New College Durham

Policy on

Academic Integrity

Approved

October 2023

Approved by

Senior Leadership Team

Policy Title	Academic Integrity
Document Owner	Vice Principal Quality, Enhanced Learning & Digital Transformation/ Head of Centre

Directorates and Departments affected by this Procedure	All Staff
Procedure Effective From	October 2023
Next Review Date	August 2027

New College Durham is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, as well as vulnerable adults, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

If you require this document in an alternative format and/or language, please contact records@newdur.ac.uk

We review our policies regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all. All policies are subject to equality impact assessments which are carried out to determine whether the policy has, or is likely to have, a different impact on those with protected characteristics. We are always keen to hear from anyone who wants to contribute to these impact assessments and we welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility of fairness of this and all College policies.

To make suggestions or to see further information please contact:

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Equality Impact Assessed: June 2022
Accessibility Assessed: June 2022

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1.   Scope

This policy has been formulated to recognise the importance the College places on promoting and protecting Academic Integrity in order to

- Protect the ownership of student work and assessments;
- Improve the quality of academic work across the sector;
- Demonstrate the quality of its own provision; and
- Secure the academic standards of the awards it offers in order to protect its reputation.

The College also recognises the importance of detecting and addressing malpractice to support this objective.

The College uses the term Academic Integrity to cover both academic malpractice and maladministration. Maladministration is activity or practice. Which results in non-compliance with administrative regulations and requirements and include the application of persistent mistakes and poor administration within a centre

For the purposes of this policy and its aligned procedures, the term 'malpractice' is inclusive of maladministration. Examples of maladministration are provided in appendix two.

This policy and any subordinate procedures must be followed by any partner organisations who are delivering programmes validated by New College Durham. Alternative responsible roles should be notified to the HE Collaborative Partnership Manager.

2.   Responsibilities

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for ensuring Academic Integrity is promoted and protected across the College and that responsibility and resource is assigned to appropriate departments to ensure a culture of student engagement and involvement is created and maintained through a commitment to partnership working with students.

The Head of Centre/Vice Principal for Quality and Enhancing Learning and the Vice Principal for HE, Lifelong Learning & International Studies are responsible for maintaining the College's ability to deliver awards, by complying with Awarding and Validating Organisation regulations and also those of the College in relation to the preservation of the integrity of the assessment and examination process.

Curriculum Teams are responsible for ensuring students are aware of their obligations to maintain high standards of Academic Integrity and the consequences of malpractice. They should

- ensure students receive appropriate initial advice and guidance during the induction period

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- provide active and regular engagement with students to ensure they remain aware of the practices that demonstrate academic integrity as well as those that might constitute academic malpractice
- promote an environment that proactively encourages students to engage in mature discussions around academic integrity with their lecturers

The Head of Quality & Enhancing Learning, the HE Quality Manager and the Academic Registrar are responsible for maintaining procedures for the investigation of malpractice to be followed by College staff.

Exams Office staff are responsible for enforcing robust exams processes to limit opportunities for malpractice.

All staff are responsible for promoting high standards of Academic Integrity.

3.   Relationship with existing policies and regulations

This policy should be read in the context of external requirements for Academic Integrity, including the 'QAA Academic Integrity Charter'[1] which the College has signed as a demonstration of commitment to securing academic standards and promoting good practice.

These include Awarding and Validating Organisation Regulations for the reporting and recording of incidents of malpractice and especially the JCQ 'Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments: Policies and Procedures'.

Internal requirements include the College's Academic Regulations for the Award of Foundation Degrees.

This policy should be read in the context of the following College documents:

- Student Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Staff Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- HE Academic Malpractice Procedure
- FE Academic Malpractice Procedure

4.   Academic Integrity Standards

To establish the College's commitment to Academic Integrity going forward the College has published its commitment to the principles based on the QAA Charter[2] and seeks to implement action plans to ensure

- Staff at all levels and within both HE and FE are aware of the importance of ensuring academic integrity

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[1] https://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/what-we-do/academic-integrity/charter
[2] https://www.newcollegedurham.ac.uk/higher-education/236-academic-integrity-charter

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- Students and staff are included in the development of processes and practices to improve Academic Integrity
- Training is provided to ensure the effective use of detection tools (eg. Turnitin)

5.   Student Expectations

Students are entitled to information, advice, support and guidance in understanding what constitutes academic integrity. This will be at the earliest opportunity on their course of study and at appropriate/regular intervals throughout the duration of their period of study at the College.

Students will be expected to fully and openly engage with their academic course team at induction and other times when academic integrity is the subject of discussion. They will be expected to demonstrate appropriate maturity in avoiding any temptation and rejecting any attempts by peers or others to engage in inappropriate academic activities and making a positive commitment to their own circumstances by taking appropriate advice and guidance from established College sources.

Staff are expected to ensure appropriate guidance is made available.

6.   Artificial Intelligence

Artificial intelligence (AI) through both Everyday AI and Generative AI (e.g. ChatGPT), is becoming integrated into our daily and working lives.

New College Durham, is committed to providing students with the knowledge, skills and behaviours that are required by employers for their future careers and next steps. Within its approach to developing your digital skills, the College is committed to educating students about the responsible and effective use of AI. This includes understanding that AI models are designed to return responses that appear convincing and all output should be viewed from this position. When using generative AI tools, there is potential that the material and data reproduced may be obscure, carrying the potential risk of copyright or other Intellectual Property infringement.

To use AI effectively all output must be independently validated by the user.

All students should note that attempting to pass off the work created by AI as their own constitutes academic malpractice.

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7.   Dealing with Malpractice

In all cases where academic integrity is not upheld to an appropriate standard it is the College's preference to initially establish an action plan to improve future behaviours for individual staff and students.

In all cases the College will review potential internal actions which could prevent future mistakes or improve the standard of academic integrity across the College.

The College will ensure any process of the reporting and investigation of academic malpractice is fair to all parties. Decisions will be recorded. Persons being investigated will be informed.

8.   Suspicion of Student Malpractice

Teaching staff or managers must not undertake internal investigations into suspected academic malpractice without first notifying the Academic Registrar, Head of Quality and Enhancing Learning or the HE Quality Manager. These staff will ensure the report is managed according to the relevant procedure.

Reporting to an Awarding Organisation will be co-ordinated by the Academic Registrar, Head of Quality and Enhancing Learning or the HE Quality Manager as required.

Categories of malpractice will be defined within the relevant procedure.

FE Malpractice Procedure (up to level 3 qualifications)

HE Malpractice Procedure (level 4 and above)

9.   Suspicion of Staff Malpractice

Where staff malpractice is reported[3], an initial review should be conducted by the Academic Registrar, Head of Quality and Enhancing Learning or the HE Quality Manager. The facts of the incident will be established, and a report will be made stating whether the suspicion of malpractice is founded or unfounded.

The member of staff should be informed of the nature of any concern. They should be informed that this initial review is to establish facts and ensure that administrative errors or misunderstandings are dealt with appropriately. They must be kept informed throughout the process.

Where an initial review shows a concern to be unfounded there will be no further action.

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[3] See appendix 1 for examples of staff malpractice

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Where an initial review shows a concern to be founded the incident will be notified to the Head of HR to advise on the best course of action. This may include referral to the Staff Disciplinary or Competence procedures.

Where staff academic malpractice is suspected following submission of work for certification, the Head of Quality and Enhancing Learning or Academic Registrar will request the Head of Centre or appropriate delegate to submit details of the case at the earliest convenience to the relevant Awarding Organisation (AO). Any further correspondence with the AO and HR would be co-ordinated by the Head of Centre or appropriate delegate.

10. Relevant Sanctions

The penalties appropriate to a found allegation of malpractice include but are not limited to the following and may be prescribed by the Awarding Organisation:

- Withholding of an award or implementation of penalties
- Not be presented at an Assessment/Award Board
- Misconduct
- Gross Misconduct

11. Evaluation and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored annually and reviewed every five years to ensure it meets the requirements of the College's Academic Regulations and the rules of its partners and accredited Awarding Bodies and in light of experience and best practice.

Subordinate procedures may be revised more frequently.

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Appendix 1: Examples of Staff Malpractice

Staff Malpractice may include:

completing work on behalf of the student, aiding in plagiarism, excessive coaching or inappropriate resits; attempting to access secure materials; disclosing secure materials; manipulating results on purpose or by mistake, falsifying unit grades or making claims that are not supported by evidence, including falsifying access arrangements; manipulating samples for EQA; failure to notify AO of student malpractice.

Staff may be found to have committed malpractice in their relations with **Sub-Contractors**. Actions like not maintaining the quality of sub -contractor evidence, false claims on the Centre's accreditation; falsifying information in an application for centre status or request for approval to deliver a qualification would constitute malpractice.

Examples of malpractice for staff working in examinations, including invigilators, may include:

disclosure of secure materials; making false claims and registrations; failure to meet awarding body requirements and centre regulations for the conduct of examinations; failure to notify the Awarding Organisation in the event of the discovery of student malpractice.

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Appendix 2: Examples of Maladministration

The categories below are examples of centre and student maladministration. Please note, that these examples are no exhaustive and are only intended as guidance on identifying maladministration.

- Failure to adhere to the College candidate registration or certification procedures.
- Failure to adhere to our centre approval requirements and/ or associated actions assigned to the centre.
- Failure to adhere to our qualification, accreditation or other approval requirements.
- Late candidate registrations, both infrequent and persistent.
- Unreasonable delays in responding to request and/or communications from awarding organisations
- Inaccurate claims for certificates (including certificates claimed in error).
- Failure to maintain appropriate auditable records (e.g. certification claims).
- Withholding information which is required to assure awarding organisations of the centre's ability to delver qualifications appropriately
- Misuse of qualifications and trademarks or misrepresentation of a centre's relationship with awarding bodies and/or its recognition and approval status with the approved awarding organisations.

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