



Procedure on Academic Integrity

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1. Purpose

In order to develop and maintain a culture of trust and honesty in all academic matters, Villa College will adhere to the procedure outlined here. It relates to all aspects of students' academic activities, including but not limited to all lectures, tutorials, presentations and assessments. The College takes allegations of assessment offences seriously; and lecturers will be responsible for ensuring that the procedure is followed in order to ensure academic integrity among all students.

2. Definition of Terms

Academic integrity relates to all academic activity that students are involved in, but is specifically related to any action that potentially enables a student to gain an unfair advantage especially in an assessment. It also relates to the ethical policy or values that Villa College students are expected to abide by in their pursuit of higher education.

Plagiarism

- Copying from another student's work without the use of quotation marks; and copying from another student's work without referencing/acknowledgement of the sources;
- Summarising another student's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without acknowledgement;
- Paraphrasing material from a source without acknowledging the original author;
- Not respecting or acknowledging the copyright and intellectual property of others;
- Presenting concepts or designs that have been created by others without acknowledging the original source;
- Copying another student's work with or without their knowledge or agreement;
- Using computer code created by another student without appropriate referencing;
- Downloading material from the web and submitting it as the student's own work;
- Using course notes without referencing;
- Self-plagiarism - a student may not re-use work (wholly or in part) that he or she has submitted for a different assessment for which credit has been/is due to be awarded, unless a subsequent assessment is understood to be dependent on previous work.

Collusion

- Submitting entirely as student's own, work done in collaboration with another student (or students), with intent to gain unfair advantage;
- Assisting another student in the completion of work submitted as the other student's own unaided work;

- Permitting another student to copy all or part of one's work and submit it as their own unaided work.

Contract cheating

- Submitting as a student's own, work which has been produced in whole or part by another student on their behalf, e.g. by using a 'ghost writing' service, essay mill or similar method;
- Making available, or seeking to make available, material to another student with the intention that it be used by them to commit an assessment offence.

Falsification

- Falsifying or misrepresenting the results of experimentation/research data;
- Falsifying one's references and/or bibliography;
- Falsifying reports or projects.

Fabrication

- Reporting on experiments/research never performed or data never collected.

Cheating in controlled conditions assessments

- Possessing materials and/or devices which are not allowed for that assessment;
- Using any kind of unauthorised communication, including gestures.

Abbreviations used

AO – assessment offence

AOA – Assessment Offence Adviser (needs to be a designated academic staff in each academic unit)

FAC – Faculty Assessment Committee

ML – Module leader

PGR – postgraduate researchers

SMS – Student Management System

3. Scope

This procedure will apply to students on all Villa College-owned programmes of study. Students on programmes of partner institutions shall be subject to those institutions' academic integrity procedures. Behaviour that constitutes an assessment offence in the context of this policy statement includes but is not limited to plagiarism, collusion, contract cheating, falsification, fabrication and

cheating in assessments. Students shall have access to Turnitin similarity checker, and will be required to use it in submitting relevant assessments. Where relevant, the Turnitin similarity checker shall be used by the staff of the college in considering the severity of relevant academic offences.

4. Procedure Description

The College considers all assessments seriously, and hence students will be expected to follow academic expectations. Those whose work constitute academic offenses will face appropriate actions and penalties as specified in this procedure.

Type of offense	Indications	Penalties to be applied
Poor scholarship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incomplete, inaccurate or missing citation in a small number of instances. ▪ Copying another author/lack of paraphrasing in a small number of instances. ▪ Collusion evidenced in small parts of assessment. 	No AO noted on SMS. ML advised to ensure mark reflects poor scholarship and concerns are included in written feedback.
First, lesser offence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incomplete, inaccurate, missing references throughout some of the assessment. ▪ Copying another author/lack of paraphrasing throughout some of the assessment. ▪ Collusion evidenced in parts of the assessment. 	AO noted on SMS. AO must maintain a Plagiarism Register at Faculty/School/Institute/Centre. Assessment mark is reduced to 0. If module is not passed, then providing resit/retake opportunity is not prevented through VC regulations, then resit/retake permitted.
Second/subsequent lesser offence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incomplete, inaccurate, missing references throughout some of the assessment. ▪ Copying another author/lack of paraphrasing throughout some of the assessment. ▪ Collusion evidenced in parts of the assessment. 	AO noted on SMS. AO must maintain a Plagiarism Register at Faculty/School/Institute/Centre. Assessment mark is reduced to 0. Referred in component. Providing resit/retake opportunity is not prevented through VC regulations, then resit/retake permitted.

First, serious offense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incomplete, inaccurate, missing references for most of the assessment. ▪ Copying another author/lack of paraphrasing for most of the assessment. ▪ Falsification/Fabrication. ▪ Collusion evidenced for most of the assessment. ▪ Taking notes into an exam when not permitted to do so. 	<p>AO noted on SMS and student file.</p> <p>AO must maintain a Plagiarism Register at Faculty/School/Institute/Centre and inform the Registration Department. Registration Department will include it in the student file.</p> <p>Assessment mark is reduced to 0. Referred in component. Providing resit/retake opportunity is not prevented then resit/retake permitted.</p>
Second/Subsequent or further serious offense	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incomplete, inaccurate, missing references for most of the assessment. ▪ Copying another author/lack of paraphrasing for most of the assessment. ▪ Falsification/Fabrication. ▪ Collusion evidenced for most of the assessment. ▪ Taking notes into an exam when not permitted to do so. <p>Lack of learning from previous AO evidenced.</p> <p>Lack of evidence that student has taken academic advice.</p>	<p>AO noted on SMS and student file.</p> <p>AO must maintain a Plagiarism Register at Faculty/School/Institute/Centre and inform the Registration Department, which will include it in the student file.</p> <p>Assessment mark is reduced to 0.</p> <p>The case will be reviewed by the Disciplinary and Grievance Committee, including whether the student is to be referred in the component.</p> <p>This may mean that the student has to drop out of the programme of studies. Such decision will be subjected to approval from the Disciplinary and Grievance Committee.</p>

- For example, where this was the student’s final opportunity at the module.

4.1 Process of Investigation

- A lecturer who considers that a student has committed an assessment offence must report the allegation, providing supporting evidence as soon as possible to the Module Leader.
- If the Module Leader finds that there is no case to answer, the investigative process will cease (and the work marked without penalty).
- If the Module Leader supports the allegation, they should refer the case to the faculty's Assessment Offence Adviser (AOA).
- Following review of the evidence by the Assessment Offence Adviser, in cases where the assessed work is found to display poor levels of scholarship, and it is deemed appropriate to deal with this without formally recording an assessment offence, the Module Leader will be advised to ensure the mark reflects the poor scholarship and that the student is offered advice and support. The AOA will record the incident in his or her own notes, and ensure that the record is maintained.
- In other cases, where the evidence suggests an assessment offence has occurred, the Assessment Offence Adviser will notify the student in writing of the nature and details of the allegation, and the procedure to be followed, which will include an offer to meet with the Adviser. The student will have five working days to respond to this communication.
- The Assessment Offence Adviser will review the evidence including any explanation provided by the student and consider the nature and extent of the alleged offence. They will consider the contribution of the element or component to the whole module and whether the student has previously been found to have committed an assessment offence.
- Where a meeting takes place, the student may be informed of the recommended outcome/penalty at that time.
- The Assessment Offence Adviser will advise the Dean of the recommended penalty. The Dean will review the case and will either confirm or amend the recommended outcome/penalty.
- The student will receive the final decision of the Dean in writing within five working days of the meeting.
- If the student declined the opportunity to meet, they will be notified of the assessment offence allegation outcome within five working days of the date of their response to the initial communication.

- The outcome will be reported to the Faculty Assessment Committee (FAC).

- Where the student denies that an assessment offence has been committed, the student may be invited to attend a meeting with an investigating panel. The investigating panel is convened and chaired by the Dean and includes two additional members of staff not involved with the allegation. Where possible, the membership will include a member of staff from the field of the module about which the allegation is made. The investigation will re-consider the evidence, establish whether an offence occurred and, if so, its nature and effect, and the appropriateness of any penalties to be imposed.

- The student will be called/invited to submit a written statement and meet the investigating panel.

- The Dean will require the person(s) making the allegation to attend a meeting of the investigating panel to explain it. At the discretion of the Dean, the identity of the person making the allegation may be withheld from the student.

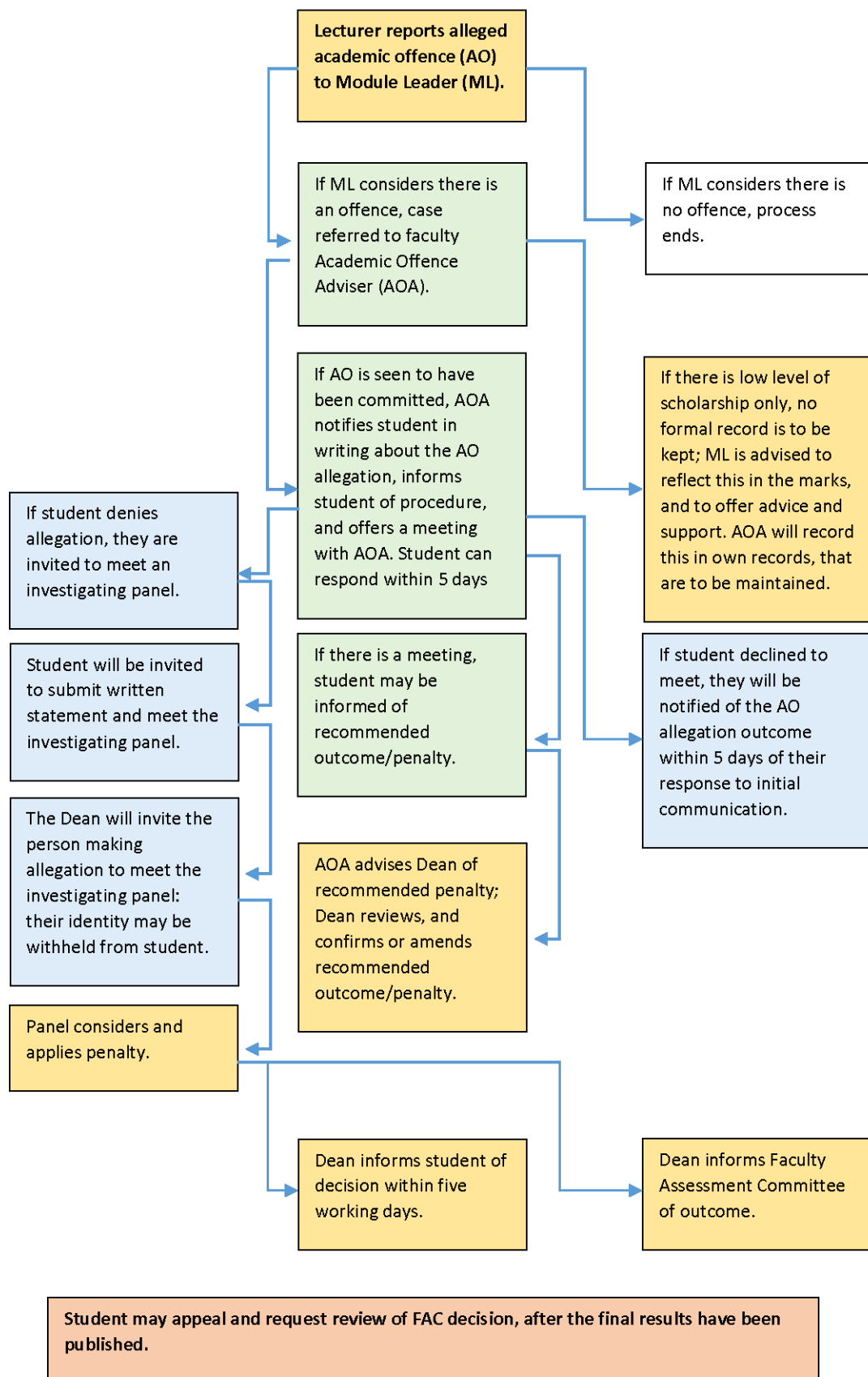
- The panel will consider the evidence and determine if an Assessment offence has been committed. If it has, a penalty will be applied according to this policy.

- Penalties for assessment offences for students on awards validated or accredited by professional or statutory bodies may be constrained by the regulations of those bodies. This may include reporting the offence to the professional or statutory body.

- Within five working days of the meeting, the Dean will report the decision in writing to the student. The outcome will be reported to the FAC by the Dean, within the same period.

- A student may use the academic appeals process to request a review of the FAC's decision once the final results have been published.

- Alleged assessment offences will normally be processed as one offence in the following situations:
 - i where the assessments have been submitted in parallel;
 - ii where an offence has not been admitted to by the student and proven, or;
 - iii where the student has not yet been notified of the first assessment offence allegation.



4.2 Group work and assessment offences

Any penalty applied in the event of an assessment offence will normally be applied to all members of a group in case of a group offence. The two exceptions are:

- a) where a member of the group acknowledges, in writing to the Assessment Offence Adviser, that they have committed an assessment offence;
- b) where the offence can be shown to have been committed by (a) specific member(s) of the group responsible for those sections of the work that are the subject of an assessment offence.

In the case of these exceptions the penalty will only be applied to the member(s) of the group who has/have committed the assessment offence.

4.3 Procedures and penalties for Postgraduate Researchers - Postgraduate Research Degrees: assessment offences

The College considers that allegations of assessment offences relating to research study undertaken by postgraduate researchers for the purpose of a master's or doctoral level award are serious, and must be investigated accordingly by the Dean of the Institute for Research and Innovation. All students of the College, including postgraduate researchers, are subject to the College's published policy on academic integrity and assessment offences.

4.4 Regulations about the investigation of assessment offence allegations

Assessment offence allegations made against postgraduate researchers (PGRs) registered on a master's or doctoral level award (including those who are also members of college staff or affiliated staff) will be investigated under the College's policies and procedures.

1. Assessment offence allegations made against PGRs relating to the assessment of taught elements of the award for which VC credit is awarded (e.g. taught modules) and all taught degrees, will be investigated in accordance with procedures in Section 5.1 of this procedure.
2. Assessment offence allegations made against PGRs relating to the assessment of the research project, the thesis or the critical commentary, or any other element of research undertaken directly relating to the award, will be investigated under PGR regulations and

procedures. The investigation will align with the principles of the College Code of Good Research Conduct as appropriate-

3. Allegations of research misconduct relating to any other area of research with which the postgraduate researcher is connected will be investigated under PGR regulations and procedures.

Investigation of assessment offence allegations will normally be led by the Dean of Research. If there is potential for conflict of interest, the allegation will be investigated by the next senior-most member of the Institute for Research and Innovation.

4.5 Procedures for investigating assessment offence allegations in PGR research

These procedures are used for investigating assessment offence allegations within research relating to postgraduate research degree awards as defined in 5.2.1 only. The process is summarised in the diagram below.

Diagrammatic summary of investigative procedures

Assessment offence is suspected, initial evidence is gathered by Reviewers, Lecturers or Supervisors

<p>Poor scholarship</p> <p><i>Evidence shows incomplete, inaccurate or missing citation in a small number of instances.</i></p> <p>Possible penalties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Details of areas for concern are included in written feedback and sent to both the student and the Research Supervisor, who must meet to agree a plan of action to improve the student's understanding of good academic practice and any further training needed. ▪ All examples must be rectified within the work concerned. ▪ Poor scholarship within a thesis submitted for final examination will be raised as part of the viva process and will require correction and / or amendment as appropriate. ▪ No offence will be recorded on the SMS/LMS. 	<p>First and lesser offence</p> <p><i>(Not applicable for offences found in a thesis submitted for final examination)</i></p> <p><i>Evidence shows plagiarism or other assessment offence of a minor nature in terms of volume with very little significance to the piece of work overall.</i></p> <p>Possible penalties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The IRI Dean issues a formal written warning to the student copied to the Research Supervisor, advising that further offences will be deemed 'serious' and may result in a severe penalty being applied from the range described. ▪ The offence is recorded on the student's file/record until graduation. ▪ Student and Research Supervisor must meet to agree an action plan as above which will be subject to IRI scrutiny. <p>All examples must be rectified within the work concerned.</p>	<p>All other offences including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First and serious offence; ▪ Second / subsequent offences; <p>All offences detected within the thesis after its submission for final examination, other than instances of poor scholarship.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Evidence shows plagiarism or other assessment offence that:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Is not extensive and is of relatively minor significance to the piece of work or thesis;</i> <li style="text-align: center;"><i>or</i> ▪ <i>Is extensive amounting to a considerable portion of the piece of work or thesis, or there are numerous occurrences throughout the work.</i> <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Is significant and compromises the academic integrity of piece of work or thesis as a whole;</i> <li style="text-align: center;"><i>or</i> ▪ <i>The student has committed a second / subsequent offence, where previously found guilty of a first offence.</i> <p>Possible penalties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Affected material is redacted within the work and the Research Committee permits the assessment to go ahead. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student is required to resubmit the work or thesis for assessment in a manner and within a timescale approved by the Research Committee, no further resubmission outcome permitted; <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Student is required by the Research Committee to withdraw and their registration is terminated, no resubmission is permitted. The student will not qualify for the award on which they are registered; <p>In all cases the offence will be recorded on the SMS/LMS and included in future academic references.</p>
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4.6 Guidance for assessment offence penalties in research master's and PhD programmes

The penalty is designed with due regard to the following and as summarised in the table below in 4.7:

- the intent to deceive;
- the proportion of the material affected;
- the level of study; and
- the amount of previous skills support training having been undertaken.

4.7 Summary of applicable penalties for AO cases in research master's and doctoral programmes

Offence outcomes	Nature of the offence committed	Normal penalty to be applied, or range of penalties where there is more than one available.
Poor scholarship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Incomplete, inaccurate or missing citation in a small number of instances. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Details of areas for concern are included in written feedback and sent to both the candidate and the Research Supervisor, who must meet to agree on a plan of action to improve the candidate's understanding of good academic practice and any further training needed. ▪ All examples must be rectified within the work concerned. ▪ Poor scholarship within a thesis submitted for final examination will be raised as part of the viva process and will require correction and / or amendment as appropriate. ▪ No offence will be recorded on the candidate's student file/record.
First and lesser offence (Not applicable for offences found in a thesis submitted for final examination)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence shows plagiarism or other assessment offence of a minor nature in terms of volume with very little significance to the piece of work overall. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The IRI Dean issues a formal written warning to the candidate copied to the Research Supervisor, advising that further offences will be deemed 'serious' and may result in a severe penalty being applied, from the range described. ▪ The offence is recorded on the candidate's student file/record until graduation.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Candidate and Research Supervisor must meet to agree on an action plan as above which will be subject to IRI scrutiny. ▪ All examples must be rectified within the work concerned.
<p>All other offences including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First and serious offence; ▪ Second / subsequent offences; ▪ All offences detected within the thesis after its submission for final examination, other than instances of poor scholarship. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evidence shows plagiarism or other assessment offence that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is not extensive and is of relatively minor significance to the piece of work or thesis; or ▪ Is extensive amounting to a considerable portion of the piece of work or thesis, or there are numerous occurrences throughout the work. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is significant and compromises the academic integrity of piece of work or thesis as a whole; or ▪ The candidate has committed a second / subsequent offence, where previously found guilty of a first offence. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Affected material is redacted within the work and the Research Committee permits the assessment to go ahead. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Candidate is required to resubmit the work or thesis for assessment in a manner and within a timescale approved by the Research Committee, no further resubmission outcome permitted; <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Candidate is required by the Research Committee to withdraw and their registration is terminated, no resubmission is permitted. The candidate will not qualify for the award on which they are registered; ▪ In all cases the offence will be recorded on the candidate's student file/record and included in future academic references.

4.8 PGR is required to withdraw, registration is terminated and no award is made

Where the offence committed is sufficiently serious the Research Committee may require the PGR to withdraw. Their registration will be terminated and no award will be made. In the case of an offence in work submitted for final assessment the PGR candidate may be withdrawn without a viva voce examination.

5. Compliance, Monitoring and Review

All academic units (Faculties/ Schools / Centres / Institutes), the Registration Department and the Institute for Academic Development are obliged to comply with this procedure.

This policy will be under the mandate of the heads of academic units and Faculty Assessment Committees.

Monitoring of adherence to this procedure shall be undertaken by the Dean/ Head of School/Director of the respective Faculty/School/Institute/Centre. Through audits, the Institute for Academic Development shall be responsible for monitoring the compliance to this procedure.

This procedure will be reviewed after 2 years of the approved date.

6. Administrative matters, responsibilities and accountability

6.1 Assessment Offence Advisers

Assessment Offence Advisers will:

- Provide advice to staff members on whether a suspected assessment offence case should be formally referred to the assessment offence process.
- Provide guidance and advice to individual students who have been formally referred to the assessment offence process for poor scholarship/ where an assessment offence has been upheld; to include advice on remedial action, support, and/or further training.
- Take an active role to identify and promote good practice and staff development in relation to the detection and deterrence of assessment offences.
- Take an active role in monitoring and analysing assessment offence data and consider suitable actions.

6.2 Dean (IRI)

The Dean will:

- Facilitate the formation of, and chair an investigating panel where required.
- Ensure that the outcome of each case is communicated in writing to the student within five working days of the relevant meeting.

7. Financial aspects

Any financial aspects related to the administration of this procedure will be in accordance with the Student Finance Policy of Villa College.

8. Orientation and implementation of this policy/procedure

Orientation of the procedure shall be undertaken by the Faculties/Schools/Centres/Institutes for the academic staff, related administrative staff and students of the respective academic units. The Institute for Academic Development shall be responsible for orienting this procedure at College level.

All academic units are responsible for the implementation of this procedure.

9. Related Policies, Procedures and Version Control*

Related Policies / Procedure

Version	Policy / Procedure Name	Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Status
1	Villa College Policy on Student Assessment and Learning	VCAS / AR / PO / 2018 / 014.v1	14 Nov 2018	Academic Senate	Active

Redundant Policies/Procedures with Implementation of this document

Version	Policy/Procedure Name	Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Status
1	Villa College Procedure on Plagiarism	VCPR/2013/02	12 February 2013	Academic Board	Redundant

Version History

Version	Policy/Procedure Name	Number	Approval Date	Approved by	Summary of Changes
	Not Applicable				