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Policy: Student Plagiarism, Cheating and Collusion

Overview

Builders Academy Australia (BAA) ensures that mechanisms are in place to avoid student plagiarism, cheating and collusion.

BAA adheres to the Principles of Assessment and Rules of Evidence. The evidence used to make a decision about competence must be valid, sufficient, authentic, and current.

This Policy is intended to promote honesty in learning and assessment and respect for the work of others and addresses authenticity in student assessment submissions. BAA requires that all students act honestly and ensure they do not involve themselves in cheating, colluding and/or committing acts of plagiarism.

Definitions

Cheating - seeking to obtain an unfair advantage in the assessment of any piece of work.

Plagiarism – to take and use the ideas and/or expressions and/or wording of another person or organisation and passing them off as one’s own by failing to give appropriate acknowledgement. This includes material from any source such as staff, students, texts, resources, including BAA learner guides and the internet, whether published or unpublished.

Collusion – unauthorised collaboration between students.

Student Integrity and Honesty

BAA is committed to upholding standards of student integrity and honesty in regard to the assessment of their work and places value in the declarations of authenticity made by students when submitting their assessment tasks.

Students are expected to act with integrity at all times and only submit work that is their own, or that has been appropriately referenced and includes acknowledgements of all texts and resource materials utilised in the development of the work.

Students and staff have a duty to ensure they gain the necessary understanding of how to correctly acknowledge and cite references and resources so as to minimise the incidents of plagiarism and cheating and the allegations of such.

Unacceptable Behaviour

From time to time, there may be incidents of student plagiarism, cheating and collusion which BAA is required to act upon in order to uphold the value of assessment outcomes and the reputation of the nationally recognised training provided.

Student plagiarism, cheating and collusion in any form are unacceptable and will be treated seriously by BAA.

BAA does not tolerate nor condone cheating of any kind, which includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Handing in someone else's work as your own (with or without that person's permission).
- Using any part of someone else's work without the proper acknowledgement, including breaches of copyright.
- Submitting a completely duplicated assignment.
- Allowing someone else to hand in your work as their own.
- Copying sentences or paragraphs from one or more sources, present extracts from books, articles, conference papers, internal reports, computer software, websites, class notes, BAA learner guides or recordings, without clearly indicating their origin.
- Having several people write one document and hand up multiple copies, all represented (implicitly or explicitly) as individual work.
- Stealing an examination or suggested answer guide from an assessor.

If a student believes that their work has been plagiarised or copied, they must report the matter at once to the appropriate trainer/assessor or appropriate staff member.

Student Discipline

BAA provides all students with clear expectations on the standards of conduct that are expected of them during their participation in the course. The rights and responsibilities of students are prescribed in:

- The Student Code of Conduct; and
- Other policies and procedures as outlined in the Student Handbook.

If any student breaches these requirements or expectations, BAA will be required to take disciplinary action with the student to rectify and/or manage the behavior.

The decision to initiate disciplinary action will only be made subject to:

- Exploring other potential avenues for dealing with the matter and fully exhausting these.
- An investigation occurring to determine the facts.
- Consultation occurring between the Trainer/Assessor and the Training Manager.

Avoiding and Detecting Cheating and Plagiarism

Learner Management System (LMS) Submission

When completing assessments via the Learning Management System (LMS) students are required to login using their unique login and password. Student are required to agree when clicking on the 'take assessment' button, that all work for assessment tasks submitted by them for each unit is their own, with no part of any assessment being copied / plagiarised from another person's work, except where authorised and listed / referenced.

All assessment tasks must be submitted with an assessment cover sheet, completed in full.

Hard Copy Submission

When completing assessments in hard copy students are required to sign and date a 'Ready for assessment and own work declaration' agreeing that they will not submit work that has been copied from another person, written by another person and that they understand that seriousness of plagiarism.

BAA will take the necessary steps to detect plagiarism and cheating which may include:

- Comparing answers between students where similarities are apparent.
- Other methods deemed appropriate by the trainer/assessor.

All staff have an obligation to identify and investigate any possibility of plagiarism, cheating or collusion. A staff member who suspects that plagiarism, cheating or collusion may have occurred should first source evidence (through identification of the source) to support their allegation.

Responding to Incidents of Cheating and Plagiarism

A student found to have plagiarised, cheated or colluded will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegations.

Disciplinary action will include meetings with the student either by phone or in person to formulate an action plan for rectifying the issues. The student will be given fair goals and timelines for rectifying the behaviour. Where the student fails to meet the requirements of the action plan or the behaviour continues, BAA will decide on appropriate further measures to be taken.

In serious cases, a Disciplinary Panel will be convened and will include senior members of BAA's Management Team. The purpose of the panel is to review the disciplinary process that has been followed; any evidence, meeting outcomes and allegations; to reach a decision about an appropriate course of action to be followed.

In all situations and circumstances, the student will be given due time and opportunity to respond to any concerns about their conduct or failure to meet the expectations set upon them. Students will be invited to bring a support person with them to a disciplinary meeting.

On conclusion of the meeting the student/s are to be advised in writing of the outcome of the discussion, including how BAA will deal with the problem. This will be done in one of the following ways:

- If the suspicion proves to be unfounded, no further action is taken.
- For a minor or unintentional offence, the student will be required to undertake an alternative form of assessment to provide evidence of attaining the requirements of competence.
- If it is a serious or deliberate offence, the student will fail the assessment and be required to re-enroll in the unit/s at their own cost, if they wish to complete their qualification.

A record of the student's involvement in alleged plagiarism, cheating or collusion will be noted in the student's file on the student management system VETtrak. Staff will have access to this information when considering any subsequent allegations of misconduct.

Students have the right to make an appeal of any decision made under this policy and procedure according to the Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy which can be located on the BAA website using the following link: [Grievance, Complaints and Appeal Policy](#).