



<b>Academic Conduct</b>	<b>Policy Name:</b>	Academic Policy
	<b>Policy Reference</b>	LeD02
	<b>Applies To:</b>	AoG Inc.
	<b>Approved By:</b>	Board of Directors
	<b>Approval Date:</b>	04/10/2024
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	<b>Policy Lead:</b>	Vice Principal (Academic)
<b>Policy Contact:</b>	mark.button@missiodei.ac.uk	

<b>PART 1 – Policy Statement:</b>
AoG Inc, through the College, is committed to fostering a culture of academic integrity where students are expected to demonstrate honesty, fairness, and respect for intellectual property in their academic work. This policy outlines the principles of academic conduct, defines unacceptable practices, and details the procedures for handling suspected breaches of academic conduct.
<b>Background/Introduction/Statement/Preamble</b>
<p>Academic integrity is built upon the following core principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Honesty:</b> Students are expected to submit work that is their own and to accurately represent the ideas and contributions of others.</li> <li>● <b>Fairness:</b> Students should be given an equal opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge and skills through assessments.</li> <li>● <b>Respect:</b> Students must respect the intellectual property rights of others and avoid unauthorised collaboration.</li> <li>● <b>Responsibility:</b> Students are ultimately responsible for ensuring the integrity of their work.</li> </ul> <p>In practice, this means that students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Acknowledge all sources of information, knowledge, and ideas when completing assessments, using an appropriate referencing system.</li> <li>● Produce work that is the product of their own efforts (except in the cases of group tasks).</li> <li>● Acknowledge work previously used in work submitted for credit (in any college/university).</li> <li>● Use accurate data, and only engage in empirical research that has been approved by the College’s Research Ethics Panel.</li> </ul> <p>Inexperience, intention, lack of intention, or unfamiliarity with this policy will not be regarded as a defence of a suspected breach of Academic Conduct Policy.</p> <p>The decision of whether a student has breached the Policy is one of academic judgement.</p>
<b>Definitions</b>
The following practices constitute breaches of academic integrity:

- **Plagiarism:** Failing to properly acknowledge the source of ideas, words, or data from others. This includes verbatim copying, paraphrasing without attribution, and using uncited sources.
- **Collusion:** Unauthorised collaboration on individual assignments or assessments.
- **Contract Cheating:** Paying a third party to complete coursework or assessments on your behalf.
- **Self-Plagiarism:** Submitting the same work for credit in more than one course without permission from the instructors.
- **Fabrication:** Falsifying or inventing data or citations.
- **Misrepresentation:** Providing false or misleading information about your qualifications or academic performance.
- **Use of AI:** Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to produce assessments or part thereof.
- **Impersonation:** Someone assuming the identity of another person with intent to deceive either in exams or other assessments
- **Cheating in Exams:** Use of prohibited materials in an exam.
- **Obstruction of Justice:** Tampering with evidence or interfering with the investigation of a suspected breach of academic integrity.

#### Scope (if relevant)

##### Examples of Plagiarism:

- Copying text directly from a source without quotation marks and a citation.
- Paraphrasing a source too closely without properly attributing the ideas.
- Patchwriting content from multiple sources without proper citations.
- Submitting someone else's work (written or creative) as your own.
- Buying or borrowing a paper from another student or online service.

##### Examples of Self-Plagiarism:

- Submitting large sections of a previous paper verbatim or with minor changes into a new assignment.
- Using extensive data or analysis from a prior research project without proper citation in a new course.
- Paraphrasing heavily from your own past work without acknowledging that you are reusing your own ideas.
- If a student has failed an assessment and needs to resubmit, improving the first attempt is not considered a case of self-plagiarism. (The student should be careful to ensure that their work has been sufficiently improved.)

##### Examples of Cheating in Exams:

- Copying answers from another student's exam.
- Bringing unauthorised notes, crib sheets, or electronic devices into the exam hall.
- Communicating with other students during the exam (without permission).
- Obtaining or attempting to obtain a copy of the exam paper in advance.
- Tampering with the exam paper or answer sheet.
- Impersonating another student during the exam.

## Objectives/Purpose

To foster a culture of academic integrity where students demonstrate honesty, fairness, and respect for intellectual property in their academic work, understand the principles of academic conduct, recognise and avoid unacceptable practices, and know the procedures for handling suspected breaches of academic conduct.

## Roles & Responsibilities

- Missio Dei will provide guidance on appropriate ways to utilise AI for research purposes.
- For formative/summative assessments, the work produced should be entirely the student's own words, other than appropriately referenced primary/secondary sources.

## PART 2 – Version History of the Policy:

Policy Author	Version #	Summary of Changes
M.Button	1.0	New Policy
M.Button	1.1	Policy Review

## PART 3 – General Procedures

### 3.1 Poor Academic Practice

**It is important to distinguish between a serious breach of academic integrity and poor academic practice.** Poor academic practice refers to unintentional mistakes or a lack of proper academic skills. Examples of poor academic practice include:

- **Inconsistent or improper referencing:** This may involve missing citations, incorrect formatting, or failing to use quotation marks for direct quotes.
- **Poor paraphrasing:** Accidentally including too much unattributed source material in your own words.
- **Time management issues:** Submitting work late without permission.
- **Incomplete understanding of assignment requirements:** Not following instructions or missing key points.

While not considered a formal breach of integrity, poor academic practice can negatively impact the student's grades and learning. If a student finds themselves engaging in these practices, Personal Academic Tutors, the Student Support Officer, and other resources on campus can help them develop the necessary skills to succeed with integrity.

### 3.2 Use of Turnitin

The College utilises Turnitin, a plagiarism detection tool, to screen submitted work for potential matches with published sources. A Turnitin originality report will be generated for most written assignments and made available to instructors. This report should be used as a guide for instructors to identify potential plagiarism, but the final decision on plagiarism rests with the instructor.

### 3.3 Reporting Breaches of Academic Integrity

Markers are responsible for identifying and reporting suspected breaches of academic integrity. If a marker suspects a student of academic misconduct, they will initially contact the Vice-Principal (Academic) to discuss the assessment and to seek further guidance.

The Vice-Principal (Academic) will make a final decision on the case, and will inform the marker of the correct procedure to follow. In certain cases, other members of the teaching faculty may be consulted for advice.

**PART 4 - Linked Policies:**

Policy	Number #	Summary
Fitness to Study (Learn)	LeD01	Fitness to Study (Learn)

**PART 5 - Appendices:**

Number #	Appendix Name
1	Procedures for Addressing Breaches of Academic Integrity
2	Resources, Support & Contact Information

# APPENDIX 1 - PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING BREACHES OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

<b>Introduction</b>
As noted above, breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy fall into two categories: Poor Academic Practice, and Unacceptable Academic Practice, with different procedures for dealing with each
<b>Poor Academic Practice</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where Poor Academic Practice is detected, the marker will mark the work as normal, but the grade will reflect poor practice elements. The marker will indicate clearly on the essay where the elements have occurred and will include a comment to inform the student that the mark has been affected.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ For essays at Level 4 where students are getting used to researching and referencing, the mark reduction may be less severe than at other levels.</li></ul></li><li>• The marker will also complete a Poor Academic Practice Form, which will highlight the problem elements. This will be sent to the student when marks are released.</li><li>• The student will be invited to arrange a meeting to discuss their work with the marker, and to be given further guidance on how to avoid issues in the future.</li><li>• The Vice-Principal (Academic) will raise the case at an Academic Team Meeting so faculty members can look for continued poor performance.</li><li>• Continued cases of Poor Academic Practice may be subjected to the same penalties as those for Unacceptable Academic Practice.</li></ul>
<b>Unacceptable Academic Practice</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Where unacceptable academic practice is detected, the marker will complete an Unacceptable Academic Practice Form, giving details of the suspected breach. This will be sent to the Vice-Principal for review.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ No mark should be registered on the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).</li><li>◦ If a mark is given, and a suspicion arises after marks have been released, this will not constitute a procedural irregularity. The mark should be removed, whilst the matter is investigated.</li></ul></li><li>• The Vice-Principal (Academic) will review the case and will decide:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◦ That the assessment does not constitute unacceptable academic practice.</li><li>◦ That the assessment does constitute unacceptable academic practice and needs to be progressed to the next stage of the process.</li></ul></li></ul>

Where an assessment does not constitute unacceptable practice, the Vice-Principal may determine that it falls under the category of Poor Academic Practice, and the procedure outlined in 7.1 will be followed.

- All paperwork related to the suspected Unacceptable Academic Practice will be destroyed.
- Where an assessment does constitute Unacceptable Academic Practice, the following process will be followed:
  - The marker will download the Turnitin report, and annotate areas where breaches occur.
  - The marker should also gather any further sources as evidence. This may include:
    - Printouts/screenshots of plagiarised sources.
    - Comparisons with previously submitted work (in cases of self-plagiarism).
    - Other electronic sources detected.
    - Any further evidence that may be relevant.
  - The evidence, the Unacceptable Academic Practice Form, and a covering letter will be sent to the student as soon as possible after the suspicion has arisen. The letter will invite the student to a meeting to discuss the case
- At the meeting:
  - The student may attend with another person (not a family member). No one is allowed to attend on the student's behalf.
  - The meeting will normally be conducted via Zoom. The student should be in a suitable location and able to access all relevant documents.
  - The case will be discussed with the student and the evidence presented.
  - The student will be invited to offer a defence and/or mitigating circumstances that may have impacted the work submitted.
  - Mitigating circumstances only influence the level of penalty that may be administered and cannot void a finding of Unacceptable Academic Practice.
  - The student will be asked to sign the Unacceptable Academic Practice Form to acknowledge that they accept the findings.
- After the meeting:
  - The case will be reviewed by the Academic Conduct Panel, who will confirm the case and decide the penalty that should be imposed.
  - The outcome will be communicated to the student as soon as possible after the meeting with the student.

### **Penalties**

The Academic Conduct Panel will take into account:

- The student's level of study and experience. The more advanced and experienced the student, the more serious the offence.
- The severity of the case i.e., the amount of the assessment that breaches the policy.
- The type of case: contract cheating, impersonation, falsification, obstruction of justice, misrepresentation, and collusion carry a more severe penalty, even when it is a first offence.
- The student's history - is it a first offence or a subsequent one.
- The degree of intention to deceive.

The following penalties may be imposed for Unacceptable Academic Conduct:

- Penalty A: The work will be marked discounting the breaches of Academic Conduct. The mark will normally be low to reflect the inappropriate use of sources.
  - If the work fails as a result of breaches being discounted, the student will be able to resubmit.
- Penalty B: The work will be given a mark of 0 and the student will be required to resubmit the work.
- Penalty C: All work for the level of student's level of study will be capped at the pass threshold.
- Penalty D: The student's overall degree classification will be lowered by one class.
- Penalty E: The student's studies are terminated with immediate effect.

Penalties C-E will only apply to serious first offences, and subsequent offences.

#### **Use of a Viva Voce**

- If there is a reasonable suspicion that a student may have commissioned a piece of work from a third party (including AI), but there is no direct evidence of this, then in agreement with the Vice-Principal a *viva voce* can be arranged to give the student the opportunity to demonstrate that they:
  - Produced the work.
  - Undertook the reading and research themselves.
  - Undertook the preparatory work themselves.
  - Understand what they have written.
- If a *viva voce* is to be conducted it should normally take place within 30 days after the assessment feedback deadline.
- The student should be given at least five working days' notice of the requirement to attend the *viva voce*. An explanation of what a *viva voce* is, the purpose of it and the potential outcomes should be outlined in the invitation. It should be made clear that the *viva voce* is

arranged due to the detection of potential academic malpractice and it is to allow the student an opportunity to demonstrate that the work is their own; it will not contribute to any mark obtained for the piece of work.

- Two members of academic staff (at least one of whom must be a subject specialist) must conduct the *viva voce*; this will normally be the Academic Director and the examiner of the assessment.
- The student may be accompanied by a person of their choice for support only (normally a fellow student or member of staff). Legal representation is not permitted. Any individual accompanying the student should under no circumstances participate in the *viva voce*.
- Reasonable adjustments must be made to ensure that candidates with additional support needs are not disadvantaged for reasons relating to a long-term medical condition, sensory impairment, specific learning difficulty and/or disability.
- The *viva voce* will not normally last more than 30 minutes and will be conducted via Zoom.
- An accurate record of the *viva voce* will be taken.
- The *viva voce* can have two outcomes:
  - It is determined that the student produced the work, and no further action will be taken.
  - There is insufficient evidence to prove that the student produced the work, or the student admits that they did not produce the work, the case will follow the process for dealing with cases of Unacceptable Academic Practice.

### Appeals Process

Students have the right to appeal the decision of the Academic Conduct Panel. Appeals can be made on the grounds of:

- Procedural irregularity.
- New evidence coming to light that may affect the outcome, and that was not previously available.
- The severity of the penalty imposed.

Students cannot appeal against the academic judgement of the marker, Vice-Principal (Academic), or the Academic Conduct Panel that an assessment has breached the Academic Conduct Policy.

- An appeal must be made in writing to the Vice-Principal (Academic) within 14 days of the outcome of the case being presented to the student.
- A separate independent panel will be convened to review the case and the evidence presented.
- The independent panel will include: the Principal, a member of teaching staff (not previously involved in the case), a governor, and a student representative.
- The independent panel will have the right to set aside, reduce or increase the penalty imposed.
- The decision of the independent panel will be final.
- The panel will not hear the case afresh but will review the evidence, the process followed, and the penalty imposed.
- The decision will be communicated, in writing, to the student within two weeks of the appeal being made. If it is not possible to conclude the appeal within this timeframe (due to



holidays, college closure, or other circumstance) the panel will contact the student to inform them of the date when the appeal will be reviewed.

- If the appeal is rejected and a student believes it has not been appropriately addressed then they can follow the College's Complaints Procedures to raise the issue.

## APPENDIX 2 - RESOURCES, SUPPORT & CONTACT INFORMATION

### Resources & Support

The College is committed to supporting students in upholding academic integrity.

Students can access resources and support through the following:

- Personal Academic Tutors/Student Support can offer guidance on referencing.
- Study Skills sessions – these are delivered at the start of each academic year offering an induction/refresher on, amongst other things, academic conduct.
- Other support sessions – these are offered on an ad hoc basis throughout the year. Sessions to address specific issues can be requested by students by contacting the academic department.

This policy is subject to change at any time. Students are responsible for familiarising themselves with the current version of the policy.

### Contact Information

For questions or concerns regarding academic integrity, please contact the Academic Team:  
info@missiodei.ac.uk