

Academic Conduct and Practice Procedure

Document Summary

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1: General principles

Upholding academic integrity underpins all learning activities at The City College. Students are expected to respect and maintain the core values of honesty and trust at all times. Poor academic practice and academic malpractice are taken very seriously and students should behave in a manner consistent with these values at all times.

Academic honesty is fundamental to the values promoted by the College and no student should be allowed to obtain for themselves, or for another student, an unfair advantage. Academic honesty means never falsifying the results of any work and always giving full credit for any other persons' contributions to your own achievements.

The City College is committed to taking-into-account best practice identified by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. All decisions taken shall take full account of natural justice and fairness, and any penalties should be applied consistently.

When considering cases, the College will adopt the civil standard of proof 'on the balance of probabilities' to make a decision. In particular, this is in accordance with the Health and Social Care Act 2008 that applies to healthcare students.

2: Potential benefits of academic honesty

Students demonstrating academic honesty are more likely to benefit from a number of potential outcomes, including for example:

- Higher grades and overall programme satisfaction
- Improved confidence, capability and adaptability
- Easier access to employment
- Improved results and outcomes in workplace and professional tasks and projects
- High personal reputation for high quality and original work
- Better promotion prospects and career progression
- More successful career and lifestyle
- Greater knowledge, skills and personal fulfilment.

3: Definitions of Academic Malpractice

Academic Malpractice is defined by The City College as any attempt by a student to gain an unfair advantage in any assessment. The term academic malpractice includes all forms of cheating, plagiarism, and collusion. Academic malpractice is effectively academic dishonesty.

The following is an indicative list of forms of malpractice but should not be considered exhaustive:

1. **Aiding and abetting** a student in any form of dishonest practice.
2. **Bribery** is where a student provides an enticement in return for a more favourable assessment decision or if paying or offering inducements to another person to obtain a copy of a coursework assignment in advance of its distribution
3. **Collusion** is where two or more students collaborate to produce a piece of work which is then submitted as though it was an individual student's own work. Where students in a class are instructed or encouraged to work together in the pursuit of an assignment, such a group activity is regarded as approved collaboration. Where there is a requirement for the submitted work to be solely that of the individual, collaboration is not permitted. Students who improperly work collectively in these circumstances will be regarded as being guilty of collusion
4. **Commissioning** another person or persons to complete an assignment, which is then submitted as your own work. This includes the use of the services of essay-writing agencies (for example in the preparation of essays or reports), including those found on the internet. Professional word processing services, which offer 'correction/improvement of English' must not be used either. (Candidates are strongly advised to retain copies of any drafts produced while preparing assessed work, as this will be of assistance in demonstrating that the work is their own)
5. **Computer fraud** is the use of the material of another person located on the internet or stored on a hard, portable, or flash drive or other form of data storage, as if it were your own (also see plagiarism)
6. **Duplication** is the inclusion of coursework of any material, which is identical or similar to material, which has already been submitted for any other assessment within the College or elsewhere e.g. submitting the same piece of coursework for two different units (unless explicitly authorised as identified by the assessor in accordance with awarding body guidance)
7. **False declarations** in order to receive special consideration (for example, injury following a personal accident or bereavement following the death of a close relative)
8. **Falsification of data** is the presentation of data in projects, laboratory reports etc. based on work purported to have been carried out by the student which have been invented by the student or altered or copied or obtained by other unfair means
9. **Impersonation** is to assume a student's name and/ or identity for the purpose of deceiving or gaining unfair advantage
10. **Plagiarism** is an attempt (deliberate or accidental) to gain advantage by the representation of another person's work, without acknowledgement of the source, as the student's own. Recognised forms of plagiarism include:

- the use in a student's own work of a significant number of phrases that may be attributed to another person's work without the use of quotation marks and acknowledgement of the source
- the summarising of another person's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without acknowledgement
- the use of ideas or intellectual data of another person without acknowledgement of the source, or the submission or presentation of work as if it were the student's own, which are substantially the ideas or intellectual data of another person
- copying the work of another person
- the submission of work, as if it were the student's own, which has been obtained from the internet or any other form of information technology
- the submission of coursework making significant use of unattributed digital images such as graphs, tables, photographs, etc. taken from books/ articles, the internet or from the work of another person
- the submission of a piece of work which has previously been assessed for a different award or unit at a different institution as if it were new work (unless explicitly
- authorised as identified by the assessor in accordance with awarding body guidance).

