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1 MCD general policy

All MCD staff and students must adhere to the highest standards of academic learning, integrity, fairness and honesty. This is the fundamental policy of the College.

This Academic Conduct Policy, which will be implemented on 25 July 2011 (the first day of Semester 2, 2011) will be reviewed annually.

1.1 Coursework Studies Committee responsibilities

The Coursework Studies Committee reports to the Academic Board and advises the Board on all matters pertaining to MCD coursework awards (Regulation 2.2.1). Its membership is determined by Regulation 2.2.2.

The Committee has responsibility for undertaking and managing regular reviews of the awards of the College. It also develops and implements the MCD Learning and Teaching Management Plan. The Committee develops and implements academic policy and procedures and approves teaching faculty.

Its duties include approving coursework units, credits and transfers, and admitting students to candidature. The Committee appoints examiners and oversees the conduct of examinations. It certifies to the Academic Board that the conditions prescribed for admission to degrees of the College and the award of diplomas and certificates of the College have been fulfilled, and assists the Academic Board to prepare advice for the Finance Committee on fees and payments associated with tuition.

1.2 Academic staff responsibilities

Academic staff are expected to teach with primary regard for student learning, reflected in the subject matter, level and specified learning outcomes of the unit concerned. Staff members are required to grade all work fairly and return graded assignments on time and without regard to any personal knowledge of, or relationship with, any student or group of students.

Academic staff associated with the MCD are expected to be active in research and publication, and to contribute to the academic life of the churches and wider society. In so doing, they are required to adhere to the highest standards of academic integrity.

1.3 Student responsibilities

Students are expected to participate actively in all classes or tutorials, to have consideration for other students and their learning, to complete assignments on time, and to respect the distinctive roles of academic, library and administrative staff.

All work submitted for assessment, and all work published at the MCD, must be the independent work of the person concerned, or, in the case of joint work, of the persons concerned.

Assessment is available only to currently enrolled students of the MCD.

Students on leave, or who have been granted deferment, are not eligible to have their work assessed for credit, neither currently or retrospectively.

1.4 Course levels and classes

The following policy applies to classes, including students from different course levels:

- a) Undergraduate classes are preferably taught at one level, 1, 2 or 3. However, they may range over two levels, 1/2 or 2/3, but not three.
- b) Provided permission has been given by the Academic Board, including approval of graduate learning outcomes and assessment tasks, graduate students may take Foundation Units in association with an undergraduate class, but may, however, require additional class time.

- c) Graduate students taking eligible, specialist or integrative units may take these in association with undergraduate Level 3 units, provided that permission has been given by the Academic Board, including approval of graduate learning outcomes and assessment tasks.
- d) Undergraduate students may, subject to the approval of their coursework coordinators, study and gain credit for Level 3 units by satisfactorily completing graduate units.
- e) Postgraduate students normally take distinctive postgraduate units, with assessment taking the form of one 6,000-word essay or equivalent.

1.5 Supervised Reading Units

Postgraduate, graduate and Undergraduate Level 3 students may apply to take a supervised reading unit, normally assessed by means of one 6,000-word essay or equivalent.

Each such unit must be approved by the Recognised Teaching Institution (RTI) Coursework Coordinator, with the agreement of the Chair of the appropriate Field(s). The RTI Coursework Coordinator notifies the MCD Director Coursework, employing the standard Reading Unit Outline pro forma as a basis, using the assigned MCD code for a reading unit in the Field(s) concerned. The reading unit outline must include the topic, a brief description of the material to be covered, supervisor, learning outcomes, assessment tasks and reading list.

When the above reading unit outline has been made, a student may audit a class at a higher or lower level (with the approval of the relevant coordinator) in order to gain the benefits of classroom learning to supplement their reading.

2 Policy and Procedures for Examinations in Coursework Programs

2.1 Examination of coursework units

The examination of each coursework unit must be made in accordance with the Method of Assessment approved by the Academic Board through its Committees, and published in the RTI Handbook or website.

The examination of all MCD coursework is the ultimate responsibility of the Chair of Examiners for each Field (Regulation 2.4).

Coursework Studies Committee must approve the method(s) of assessment and choice of examiners for each unit. The details for each unit are finalised by the examiner/s by the end of the first week of the semester. The range of final grades awarded for each unit is examined through the reporting which each MCD RTI makes at the end of semester to the MCD Director Coursework, who discusses any apparent irregularities with the Chairs after scrutinising the range of grades.

2.1.1 Submission of coursework

Students must submit one clean copy of each essay, assignment, project or other piece of assessment submitted for examination. It is the student's responsibility to retain one clean copy in case of loss, or the need for further moderation.

On submission of each piece of assessment, the student must make a declaration that this is his or her independent work, and identify the student's name, the topic, unit and degree or other award concerned. This may be done electronically or by attaching a signed Essay Cover Sheet (see section 4.1.2).

2.1.2 Examination –coursework units

Each unit must have a first and second examiner. Work for assessment cannot be given a Fail grade unless both examiners award it independently.

