

Academic Integrity Policy

1. Definition of Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a fundamental principle that applies to all members of the University community (i.e. members of staff, researchers, and students). Academic integrity ensures that anyone wishing to access and use work produced by members of the University can be confident in using and trusting the information and data that have been provided. This work can include material that has been submitted for academic assessment purposes (such as documents, data and artefacts) as well as outputs from research and scholarship.

Academic integrity is aligned with the development of good academic practice, which is expected of all members of the academic community.

There are a number of key values that underpin academic integrity:

- Acting ethically
(e.g. acting in a way which ensures that all the values described below are adhered to, and that respect for others is maintained)
- Honesty
(e.g. honesty in the production, preparation, publication and presentation of material, including the extent to which ideas have been derived and developed from others)
- Fairness
(e.g. not misusing information or material that may have been developed by others or taking advantage of other people such as colleagues, students and members of the academic community)
- Responsibility
(e.g. taking personal responsibility for determining the validity and credibility of the source information and data that are used, and for applying appropriate ethical procedures in the way in which the information is used and presented)
- Care and respect
(e.g. showing care and respect for the views and opinions expressed by others, as well as for any participants involved in the development of a piece of work)
- Accuracy
(e.g. ensuring that the work and data are as accurate as possible so that the information can be used by others with confidence)
- Rigour
(e.g. applying rigour in ensuring that appropriate protocols, standards, and frameworks are adhered to, and that the interpretation, presentation and communication of information is undertaken with care and consideration)
- Transparency
(e.g. transparency in communicating the approach adopted for the collection and interpretation of results, and for highlighting any conflicts of interest where appropriate)

(Academic integrity values derived from: International Center for Academic Integrity, 2014; Universities UK, 2012; Research Councils UK, 2011.)

2. Developing Academic Integrity

It is assumed that all members of the academic community wish to demonstrate academic integrity, and that it is only through certain circumstances that some members may exhibit academic misconduct (e.g. poor time management; lack of awareness of academic integrity issues), which is discussed further in Section 4 and Appendix 1.

Activities to support and develop academic integrity include:

- providing pre-enrolment information and guidance on academic integrity, and to emphasise this as part of the transition process into higher education and between levels of study
- providing information about the development of good academic practice and embedding and applying this information within the curriculum at each level of study
- recognising and supporting the needs of members of the academic community who may be studying off campus
- developing expertise amongst members of staff
- using different approaches to assessment design
- providing support materials for students who may have been taught in a non-UK context (e.g. some international and TNE students), and who may have developed approaches to academic writing and the use of source material that may not always align with UK custom and practice
- ensuring that instances where academic integrity is not maintained are not ignored, and that appropriate support or action is taken as a result (see Section 4).

Poor time management can often result in academic misconduct, particularly if completion of a piece of work is left until a point that is close to the submission deadline. This can sometimes also be as a result of procrastination through not understanding what is required of the work (see Section 3). The use of formative submissions, and feedback on early drafts, can help to support the time management and submission process. Working on drafts, and amending these as a result of the feedback received, is more likely to result in submissions that demonstrate academic integrity and good academic practice. Opportunities for formative feedback will therefore be made available to develop these key academic skills. In the case of text-based work, this includes an opportunity to submit the work formatively through text-matching software and specific modules have been identified for formative submission within every course. In addition, there are School or Institute-based courses within the virtual learning environment that allow for additional submissions for text-matching purposes. For non-text-based work (e.g. artefacts, music, etc.) there will be opportunities within the course for formative feedback.

Members of the academic community will be provided with information about academic integrity and the development of good academic practice through the University webpages (for example, Skills for Learning - <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/lib/skills-for-learning/>) and relevant publications (e.g. Student Handbook).

Members of staff and researchers should refer to the information provided on the University's commitment to the *Concordat to Support Research Integrity*, which is available at <https://www.wlv.ac.uk/research/research-policies-procedures--guidelines/concordat-to-support-research-integrity/>.

Students for whom English is an additional language can access support from the International Academy.

3. Enhancing Academic Integrity through Assessment Activities

In order to enhance academic integrity, consideration will be given to the nature of assessment activities to reduce the likelihood of academic misconduct (see Section 4). Members of the academic community will be supported in the development of appropriate assessment activities by the College of Learning & Teaching and the Conduct & Appeals Unit.

Examples of the ways in which assessment activities can be designed to support academic integrity may include:

- development of inclusive assessment activities that allow all students to demonstrate that they have achieved the relevant learning outcomes
- using assessment tasks (e.g. essay questions) that differ from previous years
- providing resit assessment tasks that differ from the original task in certain respects (i.e. so that work completed by others for the original assessment task cannot be re-submitted by someone else for the resit)
- providing assessment tasks that require students to provide information on something specific and unique (e.g. reflection using a particular model or structure; the use of a specified theory in relation to a case study – possibly local / regional)
- asking students to provide evidence of personal experiences or perspectives (e.g. the effectiveness of a group work activity, or a critical and analytical narrative that compares and contrasts different viewpoints), rather than providing text that is purely descriptive
- using authentic (i.e. real-world or simulated) teaching, learning and assessment activities, particularly if it is clear that these experiences are developing skills and knowledge that will be useful to support lifelong learning and employability.

All members of the academic community will be provided with clear guidance on work that is to be assessed. Uncertainty as to what was required in an assessment task is often cited as one of the reasons for academic misconduct (see Section 4). Clear and concise information (e.g. assessment briefs), and offering the chance for student-led assessment unpacking sessions, can help to explain and clarify the purpose and requirements of an assessment activity.

