Waltham International College

4.0 Academic Regulations



4.08 Academic Misconduct Policy

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Reviewed by | Approved by:	Compliance Review | BoG
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Compliance Alignment Statement

This version of the Academic Misconduct Policy has been aligned to current UK and Office for Students requirements as of May 2026. The substantive changes are listed below.

Version Control Statement

Version	Date	Changes	Reason	Author	Next Review
1	01/10/2015		New Policy	Academic Development Lead	31st September 2016
2	14/12/16	The final authority moved to the Academic Board	To check for the inconsistencies	Academic Development Lead	13/12/17
3	18/05/17	Altered for the use of students only	To keep Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and Academic Misconduct Policy separate into 2 different policies.	Academic Development Lead	17/05/18
4	11/12/2017		Annual Review	Academic Development Lead	December 2018
5	23/01/2019	Changes to incorporate the new structure Misconduct form inserted Separate classifications of misconduct and the relevant penalties	Annual Review	All academic staff	July 2019
6	May 2020	Aligned to the new policy format adopted in September 2019 Added External (especially the core practices contained within the QAA Advice and Guidance: Admissions, Recruitment and Widening Access) and Internal Reference Points Replaced Registrar with Student Support Manager Removed Welfare Officer	Annual Review	Head of HE	Jul/Aug 2021
7	July 2021	Title adjustment, signpost to partnership delivery, format changes	Annual Review	Head of HE	July 2022
8	August 2022	Minor changes/role and Grammar check. Partner institution policy takes president	Annual Review	Head of HE	August 2023
9	April 2024	The Head of He was replaced by the Vice Principal to align with the current organizational structure. The term "Learner" was substituted with "student" for consistency with HE vocabulary. Some sentences have been rephrased for clarity and coherence, with appropriate word choices incorporated.	QA Review	QA officer	August 2024
10	February 2026	Changed to new template Added Purpose, Scope and Introduction Added authenticity of student work, use of generative AI, ethical scholarship and rewritten proper use of proofreading service sections Added Academic Integrity to definitions and expanded examples and definitions of the others Added Responsibilities Section Added section on distinguishing between poor academic practice and academic misconduct Added stage 2 to procedure - AMC panel	Annual Review	Quality and Compliance	July 2026
11	May 2026	- Textual revisions made throughout to bring the policy into compliance with applicable regulations - Reworded relevant section in line with NCFE and NCC regulations - Extended external reference list - Added section 6.2.8 - Added sections 11, 12,13 - Added Appendix 1, 2	Compliance Alignment 2026 (OfS)	QA Compliance Review	August 2027

External Reference Points

The policy relates to the following external regulations:

- OfS Regulatory Framework 2018 (as amended) – Conditions B2, B4, C5
- QAA UK Quality Code 2024 – Assessment; Academic Integrity
- QAA Advice and Guidance: Academic Integrity (2020)
- Equality Act 2010 – fair and non-discriminatory process
- UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018
- Human Rights Act 1998 – Article 6 (right to fair hearing)
- Higher Education (Freedom of Speech) Act 2022
- Consumer Rights Act 2015 and CMA Guidance for HE Providers 2023
- Awarding partner academic integrity and misconduct regulations (take precedence on programme-specific matters)

Related Policies and Documents

Affects all other policy documents. This document should however be read together with the following documents:

- 3.01 Recruitment, Selection and Admission Policy
- 4.03 Assessment Policy
- 4.06 Complaints Policy
- 4.07 Academic Appeals Policy
- 4.11 Fitness to Study Policy
- 4.16 Malpractice and Maladministration Policy

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this Policy is to uphold the principles of academic integrity at Waltham International College (WIC) by clearly defining unacceptable academic practices, setting out the responsibilities of students and staff, and establishing fair, consistent, and transparent procedures for handling suspected academic misconduct.

This Policy ensures alignment with the QAA UK Quality Code (Assessment and Academic Integrity), OfS Condition B2 (quality of academic experience), and the requirements of WIC's awarding partners. It promotes a culture of honesty, ethical scholarship, and respect for intellectual work.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all students enrolled at WIC, including those studying at partner institutions (where partner regulations may take precedence and will be applied first). It applies to all forms of assessed work, including written assignments, examinations, presentations, practical assessments, portfolios, digital submissions, and any work submitted for academic credit. Students are subject to this Policy from the point of enrolment.

3. Introduction

Academic integrity is the foundation of meaningful education. When students submit work that is genuinely their own, qualifications represent real learning, and the value of those qualifications is preserved for every graduate. Conversely, when academic misconduct goes unaddressed, it undermines the credibility of awards, disadvantages students who work honestly, and risks producing graduates who have not developed the skills their qualification is meant to certify.

WIC is committed to a culture of honest, independent scholarship. This policy sets out how WIC defines academic misconduct, how suspected cases are investigated, and what consequences may follow. It is designed to be fair to all students – firm enough to protect the integrity of WIC’s awards, and proportionate enough to distinguish genuine mistakes from deliberate dishonesty.

