

## **PLAGIARISM**

### **Policy**

South Coast Careers College / Adult Ed Community College is committed to ensuring that all staff and students behave with academic integrity. Therefore, it is essential that they understand the principles underlying academic integrity and behave in a manner according to these principles.

Plagiarism is considered a breach of academic integrity, so it is necessary for staff and students to know what actions are considered to be plagiarism and how to avoid it.

The purpose of this document is to provide an outline of the College's policy on plagiarism and to provide guidelines for staff on how to manage incidents of plagiarism.

### **Application**

This policy applies to all students studying at South Coast Careers College / Adult Ed Community College.

### **Policy Statement**

#### *Policy Principles*

The aim of this plagiarism policy is to:

- Describe the types of activities deemed to be plagiarism;
- Outline the procedures for dealing with plagiarism and the penalties which apply;
- Ensure staff and students are provided with information about methods for avoiding plagiarism; and
- Provide a method for recording and monitoring incidents of plagiarism.

### **Policy Content**

#### *Informing Students*

- All students will be provided with, and have access to, information about plagiarism and how to avoid plagiarism.
- Information about referencing styles relevant to their course discipline as well as procedures for dealing with plagiarism will be made available to all students in their unit outlines where relevant.
- Extra support and remediation will be offered to students found to have plagiarised.

### **Assessing the Level of Plagiarism**

In determining the seriousness of an act of plagiarism, the following factors are usually taken into account:

- The experience of the student;
- The nature and extent of the plagiarism; and
- Where evidence is available, the intention of the student to plagiarise.

The majority of the College's students are adult learners returning to education practices who may have limited understanding of the principles of academic integrity. Therefore, most incidents of plagiarism are due to a failure to understand scholarly practices. However, the fact that a student did not mean to plagiarise does not prevent it from being plagiarism. Trainers will take into account that acquiring the skills of citing and referencing takes time and practice, so students are given opportunities to demonstrate their skills and at the same time realise that failure to employ appropriate conventions will result in the assessment process being compromised and penalties are likely to apply.

### **Levels of Seriousness of Plagiarism**

- Low Level plagiarism is inadequate or incorrect citing, referencing or paraphrasing, arising mainly from a student's limited knowledge about plagiarism, or how to conform to academic conventions, poor writing skills, or from carelessness or neglect rather than intention to cheat.
- Medium Level plagiarism includes failure to reference or cite adequately arising from negligence or apparent intent to deceive (where adequate knowledge of conventions would have been expected). It may also include copying other student's assignment work or recycling of previous assignments.
- High Level plagiarism includes copied or purchased work presented with a clear intention to deceive an assessor. This can occur when a significant portion of the work is copied (from students or other sources) or students have purchased an assignment.

### **Procedures for Dealing with Plagiarism**

#### ***Low Level Plagiarism***

Students who plagiarise at this level are usually inexperienced and lack knowledge of appropriate academic conventions. They may also have inadequate language skills which hinder their ability to paraphrase effectively.

#### ***Person/s Responsible***

This level of plagiarism is dealt with by the Assessor of the relevant unit. However, the Assessor may refer the student to the Training Manager for extra support.

### **Procedure**

- The Assessor will investigate the work to verify the nature of the plagiarism.
- The Assessor will document the plagiarism and will alert the student to the fact that they have plagiarised and point out the offending sections of the assignment. The Assessor may choose:
  - not to mark the whole assignment; rather, they will provide students with an opportunity to resubmit the assignment within a specified time limit (no longer than one week).
  - to provide a provisional mark and then revise this mark once the student has resubmitted the assignment. The Assessor may refer the student to the Training Manager or equivalent for remediation prior to submitting the assignment.
  - to reduce the mark given for the assignment.
- The Assessor or Training Manager will record the incident in the student file.

### ***Medium Level Plagiarism***

Students who plagiarise at this level have been provided with clear guidelines on how to avoid plagiarism. Their work may display evidence that they have obtained help with writing the assignment from another person or they have copied sections from sources without acknowledgement. Students who fail to correct their work even though plagiarism has been detected also fall into this category.

#### *Person/s Responsible*

This level of plagiarism should be dealt with by the Assessor, in consultation with the Training Manager. In the case of Certificate IV units, the Training Manager may consult with the Centre Manager.

