

PROVIDER NAME:	CCT College Dublin
POLICY AREA:	Standard 5: Student-centred teaching, learning and assessment

Policy and Procedure Title: Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism Policy	Policy No: CCTP511	Version: 2.2
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Policy Statement

The reputation of CCT and of its graduates depends on upholding standards in teaching, learning, assessment, research and scholarly activity. Learners have the right to be assessed on the quality of their own work and have the corresponding duty to present only their own work for assessment. Any form of academic misconduct is unacceptable. The purpose of this policy is to allow for a consistent approach to the treatment of suspected academic misconduct, including plagiarism, in CCT College Dublin and to promote a culture of academic honesty and best practice.

CCT recognises that embarking on third level education is a learning journey in terms of the subject matter but also the development of academic skills. A proactive, supportive and developmental approach to the prevention of academic misconduct is promoted. Learners are advised of the expectations and requirements in this regard and are provided with guidance on academic writing and referencing. Ongoing support is available through the CCT Library Service upon request.

CCT deems academic misconduct to be any act of attempting to secure an unfair advantage or attain marks through improper means. This includes but is not restricted to:

- Plagiarism or seeking to submit the work of others as their own
- Copying the work of a fellow learner, past learners, or other person, with or without their consent
- Collusion in the completion of an assessment where this is not authorised
- Taking unauthorised materials into an examination centre or having them on your person during the course of an examination
- Accessing unauthorised materials during the course of an examination, outside of the examination hall
- Obtaining or attempting to obtain an examination paper or marking scheme in advance of an examination
- Academic fraud
- Misrepresentation including the use of essay mills or other means through which the completion of assessments is undertaken by another party

The College distinguishes between academic misconduct and academic naivety. It is understood that naivety or inadvertent misconduct may occur in learners new to higher education i.e. those undertaking level 6 studies. Learners studying at higher framework levels are expected to have developed their knowledge and understanding of acceptable academic conduct and the expectations within CCT.

This policy defines and outlines the different categories of academic misconduct and the associated means of prevention and detection. It details the penalties associated with levels of academic misconduct and plagiarism, and the function of the Academic Standards Board of CCT, in dealing with alleged acts of academic misconduct and plagiarism.

CCT uses URKUND plagiarism detection software for the submission of all written assessments. A report is generated for each student submission outlining where text in a student submission may be similar or identical to that in other sources. A percentage of matching text is issued but this alone is not confirmation of plagiarism. Faculty members must review the report and determine whether or not there is evidence to support an allegation of suspected plagiarism.

Findings are based upon the balance of probability meaning that upon weighing up the evidence presented, the case that is more probable will be supported. Where it is felt both cases are equally probable, the case will be found in favour of the learner.

This is an internal procedure for the purpose of managing allegations of academic misconduct and as such will not normally involve external legal representation. Where a learner seeks to engage legal representation, the College will engage its legal team. Doing so may result in the timeframes outlined in this policy being extended.

Definitions and Principles

In general terms, Academic Misconduct is an act or omission contrary to the College's academic regulations, which, if undetected, would confer an unfair advantage on a learner in an assessment, where a learner's knowledge, skills and performance is measured as progression towards, or for the conferment of, an academic award or professional qualification.

Plagiarism: The act of presenting someone else's words or ideas as your own, without permission or proper referencing (in compliance with the College's Referencing Policy), is considered Plagiarism. Plagiarism includes copying or incorporating material derived from pre-existing work (published or unpublished) without the permission of the originator or without an established form of acknowledgement. It includes verbatim quotation, paraphrasing, imitation or other devices, which give the impression of being a learner's original work. It also includes the exploitation of ideas from others without proper acknowledgement, which mostly occurs in research, project work or assignments.

Collusion: Collusion occurs when a learner submits, without appropriate acknowledgement of source, work that is done in collaboration with, or commissioned from, another person. It also occurs when a learner produces work for another learner or permits a learner to copy all or a part of his/her own work knowing that the work will be submitted as that of the other learner's work, other than such behaviour is expressly permitted by the College, in relation to that particular piece of coursework.

