

Academic Integrity Policy

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Academic Integrity Policy

1. Introduction

Oak Hill College is committed to ensuring that the College's Christian ethos underpins every aspect of its academic provision and operations to ensure the highest possible standards of learning, decision-making and accountability. As well as being academically responsible, this is also an example of practical godliness; ensuring that students honour the Lord Jesus Christ in all of their activities in their time at College.

The principles of trust, honesty and integrity are fundamental to the Christian life. The ability to learn from and appropriately acknowledge the work of others, while producing original academic work and accurately representing one's own personal contribution, is an essential skill for students to develop during their time at the College.

Academic integrity is a set of learned skills, with fairness and respect for others and their work at the core. The College will support and guide students to learn the necessary skills through education and reinforcement of learning, the promotion of core values, and the establishment of clear policies that support and safeguard academic integrity.

In order to demonstrate academic integrity, students must produce their own work, acknowledging explicitly any material that has been included from other sources or legitimate collaboration. Students must also present their own findings, conclusions or data based on appropriate and ethical practice.

Academic Misconduct is a breach of academic integrity in assessment. Academic misconduct is a breach of academic integrity in assessment. In the context of coursework, it involves any attempt to mislead an examiner into believing that the work submitted is the student's own when it is not. In the context of in-person, on-site examinations or remote, open-book online assessments, it involves some form of cheating. Academic misconduct also includes any other attempt to gain unfair advantage, such as submitting false declarations to obtain coursework extensions.

Such breaches of academic integrity are major offences which will be dealt with in accordance with the University of Durham's General Regulation IV.

2. Aim of the Policy and Procedure

This Academic Integrity Policy explains how Oak Hill College will support students and staff to embed good practice and develop methods for enhancing academic integrity and for addressing breaches of academic integrity through instances of Academic Misconduct.

As a Validated Partner of the University of Durham's Common Awards Framework, this Policy and Procedure is based on that of the University.

The policy aims to:

- Make clear the types of behaviours that are considered to be Academic Misconduct;
- Ensure fair and equal treatment of all students when considering whether academic misconduct has taken place;
- Create a culture of enhancement, seeking to learn from cases of Academic Misconduct, to improve the student experience including through appropriate detection for decision-makers;
- Ensure clarity in language and process;
- Uphold fairness, consistency and natural justice in the treatment of the student body as a whole;
- Maintain awareness of the importance of academic integrity.

3. Principles

The following principles underpin the College's approach to Academic Integrity.

3.1 It is the responsibility of each individual student when submitting an assessment item to ensure that the work which they are submitting is the work which they wish to be assessed.

3.2 In all cases of alleged academic misconduct, students will be treated as innocent until a case against them has been investigated and upheld.

3.3 The decision as to whether academic misconduct has taken place is a matter for academic judgement. The use of plagiarism detection software, to check for possible academic offences, shall act as an aid to this academic judgement and decision.

3.4 The College shall employ a plagiarism detection system, Turnitin, to check for possible academic offences. When submitting work for summative assessments, students will be required to complete a declaration authorising the uploading of their work onto Turnitin and to confirm that, to the best of their knowledge, they have not plagiarised (nor self-plagiarised); copied material; embellished, fabricated or falsified any of the data, nor have they colluded in producing the work nor submitted commissioned or procured work. This statement can be found in Appendix A.

3.5 At the start of each academic year, students must complete and attest to a declaration confirming that all assessed work will be their own (except in approved group projects), that any use of others' work or generative AI tools will be properly acknowledged, and that they will comply with the College's guidance on multiple submission.

3.6 If Academic Misconduct is suspected in relation to work submitted by a student, in the interest of helping students to avoid continued acts, cases should be reported immediately and investigated and responded to as soon as possible.

3.7 The College will continue to expand and enhance its induction and formation of students, not only to emphasise the importance of academic integrity but also to equip them with the skills needed to practise it consistently. This will be done via tutor feedback, published documents in the form of the Student Handbook, guidance on the VLE and through its Learning Skills provision. The 'Guidelines' section of the Student Handbook should be the first

point of reference for students seeking advice on all aspects of academic writing. This includes referencing (quotations and citations), paraphrasing, essay formatting, footnoting, bibliographies, proofreading, and guidance on avoiding academic misconduct, with examples provided.

