



UK COLLEGE  
OF BUSINESS AND COMPUTING

# Academic Integrity and Student Misconduct Policy and Procedure

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## Introduction

UKCBC is fully committed to maintaining and improving the culture and practice of **academic integrity** through the delivery and assessment of all its programmes and at all campuses. UKCBC endeavours to maintain a positive educational environment, the standards of the awards and support the student community in this goal.

### Links to QAA Quality Code

This document is designed to underpin the regulatory contexts for the quality code of assessment requirements to ensure student academic integrity at the college is met. In doing so, it takes reference from the Quality Code **Expectations for standards core practices and Expectations for quality core practices Guiding principles 1-10 and specifically:**

#### *Assessment encourages academic integrity- Guiding Principles 10*

Misconduct is an outcome of low academic or professional integrity and can be classified as general or academic.

**General misconduct** is associated with the inconsiderate behaviour and actions of students towards other students, staff, contractors and visitors. It includes interference or intentional disruption to the business and wholesome environment of teaching and learning at UKCBC.

Examples of general misconduct could include, but not restricted to:

- General unruly and disorderly actions and behaviour;
- Vandalism;
- Harassment and bullying;
- Victimisation;
- Fraud, deceit, deception, or dishonesty;
- Possession of weapons, hazardous materials or illegal substances;
- Theft, misuse or unauthorised use of college equipment or property including that provided for the health, safety and wellbeing of students, staff, contractors and visitors;
- Criminal activity.

**Academic misconduct** is associated with incidents where a student attempt to gain unfair advantage, undermine the quality and credibility of UKCBC, its partners and its awards or have not followed academic or assessment protocols, conventions or regulations. In these situations, an investigation may result in an academic penalty for the student.

UKCBC will ensure that this policy and procedure complies with good practice that:

- the student is informed of the suspected misconduct that is being put against them, within a reasonable time before any investigatory meeting;

- the student has the right to challenge the allegation against them;
- the officer chairing the investigation does so without prejudice;
- there is a clear and timely mechanism for appealing against any decision made.

### Links to other policies

The remainder of this policy will relate to academic misconduct. General misconduct would be dealt with in line with the Student Disciplinary policy. UKCBC recommends that this policy is understood in the context of the wider maintenance of quality and standards, and particularly in relation to the following documents:

- Appeals Policy;
- Prevent Duty.

### Scope and definition of academic integrity and misconduct

The values of academic integrity are; the culture of **independent** learning and assessment based on **trust** and **honesty**, on **respect** for the intellectual property of others and on the responsible presentation of **original thought, analysis and argument**. Low academic integrity has significant implications on the credibility of the programmes being delivered at UKCBC and equally on the professional conduct of students as they progress through their chosen career.

When a student displays high academic integrity there are a number of potential outcomes for them:

- Higher grades and overall programme classification;
- Easier to secure employment;
- Improved results and outcomes to workplace and professional tasks and projects;
- High personal reputation for high quality and original work;
- Promotion and career progression;
- Successful career and lifestyle.

UKCBC is committed to supporting all students to challenge their expectations and achieve their potential during their academic and professional careers. Therefore, UKCBC is convinced that providing guidance in the promotion of academic integrity, students will achieve higher grades through a reduction of academic misconduct and are more successful in their chosen workplace and careers.

Low academic integrity may be displayed as **poor academic practice** or **academic misconduct**.

**Poor academic practice** is the result of limited or inadequate academic skills being demonstrated within an assignment following appropriate guidance and instruction from college staff. This may be demonstrated at any stage of assessment and any type by:

- Poor referencing and acknowledgement of sources in accordance to college expectations;
- Poor or no paraphrasing – excessive use of “copy and paste” within the assignment;
- Poor assignment structure – lack of coherent narrative and presentation of analysis or argument;
- Poor sentence or paragraph structure;
- Excessive use of inappropriate resources – reliance on on-line news articles and commentary rather than academic journals or textbooks;

The assessor has the responsibility for dealing with cases of poor academic practice by following UKCBC guidelines on assessment and grading.

#### **Decisions for poor academic practice**

The assessor can for example; seek clarifications on given sections of a student’s submission, lower the assessment grade or refuse to accept work for marking.

