

POLICY / PROCEDURE TITLE		DATE OF APPROVAL
HE Academic Misconduct Policy and Process		February 2025
APPROVED BY	VERSION NO.	VALID UNTIL
HE Quality and Standards Committee	<u>3</u>	February 2027

<b>OWNER</b>	Assistant Director HE Quality and Standards		
<b>GROUP EXECUTIVE LEAD</b>	Deputy Principal HE, Executive Lead HE		
<b>DOCUMENT TYPE</b>	Policy <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Group Procedure <input type="checkbox"/>	Local Procedure <input type="checkbox"/>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	This policy and procedure sets out how NCG will respond to cases of Academic Misconduct and the type of action that NCG may take to deal with the concern and to support the student.		
<b>APPLICABLE TO</b>	This policy applies to all staff teaching and/or assessing NCG programmes/awards and all students admitted to and undertaking higher education programmes/awards at NCG.		
<b>EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED [POLICIES ONLY]</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
	(If EA not applicable, please explain)		
<b>KEY THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THIS POLICY</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The policy provides an overview of the definitions and stages of academic misconduct.</li> <li>2. The policy details the actions and penalties NCG may implement for reported cases of academic misconduct.</li> <li>3. The policy is to be used to support staff and students with managing academic misconduct cases. Additional support and guidance is available to encourage academic integrity</li> </ol>		
<b>EXPECTED OUTCOME</b>	Readers are expected to understand the organisational position on academic misconduct, know their responsibilities in relation to the policy and comply with the terms of the policy.		

MISCELLANEOUS	
<b>LINKED DOCUMENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• NCG Academic Regulations</li> <li>• NCG Student Positive Behaviour Policy</li> </ul>
<b>KEYWORDS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic misconduct</li> <li>• Academic integrity</li> </ul>

## Equality Impact Assessment

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT			
	Yes	No	Explanatory Note if required
EIA 1 - Does the proposed policy/procedure align with the intention of the NCG Mission and EDIB Intent Statement in Section 2?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be YES
EIA 2 - Does the proposed policy/procedure in any way impact unfairly on any protected characteristics below?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Age	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
Disability / Difficulty	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
Gender Reassignment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
Marriage and Civil Partnership	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
Race	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
Religion or Belief	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
Sex	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
Sexual Orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
EIA3 - Does the proposed policy/processes contain any language/terms/references/ phrasing that could cause offence to any specific groups of people or individuals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
EIA4 - Does the policy/process discriminate or victimise any groups or individuals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
EIA 5 - Does this policy/process positively discriminate against any group of people, or individuals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this must be NO
EIA 5 - Does this policy/process include any positive action to support underrepresented groups of people, or individuals?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	The answer to this could be yes or no as positive action is lawful. However, an explanation must be provided for clarity.
EIA 6 - How do you know that the above is correct?	The policy author has consulted with peers and appropriate groups of people in the Group.		

## 1. GENERAL POLICY STATEMENT

NCG is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity across all academic activities. Academic integrity requires all students to demonstrate honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in their scholarly work, particularly in summative assessments.

This policy applies to all students enrolled in higher education (HE) programs at NCG. academic misconduct, whether intentional or unintentional, includes any attempt to present another's work as one's own, thereby gaining an unfair academic advantage. NCG is committed to ensuring a fair and ethical academic environment through clear guidelines and enforcement measures.

## 2. DEFINITIONS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic misconduct undermines the integrity of assessment and will be addressed under this policy. While not an exhaustive list, the following categories outline the types of misconduct covered:

- **Academic Negligence** – Considered the least serious offence, this applies to first-time, minor cases of plagiarism. It typically results from ignorance or carelessness and does not involve copying from other students. Examples include small-scale plagiarism or improper citation.
- **Academic Malpractice** – A moderate offence, which may include widespread plagiarism, excessive paraphrasing without proper attribution, systematic failure to reference, or submitting previously assessed work. Repeat instances of academic misconduct, following an initial informal stage case, may also be classified as academic malpractice.
- **Academic Cheating** – The most serious category, encompassing deliberate attempts to gain an unfair advantage. This includes collusion, theft of another student's work, contract cheating (paying a third party to complete work), falsification of data or results, and any examination-related misconduct. Repeated instances of academic malpractice may also be classified as academic cheating.

## 3. REPORTING AND INVESTIGATION SUSPECTED ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

### Summative Assessments

All summative assessments, including written assignments, presentations, portfolios, and other evaluated coursework, must uphold the principles of academic integrity.

If an assessor suspects academic misconduct, they must take immediate action by reporting the concern to the curriculum leader, head of curriculum, or equivalent curriculum manager. The report should include a clear rationale for the suspicion and any supporting documentation.

The curriculum leader, head of curriculum, or equivalent curriculum manager is responsible for reviewing the case and determining its classification as an informal stage offence, Stage 1 offence, or Stage 2 offence, in accordance with institutional guidelines. Appropriate measures will then be taken to address the case.

### **Time Controlled Assessment**

If a member of staff suspects an offence of academic misconduct is taking place during a time-controlled assessment, the invigilator should:

- Annotate the candidate's script(s).
- If appropriate, remove any object which has become the centre of the suspicion

The exam invigilator must raise the concern to the module leader, lecturer or equivalent assessor, clearly outlining:

- Whether or not the student had been found in possession of unauthorised material, and if so;
- What this unauthorised material was
- Whether or not the invigilator had seen the student using that unauthorised material;
- Whether or not the invigilator had seen the student using that unauthorised material for the question which was being attempted at that point in the examination;
- Or any other circumstance that gave rise to the suspicion of seeking an unfair advantage.

The curriculum leader, head of curriculum, or equivalent curriculum manager is responsible for reviewing the case and determining its classification as an informal stage offence, Stage 1 offence, or Stage 2 offence, in accordance with institutional guidelines. Appropriate measures will then be taken to address the case.

## **4. STAGES OF PROCEDURE**

### **Informal stage**

If the offence is deemed academic negligence, informal stage practice is implemented and should be managed by the curriculum lead, head of curriculum or equivalent curriculum manager. This

is the least serious offence and covers first-time minor offences. It includes plagiarism that is small in scale, unrelated to the work of other students, and considered to have resulted from ignorance or carelessness. The curriculum manager, head of curriculum or the equivalent curriculum manager must:

- Arrange a meeting with the student.
- Discuss the reasons why the student has been suspected of academic misconduct.
- Identify and provide advice and guidance on how to avoid academic misconduct in future assessments.
- Refer the student to the support services to access relevant guidance and support documents available to advise the students on academic integrity.

**Informal Penalty:** Work should be marked excluding the plagiarised sections, and a lower mark is likely to be awarded to reflect the plagiarism within the work.

### **Recording of the outcome**

All cases of informal academic misconduct must be recorded via the electronic recording system (example, Microsoft Forms, available from the HE Development Manager or Standardisation Manager). The outcome recording should identify the student's name and student ID, programme and module details, the curriculum leader, head of the curriculum or equivalent curriculum manager who managed the case, and the outcome. A copy of the student submission and supporting material must also be uploaded to the electronic recording system.

### **Stage 1**

If the offence is deemed academic malpractice, it is classified as a moderate offence with evidence of intent to deceive the assessor; however, the extent of the action is limited in scope and impact. The curriculum lead, head of curriculum, or equivalent curriculum management must refer the suspected case to a HE Development Manager or HE Standardisation Manager to organise a Stage 1 academic misconduct board.

If multiple assessments are submitted simultaneously by the same student and are found to contain plagiarism, academic misconduct across all affected assessments will be treated as a single offence. This ensures a fair and consistent approach to handling cases where multiple instances of plagiarism occur within the same submission period.

The Stage 1 academic misconduct board should be held within a timely period of the HE Development Manager or HE Standardisation Manager receiving the suspected academic malpractice case. Consideration should be given to any future assessments or time-controlled assessments the student may be undertaking, and the meeting should be conducted promptly to guard against any further cases of academic misconduct.

The student must receive the 'Invitation to Stage 1 academic misconduct board' email no less than five working days before the Stage 1 academic misconduct board and should inform the student of the following:

- The reason for their attendance being required.
- A copy of any relevant report or other evidence.
- The right to seek advice from Student Services and/or the Students' Union.
- The right to accompaniment/representation.
- The right to submit a written statement to the Panel concerning the alleged offence before the meeting if they wish to do so.

The Stage 1 panel will consist of the following members:

- HE Development Manager or Standardisation Manager (Chair)
- Module leader
- Internal marker/assessor (if different from the module leader).
- Student.
- Student's representative (if requested by the student).

If the student does not attend without good cause, the panel may proceed in the student's absence. The panel will consider any representations made by or on behalf of the student (in absentia) at the appropriate point in the meeting.

The Stage 1 Panel Chair will:

- Explain the purpose of the meeting and the possible outcomes.
- Invite the internal marker/assessor to discuss the matter with the student and/or the student's representative if one is present.
- Invite the student to explain the circumstances that led to the suspicion that they are engaged in seeking unfair advantage.
- Invite the student and/or friend or representative to make any other relevant comments.