3.8 This policy shall apply to all students registered with the College who are taking modules for credit. Where academic misconduct is suspected in a formative assessment for a credited module, the module tutor shall consult with the Vice-Principal (Teaching and Learning) on the best course of action. The identification of the dishonest practice and severity of the case shall be made known to the student concerned.

4. Types of Academic Misconduct

4.1 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use, including quotation and close paraphrasing of another's writing and ideas, amounting to the presentation of the other's writings or thoughts as one's own. 'Another' includes both directly human sources and those heavily facilitated by technology, e.g. generative AI. This includes using material which is available on the internet, and in any other electronic form, and 'contract cheating' i.e. obtaining an essay from an essay writing site or equivalent source, and submitting it for marking, as if it were your own work. The use of generative AI without due acknowledgement constitutes plagiarism.

4.1.1 Copying

Plagiarism also includes the copying and submission of another student's work, as their own work, without the other student's knowledge. It includes the passing off of another's intellectual property, not in the public domain, as one's own. It differs from collusion (see section 4.2 below) in that the originator of the copied work is not aware of or party to the copying. Copying may also be the act of one student presenting a piece of work as their own independent work when the work was undertaken by a group.

4.1.2 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Inappropriate use includes the following:

- Using generative AI to create substantive content for your assessed work that you then present as if it were your own creation (see the AI Policy for more information on what constitutes 'creating substantive content').
- Providing generative AI with any text or other material produced by others, unless that material is in the public domain, you have explicit permission to do so or you have confirmation that the content will not be used to train the AI.
- Providing generative AI with confidential information. This includes any personal information about identifiable individuals.

4.1.3 Plagiarism in Online Assessments

In online assessments, students are not expected to follow the standard formatting or referencing/footnoting guidelines normally required for essays or other coursework. However, to avoid plagiarism, students must properly acknowledge any sources they use. This means including quotation marks around any direct quotes and providing page numbers whenever available, so that a marker could locate the original source if they wished.

4.2 Collusion

Collusion occurs when, unless with official approval (e.g., in the case of group projects), two or more students consciously collaborate in the preparation and production of work which is ultimately submitted by each in an identical or substantially similar form. This work is then deemed to be represented by each, as the product of his or her individual efforts without acknowledgement of the other student. This is inclusive of any discussions that take place during the sitting of an online assessment paper. Collusion can also occur when a student works with another person without permission to produce work that is then submitted as their own. For example, this includes having someone else complete an assignment and submitting it as your own work. Collusion involves two or more students working together without permission. If one student submits another student's work as their own without the other student's knowledge, this is considered copying, not collusion.

Concerning group work, where individual members are responsible for submitting specific sections of the total assignment, each member must take responsibility for checking the legitimacy of the work submitted in his/her name.

4.3 Multiple Submission (Self-Plagiarism)

Multiple submission, also called self-plagiarism, occurs when a student submits the same or very similar work for assessment more than once for credit, either at Oak Hill College or at another institution. Work will automatically be considered a multiple submission unless the original material is properly referenced and its reuse has been agreed in advance with the module tutor. For dissertations, the title approval process will include a discussion with the student to determine whether the same material has been submitted previously.

4.4 Impersonation

Impersonation is defined as presenting work on behalf of someone else as if it were the work of the other individual.

4.5 Cheating

The use of any inappropriate or unauthorised means to achieve credit for a piece of coursework or an examination/online assessment/test answer. This will include, but not be limited to:

- In respect of examinations, breaching the *Examination Room/Online Assessment Rules* (which can be found on Acorn→Study→Policies & Forms;
- Behaviour in a manner likely to prejudice the chances of another candidate;
- Offering a bribe or inducement to invigilators, academic or administrative staff, examiners or other persons connected with assessments;

- False declarations in order to receive special consideration by Assessment Boards, including coursework extensions, deferrals, requests for exemption from work and extenuating circumstances;
- The use of any other form of unfair or dishonest practice in assessment.

4.6 Use of inadmissible material

Any material or resources that a student is not permitted to use when completing an assignment or examination. This includes, but is not limited to, unauthorized notes, books, digital content, AI-generated work (where prohibited), or work completed by another person (as determined by the module tutor).

4.7 Fabrication

The creation or invention of data, information, references, or results that are false or do not exist, and presenting them as genuine in academic work. This includes making up sources, experimental results, survey responses, or citations, i.e. when reflecting on field work, placements or project work.

