

Academic Integrity in the Assessment Process

6.9 Academic Integrity and Misconduct Procedure

6.9.1 Introduction

Griffith College promotes and supports learners in their development of academic writing, emphasising the role and value of researching and referencing the work of others as they develop their own views and findings. These academic support events create a positive culture around academic integrity, and focus on the fact that academic integrity is a mind-set and a set of skills, practices and values to be developed to help learners avoid possible situations of academic misconduct.

Any form of academic misconduct is unacceptable. This policy outlines the different categories of academic misconduct, and the associated means of prevention and detection. It details the penalties associated with levels of academic misconduct and describes the investigation, disciplinary and appeals procedure associated with cases of academic misconduct. Academic misconduct will in the first instance be the subject of a disciplinary process within the relevant faculty.

In cases where it is established by the investigation that there is a case to answer the alleged misconduct will be the subject of a disciplinary panel hearing resulting in a decision as to a disciplinary sanction as appropriate.

A learner wishing to appeal against any decision of a disciplinary panel may do so by invoking the College [Appeals Procedure](#).

6.9.2 Objectives

- To define the terminology and provide the definitions associated with academic integrity and misconduct.
- To, in the first instance, focus on academic integrity rather than misconduct at induction and in all assessment communication with learners.
- To identify the means of promoting and developing learners' academic writing, and preventing and detecting academic misconduct.
- To provide disciplinary and appeals procedures applicable to cases of academic misconduct.
- To ensure that learners suspected of academic misconduct have the right to a fair and impartial determination of the issues concerned, considering any other relevant or appropriate evidence, factors, or circumstances.
- To relate penalties to associated levels of academic misconduct, and to ensure that any disciplinary action arising should be reasonable and proportionate.
- To seek to ensure that all guidelines and workshops are conducted with the relevant audience in mind – ensuring that they are plain language, jargon free, and accessible to all stakeholders in the process.

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6.9.3 Scope

This policy is relevant to staff managing, and learners attending, academic programmes at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. This policy attempts to deal with academic misconduct in the many forms of assessment. However, it is recognised that experience shows that the circumstances of each case vary both within and across the different faculties. Accordingly, the policies are open to review and additional guidance from time to time.

6.9.4 Responsibility for implementation

- Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominees
- Lecturers
- Learners
- Invigilators
- Senior Invigilator
- Senior Examinations Officer
- Faculty Disciplinary Board
- Director of Academic Programmes
- Programme Administrator

6.9.5 Definitions of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is an act or omission contrary to the College's academic regulations which, if undetected, would confer an unfair advantage on a learner in an assessment, under which a learner's knowledge, skills and performance is measured for progression towards, or for the conferment of, an academic award or a professional qualification

Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Plagiarism:** Plagiarism includes copying or incorporating material derived from pre-existing work (published or unpublished) without the permission of the originator, or without an established form of acknowledgement. It includes verbatim quotation, paraphrasing, imitation or other devices, which give the impression of being a learner's original work. It also includes the exploitation of ideas from others without proper acknowledgement, which mostly occurs in research, project work or assignments.
- Collusion:** Collusion occurs when a learner submits, without appropriate acknowledgement of source, work that is done in collaboration with another person. It also occurs when a learner produces work for another learner, or permits another learner to copy all or part of their work, knowing that the work will be submitted by the other learner as their own work, other than where such behaviour is expressly permitted in relation to that particular piece of coursework. (For more information reference the Guidelines on the Prevention and Detection of Collusion in Coursework ([Appendix 27](#))).

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- iii. **Misrepresentation:** Misrepresentation is a statement or conduct in assessment, which intentionally conveys a false or wrong impression of material significance in the context of the work under assessment. Misrepresentation does not include unintentional inaccuracy.
- iv. **Fraud:** Fraud is defined as deception, which includes, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the invention, distortion, fabrication or falsification of data or other results of research or work of others.
- v. **Impersonation:** Impersonation is where an individual assumes the identity of another person with the intention of gaining unfair advantage during an examination or any other form of assessment. It also refers to a person who knowingly and willingly allows their identity to be used with the intention of gaining an unfair advantage for the person impersonated.
- vi. **Cheating:** Cheating is the offence of gaining or seeking to gain an unfair or fraudulent advantage in assessment, where the conduct is of such seriousness as to be regarded as major academic misconduct.
- vii. **Unfair Advantage:** Unfair Advantage is the offence of gaining or seeking to gain, conferring or seeking to confer, an unfair advantage by any unlawful device or ill practice.

6.9.6 The College recognises that there is a distinction between minor academic misconduct and major academic misconduct as defined below:

- i. **Minor Academic Misconduct:** Minor Academic Misconduct refers to plagiarism, collusion and unfair advantage arising from negligence rather than deliberate intent. There are two instances of Minor Academic Misconduct recognised in this policy:
 - those which occur for the first time, and
 - those which occur for the second time in the knowledge of the first infringement.A third or further minor academic infringement in the knowledge of the second infringement is deemed to be major academic misconduct.
- ii. **Major Academic Misconduct:** Major Academic Misconduct refers to *deliberate* cases of plagiarism and collusion (even those occurring for the first time) and all cases of misrepresentation, fraud, impersonation and cheating. There are three instances of Major Academic Misconduct recognised in this policy:
 - those which occur for the first time,
 - those which occur for the second time in the knowledge of the first infringement, and
 - those which occur for the third time in the knowledge of the second infringement.
- iii. **Gross Academic Misconduct:** Gross Academic Misconduct refers to particular instances of Major Academic Misconduct for which the only penalty is immediate expulsion. All current instances of such academic

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misconduct are listed in section 15: Schedule of Gross Academic Misconduct, below. Such instances can only be added to or deleted from this Schedule by the Academic and Professional Council. For each individual case, only those instances listed in the Schedule at the time of the alleged incident will apply.

6.9.7 Standard of Proof

For the purpose of this Academic Misconduct Policy, and having regard to the gravity of the matter for decision, a learner is deemed to have committed one of the forms of academic misconduct defined in sub-section 6.9.5 of this document, in circumstances where the adjudicating body is satisfied that the charge is proven based on an assessment of the evidence before it in accordance with the principles of natural justice and fair procedures.

6.9.8 Prevention of Academic Misconduct

The college is committed to putting measures in place, which aim to support and promote academic integrity by preventing instances of academic misconduct. In order to ensure that all learners are aware of how academic misconduct could occur, and the seriousness and potential consequences thereof, the college normally takes the following measures:

- Provide an explanation of academic integrity and include a summary of this policy (i.e. the definitions and penalties for academic misconduct) in the Learner Handbook, and post the full policy to the VLE and college website.
- Require learners to sign a registration form which indicates that they are bound by the regulations identified in the Learner Handbook and as updated on the VLE and college website.
- Ensure that the importance of academic integrity is presented to all learners at induction, and in advance of assignment submission, and also that learners are informed as to what constitutes academic misconduct, and what the associated penalties are.
- Post notices in locations such as outside examination locations, on learner noticeboards, on the VLE and college website indicating inappropriate conduct during examinations.
- Ensure that information provided to learners on academic integrity (and misconduct) is similarly made available to college staff through the Lecturer Handbook and college website (QAE manual).

6.9.9 In order to ensure that all learners are aware of the nature and seriousness of academic misconduct and the consequences thereof, the Faculty normally:

- i. Reference this policy in any programme handbook issued to learners.
- ii. Make specific reference to this policy in programme documents relating to learner assessment.
- iii. Ensure that academic integrity is presented to all learners at induction (in a plain language, jargon free, accessible manner), and that learners are

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- informed as to what constitutes academic misconduct, and what the associated penalties are.
- iv. Provide learners with an academic workshop on good academic practice, to endeavour to prevent academic misconduct, prior to issuing the first piece of assessment to include:
 - An overview of this policy
 - Guidelines on proper use of academic referencing
 - Guidelines on appropriate use of online resources
 - The Faculty's regulations pertaining to coursework submission
 - An introduction to the College's regulations pertaining to conduct under examination conditions
 - v. Reinforce the content of the academic workshop and the importance of academic integrity throughout the academic year, to set (and reset) these expectations.
 - vi. Implement a progressive programme for supporting academic integrity by helping learners to select appropriate sources and to use them correctly, including citing and referencing.
 - vii. Require learners to submit all coursework with the prescribed cover sheet, which includes a signed declaration that the submission is exclusively a result of their own work, unless otherwise permitted by the programme regulations.
 - viii. Require learners to make available a hard and soft copy of their coursework where it is considered this is necessary to assist in the detection of suspected cases of academic misconduct.
 - ix. Ensure that information provided to learners on academic integrity (and misconduct) is similarly made available to faculty staff through faculty meetings and programme committee meetings, the Lecturer Handbook and college website (QAE manual).