Students are required to submit their final assignments electronically into Moodle. If formative work is not submitted electronically and plagiarism is suspected, students will be required to supply an electronic copy of the work in question so that it may be subjected to electronic plagiarism detection testing. Therefore students are required to keep an electronic copy of their work, until after they receive their results.

4: Why is Plagiarism wrong?

The City College endorses the view of Pearson, the HND awarding body, about plagiarism expressed on page one of the BTEC Factsheet (V727c2):

- It is fundamentally dishonest
- Students who commit plagiarism are seeking an unfair advantage over other students
- Students who commit plagiarism are devaluing the value of the qualification they seek
- It is disrespectful to their Assessors, and a betrayal of their trust.

It must also be noted that because it is dishonest, professional regulators such as those for nursing and social work, will take any offence of plagiarism into account when deciding to

register an applicant. There are instances from both regulators of them either refusing to register or imposing conditions.

5: Definitions of the level of Academic Malpractice

Academic malpractice is defined at The City College by three levels of severity:

5.1: Poor Academic Practice

Poor academic practice may arise from lack of understanding of academic protocols or a misunderstanding of expected academic conventions of the discipline. Examples of include:

- Poor assignment structure
- Poor assignment presentation
- Poor referencing
- Reliance on sources not considered to be reliable or credible
- Errors of attribution ie. incorrect (or an absence of) attribution for copied work used in an assignment
- Paraphrasing without adequate attribution.

The definition of poor academic practice does not apply if there is any indication that the student intended to gain an unfair advantage or had the intention to deceive the marker. It also does not apply if the student has already been found guilty of a similar offence of poor academic practice, in a similar assessment, and could therefore be reasonably expected to have familiarised themselves with the academic practice of the discipline.

5.2: Academic Malpractice

Academic misconduct involves behaviour that is intended to deceive those setting, administering and marking the coursework and/ or could have obtained advantage on the part of the student. Examples include:

- Ideas or concepts which appear to originate from the student but are in fact the work of others, not fully referenced, cited or otherwise acknowledged
- Work that is inadequately paraphrased or directly quoted without speech marks and is not referenced
- Identical or closely related work and ideas to another assignment previously submitted by the student
- Falsifying some data or evidence
- Infringement of awarding body assessment rules.

5.3: Severe Academic Malpractice

Severe academic misconduct may be a repeated offence, or involve evidence of extensive plagiarism or cheating, or clear evidence of behaviour which is intended to deceive those

setting, administering and marking the assessment and/ or behaviour designed to obtain advantage on the part of the student. Examples include:

- Plagiarism extending to a substantial proportion of the work
- Commissioning work from someone else
- Copying the work of another student
- Collusion with other students to produce a piece of work as if it was an individual student's own work
- Falsifying the majority of data or evidence.

6: Procedure to be followed for Suspected Cases of Academic Malpractice (SCOAM)

SCOAM will normally be identified by the Assessor in the first instance but it could be other members of staff, such as an Internal Verifier, or partners, such as External Examiners and other quality assurance professionals. Assessors will use their professional expertise and knowledge of the student to make judgements, and also the similarity score obtained from Turnitin.

SCOAM may be identified at any point of the learning cycle, for example:

- Teaching, tutorial or workshop sessions
- Study Skills sessions
- Formative feedback on draft assignments
- Summative assessment after final submission
- Internal or external quality assurance activity post marking.

6.1: Investigating SCOAM outline

All SCOAM must be reported to the relevant Internal Verifier (IV) who will consider the matter and seek further information from the referrer if necessary. The referral should be made by completing the SCOAM referral form (an exemplar is available). Where suspected poor academic practice is identified, corrective remedy in class is preferable in the first instance. If the IV confirms poor academic practice, suspected academic malpractice or severe academic malpractice:

- The IV will inform the Programme Leader (if different) and Principal
- The IV or Programme Leader will inform the student of the allegation and determine if the student wishes to challenge the assessment
- If the student challenges, the IV or Programme Leader will invite the student to an Academic Hearing and ensure they are fully aware of the allegation. Any penalty to be applied or action to be taken will be identified at the meeting (see 7.1 below)

- If the student does not challenge, the IV or Programme Leader will identify the penalty to be applied from the Tariff of Penalties (see 7.1 below). The IV may also invite the student to an Academic Hearing if deemed necessary
- Any invitation must be sent at least five working days prior to the Academic Hearing, and include notice of the allegation and a copy of the evidence concerned if required
- The Assessor should be present at the Academic Hearing (if available)
- The student may also be accompanied by a 'Friend' to the Hearing and should notify the IV or Programme Leader who this will be at least two days before the meeting (see 6.4 below).
- Witnesses relevant to the SCOAM may appear and be questioned if required but their attendance must be agreed in advance with the IV or Programme Leader
- Students must be made aware that a *viva voce* or written test may be arranged for the purpose of establishing the original source of any work submitted
- Students should respond to the allegation and submit any explanations and any extenuating circumstances to be taken into account
- If the scheduling of the Academic Hearing is unsuitable, the student must inform the IV or Programme Leader at the earliest opportunity. A new date/ time may be negotiated though the College may not be able to accommodate the request owing to operational restrictions
- The Programme Leader or Lead IV will Chair the Academic Hearing
- If there is a conflict of interest for the Chair of the Hearing (or any other member of staff involved), they will be replaced with a suitable nominee)
- An Administrator may attend the meetings in order to take notes.

The student (and Friend) may attend for the duration of the Hearing but withdraw while the Panel makes its decision. The Panel may uphold the SCOAM allegation and apply a penalty from the Tariff of Penalties (see 7.2 and 7.3 below), or may find the student to not have carried out the suspected malpractice. The IV or Programme Leader must notify the student of the outcome of the meeting within five days of the meeting having occurred. The decision may be deferred by the IV or Programme Leader of the Appeal Hearing until a suitable time, depending on the complexity of the case. In this instance, the student and the Principal must be informed of the deferral within five days of the meeting having occurred.

If the student does not attend the Hearing without an acceptable reason, a decision about the SCOAM will be made in their absence, based on the evidence available.

The use of electronic audio or video recording equipment is not allowed unless authorised in advance by the Chair of the Hearing.

6.2: Appeals

Students are entitled to appeal the decision of the Academic Hearing and must do so within ten working days of the date of the decision being made.

Students should note that an appeal against a decision will only be accepted if:

- there is evidence of procedural irregularity
- there is evidence of bias
- the decision reached is one that no reasonable body (properly directing itself, and taking into account all relevant factors) could have reached
- the student submits further material circumstances which could not reasonably be expected to have been submitted for consideration when the original decision was made.

The Appeal will be heard by at least two of the Principal, Director of Studies, and one further academic (or their nominee if any of these members has had prior involvement with the SCOAM or is not available). An Administrator may attend the meetings in order to take notes.

An invitation to the Appeal Hearing must be sent at least ten working days in advance, and include notice of the allegation and a copy of the evidence concerned if required. The student is entitled to be accompanied by a 'Friend' to the Hearing and should notify the Chair of the Appeal Hearing who this will be at least two days before the meeting (see 6.4 below). The student (and Friend) may attend for the duration of the meeting but withdraw while the decision is made. The decision may be deferred by the Chair of the Appeal Hearing until a suitable time, depending on the complexity of the case.

