

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT PROCEDURE



PURPOSE OF THE PROCEDURE

Plagiarism, cheating, collusion and attempting to obtain an unfair academic advantage are forms of academic misconduct and are entirely unacceptable for any student. This procedure defines what the College means by plagiarism, gives examples of the categories of other forms of unacceptable academic misconduct outside examinations, determines the procedures to be adopted in suspected cases and indicates the academic penalties which may be appropriate in proven cases.

SCOPE

In creating this procedure, the College is seeking to maintain the integrity of its academic awards and procedures and to give any students affected a fair opportunity to respond to any allegation of academic misconduct. Each case will be determined on its own facts and merits.

The procedure is for use outside public examinations, where the examining boards' own procedures will apply. It includes college-assessed work which contributes towards external examination marks, including Btec Higher National awards. University validated programmes follow the respective university procedures (which are fundamentally similar to this procedure) however the evaluation of any allegation will be firstly conducted under the College's Academic Regulatory Framework for Higher Education programmes.

The use of the word "academic" throughout this document is not intended to restrict its application to any particular group of courses and programmes.

Academic Misconduct

The following are dishonest and therefore unacceptable and not allowed by the college:

- Taking someone else's work, images or ideas and passing it off as your own (this is called plagiarism);
- Using the computer, either the internet, or information stored on a hard or floppy disk which belongs to someone else, and passing it off as your own;
- Cheating by acting unfairly or dishonestly to gain an advantage;
- Secretly agreeing with others to cheat or deceive (this is known as collusion);
- Falsification or attempting to falsify submission details (eg dates, times);
- "Self-plagiarism" ie using the same assignment/work for different course assessments.

Further explanation is included in Appendix 1.

All these are examples of **academic misconduct**. If a student is discovered or suspected of doing any of the things shown in the list above, the College will investigate and may take action against them.

The College will seek to ensure that students are helped to avoid Academic Misconduct. Guidelines of appropriate steps to be taken by staff are given in Appendix 2.

RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

Procedures to be taken when a case of academic misconduct is suspected

If a minor case is suspected, the Programme Leader should:

- Discuss the incident with the student in an informal interview;
- Warn the student about future conduct;
- Deduct marks from the student's work or return work to be re-done and resubmitted for marking;
- If this has happened before, refer directly to the College Learner Disciplinary Procedure (Conduct).

If a moderate or serious case is suspected, the Programme Leader should refer the case to the College Learner Disciplinary Procedure (Conduct). All the normal processes of the College Learner Disciplinary Procedure (Conduct) must be followed, and after appropriate first or second stage disciplinary interviews any or none of the following sanctions may be applied:

- Award a reduced grade in the exam/test/module or withhold from awarding a grade for assessed work;
- Withdraw the right of the student to re-sit the exam or test or withdraw the right to resubmit work for assessment;
- Disqualify the student from the course;
- Recommend expulsion of the student from the college;
- Inform the awarding body in line with their procedures;
- Inform external examiners/verifiers in line with awarding body procedures.

Investigation of Academic Misconduct

In any case of Academic Misconduct, and especially where the allegation is not admitted by the student, the College Learner Disciplinary Procedure (Conduct) allows the senior staff involved to suspend the process while additional evidence is checked. Within Higher Education, should an allegation be substantiated the matter will be processed (where necessary) according to the awarding University's policies and procedures. In any such situation, it is within the provision of the College Learner Disciplinary Procedure (Conduct) for the senior staff involved to convene a meeting of other staff to make academic decisions on the allegation, the student's work, other relevant work, or other appropriate evidence. The student should be invited to any such meeting and has the right to be accompanied by a friend or relative. The possible outcomes of any such investigative meeting are:

- No academic misconduct has taken place, and the procedure ceases;
- The student accepts that misconduct has taken place, and the procedure continues;
- Without the student's agreement, the senior staff find that academic misconduct has taken place and the College Learner Disciplinary Procedure (Conduct) continues.

Appeals

Appeals against decisions made under the Academic Misconduct Procedure may be made as laid down in the College Learner Disciplinary Procedure (Conduct).

RELATED POLICIES, PROCEDURES, DOCUMENTS, DEFINITIONS

Learner Disciplinary Procedure (Conduct)

DEFINITIONS

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work, words, images, ideas, opinions or discoveries, whether published or not, as one's own, or alternatively appropriating the artwork, images or computer generated work of others, without properly acknowledging the source, with or without their permission.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- Directly copying from written physical, pictorial or written material, without crediting the source;
- Paraphrasing someone else's work without crediting the source;
- "Self-plagiarism" is using the same assignment/work for different course assessments without the explicit permission from the Programme Leader to do so. Presenting the same assignment/work again could lead to a student gaining credit twice for a single piece of work.

Cheating and Collusion


Examples of other forms of academic misconduct (such as cheating, collusion and attempting to obtain an unfair academic advantage) include:

- Getting someone else to produce part or all of the work submitted;
- Colluding with one or more student(s), or other people, to produce a piece of work and submitting it individually as one's own;
- Copying the work of another person, with or without their permission;
- Knowingly allowing another student to copy one's own work;
- Resubmitting one's own previously graded work;
- Using forbidden notes, books or technology in producing assigned work or tests;
- Fabrication of results (including experiments, research, interviews, observations).

GUIDELINES FOR STAFF TO AVOID ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

To prevent the occurrence of academic misconduct, staff should:

- Inform students clearly of the policy on academic integrity and honesty;
- Include statements on academic misconduct where appropriate in College policies and student handbooks;
- Make students aware of the penalties for academic misconduct at the earliest stage of the course;
- Provide students with guidance on the format of formal acknowledgement of source material;
- Inform students, in writing if possible, of the extent to which they can collaborate in coursework;
- Be aware that most students are very computer literate and can scan text and surf the web for model essays etc with ease. Ensure that students are adequately supervised when using computers to prevent students from copying or printing out other people's work as part of their own;
- Devise procedures for assessing work in such a way that plagiarism, cheating and collusion are more detectable. These might include: ensuring that coursework assessment is supported by unseen and supervised work under test conditions; changing assignment topics yearly, on at least a three-yearly cycle; making less use of generic assignments in favour of tailored assignments; getting to know the style of students' writing/submissions early on in the course; comparing subsequent work to initial assessment tests; assessing a class group's coursework on a single occasion, to enhance the likelihood of the assessor spotting plagiarised passages, or other collusion;
- Fully investigate all instances of suspected academic misconduct utilising the proper disciplinary procedures.

| Policy Review | | | | |
|-----------------|--|--|---------------|---------------|
| Author/Owner | Position | Approved by SMT | Approval date | Review date |
| Derrick Goddard | Head of Quality Assurance, Teaching, Learning & Assessment | Signed:  | 07.11.17 | November 2019 |

Document Control – Revision History (Policies only)

| Author/Owner | Summary of Changes | Date | Date last reviewed by SED | Recommend to SED Y/N |
|-----------------|--------------------|----------|---------------------------|----------------------|
| Derrick Goddard | No changes. | 12.09.17 | 11.11.15 | No |
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| Initial Equality Impact Screening | | | |
|--|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Have you consulted on this procedure? Yes Details: Director of HE | | | |
| What evidence has been used for this assessment? | | | |
| Could a particular group be affected differently in either a negative or positive way? Indicate Y where applicable | | | |
| Group | Negative impact | Positive impact | Evidence |
| Age Disability Gender (incl. Transgender) Race (incl. Gypsy & Traveller) Religion or belief Sex Sexual orientation Marriage & civil partnership Pregnancy & maternity Other groups (see guidance) | | | |
| Please give details: | | | |
| If any negative impacts are identified, are there any related policies, services, strategies, procedures or functions that need to be assessed alongside this screening? If yes, please detail below: | | | |
| Should the procedure proceed to a full Equality Impact Assessment? No If no, please give reasons: No negative impacts identified | | | |
| Declaration We are satisfied that an initial screening has been carried out on this procedure and a full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. We understand that the Equality Impact Assessment is required by the College and that we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this assessment | | | |
| Completed by Author: Kate Hill | | Position: DoTLQ | Date: 11.09.15 |
| Reviewed by Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity Group: | | | Date: 11.11.15 |
| Comments from Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity Group Review: | | | |