A08: Misconduct in Assessment Policy

1.0 Purpose

NZSEG is committed to ensuring that assessment is fair, valid, reliable and authentic. Within the academic year there are instances where there may be doubt about the authenticity of work submitted for assessment or suggestions of misconduct during examinations. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that processes are in place to detect and prevent academic misconduct in assessment.

2.0 Objectives

This policy provides for the consistent interpretation and application of processes to detect and manage academic misconduct in assessment.

Specifically this policy covers:

- Provision of information to students
- Guidance and training in appropriate academic conduct
- Management of assessment submissions
- Detection of academic misconduct
- Management of suspected academic misconduct.

3.0 Principles

3.1 Students will receive guidance in appropriate academic conduct to ensure they understand the need for honesty and integrity when completing assessments.

3.2 Students are expected to follow the principles of academic integrity in all assessment activities and are expected to submit assessments for marking on the basis that they are their own work, or a group's work, and that the assignment was prepared with integrity.

3.3 Students will be required to provide assurance about the authenticity of any work submitted in their names for assessment. Students must ensure that any work that is not their own is acknowledged in the accepted manner for tertiary education.

3.4 Academic staff will support students to reference sources appropriately, providing formative learning opportunities and materials to assist understanding of all aspects of correct referencing to ensure integrity of the work.

3.5 Heads of School/Directors of Studies are responsible for ensuring that students are provided with guidelines regarding authenticity, referencing, plagiarism, copying, cheating and copyright infringements. Academic staff will remain up-to-date with variants of cheating that emerge with technology and changing student context.

3.6 Instances of assessment misconduct will be managed following the principles of promptness, natural justice, impartiality, consistency, non-punitiveness and fairness.

3.7 Instances where a student freely acknowledges assessment misconduct will be managed by the Head of School/Group Academic Director.

3.8 Instances of serious or unacknowledged misconduct will be referred to the Head of School/ Group Academic Director and managed through the student discipline process.

3.9 Students will be expected to receive academic counselling when plagiarism is unintended such as using unacknowledged references.

3.10 Academic staff will follow the process detailed in this policy when they have doubts about the authorship of student work, on the basis of observed copying or illicit exchange of information, absent referencing, differences in level of language, recognition of previously published text, or any other indicator. For instances of serious cheating or repeated plagiarism see section 4.2.5 of this policy.

3.11 Electronic plagiarism detection software (such as Turnitin) and associated training and guidelines will be available to both academic staff and students to assist with preventing and detecting plagiarism.

4.0 Procedures

4.1 Student Information and Guidance

4.1.1 At the start of each programme/course students will be provided with information and guidance about what constitutes academic misconduct, cheating and plagiarism, expectations that students do not engage in any activity that constitutes academic misconduct and the consequences and penalties that apply to those found to be engaged in this activity.

4.1.2 Information and resources will include:

- How to reference and acknowledge sources and resources
- Providing information about research and how to write assignments
- Explaining to students the measures used to identify plagiarism including the need to submit assignments through plagiarism detection software

4.1.2 Information and guidance will be provided in the Student Handbook, Academic Policies, Course Outlines/Programme Outlines, in the academic orientation sessions provided to students at the start of their course, when assessment tasks are set and discussed, and during the discussion of ethics and expectations of the vocational sector students will be entering.

4.1.3 All students will be required to sign a declaration for each piece of work submitted, that the work is original to the student, authentic and free of plagiarism.

