



Scholars School System

Academic Misconduct Policy

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Policy Aims:

- clarify the nature and scope of unfair practice;
- identify and minimise the risk of misconduct by staff and learners;
- respond to any incident of alleged misconduct promptly (10 working days) and objectively;
- standardise and record any investigation of misconduct to ensure openness and fairness. Records will be retained of all incidents;
- impose appropriate penalties and/or sanctions on learners or staff where incidents (or attempted incidents) of misconduct are proven.

The Context

Misconduct and maladministration will mean any act or omission, or attempted act or omission, which:

- breaches Institution rules and regulations for its examinations in particular and overall management and administration in general;
- compromises the process of assessment, the integrity of any qualification or the validity of a result or certificate;
- prejudices or otherwise damages the authority, reputation or credibility of the Institution or damages the authority, reputation or credibility of a Registered Examination Centre or its staff (including any contractor, consultant or other person acting on the institutions behalf).

In order to do this, Scholars School System will:

- seek to avoid potential misconduct by informing learners of the Institution's policy for misconduct and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of misconduct. The Induction period and the Student Handbook will be the primary sources of information given to the students. This will be reinforced in class-based sessions;
- show learners the appropriate formats to record cited texts, other materials and information sources. This will include direction on website sources;
- ask learners to declare that their work is their own, and to provide evidence that they have interpreted and synthesized appropriate information and acknowledged any sources used. The institution will release results to learners once the declaration for that assessment has been signed;
- conduct an investigation in a form commensurate with the nature of the misconduct allegation.

The Nature and Scope of Misconduct

Misconduct by learners

The nature of learner misconduct may include the following:

- **plagiarism** of any nature (examples include. poor referencing, absence of attribution for copied work in an assignment, paraphrasing without adequate attribution);
- **collusion** by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work;
- **copying** (including the use of ICT to aid copying);
- **deliberate destruction** of another learner's work;
- **fabrication** of results or evidence or data;
- **false declaration** of authenticity in relation to the contents of a portfolio or coursework;
- **impersonation** by pretending to be someone else in order to produce their work.
- commissioning work from someone else.

Misconduct by staff

This list is not exhaustive, but the nature of staff misconduct may include the following:

- improper assistance to candidates;
- inventing or changing marks for internally assessed work (coursework or portfolio evidence) where there is insufficient evidence of the candidates' achievement to justify the marks given or the assessment decisions made;
- failure to keep secure candidate coursework/portfolios of evidence;
- fraudulent claims for certificates;
- inappropriate retention of certificates;
- assisting learners in the production of work for assessment, where the support has the potential to influence the outcomes of assessment;
- producing falsified witness statements, for example for evidence the learner has not generated;
- allowing evidence, which is known by the staff member not to be the learner's own, to be included in a learner's assignment/task/portfolio/coursework etc;
- facilitating and allowing impersonation;
- misusing the conditions for special learner requirements, for example where learners are permitted support, such as an amanuensis. This is permissible up to the point where the support has the potential to influence the outcome of the assessment;
- falsifying records/certificates, for example by alteration, substitution, or by fraud;
- fraudulent certificate claims, that is claiming for a certificate prior to the learner completing all the requirements of assessment.

Investigating alleged misconduct

If the Institution deems action to be required, it will:

- ensure that the Associate Dean, who will lead the investigation, makes the learner/staff member fully aware at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged misconduct and of the possible consequences should misconduct be proven;
- ensure that the Associate Dean makes the learner/staff aware of the nature of the alleged misconduct and possible consequences, and gives the individual the opportunity to respond to the allegations made;
- ensure that the Associate Dean informs the student/staff of the judgement, sanction, action and deadline, where applicable, and informs the individual of the right of appeal against any judgment made;
- provide details of the panel that will investigate the allegation, which will be chaired by the Associate Dean plus two other members of staff, one of which will be from a different Department of the institution. Every effort will be made to ensure a timely outcome with a time limit of 10 working days;
- document all stages of any investigation, and the outcome of the investigation reported at the Examination Board.

The outcome of misconduct: penalties and sanctions

If the misconduct is considered proven, the case will be considered by at least two members of the senior management team. The following is an example of possible outcomes, which may differ depending on the facts of the actual case.

The nature and scope of offences

Typical examples might be:

Minor offence – poor referencing, incorrect attribution of copied work in an assignment, paraphrasing without attribution.

Moderate offence – Ideas or concepts which appear to originate from the student but are in fact the work of others, not fully acknowledged.

Severe offence – Plagiarism extending to a substantial proportion of work, falsifying data, results or evidence.

Very severe offences – commissioning work, collusion, deliberate destruction of another learner's work.

Penalties

It is important that the policy addresses how to deal with complexities such as sanctions for a first offence that is minor and a first offence that is severe or a third minor offence for example. The guidelines which follow provide an indicative guide to what might be considered an appropriate penalty. They relate to minor and moderate offences only. The Associate Dean chairing the panel and his two colleagues must consider both the number of offences the student/staff has committed, plus the nature of the offence. They will then make a reasoned judgment based on the collective evidence.

A first offence:

In the case of a student, they are likely to be offered the opportunity to rectify their offence, with the overall mark capped at a Pass grade. They will need to resubmit their work in a time frame notified to them. A failure to meet these deadlines will result in a Fail grade being awarded, with no opportunity to resubmit. The offence will be recorded on the students record. Records will also be kept centrally and will contribute to course review.

A member of staff will receive counselling from their manager and will receive a written warning.

A second offence

A student committing a second offence will be given a penalty reflecting the severity of the offence. They are likely to be offered an opportunity to redeem themselves, with all work capped. The offence will be recorded on the students record and they will be given a formal final warning.

A member of staff will receive counselling from their manager and will receive a final written warning. The offence will be recorded on the staff record.

A third offence

A student committing a third offence, who as obviously not learnt from their previous experience, is likely to be permanently excluded.

A member of staff in this position is likely to have their contract terminated.

Appeals

Students and staff have a right to appeal against any disciplinary decision following the procedure outlined in the Student or Staff Handbook.

A student who is dissatisfied with the institutions internal process or its conduct has the right to submit an application to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA.) This right can only be exercised once the internal processes have been exhausted.

Relevant aspects of the (revised) UK Quality Code

Expectations for Standards:

Common Practices

The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

Expectations for Quality: Core Practices

The provider has sufficient and appropriate facilities, learning resources and student support services to deliver a high-quality academic experience.

The provider actively engages students, individually and collectively, in the quality of their educational experience.

The provider supports all students to achieve successful academic and professional outcomes.

Common Practices

The provider reviews its core practices for quality regularly and uses the outcomes to drive improvement and enhancement.

The provider engages students individually and collectively in the development, assurance and enhancement of the quality of their educational experience.