4. Breaches of Academic Integrity

The term *academic misconduct* is used to describe breaches of academic integrity. Examples of academic misconduct are described in Appendix 1.

All members of the academic community need to be aware of the consequences of not maintaining academic integrity. These consequences are detailed in the University's *Regulations & Procedure for the Investigation of Academic Misconduct*, which can be accessed at <http://www.wlv.ac.uk/polsregs>.

5. References

International Center for Academic Integrity (2014) *The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity*, 2nd edition. South Carolina: Clemson University. Available at: <https://academicintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Fundamental-Values-2014.pdf> [Accessed January 2019].

Research Councils UK (2011) *RCUK Policy and Code of Conduct on the Governance of Good Research Conduct: integrity, clarity and good management (2009, updated 2011)*. Available at: <https://docplayer.net/286441-Rcuk-policy-and-code-of-conduct-on-the-governance-of-good-research-conduct-integrity-clarity-and-good-management.html> [Accessed February 2019].

Universities UK (2012) *The Concordat to Support Research Integrity*. London: Universities UK. Available at: <https://academicintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Fundamental-Values-2014.pdf> [Accessed January 2019].

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Appendix 1: Academic Misconduct¹

The term 'academic misconduct' is used for situations when academic integrity has not been maintained. It is recognised that instances of academic misconduct may be unintentional, and support will be provided to members of the academic community in order to raise awareness of academic integrity and to highlight good academic practice.

Categories of Academic Misconduct

Categories of academic misconduct include:

1. Cheating
2. Collusion
3. Plagiarism
4. Fabrication
5. Falsification
6. Misrepresentation

1. Cheating

Cheating is defined as any attempt to gain unfair advantage in an assessment by dishonest means and includes, for example: cheating in an examination; stealing someone else's work; commissioning of work from a third party; and the impersonation of someone else.

This is not an exhaustive list and other common examples of cheating include:

- being in possession of 'crib notes' during an examination
- breach of examination regulations
- copying from the work of someone else
- prohibited communication during an examination
- unauthorised use of electronic devices during examination or assessment activities
- submitting work that has been downloaded from the Internet.

2. Collusion

Collusion is when two or more people combine to produce a piece of work for assessment that is passed off as the work of one person alone. The work may be so alike in content, wording and structure that the similarity goes beyond what might have been coincidence. For example, where one person has copied the work of another, or where a joint effort has taken place in producing what should have been an individual effort, including preparation for a seen examination.

Collusion should not be confused with the normal situation in which people learn from one another, sharing ideas and group work to complete assignments (where this is specifically authorised).

¹ Information in Appendix 1 has been derived from: the *University of Wolverhampton Policy on Maintaining Academic Integrity* (June 2015-2018); Universities UK (2012); Research Councils UK (2011).

3. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else's work and passing it off as your own. This includes incorporating either unattributed direct quotation(s) or substantial paraphrasing from the work of another/others/or yourself.

It is important to cite all sources whose work has been drawn on and to reference them fully in accordance with the referencing standard used in each subject area.

The most common forms of plagiarism are:

- cut or copied and pasted materials from websites
- copying the work of another student (past or present), including essays available through 'essay bank' websites
- copying material from a text book or journal
- inappropriate paraphrasing of someone else's work
- self-plagiarism (i.e. re-use of an entire piece of work, or parts of a piece of work, that was previously submitted for assessment or review – for example, for academic credit or peer review – and which is then submitted as part of another work without providing proper acknowledgement of this fact).

4. Fabrication

Fabrication involves the creation of false data or other outputs (e.g. false citations, documentation, consent of participants, artefacts) and presenting these as though they are real.

5. Falsification

Falsification involves the inappropriate use, manipulation and / or selection of data or other forms of information (including images).

6. Misrepresentation

Misrepresentation involves the presentation of data or information that is known by the author to be incorrect, incomplete or flawed. This could include, for example:

- suppression of relevant data
- presenting flawed interpretations of data
- failure to be clear about the origin of information or data (i.e. where they have been collected or derived)
- failure to declare conflicts of interest or other areas of material interest
- false claims relating to experience or qualifications
- inappropriate claims, or implied claims, to authorship and data collection
- denying authorship to a co-worker who has made a significant contribution.

Other Considerations

All work that is submitted for assessment or review must be the product of the person who is making the submission. Members of the academic community who submit a piece of work for assessment will be making a declaration as to the authenticity and originality of the submitted piece of work, and should be aware that the University will utilise appropriate electronic tools to detect instances of academic misconduct.

Proofreading and editing:

The University defines proofreading as the careful reading of a document to detect any errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar. Members of the academic community are expected to proofread their own work; however, it is recognised that it may be desirable for someone else to look at a piece of work in order to provide a different perspective or opinion on the different elements of academic writing. A proofreader is a person who reads work to check it before it is submitted for assessment and can be, for example, a member of the University (e.g. Skills for Learning team; International Academy), a family member, friend or colleague.

It is acceptable for a proofreader to highlight areas of a piece of work that should be reviewed (e.g. complex sentences, formatting errors, spelling mistakes); however, in order to ensure that work submitted is entirely that of the originator, **it is not permissible for a proofreader to edit or re-write a piece of work**. Work that has been edited as a result of proofreading, so that it is no longer a true reflection of the original work, may be referred for consideration under the *Regulations & Procedure for the Investigation of Academic Misconduct*.

It should be noted that formative feedback on a piece of work (e.g. provided by a member of staff or supervisor) does not count as proofreading. Formative feedback is a form of marking that is intended to identify areas where a piece of work can be developed and enhanced for subsequent submission.

Translation services:

The University expects all members of the academic community to work in English. The use of professional translation services to translate work into English is not permitted.

