



Student Guide: AI and Academic Integrity

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Introduction

The Office of the BSSS has collated our 2023 published work on academic integrity for students into this paper. For other advice about academic integrity, [see the BSSS Website](#). It is important to note that academic integrity is more than just AI-based plagiarism.

Why are schools and teachers worried about AI and plagiarism?

A key question underlying academic integrity in education and AI is:

Is the use of AI going to affect the validity of the teacher’s measurement of the construct being assessed?

Or, more plainly: what knowledge and skills are being assessed and will your use of AI interfere with your learning and your ability to demonstrate this learning in a way that is fair – both to you and to your classmates. If you use AI in ways that misrepresents your learning, that’s a problem for equity and for learning outcomes. In these situations, teachers and schools will apply the BSSS Academic Integrity Policy.

You should note that this is why teachers, schools, and the BSSS do not accept arguments like “I generated it, so it’s my work” or “AI isn’t a person, so it’s not plagiarism”. The teacher wants to see what you can do; what skills you have, and what skills you need to work on. Generated content won’t help them to see that. This is why the BSSS has amended our academic integrity policies to make sure it is clear that the **unattributed or disallowed use of AI in assessment is a breach of academic integrity and will be subject to penalties in the ACT Senior Secondary System**.

Preventing plagiarism is everyone’s responsibility. We know that you may be unused to needing to keep information, undertake validation tasks, or be queried without the hyper-accurate text matching of traditional detectors. Asking for drafts, setting validation tasks, and querying potential plagiarism are all ways that teachers are dealing with the use of AI while keeping things fair for everyone.

BSSS Academic Integrity – Policy

Purpose of an Academic Integrity/Plagiarism Policy

The purpose of an academic integrity/plagiarism policy is:

- To know the satisfaction of producing your own work
- To take full advantage of learning process
- To acknowledge the work of others
- To understand ethical and legal rights and responsibilities as authors and creators
- To be aware of how to use information respectfully across all subject areas.

Plagiarism – from the BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual 4.3.12

Plagiarism is the copying, paraphrasing, or summarising of work, in any form, without acknowledgement of sources, and presenting this as your own work.

Examples of Academic Integrity

To write with academic integrity, students will:

- Acknowledge the work and ideas of others, including AI, within their presentations and writing across all areas of the curriculum
- Appropriately format reference lists or bibliographies
- Demonstrate critical thinking, synthesis, have paraphrased information, and have written the work themselves.

Examples of plagiarism could include, but are not limited to¹:

- Submitting all or part of another person's work or source text with or without that person's or source's knowledge
- **Using AI generative software to substantially research, plan, structure and/or create the text/ image/ artwork**
- Submitting all or part of a paper from a source text without proper acknowledgement
- Copying part of another person's work from a source text, supplying proper acknowledgement, but leaving out quotation marks or not using italics
- Submitting materials that paraphrase or summarise another person's work or ideas without appropriate acknowledgement
- Submitting a digital image, sound, design, artwork, artefact, product, photograph, or animation, altered or unaltered, without proper acknowledgement.

¹ Examples of plagiarism adapted from: Stephen Wilhoit, "Helping students avoid plagiarism" College Teaching Vol. 42, 1994, 161-164

Principles behind the imposition of penalties:

- Any work that is found to be plagiarised will incur a penalty ranging from a written reprimand and warning, through to the cancellation of all assessment results for Years 11 and 12
- Students who unintentionally plagiarise must be given appropriate counselling and guidance so that they do not repeat the offence
- The impact on unit scores of the penalties imposed for serious and repeated instances of plagiarism will be managed in accordance with the Board of Senior Secondary Studies policies.

Note that in the tertiary sector, plagiarism is immediately treated as a breach of the code of conduct and may lead to loss of units and/or expulsion.

Procedures for dealing with situations involving plagiarism:

- a) Any suspected case of plagiarism must be investigated at the school level
- b) The principles of natural justice must be applied at all stages in the process. If you are suspected of plagiarising work, you must be given a fair hearing and the opportunity to provide evidence of authorship.
- c) If there is evidence of plagiarism you must be interviewed by the teacher and the head of faculty and given the opportunity to explain your case before a penalty is determined
- d) If plagiarism is shown to have occurred, then the teacher, in conjunction with the head of faculty, Principal or Delegate as appropriate, should determine the penalty, considering the principles and the penalty schedule listed
- e) You must be advised, in writing, of the penalty and informed that you have the right to appeal the penalty under the Breach of Discipline procedures of the Board
- f) Details of any case of plagiarism must be recorded and the record kept centrally at the school.

Right of Appeal

You have the right to appeal against the application and/or the outcomes of the above procedures. Refer to Board Policy on Breaches of Discipline in relation to school-based assessment and *Your Rights to Appeal* Leaflet.

Penalties

Any one or more of the following actions could be taken for a breach of discipline in relation to assessment:

- a) Reprimand of the candidate, except in cases where benefit would have been derived from such breaches
- b) The making of alternative arrangements for the assessment (e.g., through a reassessment)
- c) The assessment marked without the material subject to the breach being considered
- d) Imposition of a mark penalty appropriate to the extent of the breach
- e) Cancellation of the result in the particular component of the college assessment concerned
- f) Cancellation of the total college assessment result in the unit/course concerned
- g) Cancellation of all the candidate's results for years 11 and 12 in assessments conducted.

The following is a guide to the penalties to be imposed by colleges. These penalties apply irrespective of the unit/subject/course in which the incident(s) occur.

Categories	Penalties
First incident of breach of discipline	One or more of the following penalties to be imposed subject to the degree of the infringement: (a) to (f)
Subsequent breach(es) of discipline	One of the following penalties to be imposed subject to the degree of the infringement and previous breach(es) of discipline: (b) to (g)

Counselling of students is a key component of the process. After the first incident of a breach of discipline, advice in writing to you must include a warning about the consequences of subsequent breaches.

Advice to Students: What should I do if I'm accused of AI plagiarism?

Students need to be prepared to show genuine ownership of their work, by keeping notes or records as assignments are drafted. This is the responsibility of the student, and it will make things much easier if a student is wrongly accused of AI plagiarism. It is normal and expected for teachers to investigate possible plagiarism.

AI has changed a lot during 2023. With the introduction of generative AI, some people have been using programs to plagiarise their work, knowing that traditional text-matching plagiarism checkers will find it hard to pick up. Some companies claim to be able to pick up AI generated content, but these checkers are not perfect; they miss AI content, or unfairly accuse innocent people.

You need to be prepared for false positives², and prepared to discuss your work in detail, even if you did not use AI. If you refuse to participate in these processes and/or do not provide any evidence to demonstrate the work is your own, a plagiarism penalty may be applied as per BSSS Policy and Procedure. This is because your teacher needs to be certain that the work is your own, because they are certifying officially that you have skills and knowledge from your courses, and that those skills and knowledge are of a particular level.

The bottom line is that AI has made plagiarism a challenge for everyone – students and teachers. We all need to act together to help prevent plagiarism. It is normal and expected for teachers to check work for plagiarism, and to query work when it shows anomalies that can't be explained by other factors. The teachers must do it, so that they can be confident that everyone is being fairly marked on the work they've done!

Before you hand in the assignment

When you do the assignment, keep records of what you have done to put it together. We know that is time-consuming, and we hope that future developments in technology mean we can go back to easy, more accurate plagiarism checking, but until that happens, we all need to work together to keep things fair.

You might:

- Save different versions of the document if you are using a word processor that doesn't save history
- Set up "draftback" or a similar browser extension to record your process
- Put all your printouts and notes into an envelope or folder that you keep in your study space until the assessment period is over
- Take photos of your assignment each time you finish doing some work on it and put them in the same album on your phone

² False positive: a result where someone who hasn't used AI has been wrongly flagged as using it.

- Put all your digital documents relating to that assignment into the same folder on your computer or cloud storage system (e.g., Google drive, iPhone files)

Having a designated “spot” to put things while you work will mean you don’t need to stress if you get asked for your notes. Even if it’s just a tub that everything goes into, or a keyword that you use in filenames so you can use the search function, it’s much easier than trying to work out where everything is. It is advisable to keep these notes at least until the end of the assessment period when you have your scores and grades, and you know you will not be seeking an appeal or picked up for possible plagiarism.

