



## 1. Policy

This Policy outlines the circumstances in which MARS Institute (MARS) defines the actions that constitute Academic Misconduct by Students and outlines the process for investigating allegations of Academic Misconduct. It also describes the potential consequences should an allegation be proven.

MARS's strict Policy against Academic Misconduct means that the integrity of our courses and qualifications issued is upheld. It is essential to our reputation that Academic Misconduct is dealt with promptly and in accordance with this Policy.

MARS Students are expected to submit their own work for all assessment items and declare this through signing a Student Declaration for all assessment items. If Students are required to undertake research for their class work or assessments, they must properly and fully acknowledge their sources.

MARS requires that all Students act honestly and ensure that they do not commit Academic Misconduct as it may result in the cancellation of a student's enrolment at MARS.

MARS will not tolerate Academic Misconduct of any kind and considers the following as Academic Misconduct:

### **Cheating:**

for instance, if you buy or exchange an assessment task from a friend or an online site, or if you cheat in an exam or test.

### **Contract cheating or Ghost-writing:**

is when a student engages another person to complete work for them, and then submits the work as their own, regardless of if money was paid or not.

### **Collusion:**

for instance, if you collaborate with other students on an assessment task without permission, or if you help another student to cheat

### **Fraud:**

if you are impersonated by someone else for an exam, assessment task or online activity

### **Fabrication/misrepresentation:**

for instance, if you are misleading about the amount of work you have done for a group task, or if you fabricate information or data in an assessment task

### **Interference/obstruction:**

for instance, if you unfairly prevent other students from accessing study resources or completing their work.

### **Plagiarism:**

for instance, if you don't properly acknowledge the source of information used in your work, or if you re-use your own work without permission. Plagiarism is a type of intellectual theft. It can take many forms, to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement, to using the words or ideas of others and passing them off as your own.

## 2. Purpose

This Policy applies to all Students of MARS. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the Student Information Handbook and the Student Code of Conduct which describe the MARS's expectations of a student's behaviour. A breach of the Student Code of Conduct may result in an allegation of student misconduct. All allegations of student misconduct will be investigated in a manner that is fair, consistent, and transparent providing all parties with an opportunity to be heard.

The Training Manager in collaboration with the MARS Trainers are responsible for the control and implementation of this Policy.



### 3. Definitions

Academic Misconduct is a serious breach of academic integrity deemed not to be a minor plagiarism. Academic Misconduct includes but is not limited to conduct that:

- 1) Involves academic fraud, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and any other dishonest conduct by a student to gain academic or general advantage; or.
- 2) Contravenes the provisions of the Student Code of Conduct, MARS Policies, Procedures and/or Guidelines.
- 3) It is not permissible to buy essay and/or content writing services from third parties as the use of such services constitutes plagiarism (it involves using the words or ideas of others and passing them off as your own). Nor is it permissible to sell or buy copies of content and materials copyrighted to MARS Institute. This may include lecture or tutorial notes, assessment tasks, workbooks, learner guides, PowerPoint presentations, etc. The aforementioned content and material are not the intellectual property of students
- 4) Examples of plagiarism, including self-plagiarism, are

<b>Copying</b>	Using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This includes copying materials, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document, presentation, composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, website, internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment without appropriate acknowledgement.
<b>Inappropriate paraphrasing</b>	Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and/or progression of ideas of the original, and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.
<b>Collusion</b>	<p>Presenting work as independent work when it has been produced in whole or part in collusion with other people. Collusion includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• students providing their work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time</li> <li>• paying another person to perform an academic task and passing it off as your own</li> <li>• stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it</li> <li>• offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.</li> </ul> <p>This should not be confused with academic collaboration where there has been general group discussion about a project or question but where each student writes his/her own answer.</p>



<b>Inappropriate citation</b>	Citing sources which have not been read without acknowledging the 'secondary' source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.
<b>Self-plagiarism</b>	'Self-plagiarism' occurs where an author republishes their own previously written work and presents it as new findings without referencing the earlier work, either in its entirety or partially. Self-plagiarism is also referred to as 'recycling', 'duplication', or 'multiple submissions of research findings' without disclosure. In the student context, self-plagiarism includes re-using parts of, or all of, a body of work that has already been submitted for assessment without proper citation.

## 4. Procedural Fairness

MARS is committed to the principles of procedural fairness and natural justice. This includes:

- The presumption of innocence unless guilt is freely admitted or proved by clear and convincing evidence
- The right to be heard
- The right to be treated without bias
- The right to be informed of allegations being made and to be provided with an opportunity to respond to these
- The right to be given reasons for any decision.

The Student shall be given an opportunity to correct information, explain mitigating circumstances. No member of Staff can decide on an Academic Misconduct matter if they have had prior involvement in any aspect of the allegation.

Students are entitled to due notice of any allegations of Academic Misconduct made against them. Allegations may be amended at any time before their determination, provided the Student has received notice. MARS takes multiple breaches of this Policy seriously.

Knowledge that a Student has been found guilty of a past Academic Misconduct offence will be considered when determining the repercussions to be imposed. MARS is committed to investigating and determining allegations of Academic Misconduct as expeditiously as is practical recognising that a Student can be significantly affected by delay in the resolution of the matter.

## 5. Consequences of Plagiarism and Collusion:

- The student may be required to undertake an additional assessment task in that subject, or to re-submit the original assessment task after re-working it, which will incur additional costs.
- The student's work may be assessed as not competent for the unit, resulting in the student having to re-enrol into the unit again which will incur additional costs. If the student doesn't re-enrol into the unit, it may result in the student not completing the qualification.
- The most serious cases of significant offences could be considered as serious misconduct and, after investigation, penalties could include failure in the course and exclusion from MARS.

## 6. Procedures

### Step 1 - Reporting Requirements

- 1) All Staff and Students must report any suspected instances of Academic Misconduct, Plagiarism or Cheating by a Student to the relevant Trainer who in turn will advise the Training Manager.
- 2) The report must be made using the online ticketing platform and by completing the plagiarism form, accompanied by any supporting evidence.

### Step 2 - Investigation

- 1) Upon receiving the plagiarism form through the ticketing system, the Student Learning Coordinator must investigate the matter promptly and determine whether the allegations are correct.
- 2) This investigation must include an interview with the Student to review the alleged copied material and Student's class work.
- 3) The Student has the right to have a support person present during any interview and to make submissions.
- 4) After the meeting is conducted the outcome will be documented in Wisenet and the students will be sent an outcome letter.
- 5) The student has the right to appeal the outcome within 14 days of receiving the outcome letter.

### Step 3 - Outcome of the Investigation

The Student Learning Coordinator will advise the Student in writing of the outcome of their investigation within 21 days of receiving the report of alleged Academic Misconduct, Plagiarism or Cheating.

### Step 4 - Consequences of Academic Misconduct, Plagiarism or Cheating

- 1) If the Student Learning Coordinator forms the view that a Student has or is more than likely to have committed Academic Misconduct, Plagiarism or Cheating and this is the first instance of Academic Misconduct, Plagiarism or Cheating committed by the Student during their enrolment with MARS, the Student Learning Coordinator will:
  - a) Send a written warning letter to the Student advising them that their enrolment may be cancelled if they are found in the future to have committed another act of Academic Misconduct, Plagiarism or Cheating at MARS; and
  - b) Meet with the Student and counsel them not to engage in any further Academic Misconduct, Plagiarism or Cheating; and
  - c) Require the Student to resubmit the relevant class work or undertake the relevant assessment again or undertake any other remedial action deemed appropriate; or
  - d) Apply a Not Yet Competent (NYC) grade to the unit of competency



## Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism Policy

- 2) If the Student Learning Coordinator forms the view that a Student has or is more than likely to have committed Academic Misconduct, Plagiarism or Cheating and this is the second instance of Academic Misconduct, Plagiarism or Cheating committed by the Student during their enrolment with MARS, the Student Learning Coordinator will:
  - a) Recommend that the Student's enrolment be cancelled for Academic Misconduct;
  - b) Send a letter to the Student advising them that their enrolment is at risk of being cancelled. The letter will advise the Student that they have 14 days in which to appeal the outcome of the investigation.
- 3) The Student Learning Coordinator will cancel the Student's enrolment if the Student fails to lodge an appeal within the 14-day time period, withdraws from an appeal or the outcome of the appeal process results in a decision in support of MARS.
- 4) The Administration Manager has the discretion not to cancel the Student's enrolment. This discretion may be applied in a number of different circumstances, including (but without limitation) where the Student can prove that there were Compassionate or Compelling circumstances that contributed to their dishonest actions. Students should note that a decision not to cancel their enrolment is discretion only and will not always be exercised even where there are Compassionate or Compelling circumstances.

### Step 5 - Record Keeping

- 1) Full and proper written records of the following must be kept on the Student's file:
- 2) The initial report of the alleged Academic Misconduct, Plagiarism or Cheating.
- 3) The steps taken in the investigation.
- 4) Copies of any correspondence sent to the Student.
- 5) Records of any meetings with the Student, including counselling;
- 6) Outcome of any Appeal by the Student; and
- 7) If the Student's enrolment is cancelled, written verification of the cancellation must be provided to the student.

### Step 6 - Appealing the Decision

Students have the right to Appeal any decision made by an MARS staff member under this Policy. Students must lodge their appeal within 14 days of the decision being made. Students are referred to read the MARS Complaints and Appeals Policy for further information.