

Ethical Conduct of Research Policy and Procedures

Conducting ethical research is an essential learning skill promoted in the SACE. The SACE promotes the development of research, inquiry, and investigation skills in many Board-accredited subjects. All students undertake the Stage 2 Activating Identities and Futures¹ in an area of personal interest.

The term 'research' is used in its broadest sense in the SACE. It includes, for example, formal research, applied practical or technical investigations, exploratory inquiries, investigations, studies, and projects. Students can present their research in a variety of forms, such as a written report, product, oral, or multimodal presentation.

This Board's policy and procedures on conducting ethical research in the SACE is supported by guidelines for teachers, school leaders, and students.

Principles

The policy is underpinned by the following principles:

1. That research is conducted honestly and ethically
2. That the research must have integrity
3. That students have opportunities to learn research skills.

Relevant legislation

The Board operates under the authority of the SACE Board of South Australia Act 1983. Section 15 (1) of the Act sets out the functions of the Board. The functions that relate to this policy are:

- (d) to accredit subjects and courses (whether prepared at the direction of the Board or submitted to it by a school, institution or other authority or organization) that will be recognised by the Board as being suitable for the purpose of the SACE;
- (f) to assess, in such manner and to such extent as the Board thinks fit, achievements in or satisfactory completion of subjects, courses or other requirements determined by the Board for the purposes of the SACE;
- (g) to recognise, in such manner and to such extent as the Board thinks fit: (i) assessments of students made by schools, institutions or other authorities or organizations; (ii) the achievements of a student in or towards completion of any activities or requirements recognised by the Board for the purposes of the SACE;
- (h) to assure the quality and suitability of processes and standards used to assess the achievements of students for the purposes of the SACE;

Policy statement

This policy and procedures for ethical conduct of research apply to school and external assessment research activities at both Stage 1 and Stage 2 of the SACE.

The policy and procedures are designed to support:

- teachers and schools to provide opportunities for students to learn how to conduct ethical research and to develop and improve their research skills
- students to conduct research that is honest, ethical, and has integrity.

Opportunities to learn how to conduct research

Students undertaking the SACE should have opportunities to learn how to conduct research and to develop and improve their research skills. Students should be taught research skills and processes for conducting ethical research, including:

- choosing a research topic
- refining a research question or topic
- gathering and analysing research data
- appropriately acknowledging their information sources
- communicating their findings
- evaluating the research process and outcomes
- developing and applying their understanding of why they must not fabricate, falsify, or misrepresent authorship, evidence, data, findings, or conclusions.

Conducting research that is honest, ethical, and has integrity

Students' research must be conducted honestly, ethically, and have integrity. Students conducting research that contributes to the SACE must be aware that they have responsibility to:

- respect the dignity of participants, including their rights, beliefs, perceptions, customs, and cultural heritage
- consider how the research might be designed to maximise any benefits to participants and the student researcher and to minimise the risk of legal, environmental, social, emotional, psychological, and physical harm or discomfort to participants
- inform participants of the nature and purpose of the research
- seek voluntary informed consent from participants and, if the participants are unable to give informed consent, from participants' parent(s) or legal guardian(s)
- respect the right of individuals not to participate in research or to withdraw from research at any time without explanation and without negative consequences
- protect any personal information that they may acquire
- respect any agreement made about anonymity
- respect the confidentiality of the individual or groups of people in the conduct and reporting of their research
- use data or test results only for the purpose for which consent has been obtained, and obtain consent for any subsequent publication
- inform participants of any risk
- submit only genuine findings or results of their research.

Responsibility for ethical conduct of research

Students and teachers must take responsibility to ensure that the research topic and the research methodology adopted do not compromise the principles of honest and ethical research outlined above. Particular care needs to be taken where a student is undertaking research with or about Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

Authorship

Students must submit for school and external assessment only research that is their own, produced without undue assistance from other people (e.g. teachers, tutors, parents, mentors). All changes made in the various stages of the development of written or other products submitted for assessment must be the student's own work. Work that has been subjected to detailed editing, correction, or alteration by the teacher or other people may not be further developed or copied by the student for resubmission.