4.8 Facilitation by Publication

It is an offence for a student to provide their work to others in a way that could enable plagiarism. For example, this includes uploading essays or assignments to a website for others to use. This may be classed as a dishonest practice under General Regulation IV of the University of Durham's regulations and may lead to expulsion from the Common Awards programmes.

4.9 Ethics Approval

Failure to obtain required ethical approval (where applicable) before undertaking work on an assignment and/or failure to conduct the research in an ethically acceptable manner as set out in the College's Research Misconduct Procedure;

4.10 Proofreading

Proofreading is not considered to be academic misconduct; guidance on the College's approach to and view of proofreading is available in the Student Handbook.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

5.1 Oak Hill College responsibilities:

Oak Hill College will commit to the following responsibilities:

- Communicate the importance of academic integrity, maintaining student awareness of it throughout the academic cycle;
- Provide and disseminate support, tools and clear guidance to students in induction and published information on how to avoid Academic Misconduct;
- Review processes and ensure consistency and fairness of a proportionate approach;

- Design assessment tasks to deter plagiarism;
- Maintain awareness of policy and procedures;
- Ensure all academic judgements are clearly expressed and evidenced;
- Ensure all cases are dealt with and communicated to students in a timely and transparent way as defined by this Policy and Procedure;
- Keep a record of all academic offences on students' files and records;
- Produce reports for the Oak Hill Assessment Board, and the Office of the Independent Adjudicator and the University of Durham where required.

5.2 Students' responsibilities:

Students shall be expected to commit to the following responsibilities:

- Read and understand all published documentation about academic integrity and misconduct (e.g., the Student Handbook, the Academic Integrity Policy and any module information);
- Engage fully with the College's Learning Skills programme;
- Develop academic writing skills;
- Learn the correct conventions for citing references;
- Seek support and guidance from module tutors on how to cite/reference correctly;
- Identify individual strategies to avoid plagiarism;
- Abide by College regulations and policies;
- Understand assessment offences and consequences.

6. *Procedures*

The following procedures shall be followed by the College when Academic Misconduct is suspected.

6.1 Initial Procedures

6.1.1 Initial Procedures for Formal Written Examinations

Where an invigilator suspects a candidate of infringing examination room rules ('Examination/Online Assessments Rules) they shall (if possible, in the presence of another invigilator as a witness to the action taken):

- Confiscate any unauthorised material in the candidate's possession;
- Annotate the candidate's(s') script(s) on the front cover with a note of the time when the alleged infringement is discovered. Wherever possible, the annotation should be counter-signed by another invigilator;
- Issue a new examination answer sheet to the candidate(s) in question, clearly instructing them to continue (not to restart) the examination;
- Inform the candidate(s), at the end of the examination, that a report of the incident will be submitted to the Chair of the Assessment Board;
- Enter all details of the incident on the invigilation report form, giving the student the opportunity to comment on the report, and both invigilator and student sign and date it;

- Report the allegation to the Academic Registrar (for forwarding to the Chair of the Assessment Board) immediately after the examination.

6.1.2 Initial Procedures for Assessed Coursework/Online Assessment

Where a module tutor suspects a candidate of contravening the assessment regulations in assessed coursework they shall, immediately:

- Include a reference to the contravention in the feedback and highlight on the work itself those passages where there is suspected Academic Misconduct, appending sources where appropriate;
- The internal examiner should complete the marking of the whole work in the event that the case is unproven. It shall also be for formative purposes.
- Report the allegation immediately to the Chair of the Assessment Board, forwarding the marked and annotated assignment and all supporting evidence. Where the examiner is the Chair of the Assessment Board, a deputy should act in his/her place.
- Where two examiners have been appointed to examine a piece of work, the examiners should consult over the matter before submitting the report to the Chair of the Assessment Board.
- If an External Examiner suspects that a student has breached the regulations, they should consult with the internal examiners. The internal examiner should then prepare a preliminary report detailing the evidence, as outlined above. The report should be submitted immediately to the Chair of the Assessment Board.

6.2 Procedure for investigation

6.2.1 Evidence and Timescale

In order for the Chair of the Assessment Board to consider an allegation, s/he must normally receive the following documents, where applicable, from the internal examiner within four weeks at the latest (ideally sooner) after the submission date for that component of assessment. In the case of examinations, this should be immediately after the examination has taken place.

- The student(s)'s name or number;
- A report of the incident/allegation;
- The invigilator's report;
- Originals of exam scripts/online assessments involved in alleged infringement;
- Copy or original of unauthorised material used in an examination;
- Copy of original work with suspected plagiarised passages marked;
- Copy of source material with passages which are suspected as plagiarised marked;
- Summary of any informal interview with the student regarding the incident (although it is preferred that no such interview takes place before a written allegation can be put to the student);
- Copy of the instructions given to the candidate regarding the component (e.g., assessment package document) and any notes of any verbal in-class instructions.

Module tutors should not return coursework feedback to the student whilst an allegation is under investigation.

An immediate check of all the student's work for the year should be undertaken to see whether there is other evidence of similar behaviour.

6.2.2 Chair's Initial Assessment

Two weeks after receipt of the allegation and supporting documentation, the Chair of the Assessment Board shall decide if there are reasonable grounds at first sight to suggest the candidate contravened assessment regulations. In making the initial assessment, the Chair of the Assessment Board shall look at the evidence first before identifying the student's name. Wherever possible, this initial assessment shall be made within two weeks of receipt of the documents from the module tutor. The outcome of this initial investigation will be one of the three following scenarios:

- **No evidence for Academic Misconduct**

If the Chair of the Assessment Board decides there are no reasonable grounds or evidence of Academic Misconduct, the work shall be considered on its academic merit and all records of the alleged misconduct shall be removed from the student's record. Where an exam script or a coursework assignment has been annotated by the internal examiner to indicate alleged Academic Misconduct, a subsequent annotation shall be added to the front page of the piece of work to indicate that the allegation was not, in the end, upheld. The Chair of the Assessment Board will advise the internal examiner of the outcome.

- **Evidence for Academic Misconduct**

If, in the view of the Chair of the Assessment Board the report of the examiner(s) provides sufficient detailed evidence of an offence, a sub-group panel of the Assessment Board, appointed by the Chair, shall be formed comprising the Chair and two other members of the Board (who shall not include the internal examiner concerned [the 'reporting examiner']) to consider the case. The membership of the meeting (see below) shall be confirmed to the student. The student(s) shall be required to meet the panel together with the reporting examiner. The student shall be given five working days' notice of the date of the meeting. They shall be told of its purpose and receive a copy of the evidence.

6.3 Academic Misconduct Panel

6.3.1 Purpose

The purpose of the Panel meeting will be to:

- examine the evidence including where necessary the testimony of the examiner(s) or invigilator(s) concerned;
- hear from the student in which they account for the work that they submitted;
- identify any mitigating circumstances;
- decide an outcome, and
- provide advice and guidance on how to avoid such conduct again in the future.

As stated, the meeting's approach will be founded on the College's Christian ethos and the desire for relational formation.

6.3.2 Membership and Attendance

The Meeting shall include the student, the Chair of the Assessment Board (who shall chair the meeting), two additional members of Faculty (not otherwise involved in the module's assessment), the reporting examiner(s) and the Academic Registrar (who shall take notes). In addition, the student may, if they wish, be accompanied by (1) a member of staff from the College (e.g. their personal tutor or equivalent) and (2) a non-staff member of his/her choosing. (For example, another student would be appropriate.) The accompanying person may be legally qualified but may not act as the student's legal representative. If the student wishes to be accompanied, they shall inform the Academic Registrar in writing in advance of the meeting. They shall also inform the Academic Registrar if the person attending is legally qualified. Legal representation is not permitted in an academic misconduct meeting.

At the discretion of the Chair of the Assessment Board, the meeting will be held whether or not the student attends the meeting. The requirement on the student to attend the meeting may be waived at the Chair's discretion. In such cases, the student may choose to send a written response or to be represented at the meeting by an independent member of staff or student who may fairly represent the student's claims to the panel. The recording of the meeting shall not be permitted. Attendance at the meeting may be virtual if necessary.

If the allegation is collusion, both students should normally be seen together, to enable them to hear the other student's evidence against him/herself. Each student may say his/her mitigation in private before the panel, with the provision that the other student will be given the opportunity to respond to any reference to him/her in the mitigation statement. In the case of final year students where the case of alleged plagiarism or collusion is brought to light at the end of the degree programme, it may be necessary to hold a meeting without the 5 days' notice, provided that the student concerned agrees in writing to this procedure. This course of action may be necessary in order to permit the Assessment Board the opportunity of considering the case without necessarily causing any delay to the normal process of consideration for the award of a degree to the student concerned.

