1 Purpose

Victoria University of Wellington comprises a partnership of students and staff who work together to develop learning that contributes to the development of the individual and of society. This partnership involves active membership of a scholarly community that is committed to enquiry and integrity. To support students in achieving this goal, the University community is committed to an environment that fosters overall physical and emotional well-being.

As members of this community, students are expected to conduct themselves safely, and in accordance with the University’s core ethical values of respect, responsibility, fairness, integrity and empathy.

The purpose of this statute is to ensure that fair processes are followed in the event of suspected misconduct and that, wherever possible, the University’s response to misconduct addresses the harm caused and meets the needs of all parties.

2 Organisational Scope

This statute is a University-wide statute.

3 Definitions

Academic Misconduct has the meaning given in paragraph 5.2.2 below

Decision-Maker means a decision-maker as set out in Appendix B

Disciplinary Appeals Committee means the Disciplinary Appeals Committee convened in accordance with Appendix A

Disciplinary Committee means the Disciplinary Committee convened in accordance with Appendix A

General Misconduct has the meaning given in paragraph 5.2.3 below

Hall of Residence a hall of residence that is managed by or on behalf of the University or that has agreed for its residents to be covered by this Statute

Misconduct means either Academic Misconduct or General Misconduct

SIDRA means the Student Interest and Dispute Resolution Adviser
Student means any person enrolled in a personal course of study at the University, or a person who is studying at the University under an exchange agreement with another institution, and includes a resident in a Hall of Residence.

University Victoria University of Wellington

University Precincts includes all premises, grounds and buildings owned by, in the possession of, or administered by the University (including Halls of Residence).

4 Principles

4.1 The University will address suspected misconduct in a way that safeguards:

(a) the physical and emotional well-being of any person affected by suspected misconduct, the student who is suspected of misconduct and the University community; and

(b) the integrity of the University community.

4.2 The University will manage suspected misconduct in a timely manner and, wherever possible, through:

(a) an informal process at the lowest level appropriate; and

(b) restorative processes that involve the direct participation of affected parties in a facilitated conversation and in consensus-based decision-making on how things may be put right.

4.3 The University is committed to acknowledging the Treaty of Waitangi by working in partnership with Māori. The spirit of Tikanga is to seek resolutions to disputes and complaints in a manner that encourages a facilitated open exchange of views, with a view to seeking consensus and acceptance from all parties.

4.4 Students suspected of misconduct will be given a reasonable opportunity to respond to a complaint before any finding of misconduct or decision as to the appropriate consequence occurs.

4.5 Students have the right to translation services. Such translation services will, if necessary, be provided at the University’s expense.

4.6 Students have the right to appeal a finding of misconduct, and/or the penalty imposed. Any appeal must be determined by persons who were not involved in the decision under appeal.

4.7 The standard of proof applicable to any formal misconduct procedure is on the balance of probabilities.

5 Misconduct

5.1 To whom does this statute apply?

5.1.1 This statute applies to students who are suspected of misconduct within the University precincts, in the context of any university activity, or where the suspected misconduct is directly connected to a student’s status as a student of the University.

5.2 What is misconduct?

5.2.1 There are two types of misconduct: academic misconduct and general misconduct.

5.2.2 Academic misconduct is defined as:

(a) plagiarism; or
(b) dishonest or misleading conduct, including collusion, in connection with any assessment including any exam, test or other supervised assessment or in relation to the preparation or presentation of any assessed item of work; or
(c) any breach of rules or instructions in relation to any assessment, including examination rules;
(d) conduct in breach of the Human Ethics Policy or the Animal Ethics Policy, or
(e) dishonest or misleading conduct in the course of research or any other similar academic activity.

5.2.3 **General misconduct** is defined as:

(a) conduct in breach of any University statute, policy, Hall of Residence handbook, or professional code of conduct that has been endorsed by the relevant School within the University;
(b) conduct that contravenes a lawful and reasonable direction by a member of the University staff;
(c) conduct that impedes or prejudices teaching, research or study within the University community, or that infringes the ability of others to participate in the life of the University;
(d) conduct that is detrimental to the safety or well-being of other people, the effective functioning of the University or to the reputation of the University;
(e) conduct that impedes or disrupts an examination, test or other supervised assessment (but excluding dishonest or misleading conduct in connection with such assessment, which is to be treated as academic misconduct);
(f) conduct that is dishonest or fraudulent;
(g) conduct that is not in keeping with the University’s core ethical values of respect, responsibility, fairness, integrity and empathy.

