

LEARNING - POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Policy Title	Academic Misconduct Policy & Procedure
Date	May 2026
Review Date	May 2028
Authority & Responsibility	Head of Learning
Standards	2025 Standards for RTOs - Outcome Standards 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2.1, 2.7 and 4.2; Compliance Requirements - records of assessment and student information
Version	4.0

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to outline ASFA Learning’s approach to preventing, identifying, investigating and responding to academic misconduct in a way that protects the integrity of assessment, supports fair and consistent decision-making, and meets the requirements of the 2025 Standards for RTOs.

Academic misconduct includes conduct that may compromise the authenticity, validity, sufficiency or reliability of assessment evidence, including plagiarism, cheating, collusion, contract cheating, unauthorised use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools, impersonation and the misuse or sharing of assessment materials.

SCOPE:

This policy applies to all ASFA students enrolled in nationally recognised training, including qualifications and units of competency, and may also be applied to non-accredited ASFA Learning courses, workshops and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) products where assessment, completion requirements or participation expectations are affected by academic misconduct.

This policy applies to students, trainers, assessors, student support staff, third parties acting on ASFA’s behalf, and any person involved in supporting, submitting or assessing student work.

DEFINITIONS:

Term	Meaning
Academic misconduct	Any action or attempted action that may give a student an unfair academic advantage or compromise the integrity, authenticity or reliability of training and assessment outcomes.
Plagiarism	Presenting another person’s words, ideas, work, images, data or other material as the student’s own without appropriate acknowledgement.

Cheating	Fraud, deceit, dishonesty or unauthorised assistance in an assessment activity or task.
Collusion	Working with another person in a way that results in the submission of work that is not the student's own individual work, unless collaboration has been expressly permitted.
Contract cheating	Arranging for another person or service to complete, substantially complete, edit or provide assessment responses that are submitted as the student's own work.
Unauthorised use of AI tools	Use of generative AI, paraphrasing, translation, answer-generation or automation tools in a way that is not permitted by the assessment instructions or that prevents ASFA from confirming the authenticity of the student's work.
Assessment evidence	The information, work, responses, documents, observations or other material used by an assessor to make an assessment judgement.

POLICY:

1. Academic integrity and assessment authenticity

- ASFA is committed to maintaining the integrity of its training and assessment outcomes and ensuring that assessment judgements are based on authentic, sufficient, valid and current evidence submitted by the student being assessed.
- All assessment evidence submitted by a student must be their own original and genuine work, unless the assessment instructions expressly allow collaboration, templates, workplace documents, AI tools or other forms of assistance.
- ASFA will provide clear guidance to students before assessment about expectations for academic integrity, acceptable and unacceptable assistance, referencing requirements, and the consequences of academic misconduct.
- ASFA will take reasonable steps to verify that the student enrolled, trained and assessed is the same person who is issued with a qualification, statement of attainment or other completion record.
- Assessment decisions must not be made where ASFA cannot reasonably confirm the authenticity of the evidence submitted.

2. Examples of academic misconduct

- Copying and pasting content from course materials, the internet, workplace documents or any other source and presenting it as the student's own work without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Submitting work completed by another person, another student, a paid service, an employer, a colleague or an AI tool as the student's own work.
- Using AI tools to generate assessment responses where the assessment instructions do not permit this, or failing to declare AI assistance where declaration is required.
- Using paraphrasing, translation or rewriting tools to disguise copied content or externally generated answers.
- Obtaining, attempting to obtain, sharing, selling or distributing assessment materials, answers, assessor guides or marking criteria without approval.
- Logging in as another student, allowing another person to log in using the student's credentials, or otherwise impersonating a student in any ASFA system, workshop, online activity or assessment.

- Submitting identical or substantially similar responses to another student where independent work was required.
- Submitting the same or substantially similar assessment evidence that has previously been submitted by another student or for another course, unless permitted by the assessor.
- Providing false, misleading or altered evidence, including falsified workplace documents, signatures, declarations, screenshots, transcripts or other supporting evidence.
- Interfering with an investigation, including withholding relevant information, deleting evidence, coercing another person, or making false statements.