The first examiner is normally the main lecturer or co-ordinator of the unit, as named in the RTI Handbook and website, and carries responsibility for the overall grades awarded. In units taught by more than one person, the faculty concerned nominates the first examiner.

The second examiner, who must be external to the RTI hosting the unit, acts as a moderator, and must be qualified to teach in the discipline concerned.

Where the same lectures are shared by classes at different undergraduate levels, and/or graduate and undergraduate classes, examination and assessment must be made according to the learning outcomes of each class. Where moderation of the two top and bottom grades applies (see section 2.1.4), this is to be undertaken for each separate class.

2.1.3 The first examiner's responsibilities

In cases where the formal examination is 50% or greater of the total marks for the unit, the first examiner must forward a copy of any proposed examination paper to the second examiner at least four weeks before the examination will be held. The examiners must agree on the contents and structure of the paper.

Assessment work other than examination papers is marked initially by the first examiner, who may make comments to assist students. The need to allow moderation must be kept in mind, so that an independent assessment may be made if necessary.

It is the responsibility of the first examiner to ensure that each piece of assessment which does not require moderation is returned to students, together with the grade and comments, within the specified time (see section 2.2.1).

Work requiring moderation must be forwarded by the first examiner to the second examiner, who must make an independent assessment. The second examiner must be provided with a clean copy of the work for assessment.

The first examiner forwards a signed result sheet, including the total number of students in the class, and the number in each grade category together with any (clean) examination papers to be moderated, to the second examiner as soon as possible (see below), with a copy to the RTI Registrar.

The first examiner is responsible for keeping marked examination papers safe for a period of six months, after which they must be destroyed.

2.1.4 Moderation (the second examiner's duties)

For RTIs not being audited in the current year, the second examiner makes an independent assessment of all pieces of work for which a Fail grade is awarded by the first examiner.

For RTIs being audited, the second examiner makes an independent assessment of all pieces of work given a Fail grade, as well as the two highest-scoring and two lowest-scoring pieces of work in a class, as graded by the first examiner.

Where the same lectures are shared by classes at different levels, moderation must be done for each level. The second examiner writes any marks awarded by him or her on the result sheet and returns it to the RTI Registrar. A copy of the result sheet, with all examination papers, is sent to the first examiner.

A student who receives a Pass grade from the examiner for a unit as a whole has passed: a student is only to be awarded a Fail grade for a unit as a whole where both the first and second examiners agree.

Both examiners must agree on the grades reported to the RTI Coursework Coordinator. If agreement is not reached, advice must be sought from the Chair of Examiners, whose decision is final, subject to the appeal rights of the student as set out herein. If the Chair's decision differs from that of the first examiner, the Chair will contact the first examiner by the most suitable means to explain the reason for the variation in grade. If a student disagrees with an awarded grade, he or she may appeal in accordance with the Academic Grievance Policy.

2.2 Reporting of grades for coursework units

2.2.1 Grading of assessments

Work submitted during the course of teaching must be assessed promptly, and be returned to students with appropriate comment within two weeks (for shorter pieces) or three weeks (for major essays) of submission, unless otherwise arranged in advance with the Dean of the RTI.

If work is more than a week late, the student cannot expect to receive the graded work within this time-frame.

Students will be informed that grades awarded for work returned during the semester are not final, but are to inform and assist learning.

No student is to be informed of grades awarded to other students.

Faculty members must grade work according to the MCD five-point scale of grading (F, P, C, D, HD), or the two-point scale (F / PP) for pass-fail only units. When the range of results requires some explanation, the first examiner should note reasons using the result sheet submitted to the RTI Registrar.

Examiners are not required to follow any predetermined pattern of grading outcomes, such as a normal distribution curve. The agreed learning outcomes for the Field and course concerned constitute the sole measures of grading.

If both examiners believe that it is necessary to clarify possible academic misconduct affecting the grade(s) awarded to one or more students, a further assessment, oral, written or practical, may be administered to the student(s) concerned at short notice, and before the publication of final results. The relevant RTI Coursework Coordinator must be informed prior to any further assessment.

2.2.2 Timetable for reporting

The grading of all work must be completed and results reported to the RTI Registrar by the date specified in the Melbourne College of Divinity Calendar for each particular semester.

The first examiner is responsible for including on the result sheet for the unit the total number of students, and the number awarded High Distinction, Distinction, Credit, Pass, Fail, and Withdrawn. (These are generated automatically if the electronic student records system is used to produce class lists.)

Students for whom a Dean's Extension has been made (see section 2.4.3) will have the final result listed as 'E', along with any grades awarded and an indication of ungraded work.

The first examiner must sign the RTI results sheet for each unit.

RTI Registrars must collate these results and submit them to the MCD Director Coursework by the date specified in the Melbourne College of Divinity Calendar for each particular semester, together with a signed statement from the RTI Coursework Coordinator that all assessments have been conducted according to the methods approved by the Academic Board.

