



# ACADEMIC IMPROPRIETY AMPLIFICATION & PROCEDURES

Policy review area	Staff
Lead manager	Head of Quality
Approval level	Academic Board
Start date	March 2023
Review cycle	1 year
Next review	March 2026

## INTRODUCTION

### 1. DEFINITIONS

**CHEATING** includes:

- a. Any form of communication with or copying from any other source (for example, another candidate) during an examination.
- b. Communicating during an examination with any person other than an authorised member of staff.
- c. Introducing any written, printed or other material into an examination (including electronically stored information) other than that specified in the rubric of the examination paper. (Any additional written or printed material allowed to be taken into the examination room must be specified in the rubric of the examination paper in a manner which would be clear to a non-specialist invigilator.)
- d. Gaining access to unauthorised material during or before an assessment (for example a copy of the question paper or mark scheme relevant to a forthcoming examination)
- e. Copying or otherwise collaborating with others in the context the production of assessed individual assignments.
- f. Downloading papers prepared by others to present as the work of the individual being assessed.

**NB** The use of personal electronic dictionaries and of calculators with text storage capabilities is not allowed in examinations. Mobile phones and pagers may not be taken by candidates into any examination room. Any such devices brought into the room must be switched off and handed to an invigilator. Breaches of this rule will be treated in the same way as attempts to cheat.

**PLAGIARISM** includes:

- a. the representation of the work, written or otherwise, of any other person, from any source whatsoever, as the candidate's own. Examples of plagiarism are as follows:
- b. the verbatim (word-for-word) copying of another person's work without clear identification and acknowledgement,
- c. the close paraphrasing of another person's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without clear identification and acknowledgement,
- d. unidentified and unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another person's work,
- e. deliberate and detailed presentation of another person's ideas as one's own,
- f. the use of another works structure and/or bibliography.

**POOR SCHOLARSHIP** arises when inadequate or occasional minor slips in referencing of sources occur affecting less than 5% of the text submitted.

**COLLUSION** includes the conscious collaboration, without official approval, between two or more students in the preparation and production of work, which is finally submitted by each in an identical or substantially similar form and/ r is represented by each to be the product of his or her individual efforts. Collusion also occurs where there is unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation or production of work which is then submitted as the student's own work.

### 2. PROCEDURES

No assessed work is accepted without an attached soft copy so that electronic scanning can be routinely applied to check for cases of plagiarism or poor scholarship. Poor scholarship should be reflected in the assessed grade but is not a disciplinary issue. In the cases of suspected plagiarism of coursework assignments, either written or oral, the subject tutor will prepare a report, to include the bases for his or her suspicions and any relevant material as evidence, for the Academic Lead.

In the case of breaches of examination regulations, the Chief Invigilator will prepare a report on the nature of the breach (again with any relevant supporting material) and submit it to the Academic Lead. This report should include any action already taken (for example, whether the student was told to leave the examination room).

The Academic Lead, after studying the subject tutor's or Chief Invigilator's report, will interview the student suspected of cheating. If the student admits the offence or attempt, a record of the interview is placed on his/her file and a penalty imposed, as indicated below. The student is entitled to be accompanied by a fellow student of their choice during the interview.

If a breach of examination regulations is involved, the Academic Lead will report the incident at the exam board and invite comments before making a final decision as to penalty. The decision will then be reported to the relevant accreditation body.

If the student denies any attempt to cheat or that he or she had breached examination regulations, he or she will be requested to put the grounds for denying the accusation in writing to the Academic Lead will attach these grounds to their report on the ground for the allegation and an account of his interview with the student to the next Exam board, at which a decision will be made as to culpability, the seriousness of the breach and the nature of the penalty to be imposed on the student.

The Academic Lead will inform the student, in writing, of the decision within seven days of the exam board; the decision will be recorded in the exam board minutes and brought to the attention of the External Examiner prior to the relevant accreditation panel review meeting.

The student must be informed of his or her right to invoke the Appeals Procedure of the College and if necessary, of accreditation board. Appeals may be made against the decision itself and the penalty applied.

### **3 PENALTIES to be applied:**

Two basic principles underlie the penalties imposed if an allegation of academic impropriety is upheld. The first is that the penalty needs to reflect the perceived seriousness of the offence (and intention may be considered when a penalty is imposed) and the second that any penalty needs to be more serious than follows as consequences of not submitting a piece of work or not turning up for an examination.

In cases of minor or unintentional breaches of regulations, a caution may be given to the student by the Academic Lead, this caution to be placed on the student's file.

In slightly more serious cases, a reduction in the mark for the unit concerned may be applied but this reduction should not be sufficient to cause the student to fail the unit.

In cases of much more serious breaches, where there was a clear intention to cheat, the Committee could impose a reduction of marks sufficient to cause the student to fail the unit concerned, hence, by

implication, the whole course. Alternatively, it might be deemed more appropriate to impose a reduction on the overall average percentage achieved at the end of the course by up to 10%.

All such penalties, with the Committee's ruling, should be recorded on the student's file. All cases of Plagiarism will be recorded on the students' transcript of results.

In severe cases where the plagiarism extends to the whole or nearly the whole work, that student will be automatically excluded from further participation in any Programmes provided by Acquire Learning College, nor will any references be provided beyond confirming the dates of course attendance.

### **Related Policies**

Use of Assessment Criteria

Assessment Marking

## **Appendix 1**

### **APPEALS PROCEDURE**

#### **Academic appeals and student complaints on academic matters**

The Acquire Learning College Appeals Procedure operates within the principles as laid down within the UK Quality Code for Higher Education, Chapter B10, Managing Higher Education provision with others and specifically enhancing academic quality.

#### **Application**

This procedure for appeals and complaints applies to all current registered students of Acquire Learning College.

#### **Definition**

A 'student' means all such persons as are registered to undertake a period of formal instruction on one or more of the Programmes of study offered by Acquire Learning College including those individuals who may have had their studies suspended or terminated for whatever reason during the academic year in which the termination/ suspension took place.

Once an appeal or complaint has been lodged the person making the appeal/complaint will be regarded as being covered by the procedure until the matter has been resolved or the procedure has completed its final stage.

Normally seven working days may elapse for the conduct of each stage in the internal procedure up to the final stage which will be convened as soon as is reasonably practical. Normally matters will be resolved much sooner than seven days but under exceptional circumstances due to the complexity or seriousness of the complaint or the intervention of holidays or sickness the time limits may be extended.

Nothing in our procedure excludes or replaces the students' statutory rights as may apply at the time.

A student may be accompanied by another student designated by them at all stages in the procedure.

All appeals relating to issues of Plagiarism will commence as at stage three in the formal procedure below.

#### **Responsibilities**

- a. All staff are expected as a matter of course to deal courteously, flexibly and expeditiously within their competence with any informal complaint or appeal raised by a student. All staff are also expected to give the issue proper attention and to investigate the matter commensurate with its complexity and seriousness.
- b. The student is expected to raise any concerns with the appropriate staff member or academic courteously and provide a reasonable time to enable them to respond to the inform complaint/appeal being made.
- c. Once a formal complaint or appeal is lodged the staff conducting the hearing must be supported by another staff member and the student must be reminded of their right under the procedure to have another student accompany them.

- d. All documents relied upon by the parties must be made available except where confidential records concerning third parties not involved in the complaint or appeal would have to be made public.
- e. All staff and students will respect the procedures and endeavour to use them responsibly and fairly.
- f. Acquire Learning College will ensure that any possible disadvantage due to disability or other material factors by either party to the complaint or appeal will be remedied as far as possible to ensure fair process.
- g. All complaints/appeals will be summarized by the staff member involved at each the stage where the matter was either resolved or withdrawn or when the final stage in the procedure is reached.
- h. The Academic Lead (QA) will receive and maintain the reports and summarize all the reports once every calendar year and summary will be published as an attached document supporting an item on the agenda for consideration annually by the Quality Assurance Committee.
- i. The report will include the nature of the complaint/appeal, the time and stages utilized in getting the matter resolved and the outcome. The outcome will clearly state whether the complaint or appeal was upheld, withdrawn or refused and what, if any, actions were taken and by whom to remedy the situation.
- j. The Quality Assurance Manager may make recommendations for improvements in the complaints /appeals procedures or other procedures or processes, policies where the evidence suggests improvements will support the improvement in quality standards and better meet the overall mission and goals of the Acquire Learning College - University Centre Sheffield.

## **Procedural Stages**

### **Stage 1 Informal**

Acquire Learning College will do all it can to ensure all such informal complaints/appeals are dealt with fully with full information and explanation or remedy as is appropriate to the case being provided at the earliest time.

The staff member concerned will record and date the informal complaint/appeal with a summary of the response given to the student.

Unless the nature of the complaint refers to a matter requiring external bodies or individuals all informal complaints or appeals will be dealt with within 7 working days.

### **Stage 2 Formal**

Failure for the matter to be satisfactorily resolved informally then the matter must be placed in writing by the student (or group of students) and submitted to the Head of Quality for all administrative complaints/appeals, or to the appropriate Programme Leader for any academic complaints/appeals.

The staff member concerned will diarize and date the formal complaint/appeal with a summary of the response given to the student.

in the case that the formal complaint or appeal concerns a decision or action taken either by the Office Manager or a Programme Leader the matter will be referred immediately at this stage to the Director of Student Affairs.

Subject to the eventuality that holidays or sickness absenteeism intervene to delay matters Stage two will not take more than 7 working days.

The staff member concerned will record and date the formal complaint/appeal with a summary of the response given to the student. An academic matter may, if appropriate, be referred for 'Chairs action' to the Chair of the competent Programme Board of Study if such action will expedite a satisfactory resolution of the complaint/appeal and is in the interest of fairness.

### **Stage 3**

All administrative and academic complaints or appeals that have failed to be resolved within 7 working days of the commencement of Stage two will be referred to the Student Welfare Manager of Acquire Learning College or in cases where the Student Welfare Manager has already been involved at an earlier stage to the Registrar of Acquire Learning College. All appeals relating to issues of plagiarism will commence as at stage three.

### **Stage 4**

The Manager will normally hear all the stage four appeals and complaints relating to academic and or administrative matters.

### **Stage 5 (Final Stage)**

For any complaints/appeals relating to administration or business policy the Student(s) has a final right of appeal to the Board of Directors whose decision will be final subject to any additional statutory recourse that may be available to the student at the time.

For any complaints that remain unresolved that relate to matters of academic judgment the External Examiner (where appropriate) will be asked to comment on the grounds of the student(s) complaint/appeal. Those comments will be given due consideration by the Exam Board and the decision of the Exam Board will be final, subject only to any external awarding body associated with the programme of studies or additional statutory recourse that may be available to the student at the time.

Acquire Learning College will always fully co-operate with any appropriate external authority hearing once its internal procedures have been completed.