

Academic Integrity and Good Practice Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

Purpose

(1) The purpose of this policy is to establish standards for the ethical conduct of academic work and to facilitate the embedding of a culture and practices of academic integrity within Hibernia College. Furthermore, the purpose is to establish parameters for the detection and investigation of instances of academic misconduct, and to set appropriate and fair penalties for those found to have engaged in academic misconduct.

Scope

To whom does the policy apply?

(2) This policy applies to students on all Hibernia College programmes.

(3) This policy applies to any individual acting in an academic capacity on behalf of Hibernia College.

In what situations does the policy apply?

(4) The policy applies where an individual is engaging in academic work and bears responsibility for upholding academic and ethical standards.

Who is responsible for implementing the policy?

(5) The Registrar is responsible for the oversight of the implementation of this policy on behalf of the Academic Board. The implementation of the policy at programme level lies with the Programme Director in the first instance.

(6) All Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, Staff and students are responsible for upholding the principles of this policy.

(7) All Faculty, Adjunct Faculty and Staff are responsible for reporting suspected academic misconduct to the Programme Director or nominated other on the relevant programme. This process is outlined in the relevant Standard Operating Procedure.

(8) At programme level, the Programme Director is responsible for ensuring that regularly updated assessor training is provided to all assessors with specific focus on the identification of academic misconduct and the reporting process where academic misconduct is suspected to have occurred. This is supported by Standard Operating Procedures.

(9) All Faculty, Adjunct Faculty and Staff are responsible for reporting grave or repeated instances of suspected academic misconduct to the Programme Director. The Programme Director is responsible for reporting these instances to the Registrar. Instances of academic misconduct are tracked across programmes and oversight of data is maintained by the Assessment and Awards Office.

(10) All persons are responsible for reporting grave or repeated instances of suspected Academic Misconduct to the Registrar.

Definitions

(11) The definitions herein are in line with the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) Guidelines and the NAIN Lexicon in conjunction with QQI's [Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines](#) (2016), [Topic Specific Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Programmes](#) (2023) and the [National Research Integrity Forum's \(NRIF\) National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#) (IUA, 2019).

Academic Integrity

(12) Academic Integrity is the commitment to and demonstration of honest and moral behaviour in an academic setting (The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/esl/resources/academic-integrity/>).

Achieving Academic Integrity involves a student:

- a. Understanding and practicing the values of honesty, fairness, trust, respect, responsibility and courage (International Center for Academic Integrity [ICAI]. (2021). The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity. (3rd ed.). p. 4 www.academicintegrity.org/the-fundamental-values-of-academic-integrity)
- b. Complying with ethical and professional principles, standards and practices
- c. Engaging fairly, openly and honestly with assessments and ensuring that work other than their own is not misrepresented as such
- d. Clearly and transparently acknowledging the use of sources, external resources or forms of artificial intelligence in their assessment submission

Academic Misconduct

(13) Academic Misconduct is defined as morally culpable behaviour by individuals or institutions that transgresses ethical standards held common between other individuals and/or groups in institutions of education, research or scholarship (NAIN, Lexicon). It is further defined as all actions which contravene Academic Integrity, resulting in an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage, including but not limited to:

- a. breaches of exam regulations
- b. breaches of programme assessment rules
- c. inappropriate and unauthorised use or purchase of services such as essay mills or unacknowledged use of forms of artificial intelligence
- d. false claims of authorship
- e. self-plagiarism: attempting to submit their own work as genuine effort for more than one assessment task
- f. unauthorised collusion
- g. cheating
- h. plagiarism attempting to pass off others' effort, intellectual property or any other work as their own by copying without consent or failing to use academic referencing conventions (deliberately or otherwise)
- i. impersonation
- j. purchase of previous assessments or examination material
- k. data falsification
- l. Acts of dishonesty with the purpose of gaining academic credit
- m. Fabrication of data: making up results and recording or reporting them
- n. Falsification of data: manipulating research, materials, equipment or processes or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented in the research record
- o. evading or attempting to evade assessment regulations

p. conducting research without ethical approval

(14) Academic Misconduct can be either intentional or inadvertent.