4.2 Assessment Design

Well-designed assessments reduce opportunities for students to cheat. The principles of assessment design for each course and programme will be documented by the Programme Committee. These may include:

- Using unique data, contexts or case studies that are as specific as possible
- Changing all or at least aspects of the assessment from semester to semester
- Using online testing with built in safe-guards such as reordering of questions
- Designing assessments to cross-check that students actually understand the content e.g. by including live presentations, questioning, requiring working portfolios to be submitted, requiring checkpoints and formative feedback

4.3 Detection of Misconduct

Practices to detect misconduct include looking for irregularities in students' performance. These may include:

- Where possible using an invigilated in-house assessment to benchmark students' other assessment work against
- Having one tutor mark all assessments or all responses to each particular question
- Comparing students results and language across assessments and courses within their programme
- Comparing students' oral responses with their written ones
- Keep a file of formative assessments as well as summative ones
- Tutor familiarity with students writing and responses/performance as well as attendance
- Using plagiarism-detection software to detect overuse of resources beyond the limit stated in the assessment information
- Paying attention to instances where the student responses do not align with the questions asked
- Requiring students to submit planning notes, keep a journal or portfolio recording their activities and thinking as they work through an assessment.

The identification of practices to detect misconduct are documented within the Programme Approval and Accreditation Document.

4.4 Investigation and Outcomes of Misconduct

All cases of misconduct will be investigated. Where students are suspected of assessment misconduct the following process will be followed:

4.4.1 The tutor will assess the level/amount of suspected assessment misconduct, prepare evidence and discuss with the relevant Head of School/Group Academic Director.

4.4.2 Where doubt persists, a meeting is to be arranged with the student/s support person, relevant tutor and Head of School/Group Academic Director to present the allegation, evidence and to provide the student with an opportunity to discuss the matter. Where the Head of School/Group Academic Director and tutor are one and the same, another Head of School/Group Academic Director within the Institute may be asked to participate. Written documentation is to be placed on the student/s file/s in the SMS.

4.4.3 Where assessment misconduct is established and acknowledged by the student/s, the student/s may be instructed to resubmit the assessment as a second attempt if allowed by the programme regulations. Other actions can include awarding a reduced grade or awarding a fail mark/grade. A letter is to be written stating the decision that has been made.

4.4.4 All cases of misconduct in assessment and their outcomes/consequences will be tabled at the programme committee, reported by the Head of School/Group Academic Director and placed on the student's academic record.

4.4.5 Student/s appeal rights can be found in A04 Misconduct Policy and A10 Academic Appeals Policy.

5.0 Definitions

Cheating	Defined as a misconduct response whatsoever by students to any item of assessment, including any action that may otherwise defeat the purpose of the assessment. This also includes accessing any non-approved sources of information such as the internet. This can include actions such as another person completing some or all of the assignment, paying for assignment answers, copying someone else's assignment with or without their permission, taking notes into a test or examination or receiving notes by cellphone.
Deception	The attempt by a student to deceive or misrepresent their circumstances to an assessor in order to achieve an unfair advantage e.g. obtaining an extension by faking an illness. The act of taking and using another's work as one's own without proper acknowledgement and includes: copying the works of another student; directly copying any part of another author's work; summarising another's work.
Plagiarism	Plagiarism can be intentional (you mean to copy without acknowledgement) or unintentional (you are unaware you were copying without acknowledgement). Unintentional plagiarism is not seen as a defence against plagiarism but if misconduct is found it will be taken into account in formulating the outcomes.
Other misconduct	The submission of work for an assessment that has previously been submitted elsewhere.
Serious misconduct	Repeated or blatant instances of assessment misconduct and especially cheating within examinations.
Turnitin	A version of software used to detect plagiarism that is used at NZSEG.

6.0 Document Control

6.1 Monitoring and Evaluation:

The Academic Board is responsible for monitoring and evaluating this policy.

Version	Type of Change	AB Reference	Approval Date	Effective from
1	Development of Policy	AB Action Item 54	23 June 2015	23 June 2015
2	Minor Review and Re-format of Policy	Approved by AB	20 October 2015	20 October 2015
3	Inclusion to NZSEG QMS and Policies.	Approved by the Executive Management Team	16 January 2017	31 January 2017
4	Revisions to sections 3 and 4 to address issues around plagiarism	Approved by the Executive Management Team	4 September 2017	18 September 2017

| 4.1 | Review and minor word changes | Approved by the AB | 22 July 2020 | 22 July 2020 |