POLICY / PROCEDURE TITLE		DATE OF APPROVAL
HE Academic Misconduct Policy and Process		October 2026
APPROVED BY	**VERSION NO.**	**VALID UNTIL**
HE Quality and Standards Committee	4	October 2027

OWNER	Assistant Director HE Quality and Standards		
GROUP EXECUTIVE LEAD	Executive Lead HE		
DOCUMENT TYPE	Policy ☒	Group Procedure ☐	Local Procedure ☐
PURPOSE	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.		
APPLICABLE TO	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.		
EQUALITY ANALYSIS COMPLETED [POLICIES ONLY]	Yes ☒	No ☐	N/A ☐
	(If EA not applicable, please explain)		
KEY THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THIS POLICY	1. The policy provides an overview of the definitions and stages of academic misconduct. 2. The policy details the actions and penalties NCG may implement for reported cases of academic misconduct. 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		
EXPECTED OUTCOME	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	
LINKED DOCUMENTS	• NCG Academic Regulations • NCG Student Positive Behaviour Policy

KEYWORDS	• Academic misconduct • Academic integrity

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?	☒	☐	The answer to this must be YES
EIA 2 - Does the proposed policy/procedure in any way impact unfairly on any protected characteristics below?	☐	☒	
Age	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Disability / Difficulty	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Gender Reassignment	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Marriage and Civil Partnership	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Race	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Religion or Belief	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Sex	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
Sexual Orientation	☐	☒	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?	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
EIA4 - Does the policy/process discriminate or victimise any groups or individuals?	☐	☒	The answer to this must be NO
EIA 5 - Does this policy/process positively discriminate against any group of people, or individuals?	☐	☒	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?	☐	☒	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 on Higher Education (HE) programmes at NCG and covers all forms of summative assessment, including time-controlled assessments. Academic misconduct, whether intentional or unintentional, includes any attempt to gain an unfair academic advantage or to present work, ideas, data, outputs, or intellectual contributions as one's own when they are not. This includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, collusion, contract cheating, falsification of information, impersonation, and the inappropriate or unauthorised use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, including Large Language Models (LLMs), where such use breaches assessment requirements or is not appropriately declared and acknowledged. NCG is committed to maintaining a fair, transparent, and ethical academic environment through clear expectations, guidance, and proportionate measures for cases of misconduct.

2. Responsibilities of Students

Assessment is designed to enable students to demonstrate their own knowledge, understanding, and achievement of learning outcomes. Students must ensure that any work submitted for assessment represents their own intellectual effort and authentic understanding. Where errors, inconsistencies in academic writing, unacknowledged material from other sources, or the inappropriate use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools call into question a student's authorship, knowledge, or understanding of the work submitted, the validity and integrity of their assessment may be compromised and may result in further review under this policy.

NCG recognises that technological developments, including the availability of AI and other digital tools, provide valuable opportunities to support students throughout their academic journey. These technologies can assist with activities such as planning, researching, organising ideas, improving academic writing, and developing study skills. Students must use these tools to support, rather than replace, their own intellectual effort, critical thinking, and engagement with learning. Any use of such tools must be consistent with programme and assessment requirements, comply with guidance provided by tutors, and be appropriately acknowledged where required.

All HE students are expected to:

- Submit work that is their own and appropriately acknowledge the ideas, words, data, images, and contributions of others through accurate referencing and citation. Seek clarification from academic staff where they are unsure about assessment requirements, referencing conventions, collaborative working arrangements, or appropriate use of academic sources.
- Familiarise themselves with this policy, programme handbooks, assessment guidance, referencing expectations, and any academic integrity resources provided by NCG.
- Engage with academic integrity training, workshops, tutorials, and academic support opportunities, if deemed required.
- Retain drafts, research notes, reference materials, and other evidence of their academic work where appropriate. Such evidence may be requested during investigations into suspected academic misconduct.
- Be prepared to discuss and explain the development of their submitted work if requested by academic staff or an Academic Misconduct Panel.
- Disclose the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools where required by assessment guidance and ensure that any use is consistent with programme, module, and institutional requirements.
- Complete any educational activities, training, or support interventions identified as part of the academic misconduct process.
- Students may use artificial intelligence tools to support the development and refinement of their academic writing, including proofreading, grammar checking, language improvements, structure planning where permitted by the relevant assessment guidance. Such use must not replace the student's own intellectual effort, academic judgement or authorship. Students remain fully responsible for the accuracy, integrity and originality of all submitted work. Where required, the use of AI tools must be appropriately acknowledged and declared.

Any action that undermines the integrity, authenticity or reliability of assessed work is prohibited. Such actions may call into question the validity of a student's submission and may be considered under the Academic Misconduct Policy. Students must not:

- Submit work that is not entirely their own without appropriate acknowledgement and referencing.
- Copy, reproduce, or closely paraphrase the work of another person without proper attribution.

