

Fraudulent Applications Procedures

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Fraudulent Applications procedures are in place to ensure that applicants who deliberately attempt to mislead AECC University College or omit important information understand the implications their actions may have.
- 1.2 AECC University College reserves the right to not admit any applicant who has provided either fraudulent or plagiarised information and can withdraw applications where deemed appropriate.
- 1.3 AECC University College may impose immediate permanent exclusion from the University College with no eligibility for re-admittance to the University College on any course or degree programme on any student who is found to have gained his/her place on the basis of a fraudulent application.

2. Key Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Admissions Manager is responsible for enforcing the procedures as set out below.
- 2.2 The Academic Registrar is responsible for ultimately deciding on the appropriate course of action when there are cases of suspected fraud/plagiarism.

3. Principles

- 3.1 AECC University College defines Plagiarism and Fraud in the following ways:
 - Plagiarism: The unacknowledged inclusion of material derived from the published or unpublished work of another person, intentionally or unintentionally. Most commonly, this will be from the internet, books or journals.
 - Fraud: The deliberate attempt to deceive the institution into believing information given is true when in fact it is not. It is also the deliberate omission of important information with the aim of misleading the institution. Most commonly this will include false or omitted information about qualifications/work experience that would have an influence on the assessment of an application and its fee status.
- 3.2 The University College reserves the right to ask applicants for further information where there is suspicion/evidence of plagiarism or fraud.
- 3.3 The University College reserves the right to withdraw/cancel any application where it is suspected/proven the information provided is false, or if the applicant refuses to provide the requested information within an agreed timescale.
- 3.4 If discovered after the point of admission, the University College reserves the right to terminate a students' enrolment if it is found that that they deliberately submitted a fraudulent application.
- 3.5 For any applicant whom the University College is unable to verify the qualifications of without reasonable explanation, their application shall be withdrawn immediately. This shall include any deliberate attempts to provide falsified documents.

4. Procedures

4.1 UCAS applications

- 4.1.1 Where the UCAS Copycatch system alerts AECC University College that a personal statement is suspected to be plagiarised, applicants will be contacted immediately and asked to provide an explanation within the next 10 working days if they have not already done so. If this explanation is satisfactory, the application will continue to be assessed in the normal way. Examples of this may be where an applicant has applied in two consecutive cycles but has a slightly different name on each application, triggering an alert or where the personal statement only just meets the Copycatch threshold and contains a number of common phrases/words.
- 4.1.2 If no further explanation is received within the 10-day period, the application will be cancelled.
- 4.1.3 Upon receipt of this information, if it is deemed necessary to refer this case further, the Academic Registrar will decide whether or not the application can continue to be considered or whether it should be rejected. In making this decision, the Academic Registrar will take the following into account;
- Whether any fitness to practice issues are present
 - The extent of the alleged plagiarism
 - The intent of the alleged plagiarism
 - Consistency and fairness of decision-making across previous similar cases of plagiarism
- 4.1.4 If the Academic Registrar decides the application should be cancelled, the applicant will be notified by email and will be informed of the Admissions Complaints and Appeals Policy. A copy of this email will be stored on the applicants' record. The UCAS Verification Team will be informed.

4.2 Direct applications

- 4.2.1 Applications to the Access to HE Diploma and postgraduate programmes are made directly to the University College.
- 4.2.2 Electronic copies of all supporting documents, such as transcripts and degree certificates, are required as part of the direct application process. These are checked by admissions staff for signs of fraud. AECC University College reserves the right to ask applicants to provide paper copies of supporting documents if required.
- 4.2.3 All cases of suspected fraud will be referred to the Academic Registrar
- 4.2.4 It is essential that any case of suspected fraud is investigated promptly to maintain the integrity of the admissions process.
- 4.2.5 Whilst any cases of potential fraud are being investigated, AECC University College will not enter into any forms of correspondence with the applicant
- 4.2.6 The process of investigation may vary according to the nature of the suspected fraud. However, it may include:
- Requesting the applicant provide further information to verify their application
 - Requesting certified copies of supporting documents if not already received
 - Seeking confirmation from a third party, such as an awarding institution to confirm the applicant's grades or attendance
 - Contacting the referee to confirm information provided or to check authenticity of the statement or referee.
- 4.2.7 Following investigation, if parts of the application cannot be verified, the applicant should be informed in writing and given the opportunity to provide further supporting information. The applicant should be given 10 working days to respond to this request.

- 4.2.8 If no response is received by the end of the 10 working-day period, the application will be automatically cancelled and the applicant will be informed of this outcome through email by the Academic Registrar.
- 4.2.9 If a response is received within the 10 working-day period, the Academic Registrar will review the information provided. If the decision is that there is no case to be answered, this will be communicated to the applicant by email and the application will be considered against the standard admissions criteria.
- 4.2.10 Upon completion of the investigation, if there is evidence to suggest that the application contains fraudulent information, the application will be cancelled. The applicant will be informed of this outcome through email by the Academic Registrar.

5. Anti-fraud checks post-registration

- 5.1 AECC University College may, at any time, request to examine the original documents used by a current registered student in support of their application to study at the University College. Such documents may include transcripts, qualification certificates and passports.
- 5.2 If a student is required to present these original documents, they must do so. The student will be given a minimum of five working days to present the documents, and will be informed when and where these should be presented by the Admissions office.
- 5.3 The receiving office may retain the documents for up to five working days in order to conduct anti-fraud checks. The office will provide the student with a receipt indicating which original documents have been provided.
- 5.4 Anti-fraud checks of original documents will be carried out by members of the Admissions office.

6. Links to other documents

Admissions Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure

Certifying Documents Procedure

AECC University College Fitness to Study Policy

AECC University College Fitness to Practice Policy

Version:	1.0
Approved by:	
Originator/Author	Admissions Manager
Policy Owner	Admissions Manager
Reference/ source	University of Bristol, University of Edinburgh, UCAS
Date approved	
Effective from	1 September 2017
Review date	Spring 2018
Target	Applicants and staff assessing applications
Policy location	SIP, Moodle, AECC University College website