



Procedures for Academic Offences

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1. Procedures for academic offences

The college exists to provide and extend education and training amongst the communities it serves. An important aspect of academic endeavours is recognition of the effort and work of the individual student. As such, the college views attempts to falsely claim the achievements of others as one's own as serious academic offences; the college investigates all allegations of academic offences to:

- Maintain academic standards;
- Generate confidence in the college and its systems from students who do not seek advantage through academic offences;
- Protect the reputation of the college as a provider of Higher Education; and
- Protect the reputation of the college's validating universities and awarding bodies.

These procedures are to ensure the college deals with such allegations in a fair and just manner. These procedures apply to all students on Higher Education programmes at NCC.

The College will adhere to the following process in response to allegations or concerns of academic offences:

- Identification of an alleged offence or a concern that an offence may have been committed;
- Reporting of the allegation or concern and provision of details to the Senior Curriculum Manager and Deputy Curriculum Director, or their nominees;
- Reporting of the allegation or concern, with evidence of the academic offence, to HE Quality and Standards who will inform the student(s) concerned that their work is under investigation;
- HE Quality and Standards will lead the process for investigating alleged academic offences or concerns and determine the outcome through the college's procedures for academic offences set out here.

2: Academic offences are defined as:

2.1 Plagiarism

This means copying work from any other source, without it being properly or fully referenced and presenting the copied text, for assessment, as if it were the student's own work. Work presented by a student in assessment must be the student's own and where exceptions are permitted, i.e. quotations, any such exceptions must be clearly identified and the source fully acknowledged using the Harvard referencing system as set out in the college's Guide to Harvard Referencing. All HE students are expected to submit copies of their assessments via Turnitin, the college's plagiarism detection software of choice. Students' assessments submitted via Turnitin may be used in the investigation of any allegations of plagiarism.

2.1.1 Action

Where a member of staff marking an assessment, or otherwise associated with the presentation of an assessment, suspects plagiarism, the matter will be reported to the Deputy Curriculum Director/Senior Curriculum Manager, providing appropriate details, including the nature of the alleged offence, the name of the student and the evidence for suspecting it.

The Deputy Curriculum Director will ask the marker to clearly identify the work in the assessment that is suspected of having been plagiarised and the parts of the sources from which the assessment is suspected of having been plagiarised. This identification will enable the marker to reach a view on the percentage of the assessment that is thought to have been plagiarised. This figure is important because it is used within the tariff to determine the penalty that is imposed upon the student in the event that a finding of plagiarism is made against the student. The Deputy Curriculum Director will pass the copies of the assessment and the original work from which copies have been made, indicating the amount of work that has been copied, expressed as a percentage, to HE Quality and Standards who will inform the student involved.

2.1.2 Subsequent action

If a student is at level 4 of their programme, is a first offence and their assessment shows poor academic practice, it might be appropriate for the student to be offered an academic tutorial. In this case the academic offence procedure will not be followed and the piece of work will be marked as normal. This is at the discretion of the college.

The college uses the Amber Tariff, which allocates penalties for plagiarism based upon a tariff constructed around the number of offences committed, the amount of work that is copied from other sources, within each offence, the level of sophistication used to disguise the offence, the size of the module and the level of study.

The Amber Project is applied in the following way:

- (i) The evidence from the Deputy Curriculum Director / Senior Curriculum Manager of the allegation that the academic offence of Plagiarism may have taken place is considered;
- (ii) The calculation of the percentage of the assessment copied from other sources is checked and confirmed or challenged.
- (iii) HE Quality and Standards determine the seriousness of the offence by cross referencing the percentage of the assessment that is confirmed as being plagiarised, by relating the amount of plagiarised work to the criteria of the Amber tariff;
- (iv) The penalty is applied to the offence based upon the Amber Tariff criteria;
- (v) The student is sent copies of:
 - a) The assessment with the plagiarised sections clearly identified;
 - b) The original sources from which the work has been plagiarised;
 - c) A copy of the Amber Project material, which clearly identifies the criteria and basis for the penalty awarded;