The Appeal Hearing will consider the evidence presented by the IV or Programme Leader and the student. Witnesses relevant to the SCOAM may appear and be questioned but their attendance must be agreed in advance.

If the student does not attend the Appeal Hearing without an acceptable reason, a decision about the SCOAM will be made in their absence, based on the evidence available.

The use of electronic audio or video recording equipment is not allowed unless authorised in advance by the Chair of the Appeal Hearing.

The Appeal Hearing has the power to uphold, to set aside or to vary the penalty imposed by the Academic Hearing. The Chair of the Appeal Hearing must notify the student of the outcome of the Appeal Panel in writing within ten days of the meeting having occurred,

unless the decision is deferred owing to the complexity of the case. In this instance, the student must be informed of the deferral within ten working days of the meeting. There is no further internal right of appeal against the decision of the Appeal Hearing.

6.3: Office of the Independent Adjudicator

Any student who is not satisfied with the outcome of their Appeal may take their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for consideration. The OIA may be contacted by ringing 0118 959 9813. Details of the OIA may be found at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>

6.4: The Role of the 'Friend'

The Friend may be an official Student Representative or another member of the College community and is there to provide moral support and to support the student with asking and answering questions during the meetings. They may also take notes of the meetings for the student. Students are expected to speak for themselves, and there is no automatic right for the Friend to address the meeting though this may be allowed at the discretion of the Chair of the relevant Hearing. Should the Friend act beyond this definition, the meeting may be suspended and the Friend asked to leave. In the event that the student is unable to continue the meeting in the absence of the Friend, the meeting will continue in the absence of the student, based on the verbal evidence heard to date and the written documentation.

7: Penalties

The table of penalties sets out examples of academic malpractice and the type of penalty to be applied. It is not intended to be exhaustive and should be used as a guide only.

The application of a penalty should take-into-account a number of factors, including the severity of the malpractice, frequency of committing malpractice, attitude of the student and their attempt to make amends.

The Investigation Panel and the Appeals Panel should consider the facts of the SCOAM carefully and look at how characteristics within the SCOAM match up with the Description column in order to identify the fairest and most appropriate penalty.

It should be noted that the following penalties are to be applied within the Pearson requirement that students have a maximum of two attempts to submit their assignment.

7.1: Poor academic practice

Description of poor practice	Types of penalty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor assignment structure Poor assignment presentation Poor referencing Reliance on sources not considered to be reliable or credible Errors of attribution ie. incorrect (or an absence of) attribution for copied work used in an assignment Paraphrasing without adequate attribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compulsory corrective support Warning letter issued Formal reprimand In all cases assignment must be resubmitted and mark may be capped at a 'pass' for more serious/ repeat cases

7.2: Academic Malpractice

Description of academic malpractice	Types of penalty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideas or concepts which appear to originate from the student but are in fact the work of others, not fully referenced, cited or otherwise acknowledged Work that is inadequately paraphrased or directly quoted without speech marks and is not referenced Identical or closely related work and ideas to another assignment previously submitted by the student Falsifying some data or evidence Infringement of awarding body assessment rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compulsory corrective support Warning letter issued Formal reprimand In all cases assignment must be resubmitted and mark is capped at a 'pass'

7.3: Severe Academic Malpractice

Description of severe academic malpractice	Types of penalty
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plagiarism extending to a substantial proportion of the work Commissioning work from someone else Copying the work of another student Collusion with other students to produce a piece of work as if it was an individual student's own work Falsifying the majority of data or evidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compulsory corrective support Warning letter issued Formal reprimand <p>In all cases one of the following applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different assignment must be submitted and mark is capped at a 'pass'

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mark of zero for the unit & no resubmission - whole unit must be repeated• Expulsion from the programme
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