If you are accused of AI plagiarism

You will have a meeting with your teacher where your teacher explains what it is about your work that is indicating that it might be AI plagiarised. These might be things like:

- A mismatch between the language in different sections of your work
- A mismatch between the quality of your usual work, and the quality of this particular piece of work
- Significant similarities between your work and someone else’s
- An AI detector says there’s a possibility of plagiarism

You will be given the chance to explain your side of the story. If you need to get things to help explain (e.g., your notes), then you should bring them with you, or organise another meeting so you can have what you need with you.

When you have the meeting...

Don’t:

- Don’t go into a meeting about plagiarism angry; if you need to, ask to reschedule, and explain that you’d like to pause to get your feelings in order
- Don’t threaten - it’s never okay to threaten other people
- Don’t have this conversation in a corridor, or when you/your teacher is on the way to another class
- Don’t bring a belligerent support person: if you bring a friend, that’s fine, but they need to be quiet support (i.e., not acting like a “bush lawyer” or getting angry/threatening on your behalf)

Do:

- Do save your notes and drafts and bring them to show evidence of your originality
- Do talk with people in pastoral care or student services if you’re worried or nervous about speaking to the teacher: they can help you prepare, and even come with you to a meeting
- Do be prepared to explain how you came up with your ideas, and your process of creating the piece

- Do be prepared to do a validation task or interview
- Do make some notes about what happened once you've talked to the teacher
- If you brought a friend or support person, debrief with them, and ask them to make some notes
- If you did use AI, admit it: this will save a lot of heartache, time, and stress for everyone involved!

What happens then?

If you **did** use AI inappropriately in your assignment:

- Academic Integrity breaches don't happen in a vacuum. Usually there's a reason, e.g., mental wellbeing, prioritisation, carers responsibilities, procrastination, misunderstanding of the rules.
- Talk with your teacher about the reasons why you felt you needed to use AI and seek help from your teacher or another trusted adult to address these reasons. This might be applying for special consideration, or putting together some strategies to help you establish better study habits.
- You will probably get a penalty on the work, which will be drawn from the penalties in the Academic Integrity section of BSSS Policy and Procedure.
- One plagiarism penalty will not ruin your life and career. You are not a bad person; you just made an inappropriate choice. You'll do better next time.

If you **didn't** use AI inappropriately in your assignment:

- You will be okay; you get to explain your side of the story, and if a penalty is incorrectly applied, you have the right to query and appeal. This can go all the way to the Board if conditions apply.
- Remember: your teacher is doing their job, and something about your assignment has led them to make this query. It could be a result from an automated plagiarism checker, or your work might be very different to anything they've seen from you before. Maybe it is that you don't put much effort in when doing class work, and you put in a lot of effort this time. This doesn't mean the teacher dislikes you or has it out for you – it just means they're doing their job.
- Be prepared to demonstrate genuine authorship of your work. This might be explaining your thought process that led to choices in your work; it might be showing drafts or notes; it might be drawing on a support person at your school, like your Teacher Librarian or mentor teacher if you showed them a draft.
- Be prepared to do a validation task or undertake an interview where you explain your work in more detail.

What if I don't agree?

You can appeal the penalty. You will need to provide evidence as to why the penalty was unjustly applied – the same kind of evidence you would have produced to demonstrate your authorship initially.

The Assessment Query Process

It is your right to query an assessment result or penalty; however, there is a process that you will need to follow. You can query the result of an assessment, or the application of procedures and policy such as late or plagiarism policy. **Each step needs to be initiated by you**, and with the exception of the end of Year 12, should happen within 5 days of the result of the previous step. End of Year 12 timeline is 1 day.



1. **Contact your class teacher** and ask your question. They will respond to you, explaining why they marked your work that way. This query and response may be verbal or written.
2. If you aren't happy with the teacher's answer, **take your query to the faculty head**. They will review your work and respond to you in writing. If the teacher is the faculty head, a different faculty head will review your work.
3. If you are unhappy with the result of the faculty review, you need to **write to your principal** explaining what you want reviewed, and why you think a review is justified.
4. Your principal (or their delegate) will organise a College Appeal Committee to hear everyone's side of the story and make a deliberation. **This will be communicated to everyone involved in writing**, and registered with the BSSS. This is the point where a **review** becomes an **appeal**.
5. If you are not satisfied with the result of the College Appeal you can **appeal to the BSSS** by writing to the Executive Director on the grounds of fair application of procedure and appeal processes.

