

Academic Integrity Policy – *for students*

Owned by:	Academic Registrars Department
Maintained by:	Quality and Standards
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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. Resources for students

- 2.1 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.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 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 Skills 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.
- 2.4 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.

Other resources:

Academic Misconduct web page: <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/guides-and-policies/academic-matters/academic-misconduct>

Referencing Your Work web page: <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/study-skills-and-training/research-skills/referencing-your-work>

Academic Skills Workshops
<https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/study-skills-and-training/academic-skills-workshops>

3. Breaches of Academic Integrity

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 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.
- 3.3 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 <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/guides-and-policies/academic-matters/academic-regulations>
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 These lists are not exhaustive, and the Academic Integrity Policy might be breached in ways not specifically referred to here.
- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 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).
- 3.8 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>
- 3.9 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.

Appendix A – Table of Penalties

Appendix 1

Table of Penalties

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	<i>Poor scholarship - no misconduct - mark on merits</i>	<i>Poor scholarship - no misconduct - mark on merits</i>
Unreferenced Closely paraphrased ² , but not verbatim.	<i>Less than 10% of work</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Formal warning - mark on merits*</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Formal warning - mark on merits*</i>
	<i>Between 10% and 50% of the work</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Formal warning - mark on merits*</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark on merits*, but mark for assessment component capped at pass mark</i>
	<i>Above 50% of the work</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark on merits, but mark for assessment component capped at pass mark</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark of 0% for assessment component</i>
	<i>100% of the work</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark of 0% for assessment component</i>	CATEGORY 2 <i>Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel.</i>
Unreferenced and verbatim ³ (no quotation marks)	<i>Less than 10% of the work</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Formal warning - mark on merits*</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark on merits*, but mark for assessment component capped at pass mark</i>
	<i>Between 10% and 50% of the work.</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark on merits*, but mark for assessment component capped at pass mark</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark of 0% for assessment component</i>

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

³ Where content corresponds directly to the original source text

	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.
	100% of the work	CATEGORY 2 Mark of 0% for all assessment components at that level at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel.	CATEGORY 2 Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel.
	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 at that level at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel	CATEGORY 2 Mark of 0% for all assessment components at that level 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 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 Table for offences other than Plagiarism

Assessment Type	Offence	Penalty		
		L3 / L4		L5 / L6 / L7
		1st offence	Subsequent offences	
Examination and In Class Tests	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.	CATEGORY 1 <i>Formal warning</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark of 0% for assessment component</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark of 0% for assessment component</i>
	Communicating with another student or with any third party other than the invigilator / examiner during an examination or in class test.	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark of 0% for assessment component</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark of 0% for assessment component</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark of 0% for assessment component</i>
	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 <i>Mark of 0% for assessment component</i>	CATEGORY 2: <i>Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel.</i>	CATEGORY 2: <i>Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel</i>
	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: <i>Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel</i>	CATEGORY 2: <i>Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel</i>	CATEGORY 2: <i>Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel</i>
	During an examination or in class test, copying or attempting to copy the work of another student, whether by overlooking his or her work, asking him or her for information, or by any other means.	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark of 0% for assessment component</i>	CATEGORY 2: <i>Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel</i>	CATEGORY 2: <i>Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel</i>
Coursework	Making available work to another student, either intentionally or as a result of negligence that can be presented as another student's.	CATEGORY 1 <i>Formal warning</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark of 0% for assessment component</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark on merits*, but mark for assessment component capped at pass mark</i>
	Representation of work produced in collaboration with another person or persons as the work of a single student (collusion).	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark on merits*, but mark for assessment component capped at pass mark</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark of 0% for assessment component</i>	CATEGORY 1 <i>Mark of 0% for assessment component</i>
	Unauthorised access of another student's work, without the student's knowledge.	CATEGORY 2: <i>Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel</i>	CATEGORY 2: <i>Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel</i>	CATEGORY 2: <i>Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel</i>
Dishonest Practice	Offering a bribe or inducement to any staff (academic or administrative) involved in the assessment process	CATEGORY 2: <i>Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel</i>	CATEGORY 2: <i>Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel</i>	CATEGORY 2: <i>Mark of 0% for all assessment components in module, at discretion of Academic Misconduct Panel</i>

	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

(Section 10 Academic Regulations <https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/guides-and-policies/academic-matters/academic-regulations>)