The MCD Director Coursework, with the MCD Director Finance and Administration (Registrar), will scrutinise the range of marks awarded for each unit, and report any concerns regarding the assessment process to the Chairs of Examiners within two days of receipt.

Final results may be released to students by RTI Registrars on the date specified in the MCD Calendar, unless directed otherwise by the MCD Director Finance and Administration (Registrar).

2.3 The conduct of formal examinations

2.3.1 Supervisor responsibilities

All staff engaged in the supervision of a formal examination, written or oral, must ensure that the examination is conducted in accordance with these procedures; that each student under examination is treated fairly; and that no student receives unfair advantage.

The examination supervisor is responsible in particular for:

- a) Obtaining sufficient examination booklets or writing paper, together with sufficient copies of the examination paper, from the RTI Registrar;
- b) Bringing spare pens, and if loose paper is supplied for writing, one or more filled staplers;
- c) Ensuring that sufficient materials required for the examination are available to students;
- d) Checking that only permitted materials are brought by students into the examination;
- e) Ensuring that the examination commences and concludes on time;
- f) Filling in the attendance list of students present; and
- g) Forwarding securely all completed scripts to the RTI Registrar or to the first examiner.

2.3.2 Request for special examination conditions

Students with disabilities may request examinations under special conditions. Such students must obtain written permission for these from the RTI Coursework Coordinator at least one week before the relevant examinations, and any conditions which may apply.

If an amanuensis is agreed to, the Coursework Coordinator must ensure that the person nominated to write the student's paper is capable, agrees not to contribute in any way to the student's content, and accepts that the examination supervisor will determine where and how the student and amanuensis will be placed.

A student may request permission to bring a computer into an examination room, but only on the condition that written permission from the RTI Coursework Coordinator is given one week prior to the date of the examination, and for good and particular reason. The Coordinator's decision is final.

Where permission for examination under special conditions is given, the Coordinator must notify the examination supervisor at least two days prior to the examination and the supervisor must ensure that appropriate arrangements and facilities are available.

When special circumstances such as use of an amanuensis or computer have been approved, the examination supervisor must ensure that any resulting noise does not disturb other students.

2.3.3 Student responsibilities prior to the examination

It is the responsibility of students to ascertain the dates and times at which they are required to attend for examinations, or to perform or submit other components of assessment. Absence or lateness due to misreading the examination timetable or similar error does not entitle a student to any further examination or special consideration.

Students under the influence of alcohol or any other drug will be refused admission to the examination room by the examination supervisor.

Students must bring into the examination room a pen for writing, and may also bring loose pens, pencils and erasers.

Students must not bring into the examination room any equipment or materials not approved for use in the examination, unless such equipment or materials are left in a place indicated by the supervisor or placed under the chair of the candidate with the approval of the supervisor.

Where an amanuensis or computer has been approved, the student must accept the direction of the supervisor about their location, to prevent disturbance to other students undertaking the examination.

2.3.4 Requirements for the conduct of an examination

The RTI must provide writing paper or examination books, and only scripts written on this paper will be accepted for grading, unless written permission has been given by the RTI Coursework Coordinator.

Where materials are permitted to be taken into the examination room, e.g. an unmarked copy of the Bible, this must be specified in the official unit description and on the examination paper.

A student who has two or more examinations timetabled for the same day may request a special sitting of one examination paper. Such a request must be made to the RTI Coursework Coordinator at least two weeks before the examination is due to be held. Students will normally be admitted to the examination room fifteen minutes before the commencement of the examination for the purpose of reading the paper. Students may make notes on the examination question paper during this time, but not commence writing answers.

The examination supervisor makes an announcement that writing may commence.

The examination supervisor warns the students ten minutes before the end of the examination, then makes a final announcement at the end, when all writing must cease.

Unless otherwise specified on the examination paper, no student may commence writing or make any use of books or other materials before the announcement to commence.

Unless directed otherwise, students must write their answer to each question on a separate page, and write the number of the question being answered in the top right-hand corner of each page (e.g. Q1), together with their student number.

Students who require writing paper or other materials, or who wish to speak to an examination supervisor, should raise one hand and keep it raised until the arrival of a supervisor.

Immediately following the conclusion of the examination, each student must staple or otherwise connect all pages of the examination script together, or enclose each examination book used in the cover of the preceding book.

Students must complete the following information on the cover sheet of the examination booklet, or on a fresh piece of paper connected to the front of the examination script:

- a) Her or his student number;
- b) The name of the unit being examined; and
- c) The number of each question answered from the examination paper, in the order of writing.

Students must remain seated until all examination scripts, books and other materials have been collected by the examination supervisor(s).

A student who does not answer any questions must still submit a completed cover sheet.

2.3.5 Conduct prohibited during an examination

No student may enter the examination room more than half an hour after the commencement of the examination, nor leave until half an hour after the commencement of the examination or during the last quarter of an hour. These rules are designed to ensure that all students are not disturbed during the early and concluding stages of examination.

Apart from the numbering of questions and completion of covers, no writing is to be done after the announcement to cease writing.

In an examination room, no students may communicate except with the permission of an examination supervisor.

Students who wish to leave and then return to the examination room must first obtain the approval of an examination supervisor, who may require that the student be accompanied by a supervisor during the full period of absence.

The consumption of alcohol or drugs is not permitted in the examination room.

2.4 Special grading consideration, late work and extensions

2.4.1 Special grading consideration

Special grading consideration concerns the level of grade awarded to a piece of assessment or written formal examination, when:

- a) The student's work at any time during the academic semester or year has, to a substantial degree, been hampered by illness or other approved cause; or
- b) The student has been prevented by illness or other approved cause from preparing or presenting for all or part of a component of assessment; or
- c) The student was to a substantial degree adversely affected by illness or other approved cause during the performance of a component of assessment.

Applications for special grading consideration must be made to the RTI Coursework Coordinator as soon as possible after the events which instigated the request and no later than close of business on the next working day following the submission of the work concerned (where applicable).

Every application for special grading consideration must be made in writing, and supported by a medical certificate or other appropriate evidence.

Where special grading consideration is granted, the Coordinator is to consult with the examiner/s to reach an agreement on the details of the consideration. When agreement cannot be reached, consultation is to take place with the Chair of Examiners, whose decision is final.

2.4.2 Late work

All students' written work, whether submitted on time or not, must be graded and returned to students with appropriate pedagogical feedback, plus an indication of the grade which represents its intrinsic academic worth.

Students who submit work after the due date, without an official extension, will normally be penalised academically.

For assessment purposes, the following general policy applies, though RTIs may establish institution-specific procedures which accord with these guidelines:

- a) Work submitted up to one week late without an official extension will normally have its recorded grade reduced by one level (e.g. Distinction to Credit), though such work passed by one examiner must have a Pass grade recorded;
- b) Work submitted later than one week but up to one month late without an official extension is normally awarded a Pass grade only, unless it fails to reach a Pass standard;
- c) For work submitted later than one month or on the last day of semester without an official extension, a Fail grade is normally recorded.

A student may appeal, in accordance with the Academic Grievance Policy, against the reduction of a grade for late work.

2.4.3 Extensions

Due to unforeseen circumstances, students may find themselves unable to submit assignments by the due date. Unforeseen circumstances are defined as those that:

- a) Are beyond the student's control; and
- b) Make it impracticable for the student to complete the assessment requirements by the due date.

Unforeseen circumstances may include:

- a) If a situation occurs which a reasonable person would consider is not due to the student's action or inaction, either direct or indirect, and for which the student is not responsible.
- b) Unforeseen circumstances may involve (but are not limited to): serious illness or injury, pregnancy or childbirth issues, serious illness or bereavement of close family members, serious upheaval or disaster, traumatic experience, legal responsibilities (e.g. jury service).

Types of Extensions

- a) For extensions of up to two weeks (and no later than the final day of the examination period), students may apply for a Lecturer's Extension, normally not less than 3 days before an assessment item is due.
- b) For extensions of up to four weeks, students may apply for a Dean's Extension, normally not less than 5 days before an assessment item is due.

Lecturer's extension

- a) A student must discuss the need for an extension with their lecturer **before** the due date for the assignment.
- b) The student must apply formally, in writing, for the Lecturer's Extension, on a Lecturer's Extension form. The Lecturer's Extension form will be available on the MCD website as a Word document, and students may email the completed form to the lecturer.
- c) The lecturer must receive the application **before** the due date for the assignment.
- d) The lecturer may grant an extension for 1 to 14 days after the due date, at his or her discretion. The lecturer needs to be satisfied of reasonable grounds for granting the extension, and that it will not afford undue disadvantage or advantage to the student; if necessary, the lecturer should consult with the RTI Coursework Coordinator.
- e) The lecturer must respond to the student in writing using the Lecturer's Response section on the form, confirming the extension and including the new due date, or rejecting the extension. The Lecturer's Response section of the form may be scanned and emailed to the student, or a hardcopy posted. The lecturer must forward a copy of the completed form to the RTI Registrar to be placed on the student's file, to facilitate the recording of results.
- f) The student must attach the Lecturer's Response section to the submitted work.
- g) The work must be submitted no later than the newly agreed due date, and no later than the final day of the examination period. Students who submit work after the newly agreed due date will normally be penalised academically in accordance with section 2.4.2.

Dean's extension

The term 'Dean' refers to the position of Dean at an RTI or an equivalent position. A student requiring an extension of up to 28 days, or an extension beyond the final day of the examination period for a semester, must seek a Dean's Extension.

When there are medical or serious pastoral grounds for the granting of an extension beyond 15 days or the final day of the examination period for a semester, students must contact the relevant RTI Dean, who may grant an extension within the following guidelines:

- a) The student must discuss the need for an extension with the Dean **before** the due date of the assignment. At this time, the Dean must inform the student of any supporting documentation (e.g. Doctor's certificate clearly showing the dates on which the student was unable to study), which the student is required to provide to support the extension.

- b) The student must formally apply for the extension on the Dean's Extension form. The Dean's Extension form will be available on the MCD website as a Word document, and students may email the completed form to the Dean. The Dean must receive the application **before** the due date for the assignment.
- c) If the student does not supply the evidence requested, the Dean may reject the application.
- d) The lecturer must agree to the extension being granted.
- e) The Dean must be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for granting the extension, and that it will not afford undue disadvantage or advantage to the student.
- f) The Dean or Coursework Coordinator must respond to the student in writing using the Dean's Response section on the form, confirming the extension and including the new due date, or rejecting the extension. The Dean's Response section of the form may be scanned and emailed to the student, or a hardcopy posted. The Dean must forward a copy of the completed form to the RTI Registrar to be placed on the student's file, to facilitate the recording of results.
- g) The student must attach the Dean's Response section to the submitted work.
- h) A Dean's Extension may be granted for up to 28 days from the end of the examination period, at the Dean's discretion. An extension of longer than four weeks after due date for the assignment will not be granted unless warranted by exceptional circumstances.
- i) The work must be submitted no later than the newly agreed due date. Students who submit work after the newly agreed due date will normally be penalised academically in accordance with section 2.4.2.

3 Policy and Procedures for Examinations in Higher Degree by Research Programs

3.1 Examination of Research Theses

The examination of each thesis, Research Project or Publications Portfolio, must be done in accordance with Regulation 26.

3.2 Submission of thesis

Students in all master's degrees must submit two copies of their thesis, and all doctoral students must submit three copies of their thesis. All theses must be submitted in the manner determined by the Board, and must have both a Supervisor's Certification form and a Thesis Submission form attached.

3.3 Nomination of Examiners

The Research Committee appoints examiners for each thesis on the advice of, but not being beholden to, the Supervisor(s). Theses are sent to the approved examiners, who are requested to submit their reports within 2 months for master's degrees, or 3 months for doctoral degrees.

3.4 Examiners' duties

Regulation 26 specifies the following process:

26.3 - Examiners

26.3.4 After considering the Thesis, each examiner is to report in writing to the Chair of Examiners, stating whether they recommend that the Thesis:

26.3.4.1 Be accepted, only conditional upon minor grammatical or typographical errors being corrected to the satisfaction of the Supervisor;

26.3.4.2 be accepted, conditional upon revisions being made to the satisfaction of the Board, but without re-examination;

26.3.4.3 Not be accepted, but be permitted to be revised and submitted for re-examination by those examiners who deemed that it needed rewriting;

- 26.3.4.4 Not be accepted, and not be permitted to be submitted for re-examination.
The examiners may, in addition, submit a conjoint report.
- 26.3.5 No Thesis is to be passed unless it is deemed to be of Honours standard. In considering a recommendation made under sub-clauses 26.3.4.1 or 26.3.4.2, each examiner is to indicate whether a Master's Major or Minor Thesis should be graded with First Class, Second Class (Upper) or Second Class (Lower) Honours.
- 26.3.6 Normally no candidate is permitted to submit a revised Thesis for re-examination more than once.

3.5 Chair of Examiners' duties

Regulation 26 specifies the following duties of each Chair of Examiner:

26.4 - The Chair of Examiners

The Chair of Examiners is to consider the written reports of the examiners, and proceed as follows:

- 26.4.1 Where the Chair of Examiners recommends that the Thesis not be accepted, this conclusion is to be notified in writing to the Board.
- 26.4.2 Where the Chair of Examiners recommends that the candidate be required by the examiners to revise and resubmit the thesis for re-examination, this conclusion is to be notified to the Board in writing, specifying what revisions sought by the examiners are necessary, and what maximum time for re-submission is recommended.
- 26.4.3 Where the Chair of Examiners recommends that the Thesis be accepted, possibly subject to amendments being made but without further examination being necessary, this conclusion is to be notified to the Board in writing, specifying what revisions (if any) may be necessary, and (if applicable) what level of Honours is recommended.
- 26.4.4 Where the Chair of Examiners is unable to make a clear recommendation based upon the examiners' reports, the Chair may ask the examiners to consult, recommend to the Board the appointment of additional examiner(s), or take such other steps as may enable a clear recommendation to be made.
- 26.4.5 Following receipt of the written report of the Chair of Examiners, the Board must inform the candidate and the Supervisor in writing of the recommendation of the Chair of Examiners, and forward copies of the written reports of the examiners and of the Chair of Examiners.

3.6 Oral Defence

When required by regulation, or when needed for the purposes of making a clear recommendation (Reg.26.4.4), a candidate must sit an oral defence of the thesis. In such circumstances, the procedures outlined by Reg.26.5 must be followed. In such cases, the report from the Chair of the Oral Defence Panel is submitted to the Chair of Examiners in order for a final determination to be made on the awarding of the degree.

4 Academic misconduct

4.1 Explanation of academic misconduct

4.1.1 Definitions

Academic misconduct means any action by students or staff which attempts to undermine the integrity of the assessment process, or leads to false estimation of the value of academic work. It applies not only to students' work, but also to faculty research and publications.

Cheating, academic fraud and plagiarism are the most common forms of academic misconduct in a learning environment, and are strictly prohibited in any form. Students and staff found to be engaging in such practices face severe penalties.

Cheating means obtaining advantage through the use of prohibited resources.

Academic fraud means the falsification, fabrication or dishonest reporting of results or outcomes from research or study.

Plagiarism means the copying and use of the student's previously assessed work, or the work of another person without proper acknowledgment. Plagiarism may take several forms.

Any of the following, without full acknowledgment of the debt to the original source being made, constitutes plagiarism:

- a) Direct duplication, i.e. copying, or allowing to be copied, another's work, whether from a book, article, web site, another student's assignment or personal lecture notes, etc.;
- b) Paraphrasing another's work closely, with minor changes but with the essential meaning, form and / or progression of ideas maintained;
- c) Piecing together sections of the work of another or others into a new whole;
- d) Submitting work for a unit or thesis material which has already been submitted for assessment purposes in another unit or thesis (unless acknowledgment was made prior to the unit or thesis being commenced, and written permission given by the Academic Board);
- e) Producing assignments in conjunction with other people (e.g. another student, or a tutor) which should otherwise be the student's own independent work;
- f) Having another person write an essay or assignment on the student's behalf; and
- g) Purchasing and submitting essays or assignments from online repositories or elsewhere.

4.1.2 Statement of independent work

In order to ensure that students are aware of the above requirements, the following or a similar statement must be printed on the cover sheet of all work submitted for assessment, then signed and dated by the student(s) in whose name(s) it is made:

Cheating, plagiarism, academic fraud and similar activities undermine the integrity of the assessment process. They are strictly forbidden.

Cheating involves obtaining an unfair advantage over other students in any way, through the use of prohibited resources.

Plagiarism means the student using previously assessed work, or the work of another person without giving them proper acknowledgment; websites as well as books, articles or other students' work are included.

Academic fraud includes falsification, fabrication or dishonest reporting of results or outcomes of study or research.

In order to protect your good name, and that of the Melbourne College of Divinity, you are required to sign this declaration. In the case of a group project, all group members are required to sign the declaration.

The attached assignment submitted for assessment is the result of my/our own work. All sources on which it is based, and any assistance received in writing the assignment have been acknowledged.

Name: _____ **Signature:** _____ **Date:** _____

4.2 Prohibited behaviours

4.2.1 Plagiarism, cheating and academic fraud

In particular, a student enrolled with the MCD must not, during or in connection with the performance of any component of assessment or research:

- a) Use any unauthorised or prohibited information, books, notes, paper or other materials;
- b) Directly or indirectly assist any other student or accept assistance from any other person that would constitute unacceptable academic behaviour as stipulated in this policy;
- c) Copy from or otherwise use the work of any other person engaged in the performance of the same or comparable component of assessment, or permit any other person to copy from or otherwise use his or her work;
- d) Submit or represent as the work of the student the whole or part of published or unpublished material prepared by some other person, whether in written, recorded, electronic, web-based or any other form;
- e) Fabricate, falsify or report dishonestly the outcomes of research or study.

A student enrolled with the MCD must not assist, or attempt to assist, any person, to do anything prohibited above.

4.2.2 Breach of discipline by a student

If a student enrolled with the MCD, during or in connection with the performance of any component of assessment:

- a) Causes a disturbance, annoyance to or interferes with, any other student;
- b) Disobeys any instruction or direction given for the performance of a component of assessment;
- c) Disobeys any reasonable instruction or refuses or fails to answer any reasonable question of an examination supervisor;
- d) Commits a breach of discipline by engaging in any of these activities;

Such action constitutes academic misconduct, and is dealt with as appropriate in accordance with section 4.3.

4.2.3 Academic misconduct by a faculty or staff member

Students and staff associated with the MCD must not be party to any of the prohibited behaviours listed above, and not engage in any conduct which may lead to false estimation or attribution of any academic work, including research and publications.

4.3 Procedures for dealing with suspected academic misconduct

Matters relating to academic misconduct are normally resolved at RTI level. The initial task is to establish whether or not there has been intent to deceive.

4.3.1 Allegation of academic misconduct against a coursework student

- a) When a student is suspected of misconduct by an examiner, the two examiners must jointly consider whether or not academic misconduct has occurred. If the two examiners cannot agree on whether or not academic misconduct may have occurred, the matter must be referred to the appropriate Chair of Examiners to decide. If misconduct is not found to have taken place, the original grade stands, and no further action is to be taken or entry required to be made in the student's file. Unless otherwise required by law or with the consent of the student, no reference to the alleged misconduct should in the normal course be made. Confidentiality is essential; knowledge of the matter should in the normal course remain with the two examiners only, and the Chair of Examiners where also so involved, unless otherwise required by law or within the consent of the student.
- b) If academic misconduct has occurred, the first examiner consults with the student, preferably in person, to establish whether there has been intent to deceive, or whether the cause is innocent misuse of referencing and/or poor scholarship. At the end of this initial meeting a record is written of the outcome, which is signed by the examiner and the student.
- c) If unacceptable use of another person's work relates to a pedagogical issue with the work, this needs to be considered by the examiner, in accordance with the specific support structures of the RTI.
- d) If the pedagogical issues are not subsequently resolved for a particular student the Dean of the RTI may take action with regard to the student's progress in accordance with the MCD Course Progress Policy.
- e) Where deliberate academic misconduct is proved, the matter must be referred for further action to the appropriate Chair of Examiners, who shall within ten working days do one or more of the following, in each case documenting the reason(s) for this decision:
 - i. Issue a written warning to the student, a copy of which is included on the student's file;
 - ii. Apply a fail grade to the piece of work, or part thereof;
 - iii. Apply a fail grade overall to the unit;
 - iv. Require the student to undertake another form of assessment in lieu of the assessment work in question;
 - v. Require the student to resubmit the work for assessment or to undertake additional and/or remedial work in substitution for the work submitted;
 - vi. Impose a maximum grade for the unit (e.g. a maximum grade of Pass) and/or reduce the final grade overall in the unit;
 - vii. Recommend to the Dean of the RTI that the student's enrolment be discontinued;
 - viii. Refer the matter to the MCD Director Finance and Administration (Registrar) regarding the possible presentation of a case of breach of discipline to an Academic Conduct Panel (see section 4.4).

When a penalty is applied to a student, notification of this academic misconduct must be made in writing to the Dean of the RTI. If a student is found guilty of academic misconduct on more than one occasion the Dean of the RTI may refuse the student enrolment. If a student is enrolled in a Postgraduate Coursework program the Dean of the RTI will inform the MCD Director Finance and Administration (Registrar) and will inform the student in writing of this action.

4.3.2 Allegation of academic misconduct against a Higher Degree by Research student

When a candidate for a Higher Degree by Research is suspected by an examiner during examination of academic misconduct, the examiner claiming the misconduct must immediately cease examination of the thesis and notify the Director of Research, who will in turn notify the relevant Chair of Examiners and the MCD Director Finance and Administration (Registrar).

If, after consultation, the Director of Research and the Chair of Examiners believe that no *prima facie* case of misconduct has been established, the examiner who made the allegation will be asked to continue the examination process on the basis that no such case of misconduct has been established. Unless otherwise required by law or with the consent of the student, no reference to the alleged misconduct should in the normal course be made, including by the examiner in her or his report. If the examiner who made the allegation is unwilling to continue with the examination under such circumstances, she or he will be relieved of the task and the Director of Research shall invite the next examiner on the approved list to examine the thesis, without reference to these circumstances. The original examiner should be paid according to the full examiners' rates, even if she or he does not continue with the examination process.

If, after consultation, the Director of Research and the Chair of Examiners believe that a *prima facie* case of misconduct has been established, they will request in writing that the Registrar convene an Academic Conduct Panel, in accordance with section 4.4.2. The Registrar will convene such a Panel within 5 working days of receiving the written notice. In the event of such a Panel being convened, the Director of Research shall inform both the examiners and request that the examination process cease until the Panel has delivered its determination.

If misconduct is not found by the Panel to have taken place, the examination of the thesis is to re-commence on that basis, and the candidate is to be informed in writing. No further action is to be taken. Unless otherwise required by law or with the consent of the student, no reference to the alleged misconduct should in the normal course be made, including by the examiners in their reports. If either examiner is unwilling to continue with the examination under such circumstances, she or he will be relieved of the task and the Director of Research shall invite the next examiner on the approved list to examine the thesis, without reference to these circumstances. In this case, the original examiner(s) should be paid according to the full examiners' rates, even if they are unwilling to continue with the examination process.

If academic misconduct is found by the Panel to have taken place, it may recommend to the Council that one or more of the following actions be taken:

- a) That the student be excluded, either temporarily or permanently, from studying at the MCD, including any of its RTIs and Institutes;
- b) That the student be failed for the degree for which the thesis under examination had been submitted;
- c) That the student be required to rewrite and resubmit the thesis for a second examination, with due regard to Regulation 26.3.6;
- d) That the student be required to participate in an Oral Defence Panel.

The decision of the Council is final, although the candidate against whom the allegation of misconduct was made may request the instigation of Grievance Procedures, or pursue other external rights available at law.

4.3.3 Allegation of breach of discipline

Allegations of breach of discipline may be made by any person associated with the MCD. Such allegations must be raised within ten working days of the alleged breach of discipline. It is to be lodged in the first place with the RTI or MCD Dean, as appropriate.

If a *prima facie* case is believed to exist, the Dean concerned must: a) Acknowledge the complaint in writing within five working days of its being made; and
b) Ensure that the complaint is put in writing to the MCD Director Finance and Administration (Registrar).

The written allegation must identify the person against whom it is made, the nature of the alleged breach of discipline, and provide supporting evidence, including the names of witnesses where appropriate.

The MCD Director Finance and Administration (Registrar) must convene an Academic Conduct Panel within five working days of the written allegation being received (see section 4.4).

