



# **CODE OF PRACTICE ON ASSESSMENT**

## **APPENDIX L**

### **Academic Integrity Policy**

**2021-22**

Applicable to all cohorts

In the Code of Practice on Assessment and all Appendices the term “student” includes apprentices on degree apprenticeship programmes

## **Academic Integrity Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Academic integrity is concerned with the ethical code that applies to the standards by which the academic community operates. It represents the values of honesty, fairness and respect for others. While this encompasses the expectation that students will not cheat in assessments nor deliberately try to mislead examiners and assessors, it is just as important to emphasise the positive role that academic integrity plays in each student's intellectual and professional development and in their successful transition to graduate employment and future careers. Students who embrace academic integrity understand that they must produce their own work, acknowledging explicitly any material that has been included from other sources or legitimate collaboration, and to present their own findings, conclusions or data based on appropriate and ethical practice.
- 1.2 There are conventions of academic practice, such as established referencing and citation protocols, which both display and ensure academic integrity. The acquisition of relevant study skills such as effective note-taking, ability to critically evaluate other writers' theories and concepts and presentation skills, will help students to understand these conventions. Failure to adhere to these conventions can result in poor academic practice or, if there is a clear intention to deceive examiners and assessors, to unfair and/or dishonest academic practice. The policy sets out the penalties that will be applied where academic misconduct has been established. Acts that would be subject to the University's Disciplinary or Fitness to Practise procedures will be dealt with under those procedures.
- 1.3 There are five categories of academic misconduct. Categories A and B are distinct from Categories C-E. Categories A and B are determined by the academic judgement of the marker/assessor and cover practice where there has been failure, due to lack of academic ability or understanding, to observe the expected standards associated with academic integrity when undertaking academic work. Category C captures first offences in which dishonesty can be assumed but intent to deceive cannot be established because there has been no prior warning. Category D covers misconduct when intent to deceive is apparent because a prior warning has been given. Category E covers inherently dishonest acts where a student intends to gain an advantage over other students by wilfully seeking to deceive assessors and/or examiners. Such acts are often but not always premeditated and would include offences subsequent to a prior written warning of academic malpractice.

### **2. Definitions**

**The following definitions reflect those contained within Section 9 of the Code of Practice on Assessment and apply to all types of work submitted by students, including, for example, written work, diagrams, designs, charts, musical compositions and pictures:**

#### **2.1 Minor Errors**

Minor errors arise when a student has attempted to adopt academically acceptable practices but has failed to do so accurately or fully. Examples include forgetting to insert quotation marks, minor mistakes in referencing or citation, gaps in the bibliography or reference list, non-compliance with some aspects of presentation guidelines.

#### **2.2 Collusion**

Collusion occurs when, unless with official approval (e.g. in the case of group projects), two or more students consciously collaborate in the preparation and production of work which is ultimately submitted by each in an identical or substantially similar form and/or is represented

by each to be the product of their individual efforts. Collusion also occurs where there is unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the student's own.

### **2.3 Copying**

Copying occurs when a student consciously presents as their own work material copied directly from a fellow student or other person without their knowledge. It includes the passing off of another's intellectual property or ideas as one's own. It differs from collusion in that the originator of the copied work is not aware of or party to the copying. Copying of work from published sources would be dealt with as plagiarism.

### **2.4 Submission of Commissioned or Procured Coursework**

The dishonest practice occurs when a student presents as their own work coursework assessment tasks (or parts thereof) which have been intentionally procured (by financial or other inducement means) for this purpose. The definition includes the practice of requesting another party to prepare all or part of a course assignment (with or without payment) on the student's behalf. The definition also includes proofreading activities whereby a third party exceeds the acceptable practice of identifying errors or inconsistencies in a course assignment by actually amending the student's existing content. Acceptable proof-reading practice would include the identification of typographical, grammatical or spelling errors, formatting or citation errors or inconsistencies, repetition or duplication of text, ambiguous wording, and mislabelling of graphs, diagrams etc. Unacceptable proof-reading practice would include amending or adding to content, rewriting any content, and checking or correcting facts, data, equations, etc.

