

Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure

1. Scope and Purpose

- 1.1 This Policy uses the term 'student' or 'students' throughout. This refers to all learners at the university, including undergraduate and postgraduate students and apprentices. Where separate arrangements or rules apply, the target group or groups are named in the paragraph.
- 1.2 Educational Partnership arrangements will refer to the principles of this policy and any adaptations to procedure will be agreed and defined within the Operations Manual and contract.
- 1.3 AECC University College is committed to academic integrity, as demonstrated by signing the Academic Integrity Charter for UK Higher Education. In the interests of ensuring the maintenance of academic and professional standards the University College will ensure that all suspected cases of academic misconduct are taken seriously and investigated thoroughly in line with this policy. We are committed to developing high standards of academic and professional practice among our students and to safeguarding the standards of our academic awards. We expect our students to act with professionalism, and this includes acting with, and promoting, honesty and academic integrity.
- 1.4 This document sets out the AECC University College's principles relating to academic integrity and good academic practice, defines academic misconduct, and outlines arrangements the University College applies to the process of suspected and actual academic misconduct, including the penalties which may be applied. It applies to:
 - all current students on AECC University College awards, including awards delivered under educational partnerships, unless alternative arrangements are specified in the Memorandum of Agreement governing that partnership.
 - postgraduate research students studying under our partnership with Solent University.
 - Apprentices working towards their underpinning degree and their apprenticeship award
- 1.5 This Policy is part of the Student Conduct Policy Framework. Students enrolled on courses leading to professional registration are subject to the University College's standard policy and procedures in relation to academic assessment/progress and conduct, in addition to Fitness to Practise procedures. Students who have been found to have committed academic misconduct or to have broken conduct rules, which may have implications in respect of fitness to practise, will be referred for consideration under the Fitness to Practise Policy.
- 1.6 The University College is committed to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals regardless of gender, age, disability, colour, race, ethnic or national origin, socio-economic group, sexual orientation, marital status, family responsibilities, religious or political beliefs.
- 1.7 Where a student or staff member working with this policy has specific protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010, all endeavours will be made to ensure that information is available in appropriate formats and reasonable adjustments are made to the proceedings and facilities to accommodate their needs. If students or staff require this document in a different format or require any other adjustments to be made in connection with any investigation under this policy, they should contact Registry.
- 1.8 The Academic Misconduct Policy is an internal procedure and is not a legal process. AECC University College does not normally use legal professionals in the handling of cases, and therefore it is not expected that students would be required to do so either. As such the engagement of legal professionals by students in relation to academic misconduct is normally not permitted, and would be allowed only in exceptional circumstances, in discussion with the Academic Registrar and the Academic Misconduct Panel Chair.
- 1.9 Where academic misconduct is being investigated, the Assessment Board should not come to a decision on the student's result until the Academic Misconduct Procedure, and any subsequent investigations have been completed.
- 1.10 Apprentices must be made aware in writing that invoking the Academic Misconduct Policy will result in a notification to their employer, on a specific date. This is to allow the apprentice to make their employer

aware prior to the official notification. The apprentice's employer will also be formally notified about the outcome of this process,

- 1.11 The standard of proof will normally be based on the balance of probability that in light of the evidence presented it is more likely that academic misconduct did take place.

2. Use of Turnitin

- 2.1 To promote good academic practice, prevent plagiarism, and protect the intellectual property of both the University College and its students, written coursework is normally submitted through Turnitin, via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), in accordance with the Electronic Management of Assessment and Use of Turnitin policy.
- 2.2 Identifying academic misconduct is a matter of academic judgement, based on appropriate evidence, of which a Turnitin originality report may form a part. Turnitin is a useful tool but is not a substitute for promoting good academic practice, and the % similarity score is not an absolute identifier of academic misconduct.

3. Key Responsibilities and delegated authority

- 3.1 Responsibility for the management and implementation of this policy lies with the Academic Registrar.
- 3.2 All staff and students, as part of the AECC University College community, are responsible for working with academic integrity and avoiding academic misconduct, to maintain the academic standards of our awards and the quality of the education and student experience we provide.
- 3.3 The University College will ensure that at appropriate points in their studies (for example, at induction) students are provided with opportunities to develop their understanding of academic integrity and how to avoid academic misconduct, The University College will additionally ensure that mechanisms are in place to detect and thereby discourage, academic misconduct (for example by using Turnitin as a submission tool)
- 3.4 Students are responsible for :
 - understanding and achieving academic integrity and good academic practice.
 - familiarising themselves with this Policy and acting in accordance with it; In the event of an allegation of misconduct, ignorance of the requirements of the policy will not be accepted as an excuse for misconduct or a justification for mitigation of penalties.
 - seeking further advice or assistance if they have any doubts as to what they need to do to work within the principles and practices of academic integrity and avoid academic misconduct
 - making sure they keep their work secure and take measures to ensure their work is always protected. Failure to secure work, thus providing opportunities for another student to gain access to it, resulting in it being used (even if this is without their explicit consent), may be regarded as academic misconduct.
- 3.5 Students are responsible for their own work and academic conduct, respecting the rights of other scholars (which includes appropriate acknowledgement and referencing, avoiding plagiarism), following applicable professional and ethical conventions and requirements, supporting other students in their efforts to behave with academic integrity; and avoiding actions which seek to give them an unfair advantage over others.
- 3.6 Students who fail to follow these principles are being dishonest not only to those who later see their results, to those who mark their work, and to their peers who have worked hard to obtain their results without deception, but also to themselves, as they are not presenting a true reflection of their knowledge and abilities. Maintaining fair and honest conduct is an essential requirement of the system for assessing student learning.
- 3.7 If students are aware that other students have submitted work that is not genuine, they should report this via reporting@aecc.ac.uk. Anonymous allegations cannot be accepted. Students who do make reports will be treated in the utmost confidence and will only be asked to assist in the University College's investigations by providing information where required i.e. the reporting student's identity would be undisclosed unless the reporting student agreed otherwise.. Students will not be penalised for bringing such matters to the University College's attention, unless this is done with malicious intentions.
- 3.8 Unit Leaders are responsible for reminding students about the principles of academic integrity and the need to avoid academic misconduct when providing them with information about forthcoming

assessments, and for highlighting to them the learning opportunities available relating to improving academic practice.

