

Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure for Academic Misconduct

The Policy sets out an institutional approach to academic integrity for staff and students and is based on developing a common understanding and application of values and expectations.

1. Academic integrity is defined as upholding honest and truthful standards of academic behaviour and is a fundamental principle within Freshart College, strongly linked to good academic practice. The Academic Integrity Policy sets out the College's approach to maintaining the academic integrity of students' work. This is underpinned by the Procedure for Handling Academic Misconduct which sets out the steps the College will take in suspected cases of academic misconduct.
2. The College adopts a strategic approach to the prevention and management of academic misconduct. This is cognisant of the College strategies for Learning and Teaching and Research. The College advocates a holistic approach and fosters a culture of academic and research integrity amongst staff and students.
3. The College recognises that all academic, administrative and support staff, holding a variety of roles, have the responsibility to promote a culture of academic and research integrity, acting as role models for students and their peers.
4. Student support, advice and guidance will be provided to facilitate student personal and professional development, with an emphasis on information literacy, study skills and problem solving.
5. Importance is placed on providing education for staff and students and raising awareness of the importance of academic integrity. Students will be expected to develop sound academic practice throughout the duration of their studies. Education about what constitutes academic misconduct, its consequences and how to achieve sound academic practice will be provided for all students, across all courses at all levels. The use of Turnitin is promoted as both an education and detection tool, together with a range of deterrents.
6. Course teams are responsible for 'designing out' the potential for academic misconduct by implementing robust procedures for curriculum design, student recruitment, course delivery, assessment and evaluation and through continuous enhancement.
7. Faculties are responsible for investigating suspected cases of academic misconduct and imposing penalties determined by circumstances and evidence presented in accordance with the Academic Regulations. Schools will monitor the occurrence of academic misconduct utilising standardised templates which will be reported centrally to the relevant Academic Board. Incidents will be systematically collated and action plans focusing on improvements will be monitored.

The following table summarises the commitments by staff and students to promote academic integrity and eliminate academic misconduct:

Procedure for handling academic misconduct.

1. Assessment is the means by which the College tests whether a student has achieved the learning outcomes of their course and the standards of an award. It is a fundamental principle that students are assessed fairly and on equal terms.
2. Material submitted for assessment in any form must be the student's own work. Students must produce work for assessment and engage in examinations in a timely, honest and professional manner, and without attempting to gain an unfair advantage.
3. Students are bound by the Academic Regulations and are expected to familiarise themselves with these and also the guidance on referencing and proof-reading provided during the course, and ethical policies relevant to their discipline as appropriate. Students must retain draft copies of work used in the preparation of final submissions to help prove they wrote the work if challenged.
4. The College regards all cases of academic misconduct seriously and penalties will be imposed where academic misconduct is proven. Students should be aware that a record of academic misconduct may have significant academic and professional consequences. Students can be excluded from the College for very serious or repeat offences.

Scope

- This Procedure applies to all registered students and it applies to all taught courses.
- This Procedure applies to the preparation and presentation of all forms of assessed work including without limitation: written and oral examinations and other time-constrained assessments, coursework, essays, assignments, projects, dissertations, theses, presentations, practical work, placement or field trip reports and the production of artefacts.
- In cases of suspected or proven academic misconduct, the College will reserve the right to investigate previously marked work.
- Where academic misconduct is established after an award has been conferred, the Assessment Board may recommend that the award be rescinded in accordance with the Academic Regulations.

Principles

Academic Integrity Leads and Academic Misconduct Committee have authority on behalf of Academic Board to impose penalties for academic misconduct.

Where academic misconduct is suspected, an Assessment Board shall not determine the student's assessment result until the facts have been established and the case has been concluded. The assessment and/or research in question may be suspended as an interim measure pending the outcome of this Procedure.

The College will aim to deal with suspected cases of academic misconduct within 25 working days from the date when the marks are released. In exceptional cases, where it becomes clear that the investigation is likely to be complex, variation of the timescale and the reasons for this will be notified to the student.

Confidentiality will be preserved during the investigation of an allegation of academic misconduct to protect the interests of everyone concerned, unless disclosure is necessary to progress the investigation in line with the rules of natural justice. The College expects that all parties will respect the confidentiality of the process.

Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments will be made where students have mobility or communication difficulties in order that they may be informed of the process and have the opportunity to present their case, test the evidence, and offer an explanation.

Identifying Academic Misconduct

- Academic judgment will be applied based on the evidence that is available, when identifying suspected cases of academic misconduct. It is not necessary for intent to be proven in determining whether an offence of academic misconduct has occurred. It is sufficient that a particular act or omission has occurred.
- The method of detection will depend on the nature and form of the assessed work.
- Students' work may be submitted electronically to Turnitin UK which is a web-based system that provides comprehensive checking of submitted work for matching text on web pages, electronic journals and previously submitted student work. Turnitin UK generates an Originality Report to facilitate the identification of potential plagiarism cases. The Originality Report can be used as evidence and to support the related decision-making process.

Definitions of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is defined as any action or attempted action by a student which gives or has the potential to give an unfair advantage in an assessment, or might assist another student to gain an unfair advantage or otherwise undermines the academic integrity of the College. Academic misconduct includes the following without limitation:

1. Cheating is defined a form of examination malpractice relating to formal invigilated examinations or other assessments. Examples of cheating include without limitation:
 - a. communicating with another candidate during an examination;
 - b. communicating with any other person other than an authorised invigilator or other member of staff during an examination;
 - c. copying or attempting to copy from another candidate during an examination;
 - d. possession of any written or printed materials during an examination, unless expressly permitted by the examination regulations;
 - e. possession of any electronically stored information or accessing any information via a network during an examination, unless expressly permitted by the examination regulations; use of any information, communication, technology device e.g. mobile phone, watch or calculator during an examination, unless expressly permitted by the examination regulations;
 - f. substitution of examination materials;
 - g. impersonation e.g. where a student arranges for someone else to impersonate them or impersonates another person in an examination, test or hearing;
 - h. gaining or attempting to gain access to unauthorised assessment materials in advance of the specified time, unless expressly permitted by the examination regulations;
 - i. obtaining a copy of a written examination paper in advance of the date and time for its authorised release.
2. Plagiarism occurs where a student copies words or ideas from another person and presents those words or ideas as their own in an assessment without properly acknowledging and citing the source(s). Examples of plagiarism include without limitation:
 - a. the inclusion in a student's work of another's work whether published or not without proper acknowledgement;

- b. the substantial summarising of another's work without proper acknowledgement;
 - c. the substantial and unauthorised use of the ideas of another person without proper acknowledgement.
3. Re-presentation of work occurs where a student submits the same work in full or in part, that they have previously submitted for academic credit, where this is not expressly permitted by the assessment brief.
4. Collusion is an attempt to deceive the examiners by disguising the true authorship of an assessed piece of work in full or in part.
5. Commissioning of Assessed Work where a student commissions a third party to complete all or part of an assessed piece of work and then submits it as their own. Commissioned work may be pre-written or specifically prepared for the student. It might be obtained from a company or an individual and may or may not involve a financial transaction. It includes the use of essay mills or buying work on-line or the use of a proof-reading service that includes re-writing the original assessed piece of work. Where it is suspected that a student has submitted work that has not been written by them, the student may be asked questions about the work during an interview with the Academic Integrity Officer or Academic Misconduct Committee to give them the opportunity to demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the subject matter and that they understand the content of the work. Students must keep copies of drafts and other materials used in researching and preparing the work.
6. Falsification of data occurs where data, evidence or experimental results are altered or enhanced. Fabrication of data occurs where a student creates data, results or other outputs and presents them as if they were real.
7. Any Other Attempt to Deceive Any other deliberate attempt to deceive, including offering a bribe to any member of staff or external person who is connected to the College.

Roles and Responsibilities

Academic Integrity Lead

An Academic Integrity Lead will be appointed in order to ensure a consistent approach to the promotion of academic integrity within the College and the detection and investigation of cases of academic misconduct.

The role of the Academic Integrity Lead is to:

- provide advice and guidance to staff on academic integrity related issues;
- decide the level at which each case should be managed and when cases should be referred to the Academic Misconduct Committee;
- monitor the occurrence of academic misconduct within the College
- create action plans for the College focusing on improvements;
- assist with the delivery of staff development on academic integrity related issues.

Procedure following an Allegation of Academic Misconduct

Any member of staff or examiner (internal or external) who has cause to suspect that academic misconduct has occurred at the point of submission or preparation of an assessment should report the case to the relevant Academic Integrity Lead and provide any evidence to support the allegation.

Where academic misconduct is identified, the matter should be reported to the Academic Registry in the first instance, who will refer the matter to the appropriate Academic Integrity Lead for consideration.

The Academic Integrity Lead will review the evidence and may consult with the Deputy Academic Integrity Lead and/or relevant staff to decide whether there is a case to answer and, if so, how it should be managed in line with one of the following categories. Academic judgment will be applied in determining whether poor academic practice or academic misconduct has occurred. The Academic Integrity Lead will check the student record to determine whether there are any previous findings of academic misconduct on record.

The Academic Integrity Lead will conduct an initial investigation, which may involve interviewing the student, before referring the case to the Academic Misconduct Committee for consideration.

Monitoring and Review

Academic Integrity Leads will monitor the occurrence of academic misconduct in the College and create action plans focusing on improvements using standard templates.

An annual report on the occurrence of academic misconduct across the College will be submitted to the relevant Academic Board for the purposes of assuring the integrity of all the College's academic awards and improving the provision of guidance to students about good academic practice.