

## **P961 Higher Nationals Academic Offence Policy**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 It is the policy of Peterborough Regional College to prevent cheating, plagiarism and collusion through effective education and communication with its students. Where such offences are detected it is the College's policy to deal with them in a fair but rigorous manner. See section 9 for a definition of these terms.

### **2. PURPOSE**

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to inform students and staff what types of activity constitutes an academic offence and how such activities are dealt with by the College. The College has a responsibility to its students, employers and awarding bodies to ensure that the qualifications its students receive are a fair and accurate representation of their work, and knowledge and skills obtained.

### **3. SCOPE**

- 3.1 This policy applies to Pearson Higher National Certificate and Higher National Diploma qualifications, including those on the Regulated Qualifications Framework, Self-Regulated Framework (SRF) and other national frameworks in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.
- 3.2

### **4. RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- 4.1 P960 - Higher Education Academic and Assessment Regulation Policy
- 4.2 Guidelines on the procedures for dealing with instances of suspected malpractice are detailed in the JCQ publication Suspected Malpractice in Examinations and Assessments, which can be downloaded from the JCQ website: <http://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice>
- 4.3 QAA Quality Code Chapter B6: Indicator 14: 'Higher education providers operate processes for preventing, identifying, investigating and responding to unacceptable academic practice'.

### **5. RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 5.1 The College will establish and maintain, and at all times comply with, up-to-date written procedures for the investigation of suspected or alleged academic offences; and ensure that such investigations are carried out rigorously, effectively, and by persons of appropriate competence who have no personal interest in their outcome.
- 5.2 Where there is a concern, cases will be investigated following this procedure. Staff are obliged to report concerns to ensure academic rigour.
- 5.3 The Academic Officer is the first point of contact for staff to refer any suspected cases of academic offences. The Academic Officer will act as a liaison between the College Director of Quality, academic staff and students in the first instance, overseeing and monitoring claims and ensuring that the policy is adhered to. Where relevant, investigations will be referred to the JCQ by the College Quality Director.

## 6. RISK ANALYSIS

**This policy is required to** ensure that correct procedures are in place and followed by all involved in the assessment and guidance offered to higher education students.

### **Analyse risks of non-adherence to this policy**

Poor success rates, poor external stakeholder perception and loss of business as a result; loss of certification rights for qualifications.

### **Staff training needed**

Induction and refresher training to be made available to staff.

**Compliance** reduces the risks described above.

## 7. EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

7.2 All new policies must undergo an Impact Assessment. Failure to do so will result in the policy not being approved. A template Equality Impact Assessment form is available on [J:\Policies\Equality impact assessment \(2\).doc](J:\Policies\Equality impact assessment (2).doc)

7.3 **Section one:** Screening for impact consists of three pages (this is mandatory and must be signed and dated and attached to the new policy)

7.4 **Section two:** Full assessment (this only needs to be completed if there are equality issues within the Policy)

## 8. DATA PROTECTION

8.1 Internal Assessment data and records should be stored for 3 years in secure storage (this can be electronic) or subject to the Awarding Organisation's requirements.

## 9. PROCEDURE

9.1 **Definitions:** An academic offence is the general term used to define cases where a student has tried to get unfair academic advantage in an assessment for themselves or another student.

9.2 **Plagiarism** is when someone presents another person's work, words, images, ideas, opinions or discoveries, whether published or not, as his or her own. It is also when artwork, images or computer-generated work of others, is used without properly acknowledging where this is from or without their permission.

9.3 Examples of plagiarism include: (this list is an example and not exhaustive)

- directly copying from written work, physical work, performances, recorded work or images, without saying where this is from;
- using information from the internet or electronic media (such as DVDs and CDs) which belongs to someone else, and presenting it as your own;
- rewording someone else's work, without referencing them; and
- submitting an assessment which has been produced by another student or person.

9.4 **Collusion** is when two or more students collaborate in the preparation or production of work which is submitted by each as his or her own unique work but is identical or substantially similar. Collusion also occurs where there is unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the student's own.

9.5 Many parts of university life need students to work together. Working as a team, as directed by a tutor, and producing group work is not collusion. Collusion only happens if work is produced jointly to benefit of one or more person and try to deceive another (for example the assessor).

Examples of collusion include:

- agreeing with others to cheat;
- copying the work of another person (with their permission);
- allowing another student to copy your own work.

9.6 **Cheating** is when someone aims to get unfair advantage over others.

Examples of cheating include:

- taking unauthorised material into the examination room;
- inventing results (including experiments, research, interviews and observations);
- handing your own previously graded work back in;
- getting an examination paper before it is released;
- behaving in a way that means other students perform poorly;
- pretending to be another student; and
- trying to bribe members of staff or examiners.

9.7 **Fraud** occurs when someone has deliberately and knowingly allowed or paid another person to do their work, or sit an examination for them.

Examples of fraud include:

- getting someone else to produce part or all of your work;
- submitting essays from essay banks and essay writing services;
- paying someone to produce work for you;
- submitting computer programs from a computer program writing service;
- allowing someone to sit an examination for you; and
- pretending to be another student

9.8 **Poor academic practice** is a term usually used when work is badly referenced and cited incorrectly.

## 10 The Stages of Investigation:

10.1 The handling of Malpractice involves the following stages;

1. The allegation
2. The investigation (including Awarding Body involvement)
3. The decision
4. The Appeal

### 10.2 Stage 1: The Allegation

All cases of suspected academic offences must be reported to the Academic Officer. Any case of suspected academic offence must be supported by evidence documented by the person who suspects the academic offence. For example, in a case of possible plagiarism, the marker of the assignment should highlight those passages which are unattributed, should provide a note of the sources from which these passages come and should indicate the extent of plagiarism as a percentage of the assessment in question (i.e. Turnitin Report).

10.3 If the student is registered with the awarding body the Director of Quality at the College must submit full details of the case at the earliest opportunity by emailing a JCQ Form M1

<http://www.icq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice> with supporting documentation to [pqsmalpractice@pearson.com](mailto:pqsmalpractice@pearson.com).

## **11 Stage 2: The Investigation**

- 11.1 The Awards Board Panel can be called at any point in the academic year to hear an Academic Offence case. The Awards Board panel will ensure that all alleged offences have been investigated fairly and consistently across HNC and HND provision at the College. The Panel will decide if an academic offence has been committed and any appropriate sanction (which may include remedial intervention) taking account length of study, previous history of offences and the severity.
- 11.2 The Academic Officer is responsible communicating the details of the alleged offence and any supporting evidence to the student ahead of the Awards Board Panel and should submit the student response as part of the report to ensure a balanced report and associated evidence; the Panel will not make any judgements unless they are assured of this balanced approach. If the student fails to engage with the procedure, for instance, by failing to respond to correspondence, failing to attend meetings or do so in a vexatious manner they may be assumed to be admitting to the offence.
- 11.3 Students and staff involved in the investigation may be called to meet with the Panel to provide further clarifying information. Students and staff will be advised of this 5 working days ahead of the Panel in writing. Students are advised to contact the UCP Student Officer for advice and they are entitled to bring a representative along to any meetings they attend. If a student is unable to attend the meeting, and notifies the Academic Officer at least 5 working days in advance, they will be permitted to submit written representation in support of their case.
- 11.4 For cases referred to the awarding body, on receipt of a notification of suspected malpractice, the awarding body will consider the information provided and decide either:
- to take no further action; or
  - if the notification takes the form of a Report, to make a decision on the case in accordance with the procedures, (where the evidence permits to ask the head of centre to carry out a further investigation as described in sections and provide further evidence; or
  - to investigate the matter further itself.

## **12 Stage 3: The Decision**

- 12.1 The order of proceedings for the Panel meeting will normally follow:
- I. Introduction of those present;
  - II. Allegation of academic offence set out by the HE Manager or HE Programme Lead;
  - III. The student, or the student representative, responds to the allegations;
  - IV. The Panel has the opportunity to question both a subject specialist/assessor, the HE Manager/ HE programme Lead and the student;
  - V. The Chair sums up the allegations. New evidence is not admissible at this time;
  - VI. The student and their representative withdraw whilst the panel reaches its decision
  - VII. The Panel make a decision on the academic offence or otherwise based on the evidence provided;
  - VIII. The Panel makes a decision on the penalty to be applied;

IX. The Academic Officer writes up the findings and confirms the outcome in writing to the student within 5 working days.

- 12.2 If the student is found not to have committed an academic offence and there is no evidence of poor academic practice then all documentation relating to the case will be removed from the student and College files.
- 12.3 In deciding which academic penalty to impose, the panel will take into consideration, amongst other matters, admission of academic misconduct by the student, the seriousness and the extent of the misconduct.
- 12.4 Each case will be considered and judged on an individual basis in the light of all information available. Where there is an established, clearly evidenced, repeated pattern of behaviour this may be taken into consideration when determining whether a sanction should be applied.
- 12.5 Sanctions that can be made include;
- The claim is dismissed and the work is marked
  - Allow the work to be marked and student is issued with an academic warning
  - A mark of 0 or grade F is awarded for the component of assessment in question
  - A mark of 0 or grade F is awarded for the unit in question
- 12.6 Where a unit mark, or a component mark, of 0 or F has been awarded as a penalty for the use of unfair means, a student shall be permitted the normal entitlement of further opportunities to pass the unit. The opportunities which remain will depend on the point in the academic cycle at which the zero has been awarded. For example, if this is the students first submission they will be allowed further opportunities to include:
- i) an opportunity to be reassessed at the stipulated time;
  - ii) an opportunity to retake the module the next time the module is delivered;
- 12.7 Where a student has been permitted to be reassessed or to retake a unit the maximum unit mark that the student shall be given under any circumstances shall be the pass mark for the unit.
- 12.8 Any student found to have committed an academic offence will be required by the Panel, in addition to the above, to undertake appropriate study skills and guidance on the use the text matching detection tool, Turnitin.

### **13 Stage 5: The Appeal**

- 13.1 If the student believes he or she has been wrongly accused of an academic offence the student can make a case when he or she meets with the panel. The student has a right to appeal if he or she can provide new evidence or believes that the procedures have not been followed properly. Details about the Appeals Process can be found on page 34 of the UCP Rules Regulations and Procedures for Students <http://www.ucp.ac.uk/supporting-you/>

APPENDIX A- Academic Offence Procedure Flowchart

