



Academic Malpractice Guidance

Guidance

Version 1.1

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Version control details

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1. Document location

This document is a controlled document, master and control version of this document will remain with the Director of Curriculum and the Curriculum Quality Team

2. Background

This guidance relates to the management of malpractice in assessment by students and staff for all awarding organisations.

3. Promoting Academic Integrity

Aims to:

- Protect the integrity of the College and the qualifications delivered on behalf of awarding organisations.
- Identify and minimise the risk of malpractice by staff or learners.
- Respond to any incident of alleged malpractice promptly and objectively and using clearly established processes.
- Impose appropriate penalties and/or sanctions on learners or staff where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice are proven.
- To standardise and record any investigation of malpractice to ensure openness and fairness.

In order to do this:

- Lecturers should support students to avoid potential malpractice by using the induction period and the programme handbook to inform learners of the College's policy on academic malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of academic malpractice.
- Lecturers should show students the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources.
- Lecturers are to ensure that all written assessments submitted by students are checked through College approved plagiarism checker software.

- Lecturers must ensure students sign authenticity statements to declare the work submitted is their own, please refer to your awarding organisation’s standard template.
- Lecturers should ask learners to provide evidence that they have interpreted and synthesised appropriate information, including materials generated through artificial intelligence tools and acknowledged any sources used.
- Make the individual fully aware at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven.

4. Scope

This guidance applies to all teaching staff, staff involved in assessing students and staff involved in internal verification and moderation activity. It applies to all current students registered on any Belfast Met programme and students who have been certified within the last 12 months.

5. Definition of Malpractice by students

Academic Malpractice is defined as any attempt by a student to gain an unfair advantage in assessment with a view to them achieving a higher grade, mark or more favourable outcome than they would otherwise achieve. The following list is not exhaustive:

- Plagiarism of any nature.
- Submissions for assessment without acknowledging output from generated artificial intelligence to aid your development process.
- Collusion by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual learner work.
- Copying (including the use of ICT to aid copying).
- Deliberate destruction of another’s work.
- Fabrication of results or evidence.
- False declaration of authenticity in relation to the contents of a portfolio or coursework.

- Duplication, using or re-using significant, identical, or nearly identical portion(s) of their own work where such work has been previously submitted for credit within the College or at another institution.
- Impersonation by pretending to be someone else in order to produce the work for another or arranging for another to take one's place in an assessment, examination, or test.
- Taking prohibited material into an examination room.

Students will be asked to provide evidence that the work is their own, including notes or any materials generated through generative artificial intelligence tools. Please refer to the 'Student guidance in use of AI'.

6. Malpractice and Academic Offences by College staff

This list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by the College at its discretion:

- Improper assistance to students.
- Inventing or changing marks for internally assessed work (coursework or portfolio evidence) where there is insufficient evidence of the students' achievement to justify the marks given or assessment decisions made.
- Failure to keep students' coursework/portfolios of evidence secure.
- Fraudulent claims for certificates.
- Inappropriate retention of certificates.
- Assisting students in the production of work for assessment, where the support has the potential to influence the outcomes of assessment, for example where the assistance involves College staff producing work for the student.
- Producing falsified witness statements, for example for evidence the student has not generated.
- Allowing evidence, which is known by the staff member not to be the student's own, to be included in a student's assignment/task/portfolio/ coursework.
- Facilitating and allowing impersonation.

- Misusing the conditions for special student requirements, for example where students are permitted support, such as a scribe, this is permissible up to the point where the support has the potential to influence the outcome of the assessment.
- Falsifying records/certificates, for example by alteration, substitution, or by fraud.
- Fraudulent certificate claims, that is claiming for a certificate prior to the student completing all the requirements of assessment or claiming a certificate without having access to the student's assessment evidence/ assessment records.

7. Procedure for preventing Academic Malpractice

During induction, through the student handbook, students will be informed about potential malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice.

To minimise possible malpractice, students will be introduced to the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources and informed that they may be asked to provide evidence that they have interpreted and synthesised appropriate information and acknowledged any sources used.

A declaration from students that the work is their own will be required on material submitted for assessment.

Staff should be informed about potential malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice as part of curriculum development and standardisation events.

8. Procedure for Dealing with Academic Malpractice

Where malpractice is alleged, an investigation will take place in a form commensurate with the nature of the malpractice allegation. The Curriculum Area Manager should be informed and will support all investigations. Incidents will be investigated within 15 working days of the alleged incident.

For student cases of academic malpractice, these are breaches of the Student Code of Conduct and may result in a disciplinary sanction under the College's Student Disciplinary Policy. Please follow the various stages within the Student Disciplinary policy including the investigation process.

For staff cases of academic malpractice, the staff disciplinary procedure should be followed.

The awarding organisation will be notified at the earliest opportunity and where possible, prior to the commencement of the internal investigation. Please note that some awarding organisations will be required to be informed prior to any investigation, please follow your awarding organisations requirements and instruction.

The Curriculum Area Manager, or an appointed nominee will inform the awarding organisation of malpractice using the Joint Council for Qualifications processes. This is:

- Notification of the appropriate awarding organisation immediately of all alleged, suspected, or actual incidents of malpractice. The only exception to this is candidate malpractice discovered in coursework or non-examination assessments before the authentication forms have been signed by the candidate. If staff malpractice is discovered in coursework or non-examination assessments, the head of centre, or a member of staff must inform the awarding organisation immediately, regardless of whether the authentication forms have been signed by the candidate(s).
- Notify the awarding organisation(s) whose qualifications are involved in an incident of malpractice using the appropriate Joint Qualification form.
- Act as the liaison between the awarding organisation and centre staff by forwarding correspondence and evidence and/or provide staff contact information to enable the awarding organisation to do so.
- Speedily and openly make available information as requested by an awarding organisation.
- Enforce any actions or penalties required by the awarding organisation.
- Maintain good communication with the awarding organisation throughout the process and follow-up.

9. Penalties

The penalties for staff relate to the Staff Disciplinary Procedures.

For students, the Student Behaviour and Disciplinary Standard Operating Procedure and Policy applies. Where a first offence or minor offence is agreed a likely outcome is stage one or two of the process with warnings and requirement for resubmission. Where a major or repeated offence occur gross misconduct and the relevant penalties may apply. There should always be reference to the Awarding Organisation assessment principles and requirements.

10. Related Policies (supporting documents)

Student Code of Conduct

Student disciplinary Policy

Staff disciplinary Policy

[Student Code of Conduct can be found here](#)

[Student Disciplinary Policy can be found here](#)

JCQ guidance on Plagiarism in Assessment Plagiarism in Assessments - JCQ Joint Council for Qualifications

Quality Assurance Agency Plagiarism in Higher Education:

<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/about-us/academic-integrity-charter.pdf>

11. Review

This guidance will be reviewed 1 August 2026.