6 **Initiating misconduct procedures**

6.1 **Referral to appropriate decision-maker**

6.1.1 Any person can refer suspected misconduct to a decision-maker. A list of decision-makers is set out in Appendix B.

6.1.2 A decision-maker who becomes aware of suspected misconduct, whether through a complaint or otherwise, must:

(a) consider whether to refer the matter to a more suitable decision-maker; and
(b) if the conduct is not referred to another decision-maker, consider whether the reported conduct may constitute misconduct; and
(c) if the conduct may constitute misconduct, consider:

(i) whether interim action in accordance with paragraph 6.2 below is required to manage risk associated with the relevant behaviour; and
(ii) whether to proceed with an alternative resolution process in accordance with paragraph 7 below; or
(iii) whether to proceed with the formal misconduct procedures in accordance with paragraph 8 below.

6.1.3 If the decision-maker considers that none of the courses of action identified in paragraphs 6.1.2(a)-(c) are appropriate, the decision-maker may dismiss the complaint.
6.2 Interim action

6.2.1 Interim action is available if the decision-maker is satisfied that the presence within the University precincts of a student suspected of misconduct:

(a) presents an unacceptable risk to the safety of students, staff or property; or
(b) is likely to jeopardise the work of members of the University community.

6.2.2 Before proceeding to take interim action, the decision-maker must:

(a) consult the SIDRA or General Counsel (or, in the case of misconduct occurring in a hall of residence, the Associate Director, Accommodation Service) about the proposed interim action;
(b) provide the student with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed interim action; and
(c) consider any effects the proposed interim action may have on the student’s personal course of study and emotional or mental well-being.

6.2.3 Interim action may include exclusion from any designated part of the University, suspension from attendance at the University, or from particular classes, and, in the case of misconduct occurring in a hall of residence, exclusion from the hall of residence.

6.2.4 In each case, the exclusion or suspension:

(a) takes effect as soon as the student has been advised either orally or in writing; and
(b) may last until the applicable processes under this statute are concluded; and
(c) when concluded, will be followed by efforts to ensure the student’s reintegration into the University community is managed positively.

6.3 Temporary removal from class or facility

6.3.1 Nothing in this statute prevents a person in charge of a class or a University facility from removing a student from that class or facility when the person in charge believes, on reasonable grounds, that removal is necessary:

(a) to ensure that the activities within the class or facility are not impeded; or
(b) to protect the safety and well-being of persons in that class or facility.

6.3.2 The fact of removal from a class or a University facility together with the conduct that led to the exclusion must be reported to an appropriate decision-maker within 24 hours of the removal for further investigation and action as appropriate.

7 Alternative Resolution Processes

7.1 There are two types of alternative resolution processes available for general misconduct:

(a) resolution in accordance with the principles and values of restorative justice; and
(b) resolution in accordance with Tikanga Māori.

To avoid doubt, alternative resolution processes are not available for academic misconduct.

7.2 Restorative justice

7.2.1 Restorative justice promotes consensus-based resolution through participation, accountability and repairing the harm that occurred.

7.2.2 Restorative justice is available if the decision-maker suspects a student of general misconduct and:

(a) consults with the SIDRA (or, in the case of suspected misconduct occurring in a hall of residence, the Associate Director, Accommodation Service) as to whether the matter is suitable for restorative justice;
(b) the student acknowledges responsibility for the conduct;
(c) the decision-maker, the SIDRA, student, and any other relevant parties agree to proceed with restorative justice in accordance with the principles of restorative justice.

7.2.3 For the purposes of this statute the principles of restorative justice are:
(a) participation is voluntary;
(b) the process provides an opportunity for open and respectful dialogue about the misconduct and its impact;
(c) if other parties have been directly affected by the incident, they should be invited to participate in the resolution process and may determine the level of their involvement;
(d) where multiple interests are at stake, independent facilitation of the process should be considered and used where appropriate;
(e) outcomes should always seek to address harms and needs and promote repair;
(f) outcomes must reflect the agreed view of all parties;
(g) outcomes must promote accountability by the student and represent an appropriate and achievable response to the conduct in question.

