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Academic Integrity Policy – *for students*

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Academic Integrity Policy

Precepts

As an academic community, all students and staff at the University of Westminster are expected to demonstrate the highest standards of academic conduct.

The University's expectation is that all grades obtained by students must result from the student's own efforts to learn and develop. Credit is awarded as a result of assessments which are designed to demonstrate that a (given) student has fulfilled the learning outcomes in a module. For all individual assessments, the work completed must demonstrate the student's own learning. For group assessments, the expectation is normally that students should indicate the extent of their involvement in a given project.

There are specific examination regulations which define acceptable behaviour in formal scheduled examinations and other time-limited assessments. These are set out in Section 10 and Section 7 of the Handbook of Academic Regulations.

The overarching principles set out in this policy apply to all forms of assessment, and the specific requirements relating to referencing and plagiarism refer specifically to coursework and other forms of written assessment.

Any academic work which is not completed in accordance with these guiding principles and regulations may be defined as poor scholarship, or academic misconduct.

1. Maintaining Academic Integrity

1.1.   Academic integrity is concerned with the ethical code that applies to the standards by which the academic community operates. It represents the values of honesty, fairness and respect for others. While this encompasses the expectation that students will not cheat in assessments nor deliberately try to mislead examiners and assessors, it is just as important to emphasise the positive role that academic integrity plays in each student's intellectual and professional development and in their successful transition to graduate employment and future careers. Students who embrace academic integrity understand that they must produce their own work, acknowledging explicitly any material that has been included from other sources or legitimate collaboration, and to present their own findings, conclusions or data based on appropriate and ethical practice.

1.2.   There are conventions of academic practice, such as established referencing and citation protocols, which both display and ensure academic integrity. The acquisition of relevant study skills such as effective note-taking, ability to critically evaluate other writers' theories and concepts and presentation skills, will help students to understand these conventions. Failure to adhere to these conventions can result in poor academic practice or, if there is a clear intention to deceive examiners and assessors, to unfair and/or dishonest academic practice.

1.3.   The University's expectation is that all marks obtained by students must result from the student's own efforts to learn and develop. Credit is awarded as a result of assessments which are designed to demonstrate that a (given) student has fulfilled the learning outcomes in a module. For all individual assessments, the work completed must demonstrate the student's own learning. For group assessments, the expectation is normally that students should indicate the extent of their involvement in a given project.

1.4.   Students and staff have a shared responsibility in upholding the values of academic integrity in their work:

- **Students** are responsible for adopting the academic integrity approach in all aspects of their studies and for developing good academic practice. Students should familiarise themselves with their responsibilities in relation to those values and the consequences of transgression. Students should take advantage of training, guidance and other information made available to them so that they may develop skills and knowledge on good academic practice.

- **Staff** are responsible for adopting the academic integrity approach in their work. Staff involved in the teaching, tutoring or supervision of students must, with appropriate guidance, be able to support their students in adopting the academic integrity approach, including by signposting them to relevant training and guidance if necessary. Staff should set an example for their students on how the core values of academic integrity are put into practice.

1.5. In order to adhere to the University's definition of academic integrity, students are expected to abide by the following conventions when completing work for assessment:

1.5.1. Acknowledge all sources of information, knowledge and ideas used when completing work for assessment by consistently and correctly using an acceptable referencing system;

1.5.2. Produce work that is the product of their own, individual efforts. An exception to this is where an assignment brief specifically requires a single piece of work be submitted on behalf of a group of students.

1.5.3. Declare when they have used work before in a previous assessment (whether successful or not) using an acceptable referencing system;

1.5.4. Present accurate information and data that has been obtained appropriately and which is a fair representation of their own endeavours, knowledge and understanding;

1.5.5. Adhere to and comply with all applicable regulatory, legal and professional obligations and ethical requirements therein.

1.6 The University will make information on how to maintain academic integrity available to students in ways that are appropriate and accessible. However, at all times, it is the sole responsibility of the student to act in a way that is consistent with the Academic Integrity Policy and to seek advice and guidance if they are unclear.

2. Proofreading

2.1 Proofreading should initially be undertaken by students themselves; it can be a valuable learning experience for students to identify their own errors and inconsistencies. However, the University recognises that, in the course of producing a high-quality piece of work for assessment, students may wish to ask a third party to proofread work prior to submission.

2.2 Proofreading might be undertaken by peers, housemates, family members, academic members of staff and professional proofreading companies. Appropriate members of staff may use their professional judgement to provide advice and guidance during the course of formative assessment, based on the individual needs of a student to maximise their opportunity to learn and understand what is expected of them academically.

