



# **Assessment Academic misconduct Policy**

**Revised September 2017: Open University Compliant**

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# Assessment Academic Misconduct Policy

## Aim

The aim of this policy is to ensure that there are no acts that seek to undermine the integrity and validity of assessment and the certification of the qualifications.

This Policy aims to ensure that there are 'processes for preventing, identifying, investigating and responding to unacceptable academic practice'. Further that 'Assessment is carried out securely' and that 'A commitment to equity guides higher education providers in enabling student development and achievement'. (Quotes from the UK Quality Code)

## Academic misconduct

The term academic misconduct covers any deliberate actions, neglect, default or other practice that compromises, or could compromise the:

- assessment process;
- integrity of a regulated qualification;
- validity of a result or certificate;
- reputation and credibility of the Awarding Body; or,
- qualification or the wider qualifications community.

Academic misconduct may include a range of issues from the failure to maintain appropriate records or systems to the deliberate falsification of records in order to claim certificates.

In assessing the severity of any offence the College will use the Open University AMBeR Tariff.

## Maladministration

Maladministration is any activity, neglect, default or other practice that results in the College or individual learner not complying with the specified requirements for delivery of the qualification as set out in the relevant codes of practice, where applicable.

## Procedure

The College does not tolerate actions or attempted actions of academic misconduct by students, administrative staff and teaching staff.

The College will enforce penalties and/or sanctions on Students where incidents or (attempted incidents) of academic misconduct have been identified and proven.

A rigorous assessment process will be open and fair when handling incidents or (attempted incidents) of academic misconduct.

The policy on academic misconduct aims to:

- Record the incidents or (attempted incidents) of academic misconduct;
- Inform the Students as soon as practicable by email, phone or by letter;
- Inform the Students of their rights and responsibilities;
- Provide the Students with an opportunity to discuss how they intend to rectify the situation;
- Involve members of the Programme and Management team to investigate proven academic misconduct incidents or (attempted incidents);
- Handle the investigation in a fair, balanced and timely manner.
- In assessing the severity of any offence the College will use the Open University AMBeR Tariff.

The College reserves the right in suspected cases of academic misconduct to withhold the issuing of a certificate, whilst the investigation is being carried out. The outcome of the investigation will determine whether or not the certificate is withheld.

### **Intervention and Support for Students**

Students will be taught the process and appropriate formats for recording cited texts and other source materials or other materials including websites through face to face feedback sessions, study skills class and formative feedback.

It is necessary for all students to sign a declaration for all assessed work to authenticate that it is their own work. This will ensure that when any incidents of academic misconduct have been identified or suspected, it would be considered as evidence which may be used in any investigation.

The students will be made aware of this on each occasion that the document is being signed, confirming that they are agreeing to the statement.

### **Student Academic misconduct: Plagiarism**

By copying and claiming another person's work as your own, including artwork, images, words, computer generated work, such as internet sources, inventions whether published or not without appropriately acknowledging the source and giving credit where credit is due. It is therefore essential that:

- quotations from published and unpublished sources are clearly acknowledged;
- web-based materials are not to be directly downloaded into an assignment and are fully referenced like any other source material;
- students do not incorporate materials/assignments purchased or acquired from internet sites or commissioned from sources which write assignments for payment;
- paraphrasing of material from others must be clearly referenced;
- students do not normally incorporate materials previously submitted at this or any other institution towards the completion of an award;
- sources of illustrations, photographs maps and statistics are acknowledged;
- unless students have been instructed to produce a group assignment, students must produce work which is uniquely their own;
- where work is done as part of a group the submission sheet should include a list of all students who contributed to this work.

### **Student Academic misconduct: Collusion**

By working together with other students to produce work that is submitted for assessment as individual work. All parties involved in collusion are considered to be equally guilty of this offence and both will be subject to both the College and the awarding organisation guidelines.

### **Student Academic misconduct: Impersonation**

By pretending to be someone else in order to produce work for another student or arranging for another person to take the place of another student in an assessment or exam.

### **Student Academic misconduct: Fabricated Data**

By making up or fabricating data. Fabricated data is defined as any data presented as part of a formal assessment and which has not been obtained by legitimate means of experimentation or enquiry and/or there is insufficient evidence to support its validity. Fabricated data also includes any instance where existing data has been falsified.

### **Student Academic misconduct: Inappropriate Material**

By the inclusion of inappropriate, offensive, discriminatory or obscene material in assessment evidence. This includes vulgarity and swearing that is outside of the context of the assessment, or any material of a discriminatory nature (including racism, sexism and homophobia).

### **Student Academic misconduct: Inappropriate Behaviour**

By inappropriate behaviour during an internal assessment that causes disruption to others. This includes shouting and/or aggressive behaviour or language and having an unauthorised electronic device that causes a disturbance in the examination room.

### **Who will be involved in the academic misconduct Investigations?**

- Course Assessors/Tutors;
- Lead Internal Verifier;
- Member(s) of the Management Team;

Note: Student representatives must not be involved in such cases.

### **Who will contact the Student?**

- Team member from the Academic Department;
- Lead Internal Verifier.

The Management Team will determine the penalty or penalties that Student may receive after all the processes and procedures have been explored during the course of the investigation. Such penalties will be in line with the AMBeR tariff.

### **What are the timescales?**

Where any form of academic misconduct is identified the Student will be given time to re-submit their work with the next assignment submission deadlines which are normally at the end of each term.

The opportunity to resit the assignment will be in line with the AMBeR tariff. If a resit is allowed it will be governed by the Open University assessment regulations relevant at the time.

## **Academic Misconduct Penalties**

- If the academic misconduct is minor and deemed to be unintentional or due to poor academic practice the student will receive a warning and instruction regarding referencing
- If plagiarism is confirmed and is deemed minor and is a first misconduct the Course Tutor (CT) and Head of Academics will recommend to the Board of Examiners / Award Board that a mark of 0 is recorded for the assessment. The student will be given the opportunity to resubmit the assessment as a second attempt. The second attempt assessment will automatically be capped at 40%. The student will be on level 1 disciplinary and will receive instruction regarding referencing
- If the plagiarism is major or a second misconduct the Head of Academics will recommend to the Board of Examiners that a mark of 0 is recorded for the plagiarised assessment. The student must resubmit a new assessment as a second attempt and the whole module / unit mark will be capped at 40%. The student will be on level 2 disciplinary
- In serious cases, the Head of Academics will convene an Academic Misconduct Panel to assess the concern. The Academic Misconduct Panel consists of the Head of Academics and two other senior staff. Where the Academic Misconduct Panel finds that the work is seriously plagiarised or there is a series of misconducts the student will be on level 3 disciplinary which will require a Formal Hearing and may result in expulsion from the College.

**Open University AMBeR Tariff  
Academic Misconduct Penalties (based on AMBeR Tariff)**

**History**

First offence	100 points
Second offence	150 points
Third offence	200 points

**Extent**

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

**Level**

Level 4	70 points
Level 5	115 points
Level 6	140 points

**Value of assessment**

Standard weighting	30 points
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**Additional characteristics**

Evidence of deliberate attempt to disguise plagiarism by changing words, sentences or references to avoid detection	40 points
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## Penalties are awarded based on points as below

### Penalties (Summative Work)

In all cases a formal warning is given and a record made according to the appropriate level of the Student Disciplinary Policy, taking into account the student's previous history. Where the penalty is expulsion a Formal Hearing will take place and the final decision made by the Disciplinary Panel.

Points	Penalties (select one)
280-329	No further action beyond formal warning; Assessment awarded 0% - re-assessment required, with no penalty on mark
330-379	Assessment awarded 0% - re-assessment required, with no penalty on mark; Assessment awarded 0% - re-assessment required but mark capped at 40%
380-479	Assessment awarded 0% - re-assessment required but mark capped at 40%; Assessment awarded 0% - no opportunity for re-assessment
480-524	Assessment awarded 0% - no opportunity for re-assessment; Module awarded 0% - re-assessment required, but mark capped at 40%; Module awarded 0% - no opportunity for re-assessment, but credit still awarded
524-559	Module awarded 0% - re-assessment required, but mark capped at 40%; Module awarded 0% - no opportunity for re-assessment, but credit still awarded; Expelled from College but credits retained; Expelled from College with credits withdrawn
560+	Expelled from College but credits retained; Expelled from College with credits withdrawn

### Penalties (Formative Work)

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

### **Staff Academic misconduct:**

The following are examples of what the College considers to be academic misconduct by staff.

- Failing to keep awarding body assessment records safe and secure.
- Altering assessment and grading records without the proper authority.
- Influencing the outcome of assessment by producing work for Students or providing support that influences the grade awarded.
- Producing false witness statements.
- Allowing evidence which is known not to be the Students own work to be included in assessment.
- Facilitating and allowing impersonation and collusion.
- Inappropriate use of the reasonable adjustments and special considerations policy, where the support has the potential to influence the outcome of the assessment.
- Making fraudulent certification claims and/or claiming for a certificate prior to the Student completing all the requirements for assessment.
- Obtaining unauthorised access to assessment and verification material.

### **Centre Academic misconduct**

This is normally focused on insecure storage of assessment instruments and marking guidance.

- Misuse of assessments, including inappropriate adjustments to assessment decisions.
- Failure to comply with requirements for accurate and safe retention of Learner evidence, assessment and internal verification records.
- Failure to comply with awarding body procedures for managing and transferring accurate Learner data.
- Excessive direction from assessors to Learners on how to meet national standards.
- Deliberate falsification of records in order to claim certificates

**The policy also concerns actions that:**

- compromise, attempt to compromise or may compromise the process of assessment
- undermine the integrity of any qualification or the validity of an exam result or certificate; and/or
- damage the authority, reputation or credibility of the College, awarding body or any officer or employee

The Management team takes seriously any suspected or reported case of academic misconduct or maladministration, which may be the result of a deliberate act, neglect, or failure in a practice or system, or due to actions of individual(s).

The Management Team will undertake an investigation in cases of suspected or reported academic misconduct. The College has adopted the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) Suspected Academic misconduct in Examination and Assessments, Policies and Procedures (latest edition) (<https://www.jcq.org.uk/contact-us/contact-details-for-jcq-and-members>) to guide its approach to allegations, investigation, dealing with cases, making decisions and applying sanctions or penalties.

The College will take appropriate disciplinary actions against the alleged/reported academic misconduct staff and the awarding body will be informed if deemed appropriate depending on the seriousness of the matter

In assessing the severity of any offence the College will use the Open University AMBeR Tariff.

## **Appeals Procedure**

### **Stage 1 - Review**

Students or staff members may request a review of the decision made following the above process. The review is conducted by a panel consisting of representative(s) of the Academic Board including the Head of Academics. The panel will consider the report made initially on the academic misconduct incident, imposed penalties as well as any new information or evidence subsequently provided by other relevant parties. Following a review, the initial decision may be upheld or overturned, or upheld but with a change to the penalties originally imposed.

### **Stage 2 – Appeal**

If the student or staff member does not agree with the outcome of the review, they have the right to take the process to Stage 2, which would involve an independent review of the case. An appeal at Stage 2 will only consider whether the panel set by the College at the review stage applied its procedures consistently, properly and fairly during the original investigation and/or the Stage 1 review and will cover any inconsistencies if noted.

Appeals are heard by a panel chaired by the Head of Academics in the presence of a College Director with at least one independent member, who is not an employee of Grafton College, an assessor/internal verifier working for Grafton College, or otherwise connected to Grafton College. The appeal panel will have had no involvement with the assessment or the administration of assessments, and have no personal interest in the decisions under consideration.

The appeal panel may uphold the original decision, or overturn it on the grounds that procedures were not properly followed. The appeal panel will not review the original investigation.

The Director of Grafton College is responsible for ensuring that all parties affected by decisions on academic misconduct or maladministration are informed of the outcome of the above processes.

### **Reporting to the Awarding Body:**

Academic misconduct or attempted acts of academic misconduct that have influenced the assessment outcomes will be immediately reported to the Awarding Body and in cases of academic misconduct to the qualifications regulator if there's evidence that results or certificates may be invalid.

- oversee all investigations into suspected or alleged academic misconduct;
- withhold the issuing of results until the conclusion of the investigation, or permanently, where the outcome of the investigation warrants it;
- apply the sanctions and penalties listed in this document in cases of proven academic misconduct;
- report the matter to the regulators and other awarding bodies in accordance with the regulators' General Conditions of Recognition.
- report the matter to the police if a proven academic misconduct involved committing a criminal act.

The College and the Awarding Body reserve the right, in suspected cases of academic misconduct, to withhold the issuing of results or certificates while an investigation is in progress.

This Policy area reflects and embodies:

UK Quality Code Chapter B4: Enabling Student Development and Achievement

UK Quality Code Chapter B6: Assessment of Students and the Recognition of Prior Learning

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