- d) The penalty that is being proposed to be applied, to the assessment containing the plagiarism previously identified. The student is given the opportunity to agree that the academic offence of plagiarism has taken place; or to request an academic offence hearing where they can challenge the allegation of plagiarism, challenge the proposed penalty and/or submit mitigation. The student may alternatively submit their challenge and claims for mitigation in writing to HE Quality and Standards ;
- (vi) The student is given five (5) working days to confirm their acceptance of the proposed penalty, or to submit in writing their challenges and claim for mitigation, or to request a personal academic offence hearing;
- (vii) a) If the student accepts the proposed penalty, the penalty is applied and the Deputy Curriculum Director, Senior Curriculum Manager and the Examination Board are informed;
- b) If the student requests a panel hearing a formal academic offence hearing will be convened within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the report and evidence of the alleged offence or concern in the HE Quality and Standards office. The student will be notified accordingly.

Persons attending the hearing will include:-

The panel

- Two members of college management staff not related to the programme
- A further member of college staff who is not related to the programme
- A minutes secretary will also attend but will not take part in the decision making process.

One of the above will chair the panel.

- The student may be accompanied by a friend who is not a member of the legal profession or a fellow student. The person the student brings may be permitted to make representations on the student's behalf, but not answer questions. However, reasonable adjustments for individuals will be considered on a case by case basis in line with their needs.

The panel will hear representations from HE Quality and Standards, the student related to the alleged incident and programme and any appropriate witnesses. These witnesses may include:-

- The Deputy Curriculum Director / Senior Curriculum Manager or their representative
- Deputy Curriculum Director / Senior Curriculum Manager or their representative
- Any staff who have marked the assessment

Penalties will normally range from re-sitting the examination, which will then lead to the mark for the module being capped at the minimum pass grade in line with the college assessment regulations, to being asked to withdraw from the course. Hearings

will be minuted and the student will normally be informed of any decisions, with reasons, in writing within five (5) working days of the hearing.

If the student chooses to submit in writing a challenge to the proposed penalty and a claim for mitigation, these will be reviewed by the college within ten (10) working days of receipt. The claim for mitigation will be referred to the college's mitigation panel. The panel will determine the outcome of the claim for mitigation, following its procedures. The outcome of mitigation will be determine one of two outcomes, either;

- the challenge is upheld and no further action is taken by the college, or
- the challenge is declined and the proposed penalty is applied to the academic offence of plagiarism.

The student will be informed of any decisions, with reasons, in writing within five (5) working days of the decision.

2.2 Cheating in an examination

Cheating in an examination involves bringing into an examination any unauthorised materials or electronic mobile devices upon which unauthorised materials may be stored, e.g. watches or telephones, or referring during an examination to any unauthorised material, or any form of impersonation.

Action

Where a member of staff has cause to suspect any student of cheating for example, by the discovery of unauthorised books or papers brought into the examination, these will be confiscated when discovered and any work done by the student up to that time will be suitably annotated. The student will, however, be allowed to complete the examination. At the end of the examination the student may be asked for an explanation. The member of staff will submit a written report to HE_HFE@NCCLondon.ac.uk This report will include a description of the evidence that cheating has occurred, together with details of the student's name, the date and time of the examination and any other relevant information. Where material is confiscated this material should be presented along with the written report.

2.3 Collusion

Collusion occurs when two or more students collaborate in the development and production of an assessment(s) that is eventually submitted by each student, in a substantially similar and/or identical form; and is presented by each student as the outcome of his or her own individual efforts. Collusion also occurs where there is unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person, in or outside of college, in the preparation and production of an assessment, which is ultimately presented, as the student's own work.

2.4 Commissioning

This offence occurs when one student gets another person(s) to complete and/or undertake an assessment(s) which is subsequently submitted as the student's own work.

2.5 Duplication

This is where a student replicates an element(s) of their own material in more than one assessment within the same programme, within the college, or elsewhere, simultaneously or at some other time; without referencing their original work in line with college and academic protocols.

