



**Academic Integrity Standards:  
A preliminary analysis of academic integrity policies of  
Australian universities**

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This is the first report from the ALTC Priority Project 2010-2012, *Academic integrity standards: Aligning policy and practice in Australian universities*. This project seeks to develop a shared understanding across the Australian higher education sector of academic integrity standards with the aim of improving the alignment of academic integrity policies and their implementation.



# overview

- defining academic integrity (AI)
- the importance of aligning policy, practice and process
- ‘Academic Integrity Standards’ ALTC priority project (2010-2012)
- what the project will do
- research methodology
- analysis of results so far
- conclusions





Academic integrity is about mastering the art of scholarship. Scholarship involves researching, understanding and building upon the work of others and requires that you give credit where it is due and acknowledge the contributions of others to your own intellectual efforts. At its core, academic integrity requires honesty. This involves being responsible for ethical scholarship and for knowing what academic dishonesty is and how to avoid it. (University of Tasmania 2010)

# aligning policy, practice and process

- universities care about their reputations
- students are concerned about inconsistencies
- staff become cynical when breaches are not consistently administered
- a positive, encouraging and educative policy does more to persuade adoption of academic integrity in students than punitive and threatening practices



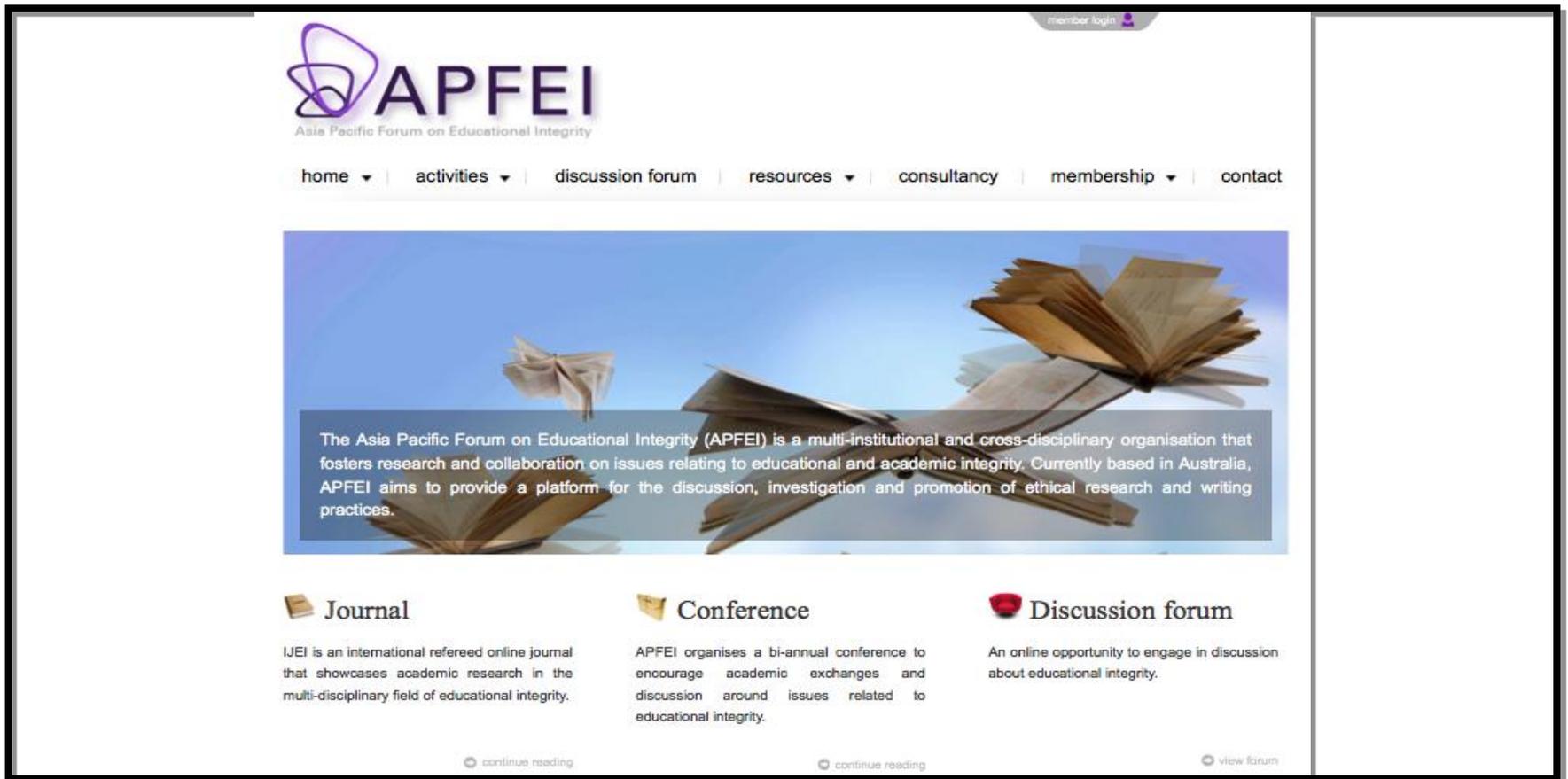
# the team

- the research team are members of *Asia Pacific Forum on Educational Integrity*  APFEI  
Asia Pacific Forum on Educational Integrity
- they have been discussing issues of and approaches to AI for some time



