

PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY & PROCEDURES

1. Purpose

The purpose of these policies and procedures is to address the assessment requirements of the Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2025 and the National Code 2018.

The objectives are to encourage ethical conduct by students, and to inform staff and students about the Training Masters standards of academic behaviour.

The policy also aims to ensure that mechanisms are in place to minimise student plagiarism and cheating, and to outline the strategies and procedures in place to detect and respond to such incidents.

2. Policy

Training Masters is committed to providing a high-quality learning environment that promotes academic integrity, ethical behaviour, and independent learning. The College expects all students to demonstrate honesty and integrity in the completion of assessment activities by submitting work that is authentic, their own, and appropriately acknowledges all sources, including the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools where permitted.

Training Masters values the authenticity declarations made by students and is committed to maintaining the integrity of assessment outcomes through fair, consistent and transparent practices. Students must acknowledge all information obtained from books, journals, websites, legislation, industry publications, Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools and other sources using the referencing style required by the College. Students and staff share responsibility for understanding and applying appropriate referencing, citation and academic integrity requirements to minimise plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic misconduct.

AI-assisted tools may be used to support learning, such as checking grammar, summarising concepts, or generating practice questions, provided they do not write or generate the student's assessment responses. Students must acknowledge any AI tool used. The use of AI to write or reword assessment answers is considered misconduct unless explicitly permitted.

Plagiarism, cheating, collusion, contract cheating, falsification of assessment evidence, unauthorised use of AI, and any other form of academic misconduct are considered serious breaches of this Policy and may result in disciplinary action in accordance with the Assessment Policy and Procedure, Student Code of Conduct, and Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.

The College provides students with information regarding academic integrity, acceptable use of AI and Large Language Models (LLMs), assessment authenticity requirements, and the consequences of academic misconduct through the Student Handbook, orientation, assessment information and ongoing academic support.

3. Definitions

Plagiarism – Plagiarism is the act of misrepresenting as one's own original work the ideas, interpretations, words or creative works of another. These include published and unpublished documents, designs, music, sounds, images, photographs, computer codes and ideas gained through working in a group. These ideas, interpretations, words or works may be found in print and/or electronic media. Plagiarism includes:

- Copying text directly from sources without quotation marks and citation.
- Paraphrasing someone else's ideas without proper acknowledgment.
- Submitting someone else's work as one's own.

Cheating – seeking to obtain an unfair advantage in the assessment of any piece of work such as by copying, falsifying identity or employing another person to undertake assessments on their behalf

Collusion: Unauthorised collaboration between students.

Academic Misconduct - any action or behaviour by a student that seeks to gain an unfair academic advantage or that undermines the integrity of assessment or learning. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, fabrication or falsification of information, collusion, and the unauthorised use of materials or assistance during assessments. Academic misconduct breaches the ethical standards of learning and assessment and may result in disciplinary action

Artificial Intelligence (AI): Computer-based systems capable of generating text, images, code or other content to assist learning. AI tools may only be used in accordance with assessment instructions and the College's AI Guidelines.

AI Misuse: Unethical or inappropriate use of AI tools, including cheating, plagiarism, or generating misleading information.

4. Responsibilities

Trainer/Assessor identifies concerns, completes preliminary authentication and refers the matter.

Academic Manager: investigates the allegation, meets with the student and determines routine academic misconduct cases.

CEO: decides serious, repeated or enrolment-related disciplinary matters.

Student Services: sends notices, maintains records and monitors deadlines.

Appeal Reviewer (or Independent Reviewer): must not be the same person who made the original decision, where practicable.

5. Requirements

Training Masters will maintain academic integrity and assessment authenticity in accordance with the Standards for RTOs 2025.

Standard 1.3, assessment tools will be reviewed before use to ensure assessment instructions are clear and minimise opportunities for plagiarism, cheating and other academic misconduct.

Standard 1.4 – “The assessment system ensures assessment is conducted in a way that is fair and appropriate and enables accurate assessment judgement of VET student competency.” This includes ensuring the authenticity of student work and identifying instances of plagiarism, collusion, or use of artificial intelligence tools that may compromise the validity of the assessment outcome.

Standard 1.5, relevant validation findings and academic misconduct incidents will be used to improve assessment tools, instructions and assessment-integrity controls.

6. Scope

This policy applies to all students, trainers and assessors, academic staff, and administrative personnel involved in training and assessment.

7. Procedures

Training Masters will implement this Policy through student orientation, trainer induction, assessment validation, staff professional development, assessment authentication processes, academic integrity education and ongoing monitoring of assessment practices. All staff are responsible for ensuring the consistent application of this Policy.

Step 1: Submission of Assessment

Students must submit assessment tasks in the format specified by the trainer/assessor or assessment instructions. 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 & use of AI/LLM and include a summary of what and how AI was used in the assessment.

