Academic Conduct and Practice Procedure

Document Summary

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1: General principles

1.1 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.

1.2 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.

1.3 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.

1.4 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 2012 that applies to healthcare students.

1.5 Where references are made to "working days" in this policy, these are considered to be Monday to Friday (inclusive).

2: Potential benefits of academic honesty

2.1 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

3.1 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.

3.2 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).

3.3 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?

4.1 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.

4.2 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

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

5.2: 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.

5.3: 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.

5.4: 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: Identifying Suspected Cases of Academic Malpractice (SCOAM)

6.1 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.

6.2 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.

7: Investigating SCOAM

7.1 The person identifying the SCOAM must upload the SCOAM referral form to Moodle so the student is able to it. If the SCOAM is identified by a partner, such as an External Examiner, the Lead Assessment Administrator will upload the SCOAM referral form having liaised with the identifier. An exemplar SCOAM referral form is available.

7.2 The relevant Internal Verifier (IV) will check all SCOAM referral forms to confirm if there is a SCOAM to investigate. The IV may decide on the evidence presented that:

- the case is not a SCOAM so the referral form is withdrawn from Moodle before the grades are published and the identifier receives an explanation of the decision from the IV
- the case is a SCOAM so the referral form remains in Moodle and the IV informs the Lead Assessment Administrator of the details.

7.3 The Lead Assessment Administrator will then:

- contact the student by email with the details and determine if the student wishes to challenge the SCOAM assessment
- receive any challenges made to SCOAM assessments and inform the relevant IV of those students wishing to challenge, and those who do not.

7.4: The IV will then:

- arrange an Academic Hearing for those students wishing to challenge
- arrange an automatic Academic Hearing for those students who are suspected of severe academic misconduct and/ or those students who are suspected of having

repeated academic malpractice, regardless of whether the students concerned wish to challenge

- identify a penalty to be applied to those students who do not wish to challenge
- inform the Lead Assessment Administrator of all the details.

7.5 The Lead Assessment Administrator will then:

- invite the student and provide all the details for the Academic Hearing
- confirm the resubmission deadline to those students granted an opportunity to resubmit.

7.6 Where suspected poor academic practice is identified, corrective remedy in class is preferable in the first instance.

7.7 Details of the procedure for an Academic Hearing are given in section 10 below.

7.8 Details of possible penalties for academic misconduct are given in section 14 below.

8: Before the Academic Hearing

8.1 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 as required.

8.2 The Assessor should be present at the Academic Hearing (if available).

8.3 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. The student (and 'Friend') may attend for the duration of the Hearing but withdraw while the Panel makes its decision. The role of the 'Friend' is outlined in section 16 below.

8.4 Witnesses relevant to the SCOAM may appear and be questioned if required but their attendance must be agreed in advance with the Lead Assessment Administrator who will liaise with the Chair of the Academic Hearing Panel.

8.5 Students must be made aware that an oral or written test may be arranged for the purpose of establishing the original source of any work submitted.

8.6 If the scheduling of the Academic Hearing is unsuitable, the student must inform the Lead Assessment Administrator 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.

8.7 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.

8.8 The Chair of the Academic Hearing Panel will have discretion to delay the date of the Hearing if it is deemed that further investigation or information is required.

9: The Academic Hearing Panel membership

9.1 This procedure is applicable for Hearings involving suspected academic malpractice. It recognises that staff in a relatively small provider may have more than one role but undertakes to comply with best practice established by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

9.2 The membership of the Academic Hearing Panel will be:

- the Managing Director or Director of Student Records as Chair
- two members of the academic staff, one of which must be from a relevant subject discipline, and neither must be involved in the case to date.

9.3 A member of the admin team will attend as Secretary to the Panel to take notes and manage the documents required. The Secretary will have supplied copies of all the documents to be used to the Panel and the student concerned at least five working days before the Panel Hearing.

10: Academic Malpractice Hearing Procedure

10.1 An Academic Hearing will operate on the principle of 'the balance of probability' rather than that of 'beyond reasonable doubt'.

10.2 The conduct of the Academic Hearing Panel is at the discretion of the Chair but shall normally proceed as follows:

- The members of the Panel have a preliminary discussion in private
- The student, the student's 'Friend' and the Programme Leader (or their nominee if not available) who will present the case enter the room and the Chair introduces all those present
- The Chair checks that the student has received details of the concern and any supporting documentation
- The Chair explains the order of proceedings to the student
- The student will be invited to declare any factors which may affect their performance in the Hearing
- The relevant Programme Leader will present the evidence regarding the allegation of suspected academic malpractice and call witnesses as required

- The student has the opportunity to respond to the evidence and call witnesses as required
- The Chair/ Panel has the opportunity to question the Programme Leader and student as appropriate
- Relevant witnesses may be asked questions by the Chair/ Panel, or by any other party through the Chair
- Witnesses only attend to present their evidence and answer questions
- The Chair invites the Programme Leader to make any final response
- The Chair invites the student to make any final response
- The student, the student's 'Friend' and the Programme Leader are then asked to leave the room. The Panel then deliberates alone and comes to a decision. If the Panel is unable to reach a decision, then the Panel may be adjourned
- If the Panel finds on the balance of probability that the case is proven, they determine any further action or sanction and clarify the reasons for their decision.

10.3The Panel shall have the power to seek such other evidence as it deems necessary. The Panel may be adjourned to allow for such evidence to be gathered.

10.4The use of electronic audio or video recording equipment is not allowed unless authorised in advance by the Chair of the Hearing.

11: The Panel's decision

11.1 The Panel may find the student to not have carried out the suspected malpractice or may uphold the SCOAM allegation and apply a penalty from the Tariff of Penalties (see section 14 below).

12: After the Hearing

12.1 The decision made by the Academic Hearing Panel will be notified to the student within five working days of the meeting. The student will be advised of the right to appeal against the decision in accordance with the appeal section in 13 below.

12.2 Whilst it is envisaged that such cases will be exceptional, the College reserves the right, at any stage and level of this procedure, to vary the process it follows in the interests of fairness and/or health and safety.

13: Appeals against the decision of the Panel (the final internal stage)

13.1 A student may appeal against the decision of an Academic Hearing Panel to the Managing Director or Director of Student Records (whoever has not been involved in the case to date) in writing, stating the grounds of the appeal and attaching all supporting evidence. Students must do so within 10 working days of the letter confirming the Panel's decision.

13.2 The grounds for the appeal shall be one or more of the following on which a student may appeal are that:

- there is evidence now available, which for good reason was not available to the Academic Hearing Panel that might have materially affected the outcome
- the College did not follow the Academic Hearing Procedure in a way which disadvantaged the student's case
- there is evidence of prejudice and/or bias during the procedures
- on the balance of probabilities, the facts of the case do not justify the decision that was reached
- the action applied by the Academic Hearing Panel was disproportionate with regard to all the circumstances of the case or was not permitted under the Academic Hearing Procedure.

13.3The College will endeavour to complete the appeal proceedings within 20 working days from receipt of the appeal form and supporting evidence. During this time the student must meet all deadlines set. Occasionally there will be circumstances when, for good reason, the College will need to extend the timeframe. Where this is the case the student will be notified and kept regularly informed of progress.

13.4In the event of an appeal, the Managing Director or Director of Student Records dealing with the appeal and a senior member of the academic staff not involved in the case to date, will decide whether the grounds for the appeal are covered by the provisions in 13.2 above and warrant further consideration by an Academic Hearing Appeals Panel. If they agree that there are no grounds for further consideration of the appeal, the Managing Director or Director of Student Records will inform the student in writing giving the reasons for that decision.