- 3.9 Markers/assessors (for coursework or practical assessments) are responsible for identifying potential cases of academic misconduct, ensuring these are taken seriously and investigating in line with the requirements of this policy
- 3.10 Exam invigilators and end-point assessment independent assessors are responsible for ensuring that breaches of examination rules are identified and reported appropriately and act in accordance with the Examination Rules (appendix 2).
- 3.11 Academic misconduct is investigated and recorded by Academic Schools and the Academic Misconduct Panel.
- 3.12 The relevant Assessment Board confirms the outcome of the investigation and uses it in its determination of the student's results in accordance with the assessment regulations.
- 3.13 Under this policy and associated procedures any University College role or officeholder or officer of the Students' Union may act through their appointed nominee.

4. **Definitions**

Academic Misconduct

- 4.1 The University College has adopted as its definition of academic misconduct that is used by the Office of the independent Adjudicator (Office of the Independent Adjudicator, Good Practice Framework: Disciplinary procedures)¹

Any action by a student which gives or has the potential to give an unfair advantage in an examination or assessment, or might assist someone else to gain an unfair advantage, or any activity likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research."

The above definition includes assessment of practice and assessment in practice.

- 4.2 A non-exhaustive list of examples of behaviours or actions which may constitute academic misconduct is available as **appendix 1**. This includes misconduct during time-constrained assessments eg examinations and practical assessments, as specified in the Examination Rules (**appendix 2**).
- 4.3 It is misconduct to assist another student to do any of these things.
- 4.4 All academic misconduct is serious and will be treated accordingly. However, where misconduct is found to be repeated, or compounded by deception, or otherwise aggravated, a more stringent penalty will be imposed.

Poor Academic Practice

- 4.5 Poor academic practice can be defined as a lack of knowledge, understanding and practice of the skills of good academic writing.
- 4.6 Such poor practice is more likely when students are in the early years of their studies (level 3 and 4) or without recent experience of higher education in the UK. Poor academic practice might encompass, for example, errors in referencing, where references are provided but not using the correct format. Academic failings of this kind should be addressed, and appropriately penalised, through the application of assessment criteria. Written feedback should indicate clearly the shortcomings and ways in which the student should address them.
- 4.7 Advice about academic writing and study skills is available to students:
 - from personal tutors, Unit and Course Leaders,
 - from Library and Learning Services staff -
 - through specialist study skills assistance available from Student Services and online.

Students should also be referred to the Student Handbook.

¹ <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/2045/good-practice-framework-disciplinary-procedures-section.pdf>

5. **Academic misconduct procedure:**

- 5.1 All direct contact with a student under suspicion of academic misconduct shall be formal, involving more than one member of the teaching staff in any face-to-face discussion with the student. Written records shall be kept of the key points and conclusions of meetings. Copies of all correspondence and other relevant documentation must be kept on file. The mark and the work should not be released to the student until the suspected academic misconduct has been investigated and this procedure completed.

School-level investigation

- 5.2 Where academic misconduct is suspected the person identifying the suspected misconduct and the Course Leader shall meet to consider the case promptly, and within 3 working days. If the Course Leader was responsible for identifying the alleged misconduct, they should nominate an appropriate senior member of academic staff from within the School to take part in the investigation.
- 5.3 The Course Leader will be responsible for recording the outcome of the meeting/investigation, using the relevant template.
- 5.4 Evidence considered at the School-level meeting should be as comprehensive as possible. Suspected academic misconduct may have become known through a variety of means. Where the suspected misconduct relates to plagiarism, the evidence presented should never be solely based on a Turnitin originality report (see section 2).
- 5.5 Where academic misconduct is alleged or suspected, a student may not use, as a defence, the failure of any member of academic staff to detect academic misconduct at an earlier point in time in their studies. Neither may an apprentice cite the lack of detection of evidence of similar misconduct in their workplace.

Academic integrity viva

- 5.6 The University College may use academic integrity vivas as part of its processes for detecting and investigating cases of academic misconduct.
- 5.7 In cases where it is difficult to document the evidence of academic misconduct (such as when a student is suspected of not having produced the work themselves – for example suspicions of contract cheating or collusion), the Course Leader may convene a Viva examination to determine whether there is sufficient evidence of academic misconduct to proceed with the allegation.
- 5.8 For the avoidance of doubt, vivas must only be used in the circumstances set out in para 5.7 above – the purpose is not to viva students randomly to check that their work is their own.
- 5.9 The purpose of the academic integrity viva is to test the student's knowledge of the work they have submitted and provide them with the opportunity to demonstrate that the work they have submitted is their own, in advance of any academic misconduct proceedings taking place. The student should be encouraged to bring with them any evidence that will help them demonstrate that the work is their own, such as notes, drafts, etc.
- 5.10 The academic integrity viva will be conducted by the Course Leader and a senior member of academic staff.
- 5.11 The student may be accompanied by a friend or representative; this is normally another enrolled student of the University College or Students' Union representative. Students are encouraged to make use of this provision. The friend or representative may not however respond to questions on behalf of the student, unless this has specifically been agreed in advance as a reasonable adjustment (see para 1.5)
- 5.12 Students should be given three calendar days' notice of the requirement to attend, and should be provided with a specific date, time and location. Vivas may take place face to face or virtually.
- 5.13 If the student declines or does not attend without providing exceptional reasons with supporting evidence, the Course Leader will determine whether to proceed with the allegation in their absence.
- 5.14 In the viva the Course Leader will act as Chair, confirm the purpose of the meeting and invite those present to introduce themselves. Questions can be posed by either the Course Leader or the staff member.
- 5.15 The questions used in the viva should encourage the student to offer helpful clarification and elaboration of their work, to demonstrate understanding and authorship. This is a matter of academic judgement and the questions asked will reflect the nature of the subject, and the assessment. The student should be

given the opportunity to demonstrate that the work is their own, including the opportunity to present any evidence which they have brought with them.

