


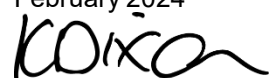
Quality System

Policy Number

POL-HE-03

Policy Title

HE Academic Misconduct Policy

Written by:	Equality Impact Assessment	Date of Policy	Date of next review
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Academic misconduct is an overarching term used in this policy to cover a range of offences included within the following specified types:

- academic negligence
- academic malpractice
- academic cheating

This policy intends to allow the College to determine whether or not academic misconduct has taken place within summative assessments. It is expected that academic misconduct suspected in formative work will be drawn to the student's attention by staff. Please note that this policy has been written with reference to the majority of cases that are suspected. However, there are cases which do not easily fit within the process defined in this policy, but nevertheless need to be dealt with insofar as this is possible. In addition, practice and technology continues to evolve. (Please see Appendix 3 for more details).

Allegations of academic misconduct within summative assessments will be considered via the following staged procedures.

- Informal Stage
- Formal Stage

The College may revoke an award, and all rights associated with an award, where it is established that a person has obtained the award by committing academic misconduct. In such cases of alleged academic misconduct, the Formal Stage procedure will be followed. If the Formal Stage Panel Hearing concludes that the allegation is proven, then it will recommend to the relevant Award Board that the award be revoked. If the Award Board accepts such a recommendation, then it will report its decision to the HE Academic Board for information and to the relevant awarding organisation.

2.0 Definition

2.1 Academic misconduct is defined by the College as any activity or attempted activity which gives an unfair advantage to one or more students over their peers.

3.0 Guiding Principles

3.1 The College aims to educate students to develop good academic practice and writing skills. As part of this philosophy to help students avoid academic misconduct - and also warn of the consequences of committing academic misconduct - the College provides the following support:

- Advice and guidance from Programme Teams and course information.
- The Learning Zone [LZ] provides writing and study skills support.
- Facility for students and staff to use plagiarism e-detection software using Moodle (see Appendix 1).

3.2 The assessment of students as regards their achievement of learning outcomes is based on the principle that, unless clearly stated otherwise in the assessment instructions, the work undertaken by a student for assessment has been carried out by that student and is their own work.

3.3 The work submitted by a student for assessment must therefore have been carried out by the student. Work presented in such a way that it fails clearly to identify the work done by others may attract the charge of academic misconduct.

- 3.4 Any essays, dissertations or other assessed work undertaken must be a student's own work and any passages quoted, paraphrased or opinions relied upon must be properly attributed.
- 3.5 Equally, if a student uses images, designs, plans, diagrams, computer code or other such media which have been originated by someone else, the student must specify the source.
- 3.6 The College accepts that a student's work may be inspired by what they have read, but a student must not copy or paraphrase whole sentences, paragraphs or parts of someone else's work without proper acknowledgement.
- 3.7 Where a student reproduces someone else's ideas, but in their own words to a greater or lesser extent (or paraphrasing), they must cite the original source and, in the case of direct quotes, include the page number. If a student is in any doubt as to how to cite reference material, they must consult a member of the programme team, the Learning Zone or the HE Student Liaison Mentor.
- 3.8 Where an element of group work is an appropriate part of the assessment methodology, the assessment instructions must make clear the nature, content and extent of such group-based activity.
- 3.9 Staff are required to give students specific instructions on when, how and in what form they should submit/undertake any assessment and students are encouraged to seek clarification.
- 3.10 The conduct of students in an examination setting must be such that there must be no suspicion that the work submitted is not their own, or that they have sought to gain an unfair advantage over other students sitting an examination by committing academic misconduct. The College therefore operates specific instructions relating to the conduct of Invigilators and students in examination settings (Examination Administration Procedure)
- 3.11 Students accused of academic misconduct shall be innocent until judged to be guilty following the process set out below. Normally, students will be allowed to progress with their academic studies until the conclusion of procedures. However, where - as a consequence of being found guilty of academic misconduct - a student needs to be re-assessed; this will take place at the next available opportunity but may impose a delay in progression. Any such decisions will be made according to the academic regulations of the awarding body. Any students subject to professional body requirements may be required to suspend their studies subject to an outcome under this policy. Any Professional or Statutory, Regulatory Body [PSRB] requirements would be referred to in programme documentation.
- 3.12 Students accused of academic misconduct shall have the right to be made aware of the accusation, to attend the academic misconduct hearing should they wish to, and to challenge that accusation.
- 3.13 The burden of proof shall rest with the College and must be based on clear, strong and cogent evidence.
- 3.14 Where a student is found guilty of academic misconduct at any stage, then a record will be kept of this and any associated penalty on their record. One complete set of papers relating to each proven case will be retained in a separate file by the HE Office to be referred to only in the event that a subsequent action, for example during any appeal made by the student, necessitates reference to this material.
- 3.15 Where a case is not proven or withdrawn at the Informal Stage and the student is therefore not found guilty, no detailed record of any sort will be kept. However, anonymous statistical data on unproven Informal Stage and Formal Stage cases will be kept by the HE Office. With reference to unproven or withdrawn Formal Stage cases, one set of papers will be filed separately by the HE Office and referred to only in the event of a subsequent action requiring a judgement to be made about the conduct of the case.

- 3.16 At the commencement of their programme, students must be advised of the College's policy for dealing with alleged academic misconduct and the penalties which may be imposed if they are found guilty of academic misconduct.
- 3.17 Programme handbooks should make reference to the dangers and penalties of academic misconduct, and these references must be reinforced verbally by staff.
- 3.18 Staff who suspect that academic misconduct has taken place shall pursue the process outlined in this policy.
- 3.19 All communication including letters, evidence and invitations will, wherever possible, be sent via email.
- 3.20 Staff who sit as panel members must have had no previous involvement in the student's case.

4.0 Stages of the Process

- 4.1 The College recognises three broad types of academic misconduct offences; academic negligence, academic malpractice and academic cheating. Academic negligence is the least serious, and academic cheating the most serious.

4.2 Informal Stage

If the Programme Leader and Head of School are satisfied that academic misconduct has not taken place, no further action will be taken in relation to the case and no formal record of the issue will be kept. The student will be informed of this outcome in writing.

- 4.3 If the Programme Leader and Head of School deem that academic misconduct has occurred, then they will forward the case to the Academic Misconduct Committee for an Academic Misconduct Panel Hearing to take place

and the following course of action will apply and the student will be notified of the outcome in writing.

4.4 Formal Stage

Referral to Academic Misconduct Committee for an Academic Misconduct Panel Hearing where the student:

i) Has a previous case of academic misconduct recorded against them, whether that be negligence, malpractice or cheating. (If multiple instances are discovered and investigated at the same time or an instance occurs before the conclusion of the first academic misconduct meeting, this should be considered as one instance).

ii) Where the Programme Leader believes the case is of an appropriately serious level (. NB. this can be either negligence, malpractice or cheating, even if it is a first-time offence);

- 4.5 The Programme Leader or Head of School will forward the Informal Stage joint decision email/letter and supporting evidence to the HE Office for the case to be heard by a panel of the Academic Misconduct Committee (AMC) The referral to AMC must be made within 5 days of the student being notified of the decision to make this referral.
- 4.6 Where a case is reported to the HE Office for the case to be heard by the Academic Misconduct Committee, the Programme Leader will inform the relevant Assessment Board. The Assessment Board must defer consideration of the work in question until the AMB has made a decision on the case. The results for modules unaffected by the suspected misconduct should be considered by the Assessment Board and released to the student.

5.0 Summary of Academic Misconduct Committee procedures

5.1 Academic Misconduct Panel hearing (Formal Stage)

Ordinarily, cases will be heard by a panel on behalf of the Academic Misconduct Committee in the form of a formal panel hearing. The panel will comprise of at least three members of Academic Misconduct Committee (AMC), two of whom will be academic staff members of the AMC. The HE Development Coordinator (or delegate) will act as Chair.

5.2 i) The programme team representative(s) are required to attend to present the case.

ii) The panel documentation will be circulated in advance of the meeting and will include the Programme Leader's decision letter and supporting evidence. The student(s) will be invited to attend the panel meeting. They will be invited via email/letter at least **3 working days** before the hearing. They may, however, also choose not to attend the panel hearing.

iii) Panel members, and the Programme Leader will all have access to the same documentary and verbal evidence. An exceptional arrangement may be made at the discretion of the Chair, if a student wishes to request that additional evidence be made available to the panel only (e.g. properly certified medical evidence that the student felt unable to share with the programme team).

iv) If the student has a previous case of Academic Misconduct on their record, the panel will only be told of this after a verdict is reached but before a penalty is decided upon (if appropriate).

v) Where an Academic Misconduct Panel hearing concludes that the student has committed misconduct, the panel will impose a penalty in conjunction with the AMBeR Tarif (as seen in Appendix 2). The matter will be recorded on the student's record and will be reported at the next Assessment Board. The programme team will also provide the student with appropriate guidance regarding best practice to avoid such situations again in the future and to help the student develop their understanding. Any penalty which impacts upon the mark of a piece of assessment will be applied as well as any other penalty (eg. penalties for late submission).

vi) The student should be informed of the outcome of the meeting within 5 days of the Formal Stage meeting.

All penalties should be appropriate and proportionate, taking into account the evidence presented in the panel hearing.

6.0 Academic Misconduct Appeals

6.1 Students who consider that the College has failed to carry out its duty to act fairly in the application of this Academic Misconduct Policy, and would like to appeal this decision, should consult the Academic Appeals Procedure for further guidance outside of this Policy.

Academic Misconduct Policy



Appendix One – Plagiarism E-detection and Generative AI detection

The College will allow both students and staff the opportunity to make use of software designed to detect the possibility of plagiarism.

The College accepts that such software does not itself prove plagiarism, nor will any single piece of software deal with all types of plagiarism. The software provides information on which judgements have to be made within this policy.

Providing students with the opportunity to make use of e-detection software at an early stage of their learning career and allowing them to make such use thereafter as they wish, is an important part of the process of educating students as to the nature of academic misconduct and in helping them to avoid it.

Turn It In is an internally used plagiarism tracker that provides a percentage-based report on all online submissions from a student. All written student submissions should be submitted via Moodle (unless otherwise agreed with the relevant awarding organisation/validating partner).

Any suspected cases of plagiarism will be dealt with via this Policy.

Students must be reminded from time-to-time that they are encouraged to make use of e-detection software and that staff routinely will make use of it on an ongoing basis during the assessment process.

Programme Teams may specify the form of submission of assignments in such ways as to facilitate submission to e-detection procedures (for example uploading assignment submissions as a PDF file).

Appendix Two – AMBeR Plagiarism Tariff

1

Assign points based on the following criteria

HISTORY

1st Time	100 points
2nd Time	150 points
3rd/+ Time	200 points

AMOUNT / EXTENT

Below 5% AND less than two sentences	80 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised	105 points
Between 5% and 20% OR more than two sentences but not more than two paragraphs	105 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised	130 points
Between 20% and 50% OR more than two paragraphs but not more than five paragraphs	130 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised	160 points
Above 50% OR more than five paragraphs	160 points
Submission purchased from essay mill or ghostwriting service †	225 points

* Critical aspects are key ideas central to the assignment

† Some institutions may consider this to be a separate form of academic malpractice

LEVEL / STAGE

Level 1	70 points
Level 2	115 points
Level 3/Postgraduate	140 points

VALUE OF ASSIGNMENT

Standard weighting	30 points
Large project (e.g. final year dissertation)	60 points

ADDITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Evidence of deliberate attempt to disguise plagiarism by changing words, sentences or references to avoid detection **40 points**

2

Award penalties based on the points

PENALTIES (Summative Work)

In all cases a formal warning is given and a record made contributing to the student's previous history

Points	Available Penalties (select one)
280 - 329	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further action beyond formal warning Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required, with no penalty on mark
330 - 379	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further action beyond formal warning Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required, with no penalty on mark Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required but mark capped or reduced
380 - 479	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required but mark capped or reduced Assignment awarded 0% - no opportunity to resubmit
480 - 524	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment awarded 0% - no opportunity to resubmit Module awarded 0% - re-sit required, but mark capped or reduced Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, but credit still awarded
525 - 559	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module awarded 0% - re-sit required, but mark capped or reduced Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, but credit still awarded Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, and credit lost Award classification reduced Qualification reduced (e.g. Honours -> no Honours) Expelled from institution but credits retained Expelled from institution with credits withdrawn
560+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to resit, and credit lost Award classification reduced Qualification reduced (e.g. Honours -> no Honours) Expelled from institution but credits retained Expelled from institution with credits withdrawn

PENALTIES (Formative Work)

280 - 379	Informal warning
380+	Formal warning, with record made contributing to the student's previous history

Academic Misconduct Policy



Appendix Three – Exceptional Cases

This policy has been written with reference to the majority of cases that are suspected. However, there are cases which do not easily fit within the process defined in this policy, but nevertheless need to be dealt with insofar as this is possible. In addition, practice and technology continues to evolve.

An example of an exceptional case, is when the marker reasonably believes that the submitted assessment is not a student's own work (for example, so inconsistent with previous performance as to suggest that it has not been produced by the student concerned) but the sources from which the work might have been derived cannot be located. This may be because the student has plagiarised the work from another, purchased/commissioned a piece of work or used generative AI in order to produce parts or the entirety of a piece of assessed work.

As part of the information given to students about academic misconduct, they must be informed of this information relating to exceptional cases, and advised that it is in their interests to retain materials used in developing a submission, such as would indicate its development and the work done in its preparation.