

University Centre Academic Integrity Policy

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Revision History

Version	Purpose/Change	Date
3.0	Inclusion of reporting cases to PSRBs.	April 2021
4.0	Review of policy. Renamed 'Academic Integrity Policy' in line with QAA charter. Procedure for the Academic Integrity Panel included as Appendix to the Policy (not a separate document). Full review of the policy and reapproval by HE Strategy Group. Removal of outdated content on categorisation and information relevant to FE students only. Update of definitions in 2 and 3.	November 2021
4.1.	Separation of 4.2 into 4.2. and 4.3. to clarify the reporting to PSRBs. Amendment to Appendix to clarify circumstances when cases of suspected academic misconduct are not heard by a full Panel. Correction of spelling in 1.3.	August 2022
4.2	Comment included to 3.2b to cover AI	October 2023

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This policy is written in line with the Expectations and Core practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code), which are a key reference point for higher education providers in all parts of the UK.

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The City of Liverpool College University Centre is signed up to the Quality Assurance Agency's (QAA) *Academic Integrity Charter for UK Higher Education*¹ which represents an institutional pledge to protect and promote academic integrity and to take action against academic misconduct.
- 1.2. All members of the University Centre community are responsible for ensuring that academic integrity is embedded and upheld and that every student's qualification is genuine, verifiable and respected.
- 1.3. This policy complements and operates within the context of the policies and regulations on assessment of our partner higher education awarding institutions. The relevant Academic Integrity Procedures will be applied to any student where concerns are raised that they have not followed the appropriate academic procedures or standards, and are alleged to have engaged in academic misconduct.
- 1.4. Where academic misconduct is detected, penalties will apply. The University Centre policy on penalties is based on the AMBeR tariff in *Appendix 1*.

2. Maintaining Academic Integrity

- 2.1. Academic Integrity is integral to higher education study. To adhere to the University Centre's expectations for academic integrity, students are expected to take care with the following conventions when completing work or assessment:
 - Acknowledging all sources of information, knowledge and ideas used by consistently and correctly using Harvard Referencing conventions.
 - Producing work that is their own, unless an assignment brief specifically requires a single piece of work to be submitted on behalf of a group of students.
 - Declaring when they have used work before in a previous assessment using Harvard Referencing conventions.
 - Presenting accurate information and data that has been obtained appropriately and which is a fair representation of their own endeavours and knowledge and university.
 - Adhering to and complying with all applicable regulatory, legal and professional obligations and ethical requirements

3. Definitions of Academic Misconduct

- 3.1. Academic misconduct is defined as any improper activity or behaviour by a student which may give that student or another student an unpermitted academic advantage in a summative assessment.
- 3.2. When a student's actions or inactions raise a concern that they might be engaging in academic misconduct, this will be investigated as a breach of academic integrity. Academic misconduct can take place irrespective of whether a student's actions or inactions are intended to gain an unfair advantage or not. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to the following, which are explained in turn below:

a. Cheating

¹ <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/academic-integrity/charter>

- b. **Plagiarism**
 - c. **Collusion**
 - d. **Falsifying data or material**
 - e. **Other forms of dishonest practice** to gain an unfair advantage in assessments that does not fall within the above definitions
- a. **Cheating:** Any action before, during or after an assessment or test which has the potential for the student to gain an unfair advantage in assessment or assist another student to do so. For example:
- The submission of false claims of previously gained qualifications, research or experience in order to gain credit for prior learning.
 - Submission of work for assessment that has already been submitted as all or part of the assessment for another module without acknowledging this using Harvard Referencing conventions.
 - Accessing an electronic communication device during an in-class test or assessment without prior permission from the module/unit leader.
- b. **Plagiarism:** The use of someone else's words, ideas, intellectual property, or work, without proper acknowledgement by use of correct referencing conventions, or necessary permissions. This applies to all types of work submitted by students, including (but not limited to): written work, diagrams, designs, charts, musical compositions and pictures. Plagiarism may take, but is not limited to, the following forms:
- Verbatim (word-for-word) copying of another's work without appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgement.
 - Paraphrasing of another's work by changing a few words without appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgement.
 - Unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another person's work.
 - Self-plagiarism. Any attempt to take any of your own previously submitted assignments -or parts of - and make it appear brand new.
 - The deliberate and detailed presentation of another person's concepts as one's own.
 - The unauthorised use of one student's work by another student.
 - The commissioning, purchase and submission of a piece of work, in part or whole, as the student's own. This includes 'contract cheating' where work is purchased from an 'essay mill' or similar entity, as well as obtaining work from family members or other students.
 - Engaging with computer-aided software to complete an assessment, in whole or part, except in cases where this has been permitted by an explicit instruction by the Programme Leader and/or as part of that assessment. This engagement can be the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) text-generating software (e.g., ChatGPT, Wordtune, chatbots and similar). The submission of work that is generated and/or improved by unpermitted language model software for the purpose of gaining marks will be regarded as false authorship and seen as an attempt to gain an unpermitted academic advantage.
- c. **Collusion:** Co-operation in order to gain an unpermitted advantage. This may occur where students have consciously colluded on a piece of work, in part or whole, and passed it off as their own individual efforts. It may also include where one student has authorised another to use their work, in part or whole, and submitted it as their own.
- c.1. Collusion must not be confused with the good practice of collaborative learning and peer support. Collaborative learning means that a student may benefit from sharing third-party material (books, articles, etc.) but unless the student is explicitly instructed to plan, organise and write an assignment in a group of two or more, the student must plan, organise and write assignment work individually.

- d. Falsifying data or material:** Any attempt to present fictitious or distorted data, results, evidence, research or other materials as factual and accurate is deemed to be academic misconduct. This includes, but is not limited to:
- When a student claims to have carried out experiments, observations, interviews or any form of research which they have not carried out.
 - Embellishment of data – when a small amount of data is enhanced or exaggerated in order to emphasise data, which has been obtained by legitimate means
 - Fabrication of data – this occurs when a student creates and presents an extensive amount, or significant amount, of data in order to conceal a paucity of legitimate data, or wholly fabricates data in the absence of legitimate data.

Important Note: Where a student has an acknowledged learning disability, a proof-reader may be used to ensure that the student's meaning is not misunderstood as a result of the quality and standard of writing. Where permitted, a proof-reader may identify spelling and basic grammatical errors. Inaccuracies in academic content should not be corrected nor should the structure of the piece of work be changed.

4. Procedure for Dealing with Cases of Academic Misconduct

- 4.1. *Appendix 2 – Procedure for the Academic Integrity Panel* sets out the full procedure for dealing with a case of suspected academic misconduct.
- 4.2. In all instances of academic misconduct, the University Centre may inform the relevant awarding body or partner university of the nature and status of the impropriety, as well as external examiners. Specific action to be taken may be influenced by the requirements of the awarding body, as this policy does not supersede any regulations in place at partner universities or awarding bodies.
- 4.3. For programmes that are affiliated to a Professional, Statutory and Regulatory body (PSRB), the relevant body will be notified when allegations of academic misconduct which heard by the Academic Integrity Panel result in a penalty.

5. Procedure for Academic Misconduct Relating to Examinations

- 5.1. An invigilator who suspects cheating in an examination will:
- a. Inform the student of the suspicions and the intention to report the incident. Confiscate any relevant evidence (e.g. any unauthorised material).
 - b. Clearly annotate the examination script of the suspected student at the point when the alleged misconduct is noticed. The annotation of the examination script should include the time and the signature of the invigilator.
 - c. Attach a full report to the script.
 - d. Alert the appropriate Programme Leader after the conclusion of the examination.
- 5.2. Not later than one working day after the conclusion of the examination, the invigilator will submit a written report to the Programme Leader and Assistant Dean of Higher Education. The report will provide an account of the incident, including the time of the incident and the student's response to the allegation, and be accompanied by any relevant supporting evidence, including any confiscated materials. Where possible, the report will include the comments, and signatures, of other invigilators who were present at the time at which the alleged cheating took place.
- 5.3. Thereafter the process follows the common procedure for dealing with cases of academic misconduct.

Important note: Separate proceedings may be taken against a student under the University Centre's *Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy* in addition to, or as alternative to, proceedings under the *Academic Integrity Policy*.

6. Academic Misconduct Penalties (based on the AMBeR Tariff)

6.1. Any penalties arising from academic misconduct will be applied in line with the AMBeR Tariff. Points are assigned based on the following criteria:

- History
- Amount/Extent
- Student Level/Stage
- Value of the Assignment
- Additional Characteristics

6.2. The AMBeR tariff is designed to break down the case of academic misconduct by measurable and quantifiable elements.

6.3. Penalties are then given based on the points assigned to the student. These range from a formal warning to expulsion. See Appendix 1 for the full tariff.

7. Related Policies and Procedures

- *HE Policy on Assessment Submission, Marking and Feedback*
- *HE Procedure for Hearing an Allegation of Academic Misconduct*
- *HE Appeals Against Assessment Decisions Policy*
- *HE Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy*
- *HE Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy*

Appendix 1: AMBeR Tariff

1 Assign points based on the following criteria

HISTORY

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

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 ghost-writing service	225 points

* Critical aspects are key ideas central to the assignment

LEVEL / STAGE

Level 4 (Year 1 FTE)	70 points
Level 5 (Year 2 FTE)	115 points
Level 6 (year 3 FTE)	140 points

VALUE OF ASSIGNMENT

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

ADDITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Evidence of deliberate attempt to disguise misconduct by changing words, sentences or references to avoid detection.	40 points
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2 Award penalties based on the points

PENALTIES (Summative Work)

In all cases a formal warning is given and a record made contributing to the student's previous history.