2.3 In some disciplines and for particular pieces of assessment it may not be appropriate for any proofreading to take place e.g. where correct grammar is part of the assessment criteria or assessed work submitted relating to language and translation. For example, proofreading may not be acceptable for language courses, as language proficiency is one of the key learning outcomes.

2.4   The University acknowledges that some assessments require students to work closely to produce a collaborative piece of work for assessment. The content for these assignments will necessitate a process of drafting and re-drafting of content by a number of different members of the team. This process is a key part of the learning experience. In these cases, students may actively edit content of other students within the group although it is expected that, collectively, the group is bound by the expectations set out in this Policy in respect to engaging with further third parties. This exception only applies to those pieces of work that are explicitly assessed as part of a group exercise. No form of collusion should take place regarding standard individual pieces of work and when detected, such cases may be subject to referral under the processes outlined in the Academic Misconduct Regulations. If a student is unaware if proofreading can be used for an assessment they should seek advice from their Module Leader.

2.5   Third-party proofreaders are not expected to actively amend existing, or create new, content in draft work; instead they should support the student by identifying errors and/or making suggestions relating to, but not creating, content.

        Any third-party reviewing work should be familiar with this policy and agree to operate within its expectations. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that the proofreader is aware of the Policy and no proofreading should be undertaken if the individual concerned does not agree to align their practice with the conditions detailed below.

        The University considers it acceptable for proofreaders to:

- Identify spelling and typographical errors
- Highlight formatting errors or inconsistencies
- Identify spelling/grammar/typographical errors in labelling of diagrams, charts or figures
- Identify typographical errors in equations
- Draw attention to repeated phrases or omitted words

        The University does not consider it acceptable practice for proofreaders to amend existing content whether through addition or reduction and, in particular, they must not:

- Identify poor grammar e.g. tense use, verb form, sentence structure, word order
- Rewrite passages of text to clarify the meaning
- Highlight a sentence or paragraph that is overly complex or where the intended meaning is not clear
- Identify errors in the referencing system applied
- Change any words or figures, except to correct spelling
- Check or rewrite calculations, formulae, equations or computer code
- Rearrange or reformat passages of text
- Contribute any additional material to the original
- Redraw, alter or relabel diagrams, charts or figures
- Alter argument or logic, where faulty
- Implement or alter a referencing system or add to references
- Check or correct facts, data calculations, formulae or equation
- Correcting errors identified in the reference system applied
- Translate text drafted by students, noting that this does not prohibit translation of source material as long as it is properly referenced

2.6   Students who submit pieces of work for assessment where proofreaders have acted in a way that compromises the authenticity of that work and who have acted outside of the limitations set out in this policy will be investigated under the Academic Misconduct Regulations. It is the student's responsibility to inform their proofreader of this policy and to check their own piece of work prior to submission to ensure that it is in line with University policy and expectations.

3.   Resources for students

3.1   The academic integrity approach centres on a community and culture of learning. Resources and guidance are an integral part of university study and academic life.

3.2   Academic integrity is addressed as part of induction and orientation in all courses at all levels of study and is inbuilt as part of the curriculum in taught courses.

3.3   To support students to develop good academic practice, students can access the plagiarism course prior to arriving and once they start their studies at the university anytime under the '*Learning Resources'* tab in Blackboard. Training in academic integrity is provided via online sources located on the 'Study Sills and Training' website. Academic advice is made available where a student is identified as struggling with aspects of academic integrity or to understand good practice.

3.4   Turnitin and Safe-Assign, text-matching systems used by the University, may be used in a formative, developmental way to assist students in understanding the appropriate use of sources and raising awareness of plagiarism. This may help students to develop their authorial voice, particularly when students discuss Turnitin originality reports with tutors, supervisors or other academics.

4. Breaches of Academic Integrity

4.1   A student will be regarded as being in breach of the Academic Integrity Policy if they act or behave in a manner that is inconsistent with the University's general definition of academic integrity.

4.2   A breach of the Academic Integrity Policy may occur when a student knowingly acts in a way that is contrary to the policy or does so inadvertently by means of careless scholarship. Inexperience, intention, lack of intention or unfamiliarity with the Academic Integrity Policy will not be regarded as a defence in the event that the policy is breached.

4.3   Any breach of the Academic Integrity Policy will be categorised as either poor scholarship or academic misconduct. These are dealt with in different ways according to the procedure described in Section 10 of the Academic Regulations.

