

STUDENT RESEARCH MISCONDUCT POLICY AND PROCEDURE



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1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This document establishes the CQUniversity's policy and procedure for managing research misconduct by students in research higher degrees.

2 SCOPE

- 2.1 This policy and procedure applies to:
- a) students undertaking the research component of research higher degrees, and
 - b) staff with responsibility for any aspect of student research misconduct prevention, identification, investigation, management, decision-making and/or administration.
- 2.2 Academic misconduct by research higher degree students completing coursework units is subject to and will be addressed under CQUniversity's [Academic Misconduct Procedure](#). Unit coordinators will advise the Dean, School of Graduate Research of any academic misconduct by research higher degree students relating to their coursework units.
- 2.3 Research misconduct by staff who are research higher degree students will be actioned in accordance with the [University's Enterprise Agreement](#).

3 POLICY STATEMENT

General principles

- 3.1 CQUniversity values academic honesty and integrity. It requires appropriate and acceptable standards of conduct and behaviour in the workplace and the learning environment to perform its functions under the [Central Queensland University Act 1998](#) (Qld). It does not tolerate any behaviour which diminishes the academic reputation of the CQUniversity, impairs the ability of scholars to participate in any legitimate CQUniversity activity or disrupts the peace or good order of the CQUniversity.
- 3.2 The CQUniversity demands ethical behaviour in study and research. As such, research misconduct is a serious offence, which may result in penalties imposed by CQUniversity and/or cancellation of Commonwealth support for a research higher degree student, and/or notification to external funding bodies (possibly resulting in withdrawal of research funding).
- 3.3 The CQUniversity investigates and deals with incidents of research misconduct by students in a consistent manner, affording natural justice and applying penalties which are appropriate, fair and just.
- 3.4 Students are expected to have acquired an understanding of what constitutes academic misconduct, including plagiarism, during their prior degrees and/or professional experience, and to be aware of their obligation to avoid such misconduct during their course.
- 3.5 At the time of their enrolment, students will also be directed to relevant policies and procedures, including this document, to ensure they are informed about academic misconduct, including research misconduct and plagiarism, how to avoid such misconduct, and applicable penalties. All CQUniversity policies are accessible via the [CQUniversity policy website](#).
- 3.6 Research supervisors must adhere to Section 3 - Supervision of Research Trainees (Staff and Students) of the [Code of Conduct for Research](#) which details their responsibility towards students. This is consistent with the requirement to promote awareness or appropriate behaviour as described in the [Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research](#).
- 3.7 CQUniversity's [Code of Conduct for Research](#) and the [Assignment of Authorship Policy](#) apply to students who undertake research, and must be read in conjunction with this policy and procedure.

Research misconduct

- 3.8 Research misconduct is where the student has displayed wilful or deliberate behaviour that is inconsistent with the values stated in the [Student Charter](#), and which may impact on the reputation, viability and integrity of the CQUniversity's academic standards. Research misconduct includes but is not limited to the following conduct:
 - a) plagiarism in research publications, in a thesis document, or in other materials relating to the research component of a research higher degree
 - b) using another's intellectual property without due acknowledgement in research-related matters
 - c) fabrication or falsification of data or findings, or unauthorised use of data for which appropriate permissions have not been sought
 - d) using [ghost-written](#) material written by another person (whether for payment or not), which a student represents as their own work
 - e) knowingly conducting research without appropriate human or animal ethical clearance or contrary to the conditions attached to ethical clearance
 - f) serious breaches of occupational health and safety requirements relating to the conduct of research activities, including knowingly conducting activities without clearance, or contrary to the conditions applicable under the [Work Health and Safety Policy](#)
 - g) misuse of research funding, serious misuse of University resources or funding in research, and/or
 - h) non-compliance with any part of the University's [Code of Conduct for Research](#).
- 3.9 Research misconduct does not include honest errors or honest differences in interpretation of data.

Plagiarism

- 3.10 Plagiarism is the presentation of existing work, ideas or data of others as one's own without appropriate acknowledgement.
- 3.11 Plagiarism in research can take several forms: plagiarism of ideas, plagiarism of data or plagiarism of text. Plagiarism of an idea involves presenting a concept developed by another as your own. Plagiarism of data involves presenting data collected by another as your own. Plagiarism of text involves the use of others words as one's own (i.e. presented without quotation marks and/or without appropriate citation of the page number of the source). Self-plagiarism involves breaching copyright (i.e. the use of published wording into another document by the same author).
- 3.12 The stages of a student's course where plagiarism may be detected includes but is not limited to the following:
- draft submission of a thesis or chapters where submission includes lodgement of materials with a supervisor, members of a supervisory panel, and/or other staff
 - oral presentations, whether they are to be delivered within CQUniversity or in an external academic or public forum
 - confirmation of candidature documentation
 - publications and co-authored articles, and
 - submission of a thesis for examination, including re-submission of the revised thesis and submission of documents for a practice examination.

Misconduct-related attempts, collusion and non-compliance

- 3.13 An attempt to do an act or make an omission which would, if completed, amount to misconduct shall be treated as misconduct and addressed in the same manner as if the offender had committed the misconduct.
- 3.14 Colluding with or aiding another person in misconduct shall be treated as misconduct and addressed as if that offender was the principal offender who committed the misconduct.
- 3.15 Failing to comply with any direction, order or penalty made or imposed pursuant to this policy and procedure shall also constitute research misconduct.

4 PROCEDURE

Investigating and determining research misconduct

- 4.1 The Dean, School of Graduate Research is responsible for investigating, managing and determining cases of misconduct by research higher degree students. Where a perceived or actual conflict of interest exists between the parties and the Dean, School of Graduate Research, the matter shall be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research).
- 4.2 All investigations shall be conducted in a confidential manner.
- 4.3 Research misconduct involving alleged corrupt or criminal behaviour may be referred to appropriate external agencies, such as the [Crime and Corruption Commission](#) or the relevant police jurisdiction. The Dean, School of Graduate Research will seek advice on whether internal investigations and determinations may be continued during an external investigation, and if so with what authority and limitations. After completing the external investigation the Dean, School of Graduate Research will consider whether any further outstanding matters relevant to this policy and procedure require a determination.
- 4.4 Allegations or complaints about research misconduct relating to a research higher degree candidature must be submitted in writing to the Dean, School of Graduate Research. The process to lodge a complaint or allegation is set out in the University's [Code of Conduct for Research](#), and is published on the CQUniversity website.

- 4.5 The Dean, School of Graduate Research shall investigate and determine allegations of misconduct and the severity of each occurrence, taking into account previous instances recorded in the student's file and progress reports, and as noted in the Academic Misconduct Register. An investigation shall include consultation as necessary, e.g. with the supervisory panel, Deputy Dean (Research) or other individuals, before making a determination.
- 4.6 Should the Dean, School of Graduate Research consider that any type of research misconduct has occurred, the student will be formally advised, in writing, of the allegations and provided with an opportunity to respond. The written advice will include:
- sufficient detail of the allegation/s to allow the student to understand the nature of the alleged misconduct
 - a list of the range of possible penalties, as described in this policy and procedure, and
 - a recommendation that the student obtain independent advice and support, such as that offered by the CQUniversity Student Advocacy Officer.
- 4.7 Written advice of an allegation of research misconduct shall be deemed to be properly served on the student if sent to the student's university-provided email address.
- 4.8 Students will be provided 14 calendar days in which to respond to an allegation of misconduct. A response shall only be accepted in writing to the Dean, School of Graduate Research. Students are encouraged to seek advice from the Student Advocacy Officer on how to present their case. If the student requires more than 14 calendar days to prepare their case, they may apply to the Dean, School of Graduate Research for an extension.
- 4.9 If a student does not respond to a written advice of an allegation of research misconduct within the time allowed, the Dean, School of Graduate Research will proceed with an investigation and make a determination based all relevant information available.
- 4.10 The student may subsequently seek to have the proceedings reopened if the student can demonstrate that they did not receive the notice because of exceptional circumstances beyond their control. Such an application must be made directly to the Dean, School of Graduate Research.
- 4.11 Investigations shall be scheduled as soon as possible after the alleged misconduct is identified, but no earlier than 14 calendar days (or as soon as a response is received), and no later than 60 days from the date of the letter of notification to the student.
- 4.12 The Dean, School of Graduate Research shall investigate and determine research misconduct matters in a manner affording natural justice and applying penalties which are appropriate, fair and just. Allegations shall be managed in accordance with CQUniversity policies and procedures.
- 4.13 In considering all matters of research misconduct, the Dean, School of Graduate Research may consult with one or more individuals with relevant discipline expertise to examine the nature and severity of the alleged research misconduct case.

Identifying, reporting and recording plagiarism

- 4.14 Where a research supervisor identifies minor lapses in referencing and/or use of sources, the principal supervisor (or supervisory panel), shall counsel the student concerned, reminding them of the policy and procedures, and potential consequences. Repeat instances will be recorded in the student's file and their progress reports.
- 4.15 Where a supervisor, peer reviewer or other staff member suspects the incident to be of a more serious or intentional nature (e.g. repeated occurrences after being counselled by the supervisory team), they shall document the reasons and evidence for this and refer the matter to the Dean, School of Graduate Research.
- 4.16 The Dean, School of Graduate Research may consult with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) at any stage of the process, on any matter including the severity of the occurrence, in particular, after repeated instances of plagiarism have been detected and/or following identification of plagiarism in a publication, thesis submitted for examination, or identification by an external source.

- 4.17 Allegations of plagiarism by a research higher degree student must be directed to the Dean, School of Graduate Research.
- 4.18 On receiving advice of potential plagiarism, the Dean, School of Graduate Research will review the student's records for an indication of previous issues, and may request an interview with the student, supervisory panel, other relevant staff, and other authors. In the case of authors who are external to CQUniversity, the Dean, School of Graduate Research will obtain their views by interview or written request.
- 4.19 In cases of plagiarism or academic/research misconduct, the supervisory panel members are as accountable as the students.
- 4.20 Papers may be co-authored with supervisors and others. All authors have contributed to and are responsible for a paper. Accordingly, any plagiarism by a student in a co-authored paper extends to all other authors.
- 4.21 Supervisors are required to decide if a thesis or portfolio is ready for examination. A thesis or portfolio containing plagiarised material is not fit for submission for examination. Students are required to submit a report from Turnitin, or other similar detection software, when lodging their thesis for examination, and when lodging a Confirmation of Candidature document.
- 4.22 If plagiarism is detected by the Examination Panel's Chair or by the Confirmation Panel's Chair, the issue shall be referred to the Dean, School of Graduate Research.
- 4.23 Should supervisors approve the portfolio or thesis and the University is unaware of the plagiarism until contacted by Examiners, the Examiners will be requested to provide formal advice of any suspected plagiarism, including the reasons and evidence for this suspicion.

Penalties

- 4.24 When determining a penalty in response to proven misconduct, the governing principles shall be the following:
- To penalise the behaviour in a manner that is fair and just in all of the circumstances
 - To allow the student an opportunity to correct the offending behaviour
 - To protect and maintain standards of conduct and behaviour in the workplace and the learning environment, which allow the CQUniversity to perform its roles and functions under the [Central Queensland University Act 1998](#).
- 4.25 Any of the following penalties may be applied for research misconduct, other than plagiarism:
- the student entering into a written undertaking regarding the offence
 - requirement to attend mandatory training
 - suspension or cancellation of research grant funding
 - suspension or cancellation of relevant ethics and/or health and safety clearances, and/or
 - suspension or termination of candidature/enrolment at the CQUniversity.
- 4.26 Outcomes for plagiarism deemed as minor (e.g. identification of small amounts of text in a confirmation document or submitted thesis) may include any of the following:
- the student entering into a written undertaking regarding the offence
 - written warning with reprimand
 - mandatory counselling (including attending training in appropriate referencing styles)
 - imposition of any combination of these penalties, or
 - no further action.

- 4.27 Outcomes for plagiarism deemed as serious academic and research misconduct (for any instance of plagiarism) the severity of which has been determined by the Dean, School of Graduate Research may include any of the following:
- a) written warning with reprimand
 - b) written advice to re-submit thesis or portfolio for further examination
 - c) failing grade
 - d) such other penalty as may be authorised by the Dean, School of Graduate Research
 - e) entering details on student's permanent record
 - f) requirement to attend training in appropriate referencing styles
 - g) cancellation of research funding
 - h) withdrawal of publications containing plagiarised material or publication of an appropriate correction or notice
 - i) termination of candidature at the CQUniversity
 - j) suspension from the CQUniversity, and/or
 - k) exclusion from the CQUniversity.

Depending on the seriousness and circumstances of the plagiarism, the outcome may be but not limited to the following examples:

- Evidence of self-plagiarism or minor text plagiarism in the confirmation document may result in a written warning with reprimand and a requirement to re-submit
- Evidence of plagiarism of data or ideas may result in discontinuation of candidature/cancellation of enrolment.

- 4.28 If plagiarism is evident in a public document (including published peer-reviewed manuscripts), the publication/s shall be revoked and the offenders must make a written apology to the journal or publisher, with a copy on the relevant staff and student files.
- 4.29 Plagiarism detected within the submitted thesis document may result in a grade of fail for the student's course.

Retrospectivity

- 4.30 Where plagiarism is detected after a student's results have been finalised, or the degree conferred, the Dean, School of Graduate Research may open an investigation. An investigation would ordinarily include audit of the student's files and, where possible, participation by the student (graduate), supervisory panel, and relevant school management personnel.
- 4.31 In cases of serious plagiarism and where the student's degree has been conferred, the CQUniversity may choose to revoke the degree, irrespective of the number of years passed since conferral.
- 4.32 A graduate whose degree is revoked will not be eligible for reimbursement of any tuition fees paid for the course.

Recording misconduct details

- 4.33 Whenever allegations of misconduct are made and investigated, the details of the incident, whether or not the student admitted or was found to have committed research misconduct, must be entered in the Academic Misconduct Register.
- 4.34 The Academic Misconduct Register shall contain sufficient detail of the alleged or proven research misconduct that would allow review if required, including but not limited to the student's name, a brief outline of the facts, any mitigating factors, the decision, any penalty imposed, and reasons for the decision and penalty.

- 4.35 Details of plagiarism and outcomes shall also be recorded in the student's progress report and the Deputy Dean (Research) and Supervisory Team shall be advised for noting on the student's file (held by the Research Division). Records of supporting documentation must also be kept on the same file.
- 4.36 For any outcome other than cancellation of candidature/enrolment, the Academic Misconduct Register shall not form part of the student's permanent academic record nor shall it be referred to on the student's academic transcript. Where the offence results in cancellation of candidature/enrolment, a notation will form part of the student's permanent academic record, including the academic transcript.
- 4.37 Access to the Academic Misconduct Register shall be restricted to the Dean, School of Graduate Research and the Director, Governance, and their staff. Requests for information regarding student records are to be submitted through the Dean, School of Graduate Research.
- 4.38 Where it is required by appropriate external authorities, allegations and/or instances of misconduct relating to a research higher degree candidature may be reported to national research bodies, including but not limited to the [Australian Research Council](#) and/or the [National Health and Medical Research Council](#).

Student appeals

Internal appeals

- 4.39 The CQUniversity shall ensure that all students are advised of their options for internal appeal at the time they are notified in writing of the decision and reasons for the decision.
- 4.40 Students may appeal a finding of research misconduct by submitting an appeal to the Academic Appeals Committee, in accordance with the grounds for appeal, timelines and processes in the [Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure](#).

External appeals

- 4.41 Any student not satisfied with the outcome of their internal appeal may appeal the decision by referring the matter to the [Queensland State Ombudsman](#) or to a court or tribunal with an appropriate jurisdiction.
- 4.42 The CQUniversity shall ensure that all students are advised of their options for external appeal at the time they are notified in writing of the decision and reasons for the decision.

5 RESPONSIBILITIES

Compliance, monitoring and review

- 5.1 The Dean, School of Graduate Research is responsible for monitoring, reviewing and ensuring compliance with this policy and procedure.

Reporting

- 5.2 The Dean, School of Graduate Research shall provide a report of their decisions regarding research misconduct twice yearly to the Academic Board.

Records management

- 5.3 The Dean, School of Graduate Research is responsible for ensuring all records of alleged or proven student research misconduct are recorded in the Academic Misconduct Register.
- 5.4 Under the [University Sector Retention and Disposal Schedule](#), records relating to allegations of academic misconduct must be retained until course completion or, if the course is abandoned, until the maximum period for course completion has elapsed. Student files containing this information may be kept for 25 years, factoring in deferments, part-time enrolment, course changes, and credit claims for units.

6 DEFINITIONS

6.1 Terms not defined in this document may be in the University [glossary](#).

Ghostwriting: sometimes also known as guest authorship, occurs where a researcher uses another person, either paid or unpaid, to produce work and then represents this as their own material for assessment or publication purposes, without due acknowledgement.

Ghostwriting is unethical, and is an example of misrepresentation and wrongful claiming of authorship. It is more appropriately dealt with under the [Code of Conduct for Research](#) (integrity clauses) and the [Assignment of Authorship Policy](#).

Engaging professional editors is permissible where the [Guidelines for Editing Research Theses](#) have been followed. The Guidelines outline the extent and nature of editorial services that professional editors can provide when editing research students' theses and dissertations.

7 RELATED LEGISLATION AND DOCUMENTS

[Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure](#)

[Assignment of Authorship Policy](#)

[Australian Code for Responsible Conduct of Research](#)

[Code of Conduct for Research](#)

[Guidelines for Editing Research Theses](#)

[Occupational Health and Safety Policy](#)

[Student Charter](#)

8 FEEDBACK

8.1 University staff and students may provide feedback about this document by emailing policy@cqu.edu.au.

9 APPROVAL AND REVIEW DETAILS

Approval and Review	Details
Approval Authority	Research Higher Degrees Committee
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