6.9.10 Learner Right of Attendance and Representation at a Disciplinary Hearing and Appeal Hearing

In section 6.9.17, below, reference is made to the learner's right to information, attendance and representation at or prior to a disciplinary hearing and any appeal hearing. The following points are relevant:

- i. A learner who is the subject of disciplinary proceedings is entitled prior to the disciplinary hearing, to a clear statement of the alleged academic misconduct.
- ii. A learner who is the subject of disciplinary proceedings or who has requested an appeal hearing has in relation to the hearing to be convened for the purpose of adjudicating the complaint or appeal, the right to attend, to be represented, to request sight prior to the meeting of evidence to be presented at the relevant hearing, to hear and see the evidence presented, to challenge the evidence on cross-examination and to present their own evidence

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- iii. A representative at a hearing may be a fellow learner, a relative, a friend, an adviser or a legal representative. Any costs associated with legal representation of the learner must be borne by the learner unless the Faculty Disciplinary Board so otherwise determines.
- iv. A representative may speak on behalf of the learner
- v. A learner may choose to be accompanied by a translator. Any costs associated with the appointment of a translator by the learner (other than one provided by the College) must be borne by the learner unless the Faculty Disciplinary Board so otherwise determines.
- vi. A learner who chooses the right not to be represented will be requested at the hearing to confirm in writing that they have been informed of their right of representation and has declined to exercise it.
- vii. Where a learner fails to attend the hearing, and has not requested to reschedule, the hearing may proceed in the absence of the learner.

6.9.11 Academic Misconduct Process

The following sub-sections describe the process which takes place when a complainant suspects that a learner has committed one of the forms of academic misconduct, defined in sub-section 6.9.5 of this document, in a piece of coursework and/or examination.

6.9.11.1 Coursework

- i. A complainant who suspects a case of Academic Misconduct gathers all available information and/or documentation about the incident and refers the case(s) to their Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee. The Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee reviews all information and/or documentation available. If the Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee determines that there is no case to answer the incident is closed and no formal records are kept.
- ii. The college also supports the appropriate use of a viva voce (henceforth referred to as a “viva”) as a method of determining whether or not suspected academic misconduct has taken place. A viva may, exceptionally, be held in order to inform the disciplinary process, as appropriate. The process for conducting the viva is outlined in [Appendix 20](#). The findings of the viva panel will be considered by the Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee when determining if there is a case to be answered.
- iii. If the Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee determines that there is a case to be answered a statement summarising the alleged academic misconduct will be prepared and sent to the learner summoning the learner to a disciplinary hearing to answer the allegation of academic misconduct. This statement also identifies the learner’s rights as set out in section 6.9.10 above, and informs the learner that they will be requested at the disciplinary hearing to confirm whether they have received sufficient notice of the hearing, that they have read and

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understood the rights as detailed to them and to confirm their intentions in relation to the exercise of these rights. The disciplinary hearing is held no less than 7 days from the date of the notice to the learner or such lesser period as the learner agrees. The disciplinary hearing is attended by the Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee, the complainant, the learner and the learner's representative where the right of representation is exercised. In the event that the Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee is the complainant they appoint some other member of their faculty to adjudicate at the disciplinary hearing.

- iv. At the commencement of the disciplinary hearing the Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee requests the learner to confirm the position as regards notice of the hearing and the learner's rights as referred to in section 6.9.10 above and will offer the learner an adjournment of no less than 5 working days in the event that the learner requires this for the purposes of further consideration of the exercise of their rights.
- ✘ If having regard to the evidence presented at the disciplinary hearing and the submissions made by or on behalf of the learner, the Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee considers that a case of academic misconduct has been proven, they will notify the decision to the learner in writing and the notification will state:
 - The decision that academic misconduct has occurred
 - The penalty which is to be imposed
 - The learner's right of appeal to an Appeal Board
 - The period (5 working days) within which this appeal must be lodged by or on behalf of the learner
- vi. Should the suspected academic misconduct be properly defined as **Gross Academic Misconduct** two further members from outside the faculty concerned will adjudicate the case together with the Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee.

6.9.11.2 Appeals

A learner wishing to appeal against the decision of the Disciplinary Panel may do so by invoking the College [Appeals Procedure](#).

6.9.12 Examinations

The following sub-section describes the process, which takes place when a complainant suspects that a learner has committed one of the forms of academic misconduct defined in sub-section 6.9.5 of this document, under examination conditions.

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- i. Where a member of staff, who is invigilating or otherwise overseeing an examination, assessment or supervised test carried out under examination conditions, has reasonable grounds to suspect that academic misconduct has occurred, or is occurring, or is reliably informed by any other person that academic misconduct is suspected, it is the responsibility of the complainant to:
 - o Immediately bring to the learner's attention the suspicion of academic misconduct.
 - o Ensure that the learner is prevented from further acts of academic misconduct of which they are suspected by confiscating any relevant documentation.
 - o Permit the learner to complete the examination or assessment.
- ii. Inform the Senior Invigilator and provide a statement of the circumstances relating to the incident - including a note of the work completed before the detection of the alleged academic misconduct and the time that the alleged academic misconduct was detected - for inclusion in the Senior Invigilator's Report. This is sent to the Senior Examinations Officer at the end of the examination.
- iii. The Senior Examinations Officer will discuss the incident with the complainant, gather all available information and/or documentation about the incident, and refer the case to the appropriate Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee.
- iv. If an item to be confiscated is something other than documentation e.g. a mobile phone, programmed calculator etc. the invigilator refers this to the Senior Examinations Officer. The Senior Examinations Officer documents how the item could have contributed to the alleged academic misconduct, sign the document and ask the invigilator to co-sign the document. The item in question is normally returned to the learner at the end of the examination.
- v. The Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee will discuss the suspected case of academic misconduct with the Senior Examinations Officer and, if necessary, with the complainant and review all information and/or documentation available. The Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee will make a determination as to whether they consider that the suspected breach of academic conduct can be substantiated.
- vi. Where the Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee determines that the suspected case of academic misconduct cannot be substantiated, no further action is taken and no record is retained. In addition, the first marker is asked to mark the learner's examination script(s) on its own merit, and without prejudice.
- vii. Should the suspected academic misconduct be assessed by the Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee as a potential breach of academic conduct, the procedure outlined in [QAE Document 7.8 Learner Disciplinary Procedure](#).

6.9.13 Multiple Assessment Submissions

Should a learner complete and submit a number of coursework pieces within their first cycle of assessment, in respect of more than one of which academic misconduct as defined in sub-section 6.9.5 of this document, is alleged to apply, the Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee has the discretion to treat all incidents of academic misconduct as a single incident.

6.9.14 Application of Penalties

The penalty applicable to confirmed cases of academic misconduct is determined by whether or not the incident constitutes a first or subsequent case of minor or major academic misconduct. The following gradation of penalties aims to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted across all academic programmes:

- i. Penalty for Minor Academic Misconduct, which has taken place for the first time:
 - The learner is given zero in that element of the coursework that was determined to have resulted from academic misconduct.
 - The learner must resubmit only that element of the coursework in which academic misconduct was detected.
 - The result in that element of coursework is capped at a pass mark.
 - If the learner does not resubmit the element within the prescribed timeframe they receive a fail result for the entire piece of coursework.
 - A record of the offence will be held internally.
- ii. Penalty for Minor Academic Misconduct, which has taken place for the second time:
 - The learner is given zero for the entire piece of coursework.
 - The learner must resubmit the entire piece of coursework. The total marks in respect of all coursework in the related module is capped at a pass mark.
 - If the learner does not resubmit the piece of coursework within the prescribed timeframe they receive a fail result for the entire piece of coursework.
 - Any subsequent instances of academic misconduct are categorised as major academic misconduct.
 - A record of the offence will be held internally.
- iii. Penalty for Major Academic Misconduct, which has taken place for the first time:
 - The learner is given zero for all assessment elements of the module (coursework and examination).
 - The learner is registered for a second sitting on the module and their results arising from this sitting is capped at a pass mark.

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- A record of the offence is placed on the learner's file and is removed on programme completion should this be the only case of major academic misconduct committed.
- iv. Penalty for Major Academic Misconduct, which has taken place for the second time:
 - The **learner is** suspended from the programme for a minimum of one semester/to the next available sitting in which there is the opportunity to retake the modules necessary to complete their programme stage.
 - The learner is registered for a second sitting on all modules, and their results arising from these sittings is capped at a pass result.
 - A permanent record of the offence is placed on the learner's file.
- v. Penalty for Major Academic Misconduct, which has taken place for the third time:
 - The **learner is expelled from the College** and are not permitted to re-enrol for a five-year period.
 - A permanent record of the offence is placed on the learner's file.
- vi. Penalty for Gross Academic Misconduct:
The penalty is the same as that for a Major Academic Misconduct which has taken place for the third-time, i.e.
 - The **learner is expelled from the College** and are not permitted to re-enrol for a five-year period.
 - A permanent record of the offence is placed on the learner's file.

6.9.15 Records and Follow Up

Documentation pertaining to all alleged, investigated and (if applicable) confirmed instances of academic misconduct is compiled and retained by the secretary of the disciplinary board (programme administrator) in terms of coursework, and the Senior Examinations Officer in terms of examinations. An appropriate brief record of these matters is also sent to the central administration office (see 6.9.16).

Records relating to each incident (see 6.9.16) are maintained by the relevant programme administrator on the college learner database, thereby providing a cumulative record of the instances of academic misconduct, as relevant, for each learner for the purposes of determining the appropriate penalty for any new incident.

The Academic and Professional Council receives an annual (anonymised) summary of all cases of academic misconduct occurring, from each faculty, indicating alleged incident, outcome and penalty applied, if/as appropriate. This is aimed at developing processes and practices to enhance academic integrity in the subsequent academic year.

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The Programme Administrator will ensure completion in the instance where a record of the offence is placed on the learner's file and is to be removed on programme completion.

6.9.16 Confidentiality

Where the College is satisfied at any stage within these procedures that academic misconduct has not taken place, no documentation relating to the alleged misconduct and the associated investigations is retained in the learner's file except as required by law or court order.

Where an incident related to minor academic misconduct, or first time major academic misconduct, no documentation is retained on the learner's file following the completion of their programme of study, or the incident is not referred to in any personal reference provided by the College.

6.9.17 Learner Rights and Support

At all times, in communicating with the learner around the suspected academic misconduct, the college staff involved in the specific process reminds the learner of their rights

- to be legally represented and/or seek legal advice
- to have a parent/guardian or friend accompany them to hearings
- to call witnesses to any hearing
- to seek an adjournment of a hearing
- A learner may choose to be accompanied by a translator. The college will bear the costs of providing a translator.
- Learners are also advised of their right to appeal the outcome of any hearing in relation to suspect academic misconduct.
- Counselling and other pastoral supports are available to learners throughout the investigation and possible disciplinary process.
- Mediation support will be provided by the college where considered necessary to support an ongoing positive Faculty/ Student relationship.

6.9.18 Schedule of Gross Academic Misconduct

- Impersonation at a Written Examination
Both the learner being impersonated and the person doing the impersonation, if that person is a registered learner at Griffith College, will be charged with Gross Academic Misconduct.
- A learner submitting an undergraduate project/dissertation or a postgraduate project/dissertation, where the major portion of the work, code or documentation, is directly taken from another source, will be charged with Gross Academic Misconduct.
- A learner submitting assessed work, where the major portion of the work, code or documentation, is from a professional source or service, whether it

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is paid for or not, and presented as the learner's own work, will be charged with Gross Academic Misconduct.

- Any learner soliciting on behalf of a professional service which creates academic work for submission, or alleged to have referred another learner to such a service, will be charged with Gross Academic Misconduct.
-