N.B. Unless otherwise required by law or with the consent of the relevant party, MCD is to take all reasonable steps to preserve the strict confidentiality of all such allegations until the Academic Conduct Panel makes its decision.

4.3.4 Allegation of academic misconduct against a faculty or staff member

Allegations of academic misconduct against an MCD faculty or staff member may be made by any person associated with the MCD.

Such allegations must be made in writing to the MCD Director Finance and Administration (Registrar) within ten working days of any event in which academic misconduct is alleged to have taken place.

The MCD Director Finance and Administration (Registrar) must:

- a) Acknowledge the complaint in writing within five working days of its being made;
- b) Convene an Academic Conduct Panel within five working days of the written allegation being received (see section 4.4).

The written allegation must identify the person against whom it is made, the nature of the alleged misconduct, and provide supporting evidence, including the names of witnesses where appropriate.

N.B. Unless otherwise required by law or with the consent of the relevant party, MCD is to take all reasonable steps to preserve the strict confidentiality of all such allegations until the Academic Conduct Panel makes its decision.

4.4 Academic Conduct Panel

4.4.1 Convening of panel

Academic Conduct Panels are to be convened by the MCD Director Finance and Administration (Registrar) where:

- a) A breach of academic discipline is alleged against a student; or
- b) Any form of academic misconduct is alleged against a faculty member.

N.B. Unless otherwise required by law or with the consent of the relevant party, MCD is to take all reasonable steps to preserve the strict confidentiality of all such allegations until the Academic Conduct Panel makes its decision.

4.4.2 Panel membership

The MCD Director Finance and Administration (Registrar) convenes and chairs any Academic Conduct Panel, unless he or she is involved in the allegation, in which case the MCD Dean or President will undertake this role.

The other members are:

- a) Two members of the Council nominated by the MCD President. The two Council members must not be associated with the person against whom allegations have been made, nor with any MCD RTI involved;
- b) The Liaison Officer of the MCD Human Research and Ethics Committee.
- c) A person nominated by the student or faculty member against whom an allegation has been made, but this person cannot be a legal representative.

4.4.3 Panel procedures

The Academic Conduct Panel will meet as soon as possible after written notice of the allegation has been made and not more than 15 working days later. All deliberations must be strictly confidential, subject to minute-taking processes.

The Panel may receive submissions in writing from any interested party, and must, to ensure provision of natural justice, interview the student or faculty member against whom academic misconduct is alleged.

All decisions of the Panel are made by majority vote of the members; the Chair has the casting vote in the event of a tied vote.

Minutes must be taken of all Academic Conduct Panel meetings. All members of the panel constitute the quorum, necessary to take any decision on the allegation. Decisions must be communicated in writing to the MCD President, as a recommendation to Council.

4.4.4 Panel outcomes

If the Panel upholds the allegation, it may recommend to Council that one or more of the following actions be taken:

- a) Require the student to write and submit another item of assessment if a coursework student; if a HDR student, rewrite and resubmit the thesis for a second examination, with due regard to Regulation 26.3.6.
- b) Require the student to participate in an Oral Defence Panel.
- c) Deprive the student of credit for the unit or component of assessment of the unit to which the misconduct relates;
- d) Terminate the student's enrolment;
- e) Exclude the student from studying with the MCD, including any of its RTIs and Institutes, either permanently or temporarily;
- f) Revoke or annul the conferral of a degree or other award;

- g) Deny approval for an academic to teach, supervise or examine in association with the MCD;
- h) Impose a fine, and / or full cost recovery, including any legal costs associated with the matter, if appropriate;
- i) If the person is a staff member, that he or she be demoted or their employment terminated, as appropriate, with the MCD or the relevant RTI, as applicable;
- j) Recommend that the matter be referred to the police.

The decision of the Council is final, though the person against whom the allegation of academic misconduct was found may lodge an appeal in accordance with the Academic Grievance Policy, or pursue other external rights available at law.

4.4.5 Confidentiality regarding complaints

All documentation from an Academic Conduct Panel must be lodged securely with the MCD Director Finance and Administration (Registrar) with a separate file for each complaint.

When a complaint is established, a note recording its nature and any penalty imposed will be placed on the person's MCD file. Unless the matter reaches beyond the bounds of the MCD, all other documentation will be destroyed five years after the date of the decision of the Panel.

When a degree or other award is revoked or annulled, the MCD Director Finance and Administration (Registrar) is authorised to make an appropriate announcement.

The MCD Director Finance and Administration (Registrar) is authorised to inform other educational institutions of an established complaint if appropriate.

If no action is recommended by Council regarding an allegation of academic misconduct, and following the determination of the Academic Conduct Panel, Council informs those who have been involved, and any others whom the Council decides to inform, including the general public if this is appropriate.

A person against whom an allegation has not been established may consequently institute a Grievance Procedure or pursue other external rights available at law.

[Revised April 2011. Approved by: Academic Board 29 April 2011; Council 29 June 2011]