In some instances, a student maybe required to make corrections and resubmit the assignment in full or repeat the unit working to a revised assignment brief.

Assessors may exempt reasonable sections of students work / similarity arising from either their own work or resources commonly used by the students at their discretion. A holistic approach to academic decisions is important while making any such valid, justified and acceptable exemptions.

Assessors/IVs/Programme Leaders may conduct appropriate interviews/Viva voce/ written tests etc. as deemed appropriate for making appropriate judgments in identification of malpractice and taking appropriate actions to award strict penalties.

The published regulations outlining the number of chances for submission will apply in all cases.

**Academic misconduct** is more serious than poor academic practice in that it is a deliberate or sustained attempt by a student to take an unfair advantage over other students and undermine the quality, standards and credibility of the programme and UKCBC.

This can be detected and evidenced in a variety of ways such as:

- **Plagiarism**

The use of material (ideas, text, code, images etc) whose author is not the student and the source is not acknowledged and presented to suggest that it is the original work of

the student. This includes “copying” or “borrowing” text etc. Additionally, this covers the verbatim use of material from other sources without clear acknowledgement or where a student just changes a few words within a copied sentence or paragraph.

- **Collusion**  
Where a student enables their work, through unauthorised collaboration, to be incorporated and presented by another as if completed by a single person.
- **Falsification**  
The deliberate invention, fabrication or misrepresentation of ideas, details, opinions, research etc including references and fraudulent Mitigating Circumstances claims.
- **Replication**  
The submission of a previously submitted assignment where credit has already been gained by the student.
- **Cheating**  
The use of unauthorised notes, and the obtaining/providing information (or attempting to) within an examination type assessment; and the purchasing (or production) of assignments from third parties and submission as the students’ own work (sometimes known as “ghost-writing”).
- **Impersonation**  
The assumption of a student’s identity for the purpose to deceive or gain unfair advantage.
- **Bribery**  
Where a student provides an enticement in return for a more favourable assessment decision.
- **Unauthorised proof-reading and translation**  
Where a third party has made changes and edits to a student’s work whilst proofreading or translating, resulting in the assignment not being authentically the student’s own work. Where proof-reading or translation has occurred, the student must declare this fact.
- **Continued and consistent poor academic practice**  
The student has not taken on previous improvement opportunities and has demonstrated further poor academic practice at subsequent assessment points or later teaching terms/stages.

Please note that this list is not exhaustive.

### **Categories of academic misconduct**

UKCBC categorises academic misconduct into three strands; minor, moderate and major.

An academic offence is deemed to be **minor** where the severity of the misconduct offence is such that it would not impact the assessment decision for any learning outcome nor the overall grade. This must be as a result of an unintentional act.

An academic offence is deemed to be **moderate** where the severity of the misconduct offence is such that it would impact the assessment decision for any learning outcome and/or the overall grade. This must be as a result of an unintentional act and not a repeated offence.

An academic offence is deemed to be **major** where the severity of the misconduct offence is such that it is deliberately intended to have an impact on the assessment decision for any learning outcome and/or the overall grade. All instances of major academic misconduct will be shared with the relevant External Examiner.

### **Decisions for academic misconduct**

Where a **minor** offence is committed, the student may receive developmental advice and the grade not affected or may have to resubmit the work with grade capped at the pass mark. The student will be warned for future conduct.

Where a **moderate** offence is committed, another opportunity may be given to resubmit assignment with grade capped at the pass mark and a formal warning issued.

Where a **major** offence is committed the student may have to repeat the unit or even be withdrawn from the course if such offence is repetitive or considered that the student is a habitual offender.

### **Prevention, detection and penalties**

Academic misconduct can be avoided, and UKCBC supports all its students in learning the skills and discipline in developing their own individual academic and therefore professional integrity. Guidance will be available through class tutors, programme leaders, student support officers and academic managers alongside on-line and library-based resources.

Additionally, all student assignments are subject to an on-line originality check utilising the Turnitin tool. This matches text within the assignment with millions of published journal articles and previously submitted student assignments. This creates an originality report and shows where text has been written with poor academic practice and provides the student opportunity to improve their assignment and not fall foul of academic misconduct.