4.4   Examples of academic misconduct include:

–   **Plagiarism**: the use of ideas, intellectual property or work of others without acknowledgement or, where relevant, permission.

–   **Self-plagiarism**: the use of work, without appropriate referencing, that has been submitted for assessment, whether successful or not, by the same student in this University or any other institution. This will not apply where a student is making a resubmission for the same assessment component in the same module, unless specifically prohibited in the assessment information.

–   **Collusion**: the unauthorised collaboration between two or more students resulting in the submission of work that is unreasonably similar, but which is submitted as being the product of the submitting student's individual efforts.

–   **Commissioning**: engaging another person or organisation to complete or undertake an assessment, whether a financial transaction has taken place or not.

–   **Dishonest Practice**: the presentation of fictitious or distorted documents, data, evidence or any other material, including submitting the work of another person as if it is their own. This includes the submission of false evidence in an application to the Mitigating Circumstances Board or to the Academic Appeals Board.

–   **Research misconduct**: failure to obtain ethical approval for a research project or failure to comply with regulatory, legal and professional obligations for research projects.

– **Cheating**: any action before, during or after an assessment or examination which has the potential for the student to gain an unfair advantage in assessment or assists another student to do so. This includes failure to adhere to the examination regulations.

4.5   These lists are not exhaustive, and the Academic Integrity Policy might be breached in ways not specifically referred to here.

4.6   The University will take steps to detect potential breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy which might not be immediately apparent when work is marked anonymously. Following completion of the marking process, once marks have been de-anonymised, the Module Leader might authorise a *viva voce*. The purpose of this will be to confirm the authenticity of the work that has been submitted.

4.7   Suspected breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy will be investigated in accordance with the procedure described in Section 10 of the Academic Regulations https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/guides-and-policies/academic-matters/academic-regulations. Where a student is found to have committed a breach of this policy, a penalty will be applied in accordance with the Table of Penalties (see appendix A).

4.8   Except in the case of poor scholarship, a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy can only be confirmed following the completion of the procedures detailed in Section 10 of the Academic Regulations https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/guides-and-policies/academic-matters/academic-regulations.

4.9   If you require additional information about the University's Academic Integrity Policy or if you want to learn more about what it means for you, ask your Personal Tutor for help. Alternatively, you can email academicstandards@westminster.ac.uk for more information.

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Appendix A – Table of Penalties

<u>Appendix 1</u>

<u>Table of Penalties</u>

The University strives to ensure fairness and consistency across the Colleges in the application of penalties and has adopted a Table of Penalties for use. The principle behind the table is simple and serves to ensure that all students are aware of the possible penalties that they may receive if they are found guilty of academic misconduct.

In accordance with paragraph 10.27, the penalties stated below are recommendations. Each body which imposes a penalty has the discretion to vary the penalty it can impose but must provide clear reasons as to why they have varied the penalty.

In accordance with paragraph 10.49, where a Category 1 offence is a 3rd or subsequent offence, it may be referred to the Academic Misconduct Panel Hearing and a more severe penalty may be applied.

This list of offences is not exhaustive. Where an alleged offence, or near equivalent, is not represented in this table the Academic Standards Manager will normally, in accordance with paragraph 10.49, refer the matter to be considered at a hearing of the Academic Misconduct Panel.

Refer to paragraph 10.71 for the penalties available to the Academic Misconduct Panel.

Table 1 - Plagiarism Penalty Table

Offence	Extent[1]	L3 / L4 L5 / L6 / L7 1st offence	Subsequent Offences for all levels
Fully referenced but closely paraphrased / excessive use of sources	**Any amount**	*Poor scholarship - no misconduct - mark on merits*	*Poor scholarship - no misconduct - mark on merits*
Unreferenced Closely paraphrased[2], but not verbatim.	***Less than 10% of work***	*CATEGORY 1 Formal warning - mark on merits**	*CATEGORY 1 Formal warning - mark on merits**
Unreferenced Closely paraphrased[2], but not verbatim.	***Between 10% and 50% of the work***	*CATEGORY 1 Formal warning - mark on merits**	*CATEGORY 1 Mark on merits*, but mark for assessment component capped at pass mark*
Unreferenced Closely paraphrased[2], but not verbatim.	***Above 50% of the work***	*CATEGORY 1 Mark on merits, but mark for assessment component capped at pass mark*	*CATEGORY 1 Mark of 0% for assessment component*

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[1] This is an approximate value and is not to be based on the percentage indicated by Turnitin or Safe Assign. These systems are only a tool to detect potential plagiarism; they are not 'plagiarism detection systems'. Academic judgment is required to determine whether a student may have plagiarised.

[2] Changing key words and phrases but retaining the essential content of the original source material

Offence	Extent[1]	L3 / L4 L5 / L6 / L7 1st offence	Subsequent Offences for all levels
Unreferenced Closely paraphrased[2], but not verbatim.	**100% of the work**	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*	*CATEGORY 2* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel.*
Unreferenced and verbatim[3] (no quotation marks)	*Less than 10% of the work*	*CATEGORY 1* *Formal warning - mark on merits**	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark on merits*, but mark for assessment component capped at pass mark*
Unreferenced and verbatim[3] (no quotation marks)	*Between 10% and 50% of the work.*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark on merits*, but mark for assessment component capped at pass mark*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*
Unreferenced and verbatim[3] (no quotation marks)	*Above 50% of the work*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*	*CATEGORY 2* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel.*
Unreferenced and verbatim[3] (no quotation marks)	**100% of the work**	*CATEGORY 2* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel.*	*CATEGORY 2* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel.*
Unreferenced and verbatim[3] (no quotation marks)	**Any amount** *Submission of work either purchased, commissioned or purloined from, or otherwise provided by, a third party*	*CATEGORY 2* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components within the module with no right to referral at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*	*CATEGORY 2* *Mark 0% for all assessment components within the module with no right to referral at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel.*

* Mark on merits: where a piece of assessment is to be marked on its merits, the examiner should normally discount any text which has been plagiarised and should award a mark based on the

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[3] Where content corresponds directly to the original source text

academic value of the work that remains. This shall not be regarded as a penalty. The mark to be awarded shall be the academic judgement of the examiner.

Table 2 - Penalty Tables for offences other than Plagiarism

Assessment Type: Examination and In Class Tests

Offence	L3 / L4 1st offence Penalty	L3 / L4 Subsequent offences Penalty	L5 / L6 / L7 Penalty
Removing any script, paper, or other official stationery (whether completed or not) from the examination room, unless specifically authorised by an invigilator or examiner.	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark on merits*, but mark for assessment component capped at pass mark*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*
Failing to comply with the reasonable instructions of an invigilator or examiner.	*CATEGORY 1* *Formal warning*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*
Possession of unauthorised material of any kind other than those specifically permitted in the rubric of the paper during the examination (including in toilets and other locations during the examination)	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*
Attempting to communicate with another student or with any third party other than the invigilator/examiner during an examination or in class test. This includes communication via social media, WhatsApp and any other type of communication.	*CATEGORY 1* *Formal warning*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*
Communicating with another student or with any third party other than the invigilator / examiner during an examination or in class test. This includes communication via social media, WhatsApp and any other type of communication.	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*
Making use of unauthorised material or accessing the internet in contravention of the examination rubric in the examination room or otherwise during the examination (including in toilets and other locations during the examination)	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel.*	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*

Being party to any arrangement whereby a person other than the student fraudulently represents, or intends to represent, the student at an examination	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*
During an examination or in class test, copying or attempting to copy the work of another student, whether by overlooking their work, asking them for information, or by any other means.	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*

Assessment Type Coursework

Offence	**L3 / L4** **1st offence** **Penalty**	**L3 / L4** **Subsequent offences** **Penalty**	**L5 / L6 / L7** **Penalty**
Making available work to another student, either intentionally or as a result of negligence that can be presented as another students.	*CATEGORY 1* *Formal warning*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark on merits*, but mark for assessment component capped at pass mark*
Representation of work produced in collaboration with another person or persons as the work of a single student (collusion).	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark on merits*, but mark for assessment component capped at pass mark*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*	*CATEGORY 1* *Mark of 0% for assessment component*
Unauthorised access of another student's work, without the student's knowledge.	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*

Assessment Type: Dishonest Practice

Offence	**L3 / L4** **1st offence** **Penalty**	**L3 / L4** **Subsequent offences** **Penalty**	**L5 / L6 / L7** **Penalty**
Offering a bribe or inducement to any staff (academic or administrative) involved in the assessment process	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*

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Seeking to obtain access to confidential information e.g. examination questions, prior to the examination	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*
Making false declarations to the Mitigating Circumstances Board	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*
Falsifying transcripts, certificates or other official University documentation relating to assessment outcomes	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*	*CATEGORY 2:* *Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel*