



# Academic Integrity Policy (DMU Registered Students)

## Version 5

Approved by the Board of Governors

Last Amendment: September 2024

The following establishes the School's definition of the behaviours which may constitute Academic Misconduct and sets out our investigative procedures for determining appropriate sanctions where such Academic Misconduct is found to have occurred.

This policy has been developed with due regard for *England's Regulatory Framework for Higher Education* and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). It should be read in conjunction with the relevant Assessment Regulations. The School proudly endorses and adheres to the [Academic Integrity Charter for UK Higher Education](#).

This policy has been developed with reference to the De Montfort University's (DMU) Academic Offences and Bad Academic Practice policies, to ensure consistent and accurate application of Academic policy procedures on all London School of Science and Technology campuses teaching DMU students.

The procedures outlined herein are separate from those that deal with instances of Non-academic Misconduct, which can be read in the School's *Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures*.



## Document Information

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\*The document owner is responsible for maintaining and updating the content of this document and ensuring that it reflects current practice at the School.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. Academic misconduct, also known as "unfair practice," refers to actions that, whether intentionally or unintentionally, impair the reliability of an assessment, the certification of qualifications, and/or the standing of those in charge of carrying out the assessment and certification.
- 1.2. When conducting or assisting with formative assessments, the School expects its staff and students to act with integrity. Academic integrity refers to honesty and responsibility in scholarship and embodies values like avoiding cheating or plagiarism, maintaining academic standards, and honesty and rigor in research. As a result, each piece of work a student submits must accurately reflect their skills and efforts.
- 1.3. This policy sets out the procedures to be followed where Academic Misconduct is suspected or identified in any formative assessment.
- 1.4. The School is aware of the negative effects that accusations of academic misconduct can have on a student's or staff member's reputation, professional standing, and standing in the classroom. The School will make sure that its processes for determining whether academic misconduct has occurred are thorough, equitable, and reliable. It will also conduct its investigations in a confidential manner; no one who is not directly involved will be informed that an investigation is underway.
- 1.5. With the government's reform to post-16 education and the ban of essay mills, the School promises to work alongside of its partner universities through sector collaboration by sharing intelligence, information, best practices and benchmarks. Through the collaboration of experience, resources and knowledge, the UK's Higher Education sector can be strengthened and maintained.
- 1.6. The School acknowledges the new legislation introduced in April 2022 through the Skills and Post-16 Education Act that criminalises essay mills, making it a criminal offence to provide or arrange essay writing services for financial gain to students, or to advertise these services. The School is obligated to ensure that mechanisms and initiatives are established to discourage our students from pursuing these prohibited services and to ensure staff are kept up-to-date on new academic regulations from our partner universities, upholding academic standards and integrity and assuring institutional consistency.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy and procedure is applicable to all internal evaluations and exams. De Montfort University's (DMU) own published procedures, however, will take precedence over the School's policy in those cases.

**NB** *No reference should be made in public about the allegation, nor should the student(s) in question be notified except as part of the formal process using the approved form of wording.*



- 2.2. Lecturers, tutors, and graders are required to adhere to the strict internal moderation/verification procedures as well as the Module Monitoring and Review Procedure.
- 2.3. By adhering to academic referencing standards and making use of the tools and technology available to identify and prevent integrity violations, all academic staff members must demonstrate academic integrity and serve as role models in their respective fields.
- 2.4. This policy should be explained to students during the orientation period and reiterated during assessment and exam preparation. Students should also receive instruction on how to properly cite other authors' work in their own submissions. The School follows the Harvard referencing style, and it will give students thorough instructions on how to cite properly and create reference lists. It is the student's responsibility to follow the policy and, if they are unsure, to seek advice and guidance.
- 2.5. Students should be warned about the possible consequences of violating this policy on both their academic and professional careers and prospects.
- 2.6. Students may file a complaint regarding the School's promotion of academic integrity using the School's *Student Complaints Policy*. This complaint will be examined separately into any academic misconduct investigation.
- 2.7. While the investigation is ongoing, the student's grade or result will be withheld. This includes students who are being investigated for possible breaches of integrity.