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 University Centre but credits retained Expelled from University Centre 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 University Centre but credits retained Expelled from University Centre with credits withdrawn

PENALTIES (Formative Work)

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

Appendix 2

Procedure for the Academic Integrity Panel Hearing a Case of Suspected Academic Misconduct

Suspected Academic Misconduct – below 5% AND less than two sentences (without critical aspects included)

Where a member of staff suspects academic misconduct in a student's work for the first time and the allegation relates to less than 5% of the student's work and less than two sentences and does not include critical aspects (key ideas central to the assignment), the first marker may arrange to meet with the student for an initial informal discussion and provide appropriate support. This applies only to standard weighted assessments and does not apply to dissertations or final major projects.

Together with the Programme Leader (or another member of the teaching team if the Programme Leader is the first marker), a decision will be made in line with the AMBeR Tariff either to take no further action or to offer the student a resubmission opportunity where the work will not have a penalty mark applied. The outcome must be reported to the Assistant Dean of Higher Education and will be added to the student's record as a formal warning.

Course tutors and academic staff play an important role in developing students' understanding of academic integrity and at this stage students should have the opportunity to ask for and receive support in good academic practice appropriate to their subject area and level of study.

Suspected Academic Misconduct – above 5% OR more than two sentences (or with critical aspects included)

Where a member of staff suspects academic misconduct in a student's work and the allegation relates to above 5% or more than two sentences or includes critical aspects (key ideas central to the assignment) or is repeated suspected misconduct or is a dissertation or final major project, they must take immediate steps to provide the Programme Leader with documented evidence.

The Programme Leader will arrange for the work to be second marked and notify students of their suspicions and of the intention to report the matter to the Assistant Dean of Higher Education for further action.

Invitation to the Academic Integrity Panel

On receipt of a report of alleged academic misconduct, the Assistant Dean of Higher Education will inform the student in writing of the allegation and notify them that the Academic Integrity Panel will hold a hearing into the allegations. The student will be provided with the *Academic Integrity Policy*, including details of the procedure to be followed in such cases.

The student will be notified of the person they should reply to, the time and date of the hearing and informed that, in line with the procedures, failure to attend the hearing or submit evidence will not prevent the Panel from proceeding and may be interpreted as an admission of guilt. However, if the student is prevented from attending through ill health or other exceptional circumstances, the Panel will adjourn its proceedings until a later date.

The student will be given seven calendar days from the receipt of the letter to respond to the allegation by stating if they wish to accept or contest the allegation and indicating whether they will be attending the hearing in person or submitting a written statement. The student may be accompanied to the hearing by a member of the Student Union, a colleague or a relative/friend.

The Panel

The Panel will not comprise any representative who has been involved in the assessment of student cases being heard and therefore substitute members must be available to attend the Panel for such cases. The higher education administration will provide secretarial support and a record will be kept of the meeting.

The Assistant Dean of Higher Education will chair the panel and there will be two other members who should consist of the Programme Leader (or, if they were the original assessor/marker, another staff member in the curriculum area who has programme knowledge but was not involved in the original marking process) and the HE Quality and Registrar Officer or a suitably experienced representative. The student and the original marker/assessor will also be invited to attend.

Procedure

1. The person, who is chairing the hearing, will introduce those present and outline the procedure to be followed.
2. The Chair will ask a staff representative to make an opening statement and outline the case.
3. Witnesses may be called by the member of staff presenting the case and will be questioned in this order:
 - 1) by the member of staff presenting the case
 - 2) by the student
 - 3) by the Panel

The member of staff presenting the case may then ask further questions.

4. The student will present their case in defence.
5. Witnesses may be called to support the student's case and will be questioned in this order:
 - 1) by the student
 - 2) by the member of staff presenting the case
 - 3) by the Panel

The student may then ask further questions.

Written statements will then be considered.

6. The member of staff presenting the case will make a short statement summarising the main points of the case.
7. The student will make a short statement summarising the main points of the case.
8. Everyone except the Panel will be asked to leave the room while the Panel considers the information presented.
9. The Chair of the Panel may ask both sides to return if some points are unclear.
10. Both sides will be called back to hear the Panel's decision or to be told when and how they will be notified if the Panel needs more time to consider the case.
11. The Chair will send a full report of the Panel's findings, together with any penalties or recommendations, to the student and Assessment Board.

12. The Assessment Board will implement the Panel's recommendations unless it can point to an error on the face of the record or evidence that has arisen since the hearing took place. For programmes that are affiliated to PSRBs, point 4.3. in the above policy applies in relation to notification.

Penalties

Any penalties arising from academic misconduct will be levied in line with the AMBeR Tariff (*Appendix 1* in the *HE Academic Integrity Policy*).

Appeals

Appeals should be received within 15 working days of a student being notified of the decision against which they wish to appeal. The appeal should state the grounds of the appeal together with the supporting documentation. Students must refer to the University Centre [Academic Appeals Policy](#) for details of the procedure and the grounds on which they can appeal.