



Reference Number: AQ_28-a02

Academic Misconduct Policy

Revision History

Version	Last revised	Next review date	Policy Owner	Notes
1.0	15 January 2014	30 June 2015	James Stephenson	For publication. Replaces PD14, CEAZ01 and Appendix B of PD34
1.1	22/01/2015	30 June 2015	James Stephenson	Additional appendix added
AQ_28-a01	10 June 2015	30 June 2016	James Stephenson	Reviewed
AQ_28_a02	14 March 2016	30 June 2017	Quality Assurance Mgr	Reviewed

Academic Misconduct Policy

1. Introduction

All work submitted for assessment must be the candidate's own work. It is an offence for any candidate to be guilty of, or party to, collusion, plagiarism, or any other act which may mislead the examiners and moderators about the development and authorship of work presented in assessments. This includes misleading examiners and moderators about the sources of information included in an assessment.

All work must fully acknowledge all sources of information used in preparing the work being submitted. This includes acknowledging all written and electronic sources. Standard practice on all NCC Education qualifications is that this should be done through 'Harvard'-style referencing. Where work is produced under examination conditions it will be sufficient to acknowledge the source without providing a full reference.

Candidates must not take any means of accessing information into an examination room unless the rubric for an examination explicitly state that this is allowed. This includes:

- all internet-connected devices – computers, tablets, watches, etc.
- telephones, pagers or other messaging devices
- books, journals, or notes.

Where it is absolutely necessary to take such materials into the room, they must be left with the invigilator (and, if an electronic device, switched off).

Unless explicitly permitted and/or required in the specification or an assessment itself, candidates must always work alone on preparing their assessments.

2. Types of Academic Misconduct

Collusion is the preparation or production of work for assessment jointly with another person or persons. The only exception to this is when group work is explicitly permitted by the specification and/or assessment guidance). An act of collusion is understood to encompass those who actively assist others as well as those who derive benefit from others. Where joint preparation is permitted but joint production is not, the submitted work must be produced solely by the candidate making the submission. Where joint production or joint preparation and production of work for assessment is specifically permitted, this will be published in the appropriate course documentation.

Plagiarism is the use, without acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of other people, and the act of representing the ideas or discoveries of another as one's own in written work submitted for assessment. To copy sentences, phrases or even striking expressions without acknowledgement of the source (either by inadequate citation or failure to indicate verbatim quotations) is plagiarism. To paraphrase without acknowledgement is also plagiarism. Direct quotations must be either in inverted commas, or indented, and directly acknowledged.

Impersonation is where someone other than the candidate prepares the work submitted for assessment. This includes purchasing or commissioning essays from third parties (including essay writing websites and other students) or asking someone else to sit an examination. Candidates who attend an examination without their student ID card or other acceptable form of photo-ID will not have their script marked until their identity has been confirmed. NCC Education takes impersonation extremely seriously and any suspicion of impersonation will result in an investigation of potential misconduct.

Misconduct in examinations includes having access, or attempting to gain access, to any books, memoranda, notes, unauthorised calculators, or any other material which has not

been supplied by the invigilator or authorised in the rubric on the front of the examination paper. It also includes aiding or attempting to aid another candidate, or obtaining or attempting to obtain aid from another candidate, or any other communication within the Examination Room.

Fabrication of results or observations in assignments or project work is the synthesis of data gained from practical activities carried out by the candidate, or the use of artificial observations to support a hypothesis/conclusion, including the forgery of computer screen shots where these are required to demonstrate that a practical activity has taken place.

For further information on the many different types of plagiarism and academic misconduct, please see the Turnitin White Paper entitled *The Plagiarism Spectrum*.¹

All instances of academic misconduct are serious failures to respect the integrity and fairness of the assessment process. NCC Education's Assessment Board makes final decisions on academic misconduct, after which an Academic Misconduct Report is issued to centres for every candidate who has been penalised, detailing the type of misconduct identified and the penalty applied

2.1. Poor Academic Practice

Poor Academic Practice is the term used to describe circumstances when a candidate commits plagiarism because they do not understand how to reference their work properly, or fail to do so correctly. For work to be considered as poor academic practice rather than plagiarism, there must be a satisfactory amount of original content and some attempt to provide a reference. For example, candidates may include sources in a bibliography but not reference them correctly in the body of the assignment. Also, the Assessment Board must be satisfied that there was no intention to deliberately mislead the markers and moderators, or to knowingly present someone else's intellectual property as the candidate's own work.

In cases of poor academic practice candidates will normally have their mark for that component capped at a maximum of 40%.

3. Identifying Academic Misconduct in Assignments

All assignments should be uploaded to Turnitin to obtain an Originality Report. In the case of locally marked assignments (at Levels 4 and 5), this should be completed by staff at the centre. If the report produces a **similarity score of 40% or more**, the assignment should be examined for plagiarism and/or collusion by centre markers. If any of the main types of academic misconduct listed above are detected, the centre should inform NCC Education.

For NCC Education marked assignments (at Level 7), NCC Education will upload all candidates' work to Turnitin to return an Originality Report. These will be reviewed by NCC Education members of staff prior to any penalty being recommended to the Assessment Board.

Although Turnitin reports give percentage scores, they do require careful interpretation before a penalty is applied. For example, a similarity score of 50% could mean that half of the work is identical to a single other source – which would be clear misconduct. However it could mean that 50% of the assignment is made up of quotations from 10 different academic sources, and if they are all correctly referenced (and the remaining half of the assignment is original work) then the submission may well be excellent.

¹ http://pages.turnitin.com/rs/!paradigms/images/Turnitin_WhitePaper_PlagiarismSpectrum.pdf

There is also a “background score” in every Turnitin report. This is caused by text which is shared between many different candidates’ assignments – for example, the wording of the Statement of Confirmation of Own Work, module names, assignment tasks and headers and so on. A typical background score, which can be ignored, is between 22 and 27% for most NCC Education candidates. This is slightly higher (around 35-40%) for computer programming assignments, where legitimate strings of code will also generate matches.

4. Penalising Academic Misconduct

4.1. In Examinations:

Cheating during an examination needs to be recorded by the Invigilator in the Invigilator’s Report (see Instructions for Conducting Examinations). This report and the examination script must be submitted with the work for marking (for global examinations) and with the sample for moderation (for the local examinations).

4.2. In Assignments:

A mark of zero should be awarded by markers when the work submitted by a candidate or candidates contains examples of the types of misconduct identified in Section 2 above. A mark of zero may be awarded for a specific task, or for the whole assessment.

Candidates are not permitted to work in groups unless explicitly stated in the rubric for an assessment. Any candidates whose work show an inappropriate level of similarity should have their marks appropriately reduced. If a candidate willingly permits a fellow candidate to access and copy their work, both candidates should be penalised.

If a marker uncovers plagiarism or other academic malpractice in assignments submitted by candidates, marks must be deducted as appropriate, a report must be written explaining the penalties imposed and justification for these penalties, and all information submitted as part of the moderation sample.

4.3. Sanctions

The sanctions which NCC Education may impose on candidates are fully outlined in the *Candidate and Centre Sanctions Policy*, which is published on the NCC Education website, *Campus* and *Connect*. Sanctions which can be imposed on candidates include:

Loss of Marks for a Section	Where Academic Misconduct has been found in a particular section of an assessment, the marks for that section may be set to zero or capped at 40.
Loss of Marks for an Assessment Component	Where Academic Misconduct has been found throughout a particular assessment component, the marks for that assessment component may be set to zero or capped at 40.
Disqualification from a Qualification	Where severe or repeated Academic Misconduct has been identified, a candidate may be disqualified from a qualification for a period of time. The candidate would then be required to re-register on the qualification, though credit could be transferred from the first attempt at the qualification (subject to the rules laid out in NCC Education’s Academic Regulations). NCC Education reserves the right to extend disqualification to all NCC Education

qualifications. Any decisions to disqualify candidates from a qualification are at the discretion of the Director of Quality and Academic Delivery

5. Information Sheets

Appended to this policy are four information sheets, which are also made available separately for download from Connect and NCC Education's website. Centres are strongly encouraged to disseminate this information widely and frequently amongst staff and students.

Information Sheets:

- A. Academic Misconduct: Guidance for Tutors
- B. What is Academic Misconduct? Guidance for Candidates
- C. Avoiding Plagiarism and Collusion: Guidance for Candidates
- D. Avoid Plagiarism and Collusion in Coding Units