#### **Procedure**

- The Assessor will review the assignment and agree on whether plagiarism has occurred and the nature/extent of the plagiarism. The Assessor may consult with the Training Manager. This will determine the type of action to be taken, as follows:
  - If it is decided that the plagiarism was unintentional and minimal, resubmission and remediation may be recommended. The Assessor may refer the student to the Training Manager for assistance.
  - If it is decided that the plagiarism was due to deliberate failure to adhere to referencing guidelines, lack of effort or submitting work which is not the student's own, the student may be given a 0 mark for the assignment.
- The Assessor may refer the student to the Training Manager for remediation.
- The Assessor will document the plagiarism and will alert the student to the fact that they have plagiarised and point out the offending sections of the assignment.
- The Assessor will determine the seriousness of plagiarism and forward a copy of the student's work to the Training Manager.
- The Training Manager will record the incident in student files. An interview will be arranged between the student and the Training Manager.

### ***High Level Plagiarism***

This refers to incidents where the plagiarism appears deliberate and planned. The student has sufficient understanding of the principles of academic integrity to avoid plagiarism. The fact that all or most of the work has been copied from another person or source means that the assignment cannot be assessed adequately.

#### *Person/s Responsible*

This level of plagiarism should be dealt with by the Assessor, in consultation with the Training Manager. In the case of Certificate IV units, the Assessor may consult with the Centre Manager.

#### **Procedure**

The Assessor will confirm that deliberate plagiarism has occurred with the Training Manager or Centre Manager and the following will be applied:

- The assignment is awarded 0 marks.
- The Assessor will determine the seriousness of plagiarism and attach it to the student's work. The Assessor informs the student that they have plagiarised.
- The Assessor provides a copy of the student's work to the Training Manager. An interview is arranged with the Training Manager.

- The student will be interviewed by the Training Manager. The outcome of this interview will determine if any further penalties will be imposed. The student may be given a fail grade for the unit in which the plagiarism occurred. If it is deemed that the incident is a serious breach of academic integrity and/or it is a repeated incident, the student may be disallowed from re-enrolling in a course of study for a specified period of time.
- The Training Manager will record the incident in student files.

## Appeals

A student has the right to appeal the penalty imposed. Appeals must be made in writing within 30 days.

## Administrative Procedures

- All formally recorded breaches of plagiarism will be kept on student files. These records will be under the responsibility of the Training Manager.
- This policy and related procedures will be communicated to staff via email and ongoing staff information sessions. New staff will receive policy information during the induction process.

## Definitions

### *Plagiarism*

- Presenting the work or property of another. Writing or presenting your own version of another person's work (including words, music, computer source code, creative or visual artefacts, designs or ideas) or research data without clearly referencing.
- Submitting work which has been written for you by someone else.
- Copying and submitting another person's work as if it were your own. If a student lends an assignment to another student and their assignment is copied and handed in by that student, both students will be penalised.
- Copying computer files in whole or in part without indicating their origin.
- Copying and submitting another student's work, wholly or partially, by a process of mechanical transformation e.g. by changing variable names in computer programs.
- Person as one's own, without appropriate acknowledgement or referencing and can include:
  - Copying of another student's or author's exact sentences, paragraphs, or creative products (i.e. drawings, graphics) without clearly indicating that you are making a direct quote and/or without giving a reference (includes copying from books, articles, thesis, unpublished works, working papers, seminar and conference papers, internal reports, Internet, lecture notes or tapes);
  - Trying to put other's ideas into your own words by changing only a few words without clearly referencing the original source. A lecturer may decide that, as the words are almost the same as the original, this is plagiarism, even if a reference is given;
  - Submitting work completed in a group as if it were the work of an individual student.

### *Collusion*

Occurs when two or more individuals combine their efforts in order to deceive others. In an academic context, this can occur if you work with others on an assignment that is meant to be individual or if you help another student to complete an assignment against instructions. This is also referred to as 'collaborating too closely.' The result is that you submit assignments which are very similar without admitting to the collaboration.

While collusion is considered to be a different form of academic misconduct to plagiarism, similar penalties will apply to both students involved in the incident.

*Collaboration*

Describes an activity in which students have been given permission to work together to accomplish a task. You are usually asked to submit a joint assignment under joint names. However, make sure you are clear about how your lecturer wants you to report on the outcomes.