**Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure**

**Introduction**

1. This procedure is designed to deal with allegations of Academic Misconduct for students enrolled on courses of study at CECOS. The procedure will not apply to students registered on courses of study where CECOS is not directly responsible for undertaking the assessment of students
2. In terms of this Policy, **Unfair Academic Practice** includes Plagiarism, Collusion and other forms of malpractice by students during the assessment process. This includes the submission of assignments which have been purchased or downloaded from ‘exam writing’ websites, use of Artificial Intelligence and other means which result in work that is not authored by the student.
3. This procedure will be subject to an annual review.

***UK Quality Code* Expectations for Standards and Quality and Guiding Principles of particular relevance are:**

* Assessment
* Enabling Student Achievement
* External Expertise
* Monitoring and Evaluation
* Student Engagement

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism may be defined as: “Stealing material from another source and passing it off as own work” (Park, 2003) Plagiarism is therefore, the theft or appropriation of someone else's work without proper acknowledgement and presenting the materials as if they were one's own. At CECOS College a 0% plagiarism tolerance policy is followed. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and the consequences are severe.

Plagiarism is explained fully during Induction. It is especially important for students to become aware of plagiarism in all its styles and dimensions, for a very specific reason. Deliberate plagiarism is regarded as a serious act of academic misconduct. Please see the Academic Malpractice Policy for a full list of consequences of plagiarism.

**Paraphrasing**

Paraphrasing means putting someone else’s ideas into your own words without properly crediting or citing the original author. As a result, paraphrasing is a form of plagiarism if your text is too close to the original wording even where the source has been cited.

**Collusion**

Collusion is where students work together to complete an assessment that should be taken independently. Talking to friends and peers about a topic is a valuable way to improve understanding and support learning. However, there is a line between working collaboratively, or in cooperation, and collusion.

**False Authorship & use of artificial intelligence (AI)**

False authorship occurs when a student is not the author of the work they have submitted, and therefore is a form of plagiarism. The false authorship may be the result of a student engaging with a third party and/or software tool to complete an assessment, either for the whole of the assessment or parts of the work submitted. This engagement can be direct or through a platform. This may include work produced by:

* another student,
* an essay mill,
* a family member or friend,
* a tutoring service or
* the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software (e.g., Generative Pre-trained Transformer (ChatAI,GPT-3/Chatbot), Megatron-turning Natural Language Generation (MT-NLG), ChatBot and Wordtune).

Use of answers by tutoring services, essay mills and platforms such as ChatGPT is False Authorship. As it is the authorship of work that is called into question, there is no requirement to prove that the work has been purchased.

The submission of work which is either generated and/or improved by language model software for the purposes of gaining marks will be regarded as False Authorship and seen as an attempt to gain an intentional unfair academic advantage.

**The procedure**

1. All assignment-based assessments and similar student work will be submitted online and automatically scanned through Turn-it-In software. Students may have the opportunity to submit draft assignments to view the originality reports on the draft prior to making a final submission. **All students will be strongly advised to take advantage of this opportunity to avoid allegations of plagiarism being made at a later stage of the assessment process.**
2. In **ALL** cases tutors will mark the submitted assignment in the normal manner and will pass an un-moderated mark to the Programme Manager or their nominee. Tutors will have access to the first page of the Turn-it-In Originality Report but must mark the work in the normal manner. A tutor does not have the power to award a’ Fail’ grade on the assumption that plagiarism or some other form of malpractice has occurred. The assignment may then be internally verified (Pearson programmes) or second marked/moderated (other programmes) using the process set out in the Assessment Policy.
3. Under no circumstances should a tutor make a comment relating to allegations of academic misconduct on the feedback sheet attached to the assignment. Where academic misconduct is believed to have occurred the tutor must report this in writing to the Programme Manager and to the Director of Quality (or nominee), clearly identifying the nature of any allegation. Repeat offences will be taken to the Principal.
4. The Originality Report obtained through Turn-it-In will inform the marking process as follows:
5. where the match is 25% or less the assessment will be marked without regard to any additional malpractice regulations.
6. where the match is greater than 25% the assessment will be marked using normal academic criteria.
7. where a student has a score in excess of 30% and over 50% the Turnitin report will be scrutinised and considered for poor referencing as well as evidence of plagiarism. Evidence that scores are not a result of referencing to key policies, reference points and documents will be referred, and a letter issued notifying the student of the malpractice.
8. Assessed work which exceeds 50% will **automatically** be referred to the Programme Manager to review the nature of similarities and may have grades reduced or be failed as a result of plagiarism, depending on the level and nature of similarities. In the case of grade reduction, students will be sent a letter related to the offence and warning about the consequences of further offences in line with the awarding body academic regulations.
9. When an allegation of Academic Misconduct is received by the Director of Quality, a formal letter will be sent to the student containing the following:

i) details of the alleged offence;

ii) a copy of the Academic Misconduct Procedure;

iii) the date of the next meeting of the Unfair Academic Practice Panel;

iv) an invitation for the student to attend the next meeting of the Unfair Academic Practice Panel with the right to be accompanied by a witness or friend;

v) an invitation to provide a written response to the allegation should the student not wish to attend the Panel meeting.