2.6 Fabrication of information

This is the presentation of any false or fabricated information, results or conclusions in any form of assessment, including practical or field work studies, oral presentations, unpublished work, and including the work of fellow students, interviews and reports from work placements, etc.

2.7 Impersonation

This is where somebody undertakes an examination or an assessment posing as a student on the programme, i.e. another person. Impersonation is a criminal offence and will be dealt with accordingly.

2.8 Syndication

This is where two or more students submit substantially similar assessments, on either the same programme, or across programmes at the college, at the same or different times. This is particularly relevant in the case of assessed group/team projects to ensure that a group of students each submit individual assessments, developed from a shared or common project, which assesses individual achievement in a particular module.

2.9 Aiding and abetting

This is where a student assists another student in the completion of assessments that is not permitted within the assessment brief of the module, or by the college's assessment regulations.

3: Action at the time

For all offences with the exception of plagiarism and cheating in an exam, the matter must first be reported to the Deputy Curriculum Director / Senior Curriculum Manager. The report must include the nature of the alleged offence; the names of the students

suspected of being involved; and the evidence upon which the allegation is based. The Deputy Curriculum Director / Senior Curriculum Manager will then report the allegations to HE_HFE@NCCLondon.ac.uk who will inform the students involved.

4: Subsequent action

For all offences with the exception of plagiarism, a formal academic offence hearing will be arranged normally within ten (10) working days of receipt of the report and evidence of the alleged offence or concern being submitted. The student will be notified accordingly.

Persons attending the hearing will include:-

The panel

- Two members of college management staff not related to the programme
- A further member of college staff who is not related to the programme
- A minutes secretary will also attend but will not take part in the decision making process.

One of the above will act as chair of the panel.

- The student, may be accompanied by a friend who is not a member of the legal profession or a fellow student. The person the student brings may be permitted to make representations on the student's behalf, but not answer questions. However, reasonable adjustments for individuals will be considered on a case by case basis in line with their needs.

The panel will hear representations from HE Quality and Standards, the student related to the alleged incident and programme and any appropriate witnesses. These witnesses may include:-

- The Deputy Curriculum Director their representative.
- Senior Curriculum Manager or their representative.
- Any staff who have marked the assessment

Penalties will normally range from re-sitting the examination, which will then lead to the mark for the module being capped at the minimum pass grade in line with the college assessment regulations or being asked to withdraw from the course. Where appropriate, i.e. in the case of Impersonation being proven, the Student Disciplinary Procedure may be implemented. Hearings will be minuted and the student will normally be informed of any decisions, with reasons, in writing within five (5) working days of the Hearing.

NB – Impersonation is a criminal offence and may be reported to the Police.

5. Appeal process

The college academic offence panel is the final stage of the internal college procedure. If the student believes that the matter requires further attention then they must make representation to external agencies. In the case of an academic offence appeal it would be appropriate to contact the awarding body or validating university who have responsibility for the programme or course concerned:

The Open University

The Vice-Chancellor's Delegate,
The Open University,
Academic Services,
Student Casework Office,
Walton Hall,
Milton Keynes, MK7 6AA,
United Kingdom.

The student can also contact the Student Casework Office (SCO) for help or advice regarding your case:

Contact SCO by email: SCO-VC-Delegate@open.ac.uk

Contact SCO by phone: +44 (0)1908 659535

Following the Open University's review and completion of the university's procedure. The Open University will issue a completion of procedure letter.

Alternatively, Higher Education students may choose to contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator, the independent ombudsmen service, on receipt of a Completion of Procedures letter from the or awarding body/university, although this must be done within twelve (12) months of the date of the Completions of Procedures letter. Contact details for the OIA are as follows:

Office of the Independent Adjudicator

OIA Second Floor,
Abbey Gate
57-75 Kings Road
Reading
RG1 3AB

Tel: 0118 959 9813 Email: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk www.oiahe.org.uk