

TERMS OF REFERENCE

FACULTY ACADEMIC INTEGRITY COMMITTEES FOR TEACHING & LEARNING

1 Background and Purpose of the Faculty Academic Integrity Committees

The North-West University's *Policy on Academic Integrity* was updated in 2021 and it provides for clear guidance and directions on the topic of academic integrity in both teaching and learning and research. The *Policy on Academic Integrity* requires faculty boards and academic units to establish processes and procedures for the effective implementation thereof, and to ensure adequate training of academic employees and students, agreement to codes of conduct, provision of information on the topic in study guides and faculty yearbooks and the reporting and record keeping of any reported misconduct.

On 24 May 2023 a Teaching and Learning Integrity Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) was approved by Senate to help with the implementation of the *Policy on Academic Integrity* (within the teaching and learning environment) and to provide guidelines and procedures for faculties for dealing with possible Poor Academic Writing Practices (PAWP) and academic misconduct. The TL Integrity SOP guides faculties in the establishment of their various Academic Integrity Committees and it should be interpreted and applied in a manner consistent with related policies such as the:

- Research Ethics Policy, 2018 and SOPs for Academic Integrity in Research, 2021.
- Intellectual Property Policy of the North-West University, 2021.
- Policy and Manual on Student Discipline, 2019.
- Behavioural Policy and Behavioural Manual for Employees, 2011.
- NWU Values Statement (2022) and the NWU Code of Ethics.
- Assessment Policy and the NWU A-rules.

The purpose of the Faculty Academic Integrity Committees for Teaching and Learning is to ensure that the following points of the *Policy on Academic Integrity* is attended to in a fair and consistent manner, and in line with the TL Integrity SOP:

“Reports of alleged breach of academic integrity through acts of fabrications, falsification or plagiarism are tabled at **appropriate substructures of the relevant faculty boards**, that record is kept of complaints of fabrications, falsification and plagiarism and that, where appropriate, such matters are escalated to the relevant structures of the university in accordance with Annexure 2 to be dealt with in accordance with the relevant disciplinary codes” (Point 6.1.6 of the *Policy on Academic Integrity*),

“An initial assessment, upon suspect of alleged academic misconduct, is done **in accordance with the relevant faculty processes**” (Point 1.1.2 of Annexure 2 of the *Policy on Academic Integrity*),

“The school/research director reports the matter to the **substructure of the relevant faculty board**, established in accordance with para 6.1.6 of the Policy and a resolution of the best suitable approach1 to deal with the alleged instance of academic misconduct is taken and recorded” (Point 1.1.3 of Annexure 2 of the *Policy on Academic Integrity*),

“The **faculty board receives regular reports from the substructure mentioned above** and, in turn, includes the information on these reports in the regular reporting to Senate” (Point 1.1.5 of Annexure 2 of the *Policy on Academic Integrity*).

2 Faculty-based structures for TL Academic Integrity

The NWU *Policy on Academic Integrity* requires that each faculty should establish their own faculty-based structures to deal with possible academic misconduct. These structures are, as described in the TL Integrity SOP, the Faculty Academic Integrity Committee (FAIC) and the Faculty Academic Integrity Review Committee (FAIRC).

Each faculty should establish at least one FAIC and one FAIRC. Depending on the faculty context (size and shape), the extent of programmes, and the varying needs in faculties, more than one FAIC can be established. For example, school based FAICs could also be established. There can only be one FAIRC per faculty, except with the permission of the Deputy Dean TL who should preferably be the chair of all the FAIRCs in the faculty to ensure consistency (see 2.2.2 below).

2.1 Faculty Academic Integrity Committee (FAIC)

In the Faculty of XXX Faculty Academic Integrity Committees:

- 2.1.1. Can be established per school or subject group as the need arises with the approval of the school director and subject chair. These committees and its members should also be approved by the faculty's TLC.
- 2.1.2. The FAIC should, in line with the SOP, consist of a minimum of three members, duly elected within the school of subject group.
- 2.1.3. Membership should be representative of all sites of delivery (if applicable and possible) – with no less than one (1) member per campus where the faculty (or school) has a footprint (to ensure cross-campus collaboration and quality assurance).
- 2.1.4. The chairperson should be a senior academic member (senior lecturer or higher).
- 2.1.5. Membership is based on size of faculty (or school) staff component, student numbers, and programmes it serves to ensure efficiency of this committee.

The task of FAIC is spelled out in the TL Integrity SOP and entails:

- 2.1.6. That the chair appoints an evaluator when the lecturer reported a case of possible academic misconduct.
- 2.1.7. Determine whether the suspicion/concern is valid, the extent of the transgression, and the potential category of transgression.
- 2.1.8. Propose appropriate remedial action in consultation (as needed) with the relevant reporting lecturer, and/or the relevant subject group leader, and/or the director.
- 2.1.9. Make a finding and report it on the Academic Integrity Information Technology System Application (AIITSA) platform within the prescribed days.
- 2.1.10. Report regularly to the faculty's TLC on the cases dealt with and the outcome of it.
- 2.1.11. Ensure faculty specific guidelines and help are provided to students to prevent possible academic misconduct.
- 2.1.12. The regular training of its members to ensure they act fair and consistent.
- 2.1.13. Faculty-based educational programmes could be developed as needed and made available on eFundi to inform the specific faculty's students regarding their specific conventions regarding academic integrity, referencing, and referencing style. Provision should be made for formal and continuous self-education, which is faculty specific where needed and applicable, by the specific faculty.

2.2 Faculty Academic Integrity Review Committee (FAIRC)

In the Faculty of XXX Faculty Academic Integrity Review Committee:

- 2.2.1. Should consist of a minimum of three senior academic staff members.
- 2.2.2. Should be chaired by a member of the Faculty Management Committee, as designated by the Executive Dean (preferably the Deputy Dean Teaching and Learning).
- 2.2.3. T&L Committee member should have representation on the FAIRC.
- 2.2.4. FAIC members are not permitted to serve on the FAIRC or vice versa.

The task of FAIRC is spelled out in the TL Integrity SOP and entails:

- 2.2.5. That this committee shall only constitute when reviews are required.
- 2.2.6. The chair must appoint an evaluator when a student request for a review of FAIC's finding.
- 2.2.7. FAIRC should consider the written request for review within seven (7) working days from the

- date on which the request was lodged.
- 2.2.8. FAIRC should consider the following regarding the review request: the report by lecturer, the report by FAIC, adherence to procedural fairness, justification of remedial action imposed and the merit of the request.
 - 2.2.9. FAIRC should decide if the case is upheld, dismissed, or to be referred to SJS as another category of transgression.
 - 2.2.10. The decision of FAIRC is final, and the outcome of the review should be captured on AIITSA.

3 Meeting arrangements

The chair of FAIC and FAIRC can schedule meetings as needed.

4 Reporting

FAIC and FAIRC should report back on their work to the Faculty Teaching & Learning Committee (or a similar committee) at its scheduled meetings, which should report then to the Faculty Board. These reports must be submitted to Senate to take note of according to Point 1.1.5 of Annexure 2 of the *Policy on Academic Integrity*.

5 Approval and review

The following documents guide the operations of FAIC and FAIRC:

Document	Status	Authority	Date
<i>Policy on Academic Integrity</i>	Approved	Senate	2021
Teaching and Learning Integrity Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)	To be approved	Senate	24 May 2023

These terms of reference were approved by the Faculty Board of the Faculty of XXX on ... 2023.