

# Higher Education Academic Integrity Code of Practice

This Code of Practice relates to the processes that must be adhered to when investigating instances of unacceptable behaviour in relation to Higher Education programmes of study. The Code does not supersede any regulations in place at partner Universities or Examining Bodies.

Full account has been taken of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, particularly the Advice and Guidance on Assessment which embeds the Guiding Principle that:

*Assessment encourages academic integrity.*

In addition, the Heart of Yorkshire Education Group (“the Group”) has taken account of:

- the OIA Good Practice Framework: handling student complaints and academic appeals (revised December 2016)
- the Academic Misconduct regulations of the University of Hull v4.11 June 2018
- the Academic Regulations: Academic Integrity of Leeds Beckett University July 2021

Since March 2021, the Group has been a signatory to the QAA’s Academic Integrity Charter for UK Higher Education and as such, the contents of this Code of Practice are consistent with the relevant guidance.

This Code of Practice should be read alongside the Higher Education Complaints Procedure.

This Code does not apply to students on programmes validated by Leeds Beckett University or the University of Huddersfield – any such student should familiarise themselves with the regulations of the relevant University. Guidance can be sought from the HE Administrator. Students on programmes validated by the University of Hull will be subject to the Regulations identified above; such regulations to be implemented by the Group, through devolved powers, and as directed by the University.

## **Introduction**

This Code of Practice (“the Code”) clarifies the expectations and procedural guidelines adopted by the Group relating to issues of plagiarism, cheating and any other unfair means on any summative assessment contributing to the final mark or classification on a programme of study.

- 1.0 The timings provided within the Code **refer to working days** and do not include weekends, bank holidays or periods when the Group is closed.
- 2.0 It is each student’s responsibility to ensure that the email contact address they have registered with the Group is up to date.
- 3.0 With reference to validating University partners or to Examining/Awarding Bodies, unfair means is referred to as:
  - University of Hull: Academic Misconduct (the regulations of the University are applicable; to be implemented by UCW through devolved powers)
  - Leeds Beckett University: Academic Integrity (this Code is not applicable for these students)
  - University of Huddersfield: Academic Integrity Offences (this Code is not applicable for these students)
  - Pearson: Malpractice.

This list is not exhaustive and other awarding or examining bodies may have their own reference point or definition. Student programme handbooks will contain appropriate links to the relevant validating University/Examining or Awarding body (“partner organisation”) regulations where applicable.

- 4.0 The Group will, to assist with the identification of potential plagiarism, require all summative assessments (where appropriate) to be submitted via Turnitin, the electronic plagiarism detection software currently in place within the Group. It is recognised that some assessment formats cannot be submitted via this software at present and tutors will clarify this for individual assignments as necessary, however, where the format is one accepted by the software, submission must be via this route.

## **Definitions**

- 5.0 Acts which breach academic integrity standards can take many forms. The Code provides indicative definitions; however, this is not an exhaustive list and will not constrain or determine the outcomes of an allegation and investigation.
- 6.0 Some examples of breaches of academic integrity are:

- **Poor Academic Practice:** this may arise from a lack of understanding of the system of referencing in current use or the expected behaviour within an exam or the appropriate levels of collaboration between students. It can also be applicable where the extent of breach does not warrant further investigation or penalty, e.g. where errors have been made through carelessness;
- **Plagiarism:** this is the use of another person's work as if it is the student's own, without acknowledgement of the source. The copied work may be published or unpublished and can be taken from materials in all formats, including online and audio visual. Copying another student's work without their knowledge would also constitute plagiarism. Examples of plagiarism are:
  - The use of a more than a single phrase of another person's work without the use of quotation marks and appropriate citation of source (this includes work taken from the internet or other form of IT)
  - Summarising another person's work by simply changing the order/structure or a few words and without appropriate citation of source
  - The use/submission/presentation of another person's ideas or intellectual data without appropriate citation of source
  - Copying the work of another person
  - The use of unattributed images (e.g. graphs, photographs etc) taken from any source;
- **Self-plagiarism:** the act of submitting work for a summative assessment which is significantly the same as that submitted for a previous summative assessment (whether at a current or previous institution). It should be noted that self-plagiarism is not applicable where a student has been directed to re-work a summative assessment for the purposes of reassessment;
- **Collusion:** the act of working together with others, without tutor authorisation, in order to submit a summative assessment and where the work is claimed on an individual basis, without acknowledgement of the contribution of others;
- **Cheating/Misconduct in an Exam:** This may include:
  - Possession and/or use of unauthorised materials on entry to an examination room, irrespective of whether that examination has commenced. This may include, but not exclusively, books, papers, data from an electronic device or any other unpermitted resource;
  - Continuing to write after the end of the examination has been announced by the invigilator;
  - Impersonating a candidate for an examination, assessment or other summative event (the act of allowing oneself to be impersonated would also constitute a breach);
  - Copying or attempting to copy from another student sitting the same examination or assessment event;
  - Communication, or attempted communication, with any person, other than an authorised invigilator or other approved member of staff, during an examination or other assessment event;

- Removing any document from the examination room which indicates that it is not to be removed from that venue.
- **Commissioning/Contract Cheating:** the submission of assessments which have been improved by, purchased from, or commissioned to a third party (this may include a family member, essay mill, other students etc.)
- **Fabrication or Falsification of Data:** This may include:
  - Falsifying data for research, fieldwork, analysis etc. or entries for learning logs, records or statements for any submitted work
  - Utilising false statements or evidence in support of extension requests, applications for mitigating circumstances, absences, or examination exemptions
  - Falsifying a transcript purporting to relate to other qualifications, or any other documentation which would usually be relied upon in academic decision making.