### **3. Responsibilities**

- 3.1. The Registrar is in charge of reviewing and managing this policy. It is the responsibility of the Registry, Academic Deans, and Course Leaders to ensure that this policy is followed and applied consistently across all London School of Science and Technology campuses.
- 3.2. Course Leaders, Module Leaders and Course Coordinators will be overall responsible for championing academic integrity promotion and maintenance.

### **4. Promoting Academic Integrity**

- 4.1. It is the School's responsibility to ensure that all students are aware of the consequences of academic misconduct and have had an equal opportunity to learn the value of academic integrity, both in their studies and in the future employment. Academic integrity principles will be mentioned during scheduled inductions and will be readily available to students when needed. It is accessible via the student's VLE account and Student Support.
- 4.2. Turnitin software will be used to detect cases of academic misconduct, and teaching staff will be trained on how to use it effectively and fairly when evaluating students' submissions.



## 5. Student Responsibilities

- 5.1. When completing and submitting assignments, students must ensure that:
- 5.2. The work they have created is entirely their own and was not written by anyone else. With the exception of assessments that explicitly require collaboration, submitting work that is copied from or jointly written with others is not acceptable.
- 5.3. They have properly and appropriately cited and referenced any original sources used when quoting other writers in their assessment. This must be accomplished using the School's Harvard Referencing System.
- 5.4. The work they produce explicitly reflects their understanding of the data and information they have sourced or obtained through ethically conducted research.
- 5.5. The School will provide information and resources on how to maintain academic integrity. However, it is always the learner's sole responsibility to act honestly and transparently in accordance with this policy, and to seek advice and guidance if they are unsure.

## 6. Definitions

- 6.1. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE) has been consulted for this policy and the School has adopted its definition of academic misconduct:

“... is any action by a student which gives or has the potential to give an unfair advantage in an examination or assessment, or might help someone else to gain an unfair advantage, or any activity likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research”.
- 6.2. Academic Integrity is defined by “a moral code or ethical code which includes values such as avoidance of cheating and plagiarism, as well as maintenance of academic standards, honesty and rigor in research, etc.”
- 6.3. An act of academic misconduct is a breach of academic integrity.
- 6.4. The following are examples of misbehaviour that students may engage in. This list is not exhaustive, and the School may consider other instances of Misconduct at its discretion:

## 7. Categories of Academic Misconduct (AM)

### 7.1. Minor Misconduct

#### *Examinations*



- Taking any script, paper, or other official stationery (completed or unfinished) from an examination room unless specifically authorised by an invigilator or examiner;
- During an examination or test, communicating with another student or any third party other than the invigilator/examiner;
- Copying or attempting to copy the work of another student during an examination or test, whether by overlooking their work or refusing to comply with or follow an invigilator's instructions.

#### *Coursework*

- Allowing another student to plagiarise your work;
- Submission for assessment of work previously submitted by the student or work previously published elsewhere, where the duplication is isolated (minor plagiarism or self-plagiarism);
- False declaration of authenticity in relation to the contents of a portfolio or coursework.

## 7.2. **Serious Misconduct**

#### *Examinations*

- Collaborating with another person in the preparation or submission of work to be evaluated. This does not apply to collaborative work that has been approved by the Course Co-ordinator;
- Deliberate destruction of another's work;
- Fabrication of results or evidence;
- Paying or otherwise rewarding someone else to take an assessment in the student's place;
- Possession or use of any device other than those expressly permitted in the examination rubric;
- Having crib sheets, revision notes (including those stored on digital media devices) or accessing the internet in violation of the examination rubric;
- Bringing a pre-written examination script into an examination for submission and exchanging it for a blank examination script;
- Obtaining early access to an unknown examination or test.

