

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Scope

This policy applies to students undertaking HE qualifications at Grantham College except where the regulations of the awarding body or validating institution take precedence.

Introduction

This policy provides definitions for the identification of academic misconduct, the sequence of actions for the investigation of alleged misconduct and guidelines for the application of penalties in confirmed cases.

The College's policy and procedures seek to follow the precepts and guidance contained in the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) *UK Quality Code for Higher Education*, specifically *Chapter B6 – Assessment of students and the recognition of prior learning (2013)*, which requires a 'processes for preventing, identifying, investigating and responding to unacceptable academic practice' (Indicator 14).

Academic misconduct is defined as any intentional or reckless conduct by a student, or students, which aims to gain an unfair advantage or benefit, or cause an unfair disadvantage or loss to another student, or students, in pursuit of an academic qualification at the College. It includes conduct which is an attempt to gain such an advantage or to disadvantage another student or students, whether successful or not.

The context for academic misconduct may be a formal examination, piece(s) of coursework, assessed placement, performance, presentation, experimental results, computer programmes or any assessment taken by a student in pursuit of an academic qualification at the College.

Definitions of Academic Misconduct

Plagiarism is defined as the unacknowledged inclusion in a student's work of material derived from the work (published or unpublished) of another person. Collaborative group assessments, which include the work of others that has not been acknowledged, are plagiarised. Specific examples of plagiarism might include:

- The inclusion in a student's work of more than a single phrase from another person's work without the use of quotation marks and acknowledgement of the source;
- The summarising of another person's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without acknowledgement;
- The use of the ideas of another person without acknowledgement of the source;
- Copying the work of another student, with or without their knowledge or agreement.

Cheating is defined as the use by a student of materials or equipment which are prohibited in the examination room, or passes off the work of another person as their own for examination assessment. Students using published materials or equipment which contravene the assessment regulations for coursework, placement, performance or presentation are also examples of cheating.

Collusion is defined as the submission, with the intent to gain unfair advantage, of work which has been done in collaboration with another person as entirely their own, or where a student collaborates with another student to complete work with the intention of the work being submitted as the student's unaided work.

Falsification of the results of laboratory or field work, or other forms of research evidence and data collected for the completion of an assignment.

Impersonation of another student (candidate) during an examination, for a coursework assessment or other assessed event.

Conspiracy is defined as colluding with another person or persons to complete the candidate's unfinished work or replacing the candidate in an examination or other event.

False statements or providing false evidence to gain admission or register into a qualification or to defer an assessment, withdraw from an examination, or seek an extension to an assessment.

Falsification or destruction of documents, transcripts, certificates, awards, ID cards or other official documents in order to gain admission to qualification or gain the qualification itself.

Use of inappropriate or inflammatory language in assessed work, unless it is clearly identified as necessary in the research for a topic or outcome.

NB: The above list is not exhaustive.

Procedure for the investigation and determination of allegations of academic misconduct

The module tutor or marker will inform the appropriate Curriculum Manager of a suspected case of misconduct.

The Curriculum Manager, after consultation with the tutor concerned, will write to the student explaining the nature of the allegation and require him or her to attend an informal meeting. In cases where the Curriculum Manager is the module tutor or marker another member of the programme team will attend the meeting. The Curriculum Manager will present the evidence to the student and invite them to comment. At the conclusion of the meeting, the Curriculum Manager and module tutor or marker will review the evidence to determine whether a case has been established. In cases involving more than one student the Curriculum Manager will decide whether they should be interviewed together or separately.

If they decide that the student has provided a satisfactory explanation of the circumstances and that there is no case to answer, they will advise the Assistant Principal: HE who will write to the student indicating that the matter is closed.

If they determine that a case of academic misconduct has been established, they will consider whether there are grounds for believing that it has been committed inadvertently (careful thought should be given to the case of first-year students since the early period of a student's registration should be regarded as developmental for the purpose of instilling good academic practices). In those cases where it is decided that

the alleged offence is inadvertent, the Curriculum Manager will advise the Assistant Principal: HE who will issue a formal warning to the student. The letter should make clear that any future case of alleged academic misconduct by the student will be regarded as deliberate. A copy of the formal warning will be placed on the student's file. A formal warning may also be issued in cases where it is suspected that a deliberate offence has taken place but there is insufficient proof to proceed further.

Where it is determined that a case of deliberate academic misconduct has been established, the Curriculum Manager will advise the Assistant Principal: HE accordingly. The Curriculum Manager will inform the student in writing of the outcome indicating that the matter will now become the subject of a formal investigation, whilst making clear that, at this stage, the allegations have not yet been substantiated. The Curriculum Manager will write to the Assistant Principal: HE enclosing copies of any evidence relating to the case.

The Assistant Principal: HE will:

- Inform the student of the allegation in writing and invite the student to respond in writing within ten working days, admitting or denying the allegation. This period may be shorter than ten days if the Subject Assessment Board is due to meet within that time period;
- Arrange for an Adjudicating Panel to be established consisting of three members of academic staff unconnected with the student's programme, one of whom shall be a Curriculum Manager who shall act as Chair;
- Inform the student of the date and venue of the hearing within two days of the end of the ten-day response period;
- Advise the student that they have the right to be heard in person and be accompanied at the Panel meeting by a friend, who may be a member of staff or student of the College but who is not a parent or legal representative. The student may claim deferment of the meeting as a result of extenuating circumstances (supported by medical or other written evidence);
- The Panel shall proceed with or without the attendance of the student concerned, unless the student establish a claim for extenuating circumstances which warrants a deferment of the meeting.

Procedures for the Adjudicating Panel

- The Panel may call witnesses, persons associated with the case, ask for further evidence.
- The Panel will make a judgement when it is satisfied that it has examined sufficient evidence.
- The Panel will make its judgement in private on whether the allegation of misconduct is proven or not.
- The Panel meeting will be minuted and the minutes made available to the Subject Assessment Board.

Where more than one student is accused of the same offence, it will be for the Chair of the Panel to determine whether they should be interviewed separately or together.

Penalties

The Adjudicating Panel may impose one of the following penalties:

- Mark of zero to be recorded for the item of assessment under review, right of retrieval to be retained for two retrieval opportunities;
- Mark of zero to be recorded for the item of assessment under review, right of retrieval to be retained for one retrieval opportunity only;
- Mark of zero to be recorded for all items of assessment for the module, right of retrieval to be retained for one opportunity only;
- Mark of zero to be recorded for all items of assessment for the module, right of retrieval to be withdrawn (not be used where module failure prevents progression)
- Mark of zero to be recorded for all modules at that level, right of retrieval to be retained i.e. the student must repeat that stage or level.
- Mark of zero to be recorded for all modules at that level, withdrawal of all rights to retrieval and the student's registration terminated.

The above penalties will include the addition of a formal or final warning to the student(s) record.

The Adjudicating Panel will be required to exercise judgment in each case on the severity of the penalty, taking into consideration the circumstances of the misconduct, whether more than one student was involved, whether previous misconduct had taken place and the level of the programme on which the student is registered. Panel members should be aware of the consequences of any penalty on the student's progression on the programme.

Notification

The student concerned will be notified in person at the end of the panel meeting and by letter, to the relevant address, of the decision of the Adjudication Panel. The letter will be posted no later than five working days after the meeting of the Adjudication Panel.

Appeals

Students may appeal against the Panel decision; the appeal must be received by the Assistant Principal: HE within 20 working days of the notification of the result to the student.

Collaborative Provision

Partner Colleges are expected to have a procedure for academic misconduct that is equivalent to that of the College. Partners may adapt this code and adoptions will be scrutinised at the partner approval event.

Students will also be notified of their right to appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for HE (the College's external ombudsman) if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of their appeal.

Quality Assurance – version control			
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