WIC delivers programmes validated by multiple awarding bodies, each with their own academic integrity requirements. This policy operates alongside those requirements. Where an awarding body’s regulations differ from or add to WIC’s own, the awarding body’s requirements take precedence on programme-specific matters. Students and staff are expected to be familiar with the requirements that apply to their programme.

The policy reflects WIC’s obligations under the Office for Students regulatory framework and the QAA UK Quality Code, and is reviewed annually to remain current with sector expectations and the evolving landscape of academic integrity risks – including the growing use of generative artificial intelligence in assessed work.

4. Academic Integrity

Every student at Waltham International College is expected to act with integrity about the production and representation of academic work. Academic integrity is central to academic life and requires that students be honest and responsible in acknowledging the contributions of others in their work.

Where a student is registered with a partner institution the regulations of the Partner Institution take president.

In all assessed work students should take care to ensure that the work presented is their own and that it fully acknowledges the work and opinions of others. It is also the responsibility of students to ensure that they do not undertake any form of cheating or gain an unfair advantage in any other way.

To assure Waltham International College that the work is their own and that the work and opinions of others have been acknowledged, students must take care to follow the appropriate standards for academic practice. This includes:

a) Providing full citation of all sources (books, articles, websites, newspapers, images, artefacts, data sources, programme code etc) which have been drawn on in the preparation of an assignment. Normally this will be done in a bibliography included in the assignment.

b) Properly referencing the sources of the arguments and ideas in an assignment using a recognised referencing system (as specified in programme and module guidelines). It is not only quotations that must be referenced but also paraphrasing of the arguments of others and the use of their ideas, even if explained in the student's own words.

c) Following other guidelines for preparing and presenting coursework as defined in the relevant programme handbooks, module guides and assignment briefs.

d) Using mechanisms provided by Waltham International College for checking their work.

4.1 Authenticity of student work

Students must ensure that all work submitted for assessment is a true and accurate representation of their own learning and abilities. Authenticity means that the submitted work has been created by the student, reflects the student's independent understanding, and has not been improperly influenced, generated, or altered by another person or unauthorised technologies.

Any work that is found not to be the student's own, whether produced by another individual, purchased, copied, or generated by artificial intelligence tools without appropriate permission or acknowledgement, will be considered a breach of academic integrity.

4.2 Ethical Scholarship

WIC expects all students to demonstrate ethical scholarship, which includes honesty in the use of sources, respect for intellectual property, responsible engagement with evidence, and transparency about how ideas and materials have been developed.

Ethical scholarship requires students to acknowledge all contributions of others, avoid misrepresenting information, and uphold academic standards in their research, writing, data handling, and use of digital tools.

4.3 Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The responsible use of generative AI tools (such as text, image, code, data-generation or paraphrasing systems) is permitted only where explicitly authorised within programme, module or assessment guidelines. Students must follow all instructions regarding whether AI tools may be used, to what extent, and with what form of acknowledgement.

Unauthorised or undisclosed use of generative AI, particularly where AI tools generate ideas, structure, wording, data, analysis, images, programming code, or other academic content, may constitute academic misconduct. Students must not present AI-generated content as their own

independent work, and must not rely on AI tools to undertake tasks that assess learning outcomes intended to evaluate personal understanding or skill development.

Where AI use is permitted, students must clearly declare the tool used, the nature of its input and output, and the extent of reliance on the tool, following the College's AI use guidelines.

4.4 Proper Use of Proofreading Services

Proofreading may be used to identify issues of grammar, spelling, or punctuation; however, it must not involve rewriting, editing, re-structuring, paraphrasing, or improving the academic content of the work. Any proofreading activity that alters meaning, arguments, or ideas may constitute academic misconduct.

Students are responsible for ensuring that any proofreading support received adheres to acceptable academic practice. The use of commercial editing services, paid support, or any form of substantive rewriting is prohibited.

5. Principles

Every student at WIC is expected to act with integrity in the production and representation of academic work. Academic integrity requires students to be honest, responsible, and ethical in:

- Ensuring that submitted work is their own and genuinely reflects their learning and understanding
- Acknowledging all sources, ideas, and contributions of others using appropriate referencing conventions
- Using generative AI and other digital tools only in accordance with published College and awarding partner guidelines
- Avoiding any action that gives or attempts to give an unfair academic advantage
- Complying with the specific rules of each assessment, including conditions relating to collaboration and resource use

6. Definitions and Examples

There are different forms of academic misconduct, all of which may be the subject of the procedures described below. The following are different examples of academic misconduct but do not constitute an exhaustive list:

6.1 Academic Integrity

Academic integrity refers to honest, responsible, and ethical behaviour in producing academic work. Students must ensure their work is their own, fully acknowledge the contributions of others, and use AI or digital tools responsibly.

