UNIVERSITY OF WOLVERHAMPTON
POLICY ON MAINTAINING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University takes pride in the academic integrity of our staff and students but when academic misconduct is suspected the University will take action. The University considers seriously all acts of academic misconduct, which by definition are dishonest and in direct opposition to the values of a learning community.

Academic misconduct, if not challenged, will ultimately devalue academic standards and honest effort on the part of all students. Academic misconduct includes plagiarism, collusion and cheating and may be deliberate or unintentional. Whatever form it takes, it will be thoroughly investigated and penalties will be applied if proven.

Academic Misconduct is a matter for students and staff together

- It is the responsibility of all students to demonstrate both a level of independent thinking and the provision of clear referencing to all sources consulted.
- It is the responsibility of faculties to provide detailed guidance and academic study skills support alongside awareness and detection methods in all aspects of teaching, assessment and feedback.
- It is the responsibility of the University to provide institutional support to both students and staff alongside a clear policy and regulatory framework for a consistent approach to preventing, detecting and dealing with Academic Misconduct.

<u>**Defining Academic Misconduct:**</u>

There are three categories of academic misconduct.

Cheating-
Cheating is defined as any attempt to gain unfair advantage in an assessment by dishonest means, and includes e.g. cheating in an examination, stealing another student's work, commissioning of an assessment from a third party, impersonation of another student.

This is not an exhaustive list and other common examples of cheating would include –
- Being in possession of "crib notes" during an examination
- Breach of examination regulations
- Copying from the work of another student
- Stealing another student's work
- Prohibited communication during an examination
- Unauthorised use of electronic devices
- Submitting essays downloaded from the internet

- Commissioning of an assessment from a third party
- Impersonation of another student

Collusion -

Collusion is when two or more people combine to produce a piece of work for assessment that is passed off as the work of one student alone. The work may be so alike in content, wording and structure that the similarity goes beyond what might have been coincidence. For example – where one student has copied the work of another, or where a joint effort has taken place in producing what should have been an individual effort, including preparation for a seen examination.

Collusion should not be confused with the normal situation in which students learn from one another, sharing ideas and group work to complete assignments (where this is specifically authorised).

Plagiarism –

Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else's work and passing it off as your own. This includes incorporating either unattributed direct quotation(s) or substantial paraphrasing from the work of another/others/or yourself.
It is important to cite all sources whose work has been drawn on and reference them fully in accordance with the referencing standard used in each subject area.

The most common forms of plagiarism are –
- Cut or copied and pasted materials from websites
- Copying the work of another student (past or present) including essays available through "essay bank" websites – or other data.
- Copying material from a text book or journal
- Self-Plagiarism[1]

Proofreading:

All submitted assessments must be the student's own work. Students are expected to proofread their own assignments. The University defines proofreading as the careful reading of a document to detect any errors in spelling, punctuation, or grammar. A proof-reader is a person who may read your work to check it before it is submitted for assessment

Where proofreading occurs and the work is changed so that it is no longer a true reflection of a student's own work, this may be referred for consideration under the Policies and Procedures for the Investigation of Academic Misconduct. All students who use a proof-reader should declare that they have done so at the point of submission.

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[1] Self-plagiarism occurs when a student reuses entire or parts of his/her own work that was previously assessed for academic credit and submits it as part of another work without providing proper acknowledgement of this fact.

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Translation Services:

The university expects all students to work in English. The use of translation services to translate work from a student's first language into English is not permitted.

Support for Students:

The University, through its academic staff, will be both sympathetic and supportive in preventing plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct, particularly in the first year of undergraduate study.

It is the responsibility of academic staff and the institution to provide clear support and detailed guidance for the prevention of misunderstood academic misconduct through –

- The availability of academic support and counselling.
- The development of students referencing skills throughout the duration of their academic studies.
- Each faculty providing written guidance to students at the beginning of their studies on subject-specific conventions and how to reference work properly, which will be reinforced in subsequent years.
- The availability of published guidance on how to avoid academic misconduct.
- The availability of advice and guidance on good academic practice, including developing good writing skills, via the Skills for Learning programme offered by the Directorate for Academic Support.
- The support from the International Academy for students who are users of English as an additional language.
- The identification of vulnerable groups, for special attention and guidance – including international students.

Where group work is a prescribed assessment component teaching staff must make additional efforts to underline the boundaries between collaboration and collusion.

It is the responsibility of all students to ensure that they understand the regulations and conventions for proper academic referencing and where concerned about the potential for any act of academic misconduct to seek advice/counselling from academic or academic support staff. In understanding this, any attempt to enhance performance by dishonest means will result in academic penalties.

A Proactive Learning and Teaching Approach:

The University, as a centre for excellence in approaches to learning and teaching, will promote and apply such conventions and initiatives that will reduce the prevalence of academic misconduct and encourage detection and reporting.

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This will include –

- Engaging students in discussion and activities to promote understanding of Academic Misconduct.
- Pre-enrolment information and guidance throughout the student life-cycle as set out above. Engaging strategies for learning that effectively recognise the "transition" to Higher Education expectations – specifically at the point of induction.
- Each level of study having good academic practice information embedded within the curriculum.
- The needs of students studying off campus being explicitly recognised and catered for
- The requirement of faculties to consider reducing the possibility of plagiarism through assessment approval processes, along with additional targeted staff development, in order to increase 'plagiarism proofing'. Developing research skills in students
- Developing expertise amongst staff
- Use of different approaches to assessment design
- Ensuring that academic misconduct is not ignored and encouraging action
- Staff will be encouraged to allow students to use text matching software formatively, with appropriate support resources being in place, at least once per level of study and before the submission of their final dissertation or similar.

Detecting Plagiarism:

Students are required, where appropriate, to make a declaration as to the authenticity and originality of any submitted piece of work. This declaration also authorises the University to request and require students to provide an electronic version of any submitted assessment for checking. In concert with the skills and experiences of academic staff the University will utilise electronic tools to detect plagiarism.

At Undergraduate level the University will require that all final year projects and dissertations are submitted through text matching software for analysis. At postgraduate level the University will require that all dissertations (or similar) are submitted through text matching software for analysis. It will be the responsibility of each Faculty to ensure that this requirement is communicated to students in the relevant module guidance and acted upon.

Students may further be required to submit an electronic copy of their work for checking via text matching software where plagiarism is suspected.
The University will support staff in using text matching software via the College of Learning and Teaching who will make training and support available.

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Investigation & Penalties:

The University has a defined framework of "Regulations & Procedure for the Investigation of Academic Misconduct" – this is available as a separate document at www.wlv.ac.uk/polsregs

Where a case of cheating, collusion or plagiarism is suspected this procedure should be followed at all times. It is essential that the University, through its academic staff, apply the regulations and procedure fairly and consistently. A viva may be held in cases where there are grounds for concern regarding the authenticity of a student's work, following the 'Procedure for the management of a viva in suspected cases of academic misconduct.' Advice to academic staff is available from the Conduct & Appeals Unit.

- Copies of this policy, the regulations and procedure and advice to students on how to avoid academic misconduct will be made widely available and easily accessible through the University website.

- The University will provide for an ongoing and highly visible campaign to discourage all aspects of academic misconduct, in liaison with the Students' Union, promoting routes for support & guidance, levels and mechanisms for detection, impact and penalties.

Ongoing Policy & Practice Development:

The University will monitor levels of Academic Misconduct and the impact of developing practice and policies through the relevant Sub-Committees of Academic Board. Which, in collaboration with the Conduct & Appeals Unit, will view reports on the levels of Academic Misconduct and lead on ongoing development of practice and expertise, monitoring developing best practice in the sector and the use of new technologies in an ongoing review of both this policy and associated documents?[2]

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[2] **Associated Documents:**

• Regulations & Procedure for the Investigation of Academic Misconduct.

• Code of Practice for research degree programme students.

- Procedure for the management of a viva in suspected cases of academic misconduct

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