7.2.4 Formal disciplinary proceedings are suspended pending the restorative justice process.

7.2.5 If the restorative justice process reaches an agreed resolution, no further action will be taken. If the restorative justice process does not reach an agreed resolution, formal investigation of the suspected misconduct may continue.

7.3 Tikanga Māori

7.3.1 General misconduct can be resolved using Tikanga Māori if:
(a) The Tumu Ahurei is satisfied all participants are sufficiently aware of tikanga including the requirements identified in paragraph 7.3.2; and
(b) The complainant, any student, decision-maker, and the Tumu Ahurei, Ruānuku or Ruahine of Te Herenga Waka marae agree:
   (i) to apply Tikanga Māori;
   (ii) the participants who will be involved in the process; and
   (iii) the procedure to be followed.

7.3.2 For the purpose of the resolution of suspected general misconduct, Tikanga requires that:
(a) The general misconduct be resolved within Te Tumu Herenga Waka;
(b) Te reo Māori is used for te kawa o te marae;
(c) Within Te Tumu Herenga Waka, te reo Māori or English may be used however:
   (i) if te reo Māori is used the Tumu Ahurei must consider whether it is necessary to ensure that all parties have a clear understanding of what is being communicated that:
      (A) statements be repeated in English; or
      (B) an interpreter be provided.
   (d) The process must be facilitated by the Tumu Ahurei and the Ruānuku and Ruahine o Te Herenga Waka marae, unless they are a party to the dispute;
   (e) All parties have the right to be supported by whanau;
   (f) Where possible, consensus decisions are negotiated by the parties; and
   (g) Where consensus is unable to be reached, the decision shall be made by consensus between the Tumu Ahurei, the Ruānuku and Ruahine o Te Herenga Waka marae.
7.3.3 The agreed resolution may, but is not required to, include any of the penalties identified in paragraph 9.

8 Formal misconduct procedures

8.1 There are three formal misconduct procedures:

(a) the Level 1 (minor) misconduct procedure;
(b) the Level 2 misconduct procedure;
(c) the Level 3 (serious) misconduct procedure.

8.2 Which formal misconduct procedure will be used?

8.2.1 Level 1 (minor) misconduct: The Level 1 (minor) misconduct procedure is available if:

(a) Academic Misconduct – Course-Work Student: a decision-maker suspects a coursework student of academic misconduct and the decision-maker considers that:

(i) the student has no prior record of academic misconduct; and
(ii) the suspected misconduct:

(A) is minor; or
(B) appears to have occurred due to a lack of skill in paraphrasing and referencing; or
(C) appears to have occurred due to a misunderstanding of the requirements associated with group work or other collaborative projects; and
(iii) the Level 1 (minor) misconduct procedure is appropriate.

(b) Academic Misconduct – Thesis Student: a decision-maker suspects a thesis student of academic misconduct in relation to in-progress work and the decision-maker considers that the student does not understand the University’s expectations in relation to postgraduate research.

(c) General Misconduct: a decision-maker suspects a student of general misconduct and the decision-maker considers that:

(i) the student has no prior record of general misconduct;
(ii) the suspected misconduct is minor;
(iii) the minor misconduct procedure is appropriate;
(iv) an alternative resolution process is not suitable.

8.2.2 Level 2 misconduct: The Level 2 misconduct procedure is available if:

(a) Academic Misconduct – Thesis Student: a decision-maker suspects a thesis student of academic misconduct in a thesis submitted for examination and the issues are at a level that, in the opinion of the Dean Faculty of Graduate Research or Associate Dean PGR, may be dealt with by means of revisions.

