

1. PURPOSE

The Quality Training and Hospitality College, trading as Quality College of Australia (QCA), is committed to maintaining the integrity, quality and credibility of its training and assessment services. QCA recognises that the value of nationally recognised qualifications depends on assessment evidence being authentic and demonstrating the student's own knowledge, skills and competence

This policy establishes the principles and procedures for promoting academic integrity, preventing plagiarism, cheating and other forms of academic misconduct, supporting students to develop ethical learning practices, and ensuring assessment decisions are based on authentic evidence. The policy also provides guidance on the responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) and other technologies in assessment.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students enrolled in nationally recognised or non-accredited training delivered by QCA, together with all trainers, assessors, administrative staff, management and third parties involved in the delivery or assessment of training on behalf of QCA.

3. POLICY

QCA promotes a culture of honesty, integrity, fairness and ethical conduct in all learning and assessment activities.

QCA is committed to:

- Ensuring assessment evidence is authentic, valid, sufficient and current;
- Educating students about academic integrity, referencing and ethical assessment practices;
- Supporting students to develop information literacy and responsible use of technology;
- Providing clear expectations regarding plagiarism, cheating, collusion and AI;
- Implementing fair and consistent procedures for investigating suspected breaches; and
- Continuously improving assessment practices to maintain compliance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations.

Students are expected to submit assessment evidence that is entirely their own work unless collaboration has been specifically authorised by the trainer or assessor.

4. OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are to:

- Promote honesty and ethical behaviour throughout the learning journey;
- Protect the integrity and value of qualifications and statements of attainment issued by QCA;
- Educate students about plagiarism, referencing, copyright and responsible use of AI;
- Support students to develop information literacy skills;
- Provide staff with consistent procedures for managing suspected breaches of academic integrity;
- Ensure assessment decisions are based on authentic evidence; and
- Maintain confidence in QCA's assessment system.

5. DEFINITIONS

5.1 Academic integrity

Academic integrity refers to acting honestly, ethically and responsibly when completing learning and assessment activities.

5.2 Referencing

Referencing is the acknowledgement of information, ideas, research, images or intellectual property obtained from another source. Students are expected to appropriately reference all external sources used within assessment activities.

5.3 Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when a student presents another person's words, ideas, research or work as their own without appropriate acknowledgement.

Examples include:

- Copying from books, websites or another student;
- Paraphrasing without acknowledging the original source;
- Submitting work completed by another person;
- Reusing previously submitted work without approval; or
- Failing to appropriately reference source material.

5.4 Cheating

Cheating is any deliberate attempt to gain an unfair advantage during assessment.

Examples include:

- Copying another student's work;
- Sharing assessment answers;
- Falsifying workplace evidence;
- Impersonation;
- Unauthorised collaboration;
- Altering assessment evidence; or
- Using unauthorised materials or technology during assessment.

5.5 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to software or technologies capable of generating text, images, code or other content. QCA recognises that artificial intelligence technologies are increasingly used within workplaces and education.

Unless specifically permitted within the assessment instructions, students must not use AI or other automated technologies to generate responses or assessment evidence that is submitted as their own work.

AI may only be used where permitted within the assessment instructions.

Where AI use is permitted, students must:

- Acknowledge its use where required;
- Ensure all submitted work accurately reflects their own knowledge and skills;
- Verify the accuracy of any AI-generated information; and
- Remain responsible for all assessment evidence submitted.

AI-generated work must never be presented as the student's own original work. Failure to comply with assessment instructions regarding AI may constitute academic misconduct.

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools may be used only where permitted within the assessment instructions. Where permitted, students must acknowledge their use and ensure that the submitted assessment demonstrates their own knowledge and skills. AI-generated content must not be presented as the student's own original work.

Where AI use is permitted, students must:

- Comply with assessment instructions;
- Declare the use of AI where required;
- Ensure all submitted work accurately reflects their own knowledge and skills; and
- Remain responsible for the accuracy and authenticity of all assessment evidence.

Failure to comply with these requirements may constitute cheating.

6. PREVENTION OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

QCA adopts a preventative approach by:

- Providing students with information regarding academic integrity before enrolment and during orientation;
- Explaining assessment requirements and assessment conditions;
- Providing guidance on referencing and copyright;
- Educating students regarding acceptable and unacceptable use of AI;
- Designing assessment activities that promote authentic evidence;

- Providing learning support where required; and
- Ensuring staff receive ongoing professional development regarding assessment authenticity.

7. RESPONSIBILITIES

QCA will:

- Communicate academic integrity expectations to students and staff;
- Provide policies, procedures and guidance materials;
- Investigate suspected breaches fairly, confidentially and consistently;
- Ensure procedural fairness and natural justice;
- Maintain appropriate records; and
- Review incidents through the Continuous Improvement process.

