LINCOLN COLLEGE

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY (HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS)

POLICYCQ/PR/20

SPONSOR

Director - Performance and Standards

Last Reviewed: September 2026 Last Updated: September 2026 Next Review: 2027/28 Academic Year

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Lincoln College strives to treat all its members and visitors fairly and aims to eliminate all forms of unlawful discrimination, specifically across all protected characteristics. We will work towards a fair and just organisation and promote inclusion for all those impacted by Lincoln College and the wider community.

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ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY – HIGHER EDUCATION

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ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

Lincoln College considers all issues of academic misconduct to be of a serious nature. This policy will allow students to be aware of how these issues will be dealt with.

1 PURPOSE

The intention of this document is to provide a standardised approach to academic misconduct across all Higher Education (HE) provision at Lincoln College.

2 AIMS

2.1 Identify and minimise the risk of academic misconduct by HE students.

2.2 Enable a prompt and effective response to any incident of any alleged academic misconduct.

2.3 Standardise and record any investigation to ensure openness and fairness and alert validating organisations when relevant.

2.4 Decide on appropriate penalties and/or sanctions relating to HE students where academic misconduct is proven.

2.5 Protect the integrity and reputation of Lincoln College and the qualifications delivered.

3 INTRODUCTION

Responsibilities

3.1 Within this policy, 'students' is used as a generic term and refers to all Higher Education students and Higher Apprentices who study at the college.

3.2 Lincoln College is proactive in promoting a positive culture to enable individuals to learn responsibly, fairly and show respect for the work of others.

3.3 It is the responsibility of all students and colleagues to fully support and implement this policy.

3.4 This policy should be actively integrated within the students' programmes of study. To ensure assessment opportunities limit academic misconduct opportunity and use programme materials to highlight the seriousness of academic misconduct and the outcomes.

3.5 It is the students' responsibility to ensure the submitted work is their own and fully acknowledges the sources of information used. It is the students' responsibility to declare their own work and ensure they do not embark on

any form of cheating or other ways to gain an unfair advantage.

3.6 The Director - Performance and Standards shall be informed of any suspected cases of academic misconduct, in writing by any student, member of staff or external stakeholder.

3.7 A Quality and Compliance Officer (QCO) or Student Enhancement (HE) Manager is responsible for the initial review of alleged cases of academic misconduct, and determining whether these allegations should proceed to a formal investigation and be referred to associated validating organisations. In cases of suspected AI usage, please refer to the Artificial Intelligence Policy.

3.8 To ensure that students and staff are treated fairly and receive appropriate support, this policy should be read in conjunction with the:

- Student Conduct Procedure Higher Education
- Ethics and Research Integrity Policy.

4 ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic misconduct covers any deliberate actions, neglect, default or other practice that compromises the integrity of the qualification/certificate. This could include (but is not limited to) the following:

4.1 Cheating is any irregular behaviour during examinations, such as:

- Unauthorised possession of notes.
- Communicating with, or copying from another candidate.
- Using programmable calculators, mobile phones, pagers or other equipment when this has been forbidden.
- Unauthorised obtaining of examination papers.

4.2 Plagiarism* is the passing off of another person's thoughts, ideas, writings or images as one's own such as:

- The inclusion of quotations from published works, the source of which is not properly acknowledged.
- Summarising another person's published material by simply changing words or altering the order of presentation, without proper acknowledgement.
- Copying the work of another student with or without that student's knowledge or agreement. In the former case, both parties are guilty of plagiarism.
- Using essay mills, unacknowledged use of artificial intelligence, writing services or equivalent.

*FOR STUDENTS ON OPEN UNIVERISTY COURSES, PLEASE ALSO SEE SECTION 23 OF THE OPEN UNIVERISTY REGULATIONS

4.3 Collusion* includes situations such as:

- A student completes work in collaboration with another person and

then submits for assessment as entirely his/her own work.

- A student collaborates with another person to complete work which is then submitted for assessment as entirely that other persons work.

* FOR STUDENTS ON OPEN UNIVERISTY COURSES, PLEASE ALSO SEE SECTION 23 OF THE OPEN UNIVERISTY REGULATIONS

4.4 Impersonation is where a student pretends to be someone else.

4.5 False declaration of authenticity in relation to a student's portfolio or coursework.

4.6 Misleading material that includes presenting data which has been invented or obtained by unfair means and/or re-submission in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement, of any work for which the student has already gained credit as part of the same or another award.

5 CONFIRMING AND ADDRESSING ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Student misconduct and can be identified in a number of different ways including, but not limited to, plagiarism detection services (for example Turn It In), internal quality assurance processes, external quality assurance scrutiny or learner/staff complaints. In all cases, the allegations will be taken seriously and given full consideration and will initially be appraised by the Performance and Standards Team. In cases of suspected AI usage, please refer to the Artificial Intelligence Policy.

Procedure

5.1 Where a member of staff believes a student has committed academic misconduct, the matter will be referred to a QCO in the Performance and Standards Team who will, based on the initial evidence presented, decide whether the allegations made constitute academic misconduct, usually within five working days of receipt of the allegation.

5.2 Where the QCO believes, based on the evidence, that no academic misconduct had been committed, no further action will be taken against the student and reasons for dismissal of the case will be forwarded to the member of staff who made the allegation.

5.3 Where the QCO believes, based on the evidence, that academic misconduct has been committed, the QCO will appoint an Investigating Officer (IO) to investigate the matter further and collect evidence from all relevant parties, usually within ten working days of appointment. On completion of their investigation, the IO will report back to the QCO who will subsequently decide:

- To dismiss the case (where insufficient evidence exists to uphold the allegation).

- To apply a sanction to the student, in accordance with AMBeR* tariff principles (where the student has admitted the allegation and it is a first offence).

- To refer the case to an Investigatory Panel Meeting for consideration (where the student has not admitted the allegation and/or it is not a first offence and/or the IO's report indicates the offence is serious in nature).

Investigatory Panel Meeting

5.4 Following the referral from the QCO, an Investigatory Panel Meeting will be arranged to review, evaluate and conclude any cases of academic misconduct, in accordance with AMBeR* tariff principles. The Investigatory Panel will consist of the Director - Performance and Standards (who will chair the meeting), the Assistant Principal - Higher Education and a member of the Academic Affairs Committee.

5.5 The Investigatory Panel Meeting will usually be convened no later than five working days following referral from the QCO. The student involved in the matter will have the right to attend and will be given at least three working days' notice of the meeting.

5.6 If the allegation is upheld by the Investigatory Panel Meeting, an academic penalty may be imposed and a sanction applied under the auspices of the HE Student Conduct Procedure. All outcomes of the Investigatory Panel Meeting will be confirmed in writing to the student within five working days of the meeting.

5.7 The Investigatory Panel Meeting will ensure that all outcomes will be communicated to the college's Academic Affairs Committee and the HE administration team for the purposes of examination boards and student records.

*AMBeR tariff principles can be found at https://marketing-porg-statamic-assets-us-west-2.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/main/Tennant_referencetariff-1506356085.pdf

6 RIGHT TO APPEAL

6.1 Learners have the right to appeal against the outcome of the action taken, and this will be made clear in the written confirmation noting the outcomes of the action.

6.2 Appeals must be made, in writing, to College Appeals Panel and be received within ten working days of receipt of the written confirmation of the action taken.

6.3 All appeals must follow the procedure noted in the College Appeals Panel Policy and Procedure (Policy CQ/PO/26) which can be obtained by contacting quality@lincolncollege.ac.uk.

7 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

7.1 The Learning Standards Quality Committee will review the Academic Misconduct Policy HE on an annual basis and make recommendations for its development.

7.2 The number and nature of academic misconduct will be reviewed at the Academic Affairs Committee.

APPENDIX A

Procedure and Sanctions for Higher Education Students

The procedure for dealing with alleged cases of academic misconduct for Higher Education students, shall follow the sequence of events noted in section 5 of this policy. In such cases, the Director - Performance and Standards shall chair an Investigatory Panel Meeting to consider and conclude the investigation. All outcomes will be forwarded to the college's Academic Affairs Committee.

In considering cases of academic misconduct or misconduct, the Investigatory Panel Meeting will evaluate:

1. ***Intention:*** To what extent was the incident premeditated by the student involved?

2. ***Recurrence:*** To what extent is the incident an isolated case? Have previous offences taken place?

3. ***Scope:*** What is the extent of the offence within the piece of submitted work?

4. ***Academic theft:*** To what extent has the student stolen others' formative or summative assessment pieces?

5. ***Impact on others:*** To what extent have other students, staff or other members of the academic community been affected by the incident?

Should the Investigatory Panel Meeting uphold the alleged case of academic misconduct or misconduct, it shall apply one of the following outcomes:

1. Apply no sanction but provide guidance as to the learner's future academic conduct.

2. The assessment item in question be awarded a mark of zero, fail or equivalent and to be resubmitted by the learner with no penalty.

3. The assessment item in question be awarded a mark of zero, fail or equivalent. The assessment item to be resubmitted by the learner and marked to a maximum of a pass standard.

4. The assessment item in question to be awarded a mark of zero, fail or equivalent, with no right to reassessment.

5. All assessment items in the module/unit to be awarded a mark of zero, fail or equivalent with no right to reassessment.

6. All assessment items in the modules studied concurrently during the term concerned to be awarded a mark of zero, fail or equivalent.

7. All assessment items in the academic year concerned to be awarded a mark of zero.

8. Termination of study.

All upheld cases of academic misconduct shall be reported to the associated awarding organisation and learners may also be subject to action under the college HE Student Conduct Procedure.

APPENDIX B

Procedure for Investigatory Panel Meetings considering cases of academic misconduct

During the Investigatory Panel Meeting, adjournments may be requested by either party or by the chairperson (either Director - Performance and Standards or their nominee) conducting the meeting and will not be refused unreasonably. Where such a request is denied, an explanation will be given.

The chairperson conducting the hearing will ask whether any new evidence has been made available that could not be circulated prior to the hearing and will make a judgement as to whether an adjournment is necessary to allow consideration of such evidence.

The chairperson will introduce all those present.

Order of the meeting

1. The Investigating Officer (IO) will present the details of the allegation and a report on the investigation undertaken.

2. The student and his/her representative may question the IO.

3. The Investigatory Panel may question the IO.

4. The IO may call witnesses and ask questions of them.

5. The student or representative may question the witness.

6. The Investigatory Panel may question the witness.

7. The student and/or representative will present the case against the allegations and explain any special circumstances that may exist.

8. The IO may question the student.

9. The Investigatory Panel may question the student.

10. The student and/or representative may call witnesses and ask questions of them.

11. The IO may question the witnesses.

12. The Investigatory Panel may question the witnesses.

13. Should the Investigatory Panel wish to clarify any issue with the student, IO or the witnesses, they will do at this point.

14. The IO will summarise the case against the student.

15. The student and/or representative will summarise the case against the allegation.

16. The staff member/student and their representative, IO and any other management

representative will withdraw and the Investigatory Panel will decide whether or not academic misconduct/maladministration has been committed.

17. If, in the opinion of the Investigatory Panel an offence has been committed, they will take into account the following before deciding upon an appropriate sanction:

    - any mitigating factors, e.g. health, domestic, bereavement;
    - current warnings of the staff member/Student;
    - time at the college;
    - nature of the offence;
    - evidence produced by either party at the hearing;
    - statements and answers provided by witnesses;

18. Once that decision is made, the two parties will be recalled and advised of the decision.

19. The staff member/student will be advised of their right to appeal against the decision and informed who the appeal should be lodged with and in what timescale.

20. Written confirmation of the decision will be sent to both parties within five working days of the hearing.

APPENDIX C

Processes for confirming and addressing academic misconduct