(b) Other Academic or General Misconduct: a decision-maker suspects a student of academic or general misconduct; and

(i) considers the minor misconduct procedure is not available or not appropriate;
(ii) following consultation with the SIDRA, determines that the Level 2 misconduct procedure is appropriate;
(iii) considers the conduct warrants further action; and
(iv) an alternative resolution process is not suitable.
8.2.3 **Level 3 (serious) misconduct**: The Level 3 procedure is only available if the suspected misconduct, if established, would be sufficiently serious as to justify the penalties in paragraph 9.5 below and if:

(a)  *Academic Misconduct – Thesis Student*: the Dean Faculty of Graduate Research or Associate Dean PGR considers academic misconduct by a thesis student relating to a thesis submitted for examination cannot be corrected by means of revision or minor amendment; and

(b)  *Other Academic Misconduct or General Misconduct*: a decision-maker suspects a student of academic or general misconduct, and:

   (i) considers the Level 2 misconduct procedure is not available or not appropriate;
   (ii) following consultation with the SIDRA or General Counsel determines that the Level 3 (serious) misconduct procedure is appropriate;
   (iii) considers the conduct warrants further action; and
   (iv) an alternative resolution process is not suitable.

8.3 **Procedural requirements**

8.3.1 Regardless of the level at which the suspected misconduct is being considered, a decision-maker:

(a) must notify the student suspected of misconduct. Such notice must be in writing and must:

   (i) inform the student that misconduct is suspected, the level of that misconduct and the procedure that will be used;
   (ii) set out a clear explanation of the suspected misconduct and the possible penalties;
   (iii) attach copies of any written material relating to the misconduct;
   (iv) advise the student of the next steps in the process and invite him or her to a meeting to discuss the matter;
   (v) advise the student of their entitlement to representation, and the advisory and support services offered by the VUWSA student advocacy service and of its contact details at advocate@vuwsa.org.nz; and
   (vi) in the case of Level 3 (serious) misconduct, advise the composition of the Disciplinary Committee.

(b) must use reasonable endeavours to convene a meeting with the student as soon as practicable;

(c) must provide a reasonable opportunity for the student to respond to the complaints either in person, in writing or by other appropriate means of communication such as audio-visual conference or teleconference;

(d) may seek additional information from the student or from other parties and must put any information provided from other parties to the student for comment;

(e) may seek advice from the SIDRA, General Counsel or, in the case of suspected academic misconduct by a thesis or doctoral student, a subject specialist; and

(f) must consider the student’s response.

8.3.2 In the case of academic misconduct, grades for any assessment item or course for the student or students concerned will be withheld pending resolution of the suspected misconduct.

8.4 **Determine whether misconduct has occurred**

8.4.1 A decision-maker must determine:

(a) whether misconduct has occurred;

(b) the level of that misconduct; and
(c) the appropriate penalty.

8.4.2 If the decision-maker determines that no misconduct has occurred, the decision-maker must:

(a) dismiss the matter;
(b) advise the student in writing; and
(c) update the appropriate University record system accordingly.

8.5 Notify Decision

8.5.1 Where the decision-maker determines that misconduct has occurred, the decision-maker must, as soon as practicable, notify the student of that decision. Such notice must:

(a) inform the student of the decision and what, if any, penalties are imposed;
(b) in the case of academic misconduct put in place a plan to address any skill development issues;
(c) in the case of Level 1 (minor) misconduct, caution the student, that a second incident of the same or similar behaviour could result in a finding of Level 2 or Level 3 (serious misconduct);
(d) advise the student that the University keeps a record of the misconduct and, if the misconduct is Level 2 or Level 3 (serious) misconduct, that the misconduct will appear on the student’s academic record; and
(e) advise the student that if they do not agree with the outcome they have the right to consult the student advocacy service and/or appeal the decision under paragraph 10 below.

8.5.2 The decision-maker must ensure the misconduct is recorded on the appropriate University record system. In the case of Level 2 or Level 3 (serious) misconduct, the decision-maker must advise the SIDRA of the decision.

9 Penalties

9.1 Wherever possible the penalties for misconduct should seek to address harms, promote accountability and repair, and meet the needs of all parties, so that both individual and institutional well-being are enhanced.

9.2 Level 1 (minor) misconduct penalties: Penalties may include:

(a) a public or private apology from the student;
(b) an undertaking as to future behaviour (which may also include suspending or waiving additional penalties imposed if the student complies with the terms of the undertaking);
(c) an educational or supervision programme;
(d) resubmission of a piece or pieces of work (for academic misconduct only);
(e) an oral or written warning; and
(f) a change to a specified document(s).