The student must be able to provide evidence that the work submitted is their own and/or was completed in accordance with SACE Board requirements. For some assessment tasks, the student will be required to sign a statement that the work submitted is their own work.

Verification

A student must have his or her work verified by a teacher. A teacher may withhold his or her signature until sufficient evidence is available to show that the submitted material is the students' own work. In such circumstances the onus is on the student to give evidence that the work submitted was completed without undue assistance. To obtain the necessary evidence of proof of authorship, students may be required to:

- provide evidence of the development of their research
- discuss the content of their research with the teacher and answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the research
- provide samples of other work related to the research
- complete, under supervision, a supplementary exercise related to the original research task
- attend an interview or complete a test to demonstrate understanding of their research
- submit their work (either hand-written or in digital format) to teachers or other assessors for checking for plagiarism.

Acknowledgment of sources

Students must acknowledge the sources of their research appropriately. Students must reference their research appropriately. Students should learn the skills of referencing so that they acknowledge others whose work they have drawn on, and give the reader enough information to locate and verify the sources.

Plagiarism is the copying, paraphrasing or summarising of work, in any form, without acknowledgment of sources, and presentation of this work as the student's own (BSSS, 2012). Plagiarism is unacceptable and each case of plagiarism will be treated on its own merits. If plagiarism is detected, penalties may apply, depending on the intent and extent of plagiarised material.

Research that is conducted in groups

In some subjects, students may have opportunities to carry out their research in a group. The protocols for conducting research as a group must be discussed, negotiated, and documented before the research commences. These protocols include students' responsibilities to other students, working safely with other students, not taking or exploiting other students' work.

Unless stated otherwise in the relevant subject outline, when assessing work conducted in groups, teachers must be able to identify each individual's contribution to assessed outcomes of group activity.

Breaches of rules and appeals processes

For assessments that are indirectly supervised by a teacher or other supervisors, such as research activities, any infringement of the following conditions of assessment is considered a breach of rules. Students must:

- submit assessment work that is their own
- hand their work direct to their teacher (or follow a procedure outlined by their teacher) by the due date (extensions may be negotiated with their teacher, but any extensions must be consistent with the school's policy on deadlines and/or special provisions)
- conform to the requirements of each stage of development of their work as prescribed by the SACE Board or their teacher, and present their work during the developmental stages according to these requirements
- clearly identify and reference the ideas or words used in their assessment that are from another person's work, including information from the Internet, books, surveys, etc. Any quoted work should be kept to a minimum – students should refer to the subject minisite for the SACE Board's advice on how to avoid plagiarism, and guidelines for referencing
- not fabricate, falsify, or misrepresent authorship, evidence, data, findings, or conclusions
- not permit any other student to copy their work
- not permit any other student to otherwise use their work (unless an assessment requires this)
- not use the work of any other student (unless an assessment requires this)
- not use work of any others in circumstances that can be defined as undue assistance (e.g. tutors, family, or friends)
- not collude with another student or others to undertake an assessment (e.g. an investigative report or a survey)
- not be guilty of any breach of good order or propriety (in an assessment task).

A breach of rules also occurs where the teacher is unable to verify that the task submitted is the student's own work. The teacher may be unable to verify that the work is the student's own if there has been no discussion with the student and the teacher has not seen the task during the drafting process. An assessment task that cannot be verified by the teacher as the student's own work is liable to receive an 'I' (no result), equivalent to a value of zero.

The student is able to appeal a decision by a teacher, school leader or SACE Board that a breach of rules has occurred. The process for this appeal is outlined in the accompanying set of procedures and guidelines.

This policy and set of procedures should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- SACE Policy Framework
- SACE Assessment Responsibilities: Code of Practice
- Supervision and Verification of Students' Work Policy and Procedures
- Redrafting of Assessed Work Policy
- Reuse of Assessed Work Policy
- Submission Dates for Stage 2 External Assessment and Moderation Material Policy

- Breaches of Rules Policy.

Policy procedures

The following procedures, presented in five sections, are provided to assist teachers in supporting their students in their research.

Section 1: Conducting Research

1. Choosing an appropriate research topic
2. Ethical conduct of research activities
3. Ethical conduct of a human research activity
4. Ethical conduct of a research activity involving animals

Section 2: Conducting research with and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

1. Protocols and guidelines for conducting research with and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Section 3: Authorship

1. Authorship and verification
2. Levels of intervention by teachers and others
3. Plagiarism

Section 4: Breaches of rules in conducting research

1. Breaches of rules in conducting research
2. Investigation of breach of rules in the conducting research
3. Responsibilities and appeals process

Section 5: Monitoring

1. Monitoring of policy, procedures, and guidelines

Section 1: conducting research

1. Choosing an appropriate research topic

Choosing an appropriate project for research can be critical to the success of the research. Students should be guided in how to approach their research and in particular, in how to choose suitable research projects.

The student selects a research topic or question. The student should discuss the research topic or question with the teacher, and it should be approved by the teacher. Should the teacher (school) not approve the research topic or question, the teacher (school) should explain to the student the reasons for not granting approval.

A discussion or negotiation of the research topic or question between students and teachers may help to avoid the student undertaking a research project that the school does not approve of, for legal, cost, safety, cultural, religious, social, and/or political reasons. Students should be aware that the school may reserve the right not to approve a research question or topic to be undertaken under its auspices.

In granting approval for the research to be undertaken, the teacher should take into account, among other factors, the suitability and appropriateness of the topic as a focus of research, the capacity of the student to undertake the research, its manageability, and the likelihood of the research being completed.

Students should be aware that some topics of research involving other students or participants under the age of 18 must have the consent of the students or participants involved as well as the written consent of their parents or guardians.

Although the research topic or question will usually be investigated by an individual student, in some subjects students have opportunities to carry out their research in a group. The protocols for conducting research as a group must be discussed, negotiated, and documented before the research commences. In some subject outlines, the protocols for conducting research in a group will be described in detail. For example, there may be direction about whether students will be assessed individually or as a group. Unless stated otherwise in the subject outline, when assessing work conducted in groups, teachers must be able to identify each individual's contribution to assessed outcomes of group activity.

Some students' research will be undertaken in the field. Fieldwork is generally described as learning and assessment activities that occur outside the classroom, under the direct or indirect supervision of the teacher and/or other supervisors.

Teachers are advised to contact their school sector for advice about safe conduct of fieldwork.

2. Ethical conduct of research activities

All research activities, individual or group, in the classroom or outside the classroom, must be conducted in an ethical manner. In general, this means that all involved – researchers, participants and teachers – should be safeguarded from any physical, emotional or psychological harm. To achieve this, there should be due account of the duty of care on the part of all involved in the research project. Responsibility for ensuring this care rests with the researcher, the teacher in charge, and the principal of the school. An initial step is for students undertaking research to take note of the SACE document: Ethical Research – Guidelines for Students.

3. Ethical conduct of a human research activity

Particular care has to be taken when research involves human participants. A definition of 'human research' can be found in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007, updated 2014). This definition includes the following ways in which humans can participate in research, through:

- surveys, interviews or focus groups
- psychological, physiological or medical testing or treatment
- observations of humans by the researcher
- having access to personal documents or other materials
- access to human information as part of an existing published or unpublished source or database.

In general, human research requires that certain ethical principles be maintained (for example, integrity, respect for human persons, beneficence, and justice), that the requirements of informed consent and confidentiality be met, and that the merit of a particular research activity be ensured.

The school will need to determine that there are no undesirable consequences for the researcher, the participants in the research, and the community in a particular research activity involving humans.

4. Ethical conduct of a research activity involving animals

Students conducting research based on live animals (including birds and insects) must have their research proposal and methodology approved by the school prior to commencement of the research.

Research based on live animals requires permission from a relevant Animal Ethics Committee. Permission to dissect animals must be obtained in writing from these committees.

Teachers are advised to contact their school sector for advice about the keeping and use of animals for educational research purposes.

Section 2: Conducting research with and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: protocols and guidelines for students and teachers

Australian governments, in collaboration with all school sectors, commit to promoting equity and excellence in Australian schooling.

This means that all Australian governments and all school sectors must:

... ensure that schools build on local cultural knowledge and experience of Indigenous students as a foundation for learning, and work in partnership with local communities on all aspects of the schooling process, including to promote high expectations for the learning outcomes of Indigenous students.

Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, December 2008

The purpose of the following protocols and guidelines is to:

- support students and teachers in the ethical conduct of research with and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- respect and protect the ownership of Indigenous knowledge and cultures of past, present, and future generations
- protect the wellbeing of students in the research process.

Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS) has published a set of 14 principles for the conduct of research with and about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. These principles provide a useful basis to guide the research contexts in which SACE students may find themselves.

The 14 principles are grouped into the following categories:

- Rights, respect, and recognition
- Negotiation, consultation, agreement, and mutual understanding
- Participation, collaboration, and partnership
- Benefits, outcomes, and giving back
- Managing research: use, storage, and access
- Reporting and compliance.

Details of these principles are available in the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (2012) Guidelines for Ethical Research in Australian Indigenous Studies, <http://www.aiatsis.gov.au/research/ethics/resources.html>

Section 3: Authorship

1. Authorship and verification

Students must submit for assessment work that is their own, produced without undue assistance from other people (e.g. teachers, tutors, parents, mentors).

The student must provide evidence that the work submitted is their own and/or was completed in accordance with SACE Board requirements.

To obtain the necessary evidence, students may be required to:

- provide evidence of the development of their research
- discuss the content of their research with the teacher and answer questions to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the research
- provide samples of other work related to the research
- complete, under supervision, a supplementary exercise related to the original research task
- attend an interview or complete a test to demonstrate understanding of their research
- submit their work (either hand-written or in digital format) to teachers or other assessors for checking for plagiarism.

Some subject outlines require teachers to verify that work offered for assessment in a particular section or sections of the program is the students' own work. The teacher signs a statement that, to the best of his or her knowledge, the work presented for assessment is the students' own work.

For a teacher's verification to be given with confidence, the teacher should see evidence from the student of the particular work during production. When a piece of work appears without earlier drafts being sighted, teachers should satisfy themselves about its origins. A teacher may withhold his or her signature until sufficient evidence is available to show that the submitted material is the students' own work. In such circumstances the onus is on the student to give evidence that the work submitted was completed without undue assistance.

In doubtful cases, where time is available, and at the discretion of the teacher and the school, students may be permitted to complete an alternative and equivalent task under more closely supervised conditions, to substitute for the piece in question. Where time is not available or where it is considered inappropriate to permit an alternative or equivalent task, schools should submit a breach of the rules report with supporting documentation to justify the absence of the teacher's signature on the supervision and verification form.

The Board follows certain procedures when dealing with breaches of rules in school and external assessments. Schools should consult the SACE Operations Manual if further clarification is required. Teachers submit a report of potential breach of rules to the SACE Board, through the school's SACE coordinator. In cases where reports are lodged with the Board, the school has the primary responsibility for providing documented evidence to substantiate the alleged breach of rules.

2. Levels of intervention by teachers and others

Common principles of fair practice must be applied to interventions made by teachers and other people where a student's final product (e.g. research report, evaluation, essay, investigation) is to be presented for assessment.

All changes made in the various stages of development of written or other products submitted for assessment must represent the student's own work.