## **Possible outcomes of a Stage 1 academic misconduct board**

The following outcomes may result from a Stage 1 academic misconduct board.

- **No Offence Determined:** No formal report will be submitted to the Board of Examiners or Examination Committee if no offence is found.
- **Admission of Offence:** If the student admits to the offence, the Stage 1 Panel holds complete authority to determine and apply an appropriate penalty.
- **Unresolved Case:** If the student does not admit the offence or the issue remains unresolved, the Panel Chair must escalate the case to a Stage 2 Panel for further consideration.

Following the Stage 1 academic misconduct board , the student will be notified via email within five working days of the outcome:

- The formal decision reached by the panel
- The basis for which the decision was made.
- Information on the student's right to appeal the decision.
- The requirements and timescale for appealing and the designated officer to whom any notice of intention to appeal should be sent.
- The procedures that will be followed if an offence is found; the next step is to refer the case to the Academic Misconduct Panel for a penalty to be agreed upon.

**Penalty:** The student must resubmit the entire assessment in question, having rectified the academic misconduct issues. Work is awarded up to a maximum mark of 40% for undergraduate (FdAs/BA(Hons)) and 50% for postgraduate (PGCE and Masters).

## **Recording of the outcome**

All cases of informal academic misconduct must be recorded via the electronic recording system (example, Microsoft Forms, available from the HE Development Manager or Standardisation Manager). The outcome recording should identify the student's name and ID, programme and module details, the curriculum leader, head of the curriculum or equivalent curriculum manager who managed the case, and the outcome. A copy of the student submission and supporting material must also be uploaded to the electronic recording system.

Records of admitted or confirmed offences will be maintained on the student's academic profile for the remainder of their studies.

## Stage 2

If the offence is deemed academic cheating, this is regarded as a severe offence and includes Level 6 plagiarism of dissertations (or modules worth 40 credits and over), all postgraduate modules, and collusion with other students. The curriculum lead, head of curriculum, or equivalent curriculum management must refer the suspected case to a HE Development Manager or HE Standardisation Manager to organise a Stage 2 academic misconduct board.

A student must receive the 'Invitation to Stage 2 academic misconduct board' email no less than five working days before the Stage 2 academic misconduct board and should inform the student of the following:

- The reason for their attendance being required.
- A copy of any relevant report or other evidence.
- The right to seek advice from Student Services and/or the Students' Union.
- The right to accompaniment/representation.
- The right to submit a written statement to the Panel concerning the alleged offence before the meeting if they wish to do so.

The Stage 2 academic misconduct board will consist of the following members:

- **Panel Chair:** Head of HE, Director of Higher Education, Assistant Director HE Quality and Standards (must be a different member from prior stages).
- **Subject Expert:** An experienced academic staff member from the relevant subject area who has not taught the student in the module(s) under investigation.
- **Independent Academic:** An experienced academic staff member from a different subject area.
- **HE Registry:** Responsible for formal minute-taking.
- **Accused Student:** The student is subject to investigation.
- **Witnesses and/or Support Person:** Witnesses or a friend may attend upon the student's or staff member's request, subject to prior approval by the Panel Chair for appropriateness and scheduling.
- **Internal Marker/Assessor:** The academic staff member who assessed the submission.

The student is expected to attend the Stage 2 academic misconduct board. If the student does not attend without good cause, the panel may proceed in the student's absence.

The panel will consider any representations made by or on behalf of the student (in absentia) at the appropriate point in the meeting.

The Stage 2 Panel Chair will:

- Explain the purpose of the meeting and the possible outcomes.
- Invite the internal marker/assessor to discuss the matter with the student and/or the student's representative if one is present.
- Invite the student to explain the circumstances that led to the suspicion that they are seeking unfair advantage.
- Invite the student and/or friend or representative to make any other relevant comments.
- Unless the offence has been admitted during the proceedings, both the academic member of staff (who marked the work) and the student (with friend and/or representative) will withdraw, and the Stage 2 panel members will consider its decision.

### **Possible outcomes of a Stage 2 academic misconduct board**

The possible outcomes from a Stage 2 meeting are:

- **No Offence Determined:** If no offence is found, no formal report will be submitted to the Board of Examiners or Examination Committee.
- **Admission of Offence:** If the student admits to the offence, the Stage 2 Panel holds full authority to determine and apply an appropriate penalty.
- **Non-Resolution or Disputed Case:** The Stage 2 Panel will deliberate and reach a decision based on the evidence presented. Decisions will be made using the "balance of probabilities" standard of proof.

Following the Stage 2 meeting, the student will be notified via email within five working days of the outcome:

- The formal decision reached by the panel
- The basis for which the decision was made.
- Information on the student's right to appeal the decision.
- The requirements and timescale for appealing and the designated officer to whom any notice of intention to appeal should be sent.

**Penalty:** The student is advised that they are allowed one reassessment opportunity (first sit only) to resubmit a brand-new piece of work. Compensation is not allowed.

Work is awarded up to maximum mark of 40% for undergraduate (Fds/BA(Hons) and 50% for post graduate (PGCE and Masters). Failure to comply will result in failure of the assessment with no further opportunity other than restudy. At the next assessment opportunity (normally the next academic year).

### **Recording of the outcome**

All cases of informal academic misconduct must be recorded via the electronic recording system. The outcome recording should identify the student's name and ID, programme and module details, the curriculum leader, head of the curriculum or equivalent curriculum manager who managed the case, and the outcome. A copy of the student submission and supporting material must also be uploaded to the electronic recording system.

Records of admitted or confirmed offences will be maintained on the student's academic profile for the remainder of their studies.

### **Reoccurrence of academic misconduct following a Stage 2 meeting**

Any further recurrences of academic misconduct will be dealt with under NCG Student Positive Behaviour Policy and may lead to withdrawal from the programme of study.

For students found to have committed academic misconduct during a reassessment, this should be managed as a Stage 2 academic misconduct case. A meeting will be convened, and the process outline in section 4, 'Stage 2,' of this policy should be followed.

## **5. APPEALS PROCESS**

Students may appeal against the outcome of this procedure by writing to the HE Registry within 20 working days of written notification of the Academic Misconduct panel decision, stating the ground(s) of appeal. Record of the appeal hearing will be recorded on HE78 Appeal Pro-forma. Students are not permitted to appeal against an academic judgement.

### **Grounds of appeal**

Students may appeal against the outcome of academic misconduct panel decisions on the following grounds:

- 5.1. That the decision reached was irrational and/or disproportionate and/or unsupported by evidence; and/or,

5.2 That there was a material and/or procedural irregularity by the academic misconduct panel which has prejudiced the student's case; and/or,

5.3 Additional material evidence has come to light, since the decision of the academic misconduct panel, which could not have been expected to have been produced at the time of the consideration of the case.

Once the appeal has been reviewed the outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the student via a 'Letter of Completion'. A student who remains dissatisfied following the conclusion of the appeal process may apply to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education within twelve months of the issue of the 'letter of completion'. Information on the process may be obtained directly from the OIA at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk>.

## **6. STATEMENT ON IMPLEMENTATION**

Upon approval, this policy will be uploaded to the policy portal and communicated to staff via The Business Round-Up and circulated to NCG staff.

## **7. STATEMENT ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY [POLICIES ONLY]**

NCG is committed to providing equality of opportunity. Further details of our aims and objectives are outlined in our [Equality Diversity Inclusion and Belonging Strategy](#).

This policy has been assessed to identify any potential for adverse or positive impact on specific groups of people protected by the Equality Act 2010 and does not discriminate either directly or indirectly. In applying this policy, we have considered eliminating unlawful discrimination, promoting equality of opportunity and promoting good relations between people from diverse groups.

## **8. STATEMENT ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH**

NCG is committed to upholding the principles of freedom of speech as enshrined in UK law. This policy is designed to ensure that all members of our college community, including students, staff, and visitors, can express their views and ideas freely and without fear of censorship or reprisal, provided that such expressions are within the law.

We affirm that this policy does not, in any way, diminish or undermine the rights of individuals under existing Freedom of Speech legislation.

## **9. STATEMENT ON CONSULTATION**

This policy / procedure has been reviewed in consultation with HE Quality and Standards committee including staff and student representatives.

VERSION CONTROL				
Version No.	Documentation Section/Page No.	Description of Change and Rationale	Author/Reviewer	Date Revised
3	Full review Section 2  Section 3    Section 4	Clarity over definitions of academic misconduct. Inclusion of terminology to reflect informal cases of academic misconduct to be managed within curriculum teams. Examination to be replaced by Time Controlled Assessment. Change of HE management roles who are responsible with the management of Stage 1 and 2 cases of academic misconduct. Removal of paper based recording and replaced with electronic recording. Wording of penalties reflective of current Academic Regulations	Hayley Bowes Assistant Director HE Quality and Standards	Feb 2025