Trainers and assessors will:

- Explain academic integrity expectations to students;
- Educate students regarding plagiarism, referencing and AI;
- Verify the authenticity of assessment evidence;
- Report suspected breaches;
- Document investigation outcomes;
- Provide or refer students to appropriate learning support where a breach results from limited academic skills rather than deliberate misconduct; and
- Participate in professional development relating to assessment integrity.

Students are responsible for:

- Completing their own assessment work;
- Appropriately referencing all external sources;
- Complying with assessment conditions;
- Submitting authentic evidence;
- Cooperating with authenticity verification activities;
- Seeking clarification where unsure of assessment requirements; and
- Complying with this policy and all related QCA policies.

Students must not provide completed assessment responses or evidence to other students where doing so could facilitate plagiarism or academic misconduct.

8. VERIFICATION OF ASSESSMENT AUTHENTICITY

QCA may verify the authenticity of assessment evidence using one or more of the following methods:

- Observation of practical skills;
- Verbal questioning;
- Workplace verification;
- Progressive assessment submissions;
- Comparison with previous assessment evidence;
- Plagiarism detection software;
- Authenticity verification software;
- Review of version history where applicable; and
- Any other reasonable verification method considered appropriate.

9. PROCEDURE

Where plagiarism, cheating or another breach of academic integrity is suspected:

1. Where a trainer or assessor has reasonable grounds to suspect plagiarism, cheating or another breach of academic integrity, they must document the concern and notify the relevant Training Manager for investigation.
2. The student is informed of the allegation and provided with a reasonable opportunity to demonstrate the authenticity of their assessment evidence through questioning, discussion or other appropriate verification methods.
3. Evidence is reviewed and, where required, additional authenticity verification is undertaken.
4. A decision is made based on the available evidence.

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5. The student is advised of the outcome in writing, normally within 10 working days unless exceptional circumstances apply.
6. Records of the investigation and outcome are retained on the student's file.
7. Students may access QCA's Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure if dissatisfied with the decision.

10. PREVENTION STRATEGIES

QCA minimises academic misconduct by:

- Providing information before enrolment;
- Discussing academic integrity during orientation;
- Providing guidance on referencing and copyright;
- Explaining assessment conditions;
- Explaining acceptable use of AI;
- Designing assessment activities that encourage authentic evidence;
- Providing support where students unintentionally breach requirements.

11. OUTCOMES

Where academic misconduct is substantiated, QCA will determine an appropriate outcome based on:

- The seriousness of the breach;
- Whether the conduct was intentional;
- Whether it is a first or repeated occurrence;
- The impact on assessment integrity; and
- Any mitigating circumstances.

Possible outcomes may include:

- Education or counselling;
- Resubmission of assessment;
- Reassessment or additional questioning;
- A Not Yet Competent outcome;
- Formal written warning;
- Cancellation of enrolment for serious or repeated misconduct in accordance with QCA policies and applicable legislation or funding requirements.

Nature of breach	Possible outcome
Minor / first unintentional breach	Education, counselling, resubmission
Minor deliberate breach	Written warning, reassessment
Serious misconduct	NYC, reassessment, disciplinary action
Repeated or fraudulent misconduct	Cancellation of enrolment in accordance with QCA policies

QCA will finalise investigations and advise the student of the outcome within 10 working days, unless exceptional circumstances apply.

When determining an appropriate outcome, QCA will consider:

- The seriousness of the breach;
- Whether the conduct was intentional or unintentional;
- Whether it is a first or repeated occurrence;
- The student's explanation and evidence provided;
- The impact on assessment integrity; and
- Any mitigating circumstances.

Where appropriate, QCA will adopt an educative approach by providing guidance, counselling or learning support before applying disciplinary action.

12. COMMUNICATION

This policy is:

- Available to staff through QCA's document management system (aXcelerate);
- Discussed during staff induction and ongoing professional development;
- Available to students through the Student Information Handbook and QCA website;
- Explained during enrolment and orientation; and
- Reinforced throughout training and assessment activities.

13. RECORD KEEPING

Records of allegations, investigations, decisions and actions taken will be maintained on the student's file in accordance with the Records Management Policy.

14. CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

QCA will monitor incidents relating to plagiarism, cheating, misuse of AI and assessment authenticity through its Continuous Improvement Register.

Information gathered through investigations, internal reviews, student feedback, assessment validation, complaints, appeals and regulatory or audit activities will be used to:

- Improve assessment tools and assessment practices;
- Strengthen academic integrity resources;
- Identify professional development needs;
- Enhance student information and support services; and
- Maintain ongoing compliance with the Standards for Registered Training Organisations.

15. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Assessment and Validation Policy and Procedure
- Assessment Resubmission Policy and Procedure
- Student Code of Conduct
- Feedback, Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- QCA Student Handbooks
- Continuous Improvement Policy
- Records Management Policy
- VET Quality Framework
- Commonwealth and State legislation relating to copyright, privacy and intellectual property