# APFEI website [www.apfei.edu.au](http://www.apfei.edu.au)

## Conference [www.apcei.catl.uwa.edu.au](http://www.apcei.catl.uwa.edu.au)



The screenshot shows the APFEI website homepage. At the top right, there is a "member login" link with a user icon. The APFEI logo, consisting of a purple abstract shape and the text "APFEI Asia Pacific Forum on Educational Integrity", is on the left. A navigation menu below the logo includes links for "home", "activities", "discussion forum", "resources", "consultancy", "membership", and "contact". The main content area features a large image of several open books against a blue sky. A text box overlaid on the image reads: "The Asia Pacific Forum on Educational Integrity (APFEI) is a multi-institutional and cross-disciplinary organisation that fosters research and collaboration on issues relating to educational and academic integrity. Currently based in Australia, APFEI aims to provide a platform for the discussion, investigation and promotion of ethical research and writing practices." Below this image are three columns: "Journal" with a book icon and a description of the IJEI journal; "Conference" with a book icon and a description of the bi-annual conference; and "Discussion forum" with a red speech bubble icon and a description of the online discussion opportunity. Each column has a "continue reading" or "view forum" link at the bottom.

member login 

**APFEI**  
Asia Pacific Forum on Educational Integrity

home | activities | discussion forum | resources | consultancy | membership | contact

The Asia Pacific Forum on Educational Integrity (APFEI) is a multi-institutional and cross-disciplinary organisation that fosters research and collaboration on issues relating to educational and academic integrity. Currently based in Australia, APFEI aims to provide a platform for the discussion, investigation and promotion of ethical research and writing practices.

 **Journal**

IJEI is an international refereed online journal that showcases academic research in the multi-disciplinary field of educational integrity.

[continue reading](#)

 **Conference**

APFEI organises a bi-annual conference to encourage academic exchanges and discussion around issues related to educational integrity.

[continue reading](#)

 **Discussion forum**

An online opportunity to engage in discussion about educational integrity.

[view forum](#)

# project outcomes

1. investigate the range of Australian universities' AI policies and practices
2. identify examples of good practice responding to breaches of AI and where inconsistencies between policy and practice might usefully be addressed
3. develop exemplars of good practice that can be adapted across a range of learning, teaching and policy contexts
4. provide teaching and learning resources to foster a culture of AI which will pre-empt breaches and ensure consistent and clear responses.



# current task

investigate the 39 Australian universities' academic integrity policies



# some categories

- ease of access
- definition
- purpose
- approach – integrity? – educational?
- responsibility – whose?
- intent
- confidentiality of records
- reporting
- breaches explained
- outcomes / penalties



# research methodology

1. identify and locate the appropriate policy at each of the universities
2. do preliminary coding (Grigg, 2010)
3. double check each policy
4. teleconference issues and review categories
5. shortlist 12 potential exemplars
6. do more coding, categorising, checking and ranking
7. shortlist to 5 exemplars or compilation of exemplars



# what we found

- 51% (20) of the policies had '**misconduct**' and '**plagiarism**' as their key terms
- 41% (16) had '**academic integrity**' as a key term
- despite this focus on 'misconduct' there is a move to instil scholarly values rather than focus on punitive elements

**A positive spirit** would focus on what is *right* rather than what is *wrong* (see Davis, Drinian & Bertram Gallant, 2009).



# policy approach

Approach	N = 39	%
Integrity	15	38
Mixed (Punitive & Education)	11	28
Punitive	8	21
Risk management	4	10
Mixed	1	3
Total	39	100



# responsibility statements

Stakeholder group	N = 39	%
Staff & students	14	36
University, staff & students	14	36
Students	8	21
Staff	2	5
Everyone (inside & outside University)	1	3
Total	39	100



# breaches and outcomes

Many policies lacked basic information relating to types of breaches and associated outcomes/penalties.

- only 44% provided details relating to severity of breaches (minor/major)
- most breaches were not defined
- in 18% no breach outcomes were stated

There was **inconsistency** in information about AI and how universities say they will respond to breaches.



# conclusions

- There is a move away from negative punitive approaches, but
- more needs to be done to reduce policies with mixed messages.
- AI is not just a student responsibility.
- Policies need to indicate institutional responsibility, beginning at the highest level, and including teaching and professional staff and students.
- AI is currently represented in inconsistent ways in Australian university policies



# finally

- There are examples of good practice and these will form the basis for policy exemplars
- These have the potential to influence future academic integrity policies of Australian universities.





For more information about the ALTC project on *Academic Integrity Standards* contact:

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