6.2 Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is any action that gives, or attempts to give, an unfair academic advantage. Types include, but are not limited to:

6.2.1 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another person's work, ideas, data, images, or words (whether published or unpublished). This includes copying or paraphrasing another's work without citation, re-submitting one's own previously submitted work without disclosure (self-plagiarism), and unacknowledged use of creative material or data.

Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Intent is a relevant consideration but is not required to establish that plagiarism has occurred. Where a student fails to reference sources throughout an entire assignment, this will always be treated as plagiarism, even if the failure was unintentional or arose from a lack of understanding of referencing requirements. Students are responsible for familiarising themselves with the required referencing standards for their programme.

6.2.2 Collusion

Collusion is an unauthorised collaboration between students, where one student submits as their own work that was done jointly, or enables another student to submit work that is not wholly their own. Collusion is distinct from permitted group work, the boundaries of which are set out in each assessment brief.

6.2.3 Falsification and Fabrication

Falsification is the fabrication or alteration of data, results, references, or other information in assessed work, including inventing references or data not actually collected.

6.2.4 Personation

Personation is assuming the identity of another person, or allowing another person to assume one's identity, in any assessment activity, with intent to gain an unfair advantage. Where personation is suspected in an assignment, an investigatory interview will normally be arranged in which the student will be asked to explain and demonstrate their understanding of the submitted work.

6.2.5 Ghosting / Contract Cheating

Contract cheating (ghostwriting) is the submission of work created wholly or in part by another person or service on the student's behalf, whether for payment or otherwise. This includes the use of essay mills, online cheating services, and third-party writing services.

6.2.6 AI Related Misconduct

The unauthorised, undisclosed, or dishonest use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools in assessed work constitutes academic misconduct. This includes, but is not limited to: using AI tools to generate ideas, wording, analysis, code, images, or other content and presenting it as the student's own unaided work; using AI tools where they are explicitly prohibited by the assessment brief or College/awarding partner guidelines; and failing to declare AI tool use where declaration is required.

Where AI use is permitted, students must follow the disclosure and acknowledgement requirements set out in the relevant module/assessment guidance. WIC's guidance on acceptable AI use in assessments is published in programme handbooks and on the VLE.

AI Related Misconduct Examples:

Type	Example	Penalty
Minor	Unauthorised rewrites using AI	Treated as plagiarism
Moderate	Unattributed AI content	As above or escalated
Severe	AI-fabricated data; AI-written submissions	Treated as ghosting/contract cheating

6.2.7 Other Academic Misconduct

Other forms of academic misconduct include: misconduct in examinations (bringing in unauthorised materials, communicating with other students during an examination); misrepresentation of evidence in extenuating circumstances applications; and any other conduct that gives or attempts to give an unfair academic advantage.

Examination misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- obtaining or seeking to obtain examination materials prior to the examination;
- copying from another candidate or from any unauthorised materials, including electronic devices;
- taking unauthorised materials into the examination room;
- communicating or attempting to communicate with another candidate or any person other than the invigilator;
- and any form of disruptive behaviour.

Examination misconduct applies equally to formal examinations, online assessments, and all tests conducted under examination conditions.

Self-plagiarism occurs when a student re-uses identical or substantially similar parts of their own previously submitted work without appropriate acknowledgement. Each piece of assessed work must be a new, original piece produced for that assessment. Where a student is required to revise and resubmit an assignment as part of a resit, this does not constitute self-plagiarism.

6.2.8 Extenuating Circumstances and Misrepresentation

Submitting an assessment is normally treated as a declaration that the student considered themselves fit to make a valid attempt at that assessment, in accordance with the Assessment Policy (4.03, section 8.1) and the Extenuating Circumstances Policy and Procedure (4.16). Where a student submits work and subsequently makes an extenuating circumstance claim in relation to that same assessment, the claim will not normally be accepted. Where a student makes a claim that is found to contain false, exaggerated, or misleading information, including false medical or professional evidence, this constitutes academic misconduct and will be investigated under this Policy. The consequences may include rejection of the claim, a formal misconduct finding, and referral to the Malpractice and Maladministration Policy (4.16) where the conduct is sufficiently serious.

7. Distinguishing Poor Academic Practice from Academic Misconduct

Not all mistakes constitute academic misconduct. WIC recognises that students may sometimes make errors in referencing, citation, academic writing, or technical presentation that result from a lack of experience rather than an intention to deceive.

Poor academic practice refers to unintentional mistakes such as inconsistent referencing, incorrect citation format, inadequate paraphrasing, or incomplete acknowledgement of sources. These errors do not normally amount to academic misconduct unless they are:

- Repeated despite feedback or support,
- Significant enough to misrepresent authorship or originality, or
- Judged to be deliberate or negligent rather than accidental.

To differentiate poor academic practice from academic misconduct, there must be:

(a) an identifiable attempt to reference sources, even if that attempt is incomplete or incorrectly formatted; and

(b) the vast majority of the work must be the student's own.