Equally the originality report is a powerful tool for UKCBC tutors who utilise their professional judgement, the context of the assignment and Turnitin when identifying plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct.

Websites offering essay services have been blocked within the UKCBC wifi network and statements relating to 'academic misconduct' and 'contract cheating' have been added to assignment briefs to prevent/minimise such instances occurring.

A suspicion of misconduct can occur at any point of a student's registration at UKCBC and even after a qualification has been achieved. Following a robust investigation several outcomes are possible, and where a case of misconduct is proven, these sanctions range from a warning with additional student support or guidance, through to referred assignments and beyond to include failed modules or even withdrawal from the programme.

In summary, the severity of the outcomes of misconduct can vary and are determined by factors including the seriousness of the undermining of quality and reputation of UKCBC, frequency of misconduct incidents, the determination of the student and the teaching stage of the student at college. In essence they are:

- No case to answer – assignment is fully marked with no cap;
- Poor academic practice – assignment is fully marked, and grades are reflective of the poor practice; capped at “pass” for HNDs dependant on severity;
- Student to engage with college study skills provision (professional development and 1-2-1 tutorials) within 20 working days of investigatory meeting letter;
- Resubmission of assignment with grade of assignment capped at “pass” for HNDs;
- Retake whole module including all relevant assignments and grade is capped “pass” for HNDs;
- Reported to Pearson or Bath Spa University (BSU);
- Withdrawn from programme and awarded with lower exit award.

### **Contract Cheating and Academic Misconduct**

Students are advised not to access such services of contract cheating under any circumstances. Assignments will be outrightly refused and serious disciplinary actions will be initiated.

The College IT department regularly keeps track of such sites and has put in place relevant firewalls that will restrict access to such online services.

The Assessment teams should be aware of the widely prevalent and seriously impacting influence by Contract Cheating and Essay Mills. The following steps should be taken with reference to the guidelines by the QAA and Pearson in the context.

- educate staff and students about contract cheating: Use information and support for students to place a positive focus on academic integrity. Early, written information to students is crucial
- promote and encourage academic integrity, and deter students from committing academic misconduct
- detect cheating when it happens
- set effective academic regulations to handle the issue
- deal with cases

- Consider 'authentic assessment', with a mixture of assessment methods where possible. Think about how to limit cheating opportunities when designing and reviewing courses and setting assignments.
- Consider blocking essay mill websites from your IT equipment. Be alert to advertising methods such as posters, flyers and social media, and take steps to minimise/counter them when detected.

QAA guide on contract cheating

### Using Turnitin for detecting plagiarism and academic malpractice

Guidelines to Academic Staff on use of Turnitin and assessment processes, plagiarism may also be referred for further information on use of Turnitin for the purpose. However, assessors, IVs and Programme Leaders should be aware of some of the limitations posed by Turnitin such as non-recognition of text in the boxes, quoted paragraphs, images and cases of contract cheating using coded text cannot be recognized by Turnitin and hence need to exercise all the possible caution to endeavour to detect and put appropriate sanctions on such students immediately.

### Suspected Staff malpractice or maladministration

All staff should be made aware of how to report suspected staff malpractice or maladministration to Pearson. Staff should complete the **Notification of suspected malpractice or maladministration involving staff** (JCQ M2(a) form) and send it to [pqsmalpractice@pearson.com](mailto:pqsmalpractice@pearson.com)

### Categories of Suspected Academic Misconduct (SAM)

The grid below sets out examples of suspected academic misconduct. Note that this is not comprehensive but should be read as a guide.

