

LONDON SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND MANAGEMENT STUDIES

Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism Policy

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1 DEFINING MALPRACTICE

Malpractice consists of acts which undermine the integrity and validity of assessment, the certification of qualifications and/or damage the authority of those responsible for conducting the assessment and certification. Malpractice refers to acts and omissions made by staff or students involved with an assessment.

1.1 Staff Malpractice

This is defined as any deliberate action by a member of staff that could potentially undermine the integrity of the assessment process.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of malpractice by members of the College staff:

- Improper or excessive assistance to candidates in an assessment.
- Falsifying marks for internally assessed work (either coursework or portfolio evidence), especially where there is insufficient evidence of the candidates' work to justify the assessment decisions.
- Fraudulent submissions that could lead to false claims for certificates.
- Inappropriate retention of certificates.
- Falsifying witness statements, for example for evidence the student has not generated.
- Allowing evidence, which is known by the staff member not to be the student's own work, to be included in their assignment.
- Facilitating and allowing impersonation.
- Misusing the conditions for special student requirements, for example where students are permitted support, this is permissible only up to the point where the support has the potential to influence the outcome of the assessment.
- Failing to secure assessment papers prior to the assessment/examination test.
- Falsifying records/certificates by alteration, substitution, or fraud.

1.2 Student Malpractice

This is defined as a student's action that has the potential to undermine the integrity and validity of the assessment their work.

Turnitin assessment submissions produce a similarity report which includes a similarity index. Academic staff check all reports to ascertain whether or not academic misconduct may have occurred. If the similarity index is 25% and above further investigation and interpretation of the matches highlighted in the report is essential to ensure that appropriate referencing practices and use of sources has been applied.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of malpractice by students in various scenarios:

1.3 Minor Malpractice

Examinations

- Removing any script, paper, or other official stationery (whether completed or not) from the examination room, unless specifically authorised by an invigilator or examiner.
- Communicating with another student or with any third party other than the invigilator/examiner during an examination or test.
- During an examination or test, copying or attempting to copy the work of another student.
- False declaration of authenticity in relation to the contents of a portfolio or coursework.

Coursework

- Making work available to another student, either intentionally or as a result of negligence that can be presented as another student's.
- Isolated use of quotes without the use of quotation marks and/or referencing
- Representation of work produced in collaboration with another person or persons as the work of a single student.
- Submission for assessment of work submitted previously by the student (either at London School of Business and Management Studies or another institution) or work submitted for assessment that has previously been published elsewhere, where the duplication concerned is isolated.

1.4 Serious Malpractice

Examinations

- Colluding with another person in the preparation or submission of work which is to be assessed. This does not apply to collaborative work authorised by the relevant Course Co-ordinator.
- Deliberate destruction of another's work
- Fabrication of results or evidence
- Paying or otherwise rewarding another person for sitting an assessment in the student's place.
- Possession or use of devices of any kind other than those specifically permitted in the rubric of the paper.
- Possession of crib sheets, revision notes (including those held on electronic devices) or accessing the internet in contravention of the examination rubric.
- Taking a pre-written examination script into an examination for submission and exchanging it for a blank examination script.
- Obtaining access to an unseen examination or test prior to the start of the assessment.
- Impersonating someone else in order to produce the work for another or arranging for another to take another's place in an assessment or examination.

- Plagiarism. This is defined as the use, without adequate acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of another person in work submitted for assessment. A student cannot be found to have committed plagiarism where they have taken all reasonable care to avoid representing the work of others as their own. The most common forms of plagiarism are cut or copied and pasted materials from websites; copying the work of another student (past or present); copying material from a textbook or journal; and self-plagiarism. Self-plagiarism is where a student reuses part or all a previously submitted work without academically acknowledging that they have done so.

Coursework

- Using another student's work and submitting some or all of it as if it were the student's own
- The presentation of data in laboratory work, projects etc. based on work purporting to have been carried out by the student but which has been invented, altered or falsified
- Extensive use of quotes or close paraphrasing without the use of quotation marks and/or referencing, where the student has not cited the plagiarised material in the bibliography.
- Stealing another student's work and submitting it as their own work (whether or not the originator is denied the opportunity of submission)
- Paying or rewarding another person for writing or preparing work to be submitted for assessment.

2 SCOPE AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

2.1 Staff malpractice policy and procedure

This policy and procedure relate to School staff malpractice and applies to all internal assessments, and internal and external examinations. Where awarding bodies have their own published procedures, these will take precedent over the School policy.

Tutors marking student work who suspect a case of alleged Academic Misconduct should in the first instances contact for advice as to the formal procedures and regulations.

No reference should be made in public about the allegation, nor should the student(s) in question be notified except as part of the formal process using the approved form of wording provided by the University.

All staff, lecturers, tutors, and markers have a responsibility to give full and active support for the policy by familiarising themselves with this policy, and ensuring the policy is understood and implemented.

Students should be introduced to this policy during the induction period and reminded of the policy during preparation for assessments.

3 ASSESSMENT MALPRACTICE PROCEDURES

3.1 A Malpractice Investigation

Where the College suspects an individual, or individuals, of malpractice it will investigate proportional to the nature of the allegation.

Such an investigation will initially be undertaken by the relevant member of staff, who will interview all staff or students linked to the allegation.

The College will make the individual(s) aware by letter and email at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of possible consequences should malpractice be proven. The investigation will proceed as follows:

3.2 Stage 1

The Preliminary investigation into the allegation will determine whether there is sufficient evidence for the allegation to be progressed. Reference should be made by the investigator to the Assessment Regulations (and where appropriate to the Academic Regulations of the awarding body).

If plagiarism or collusion is suspected, the student will be invited to an interview to be tested on subject knowledge by a viva voce examination. This viva will be conducted by a member of academic staff with knowledge of the subject being investigated. They will then submit a report to the Program Leader.

If an allegation against a member of staff appears to have substance, then all assessments by this member of staff should be halted until the investigation is complete. For cases of staff malpractice, the Human Resources Office will decide whether to proceed instead under the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

In cases where there is insufficient evidence, the Course Leader will mark the work in the normal way per the colleges' Assessment Regulations.

In cases where there is sufficient evidence for an allegation to be progressed, the Course Leader shall produce a report of their findings for the Plagiarism Panel (and in cases involving staff, the Human Resources Office). The student will be informed by letter and email that there is sufficient evidence to support the allegation and will be invited to make any submissions in response to the allegation within a period of 10 working days. The letter and email will both include:

- A copy of the allegation and all evidence in support of it
- A copy of this Policy
- The options available for a review of the decision and how to request a review.

Any submissions provided by the student will be considered before a decision about the allegation is made. If the student fails to make a submission within the period, the allegation will be found to be proven and an appropriate penalty will be imposed.

During the investigation the college will give the individual the opportunity to respond to the allegations made. The student will reply by letter or email with evidence in support of their statement to the Program Leader within 10 working days from the date of receipt of the notification of the alleged academic misconduct. The student shall clearly state whether they:

- Accept the allegation
- Dispute the allegation
- Should have any mitigating factors considered in deciding the penalty such as duress or coercion by another student or a member of staff.

3.3 Valid and Invalid Responses

A student's response will identify and explain the reasons that form the basis of their case; it should be accompanied by all relevant evidence in support of their statement. Requests that do not identify and explain the reasons upon which the student is relying shall be deemed invalid by the Program Leader. The student will be notified in writing of this and will be deemed to have accepted the allegation.

Where students do not respond within the stated deadline, they will be deemed to have accepted the allegation against them and, where necessary, the Plagiarism Panel will determine the appropriate category of academic misconduct. The Program Leader will inform the student of the Panel's decision by letter and email. The notification letter and email will be deemed to have been received by the addressee on the second postal delivery day following that on which it was posted where sent by letter, and the same day were sent by email.

3.4 Stage 2

Where a student disputes the allegation, the Plagiarism Panel will consider the allegation, the supporting evidence and the student's submission. The Plagiarism Panel will then determine whether there is sufficient evidence of academic misconduct to substantiate the allegation.

Where the student accepts the allegation, does not respond within the time limit, or the Plagiarism Panel determines that the allegation is substantiated, the Panel shall consider any mitigating evidence provided by the student in their response and apply the appropriate penalties, outlined in Section 4 of this Procedure.

Where the student is enrolled on a course where the awarding body is a validating university, and the report indicates that the assessment misconduct is likely to fall within the definition of serious misconduct, the Program Leader must consider whether to refer the matter to the validating university for resolution under their Academic Regulations or Student Misconduct Procedure.

All stages of the investigation shall be documented by the person leading the investigation, and the student will be informed of the avenues for appealing against any judgments made.

4 PENALTIES

The penalty for academic misconduct will be determined according to the seriousness of the offence and will consider the stage of study. Cheating or plagiarism in the later stages of a course of study will normally result in automatic failure and/or expulsion. In every case, the student's previous record will be considered. In the absence of compelling mitigating evidence, second and subsequent offences will be considered to be a Serious Misconduct.

Where cheating or plagiarism has been established, a report will be made to the relevant Examination or Progression Board.

4.1 Minor Misconduct

The penalties that may be imposed in relation to a proven instance of Minor Misconduct are as follows:

- The student is warned, and a record of the warning will remain on the student's file indefinitely;
- The element(s) of assessment is failed. The student may have the opportunity to re-sit the assessment, capped at a bare pass.
- Failure of the element(s) of assessment, and the module is capped at a bare pass.

4.2 Major Misconduct

Where Major Misconduct is proven, the Plagiarism Panel may, in addition to the penalties set out above, consider the application of the following penalties:

- Failure of the module. The student must re-register for the same module at the next opportunity where the re-registered module result will be capped at a bare pass. Where a re-registration of the same module, or suitable alternative, is not permissible, the student will not be able to continue the course. Additionally, a recommendation will be made to the appropriate Examination Board that the final classification of any award be downgraded by one level.
- The student is expelled. Expulsion will be automatic where two or more penalties for Major Misconduct are imposed in any academic year, or a previous penalty for Academic Misconduct has already been applied.
- The student will normally be notified of the decision and penalty within 5 working days of the meeting of the Plagiarism Panel considering the case.

5 REVIEW AND OTHER PROCEDURES

5.1 Requesting a Review

A student may request a review of the Plagiarism Panel's decision within 10 working days of receipt of notification of the decision. The student may request a review of the finding that an allegation is proved, and/or the resultant penalty.

A request for Review must be made by letter or email to the Program Leader. It must specify the grounds and explain the reasons which clearly demonstrate the grounds; if sent by letter, it must be signed by the student. Where a request for review is not made on one of the valid grounds below, the Program Leader shall refuse the Review and notify the student within 5 working days.

A Review may only be requested on the following grounds:

- That the student was unable to respond to the allegation within the timeframes provided in this Policy for valid reasons beyond the student's control.
- That there has been a procedural irregularity other than one for which the student is responsible, or clear third-party evidence of bias, resulting in substantial unfairness to the student.
- That the evidence of alleged misconduct was insufficient to substantiate the allegation
- That a penalty of expulsion or downgrading was unfairly imposed.

Where a valid request for review is made, the Program Leader shall notify the student within 5 working days and refer the allegations for review in the next meeting of the Assessment Board: their decision is final.

Where the Assessment Board determines that an appeal has demonstrated that the allegation was not proved, or an obvious unfairness to the student and the Board considers that it would be in the interest of fairness, the original penalty may be cancelled or modified. Where the Assessment Board determines that the appeal has not revealed an unfair or incorrect finding, the original penalty will stand.

The London School of Business and Management Studies (LSBS) will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter for purposes of the OIA Scheme within 28 days of the decision of the Assessment Board.

5.2 The OIA

Following receipt of a Completion of Procedures Letter from LSBS, students on higher education courses (HND level or above) may complain to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Guidance on the circumstances in which complaints can be made to the OIA is available online at: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/can-the-oia-look-at-my-complaint-complaints-wizard.aspx>

A complaint to the OIA must be made within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter, and should be made on their complaints form, available online at: <http://oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/oia-complaint-form.aspx>

Students on further education courses, such as HNC courses, that are not publicly funded cannot appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). Other than in fully evidenced exceptional circumstances complaints cannot be made to OIA until our full complaints process is exhausted.

5.3 Monitoring and Evaluation

Internal monitoring and verification of assessment activity within each department will include malpractice checks.