LINC Academic Integrity Policy

Our Commitment

Academic integrity is central to LINC Education's commitment and promise to its partners, students, academic professionals and staff. Without honesty and integrity, our learning community has no substance or validity. LINC Education dedicates significant time and resource to ensure there are no violations of our academic standards and it remains compliant to highest levels of ethics and integrity.

Purpose

1. States LINC Education's commitment to maintaining acceptable and highest standards of academic integrity across its academic support services
2. Elaborates how LINC Education institutes academic integrity in its services and maintains oversight to preserve these standards

Scope

This policy applies to all staff and academic professionals (LINC Fellows) associated with LINC Education, its related entities, employees, agents and subcontractors.

Definition

Academic integrity is a common set of values that govern fair, honest and transparent development of academic work. It is academic misconduct to commit any act whereby a person may attempt to obtain for himself/herself, or for another person, an unpermitted advantage in completing their academic requirements.

It also includes each individual's commitment to uphold these values and report any violations (self or from another person) without bias.

Implementation

LINC follows a three-pronged approach to ensure all principles of academic integrity are followed while supporting students. This approach is laid out below.

Training

As part of the exhaustive training that all our LINC Fellows undergo we devote a significant amount of time on academic integrity training, especially in an online support environment. This training has been designed by Australian experts, reviewed and approved by our Academic Advisory Board (http://www.linceducation.com/about.html). The training covers topics on:

    a. How do you preserve academic integrity?
    b. Boundary conditions of student support
    c. Golden rules of academic integrity
    d. Case studies
    e. Feedback

2. The training has both live delivery and self- learning modules with graded activities.
3. The LINC Fellow's understanding is further tested during subsequent simulation runs where they are evaluated on how they respond to students in such situations.

Monitoring and Quality Control

1. Over and above training, LINC Education monitors quality compliance on an on-going basis to ensure the service adheres to a high standard as well as operates within the realms of academic integrity
2. All conversations- telephonic, email chat or text, between students and LINC Fellows are recorded for quality and security purposes and in line with our privacy policy and processes.
3. Our dedicated program management and quality control team monitor and quality checks these conversations regularly for all aspects of delivery including any potential breach of integrity.

4. LINC Education ensures that all contact between students and coaches occurs through our technology platform as no student contact information is made available to the coaches and vice versa to limit the possibility of encroachment.

Obligations

1. Each LINC Fellow is bound by contractual obligations requiring them to adhere to LINC Education's standards and compliance norms including academic integrity.
2. Violation of these norms have strict contractual repercussions.
3. As part of this contract they also sign an academic integrity declaration which reiterates the expectations and learnings from their training.

Breaches

For the purpose of this policy, a breach refers to a LINC Fellow assisting a student in anyway to secure an unfair advantage over other students in completing their academic work. In this context, a breach would occur if -

1. The LINC Fellow provides answers to an assessment to the student
    a. While LINC Fellows often provide students guidance and support on assessments, the focus is on building the student's understanding of the underlying concepts or interpretation of the assessment. LINC Fellows use the provided unit materials or instructions from the teaching team to help explain concepts or assessment tasks.
2. Creates or changes the content of the student's submission
    a. As agreed with our partner institutions, LINC Fellows will encourage students to share their early drafts of assessments or submissions so they can guide them on structure, coverage, approach and even referencing skills (if relevant); However, they will not redline final drafts of submissions.
3. Colludes with the student in any way resulting in an unfair advantage to the student
    a. LINC Fellows will not provide students alternate mechanisms to complete their work in any shape or form.
4. Contact students through channels outside LINC's recommended technology platform
    a. LINC Fellows can only contact student through our LINC*trac* platform which has been specially designed to facilitate high quality 1-1

engagement and protect contact information of both students and LINC Fellows. Any attempts to contact students from outside channels or solicit contact information before, during or after the service has been delivered is considered a breach of LINC Education's academic integrity policy.

Detecting and Reporting Breaches

LINC Education's robust quality control and monitoring system institutes needed transparency to detect any policy breaches. The use of LINC Education's technology platform limits communication channels and information flow allowing effective monitoring.

In case a LINC Fellow is unsure whether they have breached the policy, they will report to LINC Program manager for evaluation.

In case a LINC Fellow becomes aware of a breach by another staff or colleague member, they will report to LINC management under the protection of confidentiality.

LINC Education will deal with all cases of policy breach swiftly and strictly as per its contractual obligations.

Consultation

This policy was prepared with inputs from the Academic Affairs team, Academic Operations and LINC Education leadership team.

Last Updated: 21.12.2018