Misrepresentation: Misrepresentation is a statement or conduct in assessment, which intentionally conveys a false or wrong impression of material significance in the context of the work under assessment. Misrepresentation does not include unintentional inaccuracy.

Academic Fraud: Academic fraud is defined as deception, which includes, without prejudice the invention, distortion, fabrication, or falsification of data or other results of research or work of others.

Impersonation: Impersonation is the assumption of another person's identity with the intention of gaining unfair advantage during examinations or any other form of assessment. It also refers to a person who knowingly and willingly allows his or her identity to be assumed with the intention of gaining an unfair advantage for the person impersonated.

Academic Cheating: Academic Cheating is the offence of gaining or seeking to gain an unfair or fraudulent advantage in assessment, where the conduct is of such seriousness to be regarded as a major academic misconduct.

Unfair Advantage: Unfair Advantage is the offence of gaining or seeking to gain, conferring or seeking to confer, an unfair advantage by any unlawful device or ill practice.

The College recognises that there is a distinction between the degrees of severity of minor academic misconduct and minor offences of plagiarism, and, major academic misconduct and major offences of plagiarism; as defined below:

Minor Academic Misconduct: Minor Academic Misconduct refers to small scale and/or inadvertent plagiarism or any of the above defined academic misconduct forms, arising from negligence rather than deliberate intent. There are two instances of Minor Academic Misconduct recognised in this policy, those which occur for the first time, and those which occur for the second time, in the knowledge of the first infringement. A third or further minor academic infringement in the knowledge of the second infringement shall be deemed to be major academic misconduct. Two fitting examples of minor offences of plagiarism, would be: a) an instance where there was poor or inaccurate citation or referencing, and b) an instance where the plagiarism constitutes 10% or less (normally supported by investigation on plagiarism detection software) of coursework piece

Major Academic Misconduct: Major Academic Misconduct refers to flagrant cases of plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct (even those occurring for the first time) and all cases of misrepresentation, fraud, impersonation, and cheating. There are three instances recognised in this policy, those which occur for the first time, those which occur for the second time in the knowledge of the first infringement, and those which occur for the third time in the knowledge of the second infringement.

Staff Involved

All full time and part time staff faculty within CCT, School Manager, Dean of Academic Affairs, Dean of School, QA Officer, Faculty Coordinators

Procedure Outline / Method(s) used to carry out this procedure

Responsibility of

Evidence generated by this procedure to ensure its effectiveness

1. Academic Misconduct Process

The following sub-sections describe the process which takes place when a complainant suspects that a learner has committed one of the forms of academic misconduct, as defined in the *Definitions and Principles* section above, in a piece of coursework and/or examination.

1.1 Procedures and Process

1.1.1 Investigation of the complaint

A complainant who suspects a case of Academic Misconduct shall gather all available information and/or documentation to support the allegation related to the incident and refer the case(s) to the Faculty Coordinator for consideration by the Dean of School.

In respect of examinations, where an invigilator or faculty member suspects that academic misconduct has occurred or is occurring, or is reliably informed by any other person that academic misconduct is suspected, it is the responsibility of the invigilator to:

- Immediately bring to the learner's attention the suspicion of academic misconduct.

Lecturers / invigilators

Evidence of CA work and Plagiarised Work

Unauthorised materials
Exam incident report

- Ensure that the learner is prevented from further acts of academic misconduct of which he/she is suspected by confiscating any relevant unauthorised materials.
- Permit the learner to complete the examination or assessment.
- Inform the Senior Invigilator and provide a statement of the circumstances relating to the incident by completing an Exam Incident form with the Senior Invigilator, including a report of the work completed before the detection of the alleged academic misconduct, and the time that the alleged academic misconduct was detected.
- Request the learner to sign the incident form and advise them that the College will be in contact with them.

On completion of the examination, the Invigilator must bring the report to the attention of the QA Officer, who will refer it to the Dean of School.

The examination paper will be marked in the normal way by the examiner who will not, at this time, be informed of the allegation.

