HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENT ACADEMIC DISCIPLINARY POLICY

Policy Statement

The purpose of this policy is to define areas of academic misconduct and to establish procedures to be followed in suspected cases of cheating, academic misconduct, or plagiarism. This policy is a reflection of EKC Group's commitment to ensuring governance over academic standards and formalises the internal procedure for all programmes within the department, prior to reporting to external awarding bodies.

This policy ensures that students have opportunities to develop appropriate academic skills such as researching, writing, and referencing (Quality Code, Core Practice for Quality Q6)[1].

Disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with institutional guidelines, ensuring fairness, transparency, and consistency throughout the process.

Plagiarism includes copying another's work without proper citation. Students must ensure that any use of AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT, language models, code generators) is properly acknowledged. Submitting AI-generated content without attribution may constitute academic misconduct. The use of AI must comply with institutional guidelines and ethical standards and is integral to the whole of this policy and all parts of it.

Key aspects of good academic practice include:

- acknowledging the ideas of others through appropriate referencing and citation
- meeting expectations about ethical behaviour
- fulfilling confidentiality requirements in particular subjects
- understanding the permitted boundaries between individual and group contributions (Quality Code Advice and Guidance [2])

[1] The UK Quality Code for Higher Education. Available at: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/quality-code.
2 Available at: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/quality-code/advice-and-guidance/assessment.

To ensure consistency of practice across the higher education department, the implementation of this policy is closely aligned to the University of Kent, Credit Framework for Taught Programmes[3].

Definitions of cheating, academic misconduct, and plagiarism:

The following are abbreviated examples taken from the University of Kent Credit Framework for Taught Programmes:

- **Cheating in examinations**: including the use of unauthorised materials, mobile phones and other prohibited electronic devices.
- **Attempting to influence an examiner or teacher improperly.**
- **Plagiarism:** reproducing in any work submitted for assessment or review, or any material derived from work authored by another without clearly acknowledging the source.
- **Duplication of material:** reproducing the work of others without proper acknowledgment, including permitting work to be copied by another student.
- **Falsification of data/evidence:** examples include Collusion, Contract Cheating, Fabrication, Impersonation and Failure to obtain ethical approval.

It is the policy of EKC Group that:

1. The department is committed to providing inductions and refreshers for all students to ensure that they fully understand academic conventions and are able to apply these to their studies.
2. Online resources are readily accessible with tools for academic studies and to develop referencing skills.
3. The Academic Disciplinary Board is convened as required (as matters arise). The Chair of the Academic Disciplinary Board is the appropriate college Principal, and the Secretary is the HE Officer. Two Programme Directors from unrelated provision will be requested to attend and sit on the Board.

3 Credit Framework for Taught Programmes, Annex 10. Available at:.https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/credit-framework#annex-10

The policy will be implemented in the following way:

4. Turnitin

4.1 All appropriate student work must be submitted through Turnitin in an appropriate format. It is the responsibility of tutors to identify the appropriate assessments and format required. Work not submitted through Turnitin should not be marked. All submissions from students will be submitted electronically via Turnitin and a hard copy saved on the Group system by the assessing tutor.

4.2 All students to submit one piece of work through Turnitin during induction, within the first two weeks. This is to familiarise staff and students with Turnitin submission processes, and to identify group and individual student needs for additional learning support and further academic skills workshops.

4.3 Assignments must be updated every year to provide different assessment opportunities and guard against plagiarism.

5. Study Skills and Academic Referencing

5.1 Programme Directors to ensure that regular study skills training for students is available at induction and throughout the year.

5.2 All students and staff in the department to use Harvard Referencing as shown in 'Cite them Right' by Macmillan[4] to ensure consistency. The link must be clearly displayed on online resources.

5.3 All references must refer to a text in English, and if students use texts in another language, the Group has a right to request a translation.

6. Academic Misconduct

6.1 If a tutor suspects that there has been any type of academic misconduct, they should in the first instance verify the initial credibility of the alleged misconduct. All suspected cases of academic misconduct including internal cheating, collusion and plagiarism are reported to the appropriate departmental Head.

[4] Macmillan http://www.citethemrightonline.com/

6.2 The department will investigate every allegation of academic misconduct in a fair and objective manner. Unless in exceptional circumstances, when this is not possible, the investigation will be completed by the departmental Head.

6.3 Students must be informed by the secretary of the Academic Disciplinary Committee of an allegation of cheating, academic misconduct or plagiarism by email and letter.

6.4 All stages of the academic discipline procedure in paragraphs 6-13 are recorded in writing.

7. Investigations

7.1 Investigators of academic misconduct must ensure:

- that the allegation is clear to the student
- that the student is offered the opportunity to make a statement
- that investigations comply with the relevant awarding body regulations

8. The Academic and Disciplinary Board

8.1 Where possible, the timing of the board will ensure that tutors are available to observe the Academic Disciplinary Committee meeting.

8.2 If the departmental Head is satisfied that the allegation is credible, details are then given to the secretary of the Academic Disciplinary Committee to be reported to the chair of the Academic Disciplinary Committee

8.3 The chair of the Academic Disciplinary Committee may decide to:

- Consult with other members of the Academic Disciplinary Committee
- Decide there is no case to answer.
- Decide there is a case of minor misconduct (and if appropriate set a penalty)
- Decide there is a case of serious misconduct.
- Request an investigation.

9. Minor misconduct

9.1 This can be due to student inexperience in the first year of a programme and the Chair may treat this as a formal warning. If this is a first offence for a second or third year of a programme, the Chair has discretion to treat the case as warranting a formal warning and a minor penalty. The Chair should be satisfied that the plagiarism is due to poor academic practice, there is no evidence to deceive and that this is the first incident.

9.2 Where the chair determines that there is a minor offence the chair will write to the student and propose a penalty informing the student that it will be applied unless contested. Penalties will be determined by the board and could include zero marks for the work, resubmission of the work or a new assessment and any marks given to be capped at pass.

10. Serious misconduct

10.1 This is determined by the following:

- "The contribution to the overall mark for a module made by the piece of work in which the instance of alleged plagiarism has been detected.
- The proportion of the piece of work that is plagiarised.
- Whether the student is in receipt of a formal warning;"
- "The number of previous or contemporaneous offences, if any, with any instances of repeat offending normally to be regarded as constituting a more serious offence.
- Evidence of intent to deceive, with any such evidence normally to be regarded as requiring the treatment of the case as per a more serious offence;" [5]

10.2 Where the chair determines that there is serious misconduct, a penalty is proposed that will be applied unless contested. The chair will write to the student to inform them of the proposed penalty. In the case of serious misconduct, the student will be invited to attend an Academic Disciplinary Committee meeting for clarification of the

[5] Annex 10: Academic Discipline Procedure last updated July 29th 2014. Accessed at https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/credit-framework#annex-10

proposed penalty and to provide any additional evidence. When attending such a meeting the student may be accompanied by a member of staff, Group student, Student Union representative or a relative. These are not legal proceedings, and a student may not be represented by a legal representative.

10.3 Penalties will be determined by the board, and the penalty may range from a mark of zero for a single piece of work to termination of registration depending on the circumstances of the case.

11. Cheating in Examinations

- Cheating in examinations by being in possession of unauthorised materials or electronic devices could be a penalised mark or zero mark depending on whether first or subsequent offense.
- Cheating in examinations by using unauthorised materials or electronic devices could be a zero mark or termination of registration depending on whether first or subsequent offense.
- Cheating in examinations by communicating with another student could be a warning or zero mark depending on whether first or subsequent offense.
- Cheating in examinations by copying from another student could be zero mark or termination of registration depending on whether first or subsequent offense.
- Conspiring with others to copy work and permitting work to be copied by other students may results in zero mark, depending on the circumstances.
- The above are examples and are not exhaustive and so not limit the application of this policy [6]

12. Communication

12.1 The student will be informed in writing of the Academic Disciplinary Committee decision within 3 working days of the relevant Academic Disciplinary Committee

[6] Annex 10: Academic Discipline Procedure last updated July 29th 2014. Accessed at https://www.kent.ac.uk/education/regulatory-framework/credit-framework#annex-10

meeting.

13. Appeal

13.1 The department will make the student aware that they have the right to appeal and thereafter to their awarding body following the investigation and the decision of the Academic Disciplinary Committee. Appeals must be made within 21 calendar days of the Academic Disciplinary Committee meeting as per EKC Group's procedure. Students are required to put their appeal in writing and submit to the Director of Further & Higher Student Experience. If the appeal is not upheld, students can then follow the appeals procedure of their awarding body.

Related policies and procedures

Disciplinary Policy & Procedure (Student)

HE Assessment Policy

HE Academic Appeals Policy

Flowchart from Allegation to Decision