#### *Coursework*

- Plagiarism (the use of another person's intellectual work in work submitted for



evaluation without adequate acknowledgement). A student cannot be found to have committed plagiarism if it can be demonstrated that the student took all reasonable precautions to avoid representing the work of others as their own);

- Contract cheating, which is the commissioning of a piece of work by a third party beyond basic proofreading; for example, a student may engage an essay mill and request that the essay mill produce a piece of assessed work for the student;
- Using another student's work and submitting some or all of it as the student's own;
- The presentation of data in field research, projects, and so on based on work purporting;
- Extensive use of quotes or close paraphrasing without quotation marks and/or referencing, or insufficient referencing of sources, where the student has not properly cited this material in the bibliography;
- Stealing another student's work and submitting it as the student's own (where the originator is not denied the opportunity to submit);
- Paying or otherwise rewarding another person for writing or preparing work to be submitted for assessment - the submission of assignments written by others, such as ghost writers, is strictly prohibited.

### 7.3. **Staff Misconduct**

The following are examples of the types of Academic Misconduct that may be committed by the School's staff. This list is not exhaustive and other examples of Misconduct may be considered by the School at its discretion:

- Facilitating or permitting any of the types of misconduct listed in 2.1;
- Improper assessment assistance to candidates (e.g., coaching them on how to answer a specific formative assessment task or providing assistance on an exam question);
- Making up or changing marks for internally assessed work (course work or portfolio evidence) when there is insufficient evidence of the candidates' achievement to justify the marks given or assessment decisions made;
- False submissions that could result in false certificate claims;
- Inappropriate certificate retention;
- Making false witness statements, for example, for evidence that the student did not generate;
- Allowing evidence that a staff member knows is not the student's own to be included in a student's assignment/task/portfolio/coursework;



- Enabling and facilitating impersonation;
- Abusing the conditions for special student needs, for example, where students are permitted support, this is only permitted up to the point where the support has the potential to influence the outcome of the assessment;
- Failure to secure assessment/examination/test papers prior to the assessment/examination test;
- Falsifying records/certificates, for example, through alteration, substitution, or fraud.

## **8. Detecting Potential Academic Misconduct (AM)**

- 8.1. Disciplinary action for Academic Misconduct is usually taken only when a student submits a summative assessment that contains Misconduct. Typically, disciplinary action cannot be taken prior to submission. If an academic member of staff notices Misconduct in a student's work before it is submitted, it is reasonable to expect the member of staff to warn the student of the consequences of Misconduct.

## **9. Use of Turnitin**

- 9.1. The School employs a specialized online application (Turnitin) to detect instances where a student has submitted work that has been taken from another source without proper citation (plagiarised). This application generates a similarity report that indexes all unoriginal content and where to find it. If the similarity index indicates that a submission contains 25% or more unoriginal content, the script will be flagged for further review. Smaller percentage similarities, on the other hand, may be investigated in relation to single exceptions or when a marker causes concern.
- 9.2. Staff will be trained on how to correctly interpret Turnitin reports; a flagged report will initiate the School's investigation, but will not be the basis for Academic Misconduct.

## **10. Absence of Documentary Evidence**

- 10.1. The School will use the following methods to detect and flag instances where there is a possibility, but no documentary evidence, that a student has submitted someone else's work as their own:
- Evaluation of the quality of the student's previous summative submissions, if available.
  - Formative (informal) assessment activities that have already been completed to assess a student's ability and compare it to work submitted for a summative assessment.





- 10.2. It is understood that markers will not have the time to compare every piece of work they mark to a previous assignment or formative assessment submission; instead, markers should use sound judgment and familiarity with their students' abilities in deciding how and when to investigate an assignment submission.

## 11. Procedure for Investigating Instances of Academic Misconduct (AM)

- 11.1. Any suspicion of Academic Misconduct should be reported to the corresponding Course Coordinator, who will launch an investigation in a manner appropriate to the nature of the allegation, unless it involves the Programme Leader, in which case it will be handled by the Campus Dean or the Principal.
- 11.2. The Course Coordinator or authorised nominee will make the individual(s) aware by letter/email at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged academic offence and of possible consequences should the Misconduct be proven. At the earliest opportunity, the Course Coordinator or authorised nominee will notify the individual(s) of the nature of the alleged academic offence and the potential consequences if the Misconduct is proven.
- 11.3. The investigation will proceed through the following steps:
- i. The Marker and Course Coordinator conduct a preliminary investigation into the allegation to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to proceed with the allegation. The Marker and Course Coordinator may refer to the Assessment Regulations (and, where applicable, the DMU Academic Regulations).
  - ii. If plagiarism, collusion, or a minor offense is suspected, the Course Coordinator will invite the student to an interview during which the subject may be tested on subject knowledge via an oral exam. In such cases, the oral exam will be conducted by a member of the academic staff who is knowledgeable about the subject under investigation. For safekeeping, an oral exam report must be attached to the evidence.
  - iii. If an allegation against a member of staff appears to be credible, all assessments by that member of staff should be suspended until the investigation is completed. In cases of employee misconduct, the Human Resources Office will decide whether to pursue the Staff Disciplinary Procedure instead.
  - iv. In the absence of sufficient evidence, the Programme Leader or an appointed nominee will mark the work in accordance with the Schools' *Assessment Regulations*.
  - v. If there is sufficient evidence to proceed with an allegation, the Programme Leader shall prepare a report of their findings in advance of the interview or Academic Misconduct Panel, depending on the alleged severity. When it comes to employees, the Human Resources Office will be invited as well. The student will be notified by letter/email that there is sufficient evidence to support the allegation and will be invited to respond to the allegation within 5 working days. The following information must be included in the letter/email:
    - A copy of the allegation and all supporting evidence,



- A copy of this Policy,
  - The options for a review of the decision and how to request one.
- vi. Before any interview, the student(s) must be given 5 working days' notice. If a student is unable to attend, they must provide a five-working-day notice to reschedule. With written consent, the student may request that the meeting be held within 5 working days.
- vii. Any mitigating factors should be clearly stated and visible for the student(s) to be considered when deciding the penalty (e.g., duress/coercion by another student).

### **Valid/Invalid Responses**

- 11.4. In responding, a student must identify and explain the reasons that form the basis of the case on which the student is relying, and their statement must be supported by all relevant evidence. The Course Coordinator will deem invalid requests that do not identify and explain the reasons on which the student is relying. The student will be notified in writing and will be considered to have accepted the allegation.
- 11.5. If students do not respond within the specified deadline, they are deemed to have accepted the allegation against them, and the Course Coordinator or Panel, depending on severity, will determine the appropriate category of Academic Misconduct. The decision will be communicated to the student by letter/email from the Assistant Registrar. If sent by letter, the notification letter/email is deemed to have been received by the addressee on the second postal delivery day following the day it was posted, or on the same day if sent by email.
- 11.6. If a student contests the allegation, the Course Coordinator or Academic Misconduct Panel must consider the allegation and the evidence in support of it, in addition to the student's submission. The Panel will then decide whether there is enough evidence of Academic Misconduct to substantiate the allegation on the balance of probabilities.
- 11.7. If the student believes the outcome of the investigation is too harsh or not in accordance with our policy and procedure, they may file an appeal, which will be handled in accordance with our Appeals policy.
- 11.8. If the student accepts the allegation or fails to appeal within the time limit specified in the Appeals policy, the decision made is final.
- 11.9. All stages of the investigation shall be documented by the person leading the investigation.
- 11.10. The student will be informed of the options for appealing any decisions made.



## 12. Penalties

- 12.1. The penalty for Academic Misconduct will be determined based on the seriousness of the offence and the stage of study. Cheating or plagiarism, for example, may be considered in the early stages of a course of study in the context of developing appropriate scholarly behaviour; however, the same in later stages will normally result in automatic failure and/or expulsion. The previous record of the student will also be considered.
- 12.2. When determining the penalty for students on a De Montfort University validated course, the Panel shall consider De Montfort University's Academic Offences and Bad Academic Practice policies, which cover Student Academic Misconduct.
- 12.3. Students on courses leading to awards from **De Montfort University** should refer to the following regulations:
- <https://www.dmu.ac.uk/current-students/student-support/exams-deferrals-regulations-policies/student-regulations-and-policies/academic-offences.aspx>*
- 12.4. In the absence of compelling mitigating evidence, the second and subsequent offences will be considered Serious Misconduct.
- 12.5. If cheating or plagiarism is discovered, a report will be made to the appropriate Examination Board/ Progression Board.

### **Bad Academic Practice**

- 12.6. This can only be used once subsequent offences will be treated as academic offences. When a bad academic practice is proven by the Course Leader or an authorised nominee, the following procedure will be followed:
- i. The student will be advised to seek additional assistance and guidance in referencing.
  - ii. The student must resubmit a corrected version of the assessment element within five working days of the meeting, with the maximum mark capped.
  - iii. Registry will keep a letter on the student's file for one year or until the end of the level of study.
- 12.7. Cases of bad academic practice are usually resolved within 10 working days of receipt. Bad academic performance can only be issued once; any subsequent offenses will be classified as a minor or major offense.

### **Academic offence**

- 12.8. The following penalties may be imposed in the event of a proven academic offence:
- The student is warned, and a record of the warning is kept on file for the student indefinitely.



- The assessment element(s) failed. The student may be given the opportunity to retake the assessment, with a maximum of one retake.
- Failure in the assessment element(s).

### **Serious Academic Offence: Referral to a panel**

12.9. Where Serious Offence is proven, the Academic Offence Panel may, in addition to the penalties set out above, consider the application of the following penalties:

- Failure in the module. The student must re-register for the same module at the next opportunity where the re-registered module result will be capped at a bare pass. Where a re-registration of the same module, or suitable alternative, is not permissible the student will not be able to continue on the course.
- Recommendation to the appropriate Examination Board that the final classification of any award be downgraded by one level.
- Expulsion, which will be automatic where two or more penalties for Major Misconduct are imposed in any academic year, or a previous penalty has already been applied.

12.10. The student will normally be notified of the decision and penalty within 5 working days of the meeting of the Panel considering the case.

## **13. Review and Other Procedures**

13.1. A student may appeal the Academic Offence Panel's decision by completing an appeal form within 10 working days of receiving the letter/email notifying them of the decision.

13.2. An appeal must state the grounds and provide reasons that clearly demonstrate the grounds. If an appeal is not made on sufficient grounds or with sufficient evidence, the Registrar or authorised nominee must deny the application and notify the student within 5 working days.

13.3. An Appeal may only be requested on the following grounds:

- That the student was unable to respond to the allegation within the timeframes provided in this Policy for valid reasons beyond the student's control,
- A procedural irregularity other than one for which the student is responsible, or clear third-party evidence of bias, resulting in significant unfairness to the student,
- That the evidence of alleged misbehaviour was insufficient to support the allegation; or



- That a penalty of expulsion or downgrading was imposed inequitably.
- 13.4. If the Appeals Panel determines that an appeal has demonstrated that the allegation was not proven, or that there was an obvious unfairness to the student, and the Board believes that it would be in the student's best interests, the original penalty may be cancelled or modified. The original penalty shall stand if the Assessment Board determines that the student's ground of appeal did not result in obvious unfairness to the student.
- 13.5. Where the decision relates to a student enrolled in a validating university degree program, students may make a further written appeal to the validating university under their Academic Regulations or Procedures on Student Misconduct within 10 working days of receiving the letter/ email notifying them of the Assessment Board's Review decision.
- 13.6. In all other cases, LSST will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter for OIA Scheme purposes within 28 days of the Assessment Board or Academic Offence Panel's decision.
- 13.7. After receipt of a Completion of Procedures Letter (either from LSST or validating university), students on higher education courses (HND level or above) may complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Guidance on the circumstances in which complaints can be made to the OIA is available here:

<https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/can-you-complain-to-us/>

- 13.8. A complaint to the OIA must be made within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter, and should be made on their complaints form:

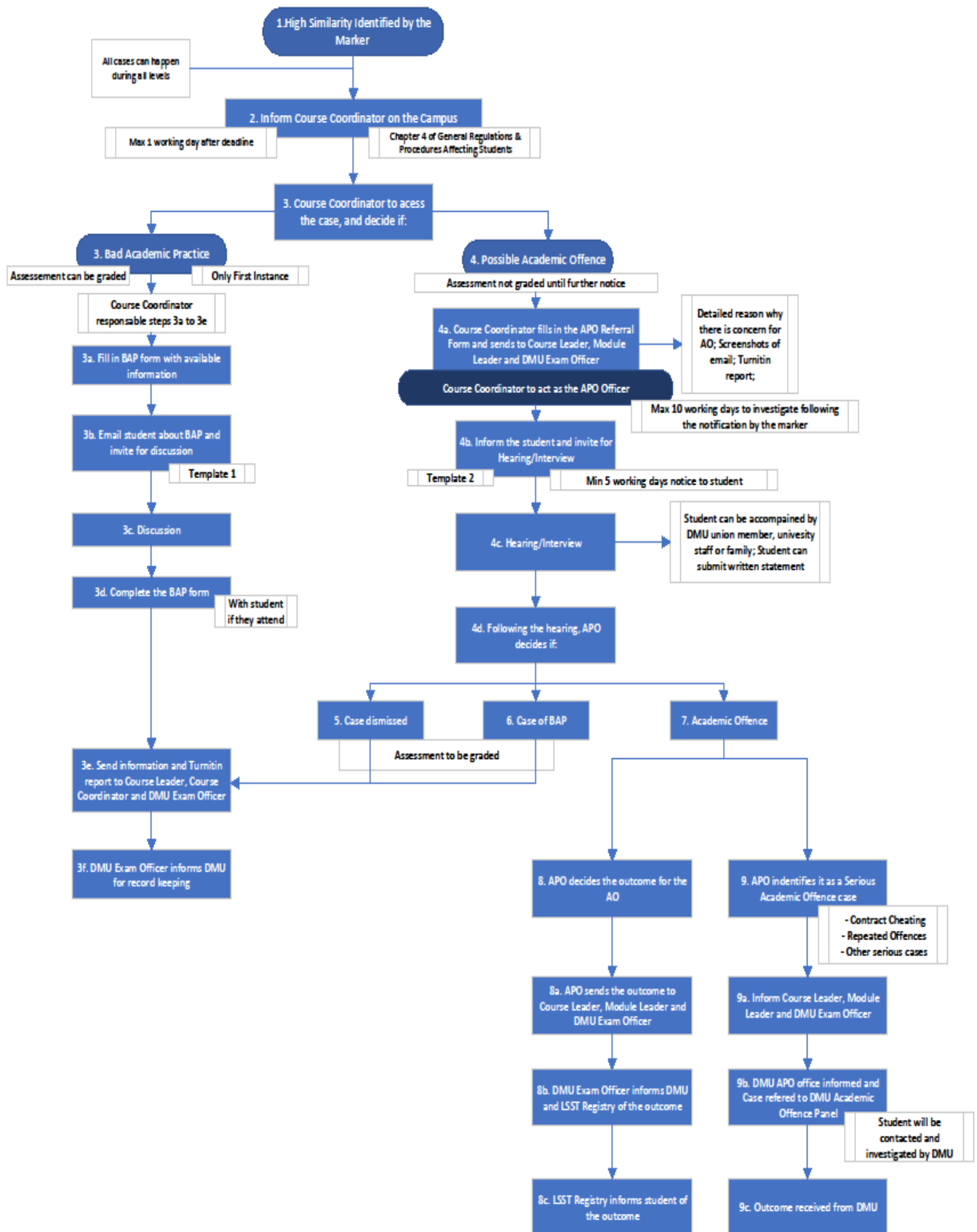
<http://oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/oia-complaint-form.aspx>

## **14. Independent External Review**

- 14.1. Following the completion of DMU's internal procedures, a student may request that the OIA, the independent ombudsman service, review their complaint about the outcome of the University's academic misconduct process. The OIA must receive the complaint within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter:

<http://oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/oia-complaint-form.aspx>

## 15. DMU's Procedure to Address Poor Academic Practice and Academic Misconduct Cases Flowchart





## Appendix: Academic Integrity Statement

**NB:** As of March 2023, the QAA will no longer consent to be the Designated Quality Body in England (DQB). Nevertheless, the London School of Science and Technology regards these principles below as essential to our role as a leading provider of further and higher education.

### A. QAA Academic Integrity Charter Principles

The Charter is made up of the 7 Principles of Academic Integrity:

1. Everyone is responsible as part of a 'whole community' approach
2. A 'whole community' approach
3. Working together as a sector
4. Engage with and empower students
5. Empower and engage with staff
6. Consistent and effective institutional policies and practices
7. Institutional autonomy

### B. Mapping of Academic Integrity Principles to LSST's Policies

#### Everyone is responsible as part of a 'whole community' approach

LSST's policies and practices ensure commitment to upholding the QAA's Academic Integrity and it is every students' and staff members' responsibility across the School. LSST provides practical guidance on how to uphold academic integrity and good academic practice through the School's Academic Integrity Policy and its training sessions for academic staff.

#### A 'whole community' approach

LSST recognises that academic misconduct takes many forms although detection and penalties are important, they cannot provide the whole solution. The 'whole community' approach is taken into account in the educational and support processes provided by the School by limiting opportunities to commit academic misconduct, through deploying institution-wide detection methods, improving practice through case reporting and data collection and the School's clearly stated institutional values.

#### Working together as a sector

LSST recognises that academic misconduct is an issue that can affect the integrity of all higher education providers and have a severe impact upon the reputation of the entire UK sector. LSST is committed to working with its partner universities to share best practices and to work together on issues of mutual concern such as, sharing intelligence on essay or degree mills that are targeting their students or staff.

#### Engage with and empower students

The School is committed to supporting its students by providing them with as much knowledge as possible about academic integrity and the possible consequences of misconduct including the repercussions it can have on their future careers.

LSST has recently revised the School's Academic Integrity Policy to be more accessible and comprehensive. Other student resources include, but are not limited to:

- Harvard referencing workshops





- Student Union Support and Advice
- Careers and Employability Guidance

Academic integrity is communicated to students through classroom lectures, tutorials, School emails, social media posts and newsletters since it is of utmost priority to educate our students on academic integrity.

We are currently working towards recognising and supporting student academic integrity 'champions'.

### **Empower and engage with staff**

The School recognises that lecturers and professional and academic staff play a critical role in deterring and identifying incidents of student academic misconduct. LSST communicates its academic misconduct policies and procedures to staff and has developed a framework that describes the processes that need to be followed when cases of misconduct have been identified. This includes staff training and development on tools and resources that detect breaches of academic misconduct and how best to educate students on the topic.

Methods, tools and resources our staff use to detect and deter breaches include but are not limited to:

- Change assessments regularly in each module, rather than just 'roll over' the same assessment type every year.
- Turnitin
- Formative feedback
- Referencing guidance
- Encouraging students to submit drafts
- Academic writing workshops

### **Consistent and effective institutional policies and practices**

The School's Academic Integrity Policy provides both students and staff clear definitions, terms and processes that define academic integrity and maintain the policies and practices. The School's Academic Integrity policy clearly states the different types of academic misconduct breaches – minor or serious. The policy also includes how the School determines misconduct activity, the fair and clear investigative procedures and penalties, if found guilty. Our Academic Integrity Policy is subject to periodic review every year with the allowance for updates to be made as required by changes in law or operational practices.

### **Institutional autonomy**

LSST acknowledges its responsibility in promoting and maintaining the quality and integrity of its institution. The School recognises that we are in the best position to provide our students with the tools and support they need to succeed in their independent learning and avoid academic misconduct. Mapping the School's Academic Integrity Policy against the QAA's Academic Integrity Charter will further enhance and showcase the good work we do.

Policies related to the Academic Integrity Policy:

1. Anti-Bribery Policy
2. Fitness to Practice (Work Placements and DBS) Policy
3. Library Regulations Policy





4. Personal Academic Tutoring Policy
5. Student Induction Policy
6. VLE Policy
7. Student Handbook
8. Student Complaints Policy



## Version History

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Approved by:	The Board of Governors	December 2021
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Revised by:	Quality Manager Head of Registry	
Revision summary:	<i>Enhancement of sections concerning definitions, scope and procedures. DMU procedures flowchart added. Academic Integrity Statement added. Document formatting and versions control applied.</i>	
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Revision summary:	<i>Annual review and update, Principal changed to Official Reviewer throughout the policy, title change from 'Awarding Body - DMU' to 'DMU Registered Student', minor grammatical corrections, document format applied, version control applied.</i>	
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