In the case of a continuous assessment / non-examination assessment, the faculty member suspecting academic misconduct must refer the matter to the Faculty Coordinator for consideration by the Dean of School. In doing so, the faculty member must provide the evidence to support the allegation. In the case of suspected plagiarism this should include the alleged original source(s) of the material. Where a report from plagiarism detection software is used to support the allegation, the faculty member must have reviewed the report and highlight which aspects of the report apply to the specific case. CCT acknowledges that such reports can highlight text as suspected plagiarism, but it is only through the assessment of the report by the subject matter expert can this be confirmed.

The Dean of School shall review all information and/or documentation available and may take into consideration the expert opinion of one other subject matter expert (not involved in any way with teaching and assessment of the module concerned). The Dean is required to determine whether or not there is a case to answer. If the Dean determines that there is no case to answer for the alleged incident, the case is closed, and no formal records are maintained.

If the Dean determines there is prima facia evidence that there is a case to answer, the learner must be formally notified that a case of suspected academic misconduct is being investigating in respect of the specific assessment. Details of the nature of the misconduct should be included as well as a link to the Academic Misconduct Policy (this policy). The learner has the right of response and should be invited to respond to the allegation within a specified timeframe (normally 5 working days).

If the learner responds and denies the allegation, the Dean will invite the student to attend an Academic Standards Board meeting. The Dean will advise the learner of this. The QA Officer will arrange this and issue the request to attend.

If the learner responds to admit the misconduct took place, the Dean is required to take the appropriate action as follows:
 Summary penalty: in the case of minor infringements the penalty shall be as in section 2 of this policy. In the case of Major Infringements, the matter must be referred to the Academic Standards Board (ASB).

QA Officer

Examiner

Faculty

Dean

Failure to respond to an allegation or a response after the deadline will result in the case proceeding without the response. The case will not be terminated as a result of non-response from the learner.

1.1.2 In referring the matter to the QA Officer, the Dean must provide a summary of the allegation and subsequent investigation. This should be accompanied by all supporting evidence from the investigation.

This statement and evidence will be incorporated into a letter which will be sent by the QA Officer to the learner, stating the learner's rights and shall inform the learner that he/she is requested to attend a scheduled Academic Standards Board (ASB) disciplinary hearing no less than 5 working days from the date of the notice, or such lesser period as the learner agrees. The letter will clearly provide a scheduled date and time for the proposed hearing and will also ask the learner to confirm his/her intentions in relation to the exercise of the learner rights, and intentions to participate in the hearing. The learner may be accompanied at the hearing by another learner or any other person the learner feels might be able to support him/her. The accompanying party would not normally be a legal representative or advocate and confirmation of their attendance must be provided to the QA Officer not less than 1 day prior to the hearing. The accompanying party is not invited to engage with the ASB but is there to support the learner.

Should the learner engage legal representation, the College will also engage legal representation for the duration of proceedings.

Notes will be kept of the meeting. This will not be a verbatim record, but an outline of the main points or issues discussed, and the substance of the questions asked and answered. This will be read back to the learner at the end of the meeting and the learner will be invited to initial and date each page. The learner has the right to decline to do so. In this case it will be noted in the record that the student so declined.

In all such cases examinable material will be assessed and marked in the normal manner. Grades/marks will be deferred on broadsheets of results until the disciplinary process has reached its conclusion.

1.1.3 The **Academic Standards Board** is established to deal with allegations of academic misconduct. The membership of this board cannot include the faculty member making the allegation. The ASB normally comprises of three members who can be selected from the following pool: Dean of School or nominee (ASB Chair), a lecturer and the QA Officer.

1.1.4 At the commencement of the ASB hearing, the Chair will request the learner to confirm that he / she was notified of the allegation being considered, the right to respond and the right to be accompanied.

1.1.5 If having regard to the evidence presented at the disciplinary hearing and the submissions made by the learner, the ASB considers that, on the balance of probability, a case of academic misconduct has not occurred, the Chair will notify the learner in writing of the decision and the notification will advise that all related records will be destroyed.

1.1.6 If having regard to the evidence presented at the disciplinary hearing and the submissions made by the learner, the ASB considers that, on the balance of probability, a case of academic misconduct has occurred, the Chair will notify the learner in writing of the decision and the notification will state:

Dean of School

QA Officer

ASB

Dean of School / QA Officer

Investigation evidence

Records Of investigations and ASB hearings

- a) the decision that academic misconduct has occurred
- b) the level of the misconduct (minor or major)
- c) the penalty to be applied
- d) the learner's rights of an appeal to an Appeals Board
- e) the period (5 working days) within which this appeal must be lodged by or on behalf of the learner

Appeals

1.2.1 Should the learner wish to appeal a decision of the ASB they must do so in writing within the timeframe specified in the written communication from the ASB.

Only a written request for an appeal made by the person concerned will be considered. The learner must supply evidence in support of his/her request. An appeal will only be granted upon the following grounds:

- A procedural irregularity occurred
- The College did not consider information that was available to it which was material to the case
- Additional information that would be beneficial to the case is available

Additional information that would be beneficial to the case will only be considered where there is evidence that this information was not known to the learner at the ASB stage.

The appeal should be submitted to the QA Officer and must include a full written statement detailing the grounds upon which the appeal is based and be accompanied by all relevant supporting evidence the learner wishes to have considered. Learners are advised to provide all evidence as part of the appeal application as evidence provided at a later date may not be considered.

The QA Officer will refer the appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs who will determine whether there are grounds for appeal. If the Dean determines there are grounds, the QA Officer will be advised to notify the learner of this and of the date and time of an Appeal hearing. The QA Officer may also be requested to undertake investigatory action to establish information pertaining to the appeal application.

The learner will be advised of their right to be accompanied to the hearing by another learner or any other person the learner feels might be able to support him/her. The accompanying party would not normally not be a legal representative or advocate and confirmation of their attendance must be provided to the QA Officer not less than 1 day prior to the hearing. The accompanying party is not invited to engage with the Appeals Board but is there to support the learner. Should the learner engage legal representation, the College will also engage legal representation for the duration of proceedings.

The Dean of Academic Affairs will convene an appeals board as follows:

The Membership and function of the Appeals Board will be as follows:

- Chair: Chair of Academic Council
- Two members of Academic Council, one of which must be an academic staff representative or School Manager

QA Officer

Dean of Academic Affairs

<p>- An external examiner or academic from outside the College.</p> <p>The QA Officer, or nominee, will act as secretary to the Appeals Board but will have no voting rights or input to the meeting or decision making.</p> <p>No member of the ASB can act as a member of the Appeals Board.</p> <p>The Appeals Board is considered quorate when the Chair and two others are present. The Board will consider the report of the ASB, any written application of the learner seeking the appeal along with any supporting evidence. The Appeals Board is entitled to ask the learner to address circumstances on which they based the appeal.</p> <p>The Appeals Board may seek (through the Chair) such information or advice as it considers necessary and, in such manner, as it considers appropriate. Having considered the circumstances, the Appeals Board will decide the outcome of the appeal. The College President reserves the right to engage the services of any appropriate professionals deemed necessary. A recording secretary will be selected from the College staff to take notes of the meeting but will not participate in the meeting.</p> <p>All decisions of an Appeals Board shall be by majority vote. In the event of a tie, the Chair shall have a casting vote. The learner will be informed by the QA Officer, in writing the outcome of the Appeals Board. Where appropriate, the Dean of Academic Affairs shall notify QQI of the outcome of the appeal.</p> <p>The outcome of the Appeals Board will be communicated to the learner in writing normally within 5 working days of the hearing. Where additional time and or information is required, the learner will be notified of this.</p> <p>The decision of the Appeal Board is final. There is no further right of appeal. The decision will be disseminated to the relevant departments in the College on a need to know basis.</p> <p>All records of appeal will be retained for one year after the learner completes the programme of study or exits from the programme.</p> <p>2. Application of Penalties</p> <p>2.1 The penalty applicable to confirmed cases of academic misconduct is determined by whether or not the incident constitutes a first or subsequent case of minor or major academic misconduct. The following graduation of penalties aims to ensure that a consistent approach is adopted across all academic programmes. Penalties outlined for major misconduct are minimum penalties. Any incidence of major academic misconduct can attract penalties up to and including expulsion.</p> <p>2.1.1 Penalty for Minor Academic Misconduct, first incident</p> <p>The learner is given a zero mark in the assessment that has proved to have resulted from academic misconduct. The result for any repeat assessment in that element of that assessment shall be capped at 40%. If the learner does not</p>	<p>Chair Dean of Academic Affairs</p> <p>QA Officer</p>	
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resubmit the element within the prescribed timeframe, he/she will receive a fail result for the entire piece of coursework. The learner is required to complete a workshop on good academic practice, provided by the CCT Library Service, before the result is issued. A record of the offence will be held internally. Any subsequent incident of academic misconduct is considered major misconduct.

2.1.2 Penalty for Major Academic Misconduct, first incident

The learner is given a zero mark for all assessment elements of the module (coursework and examination). The learner shall be registered for a second sitting on the module and his/her results arising from this sitting shall be capped by a pass result. The learner is required to complete a workshop on good academic practice, provided by the CCT Library Service, before the result is issued. A record of the offence is placed on the learner's file and shall be removed on programme completion should this be the only case of major academic misconduct committed.

2.1.4 Penalty for Major Academic Misconduct, second incident

The learner is suspended from the programme until the next semester in which there is an opportunity to retake all modules for that semester. The learner shall be registered for a second sitting on all modules and his/her results arising from these sittings shall be capped at a pass result. A permanent record of the offence is placed on the learner's file.

2.1.5 Penalty for Major Academic Misconduct, third incident

The learner is expelled from the College and shall not be permitted to re-enrol for a five-year period (pending outcome of a re-entry admissions meeting between the learner, the programme leader, and Head of Admissions). A permanent record of the offence is placed on the learner's file.

Note: CCT reserves the right to impose a financial penalty up to €200.00 in addition to the penalties specified for minor or major misconduct. In such cases the financial penalty must be settled before CCT will issue final results, transcripts, parchments or references.

Monitoring

Monitor (Job Title)	Frequency	Monitoring Method(s)
Dean of School Dean of Academic Affairs QA Officer	Ongoing reviews throughout the academic year After each ASB and examination period Annual review for full academic year	Review of records of correspondence between CCT and staff member suspected of misconduct case Review of minutes of Academic Council and/or Senior Management Team meetings, discussing any misconduct case arising Review of records of correspondence between CCT and external academic consultants, where applicable Review of all written records from the lecturers, learners, being reported or highlighted, to how the case was resolved

POLICY CONTROL SHEET

Policy Title	Academic Misconduct
Responsible Officer(s)	Dean of School, QA Officer
Issuance Date	August 2018
Effective Date	August 2018
Last Review Date	July 2019
Supersedes	Version 2.1
Next Review Date	August 2024
Designated Reviewer(s)	QA Officer
Scope	Internal staff (full and part time); Learners; Academic Standards Board; Appeals Board

Revision History

Revision	Approval Date	Revision Description	Originator	Approved By
New Policy	August 2015	New QA system	Senior Management Team	Head of Academics, College Registrar
Version 2.0	August 2017	Updating to reflect change in organisational responsibilities and to provide greater clarity on the process and requirements.	Dean of Academic Affairs	QA Committee
Version 2.1	April 2018	Update to membership of ASB	Dean of School	Academic Council
Version 2.1.	May 2018	Renumbered, was CCTP514, now CCTP511	QA Committee	Academic Council
Version 2.2	July 2019	Update to reflect use of URKUND Inclusion of referral to library course on academic writing. Changes in response to termination of Faculty Head post. Use of Dean of School for fast-track decision making where first offence is admitted.	SMT / QA Committee / ASB	Academic Council

References upon which the Policy section is based

CCT Policy area	Student centred teaching, learning, and assessment
Statutory & System Wide Basis	The Irish Qualifications and Quality Act (Education and Training), 2012; Standards and Guidelines for QA in the European Higher Education Area, QQI Assessment and Standards
Related CCT Policies / Forms	CCTP512 – Recheck / Review / Appeal Policy CCTF139 – Recheck / Review / Appeal Form