### **2.5 Dishonest Use of Data**

Throughout this policy the term "dishonest use of data" is used to cover one or more of the following:

***Embellishment or Falsification of Data*** occurs when a proportion of the total data is altered, enhanced or exaggerated in order to emphasise data which has been obtained by legitimate means

***Fabrication of Data*** occurs when a student creates and presents an extensive amount or significant piece of data in order to conceal a paucity of legitimate data; or wholly fabricates a set of data in the absence of legitimate data.

### **2.6 Research Misconduct**

Research misconduct is failure to obtain relevant approval to conduct research for a project or dissertation and/or failure to follow any protocols or procedures contained in the ethical approval process that has been given for an undergraduate or taught postgraduate research project or dissertation.

### **2.7 Plagiarism**

Plagiarism occurs when a student misrepresents the work or ideas of any other person (including another student) or of any institution, as their own work. Examples of forms of plagiarism include:

- the verbatim (word for word) copying of another's work without appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgement and citation of the source;
- the close paraphrasing of another's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgement and citation of the source;

- failure to reference appropriately or to adequately identify the source of material used;
- unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another's work;
- the deliberate and detailed presentation of another's concept as one's own.

**The University treats the decision as to whether minor errors, poor academic practice or unfair and/or dishonest academic practice has taken place as a matter for academic judgement<sup>1</sup> and the penalties applied will vary according to the individual case and the seriousness of the offence (for details of the range of penalties see section 4 below.)**

### **3. Dealing with Academic Misconduct**

- 3.1 The University aims to provide advice and training in its staff development programme on how to detect and deal with academic misconduct and on how to help students to avoid it.
- 3.2 If academic misconduct or malpractice is suspected in relation to work submitted by a student, in the interest of helping students to avoid continued acts, cases should be investigated as promptly as possible.
- 3.3 Departments<sup>2</sup> should require students, when submitting work for summative assessment, to provide either a signed hard-copy declaration or an equivalent acknowledgement where electronic submission is used, to confirm that they have not plagiarised nor copied material, nor have they embellished, fabricated nor falsified any of the data nor have they colluded in producing the work nor submitted commissioned or procured work. The coversheet appended to the guidelines to this policy may be used for this purpose, but departments may use their own procedures/forms to obtain the necessary declaration.
- 3.4 In accordance with Appendix D, each School/Department should have an Academic Integrity Officer, who is a member of academic staff. The Academic Integrity Officer will conduct investigations into allegations of plagiarism, copying, collusion, research misconduct, unacceptable proofreading practice, and dishonest use of data in accordance with the Policy and Guidelines on Academic Integrity. In the case of allegations of research misconduct the Academic Integrity Officer shall report the matter to the University's Named Person for Research Integrity who shall determine if a breach has occurred. For Category A and B cases the Academic Integrity Officer may determine that no breach of the Policy has occurred and the student may be notified accordingly. The Academic Integrity Officer shall report the outcomes of all investigations and an indicative recommendation on Category C, D and E cases to the School/Department Academic Integrity Committee to enable the Committee to agree recommendations and propose penalties as required to the Module Review Boards and/or Boards of Examiners. Reports to the Academic Integrity Committee on Category A and B cases are for note only.
- 3.5 Cases of suspected academic misconduct should be evidenced and documented before the appropriate procedure is instigated.
- 3.6 Investigation reports and supporting evidence for category C, D and E academic misconduct should be considered by the Department's/School's Academic Integrity Committee before the main Board of Examiners meeting. The Academic Integrity Committee is a sub-committee of the Board of Examiners and should comprise at least three members of the Board of Examiners, one of whom may be the Academic Integrity Officer. Administrative support should be provided by Professional Support staff. The Academic Integrity Committee shall review all investigations conducted and any recommendations made by the Academic Integrity Officer(s). The Academic

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that where plagiarism is indicated using plagiarism detection software, Examiners, Assessment Officers and Board of Examiners must still exercise academic judgement in determining whether plagiarism has taken place. [Guidelines s.1.1.6]

<sup>2</sup> The departmental responsibility referred to here should fall to the relevant appropriate body in the case of on-line programmes.

Integrity Committee shall then recommend the proposed category of offence for individual cases to the Board of Examiners. The Board of Examiners will determine the category of offence and apply the appropriate penalty in accordance with Section 4 of this Policy.

3.7 The Chair of the Academic Integrity Committee should provide summary data on academic misconduct to the Head of Department, for inclusion in an annual report on academic misconduct to the relevant Faculty Academic Quality and Standards Committee/Faculty Education and Enhancement Committee. Faculties should then provide a report on academic misconduct to AQSC. The summary data should indicate:

3.7.1 For Category C, D and E, the total number of proven cases by modules affected and by Category

3.7.2 The total number of Category A and Category B cases that resulted in the imposition of a penalty

#### **4. Penalties and Procedures**

##### **Category A: Minor Error**

4.1 If the internal examiner identifies minor errors, such as a missing quotation mark or minor mistakes in referencing, a mark penalty will be applied to the assessment task. This should be specified in the marking scheme provided to students and the student should be given feedback on how to avoid such a mistake in future work.

4.2 If a student is found to have committed a minor error the examiner will use academic judgement in determining the appropriate mark for the assessment, in accordance with the relevant marking criteria and taking into account, as appropriate, matters such as the quality/accuracy of the referencing and citations, the quality of data presented, etc.:

4.2.1 a mark penalty of up to 10% of the maximum mark or one grade for the assessment task, as specified in the marking scheme, will be applied subject to the penalty not taking the mark below the compensation threshold for the task;

4.2.2 the mark penalty will be notified to the student;

4.2.3 the student's entitlement to re-assessment in failed modules is not affected.

##### **Category B: Poor Academic Practice**

4.3 This category covers a range of poor practices in which there is no clear intention to deceive. If poor practice is identified by the internal examiners a mark penalty will be applied to the assessment task(s) and the student should be given feedback on how to avoid poor academic practice in future work. The student will also be recommended to complete an on-line academic integrity tutorial.

4.4 If poor academic practice is repeated by the student the mark penalty will be imposed for each multiple or subsequent example of poor academic practice. This creates a strong incentive for the student to avoid further penalty and should encourage the student to benefit from the remedial effect of the advisory on-line Know How academic integrity tutorial. The completion of the on-line tutorial will be registered.

4.5 If a student is found to have committed poor academic practice:

4.5.1 the assessment task mark shall be capped at the minimum pass grade for that assessment task by the examiner;

4.5.2 the examiner will recommend the student to complete an on-line Know How academic integrity tutorial;

4.5.3 the mark penalty will be reported to the Board of Examiners and notified to the student;

4.5.4 the student's entitlement to re-assessment in failed modules is not affected.

**Category C: Plagiarism, Copying, Collusion or Dishonest Use of Data**

- 4.6 This category is intended to capture first offences in which academic misconduct has occurred but intent to deceive cannot be established because the student has not received a prior written warning of misconduct.
- 4.7 If cases of plagiarism, copying, collusion or dishonest use of data are suspected by the internal examiners an investigation must be carried out by the Academic Integrity Officer in the Department/School that 'owns' the module concerned.
- 4.8 The Academic Integrity Officer will investigate the allegation on behalf of the Chair of the appropriate Academic Integrity Committee by inviting the examiner to provide evidence and reasons for their allegation and the student(s) to provide an explanation of the circumstances for the plagiarism, copying, collusion or dishonest use of data.<sup>3</sup>
- 4.9 In cases deemed proven by the Academic Integrity Committee (AIC), the Chair of the AIC will provide a report to the Chair of the appropriate Board of Examiners recommending the imposition of the mark penalty and detailing the Committee's findings, including the circumstances of the alleged offence, the investigation undertaken and the representations made by the student(s). A copy of this report will also be made available to the student(s).
- 4.10 The student's copy of the report of the investigation from the Academic Integrity Officer will also contain a dated written warning to the student outlining the consequences of further academic misconduct (see Guidelines on Academic Integrity for suggested wording).
- 4.11 If two or more students are found to have colluded in producing a piece of assessed work (this includes one student allowing another to copy their work and submit it as their own), then each should receive the mark penalty for the assessment task. If one or more students are found to have copied the work of another student in any form without their knowledge, then any resulting warning and penalty should apply only to the student(s) that copied the work.
- 4.12 If a student is found to have committed plagiarism, copying, collusion or dishonest use of data:
- 4.12.1 the Academic Integrity Committee will ask the Board of Examiners to approve a recommendation that a breach of the policy has taken place and that the assessment task should be given a mark of zero;
  - 4.12.2 the student will be given a written warning;
  - 4.12.3 the student will be recommended to take or retake the on-line Know How academic integrity tutorial;
  - 4.12.4 a note will be placed on the student's records, including their records in Banner<sup>4</sup>.
  - 4.12.5 the student's entitlement to re-assessment in failed modules is not affected.
- 4.13 After seven calendar days from the date of the first written warning any subsequent work submitted by the student in which plagiarism, copying, collusion or dishonest use of data have occurred will be treated as Category D. Any offence detected in work submitted within the seven calendar days from the first written warning will be treated as a category C breach of the policy.
- 4.14 In the case of a student being awarded a mark of zero and as a result failing their dissertation or project, the Board of Examiners will decide whether they should be permitted to re-submit the dissertation or project, revised and corrected, or whether they must complete and submit a whole new dissertation or project.

<sup>3</sup> For on-line programmes, the investigation undertaken by the Assessment Officer with the examiner and the student concerned often takes place under the auspices of an 'Academic Integrity Committee' who would make recommendations about allegations of plagiarism, copying, collusion or fabrication of data to the Board of Examiners.

<sup>4</sup> In respect of this and all references to Banner in this Policy it should be noted that for on-line programmes an alternative records system may be used.

**Category D: Second or Subsequent Category C Offence(s) following a Written Warning**

- 4.15 This category covers instances when academic malpractice can be determined and intent to deceive can be established because the student has received a prior written warning of misconduct.
- 4.16 If cases of plagiarism, copying, collusion or dishonest use of data are suspected by the internal examiners an investigation must be carried out by the Academic Integrity Officer in the Department/School that 'owns' the module concerned.
- 4.17 The Academic Integrity Officer will investigate the allegation on behalf of the Chair of the appropriate Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) by inviting the examiner to provide evidence and reasons for their allegation and the student(s) to provide an explanation of the circumstances for the plagiarism, copying, collusion or dishonest use of data.<sup>5</sup>
- 4.18 If the case is proven and the student's record shows that the student has previously been found to have committed plagiarism, copying, dishonest use of data or to have colluded in the production of assessed work, and the student has had a written warning issued more than seven calendar days previously, then the Category D penalty should be applied.
- 4.19 In cases deemed proven by the Academic Integrity Committee the Chair of the AIC will provide a report to the Chair of the appropriate Board of Examiners recommending the imposition of the mark penalty and detailing the Committee's findings, including the circumstances of the alleged offence, the investigation undertaken and the representations made by the student(s). A copy of this report will also be made available to the student(s).
- 4.20 The student's copy of the report of the investigation from the Academic Integrity Officer will also contain a second dated written warning to the student outlining the consequences of further academic misconduct (see Guidelines on Academic Integrity for suggested wording).
- 4.21 If two or more students are found to have colluded in producing a piece of assessed work (this includes one student allowing another to copy their work and submit it as their own), then each should receive the mark penalty for the assessment task. If one or more students are found to have copied the work of another student in any form without their knowledge, then any resulting warning and penalty should apply only to the student(s) that copied the work.
- 4.22 If, after receiving a written warning, a student is found to have committed second or subsequent plagiarism, copying, collusion or dishonest use of data:
- 4.22.1 the Academic Integrity Committee will ask the Board of Examiners to approve a recommendation that that a breach of the policy has taken place and that the student should be given zero for the module, regardless of any other assessment component marks for the module;
  - 4.22.2 the student will be given a second written warning;
  - 4.22.3 the student will be recommended to take or retake the on-line Know How academic integrity tutorial;
  - 4.22.4 a note will be placed on the student's records, including their records in Banner<sup>6</sup>.
  - 4.22.5 the student's entitlement to re-sit failed modules is not affected.
- 4.23 In the case of a student being awarded a mark of zero and as a result failing their dissertation or project, the Board of Examiners will decide whether they should be permitted to re-submit the dissertation or project, revised and corrected, or whether they must complete and submit a whole new dissertation or project.

**Category E: Unfair and/or Dishonest Academic Practice or Research Misconduct**

<sup>5</sup> For on-line programmes, the investigation undertaken by the Assessment Officer with the examiner and the student concerned often takes place under the auspices of an 'Academic Integrity Committee' who would make recommendations about allegations of plagiarism, copying, collusion or fabrication of data to the Board of Examiners.

<sup>6</sup> In respect of this and all references to Banner in this Policy it should be noted that for on-line programmes an alternative records system may be used.



- 4.24 This category covers academic malpractice where a clear intent to deceive and gain unfair advantage can be established. Examples include the use of purchased or commissioned coursework or data, unacceptable proof-reading practice, passing off as one's own work the work of another student or person, extensive fabrication and falsification of data, coercive collusion, and research misconduct. The practices in this category are defined as those serious enough even as a first offence to warrant suspension or termination of studies and do not depend on a student's prior actions.
- 4.25 When unfair and/or dishonest academic practice is identified, the matter must be reported to the Academic Integrity Officer in the Department/School that 'owns' the module concerned.
- 4.26 Where a breach of ethical approval is suspected this will be reported by the Academic Integrity Officer to the University's Named Person for Research Integrity who will determine if a breach has occurred.
- 4.27 The Academic Integrity Officer will investigate the allegation on behalf of the Chair of the appropriate Academic Integrity Committee by inviting the examiner to provide evidence and reasons for their allegation and the student(s) to provide an explanation of the circumstances for the unfair and/or dishonest practice.<sup>7</sup>
- 4.28 The student(s) must be afforded the opportunity to make any representations that they may wish to make. If the investigation involves a meeting, requested either by the student or the Academic Integrity Officer, each student suspected of unfair and/or dishonest academic practice will be entitled to be accompanied by another member of the University, e.g. a fellow student, or a representative of the Liverpool Guild of Students.
- 4.29 If, following the investigation, the Academic Integrity Committee concludes that unfair and/or dishonest academic practice has taken place, the Academic Integrity Committee will provide a report to the Chair of the appropriate Board of Examiners detailing the Committee's findings, the circumstances of the alleged unfair and/or dishonest practice, the investigation undertaken and the representations made by the student. A copy of this will also be made available to the student(s).
- 4.30 The Chair of the Board of Examiners will consult with the Board of Examiners and decide whether it deems the findings of the Academic Integrity Committee appropriate and acceptable and apply the appropriate penalty. No person who was involved with any aspect of the investigation and drafting of the Academic Integrity Officer's report should be party to the decision made by the Board of Examiners.
- 4.31 If a student is found to have committed unfair and/or dishonest academic practice, the Board of Examiners shall determine the penalty to be applied and shall determine any award to be made to the student. The minutes of the Board should accurately record the decision making process. The penalty to be applied for a Category E offence is a mark of zero for the module, regardless of any other assessment component marks for the module and either:
- a. For research misconduct, a mark of zero for the module in which the misconduct occurred and a reassessment of a project or dissertation on a different topic, If the misconduct occurs on this subsequent reassessment attempt, a mark of zero for the module and consideration of an exit award, or
  - b. Suspension of studies for a period not exceeding one academic session, or
  - c. Termination of studies, with credit awarded for what has already been passed without unfair and/or dishonest academic practice.

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<sup>7</sup> For on-line programmes, the investigation undertaken by the Assessment Officer with the examiner and the student concerned often takes place under the auspices of an 'Academic Integrity Committee' who would make recommendations about allegations of plagiarism, copying, collusion or fabrication of data to the Board of Examiners.



**5. Right of Appeal**

- 5.1 Students may appeal against the decision of the Board of Examiners in relation to a Category C, D or E decision but only on the grounds that there was a procedural error in determining a decision in the conduct of the investigation into the alleged offence. Students may not appeal against the decision of the Board of Examiners other than in accordance with the Code of Practice on Assessment, Appendix F, Assessment Appeals Procedure:  
<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/aqsd/academic-codes-of-practice/code-of-practice-on-assessment/>

**6. Poor Academic Practice, Unfair and/or Dishonest Practice, Research Misconduct and Fitness to Practise**

- 6.1 For some vocational and/or professional programmes there may be requirements for students to meet specified standards in respect of their fitness to practise in the relevant vocation or profession. Where a finding of poor academic practice or unfair and/or dishonest plagiarism, collusion and/or dishonest use of data or research misconduct against a student may call into question the student's fitness to practise, this must be clearly stated in the programme information provided to students.

**7. Research Degrees**

The policy for dealing with plagiarism, collusion and fabrication of data in research degrees is addressed in a separate policy document:  
<https://www.liverpool.ac.uk/media/livacuk/tqsd/code-of-practice-on-assessment/appendix-4-PGR-CoP.pdf>

**PROCESSES**