It is acceptable in the developmental stages of an assessment task for the teacher to ask questions and to offer general advice – for example, about alternative strategies that might be tried. However, the

teacher (or others) should not dictate or make specific changes in such a way as to put into question the student's authorship or ownership of a particular piece of work. Where alterations have been written into work or work has been changed by the teacher (or others) in other ways as part of formal marking, the work must be considered to have been assessed and, therefore, may not be further developed by the student for resubmission. The focus of teacher assistance should be on informing the student rather than amending the draft.

The following points help in determining whether an undue level of assistance has been received:

- Work that is acceptable, arising from a reasonable level of assistance, includes that:
 - which quotes from another source or sources, with acknowledgment of the source or sources, and with interpretation, comment, or analysis
 - which incorporates ideas or material derived from other sources (e.g. by reading, note taking, or observation) but which has been substantially transformed by the student in his or her own words to use in a new context, and is supported by the student's own ideas, or argument
 - in which the student has undertaken refinement or self-correction including that which arises from prompting or advice from another person or source
 - which is undertaken in groups, as appropriate to the assessment task.
- Work that is unacceptable because of an undue level of assistance includes that which:
 - has been copied, without acknowledgment, from another person's work or another source
 - transcribes the ideas or material derived from other sources, with acknowledgment or without acknowledgment, and where the student minimally alters the text(s) or not at all
 - has quoted large or multiple sections verbatim, or with minimum alteration from a source or sources, with little or no interpretation, comment, or analysis
 - incorporates corrections or changes that the teacher or another person made.

3. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the copying, paraphrasing or summarising of work, in any form, without acknowledgment of sources, and presentation of this work as the student's own (BSSS, 2012).

Examples include:

- word-for-word copying of sentences or paragraphs from one or more sources which are the work or data of another person's (including books, articles, working papers, websites or other students' assignments) without clearly identifying their origin by appropriate referencing. (Please note that students should avoid copying a large section or paragraph verbatim. If the original words in such a section or paragraph are essential to the argument of the student's work, then the student must make clear in his or her own words why this material has been quoted. As a guide, quotations that are more than about thirty words long should be indented from the text margin. These are called 'block quotations').
- closely paraphrasing sentences or paragraphs from one or more sources without appropriate acknowledgment in the form of a reference to the original work or works
- using another person's ideas, work, or research data without appropriate acknowledgment
- submitting work which has been produced by someone else on the student's behalf as if it were the work of the student
- producing work in conjunction with other people (other students, a tutor, parents) when it is presented as the student's own independent research.

Identifying the intent and extent of plagiarism can point to appropriate strategies to detect and avoid it. Devlin, M. (2002) has categorised plagiarism on three major dimensions:

- student intent of plagiarism (entirely deliberate/entirely accidental)
- extent of plagiarism (minor/extreme)
- suggested primary focus of response

The graph below depicts the three dimensions described above in relation to each other.

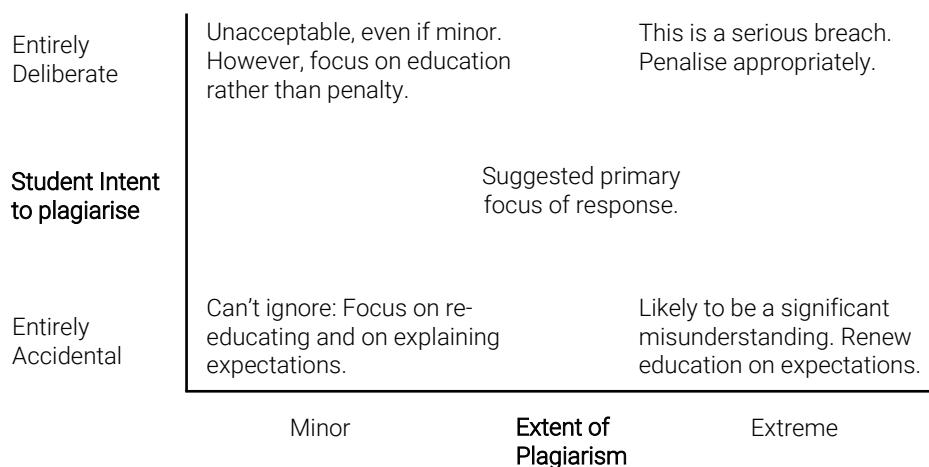


Figure 5: Plagiarism Intent-Extent-Response Graph (Devlin, 2002)

Plagiarism is unacceptable and each case of plagiarism should be treated on its own merits. Students should have opportunities to learn how to conduct research and to develop and improve their research skills. If plagiarism is detected, penalties may apply, depending on the intent (deliberate/accidental) and extent (minor/extreme) of plagiarised material. Devlin's framework asks teachers to consider the nature of the plagiarism, and to understand that punitive and educative responses should not be seen as mutually exclusive.

Teachers' practices for supervising student activity and providing feedback at various stages and in various forms should be planned to minimise the opportunity for plagiarism. For instance, it is recommended that the development of longer assignments should be conducted to a schedule with several sub-deadlines. The monitoring of progress at each stage will give teachers the opportunity to ensure that the final product represents students' own work.

Many teachers incorporate in their classroom activities practices that provide an adequate level of supervision, and so ensure that what is submitted for assessment is students' own work. A range of these practices is listed below:

- Closely monitoring what students are doing, talking to them, and giving advice. Primarily, this helps students to learn, but it also shows up discrepancies in performances.
- When long assignments are given, requiring parts of the assessment task to be done in the classroom, studio, or laboratory, and expecting oral and written progress reports to be made.
- Regularly developing new tests, assignments, and projects, and discarding ones from former years. If parallel classes are taught, varying the tests from one class to another.
- Maintaining deadlines for assignments and keeping submitted work secure.
- Providing a program of assessment that enables a thoughtful balance of assessment activities to be used, which can provide a base for detecting anomalies.

Section 4: Breaches of rules in conducting of research

1. Breaches of rules in the conduct of research

Rules apply in the conduct of school assessment and external assessments. Some assessments are directly supervised by the teacher or other supervisors; others are indirectly supervised by a teacher or other supervisors. An infringement of any of the rules and conditions listed in Breaches of Rules Information Sheet is a breach of rules, and penalties may apply. The grades or marks for an assessment task, assessment type, school or external assessment component, or a subject may be cancelled or amended.

For assessments that are indirectly supervised by a teacher or other supervisors, such as assessments that require students to conduct their own research, an infringement of the following conditions is considered a breach of rules. Students must:

- submit assessment work that is their own
- hand their work direct to their teacher (or follow a procedure outlined by their teacher) by the due date (extensions may be negotiated with their teacher, but any extensions must be consistent with the school's policy on deadlines and/or special provisions)
- conform to the requirements of each stage of development of their work as prescribed by the SACE Board or their teacher, and present their work during the developmental stages according to these requirements
- clearly identify and reference the ideas or words used in their assessment that are from another person's work, including information from the Internet, books, surveys, etc. Any quoted work should be kept to a minimum – students should refer to the subject minisite for the SACE Board's advice on how to avoid plagiarism, and guidelines for referencing
- not fabricate, falsify, or misrepresent authorship, evidence, data, findings, or conclusions
- not permit any other student to copy their work
- not permit any other student to otherwise use their work (unless an assessment requires this)
- not use the work of any other student (unless an assessment requires this)
- not use the work of any other student (unless an assessment requires this)
- not use work of any others in circumstances that can be defined as undue assistance (e.g. tutors, family, or friends)
- not collude with another student or others to undertake an assessment (e.g. an investigative report or a survey)
- not be guilty of any breach of good order or propriety (in an assessment task).

A breach of rules also occurs where the teacher is unable to verify that the task submitted is the student's own work. The teacher may be unable to verify that the work is the student's own if there has been no discussion with the student and the teacher has not seen the task during the drafting process. An assessment task that cannot be verified by the teacher as the student's own work is liable to receive an 'I' (no result), equivalent to a value of zero.

2. Investigating breaches of rules in the conduct of research

If the teacher or school suspects or detects that there is a suspected breach of rules (e.g. substantial plagiarism) in a school or external assessment:

- the school should investigate it
- the principles of natural justice must be applied at all stages in the process. Any student suspected, for example of plagiarising work must be given an opportunity to explain his or her work and the opportunity to provide evidence of authorship
- if there is evidence of plagiarism the student should be interviewed by the teacher and given the opportunity to explain his or her work before an appropriate penalty is determined (or, in the case of external assessments, recommended to the SACE Board)
- the student has a right to appeal the decision
- the school must keep a record of any discussions, penalties, or evidence of plagiarism.

If the SACE Board suspects or detects that there is a suspected breach of rules (e.g. substantial plagiarism) in a school or external assessment:

- it will investigate the matter
- the principles of natural justice must be applied at all stages in the process
- decisions will be made on verified evidence of a breach of rules
- where possible, the SACE Board, will verify that a breach of rules has occurred with the school
- the student has a right to appeal against the decision of the SACE Board
- any student suspected, for example, of plagiarising work must be given an opportunity to explain his or her work and the opportunity to provide evidence of authorship
- the SACE Board will keep a record of any decisions, penalties, or evidence of the breach of rules.

Students have the right to explain any suspected breach of rules in the conduct of research. Students have a right to appeal a decision made by the school or the SACE Board in relation to a breach of rules in the conduct of research.

3. Responsibilities and appeal process

The SACE Assuring Assessment Integrity Policy outlines the responsibilities of:

- students
 - to understand the guidelines for ensuring the material they provide for assessment is their own work
 - to sign a declaration that the material they submit for assessment is their own work
- teachers and supervisors
 - to use procedures that verify that the material students submit for assessment is the students' own work
- school leaders
 - to develop school procedures, based on SACE Board guidelines, for the consistent approach to ensuring the authenticity of student material submitted for assessment
 - to verify that the material students submit for assessment is based on the school's procedures and SACE Board guidelines for verifying the authenticity of student work
 - to administer policy and procedures that relate to student or parent appeals and grievances

- SACE Board
 - to prepare and publish guidelines for assuring the integrity of school and external assessments
 - to monitor the authenticity of students' material submitted for assessment and appropriately intervene where required
 - to administer the policy and procedures that relate to student or parent appeals or grievances.

A student is able to appeal a decision made by the school or the SACE Board where the student considers that the decisions or other actions taken in relation to the SACE Conduct of Ethical Research Policy have not been carried out in accordance with the SACE Assuring Assessment Integrity Policy or the set of procedures associated with the Supervision and Verification of Students' Work Policy (including breaches of rules).

For school assessments, appeals are directed in the first instance to the principal of the school. In such cases, schools are advised to follow the resolution procedures outlined in the SACE Assessment Responsibilities policy update.

Students may appeal the decision of the principal or school by writing to the Chief Executive of the SACE Board, stating details of the decision or action being appealed against and the redress sought.

Within 7 days of receiving a complaint, the Chief Executive will initiate an investigation into the decision or delegate responsibility for this investigation. A letter is sent to the student stating:

- that the complaint has been received
- the name of the person who is investigating the complaint and preparing a report
- that confidentiality is assured.

The investigating officer may take such actions as are necessary and may interview any parties involved in the complaint.

Although the aim of the appeal is to resolve the matter wherever possible, the action or decision complained about may be confirmed, varied, overturned, or sent back for consideration. Any determination by the Chief Executive as a result of the investigation is binding on all parties.

A similar process operates for external assessments. The student will be informed that a breach of rules has been detected and a penalty applied. The student is able to appeal a decision or action made by the SACE Board. Students may appeal by writing to the Chief Executive of the SACE Board. The matter will be investigated.

Although the aim of the appeal is to resolve the matter wherever possible, the action or decision complained about may be confirmed, varied, overturned, or sent back for consideration. Any determination by the Chief Executive as a result of the investigation is binding on all parties.

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