



# POLICIES & PROCEDURES

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## Plagiarism Policy

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<b>Policy Owner:</b>	Head of Higher Education
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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy has been aligned to and meets the requirements of the revised UK Quality Code under Expectations for Standards and Expectations for Quality. For further information visit <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code>. The aim of this policy is to ensure and encourage students to adopt good academic conduct in respect of assessment and ensure students are informed of the consequences of academic misconduct.

## 2. Policy Statement

- 2.1 In all assessed work students should take care to ensure the work presented is their own, and fully acknowledge the work and opinions of others through proper referencing and citation. It is also the responsibility of the students to ensure that they do not undertake any form of cheating or other form of unfair advantage.

- 2.2 Examples of cheating includes:

- Communicating with or copying from any other student during an examination except in so far as the examination regulations may specifically permit this e.g. group assessments.
- Communicating during an examination with any person other than a properly authorised Invigilator or another authorised member of staff.
- Introducing any written or printed materials into the examination room, unless expressly permitted by the examination or programme regulations.
- Introducing any electronically stored information into the examination room, unless expressly permitted by the examination or programme regulations.
- Gaining access to an unauthorised material relating to an examination during or before the examination.
- Obtaining a copy of an “unseen” written examination paper in advance of the date and time for its authorised release.
- In any other way, the provision, or assistance in the provision, of false evidence or knowledge of understanding in examinations.

### **3. Scope**

- 3.1 This policy and procedure applies to all forms of assessment, internal and external. Where Higher Education Institution and or awarding bodies have their own published procedures these may take precedence over the College policy.

### **4. Legislation**

- 4.1 The Human Rights Act 1998 applies to the operation of this policy.

### **5. Responsibilities**

- 5.1 All staff have a responsibility to give full and active support for the policy by ensuring:
- The policy is known, understood, and implemented.
  - All students on all programmes on all levels are made fully aware at Course induction by college staff i.e. Course Director and Module Tutors of how to reference material properly and learning sources used and researched by students.
  - It must be noted that within this policy that academic malpractice committed by Further Education students will be managed through the Course Team. Offences committed by Higher Education students will be managed through the Course Committee and assessment/examination boards. In all cases, due investigative process as outlined in section 6 below shall be completed, with the results and a provisional recommendation available for consideration by the Course Board of Examiners meeting.

### **6. Actions to Implement and Develop Policy**

- 6.1 It is appreciated that the circumstances of individual irregularities and frauds will vary, but it is important that all are vigorously and promptly investigated, and that appropriate remedial action is taken. It is an academic offence for a student to act in

a manner whereby he/she gains or attempts to gain an unfair advantage. Such acts will be dealt with in accordance with the procedure set out in this policy. Such acts shall be dealt with in accordance with the College disciplinary procedures.

- 6.2 To authenticate that the work submitted for assessment has been carried out by the student, the College requires all students to use 'Turnitin' software. All Higher Education students will be required to submit an originality report for all assessment coursework that is submitted either in hard copy or electronically. It is the student's responsibility to validate their coursework via 'Turnitin' before submission to the designated lecturer.
- 6.3 The determination of whether cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of unfair advantage (referred to in this document as academic irregularities) has occurred is not a matter for the Academic and Quality Standards Committee (AQSC) (internal or external) but will be dealt by Course Team/Committee. Where the course is validated through collaborative or franchised arrangements by a Higher Education Institution, their policy and procedure on plagiarism will take precedence. College policies and procedures will take precedence in the case of an OU validated programme.
- 6.4 The facts must be established initially by the Module Tutor and subsequently any sanction can be applied which may affect the student's overall performance. All sanctions will be agreed by the Course Committee.
- 6.5 An allegation of cheating, plagiarism or other unfair advantage is not the same as proof of the incident.
- 6.6 Once the facts have been established, it is then for the Module Tutor, Course Team/ Course Committee to judge the seriousness of the case and to exercise discretion accordingly, having regard to institutional precedent where appropriate. All confirmed cases of plagiarism will be presented to the Academic and Quality Standards Committee meeting that has the ultimate responsibility in issuing the appropriate penalties under the guidance of the relevant Course Committee.
- 6.7 **It is imperative that all Module Tutors highlight any concerns of plagiarism or**

**academic malpractice within the assessment feedback provided to students.**

## **7. Definitions and Examples**

7.1 There are different forms of “academic irregularity” all of which may be the subject of the procedures described below. However, it is not possible to state categorically that, in all cases, every perceived academic irregularity will be proved once that matter is investigated (e.g. the copying of a design or a work of art may not in all instances amount to plagiarism – see below, Section 6.7). Each case will have to be considered on its merits and based on the strength of evidence. The following sections are different types of academic irregularity.

7.2 Plagiarism – Plagiarism is defined as the presentation of work by others as the writer’s own without appropriate acknowledgement. Examples of plagiarism are:

- 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 sources.
- The summarising of another person’s work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without acknowledgement.
- The substantial and unauthorised use of the ideas of another person without acknowledgement of the source.
- Copying the work of another candidate, with or without that candidate’s knowledge or agreement.
- Students should also be aware of auto plagiarism which is deemed as a very serious academic offence. Auto plagiarism occurs where a student’s own work is re-presented without being properly referenced.

7.3 Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Generative Tools:

The College adopts the approach taken by Ulster University in respect to the use of AI. Where a student uses AI for an assessment, they must acknowledge their source appropriately to ensure that the generated material is not misconstrued as their own work, in accordance with the student declaration for coursework submission.

Students should also ensure that the use of AI tools is authorised for use in their assessment as practices may differ across modules and courses of study. For further information, visit Ulster University’s guidance site on the appropriate use of Generative AI tools via

<https://www.ulster.ac.uk/learningenhancement/cqe/strategies/ai>

7.4 Collusion – Collusion exists where a student:

- Submits as entirely his/her own, with intention to gain unfair advantage, work done in collaboration with another person.
- Collaborates with another student in the completion of work which is intended to be submitted as that other student’s own unaided work.
- Knowingly permits another student to copy all or part of his/her own work and to submit it as that student ‘s own unaided work.

7.5 Falsifying Data – The presentation of data in laboratory reports, projects etc. based on experimental work falsely purported to have been carried out by the student or obtained by unfair means.

7.6 Personation – “Personation” is the legal term of what is usually referred to by the lay person as “impersonation”. Personation is thus the assumption by one person of the identity of another person with intent to deceive or to gain unfair advantage. It may exist where:

- One person assumes the identity of a student, with the intention of gaining unfair advantage for that student.
- The student is knowingly and willingly impersonated by another with the intention of gaining unfair advantage for himself/herself.

7.7 Ghosting – Ghosting exists where:

- A student submits as their own, work which has been produced in whole or part by another person on their behalf e.g. the use of a ghost-writing service i.e. buying assignments off the internet.

- A student seeks to make financial gain or other material gain by using work, which they have written or produced, available to another student.

7.8 Dishonest Practice – The use of any other form of dishonest practice not identified by the above definitions.

## **8. Procedures used to deal with the above**

### **8.1 Initial Procedure for Course Assessment**

8.1.1 When an academic irregularity is suspected, the member(s) of academic staff concerned should first discuss the matter informally with the student(s). The student(s) will be given the opportunity to present their case. Students are encouraged to make their presentations within five working days of the concern being raised with them.

8.1.2 If the student(s) concerned admits to the academic irregularity, then the member(s) of academic staff concerned shall report the matter and the outcome to the Course Team/Course Committee within two working days, for the Course Team to determine the action to be taken.

8.1.3 In cases where the student admits misconduct the student should be required to sign a letter to that effect. The student should also be given the opportunity to declare academic misconduct in other work that they have submitted. This statement will be held on file for the duration of the student's course.

8.1.4 If this informal meeting does not resolve the matter the member(s) of staff concerned should then, within three days or as soon as reasonably practicable following the discovery or allegation, report the matter in writing to the Course Director. The report should contain full details about the circumstances surrounding the alleged irregularity including, if appropriate, photocopies of the student's work.

## 8.2 The Initial Procedure for Examinations

8.2.1 Where an academic irregularity is suspected in an examination, the Invigilator concerned will inform the Exams Office, and in the presence of that colleague will inform the student of their suspicions and clearly annotate the student's script. The student will also be advised by the Invigilator that a full report will be submitted following the examination.

8.2.2 The Invigilator will seek to confiscate any relevant evidence (for example, any unauthorised material) and allow the student to continue with the examination. However, if the student persists with the irregularity, they will be expelled from the room. The student will also be expelled from the room if they refuse to submit any suspected material to the Invigilator.

8.2.3 Immediately following the examination, the Invigilator will submit a full report of the matter to the Exams Office.

8.2.4 If the student(s) concerned admits to the academic irregularity at the point of being challenged by the Invigilators, then the Invigilator's report will go to the Course Team to determine the action to be taken.

8.2.5 If a student considers other student/s to be gaining unfair advantage during an examination, it is the responsibility of the student to bring this to the attention of the Invigilator. However, no action can be taken unless the infringement of rules on behalf of the student/s is subsequently verified by the Invigilator.

8.2.6 All examination irregularities and breaches of examination protocols are reported to the Quality Assurance Manager immediately following the examination for further investigation.

## 8.3 The Action by Academic Investigating Panel

8.3.1 Where an allegation of an academic irregularity has been made in accordance with sections 6.1 or 6.2 and not been resolved through the defined informal procedures, the matter will be investigated as soon as reasonably practical following the discovery or allegation of the irregularity by an Academic

Investigation Panel to be convened comprising of a Chair and three Curriculum Managers (one from each Department). Once the investigation has been concluded, a report will be sent to the Quality & Performance Manager who is the chair of the AQSC. See Term of Reference of Appendix 4 - Academic Investigation Panel within the AQSC document.

- 8.3.2 The Examinations officer should notify the members of the Panel and the student(s) concerned, within three working days\* of the receipt of the report, of the date, time and place of the meeting of the Panel. \*Note: If an alleged irregularity comes to light during a set of examinations, and the candidate still has some examinations to sit, this timescale shall be extended to three working days after the end of that set of examinations.
- 8.3.3 The student(s) should be provided by the Panel with full details of the alleged irregularity and informed of their right to appear before the Panel, accompanied by a friend or representative of their choice and to submit a written statement of mitigation concerning the alleged irregularity. Failure by the student(s) to appear before the Panel or to submit a statement will not prevent the investigation proceeding.
- 8.3.4 The Panel may call witnesses, as appropriate, to substantiate the allegations, and will not unreasonably refuse permission for the staff or student(s) concerned to call such witnesses as they deem appropriate.
- 8.3.5 The Panel will interview the student(s), staff, and witnesses as appropriate, consider the student's written statement, and come to a decision on the basis of the student's statement and the supporting evidence. The student will withdraw while the Panel deliberates.
- 8.3.6 The order of proceedings is as follows:
- Statement of the case against the student(s) and production of evidence in support of it.
  - Statement of the case for the student(s) and production of evidence in support of it.

- Reply to the case of the student(s) provided that, except by leave of the Panel, a reply will not be allowed where the student has produced no evidence other than their own.
- Evidence may be received by the Panel by oral statement, written and signed statement, or statutory declaration.

8.3.7 Each member of the Panel has equal status save that, in the event of a disagreement about the decision, the decision shall be made by a majority of those present.

8.3.8 If the student(s) has attended, they will be informed of the Panel's decision at the conclusion of the meeting. The Panel will report the outcome in writing to the student within two working days of the Panel's decision. The student(s) has no right of appeal at this stage (however, refer to section 9).

#### 8.4 Action by Academic & Quality Standards Committee

8.4.1 If an Academic Investigating Panel is satisfied that there has been no academic irregularity, the AQSC will consider the student's case in the usual way and will disregard the original allegations of irregularity.

8.4.2 If an Academic Investigating Panel is satisfied that there has been an academic irregularity, or if the student admits (under paragraphs 6.1 or 6.2) that an academic irregularity has taken place, the AQSC will take all the factors reported and evidence submitted into account in its consideration of the student's case and decide on action to be taken appropriate to the gravity of the case. This includes the power to fail the student for all or part of the assessment in respect of which an academic irregularity has been found to have occurred, and to determine whether the student should be permitted to continue on the course with or without reassessment, or whether the candidate is not permitted to continue on the course.

8.4.3 It is the AQSC's responsibility to decide the results of a unit affected by the academic irregularity, applying relevant action, and, for courses run in

partnership with a university, for the Course Committee to determine whether the candidate can continue on the course in the light of the overall performance, and in the light of any recommendations from the AQSC.

8.4.4 Members of the AQSC who have been involved with the investigation of the academic irregularity are not permitted to be present during discussion of the matter by AQSC.

8.4.5 All academic irregularities must be investigated within 15 days of the incident occurring and before the AQSC meets to ratify awards.

8.4.6 Where the academic irregularity concerned is one of plagiarism, the AQSC may refer to guidelines in arriving at a decision on what action is appropriate (under paragraph 6.4). In doing so, the College may be guided by a graduated framework of penalties for plagiarism, advocated by Ulster University via [https://www.ulster.ac.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0004/1535971/Academic-Misconduct-Policy.pdf](https://www.ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1535971/Academic-Misconduct-Policy.pdf)

8.4.7 If a candidate is deemed by the course committee to have failed part of an assessment, because of a finding of an academic irregularity, then the examination board cannot compensate the failure.

## **9. Student's Right of Appeal**

9.1 The student has a right of appeal against the decision of the AQSC in accordance with the appeals procedures as set out in the College Academic Assessment Appeals Procedure.

## 10. Monitoring and Evaluation

10.1 The Academic & Quality Standards Committee will monitor the operation of the policy by receiving termly reports on appeals received and their outcomes.

## 11. Monitoring and Review

11.1 The College will establish appropriate information and monitoring systems to assist the effective implementation of this Policy.

11.2 The College will ensure that adequate resources are made available to promote this Policy effectively and is committed to reviewing this Policy every three years, in consultation with the recognised trade unions, statutory organisations such as the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and in line with models of good practice.

Signed Principal and Chief Executive:   
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Date: 15.04.24  
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Signed Chair of the Governing Body:   
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Date: 11/04/2024  
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## Related Documentation

Title	Location	Owner
Equal Opportunities, Good Relations & Cultural Diversity Policy	Gateway	Head of People and Culture
Feedback on Assessment Policy	Gateway	Head of Higher Education
Higher Education Academic Assessment Appeals	Gateway	Head of Higher Education

## Change Log

Location	Change from deletion/addition	Change to
Appendix 2	Remove Appendix 2 – Turnitin process	
7.3	New section relating to use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)	<p>7.3 Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) Generative Tools:</p> <p>The College adopts the approach taken by Ulster University in respect to the use of AI. Where a student uses AI for an assessment, they must acknowledge their source appropriately to ensure that the generated material is not misconstrued as their own work, in accordance with the student declaration for coursework submission. Students should also ensure that the use of AI tools is authorised for use in their assessment as practices may differ across modules and courses of study. For further information, visit Ulster University’s guidance site on the appropriate use of Generative AI tools via <a href="https://www.ulster.ac.uk/learningenhancement/cqe/strategies/ai">https://www.ulster.ac.uk/learningenhancement/cqe/strategies/ai</a></p>
7.3, 7.5, 8.2, 8.3	Delete ‘candidate’	Replace with ‘student’
8.1, 8.2, 8.3	Delete ‘his/her’	Replace with ‘their’
8.3	Replace: “an Academic Investigation Panel to be convened comprising of a Chair, three Heads of School (one from each Faculty).”	With: “an Academic Investigation Panel to be convened comprising of a Chair, three Curriculum Managers (one from each Department).”
8.4	Remove: “Where the academic irregularity concerned is one of plagiarism, the AQSC may refer to the following	Replace with: “Where the academic irregularity concerned is one of plagiarism, the AQSC may refer to guidelines in arriving at a decision on what action is appropriate (under paragraph 6.4).

Location	Change from deletion/addition	Change to
	guidelines in arriving at a decision on what action is appropriate (under paragraph 6.4) and the following penalties may apply (see Appendix 1).”	In doing so, the College may be guided by a graduated framework of penalties for plagiarism, advocated by Ulster University via <a href="https://www.ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1535971/Academic-Misconduct-Policy.pdf">https://www.ulster.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1535971/Academic-Misconduct-Policy.pdf</a>
10	Remove: Academic Standards & Policy Committee	Replace with: Academic & Quality Standards Committee
8.3	Remove: “(but see below, paragraph 7)”	Replace with “(however, refer to section 9)”
Appendix 1	Remove (link inactive): Framework of Penalties for Plagiarism Offences in taught Programmes	Revised link referred to in 8.4

## Communication

Communication requirements	By Whom
Who needs to know (for action)	Senior Management Team Heads and Deputy Heads of Department Course Coordinators All College lecturers on HE Programmes
Who needs to be aware	All staff

## Communication Plan

Action	By Whom	By When
Upload to Gateway	J Lucas	On approval
Circulation to all staff	L Curran / J Kelly	On approval

## Document Development

Details of staff who were involved in the development of this policy:

Name	Role
L Curran	Head of Higher Education
J Kelly	Higher Education Development Coordinator

Details of staff, external groups or external organisations who were consulted in the development of this policy:

Name	Organisation	Date
N/A		

### Approval Dates

Approved by	Date
Governing Body	10 April 2024

## Document History

Issue no. under review	Date of review:	Persons involved in review	Changes made after review? Yes/No If Yes refer to change log	New Issue No.	If changes made was consultation required?	If changes made was Equality Screening required?
V01	September 2021	Liam Curran	No	V2.0	No	No
V2	February 2024	Liam Curran / Julie Kelly	Yes	V3.0	No	Yes