Type of Misconduct	Examples of offence
<b>Poor academic practice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor assignment structure</li> <li>• Inconsistent use of fonts</li> <li>• Over-reliance on popular press and websites</li> <li>• Potential issues identified in formative assessments</li> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> evidence of inconsistent or insufficient referencing</li> <li>• Extensive use of quotation marks within the assignment</li> <li>• Any similarity less than 20% but requiring improvements in referencing etc. (20% is Indicative &amp; subject to academic discretion and judgement)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Minor academic misconduct</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unintentional copying of several sentences without referencing</li> <li>• Incorrect format of quotations</li> <li>• Copying few paragraphs without referencing Minor sections of the work that are not referenced and exempted in academic judgment</li> <li>• Citations and references not aligned</li> <li>• Unacknowledged proof-reading or English language assistance</li> <li>• Misconduct occurs in year 1 with limited impact on overall award classification dependant of severity</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any similarity ranging between 21 to 25% but requiring improvements in referencing etc. (% value is Indicative &amp; subject to academic discretion and judgement)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Moderate academic misconduct</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several paragraphs or significant volume of assignment copied without referencing</li> <li>• Several paragraphs or significant volume of assignment based on another's thoughts, words, ideas without referencing</li> <li>• Knowingly submission of a previously submitted assignment including copying other assignments</li> <li>• Submission of a fraudulent mitigating circumstances form</li> <li>• Deliberate collusion between students</li> <li>• Minor misconduct is repeated following guidance in earlier modules</li> <li>• Any similarity ranging between 26 to 40% but requiring improvements in referencing etc. (% value is Indicative &amp; subject to academic discretion and judgement)</li> </ul>

<p><b>Major academic misconduct</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large scale, organised and intentional misconduct</li> <li>• Commissioning or purchasing of an assignment by another person or organisation (including the internet)</li> <li>• Extremely high volume of assignment copied without referencing</li> <li>• Extremely high volume of assignment based on another’s thoughts, words, ideas without referencing</li> <li>• Falsification of data</li> <li>• Deliberate disguising the origins of an assignment</li> <li>• Repeated occurrence of academic misconduct</li> <li>• Fraud or impersonation</li> <li>• Theft of academic, commercial or industrial material</li> <li>• Bribery</li> </ul> <p>Any similarity ranging above 40% and has no academic justification for such similarity or suspected plagiarism. (% value is Indicative &amp; subject to academic discretion and judgement)</p>
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**Process of Investigation Notification of Suspected Academic Misconduct (SAM)**

When details and/or evidence of SAM have been identified, UKCBC are determined to treat the situation confidentially by all who are informed about them. Instances of any SAM – moderate and major academic misconduct and details of action taken are to be logged with the Academic Support Manager.

All instances of poor academic practice and minor academic misconduct should be addressed by the respective tutors/Assessors/IVs or Programme Leaders and provide corrective feedback with a warning to the students.

UKCBC does not wish to mislead or “catch out” any students at any point of their learning. Therefore, SAM may be identified at any point of the learning cycle including during:

- Teaching and tutorial sessions;
- Formative feedback on draft assignments;
- Summative assessment on final submissions;
- Internal Verification activity post grading
- External Examiner verification, post grading

Suspicions of academic misconduct may be identified or notified by any UKCBC staff, external partners including standards verifiers and external quality assurance professionals, industry partners and of course members of the student community both current and historic.

All suspicions of academic misconduct are to be considered in the first instance by the academic manager in consultation with the relevant programme and/or module leader.

**Investigation of Suspected Academic Misconduct (SAM)**

An investigation of suspected academic misconduct can start at any stage or level, dependent on severity of SAM.

To ensure transparency details of the SAM will be logged via the Academic misconduct and penalties log. The log is maintained by the Academic Support Manager to record instances of misconduct for the periods between various meetings of Assessments and Standardisation Board. The initial consideration will identify if a case is to be investigated or if the suspicion can be closed with no action.

Where suspicion of academic misconduct is identified within a teaching or formative feedback context, corrective improvement in class is preferable as directed by the academic manager. This may occur where formal evidence cannot be obtained. However, where the SAM is potentially of significant nature, the matter should be notified to the Programme Leaders for appropriate action.

To ensure a fair and consistent process to all students and to uphold the standards of UKCBC, the Assessors, Internal Verifiers and Programme Leaders are authorised to take immediate and appropriate corrective steps to mitigate instances of Academic Misconduct.

In some cases, the SAM panel may be unable to satisfy themselves, without sufficient evidence, that the SAM can be upheld. This may be particularly true where students are suspected of cheating using “ghost-writing” services. In these situations, the Programme Leaders/Internal Verifiers follows a *viva voce* style where the student’s understanding of the topic can confirm the authenticity of the assignment submitted. The student would be informed if this is likely to be the case and invited to bring in supporting evidence.

The following table presents the responsibilities and authority for taking decisions based on the severity of the SAM.

Type of Misconduct	Investigation Stage	Responsibility for making decisions
<b>Poor academic practice</b>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assessor or Internal Verifier</li> </ul>

<b>Minor academic misconduct</b>	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assessor or Internal Verifier</li> <li>▪ Programme Leader</li> </ul>
<b>Moderate academic misconduct</b>	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assessor, Internal Verifier</li> <li>▪ Academic Manager</li> <li>▪ Programme Leader</li> <li>▪ Director of Studies</li> </ul> <p>All instances should be reported to Academic Support Manager for recording and referred to Assessments &amp; Standards Board (ASB).</p>
<b>Major academic misconduct</b>	3	<p>A Panel comprising any three of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Assessor</li> <li>▪ Internal Verifier</li> <li>▪ Academic Manager</li> <li>▪ Programme Leader</li> <li>▪ Director of Studies</li> </ul> <p>All instances should be reported to Academic Support Manager for recording and referred to Assessments &amp; Standards Board (ASB), External Examiners for relevant awarding organisation to be notified.</p>

It is expected that the student will cooperate with the investigation and the panel meeting and confirm attendance of the meeting within 5 days of the date of the letter.

If the date/time of the panel meeting is unsuitable, the student must contact the signatory of the invitation letter as soon as possible. A new date/time may be negotiated however the college may not be able to accommodate the request due to operational restrictions or availability of panel members.

In cases where a student does not attend a SAM investigation meeting, the panel will decide of the SAM, based on the evidence available, in their absence.

At all stages the College wishes to support the student through the process and to this end they may be supported by a student or class representative, subject to no advantage being achieved.

#### **Referrals, resubmissions and repeats**

- Students penalised for plagiarism are refused for grading

- Awarded a zero as such they lose their first chance for submission
- All resubmissions based on refused assignments are capped to a Pass.
- Students must follow the relevant QCF and RQF guidelines pertaining to resubmissions, submission of new course work/assignments or repeat the modules as per the guidelines specified by Pearson/ respective awarding organisation.
- Depending on the seriousness of misconduct the college at its discretion may award a further penalty of not allowing the student for a resubmission and provide for a repeat of the module on a case to case basis.

### **Appeals of decision following Suspected Academic Misconduct investigation**

A student may appeal if made **within 20 working days** of the date of the decision and will only be considered on the following grounds:

- That an **administrative error** or **material irregularity** has occurred in the conduct of the investigation;
- Appeals cannot be made against academic judgments in any manner
- The severity of the outcome is excessive with respect to the case;
- That there were personal circumstances which the student believes would have affected the decision taken by the panel had they been made aware of them. **A student must have a good reason not to have revealed the circumstances at the point of notification of a suspected academic offence.**

An appeal request will be made through the complaints and appeals process, details are on the website (<http://www.ukcbc.ac.uk/downloads>) and also in the Student Handbook.

Students are also able to appeal directly to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) (and any successor) after all appeal stages have been followed and a completion of procedures letter is issued by the College.

### **Monitoring and reporting Academic Misconduct**

All the assessors, internal verifiers and Programme leaders are delegated the authority to detect instances of academic misconduct and award appropriate penalties based on the similarity index, academic judgment and context of the occurrence.

All the Assessors and IVs should report the instances of academic misconduct to the respective Programme Leaders. The Programme leaders in consultation with the respective assessors and IVs confirm such penalties awarded.

Programme Leaders from time to time will ensure that appropriate assessment methods are used to ensure the authenticity and originality of students work. A combination of various assessment methods should be used to ensure

All the instances of academic misconduct that was identified and penalized by the assessors and IVs etc will be tracked by the Examination's Office (Academic Support Manager). A programme wise summary for such period of assessments and penalties will be provided to each programme leader who will in turn monitor habitual offenders and take up appropriate actions as necessary on a case to case basis.

Acts of Gross Misconduct should be immediately taken up by a panel constituted for the purpose and take strong actions against such students.

All the instances of Academic Misconduct across all the campuses and programmes are recorded as a log by the Academic Support Manager. The log as well as the Programme wise details on various penalties awarded should be presented to every Assessment & Standardisation Board meeting for consideration and approval.