Higher Level 4/5 Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures

2024-25

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Higher Level 4/5 Student Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose

This policy is designed to:

- Ensure that the student has a clear understanding of what is considered academic misconduct / unfair means
- Ensure procedural parity between all Higher Level 4 students who have been identified as using unfair means in assessments
- Protect the interests of the student who has been identified as using unfair means
- Provide scope and a definition of the types of unfair means used in assessments
- Enable College staff to manage academic misconduct procedures effectively

2. Scope

2.1 This Policy document applies to all Higher Level 4/5 students who are studying a course at the College.

2.2 The academic misconduct procedure should also refer to the College's Higher Level 4/5 Academic Appeals Policy and Procedures.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 All staff involved in the provision and delivery of Higher Level 4/5 courses are expected to familiarise themselves with the policy and procedure.

3.2 The following staff roles have responsibilities within the procedure:

- Course Leader – to deal with initial academic misconduct evidence, in the first instance;
- HE Academic Quality Leader – to investigate the academic misconduct evidence in conjunction with relevant Head of Area, and course tutor;
- HE Academic Quality Leader to assess the validity of the evidence and take appropriate action;
- Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Quality to make decision on outcome of the academic misconduct;
- HE Academic Quality Leader to inform, in writing, the outcome of the academic misconduct to the student, and to include a copy of the Higher level 4/5 Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure;
- HE Academic Quality Leader to log academic misconduct documentation;
- HE Academic Quality Leader to inform and send to the Awarding Organisation (AO), all documentary evidence relating to the misconduct investigation.

3.3 Students will not be disadvantaged in anyway because they have used these procedures.

3.4 Students are expected to treat all members of College staff with respect. Students who threaten, abuse, or mistreat any member of staff either verbally, in writing, or physically, will not be tolerated.

4. Academic misconduct offences/criteria

4.1 Allegations of any of the following shall be dealt with according to the Academic Misconduct policy and procedures.

Offences relating to an invigilated examination, coursework and plagiarism:

4.1.1 Unauthorised access to an examination paper before an examination;

4.1.2 Forgery of an examination timetable produced by the College;

4.1.3 Removal of a question paper, answer script or other examination stationery from an examination venue or any other College premises;

4.1.4 Causing a disturbance during an examination, either physically, verbally, or through an electronic device;

4.1.5 Refusal to cooperate with an invigilator, or to follow an invigilator's instructions;

4.1.6 Possession of unauthorised materials whilst under examination conditions, or leaving unauthorised material in an examination venue (including toilets);

4.1.7 Access, possession or use of unauthorised material on a computer, mobile telephone, or other electronic device during an examination;

4.1.8 Communicating with another candidate while under examination conditions;

4.1.9 Copying, or attempting to copy, the work of another candidate;

4.1.10 having writing on the body in an examination venue;

4.1.11 the fraudulent reporting of source material;

4.1.12 the fraudulent reporting of experimental results, research, or other investigative work;

4.1.13 collusion in the preparation or production of submitted work, unless such joint or group work is explicitly permitted;

4.1.14 use, or attempted use, of ghost writing services for any part of an assessment;

4.1.15 submission of work, or sections of work, for assessment in more than one module or assignment (including work previously submitted for assessment at another institution);

4.1.16 impersonation of another student in an examination or assessment, or the employment of an impersonator in an examination or assessment;

4.1.17 the use of plagiarism: The College defines plagiarism as the practice of taking someone else's work and/or ideas and passing it/them as your own. It is, moreover, the action of presenting someone else's work as one's own irrespective of intention. Close paraphrasing, without adequate attribution; copying form the work of another person, including another student; using the ideas of another person without proper acknowledgement all constitute examples of plagiarism. In addition, the action of re-using work, whether in part or in whole that you have previously submitted for graded assessment – at the College or at another institution – without properly referencing yourself (known as 'self-plagiarism') shall also constitute plagiarism. If a student knowingly gives another student their assessed work for copying, then they too will be culpable and will be asked to attend an interview after the student who has plagiarised the work.

5. Why plagiarism is wrong

- It is fundamentally dishonest.
- Students who commit plagiarism are seeking an unfair advantage over other students.
- Students who commit plagiarism are devaluing the value of the qualification they seek.
- It is disrespectful to their Assessors, and a betrayal of their trust.

6. Minimising the risk of plagiarism – what tutors should do

The most important thing that a tutor can do is contribute to a culture in which students do not consider plagiarism an option. Tutors should:

- Inform students about plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct and explain at induction what is meant by 'plagiarism' and how it will be monitored;

- explain, at an early stage of the course, the concepts of individual ownership of ideas and words, the ownership of electronic material and the difference between 'intellectual property' and 'common knowledge'
- provide instruction in study skills, research skills, writing skills, time-management skills and the use of a suitable referencing system to record and cite sources correctly;
- insist upon the use a standard referencing system and a comprehensive bibliography from day one;
- act as a team, with every Assessor rigorously applying centre policies on referencing and bibliographies;
- avoid the use of highly generic assignments and, instead, produce contextualised tasks that require the student to research in depth and individually analyse and evaluate their findings;
- avoid the unhelpful practice of recycling assignments year after year;
- include an authenticity statement with every assignment brief: students must sign and date the authenticity statement to acknowledge that the work produced is their own and that they understand the penalties that will be imposed on students who do submit plagiarised work;
- provide students with opportunities to discuss any problems they may encounter, support them at each step and provide them with the resources they need to do the work properly;
- ensure that students are not overlooked by providing them with an assessment schedule, agreed by all the course team, and ensure that the team adheres to the schedule

7. Procedures for staff

7.1 Invigilators, assessors or internal examiners who suspect a student of breaching the regulations shall immediately inform the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader or their nominee, who shall be responsible for investigating the allegation.

7.2 A student accused of committing an academic offence in an invigilated examination or submitted piece of written work shall be invited to attend an interview with the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader (or their nominee), and shall be given copies of all evidence submitted in support of the allegation.

7.3 If the student does not inform the HE Academic Quality Leader or Head of Area that they cannot attend an interview then the investigation and a decision will be made in their absence. The student must contact the HE Academic Quality Leader or Head of Area to make alternative arrangements for a new interview date within **5 working days** of notification of the allegation.

7.4 Where the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader (or their nominee) concludes that there is no case to answer, s/he shall report this to the Head of the appropriate Assessment Board and notify the student that the matter is closed.

7.5 Where an investigation reveals evidence of a potential assessment offence, the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader (or their nominee) shall refer the matter to the AO and notify the student to this effect.

7.6 Where a member of staff suspects that an academic offence has been committed, the case shall be dealt with in three stages:

- Stage I: Informal
- Stage II: Formal (Minor Offence) Where the case is dealt within the Subject area and is classified as a minor offence.

- Stage III: Formal (Major Offence) Where the case is referred to the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader (or their nominee) for further investigation by the Director of Curriculum and Quality and/or may be classified as a major offence.

7.7 The internal examiner or assessor shall immediately notify the Head of Area and the HE Academic Quality Leader or their nominee and the person responsible for the module or course.

8. Stage 1: Informal:
8.1 Where the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader (or the nominee) concludes that it is poor academic practice they shall advise the student to obtain further support and guidance in good practice for referencing skills. A letter should be retained on their file to this effect.

Stage II: Formal (minor offence)
8.2 Where the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader (or their nominee) invites the student for an interview and determines that a student attempted to acknowledge their sources fully and/or comply with the regulations for assessment, but a minor oversight or error has given cause for concern, this shall be deemed a minor offence. A minor offence is when the student has committed plagiarism (as defined in section 4 above) inadvertently and could potentially benefit from further academic advice and referral for support.

8.3 As part of an interview, if the case warrants it, a student may be tested on subject knowledge by a *viva voce* examination. In such cases, the viva shall be conducted by a member of academic staff with knowledge of the subject being investigated and shall submit a report on the viva to the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader (or their nominee) for consideration.

8.4 Where an interview with the student reveals that it is a minor offence, the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader (or their nominee) may decide one or more of the following actions:

i) a formal reprimand, which will be retained on student file for a period of 12 months and a requirement for the student to resubmit a corrected version of the element of assessment by a specified deadline with the maximum mark uncapped;
ii) a formal reprimand, which will be retained on student file for a period of 12 months and a requirement for the student to resubmit the relevant element of assessment by a specified deadline, with the maximum mark limited to the minimum pass mark – as specified by the AO

8.5 Where the penalty involves resubmission of an element of assessment, this shall take place during the current academic year and/or by the deadline set by the Subject area. Where a student does not resubmit, a mark of 0 shall be given for the element of assessment.

8.6 All cases referred to the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader (or their nominee) will normally be concluded within **20 working days** of the receipt of the case.

8.7 All offences and outcomes must be reported to the Director of Curriculum and Quality.

Stage III: Formal (major offence)
Where the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader (or their nominee) determines that there is evidence of an academic offence that cannot be dealt with under Stage II, the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader (or their nominee) shall notify the Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Quality, who shall be responsible for investigating the case.

8.8 A student accused of committing an academic offence in an element of assessment, or of a second or subsequent offence, shall be invited to attend an interview with the assistant Principal of Curriculum and Quality, Head of Area, and HE Academic Quality Leader (or their nominee) and shall be given copies of all evidence submitted in support of the allegation. The student can invite a friend, or a representative of the Student Union, or a support worker, to attend the interview.

8.9 The interview will cover: the nature and extent of the offence; an explanation by the student as to why they may have used alleged unfair means, or not; a decision as to whether an assessment offence has been made; If the decision is that the offence is classified as 'major', the HE Academic Quality Leader will inform the AO and send all documentary evidence to the AO for further investigation and outcome of their investigation.

8.10 The HE Academic Quality Leader will send a copy of the Higher Level 4/5 Academic Appeal and Procedures to the student who wishes to appeal against outcomes arising from the investigation of academic offences.

8.11 The outcome of all cases shall be communicated to the student in writing.

9. Procedures for each separate stage

STAGE 1

Stage 1: Informal:

1. The student will be informed that there is evidence of academic misconduct.
2. A meeting between Head of Area, HE Academic Quality Leader or nominee, and student, to take place within the 10 day period.
3. Where the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader or the nominee concludes that it is poor academic practice they shall advise the student to obtain further support and guidance in good practice for referencing skills.
4. A letter should be retained on their file to this effect.

STAGE 2

Stage II: Formal (minor offence)

1. The Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader or their nominee invites the student for an interview to ascertain the evidence for academic misconduct.
2. A minor offence is when the student has committed plagiarism (as defined above) inadvertently and could potentially benefit from further academic advice and referral for support.
3. If the case warrants it, a student may be tested on subject knowledge by a *viva voce* examination.
4. Where an interview with the student reveals that it is a minor offence, the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader or their nominee may decide one or more of the following actions:

i) a formal reprimand, which will be retained on student file for a period of 12 months and a requirement for the student to resubmit a corrected version of the element of assessment by a specified deadline with the maximum mark uncapped;

ii) a formal reprimand, which will be retained on student file for a period of 12 months and a requirement for the student to resubmit the relevant element of assessment by a specified deadline, with the maximum mark limited to the minimum pass mark – as specified by the AO.

5. Where the penalty involves resubmission of an element of assessment, this shall take place during the current academic year and/or by the deadline set by the Subject area. Where a student does not resubmit, a mark of 0 shall be given for the element of assessment.

6. All cases referred to the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader or their nominee will normally be concluded within **20 working days** of the receipt of the case.

7. All offences and outcomes to be reported to the Director of Adult and HE.

STAGE 3

Stage III: Formal (major offence)

1. Where the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader (or their nominee determines) that there is evidence of an academic offence that cannot be dealt with under Stage II, the Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader (or their nominee) shall notify the Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Quality, who shall be responsible for investigating the case.

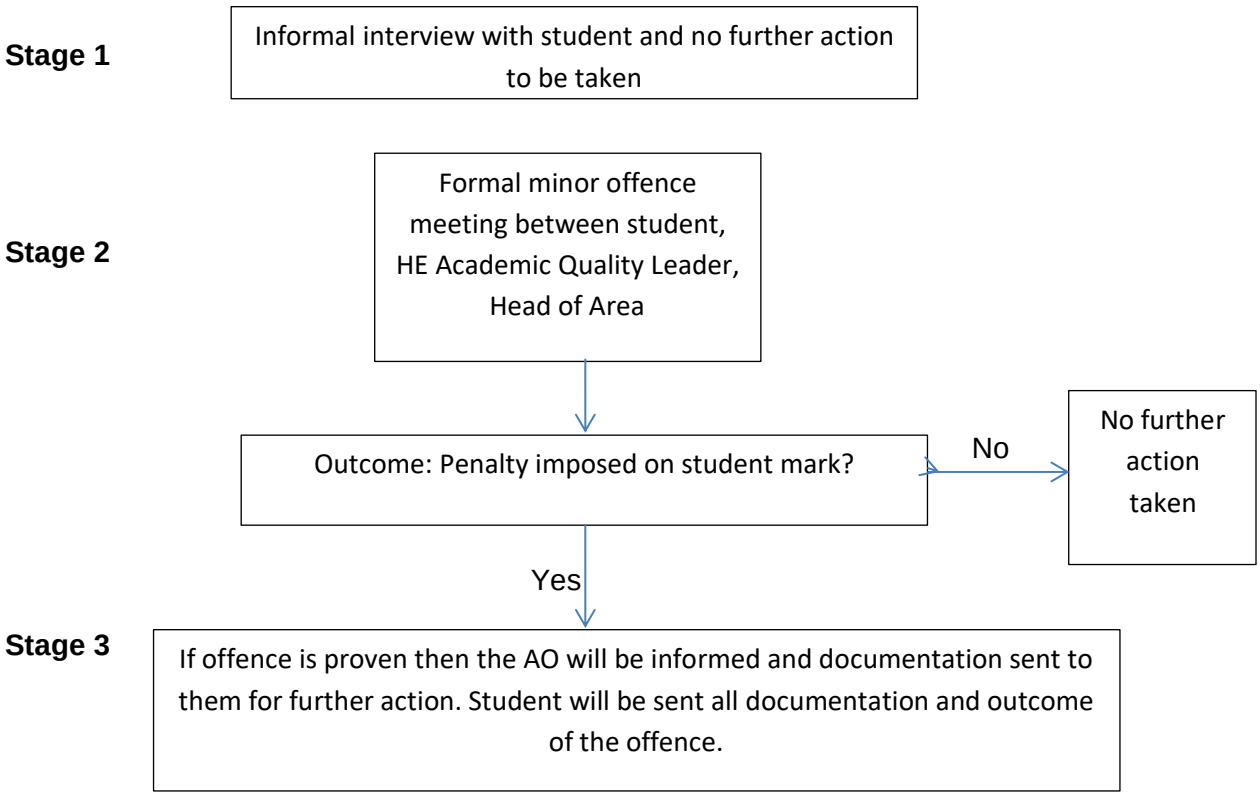
2. A student accused of committing an academic offence in an element of assessment, or of a second or subsequent offence, shall be invited to attend an interview with the Assistant Principal of Curriculum and Quality, Head of Area and HE Academic Quality Leader (or their nominee) and shall be given copies of all evidence submitted in support of the allegation. The student can invite a friend, or a representative of the Student Union, or a support worker, to attend the interview.

3. The interview will cover: the nature and extent of the offence; an explanation by the student as to why they may have used alleged unfair means, or not; a decision as to whether an assessment offence has been made; If the decision is that the offence is classified as 'major', the HE Academic Quality Leader will inform the AO and send all documentary evidence to the AO for further investigation and outcome of their investigation.

4. The HE Academic Quality Leader will send a copy of the Higher Level 4 Academic Appeal and Procedures to the student who wishes to appeal against outcomes arising from the investigation of academic offences.

5. The outcome of all cases shall be communicated to the student in writing.

Student Academic Misconduct Procedure Summary Flowchart



Internal Procedures Completed

Data Protection Policy:

https://www.boltoncollege.ac.uk/assets/Uploads/Data-Protection-Policy.pdf