Executive Management Team	16 January 2017	31 January 2017
4	Revisions to sections 3 and 4 to address issues around plagiarism	Approved by the Executive Management Team	4 September 2017	18 September 2017
4.1	Review and minor word changes	Approved by the AB	22 July 2020	22 July 2020

5	Policy Review and Formatting	Approved by ELT	February 2025	February 2025
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