Where a student fails to reference throughout an entire assignment, this will always be treated as plagiarism, even if the failure was unintentional. Poor academic skills and referencing mistakes may still affect the mark awarded for the work but will not automatically trigger formal misconduct proceedings.

Academic misconduct, by contrast, involves intentional or reckless behaviour that seeks to gain an unfair academic advantage, such as plagiarism, collusion, falsification, personation, ghost-writing, or the inappropriate use of artificial intelligence tools.

Staff will use academic judgement to distinguish mistakes arising from poor academic practice from behaviour that meets the threshold of misconduct. Where appropriate, students may receive formative feedback and signposting to academic skills support instead of formal penalties.

Poor academic practice will be addressed as part of academic development, whereas academic misconduct triggers the formal procedures outlined in this policy.

8. Responsibilities

8.1 Students

Students are responsible for:

- Ensuring all submitted work is original and represents their own learning and abilities.
- Demonstrating academic integrity by following all assessment instructions and academic conduct expectations.
- Using sources appropriately, including correct citation, quotation, and referencing of all material drawn from others.
- Using generative AI tools only where permitted and in accordance with programme or assessment guidelines.

- Accurately declaring any permitted use of AI tools, including the nature and extent of support received.
- Avoiding the use of unauthorised assistance, including contract cheating, rewriting services, or inappropriate AI-generated content.
- Understanding and applying the required referencing system consistently.
- Seeking academic support when unsure about referencing, academic integrity, or appropriate use of external tools.

8.2 Academic Staff

Academic staff are responsible for:

- Designing assessments that promote academic integrity and minimise opportunities for misconduct.
- Providing students with clear, accessible assessment briefs, learning outcomes, and referencing expectations.
- Communicating expectations regarding acceptable and unacceptable use of AI and other external tools.
- Using plagiarism-detection or similarity-checking tools appropriately and interpreting results using academic judgement.
- Offering guidance on good academic practice, responsible scholarship, and proper use of academic support tools.
- Reporting any suspected academic misconduct promptly to the Programme Manager with supporting evidence.
- Supporting students to understand academic integrity principles through feedback, signposting, and academic skills development.

8.3 Programme Managers

Programme Managers are responsible for:

- Leading Stage 1 investigations into suspected academic misconduct.
- Reviewing evidence provided by academic staff and meeting with the student to discuss the allegation.
- Ensuring students have an opportunity to respond and present their explanation.
- Making a determination based on available evidence, institutional precedent, and principles of fairness.
- Completing the Academic Misconduct Report Form accurately and recording all outcomes.
- Referring serious, repeated, or complex cases to the Academic Development Lead.
- Monitoring misconduct patterns within their programme and supporting academic staff in promoting academic integrity.

8.4 Academic Misconduct Panel

The Academic Misconduct Panel is responsible for:

- Providing oversight and quality assurance of academic misconduct investigations.
- Conducting Academic Misconduct panels and reviewing Stage 1 outcomes referred by Programme Managers for consistency and procedural compliance.
- Ensuring that confirmed cases are appropriately logged and reported to the Assessment Board.
- Advising staff on policy interpretation and the management of complex or high-risk cases.

- Supporting cross-college initiatives aimed at strengthening academic integrity and alignment with awarding-partner expectations.

8.5 Academic Board

The Academic Board is responsible for:

- having overall oversight of academic integrity policy and to receive regular reports on misconduct cases

8.6 Assessment Team

The Assessment Team is responsible for:

- Maintenance of records, monitor trends, and support staff and students in relation to academic integrity.

9. Procedure for Suspected Plagiarism

9.1 Stage 1: Investigation by Programme Manager

- When a member of staff suspects academic misconduct, they must report it to the Programme Leader using the Academic Misconduct Report Form.
- The Programme Leader (or delegated academic staff member) will conduct an initial investigation, which will include: reviewing the submitted work and similarity or AI detection reports; gathering evidence; and meeting with the student to give them an opportunity to respond to the allegation.
- The student must be informed in writing of the allegation, the evidence, and the process, and given at least 5 working days' notice of any meeting. The student has the right to be accompanied by a student representative or person of their choice (not a legal practitioner). The meeting is not a disciplinary hearing; it is an opportunity for the student to explain or contextualise the evidence.
- If the Programme Leader finds no evidence of misconduct, the case is closed and the student is notified in writing. If there is sufficient evidence of misconduct, the case is referred to Stage 2 unless the Programme Leader determines it is a minor first offence that can be managed with a formal warning at this stage.

9.1.1 Right to Amend Admission

In exceptional circumstances, where a student judges that there had been a procedural error which has resulted in them erroneously admitting to academic misconduct, they should immediately inform the Programme Manager that they now wish to withdraw their admission and contest the allegation of academic misconduct.

Any such change of admission must be conveyed in writing to the Programme Manager within five working days of receiving the decision of the Stage 1 meeting. The Programme Manager will advise the Academic Development Lead who will decide on the matter in liaison with the Principal if required.

An allegation of academic misconduct may be made after the work has been marked and returned to the student.

If a student believes academic misconduct to be taking place in any form of assessment, it is their responsibility to bring this to the attention of the Programme Manager.

9.2 Stage 2: Academic Misconduct Panel

The Academic Misconduct Panel is normally convened after Stage 1 and reviews all submitted Academic Misconduct forms. This stage ensures consistency, fairness, and adherence to academic integrity standards across the College. Stage 2 acts as an internal quality-assurance checkpoint. It confirms that Stage 1 decisions are appropriate, evidence-based, and aligned with institutional precedent before outcomes are formally recorded and submitted to the Assessment Board.

The Academic Misconduct Panel will normally consist of:

- a senior academic who was not involved in the original assessment;
- a senior manager or nominee;
- and (where appropriate) a student representative.

The Panel will consider all evidence and make a finding of misconduct or no misconduct. Where misconduct is found, the Panel will determine the appropriate penalty from the range set out in this Policy. The student is informed of the outcome and reasons in writing within 10 working days of the hearing.

9.2.1 Possible Outcomes of Stage 2 Panel Review

After reviewing each AM Form, the Panel may decide to:

A. Agree the Stage 1 Outcome

- The Panel confirms that the decision is fair, evidence-based, and procedurally sound.
- The outcome is seconded and approved for recording.

B. Request Clarification or Amendment

- The Panel may request additional information from the Programme Leader or assessor.
- The Academic Development Lead will liaise with staff to correct or clarify the outcome.

C. Refer the Case Back to Stage 1

- If the Panel identifies procedural issues, missing evidence, or concerns about fairness, the case may be returned to the Programme Leader for reconsideration.

D. Escalate to Senior Review

- In rare cases involving significant concerns, patterns of repeat misconduct, or institutional risk, the Panel may escalate the case to the Principal for senior oversight.

  Note: This is not an appeal; it is internal quality assurance.

9.3 Appeal

A student who is dissatisfied with the Academic Misconduct Panel's finding or penalty may appeal on the following grounds:

- procedural error or irregularity that materially affected the outcome
- new evidence not reasonably available at the time of the Panel hearing

- disproportionate penalty

Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Principal within 10 working days of receiving the Panel's decision in writing, setting out the ground(s) relied upon and providing any supporting evidence.

The Principal will carry out a preliminary review of the written appeal and will either:

- reject the appeal where no arguable case has been established on the stated grounds, and notify the student of this outcome in writing, normally within 15 working days; or
- refer the case to an Academic Misconduct Appeals Panel where the student has established arguable grounds, with a requirement that the Panel reconsider the case in light of the evidence put forward.

The Principal's decision on whether to convene an Academic Misconduct Appeals Panel is a screening decision only and is final. Where a panel is convened, the full procedure is set out in Appendix 5.

The outcome of the Academic Misconduct Appeals Panel is final within WIC. Following the conclusion of all internal processes, a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued and the student may refer their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) within 12 months.

10. Penalties for Academic Misconduct

Where a referral is offered as part of a penalty under this Policy, this means a further attempt at the affected assessment, subject to the conditions and any mark cap set out in the Assessment Policy (4.03, section 9) and the relevant awarding partner's regulations.

Penalties for academic misconduct are graduated according to the severity of the misconduct, the level of study, and whether it is a first or repeated offence. Penalties may include:

- Minor first offence: formal written warning; requirement to resubmit or redo the work without penalty, or with a capped mark
- Moderate misconduct or repeat offence: mark of zero for the affected assessment or component; written warning on student record
- Serious misconduct: fail the module with no right to resit; mark of zero for the whole unit or module
- Gross misconduct or systematic or premeditated cheating: exclusion from the College or withdrawal from the programme; notification to the awarding partner

All penalties are applied consistently and proportionately in line with awarding partner requirements. A record of academic misconduct is maintained on the student's file for the duration of their studies. The Academic Board reviews aggregate data on misconduct annually.

For specific penalties relating to separate awarding bodes, see Appendix 1.

10.1 Plagiarism, collusion, falsification or similar

First instance of academic misconduct (or multiple instances declared at the same time) will result in a written warning plus referral for each piece of work. Referral opportunities are normally granted by the Programme Manager.

Penalties for second or subsequent instances of academic misconduct will be decided by the Assessment Board. Assessment Board will decide whether referral opportunity should be given, or whether to deregister the student from the programme of study according to the facts and severity of the academic misconduct.

Offence	Consequence
First offence	Written warning + referral (resubmission)
Second offence	Assessment Board decides referral or module zero
Third/subsequent	Possible deregistration

10.1.1 Checking for Plagiarism

WIC uses plagiarism detection software to detect instances of plagiarism. The reports indicate the percentage of work that appears to be plagiarised.

Referencing Standards

Students are required to use the Harvard referencing system unless programme-specific guidance specifies otherwise.

- For programmes validated by NCC Education, Harvard referencing is mandatory.
- For NCFE qualifications, full structured referencing is required at Level 3 and above; at Levels 1 and 2, a bibliography and identification of directly copied or quoted text is the minimum acceptable standard.

All assessed work submitted to WIC must include appropriate acknowledgement of sources in line with these standards.

Plagiarism Prevention

WIC promotes academic integrity through a range of preventative measures, including induction sessions on academic integrity, guidance in programme and module handbooks, referencing instruction within teaching sessions, assessment briefing materials, and in-class resources. Students are encouraged to use plagiarism-checking tools to review their own work before submission. Prevention of plagiarism is a shared responsibility of students and staff.

It should be noted that there is no set rule to decide which percentage indicates that the learner's work has been plagiarised and it remains an academic judgement. The following is a guide on interpreting plagiarism scores:

- Scores of 10% or less – this work will normally include some quotes and some common phrases that match other documents. This score will indicate that the learner's work does not require further checking.
- Scores of between 10-20% - this is a difficult area and will require careful checking. If the matched material is concentrated in one or two sections or there is some rewording but from a recognised source, this could be plagiarised.
- Scores of between 20-40% - this work will include extensive quoted or paraphrased material which may be plagiarised. The student's work will require further checking and where the

matched material is concentrated in certain sections of the work and is not attributed there may be plagiarised material.
- Scores over 40% - there is a high probability that the student's work is copied from other sources. The work may well have extensive levels of quoted or paraphrased material and should be checked for plagiarism.

NCC Programmes

For programmes delivered under NCC Education regulations, all assignments must be submitted through plagiarism detection software (such as Turnitin) to obtain an Originality Report. Where a similarity score of 40% or more is returned, the assignment must be examined for plagiarism and/or collusion by the marker. Similarity scores must not be used in isolation as justification for a penalty; they require careful interpretation by a qualified marker to determine whether the matched text represents unreferenced copying, acceptable quotation, or shared standard phrases (such as assignment brief extracts or assessment criteria). A high similarity index does not automatically indicate misconduct if quotations are properly referenced.

Please note that if material such as an assignment brief or extracts there to and/or learning outcomes or assessment criteria are also included in the uploaded document they may show as plagiarism, so they will need to be discounted.

10.2 Ghosting, Personation or Cheating in an Examination

First instance of academic misconduct (or multiple instances declared at the same time) will result in a written warning plus referral for each piece of work. Referral opportunities are normally granted by the Programme Manager.

Second or subsequent instance of academic misconduct will result in the mark of zero for the piece of assessed work and the mark of zero for the module/unit. Assessment Board to decide whether a referral opportunity should be given, or whether to deregister the student from the programme of study according to the facts and severity of the academic misconduct.

Offence	Consequence
First offence	Written warning + referral
Second offence	Zero for assessment **and** module; Assessment Board determines progression
Severe or repeated offences	Deregistration

11. Equality, Fairness and Natural Justice

- The academic misconduct process must be fair, proportionate, and free from discrimination.
- All students are presumed innocent until the evidence indicates otherwise.
- Students have the right to be informed of the allegation, to present their case, to be accompanied, and to appeal.
- WIC will not discriminate on the basis of any protected characteristic in applying this Policy.

- Where a student's disability or mental health condition may be relevant to the misconduct (e.g., anxiety leading to plagiarism), this will be considered as a mitigating factor.

12. Data Protection

Information collected during academic misconduct proceedings is personal data and is processed in accordance with UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018. Records are held securely and retained in accordance with WIC's records management schedule.

13. Monitoring and Review

Academic misconduct data is monitored by the Assessment team and reported to the Academic Board annually. Data is analysed to identify trends, patterns, and any areas requiring additional student support or academic staff development. This Policy is reviewed annually.

14. Appendices

14.1 Appendix 1: Awarding Body Specific Process and Centre Responsibilities

WIC delivers programmes validated by different awarding bodies. Where the regulations of an awarding body differ from or add to WIC's own procedures, the awarding body's requirements take precedence on programme-specific matters. The following sets out the additional obligations that apply to programmes delivered under NCC Education and NCFE/CACHE.

14.1.1 NCC Education Programmes

For all assessments marked locally by WIC staff under NCC Education regulations:

- all assignments must be uploaded to Turnitin and an Originality Report obtained;
- any report producing a similarity score of 40% or more must be examined for plagiarism and/or collusion;
- and the marker must complete a Candidate Misconduct – Centre Declaration Form for every assessment cohort, confirming either that no misconduct was found or recording details of any misconduct identified and the penalty applied.
- This completed form must be submitted with every unit moderation sample.
- WIC staff must ensure all cases of academic misconduct are investigated and resolved before submission of marks to NCC Education.
- NCC Education may request additional samples from the cohort, conduct its own investigations, or require candidate interviews as part of any investigation it undertakes.
- NCC Education reserves the right to withhold results pending the outcome of any investigation and to rescind an award where evidence of misconduct arises after certification.

14.1.2 NCFE Programmes

For all assessments delivered under NCFE/CACHE regulations:

- WIC must investigate and resolve all identified instances of plagiarism before grades and assessment work are submitted to NCFE;
- for external assessments that are not reviewed by WIC before submission, the responsibility for avoiding plagiarism rests with the student.
- Plagiarism must be identified and addressed through WIC's internal processes (which may include feedback, required resubmission, or formal misconduct proceedings).
- Serious or repeated cases must be escalated through WIC's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy and reported to NCFE accordingly.
- Where NCFE identifies plagiarism in external assessments, achievement may be withheld from the student and WIC will be notified of required actions.

14.1.3 Awarding Body Specific Penalties

WIC's penalties framework (Section 10) applies to all students. For students on programmes regulated by NCC Education or NCFE, additional or different penalties may apply as set out by those awarding bodies.

For NCC Education programmes, the specific penalty framework includes:

- a formal warning (no mark reduction for first/minor offences);
- capping of the mark at the pass boundary (40);
- loss of marks for a specific task or assessment component;
- loss of all marks for the unit; and disqualification from the qualification for serious or repeated misconduct.

For NCFE programmes, penalties are determined case by case and may include withholding of certification and referral through the malpractice process for serious cases. Where WIC's penalty framework would result in a different outcome from that required by an awarding body, the awarding body's requirements take precedence.

14.2 Appendix 2: Student Guidance: Understanding Plagiarism and Referencing

This section provides guidance to help students understand what plagiarism is, how it differs from acceptable academic practice, and how to reference correctly. Students are encouraged to review this section and seek academic support if they are unsure about any aspect of referencing or academic writing.

14.2.1 What counts as Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when you use another person's work, ideas, or words without acknowledging the source. It includes:

- copying text word-for-word from any source (printed or online) without quotation marks and a reference;
- closely paraphrasing a source by changing only a few words, without attribution;
- using another person's ideas or conclusions without crediting them;
- cutting and pasting from websites or other electronic sources;
- and using translation software to convert foreign-language material and presenting it as your own work.

Plagiarism can be intentional or unintentional. It is your responsibility to ensure that all sources are properly acknowledged regardless of whether you intended to deceive.

14.2.2 Quoting, Paraphrasing and Poor Referencing: The Differences

- Quoting:

  A direct quote reproduces the exact words of a source. You must use quotation marks and include a full reference (author, date, page number). Example of good practice: Smith (2020, p.45) argues that "referencing is a fundamental academic skill."

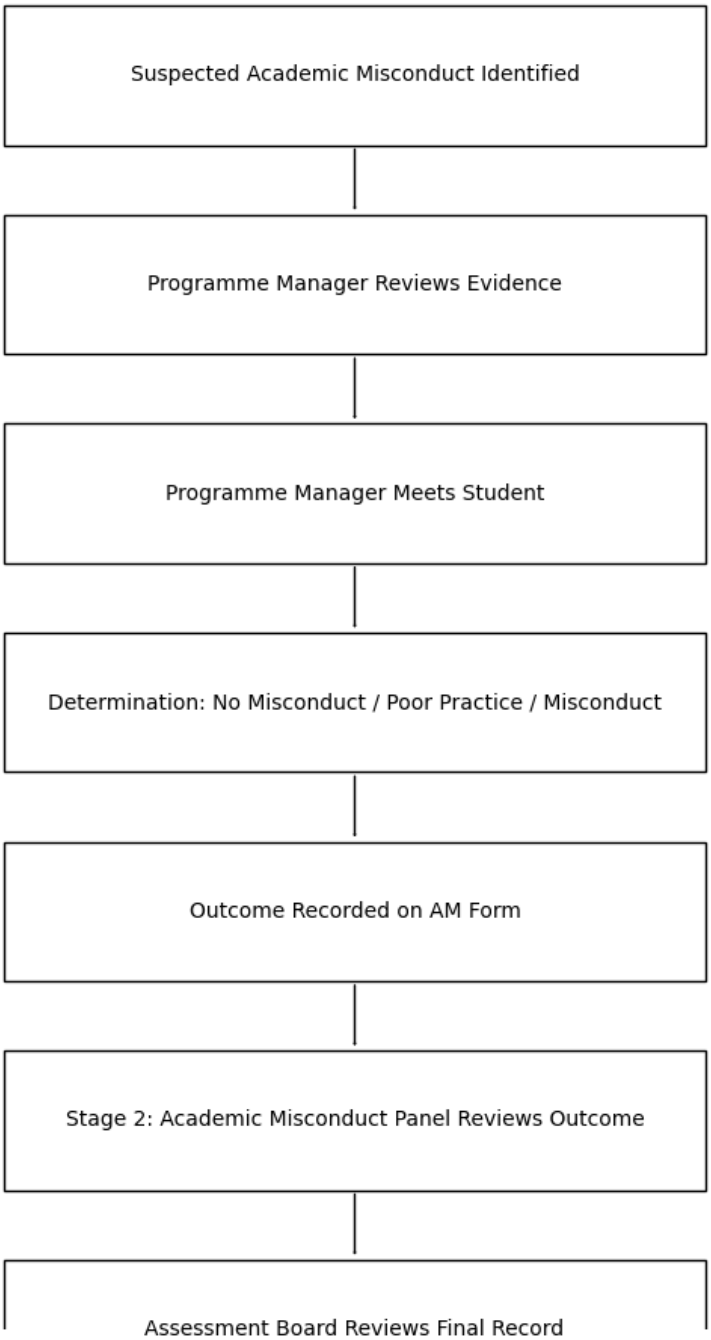
- Paraphrasing:

  Paraphrasing means expressing an author's idea in your own words and sentence structure. Simply changing a few words from the original is not paraphrasing – it is still plagiarism. Even correctly paraphrased material must be attributed to the original source with an in-text citation. Example of poor practice (plagiarism): Writing "referencing is a key academic skill" directly from a source without quotation marks or citation. Example of good practice: Smith (2020) identifies referencing as central to academic development, emphasising that acknowledging sources demonstrates intellectual honesty.

- Poor referencing:

  Poor referencing (such as a missing page number, an inconsistent citation format, or placing a reference at the end of a paragraph rather than the relevant sentence) is different from plagiarism. Where there is a genuine attempt to reference – even if that attempt is imperfect – this will normally be treated as poor academic practice rather than misconduct, and feedback will be given to support improvement. However, where an entire assignment contains no referencing at all, this will be treated as plagiarism even if unintentional.

14.3 Appendix 3: Flowchart



14.4 Appendix 4: Stage 3 - Appeal against the finding of the Programme Manager and/or Academic Misconduct Panel

14.4.1 Introduction

This appendix sets out the procedure for a student appealing against the finding or penalty of the Academic Misconduct Panel (Stage 2). It should be read alongside section 9.3 of this Policy.

14.4.2 Procedure

A student who wishes to appeal must submit their appeal in writing to the Principal within 10 working days of receiving the Panel's written decision. The appeal must specify the ground(s) relied upon from those set out in section 9.3, and must be accompanied by any supporting evidence.

The Principal will review the written submission and determine whether an arguable case has been established. The Principal will notify the student of the outcome of this preliminary review, normally within 15 working days of receiving the appeal. Where the Principal determines that no arguable case has been established, this decision is final and the student will be issued a Completion of Procedures letter.

Where the Principal determines that arguable grounds exist, the case will be referred to an Academic Misconduct Appeals Panel in accordance with Appendix 5. The Panel will reconsider the case in light of the grounds and evidence put forward by the student.

14.5 Appendix 5: Academic Misconduct Appeal Panel

When an appeal against a finding of academic misconduct has been accepted for further investigation the matter will be considered by an Academic Misconduct Appeals Panel as soon as reasonably practicable following the decision of the Principal to convene such a panel. The Academic Misconduct Appeals Panel will comprise:

- the Principal or nominee – who will act ac a Chair of the Academic Misconduct Panel
- a Programme Manager not associated with the unit where plagiarism has been alleged to have taken place

The Programme Manager will notify the student concerned of the date, time, and place of the meeting of the Panel. Notification should be no less than five working days before the scheduled meeting of the Panel.

The student may be accompanied by a friend at the Panel meeting. Failure by the student to appear before the Panel or to submit a statement will not prevent the Panel from meeting and deciding.

The Academic Misconduct Appeals Panel may call witnesses, as appropriate, and will not unreasonably refuse permission for the student or staff concerned to call such witnesses as they deem appropriate.

Evidence may be received by the Academic Misconduct Appeals Panel by the oral statement, written and signed statement, or statutory declaration. The Chair of the Panel shall decide, after taking account of the evidence assembled, whether the evidence from each party can be heard in the presence of others.

The Academic Misconduct Appeals Panel will interview the student, staff, and witnesses as appropriate, consider the student's written statement, and come to a decision based on the student's statement and the supporting evidence.

The order of proceedings is as follows:

- statement from the student and production of evidence in support of their appeal and responses to questions from the Academic Misconduct Appeals Panel
- statement from the Programme Leader and/or Academic Development Lead, as appropriate, and production of supporting evidence and responses to questions from the Academic Misconduct Appeals Panel
- the Panel will consider the evidence in private and decide on the outcome detailed below.

Each member of the Academic Misconduct Appeals Panel has equal status and, in the event of a disagreement about the decision a third person may need to be consulted.

After consideration of the available evidence relating to the appeal, the Academic Misconduct Appeals Panel will either:

- reject the appeal; or
- accept the appeal and nullify any judgement about plagiarism having taken place

The student and the Chair of the Academic Misconduct Panel will be provided with a copy of the notes of the Academic Misconduct Appeals Panel's meeting, normally within five working days.

The decision of the Academic Misconduct Appeals Panel shall be final.