



Academic Misconduct Policy

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1. Aims

- 1.1. This policy aims to establish a clear and fair process to be followed for preventing, identifying, investigating and responding to suspected unacceptable academic practices. This protects the academic standards of the programmes, by ensuring that students cannot obtain awards through any form of unacceptable academic practice relating to assignment assessments;
- 1.2. The processes described in this policy apply to students studying on HND Courses;
- 1.3. LCC is committed to the highest standards of integrity in respect of academic work submitted by students.

2. Policy

- 2.1. The College will facilitate the gathering of evidence and provide students who are believed to have engaged in unacceptable practice with the opportunity to put their case, test the evidence and offer any explanation or mitigation;
- 2.2. The handling of individual cases takes account of the needs of the student, including those arising from protected characteristics;
- 2.3. Clear information is provided to all concerned about the rights of students involved in a case where unacceptable practice is suspected, including whether students are entitled to be accompanied or represented at hearings and the rights of appeal against the decision and/or penalties;
- 2.4. Penalties for proven cases of unacceptable practice are clear, proportionate and consistently and equitably applied;
- 2.5. The expectations of learners with respect to academic integrity at all stages of study and the responsibilities of students and staff in meeting those expectations, are identified. New students are provided with information about how to avoid unacceptable academic practice at induction. The College can provide this information in other formats on request from students with relevant protected characteristics.
- 2.6. The following are examples of offences that are covered by this policy:
 - 2.1.1. Cheating in an examination;
 - 2.1.2. Impersonation;
 - 2.1.3. Fabrication;
 - 2.1.4. Collusion;
 - 2.1.5. Plagiarism;
 - 2.1.6. Submission of work produced by someone else;
 - 2.1.7. Self-Plagiarism: which is the reproduction/resubmission of a student's own work which has already been submitted for summative assessment at LCC or any other institution.

3. Definitions

- 3.1. Because there are differences in the severity of alleged academic misconduct, the College distinguishes between two different forms of unacceptable academic practice, which follow different courses of action:



- 3.1.1. Academic concerns occur where the integrity of academic process has been deemed potentially to be compromised such that the College does not have a reasonable level of confidence that the work submitted conforms to the regulations. A concern would be considered where the nature of the offence, or the point of study suggests that guidance and being dealt with as a concern would be the best course of action.
- 3.1.2. Academic offences are identified as occasions or circumstances within which it can be demonstrated on the balance of probabilities that a student has deliberately (knowingly), or through culpable negligence (unknowingly), used unfair means in the assessment or some other aspect of the academic or academically-based progress.

4. Procedure

4.1. Identification

- 4.1.1. Where a suspicion of academic malpractice is identified by staff involved in the marking process, the individual staff member shall report the matter to the Programme Leader in the first instance as a matter of urgency by completing the Academic Concern Form (see Appendix);
- 4.1.2. Where work submitted by a student is the subject of an academic offence investigation, it should be marked and graded on the basis of the submission but should not be processed for mark confirmation until the investigation is completed;
- 4.1.3. Where academic malpractice is identified by staff invigilating an examination, the existing regulations governing the conduct of the examination's procedures will apply.

4.2. Consideration by the Programme Leader

- 4.2.1. A decision will be made by the Programme Leader as to whether suspected malpractice should be considered as an academic offence or an academic concern and the students' records checked to determine previous activity and their level of study;
- 4.2.2. Only a qualified academic, normally the Programme Leader, can exercise his/her academic judgement to determine whether the suspected malpractice is either a concern or an offence;
- 4.2.3. Where the issue is a first offence, factors affecting this decision deciding if this is a potential concern or offence may include:
 - a) The amount of similarity identified via Turnitin;
 - b) Whether there was an attempt to acknowledge the sources,
 - c) Where the similarity occurs; for example a similarity within the conclusion and recommendations may be considered more serious than a similarity in the literature review.
- 4.2.4. Where there is a second offence, this may also be considered as an academic concern if:



- a) The submission date was before the student would have received guidance following the first concern;
- b) Where the student has been seen to apply the guidance from the first concern but requires additional feedback to address minor errors;
- c) Where the concern is minor, such as the student has a referencing error where they have acknowledged the source in the text, but forgotten to include it in the reference list, and the rest of the submission is correctly referenced.

4.2.5. The Programme Leader decides whether a case can be argued for academic offence following discussion with the Head of Programmes and Academic Monitoring, in which case the College would proceed to convene an Academic Offence Panel. The decision is recorded on the Academic Concern Form (ACF).

4.3. Dealing with Issues of Academic Concern

4.3.1. If it is considered that the work contains an academic concern, the student will be invited to a meeting with the Personal Tutor in which s/he will be given the opportunity to defend the case. The Personal Tutor will identify the evidence of the concern and give guidance and feedback regarding how to prevent it in further assignments.

4.4. Academic Offence Panel

4.4.1. The function of the Academic Offence Panel is to ensure all alleged cases of academic offence are investigated and to ensure consistency of approach across the College. The panel determines whether an academic offence has been committed and determines an appropriate penalty and/or further action;

4.4.2. The panel will consist of a Chair, and two additional panel members. No two attending members will be from the same Department. The panel will comprise from a membership pool of Head of Programmes and Academic Monitoring, Heads of Academic Departments, Lecturers and the Registrar;

4.4.3. LCC will write (email) to the student to advising of the allegation, giving details of the arrangements for the Panel meeting. The email will include full details of the allegation and any evidence to be considered. This shall occur at least 5 working days in advance of the Panel meeting. The student will also be advised to contact the Personal Tutor for advice and, if required, to bring a friend or student representative to the Panel meeting;

4.4.4. Where a student accepts the allegation, s/he will not be invited to attend the meeting to speak to the Panel but may submit a written statement for consideration;

4.4.5. Where the student does not accept the allegation, s/he will be invited to attend the Panel meeting on a specified date, time and location. If this is not possible, the student might submit a written statement for consideration;



- 4.4.6. In cases where the student successfully defends the allegation, the matter will be dropped and the students work will be marked as normal procedures with the full range of marks being available without penalty;
- 4.4.7. In the event of suspected submission of work produced by someone else, the student may be invited to attend a *viva* to help staff reach a conclusion about the nature and extent of any suspected offence. The notes taken at the *viva* can be considered as evidence by the Panel.

4.5. Range of Outcomes

- 4.5.1. The Academic Offence Panel shall seek to impose penalties for an academic offence that constitutes equitable treatment of all students and at the same time allow a student found guilty of an academic offence to recover their standing and to progress in their studies;
- 4.5.2. The Panel shall determine the severity of the penalty, which is dependent on details of the case;
- 4.5.3. The possible Panel outcomes are:

4.5.2. Resolved

- a) The allegation is successfully defended, and the case is dismissed
- b) Case dismissed

4.5.3. Proven

- a) Referred due to plagiarism with a resubmission opportunity, and the grade is limited to pass mark, if the severity of malpractice is moderate;
 - b) Repeat the unit with class attendance and the grade is limited to pass mark, if the severity of malpractice is high;
 - c) Repeat the unit and lower the grade by a further 15-credit unit in the concurrent semester, if the severity of malpractice is very high.
- 4.5.4. If a student receives a penalty on a referred unit, the Panel may consider offering a different unit to make up the credit deficit, that module will be limited to the minimum pass mark;
 - 4.5.5. Where a student has multiple and serial offences, or where the offence is considered to be deliberate and severe, the student may be exited from the College and not permitted to continue with studies. S/he will normally be entitled to any award for which they are eligible;
 - 4.5.6. Any penalties applied override any decision taken regarding mitigating circumstances applications. The decisions of the Assessment and Progression Board are final and cannot be overridden. The Minutes of the Academic Offence Panel are available to External Examiners;
 - 4.5.7. The application of penalties can be expected to be applied once the Assessment and Progression Board has met and ratified the decision;
 - 4.5.8. The procedures outlined by this policy must therefore be completed before any Assessment and Progression Board takes place;



- 4.5.9. Students have the right to Appeal against the decision and the procedure is described in LCC's Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure, which can be accessed on the VLE.



5. Appendix



ACADEMIC CONCERN FORM (ACF)

Student Name			
Student ID No		Term / Semester	
Programme			
Unit Name			

Type of Concern/Offence:

- | | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Cheating (in an exam) | <input type="checkbox"/> | | |
| Impersonation | <input type="checkbox"/> | Plagiarism | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fabrication | <input type="checkbox"/> | Work produced by a third party | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Collusion | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Details of the current Offence/Concern:



Details of any Previous Offences/Concerns:

Form Completed by	
Position	
Date	

To be dealt with as:
(Please consult Academic Discipline Policy for guidance on academic practice and plagiarism)

Concern **Offence**

Confirmed by Programme Leader	
Date	