

Academic Malpractice A Guide for Students

Introduction

1. The College regards it as a **very** serious academic offence to use or attempt to use unfair means to enhance your performance or influence the standard of the award you obtain.
2. 'Unfair' includes all forms of cheating, including plagiarism, collusion and impersonation. Offences of this nature may result in your immediate withdrawal from the College.
3. This document outlines the definitions, procedures and consequences of academic malpractice. They are applicable to the preparation and presentation of all assessed work irrespective of the College's form of assessment for the module. Full details of what constitutes academic malpractice, the protocol and procedures followed are found in Section 5 of the College's *Quality Assurance Handbook* which can be found [here](#).
4. **Ignorance of the College's academic malpractice procedures is not accepted as a defence for malpractice. We do not distinguish between intentional and unintentional academic malpractice.**
5. If you are in any doubt as to whether you may be committing academic malpractice you must seek advice from either your module teacher or from a member of the College's Academic Team.
6. Advice and guidance on how to avoid common forms of malpractice is available to all students through academic induction processes. We strongly advise you to attend these sessions, as accidental or ignorance of what constitutes academic malpractice is not an accepted excuse for offending. If you are having difficulty with your studies there are a number of ways you can change your situation, including asking your module teacher or other trusted teacher for help, or contacting the College's Academic Team.
7. Please remember, it is your responsibility to:
 - guard against unauthorised access by others to your work, both before and after assessment
 - read this information on academic malpractice and to attend induction sessions so that you are familiar with the guidelines. Ignorance of the College's guidelines and procedures is not accepted as a defence for malpractice.

Definitions of academic malpractice

8. The College defines academic malpractice as '***an attempt to gain an advantage over other students by the use of unfair and/or unacceptable methods***'.

9. Please note: the definitions and descriptions below are not exhaustive and the College reserves the right to judge that malpractice has occurred in instances that are not explicitly defined in this document.
10. Common types of malpractice include:

Cheating

This is an infringement of the rules governing conduct in examinations or other time-constrained assessment. It includes:

- communicating with or copying from any other student during an examination except where specifically permitted, for example in-group assessments
- communicating during an examination with any person other than a properly authorised invigilator or another authorised member of College staff
- introducing any written or printed material into an examination room, unless the regulations for the module or programme assessment explicitly state the examination is open-book
- introducing any electronically stored information into an examination room unless expressly permitted by the regulators for the module or programme assessment
- gaining access to any unauthorised material relating to an examination during or before the specified time
- providing or helping to provide in any other way false evidence of knowledge or understanding in examinations Our invigilators have successfully spotted all the above examples and more.

Plagiarism

The College defines plagiarism as an attempt to pass off someone else's work as your own. This includes the representation of work, written or otherwise, of any other person, including another student, or any institution, as your own work. It may take the form of:

- verbatim copying or insertion of another person's work (published or unpublished and including material freely available in electronic form) without appropriate acknowledgement. This includes incorrect, incomplete or omitted references the close paraphrasing of another person's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without appropriate acknowledgement
- unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another person's work
- the use of Artificial Intelligence such as ChatGPT and other similar software platforms.
- the deliberate and detailed presentation of another person's concept as your own

- contracting a third party to produce work and submitting it as your own. This includes paid and unpaid contracts and using 'essay mills'.

Self-plagiarism

This is the offence of submitting the same piece of work for multiple coursework assessments, unless multiple use has been authorised by the module teacher.

Collusion

This offence includes instances where you:

- knowingly submit work as entirely your own work when it was actually undertaken in collaboration with another person without official approval
- knowingly submit work as entirely your own work when it was actually undertaken in collaboration with an Artificial Intelligence provider such as ChatGPT without official approval from the College
- collaborate with another student in the completion of work which you intend to submit as your own unaided work
- knowingly permit another student to copy all or part of your work and allow that student to submit it as their own unaided work.

You may think you are helping a friend by sharing your work, but you could both be found guilty of malpractice. Protect your work and your friendships by finding other ways to help.

Falsifying data or material

This includes:

- falsifying the data or material presented in reports or any other assessment
- falsely claiming to have undertaken experimental or experiential work, or obtaining such data by unfair means
- fabricating references or a bibliography

Remember: you are taught by subject matter experts with years of experience. They can often recognise false information at a glance. **Don't underestimate the ability of the College's teaching team to identify false material.**

Impersonation

This is defined as the assumption of another person's identity with intent to deceive. For example, pretending to be someone else in order to gain academic advantage.

Ethical malpractice

These are issues which contravene the College's regulations on research ethics. Ethical approval for undergraduate or postgraduate submissions may be subject to referral to a malpractice panel for issues such as:

- evasion of ethical responsibilities
- failure to gain ethical approval
- ethical misconduct caused by careless and irresponsible research practice

Other forms of academic malpractice

Apart from the definitions outlined above, the College deliberately does not hold an exhaustive list of every type of academic malpractice. However, examples of other types of malpractice include:

- attempting to obtain special consideration by offering or receiving inducements or favours (that is, bribery)
- providing false information in your application for exceptional mitigating circumstances, academic appeal or any similar application for dispensation

11. You should not need to resort to these or any other dishonest academic practices. If you are having difficulties with your studies, there are a number of ways the College can support you. Please talk to your module teacher or the College Academic Team for advice on where you can acquire study skills or any other support you might need.

What happens if you are found to have committed academic malpractice?

12. If you are found to have committed **any** form of academic malpractice the College will take the matter extremely seriously.
13. You will be required to repeat your assessment(s) and however well you perform in the repeat assessment your mark will be capped at 40%. This will obviously have a serious impact on the final grade you might receive for your programme.
14. In extreme cases of proven academic malpractice the College may take more serious action. This may involve requiring you to re-take the module again at your own cost or removing you completely from your programme without any exit award. You will, we know, want to avoid this.

Appeals against a finding of academic malpractice

15. You can appeal against the outcome of a malpractice panel of enquiry. The appeal must meet the College's standard grounds for appeal which are:
- procedural irregularity in the process
 - bias or perception of bias
 - exceptional mitigating circumstances where the details were, for good reason, previously unavailable to the appropriate module assessment team or College panel of enquiry

Disagreement with a decision made by a panel of enquiry does not, of itself, constitute grounds for appeal.