3. Referencing and acknowledgement of sources

- Students are not generally required to use external sources unless the assessment instructions require or allow this. Where external information is used, the source must be acknowledged.
- Students should use Harvard referencing style where practicable. For short answer responses, a brief citation next to the sourced information and a source listed directly below the response is acceptable.
- Students will not be penalised solely for minor or inconsistent referencing style. However, a Not Yet Competent outcome or disciplinary action may apply where the work is not the student's own, sources have not been acknowledged, or plagiarism is evident.
- Where workplace documents, templates or examples are used as supporting evidence, students must ensure they are authorised to use them and must explain their own role in developing or applying the material.

4. Collaboration and group learning

- Students may discuss course content and study together, unless an assessment task specifically prohibits collaboration.
- Each student must submit their own work in their own words and must be able to explain and verify the work they submit.
- Collaboration becomes collusion when students submit identical or substantially similar responses, share completed assessment answers, or assist another student to submit work that is not their own.
- Students must not loan, share or distribute completed assessments or draft answers to another student. Where shared work is copied or misused, all involved students may be investigated.

5. Use of artificial intelligence tools

- ASFA recognises that AI tools may be used in some learning contexts. However, students must follow the specific instructions provided for each assessment task.
- Unless expressly permitted, students must not use AI tools to generate assessment answers, complete assessment tasks, fabricate evidence, paraphrase copied content, or replace their own demonstration of knowledge and skills.
- Where AI use is permitted, students must declare how the tool was used and retain sufficient drafts, notes or other evidence to demonstrate their own contribution and understanding.
- Assessors may request additional evidence, questioning, discussion, oral verification or resubmission where AI use is suspected or where authenticity cannot be confirmed.

6. Detection and prevention

- ASFA may use a combination of assessor judgement, comparison with previous student work, online searches, plagiarism detection tools, AI-detection indicators, oral questioning, system access records and other reasonable verification methods to identify potential academic misconduct.

- Any detection method must be used as an indicator only. Decisions must be based on a fair review of the available evidence, the student's response and the assessor's professional judgement.
- Assessment tools, student instructions and assessment processes will be reviewed through validation and quality assurance activities to identify and reduce risks to assessment authenticity and academic integrity.

7. Procedural fairness and student rights

- All suspected academic misconduct will be handled fairly, consistently and confidentially.
- Students will be informed of the allegation, provided with relevant details, and given an opportunity to respond before a final decision is made.
- Students will remain enrolled while an investigation is underway, unless there is a significant risk to ASFA, other students, staff, assessment integrity, privacy or safety.
- Assessment marking, issuance of certification documentation or finalisation of results may be paused while an academic misconduct matter is being investigated.
- Students may access ASFA's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure if they are dissatisfied with the decision or the process followed.

8. Consequences of academic misconduct

Where academic misconduct is substantiated, ASFA may apply one or more consequences depending on the seriousness, intent, impact, previous history and available evidence. Consequences may include:

- a written warning and academic integrity guidance
- requirement to resubmit the assessment task with or without a further assessment attempt being available
- an assessment outcome of Not Yet Competent for the relevant task, unit or course
- requirement to complete additional questioning, oral verification, practical demonstration or supervised assessment
- withdrawal from the course without refund
- ineligibility to re-enrol in the same or a related course
- withholding of certification documentation until the matter is resolved
- notification to an employer or corporate client where the employer is the fee payer or where this is necessary to manage a corporate training arrangement, subject to privacy and confidentiality requirements
- escalation to senior management where conduct may involve fraud, falsified documents, safety risks, unlawful behaviour or serious reputational risk.

No refund of fees will be provided where a student is withdrawn or otherwise penalised because of a substantiated breach of this policy, subject to applicable consumer protection obligations and ASFA's Fees and Refunds Policy and Procedure.

9. Records and confidentiality

- ASFA will keep secure records of academic misconduct allegations, investigations, evidence reviewed, student responses, decisions, reasons for decisions, actions taken and appeal outcomes.
- Records will be stored in the student record in ASFA's CRM system and/or the appropriate secure SharePoint folder, with access limited to staff who require the information for their role.
- Academic misconduct records will be retained in line with ASFA's record-keeping obligations and any applicable VET regulatory requirements.

PROCEDURE

1. Identification and reporting of suspected misconduct

- Where a trainer, assessor, student adviser or other staff member suspects academic misconduct, they must report the matter to the Head of Learning as soon as practicable.
- The report should include the student's name, course or unit, assessment task, nature of the concern, relevant evidence and any immediate action already taken.
- Reasons for concern may include unexplained changes in writing style, similarity between student submissions, copied or uncited material, inconsistent knowledge during questioning, suspicious system access, evidence of contract cheating, suspected AI-generated content, falsified documents or unauthorised sharing of assessment materials.

2. Preliminary review

- The Head of Learning will conduct a preliminary review to determine whether there is sufficient basis to proceed to a formal investigation.
- The preliminary review may include checking the assessment submission, comparing previous work, reviewing LMS or CRM records, consulting the assessor, conducting internet searches, and considering whether a reasonable explanation may exist.
- If there is insufficient evidence to proceed, the matter will be closed and the assessment will continue through the normal assessment process. A brief note may be kept where appropriate.

3. Notification to student

- Where a formal investigation is required, the student will be notified in writing of the allegation and provided with enough information to understand and respond to the concern.
- The notification will outline the relevant assessment task, the policy provisions that may have been breached, any immediate impact on assessment marking or certification, and the timeframe for response.
- The student will normally be given at least five working days to respond, unless urgent circumstances require a shorter timeframe.

4. Investigation

- The Head of Learning, in consultation with the Chief Operating Officer, will review all relevant information before making or recommending a decision.
- The investigation may include reviewing submitted work, plagiarism or similarity evidence, AI-use indicators, drafts or supporting documents, system access logs, prior examples of student work, assessor observations and the student's explanation.
- The assessor or Head of Learning may request further information from the student, conduct an interview or oral verification activity, or ask the student to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in another way.
- Where the student is enrolled through an employer or corporate arrangement, ASFA may contact the employer only where necessary and appropriate, taking privacy and confidentiality obligations into account.

5. Decision and outcome

- The Head of Learning will consider the available evidence, the student's response, the seriousness of the conduct, whether the conduct appears intentional, the student's previous history, and the impact on assessment integrity.
- Possible findings include: no academic misconduct found; insufficient evidence to substantiate misconduct; academic misconduct substantiated; or serious academic misconduct substantiated.

- The student will be notified of the outcome in writing, normally within five working days of the decision being made.
- The written outcome will include the decision, reasons for the decision, any action required by the student, any assessment or enrolment consequences, and the student's right to appeal.

6. Recording and follow-up

- The outcome will be recorded in the student's CRM record and the academic misconduct register or secure SharePoint folder.
- Any required assessment status changes, resubmission requirements, withdrawal action, certification hold, fee action or employer notification must be completed promptly and documented.
- Where the incident identifies a broader risk, the Head of Learning will consider whether assessment tools, student instructions, trainer guidance, LMS controls, validation activities or other quality assurance processes need to be updated.

7. Appeals

- A student who is dissatisfied with the decision or believes the process was not fair may appeal in accordance with ASFA's Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure.
- Where an appeal is lodged, relevant assessment marking, certification or withdrawal action may remain on hold until the appeal is finalised, unless ASFA determines that another action is necessary to manage risk.

VERSION CONTROL:

Version	Date	Approved by	Summary of changes
4.0	15/05/2026	Head of Learning	Updated to align with the Standards for RTOs 2025.