6.3.3 Meeting Notes

Following the meeting, a written record of the meeting's discussion must be made immediately. The report will be sent to the Common Awards Team at the University of Durham to forward to the relevant University Liaison Officer.

6.3.4 Panel Outcome

The meeting and all paperwork shall be strictly confidential to those invited to attend. The meeting shall consider its decision after the evidence has been heard and shall decide upon the quantitative and qualitative extent of alleged plagiarism and other types of academic misconduct (see section 4 above). Its decision shall be whether, in the light of the evidence presented and the account given by the student including any mitigation offered and on the balance of probabilities, the student infringed assessment regulations. The Chair and the two Assessment Board members present shall each have one vote on the final decision. If needed, the Chair of the Assessment Board shall have the casting vote.

The panel's recommendation may be one of the following outcomes:

- Allegation is not upheld.

No academic misconduct (as defined in Section 4) has taken place. No further action shall be taken. All work for the component shall be assessed on its academic merit and any record of the alleged misconduct shall be removed from the student's record. All records of disproved allegations must be deleted.

- **Mitigation Accepted**

Whilst there is clear evidence of plagiarism and/or other forms of academic misconduct, due to exceptional mitigating factors, a punishment is inappropriate. The Board shall apply for a concession or grace period on the student's behalf.

- **Allegation Upheld**

Where the panel decides that there is clear evidence of plagiarism and/or other forms of academic misconduct, one of the following penalties shall be recommended:

- A. Mark only the student's own contribution to the work, or in the case of multiple submission, mark only the proportion of the work which complies with the College's guidance.

This may be most appropriate where the plagiarism and/or other forms of academic misconduct, is not extensive or it is a first-offence, or a first-year student; or the Assessment Board accepts the student's mitigation;

- B. Award a mark of 0 for the work. This may be appropriate where the plagiarism and/or other forms of academic misconduct, is more extensive, the work makes a significant contribution to the module/programme as a whole, or it is a repeat offence or there is clear evidence of dishonesty. The student shall be permitted to resit/resubmit the piece of work with a mark capped for that piece of work at the pass mark (within the resit limitations set out in the Core Regulations for the Common Awards programmes);
- C. Award a mark of 0 for the entire module in which the plagiarism and/or other forms of academic misconduct, submission occurred. This is the most severe punishment open to the College's Assessment Board. The student will be required to resit the entire module with a mark capped at the pass mark (within the resit limitations set out in the Core Regulations for the Common Awards programmes). For students in Level 6 of the BA programme, where resits are not permitted, this may result in the student failing their programme. This penalty should be applied only in the most severe cases.
- D. That the level of misconduct goes beyond the examples cited in A-C and, therefore, it should be referred to the University as a possible major offence under the University's discipline regulations. In this case, the Academic Misconduct panel shall choose an academic outcome from A-C (above), and shall contact the Common Awards Team as soon as possible to receive advice on progressing the case under the University's discipline regulations.

The student shall be informed of the outcome of the meeting both verbally after the meeting and in writing within seven working days of the meeting by the Chair of the meeting. Where an allegation is upheld, this communication shall also include the Panel's recommendation to the Assessment Board.

6.3.5 Recommendation to Assessment Board

Where the allegation is upheld and one of the above four recommendations is applied, a written report of the case, together with the student's explanation and the Panel's recommendation, shall be submitted to a meeting of the College Assessment Board for consideration.

If agreed, the Assessment Board shall ratify the final mark, which will include the penalty.

The Board shall consult the External Examiners before making a decision about cases involving work submitted for Final Honours. The report shall also be sent to the Common Awards team at the University of Durham for onward forwarding to the University Liaison Officer for review.

In all cases in which the student is not in the final Level of their programme of study or has other summatively assessed work to complete, an appropriate member of teaching staff shall arrange a meeting to counsel the student on how to avoid infringing the assessment regulations in future. A note of the date and time of the meeting shall be kept on the student's file.

7. *Appeal*

A student penalised for Academic Misconduct may subsequently appeal against the penalty awarded by the Assessment Board if:

- there might have been a serious error in the way in which the original decision was made;
- there exists, or existed, circumstances affecting the student's performance of which, for good reason, the Assessment Board might not have been aware when the original decision was made.

Matters of academic judgement cannot be appealed.

An appeal against an Academic Misconduct penalty will be considered under the University of Durham's [Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure](#). For information on how to submit an appeal, contact the Academic Registrar in the first instance.

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