

EDA COLLEGE



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Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism Policy¹

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Applies To	All students enrolled on credit-bearing programmes delivered by, with or on behalf of EDA College, and all staff involved in the design, delivery and management of assessment

¹ Aligned with OfS Conditions B4 and B5, the UK Quality Code, the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 and the OIA Good Practice Framework.

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1. Policy Statement

EDA College (“the College”) is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity. The credibility of the College’s qualifications, the value of students’ achievements and public confidence in higher education depend on a culture in which all academic work is the genuine and properly attributed work of the person presenting it.

This Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism Policy sets out the categories of academic misconduct, the procedures by which alleged misconduct is investigated, the range of sanctions available and the safeguards that ensure decisions are fair, consistent and proportionate. The Policy supports the College’s compliance with the Office for Students (OfS) conditions of registration on assessment (B4) and sector-recognised standards (B5), and reflects the principles of the OIA Good Practice Framework on disciplinary procedures.

The Policy is grounded in a positive view of academic integrity. Wherever possible the College will promote integrity through teaching, induction, study skills support and constructive use of similarity-detection tools, and reserve formal misconduct procedures for cases where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a breach.

2. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Define academic misconduct and the categories of behaviour that may amount to a breach of academic integrity.
- Set out clear, transparent and fair procedures for handling allegations.
- Specify the range of sanctions available and the principles by which they are applied.
- Define the rights of students who are subject to investigation, including rights to be heard, to be supported and to appeal.
- Define the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of staff involved in investigations and decision-making.
- Promote a culture of academic integrity through education, awareness and constructive engagement with academic skills.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled on credit-bearing programmes delivered by, with or on behalf of EDA College, and to all forms of credit-bearing assessment, including coursework, dissertations, projects, portfolios, presentations, examinations, online assessments and any other work submitted for academic credit. It also applies to research ethics breaches associated with assessment.

Where a programme is delivered under the regulations of an awarding or validating body or PSRB, those regulations will take precedence to the extent that they conflict with this policy. Suspected misconduct by staff is dealt with under the College’s Disciplinary Policy and Procedure or, where applicable, the Research Integrity Policy.

4. Regulatory and Sector Framework

- Office for Students Regulatory Framework, in particular conditions B4 (assessment and awards) and B5 (sector-recognised standards).
- UK Quality Code for Higher Education, including the Advice and Guidance theme on Assessment.
- Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 (Part 3), which makes it a criminal offence in England to provide, or arrange for the provision of, contract cheating services to students undertaking higher education.
- Higher Education and Research Act 2017.
- Equality Act 2010, including the duty to make reasonable adjustments.
- UK GDPR and the Data Protection Act 2018, in respect of personal data used in investigations.
- Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) Good Practice Framework on Handling Complaints and Academic Appeals (and on disciplinary procedures).

5. Definitions

5.1 Academic Integrity

The commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage in academic work, as articulated by the International Center for Academic Integrity.

5.2 Academic Misconduct

Any action, attempted action or omission that gains, or attempts to gain, unfair advantage in assessment, or that compromises the integrity of academic work.

5.3 Plagiarism

Presenting another person's ideas, words, images, data or creative work as one's own, without appropriate acknowledgement, whether intentionally or unintentionally.

5.4 Collusion

Working with one or more other people to produce work that is then submitted as the individual work of one or more of those involved, where this is not permitted by the assessment task.

5.5 Contract Cheating

Procuring, paying for or otherwise arranging for a third party (including online services, essay mills, AI tools used as a substitute for the student's work and other individuals) to produce or substantially alter work that is then submitted as the student's own. The provision of contract cheating services is a criminal offence in England under Part 3 of the Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022.

5.6 Fabrication and Falsification

Inventing, manipulating or misrepresenting data, sources, references, results or other material in academic work.

5.7 Examination Misconduct

Any conduct in or in connection with an examination or invigilated assessment that breaches examination regulations, including the use of unauthorised materials, communication with others or removal of examination material.

5.8 Impersonation

Sitting an assessment in place of another person or arranging for another person to sit an assessment in one's place.

5.9 Self-Plagiarism (Recycling)

Submitting one's own previously assessed work, in whole or in substantial part, for credit again, without express permission and appropriate acknowledgement.

5.10 Inappropriate Use of Generative AI

Using generative artificial intelligence tools in the production of submitted work in any way that is not expressly permitted by the assessment brief, or failing to acknowledge such use as required.