1. If the Unfair Academic Practice Panel finds the student not to be guilty of the allegation(s) of Academic Misconduct/Unfair Practice, then the original verified/moderated grade for the assignment will stand. The allegation of Misconduct will be removed from the student’s record (unless this is in contravention of an awarding body requirement).
2. Penalties for confirmed cases of Academic Misconduct will be applied as follows:

**i) Official warning letter**

This will apply where the Unfair Academic Practice Panel finds that the student was guilty of Academic Misconduct (for example, poor or inadequate referencing) but had not deliberately set out to deceive the examiners. The mark awarded will stand. If the original grade was a fail the student will be entitled to re-assessment.

A student can receive only **one** Warning Letter during their course of study. Any further allegations will not be considered to be poor academic practice.

**ii) Fail and first official warning (mark capped where permissible)**

This will apply to students who have committed a first offence but where the offence is either;

a) considered to be minor or

b) the Turn-it-In score was less than 30% and was from a range of sources.

Students will be permitted to re-submit the assignment but, where appropriate/possible, the mark will be capped at 40%/Pass.

**iii) Fail and final official warning (mark capped where permissible)**

This will apply to first offences and second or subsequent offences where serious plagiarism is confirmed. In such cases the Turn-it-In score will be greater than 50%. In such cases the Unfair Academic Practice Panel will determine whether or not the student should be given the opportunity for re-assessment. Where re-assessment is permitted the mark will (if possible) be capped at 40%/Pass.

**iv) Exclusion from the unit/module or course**

This will apply:

a) to a second case of plagiarism in the same module/unit;

b) to a third proven case of plagiarism in a course of study;

c) where a student has submitted an assignment which he/she has not prepared;

d) where a student is found guilty of academic misconduct during an examination.

1. The Unfair Academic Practice Panel will meet as required to review cases of alleged academic misconduct. Recommendations made by the Panel will be ratified by the next meeting of the Academic Board.
2. Students will have the right to appeal to an external Academic Adjudicator against the findings of the Unfair Academic Practice Panel. The external Academic Adjudicator will be appointed by the College and will in most cases be drawn from a partner institution, and will be wholly independent of the College. The decision made by the Academic Adjudicator will be binding on the student and the College. There will be no further right of appeal unless permitted by the appropriate Awarding Body.

**13. Unfair Academic Practice Panel membership**

Chair: Director of Quality (or nominee)

Programme Manager or nominee

Head of Programme or, when not available, a member of the academic staff not involved with the allegations under consideration

Panel Secretary

The Chief Executive Officer will have the right of attendance.

**APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1 – letter inviting student to come to an Academic Misconduct review meeting**

**Appendix 2 – letter informing student of the outcome of the Academic Misconduct meeting**

**Appendix A**

CONFIDENTIAL

[Students name and address]

[Date]

Dear [Students name]

Course and Module:

I am writing to inform you that the Programme staff suspect that academic misconduct has occurred in the above module in relation to coursework that you have recently submitted. Please attend a meeting at CECOS to be held on:

Date:

Time:

Place:

CECOS and the awarding body defines academic misconduct as any action(s) or behaviour likely to confer an unfair advantage in assessment, whether by advantaging a candidate for assessment or disadvantaging (deliberately or unconsciously) another or others.

Examples of such misconduct include the submission of material (written, visual or oral), originally produced by another person or persons or oneself, without due acknowledgement, so that the work could be assumed to be the Students own or the submission of work produced in collaboration for an assignment based on the assessment of individual work. (Such misconduct is typically described as plagiarism and collusion.)

The purpose of this meeting and the academic misconduct procedure can be found in the Student Handbook and more information is available from the Academic Development Manager on request.

You are entitled to be accompanied at the meeting by a friend and you may also wish to seek the guidance of the Student Council. If you fail to attend the meeting, any reasons advanced for non-attendance will be considered and the proceedings may be adjourned to a later date. If no reasons are advanced, or if they are judged invalid, the meeting will conclude that you have admitted academic misconduct and will issue you with an Academic Misconduct Warning (see our Academic Misconduct Regulations). Please confirm that you will be attending this meeting.

Yours sincerely,

[Name of Programme Coordinator]

Programme Coordinator on behalf of the Director of Quality.

Tel: 020 7359 3316

Email: mandyhobart@cecos.co.uk

**Cc.**

**Appendix B**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

[Students name and address]

[Date]

Dear [Students name]

**Course & Module:**

Further to the Academic Misconduct Meeting held on *[date]*, I write to confirm that your behaviour in the above module was contrary to the Academic Misconduct Regulations and that this letter constitutes an Academic Misconduct Warning.

The effect of this warning is that the piece of work concerned will be awarded a mark of 0% . Provided that you have not exhausted your assessment opportunities, you will be permitted to resubmit the piece of work in question but your mark will be capped at 40%/Pass. As this will also count as reassessment within the module, the component mark for the Module will also be capped to a pass mark.

This matter is now closed, but you should:

1. ensure that you familiarise yourself with the academic conventions of referencing, before you submit further work for assessment (you should refer to the Referencing Guide which can be found on LiveCampus

(b) read the guidance on plagiarism in your programme handbook and student handbook;

(c) seek advice from either your lecturer or Course Manager if you are unsure of the rules;

(d) note that any future academic misconduct on your part is likely to lead to a serious penalty.

Yours sincerely,

Programme Coordinator on behalf of the Director of Quality.

Tel: 020 7359 3316

Email: mandyhobart@cecos.co.uk

Cc: