

Guide to determining the seriousness of a case of academic misconduct

The [Academic Misconduct Procedures](#) state that when a Lecturer in Charge has resolved that there is sufficient evidence to conclude a student has acted inappropriately or dishonestly, within 10 working days of reaching the determination they must establish whether the alleged academic misconduct is minor, moderate or major under section 7 of the [Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy](#).

To assist Lecturers in Charge and other Officers in ACU determine the level of misconduct the following matrix has been developed.

There is a degree of flexibility in the matrix in order for staff to consider contextual information. All decisions, however, must comply with the [Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy](#) and the [Academic Misconduct Procedures](#).

CRITERIA	MINOR	MODERATE	MAJOR
<p>Minimum conditions</p> <p>(Refer to Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy; Section 7.4 states that "Academic misconduct is handled as either minor, moderate or major".)</p>	<p>Limited to cases where all the following conditions apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the breach has occurred in the first eight undergraduate units or first four postgraduate units of study at ACU; the breach is not one of cheating in an examination; there is no record relating to a previous occurrence of academic misconduct or finding of academic misconduct; the breach had a minor effect on the assessment task; it did not provide the student with a significant unfair advantage; a proportionate response by staff would maintain the University's academic reputation. 	<p>Can only be determined as such where it is judged that the conditions of the breach are not minor and does not meet the conditions for a major breach, and includes but is not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> several referencing/citation errors are made after the first year of study; and/or the breach has a moderate effect on the assessment task; and/or it constitutes recycling. 	<p>A breach must be determined as major where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student has been found to have breached the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy on two or more prior occasions; and/or it constitutes any form of misrepresentation; and/or it constitutes any form of cheating.

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Other considerations			
In assessing the gravity of breach, a judgement should be made on the basis of the minimum conditions above plus an overall qualitative assessment of the following circumstances (see also Academic Misconduct Procedures – Section 10):			
Experience of the student	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student has not previously attempted the type of assessment task under investigation 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> there is evidence that the student has been referred to training/instruction in avoiding plagiarism the assessment task is an early draft of a research report or thesis 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student is in their final year the student is expected to fully understand and exhibit academic integrity
Effect on the assessment task	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> less than 20% of the assessment task was affected by the breach 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 20-30% of the assessment task was affected by the breach the student would have been given a moderate advantage 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> More than 30% of the assessment task was affected by the breach the student would have been given a significant advantage
Intent of the student	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the misconduct appears to be uninformed or inadvertent (as a result of poor academic practice), and the misconduct is admitted by the student 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the misconduct appears to be a result of carelessness the student lacks insight into the seriousness of academic misconduct 	For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the misconduct appears to be intentional or reckless two or more students are involved the student denies the misconduct, despite evidence indicating otherwise
Nature of the breach (Academic Integrity & Misconduct Policy 7.1 Academic misconduct may take a number of forms, and 10 – Schedule 1 Examples of Academic Misconduct)			
Cheating	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all forms of cheating examples are detailed in Schedule 1 of the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy
Collusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> failure to acknowledge approved cooperation/ collaboration on an assessment task 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unauthorised collaboration with another student(s) on part of an assessment task encouraging or assisting another student to plagiarise part of an assessment task attributing work to others who have not contributed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> unauthorised collaboration with another student(s) on a significant portion of an assessment task encouraging or assisting another student to plagiarise a significant portion of an assessment task

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Plagiarism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> referencing/citation of work is not clear or adequate, or has numerous errors inappropriate summarising without referencing the source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> failure to reference and/or cite adequately in several instances copying segments of other students' work claiming credit for contribution to group work beyond the level of participation or contribution to that work copying segments of material from other sources (including websites) without referencing the source 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> fabricating references or citations or citing sources, such as texts, which the student has not read, without acknowledging the 'secondary' source from which knowledge of them has been obtained copying of a significant portion of other work (including other students' work) including content (including referenced content) from other sources which is so extensive as to preclude an appropriate level of input by the student
Misrepresentation	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all forms of misrepresentation examples detailed in Schedule 1 of the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy
Recycling	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> recycling/resubmitting part of a previous assessment task without the permission of the Lecturer in Charge or without referencing the source 	N/A
Research	N/A	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all forms of research misconduct in coursework examples detailed in Schedule 1 of the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy