

DOCUMENT DETAILS

Document Name:	Nottingham College HE Academic Irregularities & Misconduct Procedure			
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Document author	Claire Barton			
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Applicability	Students		Staff	X
	Governors		Other	
Summary	This document confirms procedures of academic malpractice and impact on grading and completion of studies.			

DOCUMENT CONSULTATION & APPROVAL

Consultation person / body	Date passed
NA	

Approval body	Date approved
HEAB	Oct 23

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

A significant negative impact has been identified in the following area and a full impact assessment / risk assessment is available.

Equality & diversity	No
GDPR	No
Health & safety	No
Safeguarding	No

Friendly version of policy available	No
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POLICY CHANGES

Key updates	Impact	Section reference
Job title updates.		



1. INTRODUCTION

It is clearly in the interests of former, current and future students that the College maintains the good reputation of its awards to promote high standards of academic honesty and integrity. This Policy is intended to determine whether academic misconduct has occurred in both formative and summative assessments.

Allegations of academic misconduct will be adjudicated by presenting cases to the Academic Misconduct Committee for student produced assessments on validated and awarding organisation courses.

2. ACADEMIC IRREGULARITIES

These are defined as any attempt by a student to gain unfair advantage for herself/himself, or another student, by unauthorised means – in essence: *gaining illegitimate academic advantage*. The following are examples of academic irregularities:

2.1 Malpractice

This includes:

- communicating with, or copying from, any other candidate during an examination except insofar as the examination regulations may specifically permit this, for example, 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 board or course regulations
- introducing any electronically stored information into the examination room, unless expressly permitted by the examination board or course regulations
- gaining access to any unauthorised material relating to an examination before or during the examination
- obtaining a copy of an unseen written examination paper in advance of the date and time of its authorised release
- any other ways, the provision, or assistance in the provision, of false evidence of knowledge or understanding in examinations

NB. In this context the term *examinations* is deemed to include end tests, phase tests, or other tests carried out under examination conditions.

2.2 Collusion

This includes a situation where a student:

- undertakes work in collaboration with another person, but submits that work as entirely their own with the intention of gaining unfair advantage
- collaborates with another candidate in the completion of work which is intended to be submitted as that other candidate's own unaided work
- knowingly permits another candidate to copy all or part of their own work, and to submit it as that other candidate's own unaided work

NB. The College encourages all students to share ideas and exchange reference material prior to each student writing up their own personal presentation of an assessed piece of work.

Some course teams may stipulate an assessment as assessed group work. Where this is undertaken, course teams will indicate the criteria and manner in which the work is assessed

and the ways in which individual marks are ascribed to members of the group.

2.3 Falsifying data

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

2.4 Personation

Personation is the legal term for what is usually referred to as impersonation.

Personation is 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 candidate, with the intention of gaining unfair advantage for that candidate
- the candidate is knowingly and willingly impersonated by another with the intention of gaining unfair advantage for the person personated

2.5 Plagiarism

The deliberate, substantial and unacknowledged incorporation in a candidate's work of material derived from the work (published or unpublished) of another. Examples of plagiarism are:

- the inclusion in a candidate'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 words or altering the order of presentation, without acknowledgements
- copying the work of another candidate, with or without that candidate's knowledge or agreement. In the former case both parties are guilty of academic irregularity
- material cut and pasted from the internet or other electronic sources without acknowledgement of the source
- copying or using a substantial amount of the students own work

The Amber tariff, included in Appendix 1 offers the most instructive tool for determining severity and consequence for such cases, to achieve consistency across all HE.

The widespread use of Turnitin for almost all text based assessment submissions helps detect similarity and plagiarism in the first instance.

2.6 Mobile phones

Having a mobile telephone turned on and/or visible in an examination, time-constrained assignment or phase test is an academic offence.

2.7 Dishonest practice

The use of any form of dishonest practice not identified by the above definitions.

3. Incontrovertible evidence

Where there is incontrovertible evidence that academic misconduct has occurred, the Academic Misconduct Committee (AMC) will advise to the Examination Board of its determined outcome.

4. PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

An important criterion in deciding how to deal with an instance of academic misconduct is whether or not the student intended to deceive. Secondly, the



seriousness or extent to which misconduct has occurred is considered.

Therefore, the following process will be adopted according to the seriousness of the occurrence:

4.1 Cases of academic misconduct

Where a lecturer or other staff suspects an instance of academic misconduct the matter will be notified to the course leader and/ or personal tutor. In first offences, or when students are new to HE, the provision of help and guidance and issuing an informal warning about the future conduct (which will not be noted on the student's record) may be justified if the wrongdoing is very minor.

Examples of minor instances of academic misconduct because of unfamiliarity of a student new to HE might include:

- failure to reference work properly
- failure to acknowledge the source of a small section of an assignment
- receiving undue help in good faith, such as a misunderstanding over instruction

4.2 The Academic Misconduct Committee (AMC)

For all cases, except the above in 4.1, where a lecturer suspects a genuine instance of academic misconduct, or where there have been previous, multiple, minor occurrences in 4.1, a report will be made to the AMC who will determine the penalties.

Where plagiarism and associated misconduct is presented the penalty will be as defined by AMBeR tariff (see Appendix 1). For other types of academic misconduct, formal College disciplinary procedures may be followed at the appropriate stage after hearing at the AMC.

Possible outcomes:

- (a) The AMC will decide that no academic misconduct has taken place and the assessment will be marked as it stands.
- (b) The student will accept that academic misconduct has occurred and may be allowed to resubmit the assessment, with sanctions in line with severity determined by the AMBeR tariff (see Appendix 1).

The relevant Exam Board will be notified of the AMC's decision to allow consideration and impact upon end of year results and impact on conferment of grades; this may take the form of:

A student who has committed an academic irregularity may be referred in a unit/module or element in order to provide an opportunity to meet the learning outcomes. If the resubmitted work meets the criteria for a pass grade, a pass will be recorded. In the case of misconduct relating to an examination, the student will fail that sitting but will be allowed to resit at a later date.

The unit/module is not compensated and the unit/module aggregate mark remains zero. The student will receive a formal written warning, which will be noted on the student's record.



Should the student repeat the offence it will be treated as gross misconduct and it will be dealt with under the terms of the College disciplinary procedure.

- (c) The AMC decides that academic misconduct has occurred but, upon notification of the decision, the student will not accept the decision.

In this case, the Director of Quality or their representative will convene an *academic misconduct appeals panel*. If appropriate, a subject specialist may be co-opted onto the academic misconduct appeals panel.

The academic misconduct appeals panel will have the right to examine written evidence and interview the student and lecturer concerned. A written record of the meeting(s) and decision will be maintained.

If necessary, representatives of the awarding body/validating university and, where appropriate regulating bodies will be informed. The written records of the academic misconduct appeals panel will be confidential.

The outcome of the appeal may be:

- previous decisions are confirmed;
- previous decisions are overturned and the reasons given in writing.

The Chair of the academic misconduct appeals panel will issue its decision within ten working days of the meeting of the AMC.

5. REFERRAL TO VALIDATING UNIVERSITY OR AWARDING BODY

(a) Courses awarded by a Validating University

For students on university validated courses, the Chair of the academic misconduct appeals panel will issue a Decision Letter within ten working days of its meeting. This will detail the process students may take to refer the issue to the validating university if they still remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal. The validating university will issue a Completion of Procedures letter detailing their decision and any further recourse the student may have to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator if still not satisfied with the outcome of the appeal.

(b) Courses awarded by Pearson (Edexcel)

Students on Higher National Certificate/Higher National Diploma courses awarded by Pearson (Edexcel) will receive a Completion of Procedures Letter from the Chair of the appeals panel detailing the process students may take to refer the issue direct to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator if they still remain dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

There is an expectation from partner universities and awarding bodies that academic misconduct appeals are dealt with by the College in the first instance. If the student feels that the matter has not been satisfactorily resolved it may be pursued through the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provided that the appeal is eligible under its rules. The OIA has been established to provide an independent scheme for the review of student appeals and can be contacted at www.oiahe.org.uk. An appeal will not be considered by the OIA unless it is received within 12 months from the date of issue of the Completion of Procedures Letter.

Appendix 1: Academic Misconduct Benchmarking Research (AMBeR) Project (from plagiarismadvice.org)

1.0 Assign points based on the following criteria:

1.1 History

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

1.2 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

1.3 Level/Stage

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

1.4 Value of Assignment

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

1.5 Additional Characteristics

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

2.0 Award penalties based on the points

2.1 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

2.2 Penalties (Formative Work)

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