- Allow another individual to complete, edit, or substantially contribute to assessed work on their behalf.
- Purchase, commission, or otherwise obtain assessment material from a third party for submission as their own work.
- Share, distribute, or make available their work to others where it could reasonably be used for assessment purposes.
- Use artificial intelligence (AI) tools, software, or technologies in a manner that is prohibited by the assessment instructions or without appropriate declaration where required. This includes the use of smart glasses.
- Fabricate, falsify, or manipulate data, evidence, research findings, records, references, or results.
- Collude with other students or individuals in a way that results in an unfair academic advantage.
- Submit the same piece of work, in whole or in part, for more than one assessment without prior authorisation.
- Engage in any behaviour intended to gain an unfair advantage in examinations, tests, practical assessments, or other forms of assessment.

3. Responsibilities of Academic Staff

NCG recognises that academic staff are best placed to make informed judgements about student authorship and the authenticity of assessed work. Prior to referring a student for suspected academic misconduct, staff should carefully review the work using their professional and academic judgement, considering the student's typical standard of work, engagement with learning activities, development of ideas, and any other relevant contextual evidence. Concerns should only be referred where there are reasonable grounds to believe that the work may not accurately reflect the student's own knowledge, understanding, or academic achievement.

All HE Academic staff are expected to:

- Promote a culture of academic integrity through teaching, assessment design, and student support.
- Provide clear guidance to students regarding assessment requirements, referencing expectations, academic conventions, and acceptable use of AI and other technologies where relevant.
- Provide opportunities for students to develop academic writing, research, referencing, and study skills through formative activities and constructive feedback.

- Identify and report suspected academic misconduct in accordance with this policy and associated procedures.
- Apply the policy consistently, fairly, and objectively, ensuring that students are treated with dignity and respect throughout any investigation.
- Signpost students to appropriate academic and wellbeing support services where additional developmental support is required.

4. Categories of Academic Misconduct

NCG adopts the following misconduct categories to reflect the severity of the academic misconduct.

Minor Academic Misconduct is the least serious type of academic misconduct which applies to minor, first-time breaches of academic integrity, where there is little or no evidence of intent to gain an unfair academic advantage. This also may be specific to students who are in their first year where academic writing and referencing skills are still being developed.

Moderate Academic Misconduct is considered a more moderate offence where there is evidence of intent to gain an unfair academic advantage, although the misconduct is limited in scale or impact.

This may include:

- Excessive plagiarism.
- Excessive paraphrasing without attribution.
- Repeated minor academic misconduct.
- Failure to acknowledge sources appropriately.
- Submission of previously assessed work without approval.
- Misuse of AI tools where this calls into question the authorship, knowledge of understanding of the work submitted.

Major Academic Misconduct is the most serious category of academic misconduct and includes, but is not limited to:

- Contract cheating.
- Purchasing assessments.
- Commissioning work through third parties.

- Collusion.
- Impersonation of another student.
- Falsification or fabrication of data.
- Time-controlled assessment misconduct.
- Significant plagiarism in dissertations, major projects, or modules worth 40 credits or more.
- Repeated or persistent cases of moderate academic misconduct.

5. Reporting and managing suspected cases of Academic Misconduct.

All suspected cases of academic misconduct must be reported to the central Higher Education team through agreed reporting channels, to ensure that a central record is maintained. This requirement applies irrespective of the severity or category of the suspected misconduct.

Upon receipt of a referral, an initial review will be undertaken to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to warrant further investigation and whether the matter should be considered as minor, moderate or major academic misconduct.

Academic Misconduct Meetings

Where there is a reasonable basis to suspect moderate or major academic misconduct, the student will be informed of the allegation and invited to attend an Academic Misconduct Meeting.

The purpose of the meeting is to:

- explain the nature of the concern;
- review the evidence available;
- provide the student with an opportunity to respond to the allegation; and
- enable an informed decision to be made before any finding is reached.

The meeting will be conducted by an Academic Misconduct Panel.

Following consideration of all evidence, including any representations made by the student, the Panel will determine, on the balance of probabilities, whether:

- no academic misconduct has occurred;
- academic misconduct is admitted by the student; or
- academic misconduct is proven.

Where academic misconduct is admitted or proven, the Panel will determine the appropriate category of misconduct and apply an outcome in accordance with this policy.

Students will receive a minimum of five working days' notice of the meeting and will be notified of the arrangements by email.

Students have the right to be accompanied by a supporter or representative, including a Students' Union representative, student representative, or other appropriate support person. The name of any accompanying person should be provided to the Panel Chair in advance of the meeting.

Students may also submit written statements or supporting evidence for consideration by the Panel prior to the meeting.

The outcome of the meeting, including any penalty imposed, will normally be communicated to the student by email within two working days of the Panel's decision.

Academic Misconduct Panel

The Academic Misconduct Panel will normally comprise:

- A Panel Chair (Higher Education Development Manager, Higher Education Standardisation Manager, or nominee);
- The Internal Marker/Assessor;
- The Module Leader, Programme Leader, or equivalent;
- An independent academic member who has had no prior involvement with the student or assessment under consideration.

The student may also be accompanied by a supporter or representative; however, this individual is not a member of the Panel and will not participate in determining the outcome.

Evidence Considered in Academic Misconduct Panels

In determining whether academic misconduct has occurred, the Academic Misconduct Panel will consider all relevant and available evidence.

Evidence may include, but is not limited to:

- the submitted assessment;
- originality, text-matching or similarity reports;
- AI-detection reports;
- assessment briefs and requirements;
- draft versions of work;
- version histories and document metadata;
- research notes, plans and preparatory materials;
- source materials referenced within the work;
- statements provided by the student;

- authorship review outcomes;
- witness statements, where appropriate; and
- previous confirmed findings of academic misconduct.

The Panel will consider the totality of the evidence available and will reach its decision on the balance of probabilities.

Determined Level of Misconduct	**Outcome (if determined)**	**Academic Penalty**
Minor Academic Misconduct	Mandatory completion of the NCG Academic Integrity Training Programme and signposting to academic skills support.	The assessment will be marked in accordance with Academic Regulations.
Moderate Academic Misconduct	Educational intervention and academic integrity support as appropriate.	Work is awarded up to maximum mark of 40% for undergraduate (FdA/BA(Hons) and 50% for post graduate (PGCE and Masters).
Major Academic Misconduct	Intensive academic integrity intervention and support.	If the assignment is a first submission, the student will be given opportunity to resubmit in the resubmission window. The work will be awarded up to a maximum mark of 40% for undergraduate (FdA/BA(Hons) and 50% for post graduate (PGCE and Masters). If the assignment is a resubmission, the student will be provided with the opportunity to resit at the next assessment opportunity in the next academic year.

Student Support and Reasonable Adjustments

Where a student has a declared disability, learning difficulty, health condition or other protected characteristic, reasonable adjustments will be considered by the academic misconduct panel.

Reasonable adjustments may include, but are not limited to:

- Additional time to prepare a written response.
- Alternative methods of participation in meetings.
- Support from a nominated support practitioner.

The existence of a disability, learning difficulty, health condition or personal circumstance does not excuse academic misconduct. However, such factors may be taken into consideration when determining appropriate support and communication methods.

6. Academic Misconduct Appeals

Students have the right to appeal the outcome of any Academic Misconduct outcome outlined within this policy. Appeals must be submitted using the HE78 Academic Misconduct Appeal Proforma and emailed to HE Registry within 20 working days of the date on which the outcome of the Academic Misconduct Panel was communicated to the student. Students may request a copy of the HE78 Academic Misconduct Appeal Proforma from Panel Chair or from the HE Registry email heregistryadmin@ncgrp.co.uk.

The appeal must clearly state the grounds on which the appeal is being made and include any supporting evidence that the student wishes to be considered as part of the appeal. Students may only submit an appeal on one or more of the grounds set out below. Appeals will not be considered where they are based solely on disagreement with the Panel's academic judgement or decision.

Grounds for Appeal

- **Unreasonable or Disproportionate Decision;** The decision was unreasonable, disproportionate, or not supported by the evidence available to the Panel.
- **Procedural Irregularity;** A material procedural error or irregularity occurred during the investigation or panel process which may have adversely affected the outcome.
- **New Material Evidence;** New evidence has become available that could not reasonably have been provided at the time the case was considered, and which may have affected the outcome.

Outcome of an Academic Misconduct Appeal

Following consideration of the appeal, the student will be notified in writing of the outcome and the reasons for the decision.

The appeal outcome may result in one of the following:

- The appeal being rejected and the original decision remaining unchanged.
- The appeal being upheld in whole or partially.

- Any other action considered appropriate in the circumstances.

Upon receipt, the appeal will be considered in accordance with NCG's Higher Education Appeals Procedure. A formal record of the appeal and its outcome will be maintained by NCG and outcomes will be sent to students within two working days of the Panel's decision.

Once the internal appeal process has been completed, the student will receive a Completion of Procedures Letter confirming the conclusion of NCG's internal procedures.

Students who remain dissatisfied following the completion of the appeals process may submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) within the timescales specified by the OIA. Information about the OIA Scheme can be found at www.oiahe.org.uk.

7. 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.

8. STATEMENT ON EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY [POLICIES ONLY]

NCG is committed to providing equality of opportunity. Further details or 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.

9. STATEMENT ON FREEDOM OF SPEECH

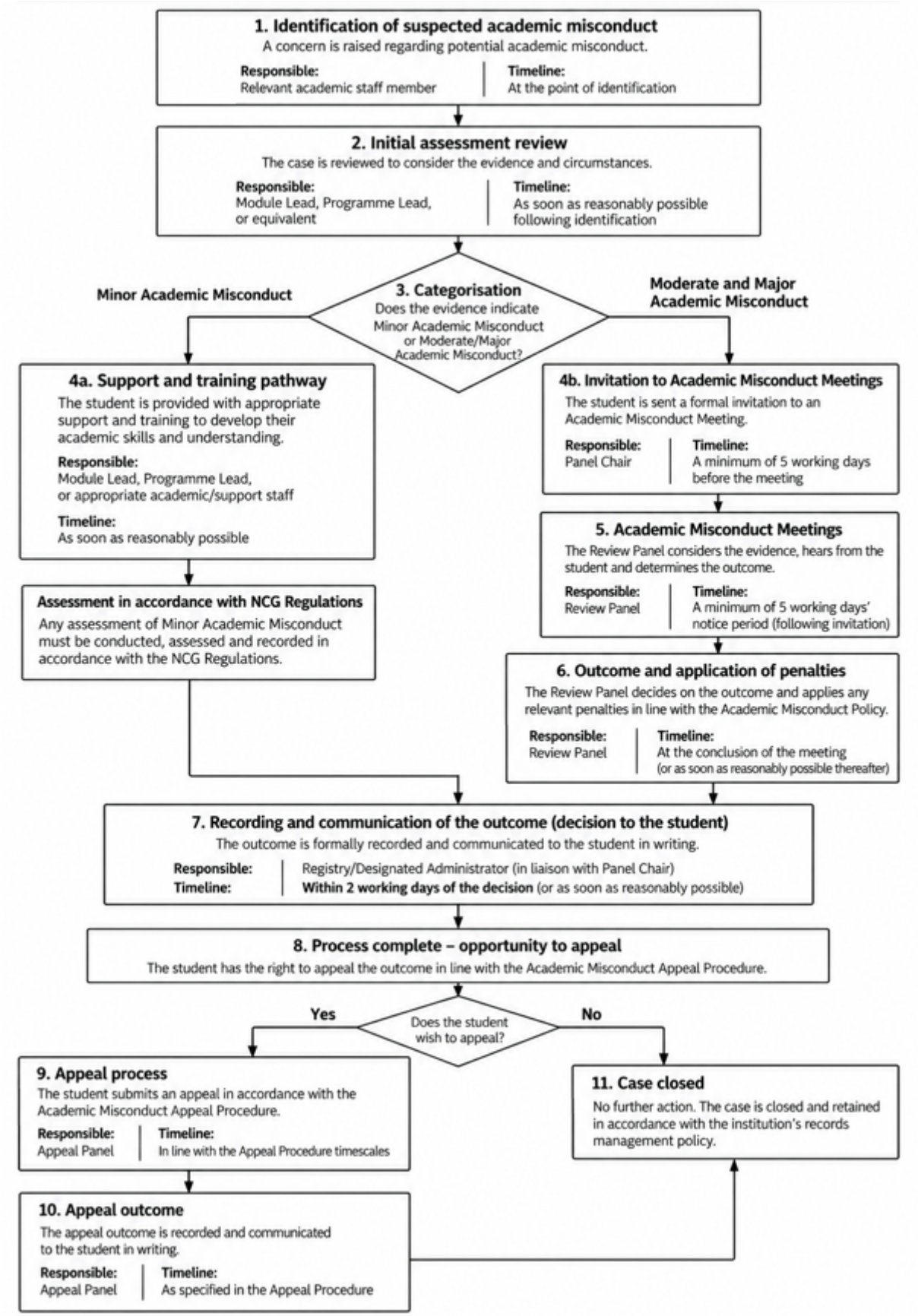
NCG is committed to upholding the principles of freedom of speech as enshrined in UK law. This policy is designed to ensure that all members of our college community, including students, staff, and visitors, can express their views and ideas freely and without fear of censorship or reprisal, provided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

10. STATEMENT ON CONSULTATION

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

Appendix 1: Academic Misconduct Procedure Flow Chart



VERSION CONTROL				
Version No.	**Documentation Section/Page No.**	**Description of Change and Rationale**	**Author/Reviewer**	**Date Revised**
3	Full review	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	Assistant Director HE Quality and Standards	Feb 2025
4	Full Review	Redefining categories of academic misconduct to minor, moderate and major. Additional section on student and staff responsibilities added into policy. Reduction of stage 1 and stage 1 academic misconduct meetings to a academic misconduct meeting. Inclusion of a flow diagram to reflect reporting channels.	Assistant Director HE Quality and Standards	October 2026