Step 2: Initial Review by Assessor

Assessors conduct a preliminary review of submissions for inconsistencies in writing style, tone, and structure. Sections of concern are flagged. Methods for detecting plagiarism, cheating and collusion include:

- identifying uncharacteristic usage of language by students
- detecting text and formatting that is typically generated by LLM
- answers that are not related to the actual content/intent of the assessment question; and
- identifying responses where sources are real, but they aren't relevant to the context.

Step 3: AI Detection

Approved similarity-checking or AI-detection tools may be used as screening indicators only. Results must be interpreted cautiously and must not, by themselves, establish academic misconduct.

A finding must be based on a balanced review of relevant evidence, which may include the student's assessment history, source verification, document metadata, version history, oral questioning, practical demonstration and the student's explanation.

Step 4: Plagiarism Detection

Where concerns are identified, the assessor will undertake further authentication before making an assessment decision. This may include:

- comparing the submission with the student's previous authenticated work;
- checking whether references and sources are accurate and relevant;
- reviewing drafts, document metadata or version history;
- asking the student oral questions about the submitted work;
- requesting a practical demonstration or supervised reassessment; and
- considering the student's explanation and supporting evidence.

No finding of academic misconduct will be made solely on the basis of writing style, similarity percentage or an AI-detection result

Step 5: Recording of Integrity Checks

Where reasonable grounds for concern exist, the assessor will record the matter in the Assessment and refer it to the Academic Manager. Records must include the student's details, unit, nature of the concern, evidence reviewed, authentication activities and action taken.

Step 6: Student Notification and Resolution

- Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect academic misconduct, provide the student with written notice of the allegation and a reasonable opportunity to respond before any finding is made.
- Send a written communication to the student outlining the issues.
- In the case of AI/LLM usage, explain to the student what appropriate use is and refer them to the Student Code of Conduct.
- Advise the student that they will be required to redo the assessment in full or as a gap assessment. Any reassessment or resubmission fee will only be charged where permitted under the College's published Fees Management and Refund Policy, and where the student was informed of the applicable fee before enrolment or before the service was provided.
- Where academic misconduct is substantiated, the Academic Manager will determine an appropriate and proportionate outcome. Serious or repeated misconduct, or any proposed action affecting the student's enrolment, will be referred to the CEO for a decision.
- Outcomes will be proportionate to the seriousness of the misconduct, the available evidence, the student's explanation, any previous incidents and the impact on assessment integrity. Outcomes may include academic support, correction of referencing errors, resubmission, reassessment, a Not Yet Competent outcome, a formal warning or, for serious or repeated misconduct, disciplinary action.
- The College may initiate disciplinary action, including suspension or cancellation of enrolment, in accordance with the Student Deferment, Suspension and Cancellation Policy and the Complaints and Appeals Policy if:
 - The student is directed to resubmit the assessment, and, on the second submission of the work, the work is determined to be deliberately plagiarized; or
 - The student has committed multiple incidents of plagiarism and has been formally warned
 - The student has committed another form of academic misconduct or falsified documentation in relation to his or her studies at Training Masters.
- Students will be provided with procedural fairness, including the opportunity to respond to allegations, present supporting evidence, be accompanied by a support person where appropriate, and access the Complaints and Appeals process if dissatisfied with the outcome.

Step 7: File Retention and Evidence Pack

All files, check results, and communication records are saved to the student file for audit readiness. Records relating to plagiarism, cheating and academic misconduct investigations will be securely maintained in accordance with the Records Management Policy and applicable privacy legislation.

Procedure Summary

Step Action	Responsible	Tools/Forms	Timeframe
1. Assessment submitted in the format specified by the trainer/assessor	Student	Assessment Declaration Form	At time of assessment submission
2. Review for style and consistency	Assessor	N/A	Within 5 business days of submission

3. AI content detection	Assessor	College-approved similarity-checking or authentication tools	Same day as Step 2 or within 5 business days
4. Plagiarism detection	Assessor	College-approved similarity-checking or authentication tools	Same day as Step 3 or within 5 business days
5. Log integrity check results	Assessor	Assessment Integrity Register	Immediately after Steps 3 & 4
6. Notify students, allow response, Internal appeal	Assessor/Student Services	Email Record, Appeal Form (if required)	Within 5 business days of detection
7. Save all evidence	Assessor	Student File Checklist	Immediately after Step 6

8. Implementation

This policy is implemented through staff training, internal validation, and audit processes. Trainers and assessors are supported to use detection tools and record results appropriately.

9. Review & Continuous Improvement

This Policy and Procedure will be reviewed at least annually, or earlier where legislative, regulatory, operational or organisational changes occur. Feedback from students, trainers, assessors, staff, validation activities, complaints, appeals, audit findings and academic misconduct investigations will be analysed to identify opportunities for improvement. Approved changes will be recorded in the Continuous Improvement Register, implemented through the College's quality assurance processes, and communicated to relevant stakeholders.