

## **ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY**

**Approved  
November 2004**

First edition approved April 2004

Quality Assurance & Enhancement Office  
eca  
Lauriston Place  
Edinburgh EH3 9DF  
Tel: 0131 2216042  
e-mail: [m.sproule@eca.ac.uk](mailto:m.sproule@eca.ac.uk)

## **ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY**

This policy seeks to deal with Academic Misconduct. It defines Academic Misconduct, gives guidance to staff and students to help prevent the occurrence of such misconduct and outline the procedures to be adopted to deal with such incidents and indicates the academic penalties in proven cases.

The objective of establishing this policy is to maintain the integrity of the University's academic awards and procedures and to provide students a fair opportunity to respond to any allegation of academic misconduct.

There are different types of academic misconduct, including plagiarism, cheating, collusion and any other attempts to obtain an unfair academic advantage. These are forms of academic misconduct and are entirely unacceptable for any student at **eca**. Alleged academic misconduct at whatever stage of a student's studies, whether before or after graduation, will be investigated and dealt with appropriately by **eca**.

While it is expected that for any piece of academic work, be it written, studio work, visual or spoken, a body of research will be undertaken which may involve drawing on a range of other people's experiences, investigations and insights, it is expected that this will lead to a resulting piece of work which is a personal synthesis by the student which gives full acknowledgement to the sources used.

### **1 DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES**

The following are different definitions and examples of academic misconduct but do not constitute an exhaustive list:

#### **1.1 Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is defined as the presentation of another person's work, be they images, ideas, opinions or discoveries, whether published or not, as the student's own, or alternatively appropriating the artwork, images or computer generated work of others without properly acknowledging the source, with or without their permission, intentionally or unintentionally.

Examples of plagiarism are:

- Including in one's own work extracts from another person's work without the use of quotation marks and crediting the source.
- Copying the work of another student, with or without their knowledge or agreement.
- The use of ideas of another person without acknowledgement of the source.
- Paraphrasing or summarising another person's work without acknowledgement.

- Cutting and pasting from electronic sources without explicit acknowledgement of the source or the URL or author, and without explicitly marking the pasted text in inverted commas. *Note: the inclusion of a large amounts of acknowledged pasted material as well as over-quotation from a printed source always raises doubts about how much of the work presented should be credited to the student.*

## 1.2 Cheating

Cheating is defined as obtaining access to the work of another person by deceitful means for use in examination and assessment, whether or not it is subsequently used fraudulently.

Examples of cheating are:

- Gaining access to or the use of unauthorised notes or other material relating to an assessment.
- Introducing any information, including electronically stored information into the examination room, unless expressly permitted by the examination or programme regulations.
- Communicating with or copying from another student during an examination except insofar as the examination regulation may specifically permit this, e.g group assessment.

## 1.3 Collusion

Collusion is a form of plagiarism. It may be defined as the unauthorised and unattributed collaboration of students or others in a piece of assessed work.

Examples of collusion:

- A student who knowingly allows another student to copy all or part of his/her own work and to submit it as that student's own unaided work.
- To submit a piece of work entirely as one's own when the work was produced in collaboration with one or more student(s).

## 1.4 Falsification

Falsification is defined as any attempt to present fictitious or distorted data, evidence, references, experimental results or material contributing to a piece of assessed work and/or knowingly make use of such material.

Examples of falsification:

- The presentation of data in reports, projects or other form of assessment based on controlled investigations, surveys or analysis falsely purported to have been carried out by the student or obtained by unfair means.
- The invention of references and/or false claims.

## 1.5 Deceit

Deceit is defined as seeking to achieve an advantage through, for example, the misrepresentation or non disclosure of relevant information.

Examples of deceit:

- Resubmitting one's own previously assessed work.
- Failure to disclose that a piece of work was submitted for assessment and has been or will be used for other academic purposes.

## **1.6 Personation**

'Personation' is the assumption by one person of the identity of another person with intent to deceive or to gain unfair advantage. It is the legal term of what is usually referred to by the lay person as 'impersonation'.

Examples of personation:

- One person assumes the identity of a student, with intent to gain unfair advantage for the student.
- The student is knowingly and willingly impersonated by another with intent of gaining unfair advantage for himself/herself.

## **1.7 Ghosting**

Ghosting exists where:

- A student submits as their own work, a piece of work that has been produced in whole or part by another person on their behalf, eg the use of 'ghost writing' service or similar.
- A student will also be guilty of academic misconduct if he/she deliberately makes available or seeks to make available material to another student (of this College or elsewhere) whether in exchange for financial gain or otherwise with the intention that the material is used by the other student to commit academic misconduct.

## **2 GUIDANCE**

It is recognised that it will never be possible to eliminate academic misconduct entirely, eca is firmly committed to strengthening its regulation and procedures for dealing with academic misconduct.

### **2.1 Action to be taken by student:**

Student must ensure that any work submitted for assessment is their own. In order to avoid suspicion or charge of dishonesty relating to any of the above, students should always make sure they take all reasonable steps to either acknowledge the sources or background of work submitted.

With regard to essays, reports and dissertations, a simple rule dictates that it is necessary to acknowledge sources. All direct quotations must be placed in quotation marks, and the source immediately cited (detailed references and a full bibliography).

Wherever a student is in doubt, the student should seek in the first instance the advice from the Academic Tutor responsible for assigning the work.

For more details, please refer to Appendix 1: *Student Guidance on Academic Integrity and Honesty*

## **2.2 Action to be taken by staff:**

When dealing with academic misconduct, avoidance is clearly the preferable strategy. All members of staff should be committed to implementing these regulations and procedures and to ensure that cases are always reported promptly and acted upon swiftly.

For further advice, please refer to Appendix 2 : *Staff Guidance on Plagiarism*

## **3 PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH SUSPECTED CASES OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

### **3.1 Reporting**

When academic misconduct is suspected at any stage of a student's programme, whether discovered before or after graduation, it is important that it is investigated and dealt with appropriately by the College.

#### **In-programme assessment**

If a marker suspects academic misconduct, the following procedure is followed:

If a student is suspected of attempting to gain unfair advantage in work submitted for assessment, the marker informs the relevant Head of School who will review the work and then reports the case to the Registry Manager. An initial investigation will be carried out and collated by Registry, reviewing the work concerned with those responsible for the assessment. Notes of all meetings should be taken by Registry Manager (or his/her nominee).

The affected student shall be informed in writing by the Registry Manager that his or her assessment has been suspended pending an investigation of suspected academic misconduct.

If a student suspects a fellow student of academic misconduct, the following procedure is followed:

The student should speak to a member of staff in the department or School concerned. The identity of the student making the report shall remain confidential.

The member of staff concerned should inform the relevant Head of School who will review the situation and then reports the case to the Registry Manager. An initial investigation will be carried out and collated by Registry, reviewing the work concerned with those responsible for the assessment. Notes of all meetings should be taken by the Registry Manager (or his/her nominee).

The affected student shall be informed in writing by the Registry Manager that his or her assessment has been suspended pending an investigation of suspected academic misconduct.

### **Examinations**

Where academic misconduct is suspected in an examination, the following procedure is followed:

The Invigilator in the presence of the Chief Invigilator, informs the student of his or her suspicions and clearly annotates the student's script. The student will also be advised by the Invigilator that a full report will be submitted following the examination.

Immediately following the examination, the Invigilator will submit a full report of the matter. The report will be returned to Registry along with the script and other examination stationery.

If a student believes academic misconduct to be taking place during an examination:

It is the responsibility of the student to bring this to the attention of the Invigilator. However, no action can be taken unless the suspected academic misconduct is subsequently verified by the Invigilator.

### **3.2 Investigation by Head of School/ Registry Manager**

The Head of School and Registry Manager shall interview the student concerned. They can also interview any student who has allegedly allowed their work to be copied. As soon as practicable, the student will be informed in writing of the alleged offence and of the requirement to attend for interview.

The student shall have the right to be accompanied at the interview by a member of the eca community.

The Head of School and Registry Manager shall have a member of the Registry support staff present to maintain a record of the meeting.

At the interview the student will be shown a copy of his or her work, duly marked up and the student shall be given the opportunity to justify the work and invited to admit or deny responsibility.

### **Possible outcomes:**

#### **No academic misconduct has taken place**

If it is judged that no academic misconduct has taken place, the student will be informed in writing and the piece of work in question will be marked in accordance with normal arrangements, without penalty.

#### **Academic misconduct is upheld**

If the investigation proves beyond reasonable doubt that an offence has occurred this will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

The student will be notified in writing of the outcome by Registry Manager and a copy kept on file in the student record in Registry and copy to School. The recommended outcome will be ratified by the Examination Board or Progression Board.

The Examination Board will be notified accordingly, at its next scheduled meeting to take into account when considering the mark and action taken. The Registry Manager will notify the Convener of the Examination Board before the Examination Board meeting.

### **3.3 Penalties**

Wherever there is evidence of an attempt to gain advantage by dishonest means an Examination Board may, having taken full advice, impose a penalty or penalties which it believes to be merited by the gravity of the offence and the level of the student's programme of study which is being assessed. These penalties may include:

- If it is a first offence and the student is found guilty he/she will be required to re-submit work or re-sit the examination; mark awarded may be on a scale between a minimum pass mark only and a zero grade
- If the investigation concludes the offence is a second offence or a more serious the Student Disciplinary Procedures will be used. The outcome could include withdrawing the right of the student to re-sit an exam/re-submit an assessed piece of work; removal of the student from the programme and/ or expulsion from eca

In all cases a note of the allegation, outcome and action taken should be recorded in the student's file in Registry.

If it is judged that no academic misconduct has taken place, the student will be informed in writing and the piece of work in question will be marked in accordance with normal arrangements, without penalty. The mark for the work should reflect the academic quality of the work.

### 3.4 Right of Appeal

The student has the right of appeal against the decisions reached by an Examination Board. It should be stressed that an appeal must be submitted in compliance with eca's Academic Appeals procedure. (*see Academic Appeals procedure*)

### 3.5 Review and Enhancement

At the end of the academic session, the Registry will submit a summary report on the cases of academic misconduct to the Quality Office.