## **Procedures**

- 7.0 Where a tutor believes that a breach of academic integrity has occurred the following procedures should be used. All allegations will be investigated and determined on the balance of probabilities using the QAA's guiding principles of fairness and transparency.
- 8.0 Where a tutor believes the breach to be minimal in nature (based on their own academic judgement) they should complete the relevant marking and moderation processes and within their feedback indicate to the student that poor academic practice was identified. They should also provide guidance and developmental feedback to the student in order that further instances can be avoided. This guidance may relate to specific actions that may be required or could be generic in nature, for example referring the student for study support sessions. No penalty may be imposed and there should be no reduction in marks.
- 9.0 In a situation where the tutor believes plagiarism has occurred, but where it would be impractical or impossible to evidence, the marking and moderation processes should take place and the student should be advised that concerns have arisen relating to potential academic integrity breaches and be provided with guidance and developmental feedback (as per paragraph 8.0). No further action can be taken in such a case.
- 10.0 Where a tutor identifies a breach which is sufficient to warrant an investigation they must, within 20 working days of the assessment event, complete the Breach of Academic Integrity Form (appendix 1.0 of the Code) and submit it to the HE Administrator at the relevant campus along with the following documentation:
  - either the Turnitin originality report or indicate in an appropriate manner which sections of the work are plagiarised. If the information submitted takes the form of prints from a book or

journal for example, the relevant sections within the student assessment must also be highlighted;

- the examination invigilators report or documentation relating to any breach;
- the submitted/completed work;
- the assessment brief and module handbook;
- any other relevant evidence.

11.0 Any assessment considered to be plagiarised or produced via unfair means is still subject to the feedback response times detailed in the Group's Higher Education Assessment Policy. At the time of giving formal summative feedback, the student should be advised (verbally or clearly stated within the feedback) that there is a suspicion of plagiarism or unfair means having occurred and that the assessment has been referred for further investigation in line with this Code. It should be noted that where a submitted piece of work is substantially copied from another source, no marking need take place.

12.0 The HE Administrator will confirm receipt to the relevant module tutor. All documents submitted will be retained by the HE Administrator for use during the investigation and therefore programme teams are advised to retain copies for their own reference.

13.0 On receipt of the submitted allegation, the HE Administrator will, within 5 working days, forward the documentation to the Director of Higher Education for investigation and will also within the same timescale, notify the student, in writing via the email address that the student has registered on the Group systems, that the allegation has been received. The information contained within the email will include:

- a summary of the allegation;
- a request for the student to respond to the allegation, via email, within 15 working days of the notification;
- an opportunity for the student to make a statement of explanation for the breach.

14.0 On receipt of a student response, or after the 15 working day timeframe (whichever is the sooner), an Academic Integrity Panel (AIP) will be established. The AIP will be chaired by the Director of Higher Education, or their delegated representative. The AIP must also include the HE Administrator, acting as Panel Secretary, and two members of academic staff, with at least one being from another curriculum area.

15.0 The AIP will determine the most appropriate penalty for the breach and will take the following into account:

- the assessment where the breach is alleged to have occurred;
- the student's previous higher education experience;

- the extent of the alleged breach;
- any prior proven allegations of a breach of Academic Integrity;
- whether the student has accepted responsibility for the breach;
- any other evidence or information considered relevant to the breach.

- 16.0 The Director of Higher Education will notify the student (via the HE Administrator) of the date, time and venue of the relevant Board hearing. This written notification will be emailed out to the student at least 10 working days prior to the meeting and the meeting details will be sent to the email address currently registered on the Group systems. The student will also receive all evidence relating to the case as attachments to this email.
- 17.0 The student should confirm their attendance at the meeting no later than 3 working days after receipt of the email. If no response is received from the student within this timeframe, the AIP will go ahead as planned. If the student is unable to attend the planned AIP date for legitimate reasons and notifies the HE Administrator of this within this timeframe, the AIP will be rearranged.
- 18.0 All AIPs will, where applicable, be held in accordance with Partner regulations. They will be formally minuted to ensure consistency of approach and, where required, a copy of the minutes will be forwarded to the partner organisation.
- 19.0 If the student elects to attend the AIP, they may bring with them a third party who may not speak on their behalf or advocate for them unless invited to do so by the Chair, and subject to partner organisation regulations. This third party may, for example, be a friend, relative or student experience manager. The third party may not be a lawyer acting in a professional capacity. If the student wishes for their third party to be their tutor, this is permissible, however, they should bear in mind that the tutor may also be required to provide evidence to the AIP.
- 20.0 The AIP may call any other witness that they deem to be appropriate to supply relevant evidence.
- 21.0 Where electronic evidence is available, such as that provided through the Turnitin software, or electronic copies of assessment, this shall be made available to the AIP.
- 22.0 Although the student is entitled to be present throughout the hearing there may, on occasion be exceptional circumstances where evidence needs to be presented in a closed hearing. At this point the student will be temporarily asked to leave the hearing.
- 23.0 Once the Chair has determined that satisfactory evidence has been presented and that a decision can now equitably be made, the Board will make their formal decision in private. The decision will relate to whether the allegation made is proven or unproven. Where a decision of 'proven' is reached, the

Board must then decide upon an appropriate decision made in accordance with the partner organisation regulations. The penalty applied will consider the nature and severity of the proven allegation, the number of previous breaches, if any, committed by the student, the stage of study that the student is on, and whether any satisfactory mitigating circumstances have been presented.

24.0 The penalties for a proven breach of academic integrity are detailed in Appendix 2 of the Code.

25.0 Following an AIP decision, the Director of Higher Education will, via the HE Administrator, notify the student in writing of that decision. This notification will be sent by email within 5 working days of the AIP convening and agreeing an outcome. A copy of this email must also be forwarded to the student's programme leader.

### **Appeals**

26.0 A student may lodge a formal appeal against the Board's decision, and this must be done in accordance with the Group's Academic Appeals Code of Practice.

### **Monitoring**

27.0 The outcomes of all substantiated cases heard under the procedures set down in the Code will be reported, at the next available opportunity, to the Board of Examiners. Where an academic integrity case is still ongoing at the time of the next Board of Examiners, the decision recorded at the Board will align with the relevant Regulations.

28.0 The Director of Higher Education will produce a semesterly report for consideration by the HEQS Committee. The data contained therein will inform the production of the Group's annual Higher Education Self-Assessment Report which will be presented to the Executive Team and the Board of Governors. In addition, external agencies and Awarding Bodies may require the Group to submit data relating to case outcomes for monitoring purposes.

**Appendix 1: Form PCU1: Breach of Academic Integrity Allegation**

Student Name:			
Student Number:		Level of Study (delete as appropriate)	4 / 5 / 6
Programme			
Mode of Attendance (delete as appropriate)	FT / PT	Academic Year	
Module Title			
Module Leader			
Module Assessment		Weighting	
<b>Nature of allegation</b>			
Please tick as appropriate. One box must be ticked in order for this allegation to be processed. For further details for each category please utilise the guidance within the CoP			
	Plagiarism		
	Self-plagiarism		
	Cheating or Misconduct in and Exam		
	Collusion		
	Commissioning/Contract Cheating		
	Fabrication or falsification of Data		
	Other (please provide details in the space below)		
Was this the student's first or second attempt at the assignment?			

<b>Supporting Evidence</b>	
Please ensure <b>all</b> of the following are attached. The allegation cannot be processed with this information.	
	The piece of work subject to the allegation
	Assessment brief
	Unbiased mark (the mark that would have been awarded had no plagiarism, cheating or unfair means taken place)
	Estimated percentage of work affected by plagiarism, cheating or unfair means (where appropriate the similarity index on Turnitin can be utilised here)
	Original sources (where appropriate the Turnitin report will provide sufficient evidence)
	Rationale for the allegation
	Any other relevant information (e.g. report from Admissions staff/Exam invigilator)
Have you included the Turnitin Originality Report? (Delete as applicable)	Yes / No / No report
Signature of Module Leader	
Received by HE Administrator (signature)	
Date	

**Office Use Only:-**

Allegation not proven	No evidence provided	Other (with details)
	Unsatisfactory rationale	
	Insufficient evidence provided	
Allegation proven	Details of Board recommendations:	

## **Appendix 2: Penalties for a Proven Breach of Academic Integrity**

**Formal Warning:** a warning letter is issued which remains on the student's record. The original mark awarded will stand for the purposes of Assessment Board.

**Zero Mark & Reassessment:** for a first attempt, the mark for the individual assessment component will be recorded at zero and a reassessment attempt permitted. The reassessment attempt will be capped at the pass mark (usually 40%). A warning letter will also be issued which will remain on the student's record.

**Zero Mark in Module/Unit & Reassessment:** for a first attempt at the module, all assessment components will be recorded at zero and subject to reassessment which will be capped at the pass mark (usually 40%). A warning letter will also be issued which will remain on the student's record.

**Zero Mark in Module and no Reassessment:** a failed module with no right to reassessment which may affect the ability of the student to progress on their programme of study. A warning letter will also be issued which will remain on the student's record.

**Termination of Study:** This is only applicable where there is clear evidence of sustained and multiple breaches of Academic Integrity.

**It should be noted that where the breach of Academic Integrity relates to a reassessment submission, the application of zero mark penalties may affect the ability of the student to progress on their programme of study.**