



**Embedding and extending exemplary academic integrity policy
and support frameworks across the higher education sector**

www.unisa.edu.au/EAIP

Tracey Bretag (Project Leader) and Saadia Mahmud (Project Manager), University of South Australia; Anna Stewart and Karen van Haeringen, Griffith University, and Leigh Pointon, Queensland Institute of Business and Technology

Fundamental values of academic integrity

“Academic integrity is a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. From these values flow principles of behaviour that enable academic communities to translate ideals into action”.

(Fundamental Values Project 1999, ICAI)

What are we “embedding and extending”?



- Findings and recommendations from the OLT funded *Academic Integrity Standards Project*.
- Five core elements of exemplary academic integrity policy.
- Adaptation of best practices for identified student groups:
 - International English as an Additional Language (EAL) students
 - ‘Educationally less prepared’ students
 - Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students.

Academic Integrity Standards Project*

- Analysed Australian academic integrity policies
- Student survey
- Interviewed senior managers
- Focus groups with students and staff
- Aimed to foster a culture of academic integrity



Academic
Integrity
Standards
Project
2010-2012

*Lead institution: University of South Australia

Project partners: University of Adelaide, University of Western Australia, La Trobe University, University of Newcastle, University of Wollongong.

Project website: www.aisp.apfei.edu.au

AISP policy analysis: Key findings

- Changing focus from misconduct (51% of policies) to **integrity and education** (41%). 28% mixed focus.
- 10% policies concerned with **risk management**.
- Students still considered to be responsible for AI (institution mentioned in only 39% of policies).
- Most policies (56%) **lacked sufficient detail** about breaches and outcomes.
- Most policies (56%) made no mention of **confidentiality**.

5 core elements of exemplary policy



No element privileged over another

Elements interconnected

Strength of the knot

Overarching commitment to academic integrity lies at the heart of an exemplary academic integrity policy

5 core elements of exemplary policy

- **Access:** Easy to locate, read, concise, comprehensible.
- **Approach:** Aspirational statement of purpose with educative focus up-front and all through policy.
- **Responsibility:** Details responsibilities for ALL stakeholders.
- **Detail:** Extensive but not excessive description of breaches, outcomes and processes.
- **Support:** Proactive and embedded systems to enable implementation of the policy (for both students and staff).

Student survey

Largest student survey on academic integrity in Australia.

Different to previous student surveys:

- Not seeking to gain additional data on the number, frequency, type or cause of academic integrity breaches.
- Students not required to self-report cheating behaviours.
- Survey designed to give students the opportunity to share their understandings of academic integrity.
- Focus on how students wish to be educated about the issue.

Student survey highlights

- **64.5%** of students said they had heard of academic integrity and thought they had a good idea what it entails.
- **4.4%** of total students and **8.8%** of international students had never heard of academic integrity.
- **64.7%** said they knew whether their university had an academic integrity policy and they knew how to access it.
- **79.9%** of total students agreed that the academic integrity policy was clearly communicated, but only **70.4%** of postgraduate research (HDR) students agreed.
- **94.2%** of total students (and **89.4%** of international students) stated they felt confident they knew how to avoid an AI breach.
- **92.1%** of total students and **95.6%** of HDR students agreed that academic integrity has relevance to their lives beyond university.

Student survey: Key findings

1. Majority reported a **good understanding** of academic integrity and AI policy and were satisfied with support and training.
2. A disproportionate percentage felt **confident** about avoiding an AI breach.
3. **International students expressed lower understanding** of AI and lower confidence in how to avoid a breach.
4. **Postgraduate research students were the least satisfied** with the information they had received.
5. Small group (4.4%) of **educationally 'less prepared'** students had never heard of academic integrity.

Interviews with senior managers

What is your understanding of academic integrity?

- **Many respondents reluctant to focus on positives**

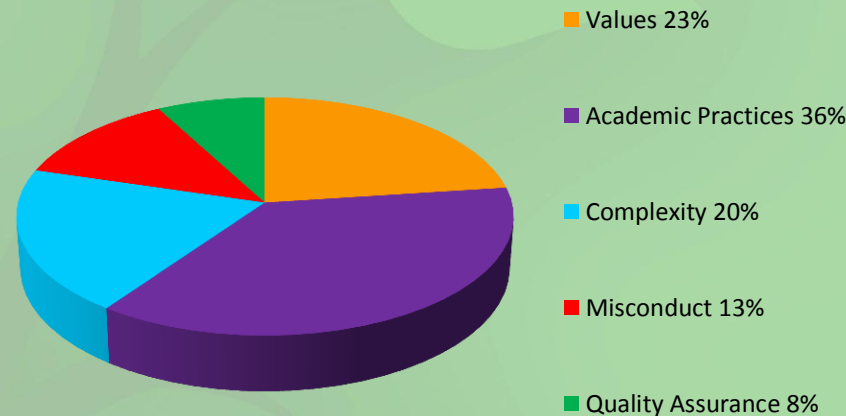
“...the only time anyone’s ever really thinking about notions of academic integrity is when they're reducing it simply to academic misconduct and pinging someone for plagiarism....” (Senior Manager 1, University C)

Foundation concepts: Understandings of academic integrity

Academic integrity is:

1. grounded in action;
2. underpinned by values;
3. multifaceted and applicable to multiple stakeholders;
4. understood by many in terms of what is *not* (misconduct); and
5. important as a means of assuring the quality and credibility of the educational process.

Understandings of Academic Integrity



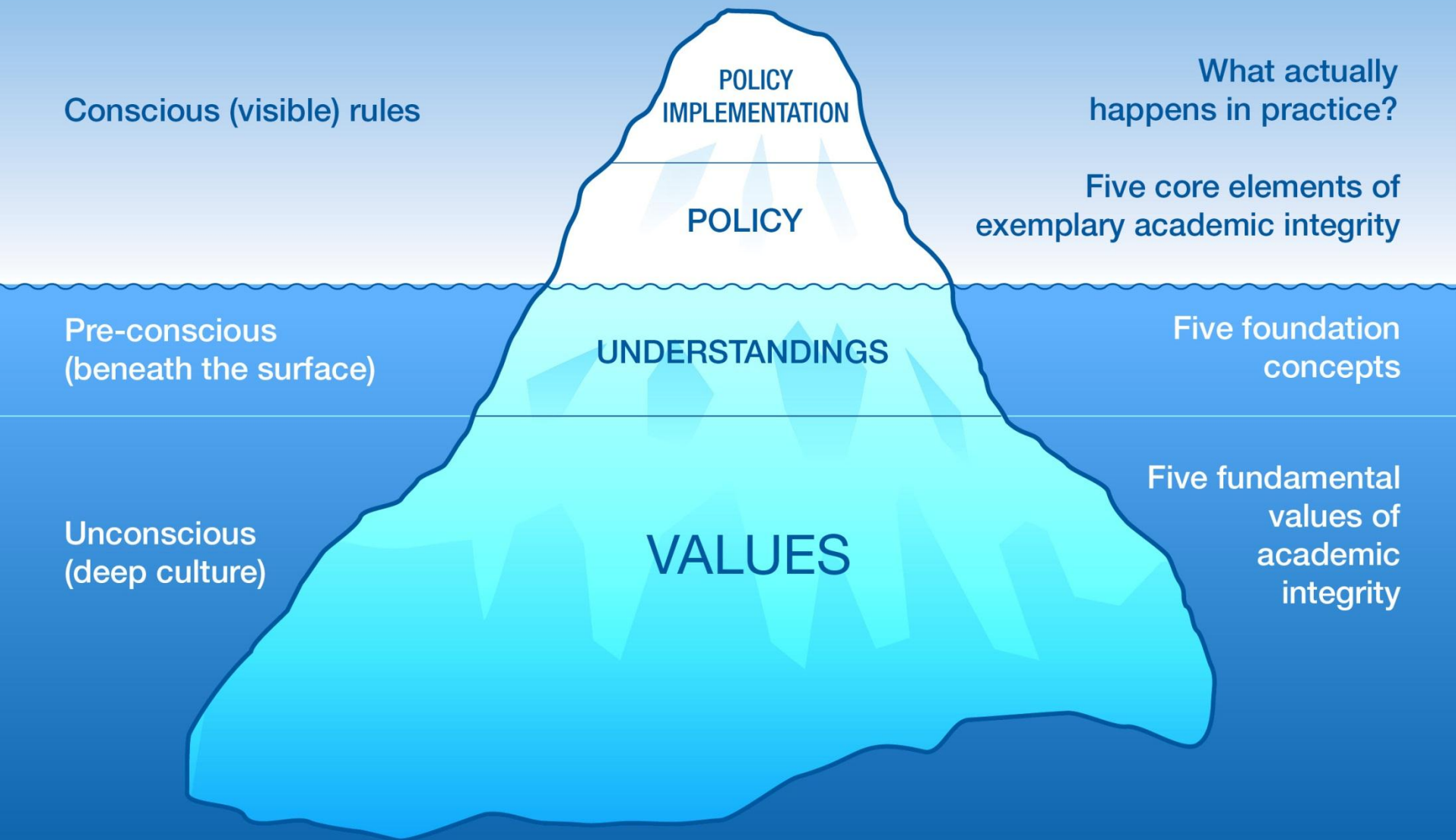
Positive definition of academic integrity

Academic integrity encompasses a number of **values and ideals that should be upheld** in an academic institution. Within the academy there is a fundamental obligation to exercise **integrity, which includes honesty, trustworthiness and respect**. Within an academic structure those **values** must be evident in the **research as well as the teaching and learning activities of the institution**. Academic integrity involves ensuring that in **research, and in teaching and learning, both staff and students** act in an **honest** way, that they're **open and accountable** for their actions, and that they exhibit **fairness and transparency** when they're dealing with **people or with research**. Furthermore, it is important that **staff members at all levels** be role models and **demonstrate integrity as an example to students** who will progress through the **education system and then transition into professional life**. Academic integrity impacts on **students and staff in these core activities**, and is **fundamental to the reputation and standing of an organisation** and its members. (Law Academic, University A)

Taking the results of the AISP forward

- What is the connection between values, understandings and elements of policy?
 - Most importantly, what actually happens *in practice*?
-

CULTURE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY



Aims of the Exemplary Academic Integrity Project (EAIP)

1. Extend and embed the '5 core elements' of exemplary AI policy across the higher education sector.
2. Develop resources accessible to both public and private higher education providers.
3. Develop support systems for International English as an Additional Language (EAL) students.
4. Develop support systems for educationally 'less prepared' students.
5. Extend lessons about policy and support to higher degree by research (HDR) students.

Exemplary Academic Integrity Project

Where are we up to?

1. Higher Degree by Research policy analysis
2. Aim to engage *all* Higher Education Providers
3. The Roundtable:
 - *What actually happens in practice?*
4. National Speaking Tour
5. Developing online academic integrity policy tool



Aims of the EAIP Roundtable

- Develop understanding of changing higher education context
- Showcase practical implementation details of exemplary academic integrity policies in context.
- Use '5 core elements of exemplary academic integrity policy' as the framework for discussion.
- Presentations videotaped and analysed to enable adaptation of best practices for identified student groups:
 - International English as an Additional Language (EAL) students
 - 'Educationally less prepared' students
 - Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students.

References

Academic Integrity Standards Project: <http://www.aisp.apfei.edu.au/>

Asia Pacific Forum on Educational Integrity: www.apfei.edu.au

Exemplary Academic Integrity Project: www.unisa.edu.au/EAIP

Bretag, T. (2012). The 'Big Five' of Academic Integrity, Keynote Address to the 5th *International Integrity and Plagiarism Conference*, 14-16 July 2012.

Bretag, T., Mahmud, S., East, J., Green, M., James, C., McGowan, U., Partridge, L., Wallace, M. & Walker, R. (2011a). Academic integrity standards: A preliminary analysis of the academic integrity policies at Australian universities, presented at *Australian Quality Forum*, 29 June-1 July, Melbourne, Australia. http://www.auqa.edu.au/files/auqf/paper/paper_h20.pdf

Bretag, T., Mahmud, S., Wallace, M., Walker, R., Green, M., East, J., James, C., McGowan, U., Partridge, L. (2011b). Core elements of exemplary academic integrity policy in Australian higher education, *International Journal for Educational Integrity*, 7(2), pp. 3-12, available online: <http://www.ojs.unisa.edu.au/index.php/IJEI/article/viewFile/759/574>

Bretag, T., Mahmud, S., Walker, R., Wallace, M., McGowan, U., East, J., Green, M., Partridge, L. and James, C. (2013, forthcoming) 'Teach us how to do it properly!' An Australian academic integrity student survey, *Studies in Higher Education*.

Mahmud, S. and Bretag T. (2013, forthcoming). Postgraduate research students and academic integrity: 'It's about good research training', *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management*.