13.5If the Managing Director or Director of Student Records dealing with the appeal decide that the appeal does warrant further consideration, the Managing Director or Director of Student Records dealing with the appeal will refer the case to an Academic Hearing Appeals Panel which shall normally be comprised of:

- the Managing Director or Director of Student Records dealing with the appeal as Chair
- one member of the academic staff from a relevant discipline (who has not been involved in the case to date)
- a second member of the academic staff or member of the Board of Governors (neither of whom has been involved in the case to date).

13.6A member of the admin team will attend as Secretary to the Panel to take notes and manage the documents required. The Secretary will provide the Panel with all the documents

relating to the original Hearing, together with the written statement and any other evidence submitted by the student setting out the grounds for the appeal.

13.7The Appeals Panel shall not proceed by way of a re-Hearing but shall have the power to require the presentation of such further evidence as it deems necessary. The proceedings of the Appeal Hearing will be the same as in the original Hearing (see 10.3 above).

13.8The Appeals Panel shall have the same powers as the Academic Hearing Panel and may confirm the decision of the Academic Hearing Panel or substitute another decision as it considers appropriate within the powers identified in 11.1 above. If new issues have arisen, the Appeals Panel may also decide that a new Academic Hearing Panel is required.

13.9When the Appeals Panel has reached its decision, the student concerned will be informed in writing within five working days of the decision being made.

13.10 The decision of the Appeals Panel is final and completes the College's internal Academic Hearing Procedure.

14: Penalties

14.1 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.

14.2 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.

14.3 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.

14.4 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.

(See below for examples of penalties that may be applied)

14.5: Poor academic practice

Description of poor practice	Types of penalty
• Poor assignment structure • Poor assignment presentation • Poor referencing • Reliance on sources not considered to be reliable or credible • Errors of attribution i.e.. incorrect (or an absence of) attribution for copied work used in an assignment • Paraphrasing without adequate attribution	• 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

14.6: Academic Malpractice

Description of academic malpractice	Types of penalty
• 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	• Compulsory corrective support • Warning letter issued • Formal reprimand • In all cases assignment must be resubmitted and mark is capped at a 'pass'

14.7: Severe Academic Malpractice

Description of severe academic malpractice	Types of penalty
• 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	• Compulsory corrective support • Warning letter issued • Formal reprimand In all cases one of the following applies: • Different assignment must be submitted, and mark is capped at a 'pass'

	• Mark of zero for the unit & no resubmission - whole unit must be repeated • Temporary suspension from the programme (total or partial. dg. from particular activities, services or locations) • Permanent expulsion from the college.

15: External review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

15.1 Once the appeal stage has been completed and the College's internal procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals are therefore exhausted, the College will automatically issue a Completion of Procedures (COP) Letter. A COP Letter confirms the decision made and that the student has reached the end of the College's internal processes.

15.2 If the student's appeal is not upheld and the student does not agree with this decision, the student can apply to the OIA to have the decision reviewed. The COP letter is normally needed when applying to the OIA for a review.

15.3 Applications for review must be submitted to the OIA within 12 months of a COP Letter being issued. The OIA may be contacted by ringing 0118 959 9813. Details of the OIA may be found at http://www.oiahe.org.uk

15.4 If the matter is concluded before the appeal stage, for example because the student does not wish to appeal, the student may request a COP Letter if they want one. There is a deadline of one month for the student to make such a request, beginning when the relevant College decision was made.

15.5 If the student makes a request after the deadline has passed, the College will issue a COP Letter containing the date upon which the original Academic Hearing decision or the Appeal Panel decision was reached. The time for bringing the matter to the OIA will normally run from that date, rather than the date of the COP Letter.

16: The Role of the 'Friend'

16.1 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 when the student is asking or answering questions during the meetings and/ or Hearings. The 'Friend' may not be a lawyer or legally qualified adviser or representative. The 'Friend' may also take notes of the meetings for the student. While students are normally expected to speak for themselves, the 'Friend' may speak with the agreement of the Chair of the Panel. 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 oral evidence heard to date and the written documentation.