Using AI in assessments

Teacher-directed use of AI

Your teacher will tell you what is and is not counted as acceptable use of AI in an assessment. You need to follow the instructions given by the teacher on the assessment task. If a task does not mention AI specifically, normal BSSS Academic Integrity policy applies, which means that you are not permitted to use AI.

To use, or not to use?

The main difference between AI use being penalised or not is whether the use of AI is a substitute for your own thinking and technical skills or being used in service of your own thinking. You must reference AI use when:

- Any quote or wording taken from AI must be referenced as a direct quote, using the referencing style specified in the assessment sheet
- Any idea developed through AI must be referenced; for example, if you asked an AI for five ideas for a story in English and used one of these ideas to create your own short story, you need to reflect on and reference this in their rationale. If you asked an AI to create a proof of concept in a design, technology, art, or textiles course and then built from that, this should be reflected on and written up as part of your final project.

Uses that are prohibited in assessment tasks unless specifically referred to on the assessment sheet:

- Any use of AI to scaffold your work or provide a structure that eliminates your need to understand the text type you're working in
- Any use of AI to refine or replace wording (e.g., changing your original sentence structures)
- Any unacknowledged use of AI

The reliability of generative AI as a source: what is its value?

AI's source value – the validity of using an item generated by AI as a scholarly source – is currently quite low. AI tends to make things up, sometimes referred to as an 'hallucination', as well as tending towards being biased depending on the content it has been trained with. It is unlikely that the AI is going to come up with something as a source that is of any greater use to you than the corresponding Wikipedia, Stack Overflow, or generally 'googleable' source. Referencing AI as a source for facts is not recommend. The use of AI to find source documents is *highly* dependent on the model.

We do not recommend you including sentences or paragraphs written by generative AI, as a quote or as a substantive part of a paragraph, **as in all cases it will not increase your mark or grade** (as it is not your work).

Referencing

Your assignment will give you details about how AI is to be referenced. Generally, you should reference AI as if it is a private conversation. It is a good idea to provide transcripts of any AI chats, prompts, or generation sessions used as an appendix to your work.

Direct References

These will depend on the model you are using and will change as generative AI becomes a more accepted part of academia. You can find a [clear citation guide here](#) from Monash University. We recommend using web-based citation guides as these can be updated as the technology changes.

Declarations

Where the assignment has permitted the use of generative AI to scaffold or permitted you to make use of generative AI more substantially, you should provide a written acknowledgement of how generative AI was used in your work.

Monash University suggests the following scaffold:

I acknowledge the use of [insert AI system(s) and link] to [specific use of generative artificial intelligence]. The prompts used include [list of prompts]. The output from these prompts was used to [explain use].

[Monash University, 2023](#)

You should also include links to, or copies of, conversations with the AI that show clearly which elements of the text were original to you, and which were generated.

Summary

- The unattributed, disallowed, or dishonest use of AI, or the use of AI in any other way to substitute for your own work and thinking, is a breach of academic integrity, and will be dealt with using the BSSS Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures.
- Use sources not because you 'have to', but as part of developing your understanding of the subject you are studying, and as a way to place the work you are doing in the context of your discipline.
- Use AI ethically and honestly. If AI isn't permitted in the task, don't use it. If it is, record your prompts and hand in what your teacher asks you to that shows and supports your use of AI.
- Don't get tied up arguing semantic definitions of plagiarism. The BSSS counts the use of AI as a breach of academic integrity, unless used in a way that is explicitly permitted in the task instructions.
- Don't take the word of businesses who are promoting a product as to what constitutes academic integrity. For example, a word processing AI that completely rewrites your sentences is most likely to be counted as a breach of academic integrity, particularly in subjects where the way you write is a big part of what is being assessed (e.g., English).
- Remember that your teacher is interested in measuring what you have learned, and how well you have learned it. If you're not prepared to do the learning, then you should not expect to be rewarded!
- Recognise that it's normal for teachers to query work that shows differences to your normal work. This might not be because of AI. You will get a chance to explain what happened.
- Keep your notes and drafts as you create take-home tasks and be prepared to show them to your teacher if needed.

Australian Capital Territory, Canberra 2023

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