- 5.16 Normally the Course Leader will be responsible for preparing a report on the viva recording their conclusions on the student's knowledge of the work which they have submitted and the reasons for this assessment, based on their academic judgement. However, should the Course Leader consider that a notetaker is needed to assist with this process they should contact Registry.
- 5.17 The report from the viva should be presented to the School level meeting (see paras 5.2- 5.4 above) normally within five working days of the date of the academic integrity viva

Outcomes of School level meeting

- 5.18 The School level meeting may find that:

Outcome	Action
a) There is no case to answer;	<p>All documentation relating to the case must be destroyed within 5 working days. Notes relating to the alleged misconduct must not be produced. The Course Leader should advise the Academic Registrar that there has been an investigation with a 'no case to answer' outcome. In order to maintain an audit trail, the Academic Registrar will retain a record of the number of 'no cases to answer' in each academic year (course, student level type of misconduct and what part of the process the alleged misconduct reached i.e. Investigative Panel or Academic Misconduct Panel). Specific student details will not be included.</p> <p>The student's work should be marked as normal.</p> <p>If a viva has taken place the Course Leader, as Chair, should inform the student that this is the case and that no further action will be taken.</p>
b) There is no case to answer but the student may have made small mistakes in their work	<p>The student should be informed of this in writing by the Course Leader and be invited to discuss this with an appropriate member of academic staff at the earliest possible opportunity. The student should be given appropriate advice as to how to prevent a recurrence of these mistakes. A note that this has occurred should be given to the student within 5 working days of the meeting and a copy provided to the Course Administrator for the student file. In such cases, no specific penalty will be applied. The overall mark awarded will consider normal assessment criteria</p>
<p>c) There is evidence to demonstrate that a first offence of academic misconduct of a minor nature has occurred:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor referencing • Incorrect (or an absence of) attribution for copied work inserted in an assignment • Paraphrasing without adequate attribution <p>When an academic integrity viva has taken place the outcome of the viva will form part of the evidence considered by the School level meeting</p>	<p>The School level meeting may impose a penalty as follows:</p> <p>Award a mark appropriate to the work submitted (which may include a mark of zero) that excludes credit for any words /ideas etc of other individuals that the student has presented as their own through failure to provide appropriate acknowledgement.</p> <p>Issue a formal written warning outlining the misconduct and giving a warning not to repeat the action/ behaviour.</p> <p>The Course Leader will advise the Academic Registrar of the outcome using the Academic Misconduct School level meeting outcomes form. The Academic Registrar will inform the student of this within 5 working days.</p> <p>The student will be advised in this letter that if they wish to dispute the penalty they have the right to request that the case be referred to the Academic Misconduct Panel for consideration. The student must also be informed that advice and guidance can be obtained from the Students' Union.</p> <p>The student should sign and return the Academic Misconduct School level meeting outcomes form to confirm that they understand the decision and either: accept the penalty applied, or</p>

Outcome	Action
	<p>request that the case be referred to the Academic Misconduct Panel for consideration.</p> <p>The Academic Registrar will then either issue the warning or arrange for the Academic Misconduct Panel to be convened.</p> <p>For any penalty lower than withdrawal, the School-level meeting is encouraged to incorporate an educational element relating to academic integrity' – for example asking the student to write a reflective piece of work on academic integrity to demonstrate their learning</p>
<p>d) There is evidence to indicate that academic misconduct of a more extensive or serious nature, or that is a second or more) offence, may have occurred.</p>	<p>Where the School level meeting concludes that there is evidence to indicate that academic misconduct of a more serious nature, or that is a second or more) offence may have occurred, the Course Leader should use the standard investigations template to record the outcome, and forward this to the Academic Registrar.</p> <p>The student will be informed of this in writing by the Academic Registrar within 5 working days, and the matter submitted to the Academic Misconduct Panel for consideration. The student must also be informed that advice and guidance can be obtained from the Students' Union.</p> <p>When an academic integrity viva has taken place the outcome of the viva will form part of the evidence to be submitted for consideration by the Academic Misconduct panel</p>

- 5.19 Students enrolled on courses leading to professional registration who have been found to have committed academic misconduct, and a formal written warning issued, will be referred for consideration under the Fitness to Practise Policy. Where the Panel considers that misconduct that does not warrant a formal written warning has implications on the student's fitness to practise, the matter can also be referred to fitness to practise.

Academic Misconduct Panel

- 5.20 The Academic Misconduct Panel will be convened by the Academic Registrar. Normally a Panel will be convened within 20 working days of the outcome of the School investigation and the student will be given a minimum of 10 working days' notice before the meeting of the Panel except where they have agreed in writing that shorter notice is acceptable.
- 5.21 The Academic Misconduct Panel will normally consist of:
- the Head of School (that the accused student is not studying in) (Chair);
 - an independent senior member of the academic staff of the University College not involved in the initial investigation of the case;
 - a representative of the Students' Union Executive.

The Academic Registrar will act as Secretary but is not a decision-making member of the Panel.

The role of the student member is to act as a full member of the panel in determining the matter under consideration and not to act as an advocate for the student suspected of the academic misconduct.

- 5.22 Where the Chair of the Panel and/or the Academic Registrar consider that the Panel would benefit from input from an expert to deal with a question of fact or special difficulty (for example in relation to academic misconduct in a research degree thesis), such an expert may provide a written report in advance of the panel and, where appropriate, may be invited to the panel to provide expert evidence and advice to the Panel. Such expertise may be sought from inside or outside the University College as most appropriate.
- 5.23 For students enrolled on postgraduate research degrees, in the event of an allegation which the Academic Registrar, in consultation with the Chair and the University College Director of Studies considers to be serious, the Panel may include a representative from the Validating University.
- 5.24 The student will be informed in writing of the nature of the allegations and be provided with the evidence to be considered at least 5 working days before the meeting of the Panel. The student will also be advised of the names of the Panel members and will be asked to indicate if they have any legitimate

concerns that any member of the Panel might not be impartial towards them, providing supporting evidence. Should the Academic Registrar accept that the student's concerns are legitimate the Panel member(s) will be replaced. This may require the Panel to be re-scheduled.

The student should be encouraged to seek advice from the Students' Union as soon as possible.

- 5.25 Apprentices are encouraged to discuss the process and outcomes with their employer.
- 5.26 The student will be given an opportunity to provide a written explanation, and this will be provided to the Panel.
- 5.27 The student should be encouraged to be open and honest and should be informed that the formal procedure will be reduced in length and complexity if the facts are known and agreed at an early stage. Where a student admits to the suspected academic misconduct before the meeting, the meeting should still go ahead but the formal procedure should be reduced in length and complexity.
- 5.28 At the meeting of the Academic Misconduct Panel the student may be accompanied by a friend or representative (not acting in a legal capacity). This is normally another enrolled student of the University College or Students' Union representative. Students are encouraged to make use of this provision. For an apprentice this may also be their employer or their employer's representative.
- 5.29 If, for exceptional reasons (e.g. having returned to their home overseas or left the University College) the student is unable to attend the meeting of the Panel, the student may choose to be represented by a member of the SU Executive or other current student willing to act in this capacity. In this case the Panel will proceed as normal basing its considerations on the evidence available.
- 5.30 Where a medical practitioner has advised that the student's state of health makes attendance impossible or inadvisable, the case will not be considered formally until the student is deemed fit by their medical adviser to appear before the Panel.
- 5.31 If a student or the AECC University College representative fails to attend a meeting of the Panel without notifying the Panel in advance, the meeting will proceed as normal.
- 5.32 Normally the Chair or Convener of the School Meeting will attend to set out evidence relating to the alleged misconduct.
- 5.33 In cases where members of an Academic Misconduct Panel learn that a student was previously involved in a suspected case where the outcome was 'no case to answer', this must not be considered during the hearing and should not prejudice the decision of the Panel for the current case.

Academic Misconduct Panel agenda and proceedings

- 5.34 The Academic Misconduct Panel shall determine whether academic misconduct has been committed. If it is determined that academic misconduct has been committed the Academic Misconduct Panel will judge the seriousness of the misconduct, and decide what penalty should be applied, as appropriate to the case.
- 5.35 For cases involving a group of students, the Panel must decide on the most appropriate way to deal with the students suspected, including:
- the conduct of the hearing in terms of meeting with individuals or a group of students and the rationale for this clearly recorded in the minutes.
 - the potential outcome(s) could affect the whole group or individuals. However, the impact could vary.
- 5.36 The Agenda for a meeting of the Academic Misconduct Panel shall be as follows:
- i) Introduction of those present
 - ii) Course Leader presentation (normally no more than 10 minutes)
 - iii) Opportunity for the Academic Misconduct Panel to question the University College representative
 - iv) Opportunity for the student to question, through the Chair, the Course Leader
 - v) Student and/or representative presentation (normally no more than 10 minutes)
 - vi) Opportunity for the Academic Misconduct Panel to question the student
 - vii) Opportunity for the University College representative to question, through the Chair, the student
 - viii) Course Leader summing up (5 minutes). New evidence is not admissible at this stage

ix) Student and/or representative summing up (5 minutes). New evidence is not admissible at this stage. The agenda may be varied if appropriate and may be preceded by a private meeting of the Panel.

5.37 The student, their representative if present, and the Course Leader will then withdraw while the Academic Misconduct Panel considers the evidence privately.

5.38 Either party may call witnesses. Should witnesses be called they will attend only to present their evidence and to answer any questions that the Panel or the other party may put to them. Once their evidence has been heard and there are no more questions, witnesses will be required to withdraw.

5.39 In exceptional circumstances, the Panel may request additional evidence if it is considered that such evidence is likely to significantly affect the outcome. If all parties, including the student, agree that the Panel members may consider this evidence and reach a decision without further need for the student or Course Leader to have an opportunity to respond to the additional evidence, then all parties will be allowed to depart, and the decision will be communicated to all parties in writing. Otherwise the Academic Misconduct Panel may decide that the meeting would need to be adjourned to give all parties the opportunity to have time to prepare and respond to the new evidence.

5.40 While the Academic Misconduct Panel is considering the evidence, the student and the Course Leader must be available and may be required to provide further information or clarification to the Panel. If the Panel needs further information or clarification, both parties shall be recalled to the hearing.

5.41 The decision shall be confirmed in writing to both parties within **5 working days**.

6. Penalties

6.1 In considering which penalty to impose, the Academic Misconduct Panel shall take into consideration the seriousness of the misconduct. Relevant precedents should also be considered. For example, first or admitted misconduct would normally be treated more leniently than second or denied misconduct. Repeated misconduct, or those aggravated or compounded by lying or deception, will normally attract more stringent penalties.

6.2 Neither exceptional personal circumstances nor the impact of a decision on the student's current work and employment will be considered grounds for excusing academic misconduct. However, a Panel may take such circumstances (with appropriate supporting evidence) into account and use its discretion if the evidence demonstrates that the student's judgement at the time of the alleged misconduct would have been severely impaired due to these circumstances. It is for the Panel to decide if the exceptional personal circumstances are deemed to have severely impaired a student's judgement. Such circumstances may then be considered in relation to the penalty imposed, but not to the decision on whether academic misconduct has occurred.

6.3 The Academic Misconduct Panel shall reach one of the following decisions, based on the standard of proof on the balance of probability, that in light of the evidence presented it is more likely that academic misconduct did take place:

6.4 Where the Panel determines that a penalty is imposed, the level of penalty is a matter of academic judgement for the Panel. Points that may be taken into account in determining the seriousness of the misconduct and appropriateness of a particular penalty may include:

- the student's level of study, their experience in UK HE and the guidance that has been made available to them;
- whether this is a student's first offence (the penalty for a second or subsequent offence will normally be more severe, even if the second offence would normally merit a lower penalty than the first offence on the student's record)
- the impact of the misconduct on the work, linking to the assessment criteria/learning outcomes (for example, a few lines of limited impact on the assessment criteria, to a large proportion which significantly affects attainment of the assessment criteria);
- nature or seriousness of the misconduct (ranging from, for example, incomplete or inconsistent referencing through to using another's work with no attribution, to acts which are clearly fraudulent acts such as using essay mill or deliberately bringing material into an examination room)
- whether the student accepts that they have committed academic misconduct.

- whether the student has evidence of exceptional personal circumstances demonstrating that their student's judgement at the time of the alleged misconduct would have been severely impaired due to these circumstances (see paragraph 6.2).

Penalties may be imposed as set out below:

6.5 Taught degrees (undergraduate and postgraduate)

Decision	Action
That no further action be taken.	The Panel will act in accordance with para 5.18a. above.
That small errors in work have been made	The Panel will act in accordance with para 5.18b above
That academic misconduct has occurred	The Panel will impose a penalty as set out below
	<p>a) Award a mark appropriate to the work submitted (which may include a mark of zero) that excludes credit for any words /ideas etc of other individuals that the student has presented as his or her own through failure to provide appropriate acknowledgement.</p> <p>Issue a formal written warning outlining the misconduct and giving a warning not to repeat the action/ behaviour. The warning will remain on the student file for the duration of their studies, to ensure any repeated behavior is taken into consideration</p>
	<p>b) Mark for the piece of work in question to be capped at the pass mark,</p> <p>Issue a formal written warning outlining the misconduct and giving a warning not to repeat the action/ behaviour. The warning will remain on the student file for the duration of their studies, to ensure any repeated behavior is taken into consideration</p>
	<p>c) A mark of 0% to be recorded for the element of assessment affected by the academic misconduct. The student may be reassessed, but only in accordance with the assessment regulations for the course. The reassessment would be capped at the pass mark.</p> <p>Issue a formal written warning outlining the misconduct and giving a warning not to repeat the action/ behaviour.</p>
	<p>d) A mark of 0% to be recorded for the unit affected by the academic misconduct. The student may be reassessed, but only in accordance with the assessment regulations for the course. The reassessment would be capped at the pass mark.</p> <p>Issue a formal written warning outlining the misconduct and giving a warning not to repeat the action/ behaviour. The warning will remain on the student file for the duration of their studies, to ensure any repeated behavior is taken into considerationr</p>
	<p>e) A mark of 0% to be recorded for the unit affected by the academic offence, including all formal components contributing to the unit.</p> <p>No opportunity for reassessment.</p> <p>and</p> <p>Repeat failed unit: The student may be allowed to repeat the unit, normally using new piece(s) of assessment, but only in accordance with the assessment regulations for that course and if the student's profile permits and all</p>

Decision	Action
	<p>opportunities have not already been exhausted. The mark for the repeated unit, including all formal components, will be capped at the pass mark.</p> <p>Issue a formal written warning outlining the misconduct and giving a warning not to repeat the action/ behaviour. The warning will remain on the student file for the duration of their studies, to ensure any repeated behavior is taken into consideration</p>
	<p>f) Repeat level: The student may repeat the level the following academic year, normally using new pieces of assessment, in accordance with the assessment regulations for the course and if the student's profile permits and all opportunities have not already been exhausted.</p> <p>The student will have all credit stripped from their assessment record for the level and all units within the repeated level will be capped at the pass mark. If the student chooses not to repeat, they will be withdrawn in accordance with Option g.</p> <p>Issue a formal written warning outlining the misconduct and giving a warning not to repeat the action/ behavior. The warning will remain on the student file for the duration of their studies, to ensure any repeated behavior is taken into consideration</p>
	<p>g) Withdrawal: The student may not be reassessed and is withdrawn from the course with immediate effect. The student may be considered for the award of credit at that level in accordance with the assessment regulations for the course. The student may also be eligible for an intermediate award.</p> <p>The student cannot transfer to any course within AECC University College using any credit gained nor may they be re-enrolled into the same course at a later date.</p>
	<p>h) Withdrawal: The student may not be reassessed and is withdrawn from the course with immediate effect.</p> <p>The student will have all credit stripped from their assessment record for the level and previous levels and will leave the University College with no credit for the course</p> <p>The student will not be allowed to re-enrol on the course at a later date or on any other course at the University College</p>

- 6.6 It is recognised that pass/fail assessments cannot necessarily incur the same penalties as set out above and it is the responsibility of the Academic Misconduct Panel in discussion with the Academic Registrar to adapt the penalties as necessary, to determine the appropriate penalty to be applied in these cases.
- 6.7 Reassessment(s) shall only be carried out once the Assessment Board has met to consider the student's overall profile and where the student's overall profile permits the student such a reassessment.
- 6.8 The Panel's decision will be passed to the Assessment Board for confirmation and for inclusion in its recommendations. It may be that the student has also failed assessed work other than that affected by the academic misconduct. If this is the case the Board will include all units failed as a result of the Panel's decision in its consideration of the student's overall performance according to the assessment regulations in force.
- 6.9 Students enrolled on courses leading to professional registration who have been found to have committed academic misconduct, and a formal written warning issued, will be referred for consideration under the Fitness to Practise Policy. Where the Panel considers that misconduct does not warrant a formal written

warning has implications on the student's fitness to practise, the matter can be referred to fitness to practise panel.

6.10 The University College will be mindful of its obligations under relevant data protection regulations and the Equality Act 2010 in relation to any information shared about the case. All those involved will be reminded of the confidentiality associated with the procedures. Information associated with the case will be disclosed to as few people as possible, consistent with effective investigation.

7. Allegations of academic misconduct for postgraduate research students ²

7.1 Where allegations of academic misconduct are raised concerning the work of a research student prior to the examination process (this may be work identified in the course of supervision or in consideration of Milestone or annual monitoring reports), in the first instance the supervisory team should work to address whether the issue is poor academic practice or academic misconduct.

7.2 Where poor academic practice is identified the postgraduate research student should be informed of this in writing by their Director of Studies and be invited to discuss this with a member of their supervisory team at the earliest possible opportunity. The student should be given appropriate advice as to how to prevent a recurrence of these mistakes. A note that this has occurred should be given to the student within 5 working days of the meeting and a copy provided to AECC University College Registry for the student file.

7.3 If it is determined that there is evidence academic misconduct may have occurred, then the case should be referred to an Academic Misconduct Panel in accordance with this policy.

7.4 Where allegations of academic misconduct are raised during the examination process the examination process will be put on hold while the allegations are investigated. An Academic Misconduct Panel will be held in accordance with this policy.

7.5 This will be the case even if the allegations are raised on the day of the oral examination. The Academic Misconduct Panel should be convened as quickly as possible so as not to delay unnecessarily the examination process.

7.6 Penalties may be imposed as set out below:

Postgraduate Research degrees

Stage of offence	Action
Offence in annual monitoring report (review of progress), or transfer report	a) There is no case to answer; action taken as set out in 5.18a
	b) There is no case to answer but the student may have made small mistakes in their work Action as set out in 5.18b
	c) Formal warning issued and student required to amend errors. The warning will remain on the student file for the duration of their studies, to ensure any repeated behavior is taken into consideration
	d) Upgrade work to be rewritten and resubmitted, for reconsideration
	e) Student not permitted to upgrade to PhD, but may continue for MPhil
	f) Withdrawal: The student may not be assessed/reassessed and is withdrawn from the course with immediate effect.
Offence in submitted thesis/oral examination	g) There is no case to answer; action taken as set out in 5.18a

² Postgraduate research degrees are validated by Solent University and are governed by the Partnership Handbook and approved Research Degree Regulations approved at validation and modified from time to time with the approval of Solent University

Stage of offence	Action
	h) Thesis to be revised and resubmitted, without second examination (viva).
	i) Thesis to be revised and resubmitted for examination (viva).
	j) Lower level award is recommended (i.e. MPhil rather than PhD). The student will still be required to address plagiarism/misconduct in the submission.
	k) Withdrawal: The student may not be assessed/reassessed and is withdrawn from the course with immediate effect.

7.7 For any penalty lower than withdrawal, Panels are encouraged to incorporate an educational element relating to academic integrity' – for example asking the student to write a reflective piece of work on academic integrity to demonstrate their learning. This applies for students on either taught or research

8. Academic misconduct coming to light after the meeting of the Assessment Board

8.1 Evidence which comes to light after the recommendation of the Assessment Board shall be considered initially and promptly under the process set out in Section 4 (Preliminary Consideration) of this Procedure.

8.2 At the conclusion of the process, External Examiners should be informed of any decision that materially affects the original recommendation of the Assessment Board.

9. Appeals – undergraduate and taught postgraduate students

9.1 The decision of the Academic Misconduct Panel is considered to be one of academic judgement against which students may not appeal. However, appeals may be lodged on the grounds of:

- **Procedural irregularity:** that there were irregularities in the academic misconduct process which are of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt whether the same decision would have been reached had they not occurred;
- **New evidence:** that relevant new evidence can be presented which the student was unable, for compelling reasons, to provide earlier in the process.
NB: Exceptional personal circumstances are not considered as grounds for appeal;
- **Prejudice or Bias** that there is **evidence** of prejudice or bias on the part of the person or persons conducting the investigation and/or hearing.

9.2 Students who wish to appeal on these grounds must provide, in writing, full details of their case (with supporting evidence) to the Academic Registrar within 10 working days of the official notification of the outcome of the Academic Misconduct Panel. Where the appeal is based on the presentation of fresh evidence, the student should forward it or a summary of it, including explaining why this could not have been provided earlier in the process

9.3 The Academic Registrar will consider the information submitted. If there appears to be valid grounds for the appeal, they will not overturn the decision of the Academic Misconduct Panel but may refer the misconduct for a rehearing. Should a rehearing be required, a new Panel will be convened with a membership not including any of those on the original Panel. Notification that the matter will be considered by a new Panel will be sent to the student within 5 working days, and the establishment of the Panel will follow the process outlined in paras 5.19ff.

9.4 The Academic Registrar will send the student a copy of the Completion of Procedures letter if a student has appealed and exhausted all internal AECC University College procedures, within 5 working days.

10. Appeals - postgraduate research students

10.1 The decision of the Academic Misconduct Panel is considered to be one of academic judgement against which students may not appeal. However students enrolled on research degree courses validated by Solent University will have the right to appeal to Solent University in accordance with the approved research degree regulations.

10.2 Students enrolled on research degree courses validated by Solent University will have the right of a further appeal to Solent University in accordance with the approved research degree regulations.

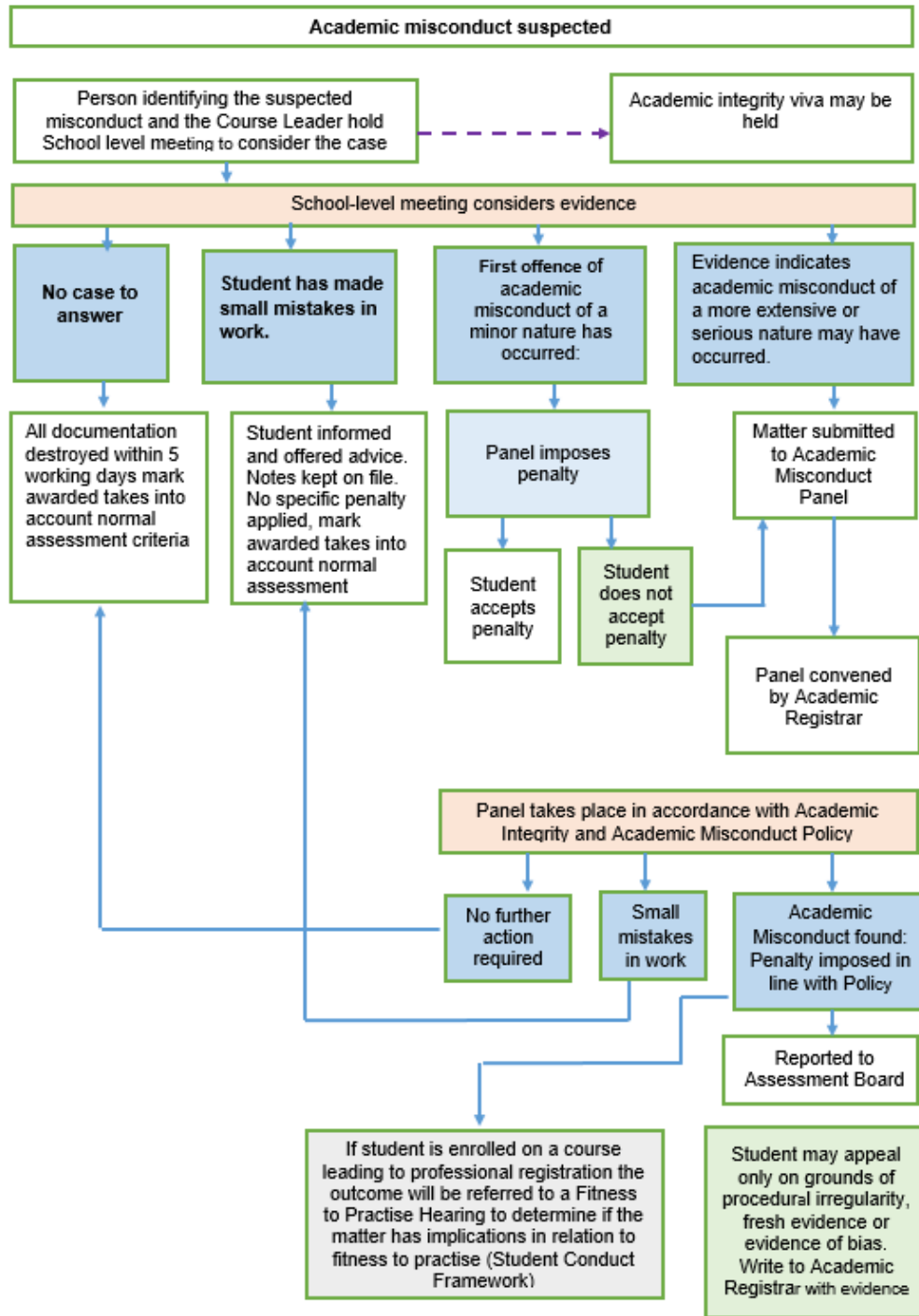
11. Monitoring and review of academic misconduct cases taken to Academic Misconduct Panel

- 11.1 The Academic Registrar will prepare an annual review of academic misconduct across all awards, to be considered by Academic Standards and Quality Committee, with a view to identifying any trends and whether there is a need to revise any policy or practices. This report will not refer to individuals by name.
- 11.2 AECC University College seeks to develop a body of case-law, which will provide guidance and precedents that may be used by Academic Misconduct Panels and Assessment Boards, in pursuit of consistent and equitable practice. To this end, the minutes of each meeting of an Academic Misconduct Panel will be retained by the University College's Academic Registry. These records must be anonymous.

12. Support for students affected by contract cheating

- 12.1 The Skills and Post-16 Education Bill (28 April 2022) made it illegal to provide contract cheating services (essay mills) for financial gain and/or to advertise to provide or arrange for another person to provide a cheating service. Anyone considering breaching this academic integrity policy to use such a service should therefore be aware that they would be engaging with a body or person that is operating outside the law.
- 12.2 Students who have used contract cheating services may subsequently find themselves the subject of extortion or blackmail (with the company or individual indicating that unless the student meets a financial demand they will inform the University College or other body that cheating has occurred). Such blackmail may continue indefinitely. The University College does not wish to see any student pressured in this way, and any student in this situation is advised to seek support from either the ASU or Student Services as soon as possible. Although speaking up about the threat will trigger an investigation under this policy, and an academic penalty is likely to be applied, students are encouraged to recognise that this is preferable to the longer-term stress and financial anxiety that dealing with the situation are likely to cause.

13. Academic misconduct process flowchart – taught awards



Version:	1.1
Approved by:	Academic Board
Originator/Author	Assistant Registrar (Quality Assurance)
Policy Owner	Academic Registrar
Reference source:	QAA Academic integrity resources (various) Examples from other institutions used as source material (in particular Swansea University, University of Wales Trinity St David's, Goldsmiths, University of London, Harper Adams University, York St John University)
Date approved:	29 August 2023
Effective from:	September 2023 (AY 2023-24)
Review date:	Spring 2025
Target:	All Staff, All students and apprentices
Policy location:	VLE, SIP, public website
Equality impact	No direct impact. There is provision for reasonable adjustments to be made where required. Monitoring will be undertaken to assess whether there is any differential impact in the handling of

Amendments	
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Appendix 1: Behaviour or actions which may constitute academic misconduct:

The following **non-exhaustive list** gives examples of behaviour or actions which may constitute academic misconduct:

- **Bribery:** paying or offering inducements to another person to obtain or to attempt to obtain an unfair advantage.
- **Cheating:** failing to comply with the rules or otherwise seeking to gain unfair advantage in examinations or tests, such as:
 - obtaining an advance copy of an 'unseen' written examination paper;
 - copying or communicating;
 - using notes or other prompts;
 - removing items of stationery or other materials from the examination room without permission or contrary to instructions;
 - use of smart devices in examination rooms contrary to instructions;
 - asking other students about questions asked in practical/viva examinations during the examination period; accepting information from other students about questions asked in practical/viva examinations during the examination period; offering other students' information about questions asked in practical/viva examinations during the examination period.
- **Collusion:** working together with other students – without official approval – and submitting the resulting work as the work of a single student.
- **Contract cheating:** Contract cheating is the practice of students engaging a third-party to complete assignments. It occurs when someone other than the student completes an assignment and which the student then submits for assessment/credit. This would include the use of AI to complete the work.
- **Fabrication:** including falsified or fabricated material or data in work submitted for assessment.
- **Falsification:** falsely claiming to have completed requirements such as hours in practice or patient numbers, false claims of mitigating circumstance; falsifying signature(s) or documents related to certification or assessment.
- **Ghosting:** submitting work presented as the student's own which has been produced in whole or part by another person on the student's behalf, which includes acquiring or buying material or paying another person to complete an assignment. This would include the use of AI to complete the work.
- **Personation:** arranging or attempting to arrange for another person to take one's place in an examination; or being a party to an impersonation, or producing work on behalf of another student.
- **Plagiarism:** representing another person's work (published or unpublished) as one's own, without acknowledgement of the author or source; this includes:
 - submitting whole pieces of work originally produced by another;
 - directly importing into one's work more than a single phrase from another person's work without using quotation marks and identifying the source;
 - making a copy of all or part of another person's work and presenting it as one's own (copying);
 - making extensive use of another person's work, either by summarising or paraphrasing it by changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without acknowledgement;
 - presenting data collected or analysed by others, without acknowledgment;
 - the use of the words, constructs or ideas of another person without acknowledging the source, or submitting or presenting work as one's own which is substantially the ideas or intellectual data of another.
- **Recycling (self-plagiarism):** Re-submitting work which has already been assessed and marked (whether in full or in part) for another assessment in the same or in a different course, or at another institution.
- **Third party assistance:** making use of the assistance of another such as an editor, translator or proof-reader, in such a way as to change significantly the content, language, meaning or significance of what is written.
- **Breaking examination rules**
- **Breaching ethical standards:**
 - Failing to obtain ethical approval where necessary before carrying out research, or failing to carry out a

- research study as set out in the approved ethics application
- Improper or unauthorised use of data from participants in a research study
- Failure to follow accepted procedures or to exercise due care in carrying out research in relation to research subjects
- **Publication of data or results known to be or believed to be misleading**
- **Misquotation or misrepresentation** of other authors

Assisting another student to do any of these things is academic misconduct.

Appendix 2 Examination Rules

Whatever form their examination takes (for example, written, practical, viva, computer-based) students must ensure that they avoid all forms of academic misconduct/cheating

Students are not permitted to have any other person impersonate them, contribute towards or complete answers on their behalf in any examination. Arranging, or attempting to arrange, for another person to take their place in an examination is **Personation**, and will be treated very seriously under the Academic Integrity and academic misconduct policy. Students will be required to present their student ID card at all examinations or vivas as proof of identity.

Written examinations

1. **Electronic devices:** The use of mobile telephones, smart watches or other electronic devices in examination rooms is strictly forbidden. Such devices must be left in the designated place (mobile phones turned off). If a student is found to have a mobile telephone or other electronic device in their possession during the course of an examination, irrespective of whether it is being used, it will be regarded as an academic offence.
2. A seating plan will be available outside the examination room.
3. Students should arrive about 15 minutes before the start of the examination as it takes some time to get all students in place and the time it takes to fill in the administrative parts of the papers is not taken out of their examination time.
4. If students arrive late for a written assessment they will be admitted to the assessment room without question during the first half-hour of an assessment, although they will not be given any additional time. If they arrive after the first half-hour they will not normally be admitted.
5. As soon as students enter the examination room they must be silent and not communicate with other students.
6. The invigilators will ensure that nothing, apart from the student card and permitted pencils, erasers, ruler and coloured pens (in a clear pencil case), and water (in a clear bottle) are taken into the room. All hats and coats, bags and briefcases, books, dictionaries, revision notes, reference materials, mobile phones and any food must be left outside the room, or in designated areas.
7. If calculators are required for the examination they will be provided.
8. The invigilator will remind students of the list of unauthorised items and tell them to put them outside the room. They will tell students to place their student card on their desk; this is confirmation of their attendance. They will instruct students in how Optical Marked Answer papers should be filled in.
9. The invigilator will then read the following statement on behaviour during the examination:
“Cheating in this examination will void your examination script and will result in a disciplinary investigation. Any communication to any other student in the assessment hall, or the possession, for any reason whatsoever, of unauthorised notes or similar materials, is cheating”.
10. The invigilator will specify the starting time and length of the examination and inform students when 30 and then 5 minutes remain. Students must start their examination only when directed. At the end of the examination they must stop writing when told to do so.
11. **Finishing an examination early:** students may not leave the examination room early in any examination which lasts one hour or less.
12. In any examination lasting longer than one hour students may not leave during the first or last 30 minutes.
13. Once a student leaves the examination they may not return to the room (unless this is on an authorised toilet break).
14. **Toilet breaks:** If a student needs to leave the room temporarily to go to the toilet, they will need to gain the permission of an invigilator before they do so. Only one student may take a toilet break at any one time and they will be escorted by an invigilator. Students taking such breaks may be asked to turn out their pockets or otherwise confirm that they do not have a mobile device or any other inappropriate material with them. The time at which a student leaves and returns to the room will be noted.
15. At the end of the examination students must remain in their seats in silence while all examination questions and answer papers are collected. Nothing can be taken from the assessment room. Students must remain silent as they leave the room.
16. If students experience any difficulties with the conditions in an examination room (such as excessive noise)

they must bring this to the attention of the invigilator immediately. **If they do not do this then the condition in the examination room cannot subsequently be used in a claim for exceptional personal circumstances.**

Practical examinations and viva examinations

17. Students should arrive 10 minutes before the start of the examination or when directed by their tutor.
18. Students must bring their student card with them to the examination or viva as proof of identity.
19. **Electronic devices:** The use of mobile telephones, smart watches or other electronic devices is strictly forbidden. Such devices must be left outside room (mobile phones turned off). If they are found to have a mobile telephone or other electronic device in their possession during the course of an examination, irrespective of whether it is being used, it will be regarded as an academic offence.
20. In some cases, students may be held in a room (a 'holding room') while other students undertake their practical/ viva examination. During that time students must place their turned off mobile phones/smart watches/devices where directed. Possession of an electronic device while in the holding room, whether or not they are seen to use the device, may be regarded as a breach of these examination rules.
21. If a student attempts to contact another student during the practical/viva examination period it will be considered cheating. If they receive any contact from another student during the practical/viva examination period it will be considered cheating.
22. **The above rules regarding the use of electronic devices apply also to students acting as 'model patients' for clinical practical examinations.**