9.3 Level 2 penalties: Penalties may include all of the penalties in paragraph 9.2 above and:

(a) an order to pay compensation for any loss or damage caused by or arising from the misconduct;
(b) an order to make reparation for any harm caused by or arising from the misconduct;
(c) suspension from some or all classes for a period not exceeding the balance of the current trimester;
(d) withdrawal of or suspension of access to all or any part of the University precincts, facilities or services (including library or information technology services) for a period not exceeding the balance of the current trimester;
(e) cancellation in full or in part of the mark for the item of assessment in respect of which the misconduct occurred and/or the award of a fail or reduced grade for the course (for academic misconduct only); and
(f) any other action which may relieve any distress caused to the complainant, repair any damage caused by the student, or address the student’s conduct.

9.4 **Hall of Residence specific penalties:** Penalties for Level 1 (minor) misconduct or Level 2 misconduct in a hall of residence may include all of the penalties in paragraphs 9.2 and 9.3 above and:
(a) a community service project within the hall of residence which bears some relevance to the misconduct;
(b) exclusion from any particular area of, or activity associated with, a hall of residence for a period not exceeding two weeks; and
(c) a ban on guests and/or alcohol for a period not exceeding the balance of the current trimester.

9.5 **Level 3 (serious) misconduct penalties:** Penalties may include all of the penalties in paragraphs 9.2, 9.3 and 9.4 above and:
(a) permanent exclusion or eviction from a hall of residence;
(b) disenrollment and exclusion from enrolment in some or all classes for a period not exceeding two years;
(c) in the case of a thesis student, termination of enrolment in a thesis;
(d) withdrawal of a grade and/or rescindment of a qualification already awarded (for serious academic misconduct only); and
(e) withdrawal or suspension of access to all or any part of the University precincts, facilities or services (including library or information technology services) for a period not exceeding two years.

10 **Appeals**

10.1 **Right of appeal**

10.1.1 A student may appeal a finding of Level 2 or Level 3 (serious) misconduct or a penalty imposed to the Disciplinary Appeals Committee.

10.1.2 A student may not appeal an agreed resolution reached in accordance with the principles of restorative justice, Tikanga Māori, or the Level 1 (minor) misconduct procedure.

10.1.3 A student who is dissatisfied with the decision of the Level 1 (minor) misconduct procedure can request the matter be dealt with through the Level 2 misconduct procedure.

10.2 **Appeal process**

10.2.1 A student must:
(a) submit an appeal in writing to the Convenor of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee within 20 working days of the date of the letter notifying a finding of misconduct; and
(b) indicate in their submission whether they wish to appear in person before the Disciplinary Appeals Committee.

10.2.2 The Convenor may extend the timeframe if he or she is satisfied that there is a good reason why the appeal was not submitted within the specified timeframe.

10.2.3 Within 10 working days of receipt of an appeal the Convenor must in writing:
(a) acknowledge receipt of the appeal;
(b) outline the anticipated timeframe for the appeal; and
(c) provide the names of the members of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee.
10.3 **Consideration of the appeal**

10.3.1 The Disciplinary Appeals Committee:

(a) must review:

(i) the evidence submitted to the decision-maker; and
(ii) the decision, and

(b) may request:

(i) any further evidence that it deems relevant; and
(ii) to meet the student appealing or other relevant parties; and
(iii) to meet the decision-maker (or, where the decision maker was the Disciplinary Committee, the Convenor of the Disciplinary Committee).

10.3.2 If the Disciplinary Appeals Committee requests to meet any relevant parties:

(a) any meetings with the parties must be held separately;
(b) the parties may bring support persons who may speak on their behalf.

10.4 **Decision on the appeal**

10.4.1 The Disciplinary Appeals Committee must not allow an appeal unless satisfied that:

(a) the decision of the decision-maker was:

(i) unfair because of some material defect in the procedure followed; or
(ii) was incorrect on the basis of:

(A) the information considered by the decision-maker; or
(B) additional information not available to the decision-maker; or
(C) additional information available to the decision-maker but not considered; or

(b) the penalty imposed by the decision maker was manifestly excessive.

10.4.2 The Disciplinary Appeals Committee may:

(a) if the decision was unfair because of some material defect in procedure, set aside the decision and refer it back to the decision-maker;
(b) if the decision was incorrect, set aside the decision and substitute another decision;
(c) if the penalty was manifestly excessive, set aside the penalty and substitute another penalty.

10.4.3 The Disciplinary Appeals Committee must provide written reasons for its decision to allow or not allow an appeal to:

(a) the student appealing;
(b) the decision-maker.

10.4.4 The decision of the Disciplinary Appeals Committee is final.

11 **Legislative Compliance**

The University is required to manage its policy documentation within a legislative framework. The key legislation directing this statute is the Education Act 1989, New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 and Human Rights Act 1993.

12 **Appendices**

Appendix A: Composition of Committees
Appendix B: Who considers Misconduct.

13 Approval Agency

University Council

14 Approval Dates

This Statute was approved on: 21 November 2016 (effective 26 February 2017)
This Statute be reviewed by: 31 December 2018

15 Statute Sponsor

Provost

16 Contact Person

The following person may be approached on a routine basis in relation to this statute:

Student Interest and Dispute Resolution Adviser
Ext: 5023
Appendix A: Composition of Committees

1.1 Membership of committees differs depending on the role and function of the Committee.

Disciplinary Committee

(a) The Convenor of the Disciplinary Committee will be appointed by the Provost. The Convenor will normally be a member of academic staff at professorial level.

1.2 General Misconduct: the Disciplinary Committee will comprise:

(b) the Convenor;
(c) the Director, Student Academic Services (or nominee);
(d) a student member of the Academic Board, or of a Committee of the Academic Board, appointed by the Convenor; and
(e) where the suspected misconduct arose out of a hall of residence, the Associate Director, Accommodation Service (or nominee).

1.3 Academic Misconduct: In the case of suspected academic serious misconduct (except in the case of suspected academic serious misconduct by a thesis student), the Disciplinary Committee will comprise:

(a) the Convenor;
(b) the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the faculty most closely connected with the student suspected of academic misconduct (or nominee); and
(c) a student member of the Academic Board, or of a Committee of the Academic Board, appointed by the Convenor.

1.4 Academic Misconduct - candidate for a Master’s degree by thesis or by a doctoral candidate prior to thesis submission: the Disciplinary Committee will comprise:

(a) the Convenor;
(b) the Dean Faculty of Graduate Research or a senior academic staff member appointed by the Convenor in consultation with the Dean Faculty of Graduate Research; and
(c) a postgraduate student member of Academic Board, or of a Committee of Academic Board, appointed by the Convenor.

1.5 Academic Misconduct - doctoral candidate after thesis submission: the Disciplinary Committee will comprise:

(a) the Convenor;
(b) a senior academic staff member experienced in chairing oral examinations, appointed by the Convenor; and
(c) a postgraduate student member of the Academic Board, or of a Committee of the Academic Board, appointed by the Convenor.

The Disciplinary Appeals Committee

1.6 The Disciplinary Appeals Committee is convened by the Provost (or nominee) and will comprise:

(a) the Convenor;
(b) a student member of the Academic Board, or of a Committee of the Academic Board, appointed by the Convenor;
(c) a member of Academic Board appointed by the Convenor
(d) either:
   (i) a member of Council appointed by the Convenor in consultation with the Secretary to Council; or
(ii) a person independent from the University appointed by the Convenor in consultation with the Chancellor; and

(d) where the appeal arises out of a finding of misconduct within a hall of residence, the Director, Student and Campus Living (or nominee).
Appendix B: Decision-Makers

1.1 Levels 1 and 2 - Academic Misconduct:
   (a) Level 1 (Minor) Misconduct: relevant course co-ordinator;
   (b) Level 2 Misconduct or Misconduct in an exam: the relevant Head of School;
   (c) Misconduct concerning in-progress work of a thesis student: the student's supervisor;
   (d) Misconduct concerning a thesis submitted for examination: the Dean Faculty of Graduate Research, or the relevant Associate Dean.

1.2 Levels 1 and 2 - General Misconduct:
   (a) the relevant Head of School;
   (b) a Director or Associate Director of a Central Service Unit;
   (c) if the conduct occurred in a Hall of Residence, a Head of Hall.

1.3 Level 3 (Serious) Misconduct
   (a) Disciplinary Committee

1.4 Any decision-maker (other than the Disciplinary Committee) may nominate another suitable member of staff to be the decision-maker in any particular instance of suspected misconduct.