Academic Integrity Policy

1 PURPOSE / BACKGROUND

The purpose of this policy is to promote a learning environment that upholds the expectations of academic integrity within the RTO. It applies to all Learners, Trainers/ Assessors and Staff involved in the RTO and ensures they understand their responsibilities in maintaining the standards of honesty, fairness and ethical behaviour in all academic pursuits.

2 POLICY STATEMENT

The RTO is committed to upholding the principles of academic integrity and maintaining a learning environment based on honesty and accountability. Academic Integrity is essential to maintaining the credibility of all training products maintained by the RTO and ensures a fair and equitable assessment system. SYC utilises multiple strategies to ensure Academic Integrity is upheld, including:

2.1.1 Implementation of Turnitin, a cheating and plagiarism detection software, which scores and reports on student's assessment responses.

2.1.2 Being transparent to students regarding the use of Turnitin prior to commencing any assessment tasks.

2.1.3 Providing comprehensive guidance on the acceptable and ethical use of artificial intelligence in education.

2.1.4 Training and development of RTO Staff in detecting and addressing breaches.

3 POLICY DETAILS

3.1 What is Academic Integrity?

3.1.1 Academic Integrity refers to the ethical and honest conduct expected of all Learners and Staff within an RTO. It involves upholding principles such as honesty, integrity, trust, fairness and respect in all educational activities including assessment. In an RTO context, academic integrity means that learners submit their own original work, acknowledge the work of others and refrain from dishonest behaviour such as cheating, plagiarism and collusion.

3.2 Student responsibilities

Students are responsible for abiding by the following:

3.2.1 Refraining from misconduct including, cheating, plagiarism, collusion and any other forms of dishonesty.

3.2.2 Completing all individual assessments independently unless group work is authorised and, in such cases, crediting the other members of the group.

3.2.3 Familiarising themselves with the consequences of misconduct as detailed in section 3.4.

3.2.4 Respecting assessment timeframes and submitting work on time, as prescribed by their Trainers.

3.2.5 Being honest about capabilities and understanding opportunities for reasonable adjustment, such as extensions and requests for special considerations.

3.2.6 Using permitted resources only, as determined in the assessment instructions.

3.2.7 Completing all assessment tasks within the ethical AI use parameters provided in the Turnitin guidelines.

3.3 Trainer responsibilities

Trainer/ Assessors are responsible for the following:

3.3.1 Informing students of their responsibilities including explaining the importance and principles of academic integrity.

3.3.2 Monitoring/ investigating alleged breaches fairly and consistently.

3.3.3 Utilising Turnitin software for its intended purpose, utilising all features to identify and respond to misconduct/ breaches, where apparent.

3.3.4 Providing constructive feedback to help students avoid academic misconduct.

3.3.5 Ensuring assessment marking is done in accordance with internal procedures and in compliance with the Outcome Standards for RTOs.

3.3.6 Participating in designated training and development opportunities regarding academic integrity.

3.3.7 Creating a culture of honesty and an environment where learners feel supported in completion of their course work.

3.4 Breaches of Academic Integrity

SYC considers the following as breaches of academic integrity and consequences may apply:

3.4.1 Using unauthorised material

3.4.2 Submitting work that is not their own

3.4.3 Copying or paraphrasing large portions of text without citing sources

3.4.4 Using ChatGPT and other AI functions to create text responses which do not meet the requirements of ethical use of AI.

3.4.5 Bribing, paying, threatening or coercing in any way, another party to write an assessment response for the student.

3.4.6 Copying and pasting course content directly from the Learner guide/ resource material provided, unless the assessment specifically requires it.

3.4.7 Completing group project work but taking credit for the entire piece of work as their own.

3.5 Consequences

3.5.1 Consequences will depend on the severity and nature of the breach and may include:

a. Verbal warning

b. Written warning

c. Fail result (not yet competent)

d. Cancellation of enrolment

3.5.2 Regardless of the consequence, where an unacceptable breach has occurred, the assessment in question will be resulted as not yet satisfactory and the student will be required to re-submit the assessment properly.

3.5.3 Where continued use of cheating, plagiarism or dishonest conduct occurs the student may receive a failure result and in extenuating circumstances, be removed from the program. However, this occurrence will be considered on a case-by-case basis between the Program Manager and the Trainer/Assessor.

3.5.4 Where there are repeated instances of academic misconduct, it may be appropriate for the Program Manager or Trainer/ Assessor to discuss the circumstances with the student's referring body such as their Case Manager, School Contact or Workforce Australia Provider.

3.6 Acceptable and ethical use of Artificial Intelligence

3.6.1 The RTO understands and accepts the responsible use of AI as a study aid however, it is not to be used for completing assessments in full.

3.6.2 The RTO acknowledges that select AI tools can be beneficial to learners with diverse learning needs and disabilities.

3.6.3 Turnitin software has been implemented to identify and report on cheating, plagiarism, collusion, contract cheating and use of artificial intelligence. Turnitin will report on every instance of misconduct and return a report which details the percent of misconduct.

3.6.4 SYC's Turnitin guidelines should be used by Students and Trainers to judge acceptable uses of artificial intelligence while maintaining the required level of academic integrity as determined by the RTO.

3.6.5 It is the student's responsibility to follow assessment guidelines. Regardless of this policy if an assessment tasks specifically states the assessment must be AI free; AI tools must not be used.

3.7 Appeals

3.7.1 Students have a right to appeal all decisions including where they feel they have been wrongly assessed, as per the Complaints and Appeals policy.

4 DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this document, unless otherwise stated, the following definitions shall apply.

Term	Definition
Plagiarism	The practice of taking someone else's' work or ideas and passing them off as your own. In an academic setting this can include directly copying text, a portion of text or paraphrasing someone else's words without acknowledgement.
Cheating	Cheating in an academic setting can be defined as unethical use of information, materials, devices, sources or practices to gain an academic advantage.
Collusion	Collaborating with others on a task or project and presenting the complete works as your own, that you completed independently.
Contract cheating	Outsourcing work by payment and submitting the work as your own. E.g. paying a contractor, family member or friend to write, edit or complete work for you.
Bribery or coercion	Persuading someone to do something by using force, threats or incentives.
AI assisted writing	When artificial intelligence software utilises existing content to predict, modify or create text based on input that a user supplies it. Certain tools may create novel bodies of text, while others may reword existing text in the case of AI paraphrasing tools.
AI generated text	Text created by artificial intelligence based on vast amounts of data of existing content from the internet
AI Paraphrasing	AI paraphrasing refers to the use of AI techniques to rephrase or rewrite a given piece of text in a way that preserves the original meaning of the text while using different words and phrases
ChatGPT	Chat Generative Pre-Trained Transformer is a Large Language Model with both supervised and reinforcement learning techniques. ChatGPT can produce a body of unique text from a user's specific input based on existing content from the internet.
Large Language Model (LLM)	Artificial intelligence that has been trained on massive quantities of text data to produce human-like responses to natural language inputs.
Supervised Learning	An approach to creating artificial intelligence where a computer algorithm is trained on input data that has been labelled for a particular output.
Unsupervised learning	The use of AI algorithms to identify patterns in data sets containing data points that are neither classified nor labelled.

Term	Definition
Text Spinners	Also known as AI paraphrasing tools, these are software tools that are used to automatically rewrite or rephrase a given piece of text in order to generate multiple variations of the original text.

5 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS / REFERENCES

In support of this Policy, the following documents apply:

- Complaints and Appeals Procedure
- Assessment Framework
- Student Handbook

6 APPLICABILITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, RISK ASSESSMENT AND PROPERTIES

This Policy applies to students, Trainer/ Assessor and RTO Management staff. Compliance with this policy is mandatory.

Organisational compliance with this Policy will be determined through validation tasks, compliance reviews and internal audit.

Opportunities for Improvement in relation to this Policy or its implementation may be registered in Skytrust.

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