Section 2 - Context

Legal and Regulatory Context

Quality Assurance guidelines

(15) The policy is designed and implemented to comply with the provisions of the QQI [Core Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines](#) in respect of research. The policy is also designed with regard to the QQI [Statutory Quality Assurance Guidelines for Providers of Blended and Fully Online Learning Programmes](#) (2023).

National Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland

(16) Hibernia College endorses and adopts the [Policy Statement on Ensuring Research Integrity in Ireland](#).

International Effective Practice

(17) Hibernia College also adopts and strives to comply with [The European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#).

Section 3 - Policy Statements

Part A - Principles for Good Academic Practice

Critical skills and techniques

(18) Good academic practice involves effective demonstration of:

- a. Time management
- b. Reading
- c. Listening
- d. Note-taking
- e. Research
- f. Critical inquiry and evaluation
- g. Academic writing
- h. Referencing
- i. Citation
- j. Assessment techniques
- k. Referencing and acknowledging all sources
- l. Avoiding inadvertent mis-referencing

College responsibilities

(19) Hibernia College provides:

(20) Information on the meaning of Academic Misconduct and academic integrity in the Irish context and the consequences for breaches of good academic practice

(21) Unambiguous information on, amongst other things, how to demonstrate critical skills and techniques and

conduct research and Assessments while upholding the values of academic integrity

(22) Clear and regular training for Faculty, Adjunct Faculty and Staff, particularly those involved in programme design and development or Assessment design and development. Training to support academic integrity, ensuring teaching techniques and Assessment strategies are designed with regard to academic integrity policy and mitigating against, in as far as possible, the types of misconduct associated with any form of Assessment. This training will be cognisant of differing cultural understandings of academic integrity.

(23) A repository of resources for all Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, Staff and learners on Academic Integrity is maintained and regularly updated.

Staff and faculty responsibilities

(24) Where Faculty, Adjunct Faculty and Staff are operating in an academic capacity, they are cognisant of the need to uphold academic standards, good academic practice and Academic Integrity.

(25) Where Faculty, Adjunct Faculty and Staff are designing Assessments, consideration should be given to planning a wide variety of Assessments, including authentic Assessment, across a Programme.

(26) Faculty, Adjunct Faculty and Staff have responsibility for overseeing the upholding of Academic Integrity standards within the College.

(27) Faculty, Adjunct Faculty and Staff are required to familiarise themselves with the Academic Integrity resources shared with them by the College and to attend training.

(28) Opportunities for formal and informal learner-to learner conversations on Academic Integrity are facilitated at Programme level.

(29) Supports for effective learner engagement such as writing skills development Resources, study aids and pastoral support are provided to negate against the risks of Academic Misconduct.

(30) The College prioritises prevention of repeated Academic Misconduct. Supports for students who are deemed to have engaged in Academic Misconduct are planned and implemented at Programme level.

(31) All Faculty, Adjunct Faculty and Staff involved in the Assessment of students are required to be cognisant of the relevant Policies and Procedures for reporting suspected instances of Academic Misconduct.

Student responsibilities

(32) Students must:

- a. Ensure they participate in all course work and follow the guidance of Faculty, Adjunct Faculty and Staff
- b. Make themselves aware of the College Policies and Procedures and guidance on good practice, including those relating to all types of Academic Misconduct
- c. Engage with their Programme in an independent and autonomous way, learning how to express themselves clearly, without replicating another's thought, but learning how to cite and reference properly in this process.
- d. Consider and take actions to mitigate against the risks of unauthorised collusion, plagiarism or any act resulting in the presentation of work which is not entirely their own without appropriate referencing
- e. Engage willingly, openly and honestly with academic faculty, attending training and information events as appropriate, to keep updated on the emerging challenges in the area of Academic Misconduct
- f. Participate in courageous conversations with academic faculty and/or the Registrar in order to take ownership of mistakes and actively co-plan educative interventions to mitigate against Academic Misconduct or repeat incidents of Academic Misconduct.

- g. Act with integrity in the disclosure of information regarding suspected academic misconduct of others

Part B - Principles for Ensuring Good Academic Practice and Investigating Academic Misconduct

Detection

(33) The College uses any legal means at its disposal to detect Academic Misconduct and other breaches of standards. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of text-matching software, Staff training and professional development in the detection of Academic Misconduct.

(34) Faculty, Adjunct Faculty and Staff are enabled to recognise and report Academic Misconduct to minimise its extent and impact. Staff training is provided in how to recognise possible misconduct, the use of plagiarism detection software and the interpretation of results. Learners are made aware at commencement of the programme and regularly across the course of the programme of the processes in place to detect Academic Misconduct and the sanctions imposed.

(35) Hibernia College has a responsibility to protect those who report suspected Academic Misconduct, including Faculty, Adjunct Faculty, Staff, and students. The Registrar has responsibility for investigating allegations of misconduct or suspected misconduct which are brought to their attention by the Programme Director or nominated party.

College responsibilities

(36) The College makes all codes of conduct and guidance for good academic practice and integrity available to students and individuals acting in an academic capacity for the College.

(37) The College emphasises good academic conduct and integrity during orientation and at the point of Assessment for all students.

(38) The College deals with breaches of good academic practice and integrity by Staff and Faculty through the College's disciplinary procedures for Staff and Faculty.

(39) The College commits to engaging with students in a collaborative process of reviewing, discussing and updating supports, Resources and information in this area

Investigation

(40) The College investigates all allegations of student Academic Misconduct using the relevant procedure.

(41) The investigation of Academic Misconduct is based on:

- a. Natural justice
- b. Fairness
- c. Due process
- d. Timeliness
- e. Subsidiarity (that investigations will be carried out by those closest to the detection of the suspected misconduct)

(42) The College reserves the right to suspend a student pending investigation when it is in receipt of an allegation of Academic Misconduct. In all such cases, the investigation is processed as a priority.

(43) The College is not liable for any delay to Programme completion as a result of where a reasonable and justifiable decision to suspend was acted on.

(44) Offences deemed to be grave, and all second instances, are referred to the Registrar for formal investigation as a matter of priority.

Student rights and responsibilities

(45) Students are responsible for their own conduct and are assumed to be capable of making informed decisions about their behaviour.

(46) A student accused of Academic Misconduct is entitled to know the detail of the allegation made against them and is entitled to respond.

(47) Students may be requested to present an oral defence of their assessment attempt to a member (or members) of academic faculty.

Non-adversarial

(48) Where appropriate and feasible, the College will seek to resolve any breach of good practice without the requirement to invoke formal disciplinary proceedings.

(49) Procedures under this policy are not intended to be adversarial and the College recommends that where a student does participate in a meeting, that they do not engage legal representation during proceedings.

(50) Where a student does seek to bring legal representation to any meeting, the student must notify the College in writing of their intent within five working days as the legal representatives of the College will also be required to attend.

(51) A student may opt to be accompanied by a friend or family member in a supportive capacity. However, where this person is a member of the legal profession, they cannot act in that capacity.

Reporting

(52) Instances of Academic Misconduct and investigation of Academic Misconduct are reported to the Board of Examiners. A statistical analysis of Academic Misconduct across modules is conducted to inform assessment development and planning.

(53) The Registrar reports annually to the Academic Board on Academic Misconduct and distinguishes between grave and other offences.

Part C - Penalties

(54) Consequences for Academic Misconduct are proportionate to the offence. Academic Misconduct is categorised as minor, moderate or grave/severe and penalties are linked to the category of offence. Programme level guidelines on penalties are available for consultation by the decision maker. Decisions on penalties are guided by several considerations including but not limited to:

- point of study on the programme
- whether this is a repeat incidence
- academic profile of the student

- mitigating circumstances
- category of offence (minor, moderate or grave)

(55) Consequences a-e above can be applied by a the Programme Director or nominee; all other penalties must be decided by an Investigation and Disciplinary committee.

(56) Penalties and outcomes can include those noted below (please note this is a non-exhaustive indicative list subject to adaption at programme level and at the discretion of the academic). Examples of offences are available at programme level and are regularly monitored and reviewed by the programme team. Courageous conversations are encouraged and ethical and honest engagement with the investigation process is taken account of when decisions on sanctions are made:

Category	Definition	Possible Sanction(s)
Minor	Limited evidence of academic good practice, lack of attention to detail and understanding of academic integrity-without specific intent to cheat	a. Failure of the element of the assessment where misconduct is detected b. Requirement to repeat the specific element c. Percentage deduction from specific element
Moderate	Dishonest practices, misleading of assessors or significant lack of attention to referencing requirements	d. Failure of assessment in full e. Requirement to repeat element of the assessment, or the assessment in full
Severe	Extensive evidence of cheating and/or clear evidence of intent. A category may be upgraded to severe due to repeated offences	f. A grade of 0% is applied to the entire module and the module must be repeated And/or Suspension from the programme Expulsion from the programme And/or Withholding a professional reference And/or Annotation of an academic transcript/European Diploma Supplement And/or any other appropriate sanction made by the disciplinary hearing

(57) Consequences for minor and moderate categories can be applied at programme level by the Programme Director. Once an initial investigation at programme level indicates a severe/grave category of misconduct, the investigation is referred to a Disciplinary Committee.

Part D - Principles for Expulsion Due to Academic Misconduct

(58) The College considers expelling a student in very grave situations involving:

- a. Health and safety
- b. Repeated breaches of academic rules
- c. Bringing the College or profession into disrepute

Part E - Membership of a Disciplinary Committee Considering a Case of Academic Misconduct

Criteria for membership

(59) Members of a disciplinary committee considering a case of Academic Misconduct must have:

- a. Competence to make the decision or judgements required of the committee

- b. Independence from the matter being investigated

Membership

(60) Normally, the chair of the committee is the Registrar, or where more practical, a senior academic external to the College, i.e. not a member of Staff, Faculty, Adjunct Faculty or the Board of Directors.

(61) A gender balance should be maintained, where possible.

(62) A panel of potential members is appointed by the Academic Board on a bi-annual basis.

(63) A note-taker (not a member of the committee) will attend and prepare a formal record/written minutes of the committee proceedings for approval by the chair and communication to relevant parties.

Part F - Principle of Support

(64) The College proactively supports academic integrity and seeks to mitigate against repeat offences. It does so by planning at programme level for specific supports for students who are found to have engaged in Academic Misconduct. These include:

- a. individual Tutor sessions
- b. establishing and maintaining a panel of academics across programme to provide a co-ordinated approach to supporting students
- c. continual review and development of supports for academic integrity
- d. regular consultation with students (including international student representatives and those involved in the delivery of fully online programmes) on issues of academic integrity

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	5th March 2025
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Approval Date	5th March 2025
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Enquiries Contact	Eoin Crossen Quality Assurance Administrator <hr/> Quality Assurance

Glossary Terms and Definitions

"Assessment" - The assessment of a student's learning means inference (for example, judgement or estimation or evaluation) of a student's knowledge, skill or competence by comparison with a standard and based on appropriate evidence. This includes self-assessment.

"Policy" - Policies are principled statements adopted by the College at a high level to enable decisions about actions and desired outcomes to which the College is committed. They clearly articulate the formal position of the College on specific issues in order to guide internal decision-making. Policies set out 'what to do' on a given issue. They have a medium- to long-term review cycle.

"Procedure" - Procedures are the broad actions that must be carried out to implement a policy. They set out 'how to do' what the policy specifies must be done.

"Programme" - A programme of education and training refers to any process by which learners may acquire knowledge, skill or competence. It includes courses of study or instruction, apprenticeships, training and employment. A programme offers learners the learning opportunities by which they may attain educational goals (expressed as the intended programme learning outcome) by learning activities in a learning environment. A programme is normally comprised of modules. A programme leading to a major award will normally require a 'cohesion generating' process which integrates constituent modules so that the minimum intended programme learning outcomes are supported. The cohesion generating process should establish the epistemological and cultural identity of the programme. It should also coordinate alignment of activities with the minimum intended programme learning outcomes and introduce learners to the broader community of practice to which they aspire. (QQI (2013) Assessment and Standards Revised)

"Resources" - The HCQF includes other supporting documented resources. These comprise a set of practical, detailed, up-to-date resources to assist staff, faculty and students in implementing or complying with policies and procedures. These are developed as required by any unit or department of the College. They can be public-facing or internal-facing and may or may not be publicly available on the website.

"Academic Misconduct" - Academic Misconduct is any form of cheating or other attempt to seek an unfair reward for the amount of genuine effort put into an assessment task or an advantage over other students.