

Academic Conduct and Practice –Malpractice Procedure

Document Summary

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Academic Integrity Policy

This policy outlines The City College's commitment to academic integrity—a core value of our learning community. By upholding these principles, you ensure the credibility of your qualifications and prepare yourself for professional success. This policy is aligned with best practices from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), OfS, QAA, Jisc, and Pearson.

1. All work submitted for assessment must be your own.

1.1. The College's Principles on Academic Honesty

We believe that integrity and honesty are fundamental to learning. You are expected to respect and maintain these values at all times.

- **Honesty:** You must be truthful in all academic activities, including when you conduct research and report data.
- **Trust:** You should always give full credit for the contributions of others and never try to gain an unfair advantage.
- **Respect:** We respect the work of others and expect you to do the same by correctly acknowledging all sources.
- **Fairness:** We are committed to a fair and consistent process for all students, ensuring that all decisions are proportionate and transparent.

2. What is Academic Malpractice?

Academic malpractice is any behaviour that undermines the integrity of your work and seeks to give you an unfair advantage. We have defined three levels of seriousness to ensure our response is fair.

2.1 Poor Academic Practice

This is an unintentional mistake, often due to a lack of understanding of academic conventions. It is an educational opportunity, not a deliberate act of cheating.

Examples of Poor Academic Practice:

- Minor errors in a referencing list or bibliography.

- Inadequate paraphrasing of a source without intent to deceive.
- Submitting work with an unclear structure or poor presentation.
- Using a source that is not academically credible (e.g., a personal blog).

2.2 Academic Malpractice

This is a deliberate attempt to deceive or gain an advantage.

- Examples of Academic Malpractice:
- Plagiarism: Using another person's words, ideas, or data as your own without proper acknowledgement. This includes copying text, images, or data from any source (books, websites, etc.).
- Self-Plagiarism (Duplication): Submitting work that is identical or substantially similar to a piece of work you have previously submitted for another assessment.
- Collusion: Working with another student on an individual assignment and submitting it as your own.
- Falsification of Data: Inventing or altering data for a report or project.

2.3 Severe Academic Malpractice

This is a serious and intentional act of cheating that significantly undermines the integrity of an assessment.

- Examples of Severe Academic Malpractice:
- Contract Cheating: Commissioning or paying a third party (such as an essay mill) to produce work that you submit as your own. This is a criminal offence under the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022.
- Copying another student's work: Submitting work that is directly copied from a peer.
- Impersonation: Arranging for another person to take your place in an assessment.
- Misuse of AI-generated content: Submitting content generated by an AI tool (such as ChatGPT, Google Gemini, etc.) as your own original work, unless the assessment has explicitly permitted this use.

3. Your Responsibility and AI Use

Your responsibility for academic integrity extends to the use of AI tools.

Allowed Use: You can use AI tools for activities like brainstorming ideas, developing a study plan, or checking grammar and spelling.

Misuse: Submitting content produced by an AI tool as your own without permission will be treated as severe academic malpractice.

The AI tool cannot be the author: AI tools are not a reliable source of information. They can produce fabricated facts or references. Content generated by an AI tool does not demonstrate your own knowledge, skills, or critical thinking.

Check with your assessor: If an assessment brief allows the use of AI, it will specify exactly how and what you are allowed to use. If you are unsure, you must ask your assessor for clarification.

All work submitted for assessment is subject to electronic plagiarism and AI detection software.

4. The Malpractice Process

Our process is designed to be fair, transparent, and consistent.

- Identification: A staff member identifies a suspected case of malpractice and gathers the evidence.
- Initial Review: An Internal Verifier (IV) reviews the evidence to confirm if a formal investigation is required.
- Student Notification: The Lead Assessment Administrator will contact you by email to inform you of the allegation and provide you with a copy of the evidence.
- Academic Hearing: An Academic Hearing will be arranged for all cases of Severe Academic Malpractice or if you wish to challenge the allegation. You will receive at least five working days' notice.

- Your "Friend": You may bring a "Friend" to the hearing for support. This can be a fellow student or a college staff member, but not a legally qualified representative.
- Decision & Appeal: The Academic Hearing Panel will determine the outcome based on the evidence. You will be notified of the decision within five working days and informed of your right to appeal.

5. Penalties for Malpractice

Penalties are based on the severity of the offence, your intent, and whether it is a repeated instance.

Malpractice Level	Potential Penalties (One or more may apply)
Poor Academic Practice	Corrective support and guidance. This may include a warning and a requirement to resubmit the work. The mark may be capped at a 'pass'.
Academic Malpractice	A formal reprimand. You will be required to resubmit the assignment, and the mark will be capped at a 'pass'.
Severe Academic Malpractice	One of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You must submit a new assignment, and the mark will be capped at a 'pass'. ▪ A mark of zero for the unit, with no option to resubmit. ▪ Temporary suspension or permanent expulsion from the College.

6. External Review by the OIA

If you have completed all internal appeal stages and are still not satisfied with the outcome, you may be able to apply for an independent review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

The College will issue a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter once our internal processes are complete. This is the document you need to start a complaint with the OIA.

The OIA is an independent body and is not a further stage of our internal process. It reviews whether our procedures were followed correctly and if our decision was reasonable.

You must submit your complaint to the OIA within 12 months of the date on the COP letter.

7. Further Information and External Resources

For additional guidance on academic integrity and related procedures, please refer to the following resources:

- Jisc: For comprehensive guidance on academic integrity in the digital age, including advice on AI and contract cheating, please see Jisc's student-facing guidance:
- [Jisc's Learner Guidance for FE on AI](#)
- Pearson: For Pearson's official regulations on malpractice, which form the basis for our policy on Higher National qualifications, you can consult their guidance for centres:
- [Pearson's Centre Guidance: Dealing with Malpractice and Maladministration](#)
- The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA): For detailed information on the OIA's role, the complaints process, and what they can and cannot review, please visit their student hub:
- [OIA Student Hub](#)
- The Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022: For more information on the law that makes providing and advertising "essay mills" a criminal offence in England, you can find details on the official legislation website:
- [The Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 \(Commencement No. 3\) \(England\) Regulations 2025](#)