

AIMS Fellowship Program - Academic Misconduct Policy

1. Introduction

The Australian Institute of Medical and Clinical Scientists (AIMS) expects a high level of professional integrity and behaviour from its Members and Fellows and any form of professional or academic misconduct is regarded as unacceptable. In particular, AIMS regards academic dishonesty by candidates in the Fellowship Program as a very serious matter and all candidates are obliged to understand and respect the general conventions applying to academic misconduct and dishonesty.

Any matter regarding allegations or a suspected breach of conduct in the AIMS Fellowship Program will be investigated and treated with the highest level of confidentiality by all parties.

2. Forms of Academic Misconduct

2.1. Plagiarism

Plagiarism consists of using of the work of others (words or ideas) or content generated by artificial intelligence (AI) software as if it was one's own and with the deliberate intent to deceive. Examples include, but are not restricted to, the following:

- Presenting substantial extracts from other persons' work, including books, articles, theses, other published or unpublished works (such as working papers, seminar and conference papers, internal reports, computer software, lecture notes or tapes, numerical calculations and data) without clearly citing or indicating the origin of those extracts with quotation marks and references such as footnotes.
- Using very close paraphrasing of sentences or whole paragraphs "plagi-phrasing" without due acknowledgement in the form of a reference to the original work.
- Quoting directly from a source and failing to insert quotation marks around the quoted passages. In such cases it is not adequate merely to acknowledge the source.
- Arranging for someone else to undertake all or part of a piece of work and presenting that work as one's own.
- Submitting another persons' work whether or not it has been previously published, used or submitted in some way by that person.
- Two or more individuals separately submitting the same piece of work on which they have collaborated, except in accordance with approved Fellowship Program practices and guidelines.

2.2. Other forms of academic dishonesty:

- Fabrication or falsification of data or results from any form of laboratory or practical work.
- Accepting assistance from another person in a piece of assessed individual work, except in accordance with approved Fellowship Program practices and guidelines.
- Giving assistance, including the provision of work to be copied, to a person in a piece of assessed individual work, except in accordance with approved Fellowship Program practices and guidelines.
- The submission of work already published or submitted to another program, except in accordance with approved Fellowship Program practices and guidelines.
- Any form of cheating (deceptive behaviour) undertaken to obtain an unfair advantage in respect to submitted work or an examination.

3. Procedure Following Suspected Incident of Academic Misconduct

3.1. Suspicion of academic misconduct

- 3.1.1. If misconduct is suspected by an examination supervisor, the invigilator will follow the procedure outlined in the examination supervisor guidelines. The candidate will be informed that a report will be prepared and submitted to the AIMS Chief Executive Officer (CEO).
- 3.1.2. If an examiner, an AIMS staff member, or a member of the Examinations Council suspects misconduct, they will prepare a written report outlining in detail the reasons for the suspicion and any other relevant information. The report is to be submitted to the AIMS CEO along with relevant supporting documents.
- 3.1.3. If the CEO is satisfied there are sufficient grounds to support a finding of misconduct, the CEO will notify the candidate of the concerns in writing within five (5) working days and request the candidate attend a meeting to discuss the matter.
- 3.1.4. The candidate will be provided with a copy of the report, and will be given the opportunity to submit a written report in response prior to the meeting.

3.2. Meeting with candidate

- 3.2.1. The meeting will be held virtually or in person in a location in close proximity to the candidate, and should occur within 30 working days of the initial notification.
- 3.2.2. The meeting will be attended by the CEO and two other senior members nominated by the CEO (the AIMS Executive Group) with experience in the candidate's discipline area. Where possible, one of the two other senior members will be the relevant module convenor or the discipline chair.
- 3.2.3. The candidate may be accompanied and assisted by another medical scientist or nominated support person.
- 3.2.4. Following this meeting, the CEO and two senior members will make a determination as to whether academic misconduct has occurred. The candidate will be notified in writing of the outcome of this meeting within 10 business days.
- 3.2.5. If, as a result of the meeting, it is determined that no misconduct occurred, then no further action will be taken.
- 3.2.6. If, as a result of the meeting, it is determined that the candidate's action constitutes academic misconduct, then the matter will be referred to the AIMS executive group.

3.3. Referral to the AIMS Executive Group

- 3.3.1. The executive group will consider the evidence provided, including the written reports, supporting documentation, and the findings of the CEO following the meeting with the candidate.
- 3.3.2. If a majority of the executive group is of the view that academic misconduct or dishonesty has occurred, they will consider an appropriate penalty, taking into account the severity and intentionality of the misconduct. The executive group will determine the penalty from the following options:
 - a) failure in the examination, or
 - b) failure in the examination, disqualification from the Fellowship Program, and preclusion from re-enrolling in the Fellowship for a period of up to three (3) years, or
 - c) failure in the examination, disqualification from the Fellowship Program, and permanent preclusion from re-enrolling in the Fellowship Program, or
 - d) in serious instances, failure in the examination, disqualification from the Fellowship Program, and permanent revocation of AIMS membership.

- 3.3.3. If a majority of the executive group is of the view that academic misconduct has not occurred, no further action will be taken.
- 3.3.4. The candidate will be notified in writing of the outcome of the decision within five (5) working days of the executive group meeting.

3.4. Review of decision

- 3.4.1. The candidate may apply to have decision reviewed by the executive group on the basis of the provision of additional supporting evidence within one calendar month of the decision.
- 3.4.2. The candidate must apply in writing outlining the additional supporting evidence and the reason for the review.
- 3.4.3. The executive group will consider the application and supporting documentation at the next scheduled meeting and make a determination as to whether the original decision, including the penalty imposed, ought to stand.
- 3.4.4. The candidate will be notified in writing of the outcome of the executive group meeting within five (5) working days.

3.5. Appeals

- 3.5.1. The candidate has the right of appeal against an executive group decision on the grounds that correct procedure has not been followed. An appeal must be made within 30 days of receiving notification of the executive group decision.
- 3.5.2. The application for an appeal must be in writing, include the reasons for seeking the appeal, and submitted to the CEO.
- 3.5.3. The appeal will be considered by the AIMS Board.

4. **Legal Advice**

Any legal advice sought by the candidate will be at the candidate's expense.

Fellowship Candidate Declaration and Statement of Academic Integrity

- I certify that all work submitted by me in the Fellowship Program will be my own work based on my own personal study.
- I have read and understood the conventions regarding plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty.
- I understand the penalties that may be imposed if I am found guilty by the Executive Group of academic misconduct.

Name (print clearly):

Signature: **Date:**