The policy will be subject to review on an annual basis to ensure compliance with best practice, legislation and the QAA Code of Practice.

<p><b>Acknowledgement:</b> Resources produced by the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) have been used substantially in the preparation of this document.</p>
---

## Appendix 1

### STUDENT GUIDANCE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND HONESTY

#### Academic Integrity and Honesty

eca is an institution of learning. The common factor that links students on taught programmes, PhD students undertaking original research and academic staff is the *enhancement of intellectual skills and attributes* and that is why concern for intellectual honesty pervades all eca activities.

When a student presents himself/herself for any examination or assessment, (s)he is asking the assessors to make a judgement on what his/her has made as an individual of the studies undertaken. The range of marks and the level of award is an indicator of a student's academic abilities. It is vital that student must ensure that any work submitted for assessment is their own.

Plagiarism, cheating and collusion and any other attempts to obtain an unfair academic advantage are entirely unacceptable and is viewed by the College as a serious disciplinary offence. And is outlined in eca's 'Academic Misconduct Policy'.

Students can avoid plagiarism by ensuring that any sources used in submitted work are adequately acknowledged and properly reference and adhere to appropriate academic referencing conventions. This will include:

- Provide full and meticulous citation of all sources used in preparation of a piece of work
- Proper and accurate referencing of the sources – a source which cannot be traced because of inadequate references is in effect 'unacknowledged'
- The basic principle is to make clear to your reader what is your work and what is someone else's – be clear, careful and honest.

It should be noted that referencing and citation practices may vary between subject areas. Additional information on appropriate academic practice within particular subject areas will be provided by academic staff.

Reading good scholarly work should provide useful examples and models of good practice.

Remember: the heart of academic life is to learn how to make correct and responsible use of other people's work in order to develop your own understanding of a subject.

## Other useful resources

<http://www.waldenu.edu/acad-rsrcs/writing-center/plagiarism/students.html>

Plagiarism prevention resources for students, explaining the difference between plagiarising and paraphrasing and incorporating an exercise based upon the tale of the Three Little Pigs to illustrate the points made.

[http://ec.hku.hk/plagiarism/content\\_brief.htm](http://ec.hku.hk/plagiarism/content_brief.htm)

This website aims to help students to avoid plagiarism by improving their academic writing skills. A Self-test feature is included to assess whether you can identify and avoid plagiarism

<http://www.ukcosa.org.uk/pages/guidenote.htm>

UKCOSA: The council for international education. UKCOSA provides information on a range of topics for prospective and current international students in the UK. Of particular relevance to this guide is their publication "Guidance notes for students 15 : Study methods used in the UK".

Students may find it beneficial to draw on the resources available at the **eca** libraries.

<p><b>Acknowledgement:</b> Resources produced by the Joint Information System have been used substantially in the preparation of this document.</p>
---

## Appendix 2

### STAFF GUIDANCE ON PLAGIARISM

#### Staff guidance on plagiarism

Plagiarism is a growing concern for academic communities throughout the world. **eca** recognised that there is a need to uphold its academic integrity by educating students about plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct and actively detecting breaches of their academic expectations.

When dealing with plagiarism, avoidance is the preferred strategy. The following steps can be adopted by staff to help reduce the incidence of plagiarism.

#### Educating and make expectations clear to students

Many students are uncertain about what does and does not constitute plagiarism. It is important for staff to take a proactive approach in informing and teaching their students about plagiarism and ensuring that they understood the implications of breaching the relevant regulations.

- Induction –is a good place to introduce students to expected conventions for authorship, other appropriate use and acknowledgement of all form of intellectual material to avoid plagiarism
- Provide clear guidance on what is and what is not acceptable in the use of resources available on websites
- Be a role model of good practice, by citing references in lectures, tutorials and hand-outs
- Be aware of cultural differences and that certain groups of students (from certain national background) are particularly at risk, and may require special attention
- Heighten awareness of plagiarism by requiring students to submit, with each piece of work, a signed cover sheet declaring that except for ideas and passage properly acknowledge, all work is the student's own
- When assessing group-work, guidance should be provided on how the contributions of individual should be identified

#### Design assessment to minimise opportunities for plagiarism

It is good practice to counter plagiarism through the design of assessment tasks. This can be achieved by:

- Avoid using the same assessment task year after year

- Ensure that assessment tasks are sufficiently varied, in order to prevent student from submitting the same piece of work twice.
- Set assessment tasks that require students to compare, analyse and evaluate rather than to describe or list information.

### **Detecting plagiarism**

Staff are encouraged to educate themselves and be familiar with resources that may be used for plagiarism.

- Check that you are familiar with available resources related to assessment task you set
- Demonstrate to your students your awareness of electronic resources available to them
- Make use of search engines and other pieces of detection software.

Further advice about this guidance can be obtained by contacting Maggie Sproule, Tel: 0131 221 6042, e-mail: [m.sproule@eca.ac.uk](mailto:m.sproule@eca.ac.uk)

**Acknowledgement:** Resources produced by the Joint Information System have been used substantially in the preparation of this document.