6. Promoting Academic Integrity

The College adopts a positive, educative approach to academic integrity. The College will:

- Embed academic integrity in induction, study skills programmes and the curriculum.
- Provide clear guidance on referencing, paraphrasing, group work and the appropriate use of generative AI in module assessment briefs.
- Use similarity-detection tools as a developmental aid as well as for detection.
- Provide individual academic skills support, including for students for whom English is an additional language.
- Recognise that genuine, supported skill development reduces the likelihood of unintentional misconduct.

7. Categories of Academic Misconduct

The categories of academic misconduct addressed under this policy include, but are not limited to:

Category	Examples
Plagiarism	Failing to acknowledge sources; copying text or images without attribution; paraphrasing without citation; over-reliance on a single source.
Collusion	Submitting work substantially produced jointly with others where the assessment is intended to be individual; sharing answers in online tasks.
Contract cheating	Buying, commissioning or downloading work; using essay mills or paid third parties; arranging for another to write or substantially rewrite work.
Fabrication / falsification	Inventing data, sources or references; falsifying laboratory or fieldwork results;

	tampering with academic records.
Examination misconduct	Use of unauthorised notes or devices; communicating with others; removing examination material; breaching online examination protocols.
Impersonation	Sitting or attempting to sit an assessment in another student's name, or arranging for another to sit one's own.
Self-plagiarism	Re-submitting one's own previously assessed work without authorisation and acknowledgement.
Inappropriate use of generative AI	Use of AI tools where not authorised by the assessment brief; using AI to generate substantial portions of a submission; failing to acknowledge authorised AI use.
Breach of research ethics	Conducting research without required ethical approval; misrepresenting consent; breaching confidentiality of participants.

8. Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence

The use of generative AI tools in the production of submitted work is permitted only where explicitly authorised by the assessment brief. Where it is authorised, students must use AI tools transparently and ethically and must acknowledge their use in line with module guidance.

Examples of inappropriate use of generative AI that may amount to misconduct include:

- Submitting AI-generated content as one's own work, in whole or in part, where AI use was not permitted.
- Using AI to generate or substantially rewrite key elements of an argument, analysis or original work.
- Failing to acknowledge AI use in cases where its use was permitted.
- Using AI tools to bypass authentic engagement with sources, data or learning outcomes.

The College will keep the operation of this section under review as sector practice evolves and may issue supplementary guidance to programmes between policy reviews.

9. Burden and Standard of Proof

Proceedings under this policy are not criminal proceedings. Allegations will be considered on the balance of probabilities, taking account of all available evidence. The burden of establishing an allegation rests with the College. Where a student fails to engage with the investigation without good reason, the College may proceed in their absence and reach a decision based on the evidence available.

10. Reporting an Allegation

Any member of staff (including markers, invigilators, dissertation supervisors and external examiners) who suspects academic misconduct in relation to an assessment must report it promptly to the relevant Module Leader and the Academic Registry / Quality Assurance function. Reports should include:

- The student's name and identifier (where known).
- The module and assessment concerned.
- A description of the suspected misconduct and its category.
- Supporting evidence (e.g. similarity reports, comparison with sources, examination-room reports).

Where misconduct is suspected, the marking of the affected piece of work will be paused; marks will not be released to the student until the investigation has concluded.

11. Investigation Procedure

The College operates a tiered investigation procedure proportionate to the seriousness of the alleged misconduct. The procedures and decision-making bodies are summarised below; detailed operational steps are set out in the Academic Misconduct Procedure within the Quality Manual.

11.1 Stage 1 – Initial Review

On receipt of a report, the Academic Registry / Quality Assurance function will undertake an initial review to consider whether there is a case to answer. If there is no case to answer, the matter is closed and the student is informed; the work is then marked in the normal way.

11.2 Stage 2 – Module/Programme-level Investigation (Minor Cases)

Where the case appears to be minor (e.g. a first instance of poor academic practice with limited impact on the assessment outcome), the case may be considered by the Programme Leader (or a designated Academic Misconduct Officer) on a documentary basis. The student will be informed of the allegation, sent the evidence, and given a reasonable period (not less than 10 working days) to provide a written response.

11.3 Stage 3 – Academic Misconduct Panel (Major or Repeat Cases)

Where the alleged misconduct is more serious (e.g. contract cheating, impersonation, fabrication, examination misconduct, or repeat instances of poor practice), the case will be referred to an Academic Misconduct Panel. The Panel will:

- Comprise at least three members, including a senior chair, an academic member from outside the student's programme and a Quality Assurance representative; a student representative may be included where appropriate.
- Consider documentary evidence and may invite the student to an in-person or remote hearing.
- Allow the student to be accompanied by a friend, fellow student or representative (excluding legal counsel acting in a legal capacity unless the College agrees otherwise).
- Reach a decision on the balance of probabilities and apply an appropriate sanction within the framework set out in this policy.
- Issue a written outcome to the student within 10 working days of the hearing, with reasons.

12. Student Rights and Support

Students subject to an investigation under this policy are entitled to:

- Be informed in writing of the allegation, the evidence relied upon and the procedure being followed.
- Be given a reasonable opportunity to respond, normally not less than 10 working days.
- Be accompanied at any hearing by a supporter as set out in section 11.3.
- Be treated with respect and to have the matter dealt with confidentially.
- Receive any reasonable adjustments required under the Equality Act 2010.
- Receive a written outcome with reasons, and be informed of their right of appeal.

The College recognises that being subject to an academic misconduct investigation can be stressful. Students will be signposted to wellbeing and academic skills support throughout the process. Where there is concern about a student's welfare, the College will work in line with its Safeguarding Policy.

13. Range of Sanctions

Sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the misconduct, taking into account the nature and extent of the breach, the level of study, the student's previous record, and any aggravating or mitigating factors. The College's sanctions framework is illustrative and not prescriptive; decision-makers will exercise judgement within the framework.

Category	Indicative Sanctions
Minor / poor academic practice	Formal warning recorded; mandatory academic skills support; deduction of marks within the affected piece; opportunity to resubmit (capped at the pass mark) where appropriate.
Standard misconduct	Mark of zero for the affected assessment; capped resubmission opportunity (where regulations allow); formal record on the student's academic file.
Serious misconduct	Mark of zero for the affected module; failure of the module without the right to resubmit (where regulations allow); reduction in classification; requirement to repeat the module externally.
Severe misconduct	Failure of the programme; rescinding of credit or award; suspension; expulsion from the College.

Where contract cheating, impersonation or substantive falsification is established, the starting point for sanction will be in the serious or severe category. The College may also report suspected criminal conduct (including the supply of contract cheating services) to the relevant authorities.

14. Records and Confidentiality

Records of academic misconduct allegations, decisions and outcomes will be retained securely on the student's academic file in accordance with the College's Records Retention Schedule and applicable data protection law. Information will be shared only with those who need it for the purposes of investigation, decision-making, sanction, appeal and external review. Aggregate data on academic misconduct will be reported to the Academic Board to inform enhancement.

15. Appeals

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an academic misconduct case may submit an appeal under the College's Academic Appeals Policy on the following grounds:

- There was a material procedural irregularity in the conduct of the investigation or hearing;
- There is new evidence which the student could not, for valid reasons, have made available at the time of the original decision;
- The decision reached, or the sanction imposed, was manifestly unreasonable in the circumstances.

Disagreement with the academic judgement of markers, panels or examination boards is not a ground for appeal. Following the conclusion of internal procedures, students who remain dissatisfied may have the right to refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), where the College is a member of the OIA scheme. The College will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter on conclusion of internal procedures.

16. Group Work and Multiple Students

Where alleged misconduct involves more than one student (e.g. collusion in submitted work), each student's case will be considered on its own merits with separate determinations and, where appropriate, separate sanctions. Group assessments will only be treated as a single case where the assessed product is genuinely a group product and the brief was clear about this expectation.

17. Examinations and Invigilated Assessments

Invigilators have the authority to take immediate action where misconduct is suspected in an examination, including (where appropriate) confiscating unauthorised materials, recording the incident in the examination report and continuing to allow the student to complete the examination. The matter is then referred for investigation under this policy.

18. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Key Responsibilities
Academic Board	Approve and review this policy; receive aggregate reporting on misconduct cases and outcomes.
Programme Leader	Owns this policy; ensures consistent application across the College; reports to the Academic Board.
Academic Misconduct Officers / Programme Leader	Carry out Stage 2 investigations; recommend cases for referral to Academic Misconduct Panels; support staff and students through the process.
Academic Misconduct Panel Chairs and Members	Conduct hearings fairly and consistently; reach proportionate decisions; document outcomes.

Registry / Quality Assurance	Coordinate cases; maintain records; train staff; report aggregate data; support consistency across panels.
Markers, Invigilators and Supervisors	Identify and report suspected misconduct promptly with appropriate evidence.
Students	Engage with academic integrity expectations; respond to allegations within the timescales given; seek support when needed.

19. Monitoring and Review

The application of this policy will be monitored through:

- Annual reporting of misconduct cases and outcomes to the Academic Board.
- Periodic review of decisions and sanctions across cases for consistency.
- Feedback from external examiners and (where applicable) the OIA.
- Internal audit of records, timescales and procedural compliance.
- Review of the impact of generative AI and other emerging risks.

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner where regulation, sector guidance or technological developments require it.

End of Policy