Faculty of Engineering and Information Technology

Standard Operating Principles
Handling of Allegations of Misconduct

Scope
This policy applies to all UTS:Engineering and UTS:IT coursework students.

Background
UTS Rules provide for a Faculty Board to determine a policy (referred to as Standard Operating Principles – SOP – under the UTS Policy Framework) for dealing with allegations of student misconduct:

16.8 Faculty policy

16.8.1 A Faculty Board may determine a policy for dealing with allegations of student misconduct other than those considered to be serious non-academic misconduct and dealt with under Rule 16.11.3. Any such policy must be consistent with University Rules and must be approved by Academic Board.

16.8.2 In dealing with an allegation of student misconduct the Dean has authority to determine whether in the first instance to deal with the matter in accordance with the approved faculty policy or to handle the matter under the procedures specified in these Rules.

This SOP aims to facilitate effective and efficient handling of allegations of student misconduct, whilst ensuring that procedural fairness and consistency is maintained.

The following provisions are based on simplifying the administrative processes for first offences and the awarding of potentially lesser penalties coupled with a developmental element for students who do acknowledge misconduct.
Provisions

Application

The procedures outlined in this SOP are to be only adopted where all of the following conditions are met:

- The student who is the subject of the allegation does not have any other prior, current or pending misconduct sanctions recorded against them.
- The alleged misconduct is not viewed as being serious (i.e. it is not a major, obvious and unambiguous attempt to deceive, nor is of a nature which might typically warrant a significant penalty such as failure in a subject). The table provided in the section on guidelines on penalties should be used as a guide in determine if an allegation would be considered serious.

Where all of these conditions are not met, the normal University processes (as outlined in the University rules) should be followed.

At any point, the RAO or Dean can require that an allegation be pursued according the normal University processes rather than the processes outlined in this policy.

Process

Where the above conditions are met, then the following process may be followed provided the RAO (or delegate) feels that it is appropriate:

1. An academic staff member identifies an assignment which contains numerous unacknowledged quotes/material or which is a copy of other students’ work.
2. The academic staff member and/or the Subject Coordinator gather evidence and source material to substantiate the alleged misconduct. The allegation and supporting evidence are submitted to the RAO (or delegate).
3. The RAO (or delegate) checks whether or not there is any previous, current or pending record of a similar incident.
4. If there is a record of a previous, current or pending similar incident, then the alleged misconduct will be reported to the Dean and the University guidelines will be applied in full.
5. If there is a no record of a previous, current or pending similar incident, then the RAO (or delegate) advises the student, in writing, that the allegation has been made and that the student must attend a meeting with the RAO.
6. The RAO (or delegate) advises the Dean of action under this policy and organises a meeting with the RAO and the student.
   6.1 The student will be told the reason for the meeting and informed that they can bring a support person with them, if they wish.
6.2 The purpose of the meeting is to explain to the student what the problem is and to provide a clear explanation to the student about plagiarism, academic misconduct etc. The assignment and the evidence / source material are used to explain and illustrate the problem.

6.3 If the student provides a satisfactory explanation, then no further action is taken.

6.4 If the student admits the misconduct, then a penalty of zero for the assignment will be imposed. However, the student may be permitted to submit a revised assignment/further work to be marked (normally a revised submission for the original assignment). The revised assignment/further work can never be awarded a mark of more than 50% and the student will be informed of this. For subjects where the submission of a revised assignment is not practical, then another penalty may be determined. Students are given the opportunity to redeem the assignment/subject if possible.

6.5 The student is told that plagiarism or copying other students' work is considered a serious offence and that a record of the meeting and the outcome will be placed in their file. They are also informed that any similar incident occurring at any time in the future will be reported to the Dean and the University guidelines will be applied in full. If misconduct is proven, then the normal penalty in this instance is zero marks for the subject. The student is required to sign a letter attesting to the fact that these procedures have been carried out.

6.6 If the student does not admit the misconduct but cannot provide a satisfactory explanation then the alleged misconduct will be reported to the Dean and the University guidelines will be applied in full.

**Version History**

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