

Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy

1. Scope and purpose

- 1.1 This policy applies to students following a higher education programme.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to clearly define expectations for ethical academic conduct and outline procedures for addressing academic misconduct. It aims to foster a culture of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all academic activities. It provides a framework to ensure that all students, staff, and faculty understand their roles in maintaining academic standards and are aware of the consequences of violating them.
- 1.3 By promoting integrity and accountability, the policy supports the institution's commitment to high-quality education and scholarly excellence.

2. What is academic integrity?

- 2.1 The principle of academic integrity underpins the work conducted by academic researchers and students, and guarantees that any research findings, and the process of establishing them, are fair, honest, transparent, ethical and produced by the authors credited.
- 2.2 It is assured through a series of actions that you and others take to ensure that the work you produce for assessment is your own. Actions include:
 - i Producing work for assessment that is completed solely by you
 - ii Not copying or paraphrasing the work of other people and submitting it as your own work
 - iii Fully acknowledging the authors or sources you quote or reference in your assessments
 - iv Ensuring that the information or data you use in your assessments are valid and real
 - v Avoiding any action that would give you an unfair advantage in your assessments
 - vi Not enabling another student to gain unfair advantage in their assessments
 - vii Complying with any ethical approval requirements related to your assessments
- 2.3 Through these actions you will develop skills in self and critical reflection, autonomy and digital literacy, as well as building behaviours that will transfer into employment, civic engagement and lifelong learning.

3. What is academic misconduct?

- 3.1 Academic misconduct is where you do not act with integrity with the aim of creating an unfair advantage for yourself and/or your peers over other students. Examples of actions that would be considered misconduct are detailed in Appendix One.
- 3.2 At Walbrook, we understand that not all instances of misconduct are a result of deliberate actions but can result from error or misunderstanding. For that reason, we take the question of intent into consideration when reviewing potential instances of misconduct, and the appropriate penalties, as follows:

Tier	Descriptor	Indicative Cues / Evidence
Tier 1 - Mistake (Unintentional)	Honest error or novice practice	First offence; early-stage student; evidence of attempt to apply rules; unclear guidance; immediate admission
Tier 2 - Careless / Skill Gap	Negligence or inconsistent application	Referencing errors despite guidance; paraphrasing sources with little critical engagement; limited reflection; not a first occurrence but no evidence of deception
Tier 3 - Reckless Disregard	Rules known but ignored	Prior guidance on good practice given; significant portion of work affected; denial despite evidence; repeat behaviour despite previous warnings about misconduct/prior offences.
Tier 4 - Deliberate Deception	Intent to mislead or outsource authorship	Contract cheating; impersonation; falsified data; organised effort; repeat misconduct despite sanctions

- 3.3 We also understand that not all instances of misconduct will have an equal impact, in terms of the level of academic advantage that is gained as a result of the actions taken. For that reason, we assess the scale of the misconduct, and its impact when reviewing potential instances of misconduct, and the appropriate penalties as follows:

Impact Level	Descriptor	Indicative Cues
Low ($\leq 10\%$)	Isolated / marginal	Small section affected (e.g., introduction, reference list); limited effect on assessment outcome
Medium (10–40%)	Significant but partial	A major section affected (e.g., discussion, methodology), or several smaller issues combined
High (>40% or core task)	Substantial / central	Majority of submission compromised OR misconduct affects the core task/learning outcomes being assessed

- 3.4 These categorisations are used by decision makers to help to guide their deliberation and conclusions, they are not hard and fast rules that must be followed in every case, as each case will be assessed on its own merits.

4. Support

- 4.1 We recognise that it is important to offer you guidance and support with understanding the concepts of academic integrity and misconduct. Each student will have their own previous experience of applying academic integrity principles to their work. These experiences may vary depending partly on your previous level of study, the academic integrity conventions you may have experienced when studying elsewhere and the length of time since you were in a formal education setting.
- 4.2 We therefore provide support to each student by:

- i Providing every student with access to this policy
- ii Providing information on good academic practice as part of initial course orientation
- iii Providing ongoing access to materials on good academic practice via KnowledgeBank or the module course site.
- iv Providing structured study and academic practice activities through our Student Support offer.

5. Reasons you may contemplate or decide not to act with integrity

5.1 We recognise that there may be reasons why you contemplate or decide not to act with integrity when completing your work. These could include:

- i Not fully understanding how to apply the principles:
If you do not understand the principles set out in this Policy or in other support that we provide, you must ask a member of staff for further guidance.
- ii Personal concern about your academic success and where you may lack confidence in your own abilities:
If you are feeling concerned, we strongly advise you to talk to your module or programme leader, or to access support from Student Services, or to talk to friends or family.
- iii Experiencing pressure from other people to succeed, or where you feel the need to please them but are concerned that you will not meet their expectations through your own academic abilities:
If you are having these experiences or feelings, we also strongly advise you to talk to the Student Support team.
- iv Your direct intention to gain advantage for yourself or to help another student gain advantage.
- v Systemic factors outside of your control, such as limited access to digital resources or having limited experience of or access to others with experience of higher education.

5.2 In any of these circumstances, it is **never** the right course of action to ignore or not behave with integrity. Doing so is unacceptable and will be defined as academic misconduct; this is a serious matter that will be investigated and will likely result in a penalty.

6. Reports of alleged academic misconduct

- 6.1 Alleged academic misconduct in your work may be identified by any individual who has relevant information including members of staff, External Examiners, employers or another student.
- 6.2 The person who has identified the alleged academic misconduct must complete an Academic Misconduct Report Form which sets out the name of the student and the supporting evidence that supports the allegation.

- 6.3 Where a student reports the alleged misconduct of another student it may be necessary for a member of staff to collate the evidence.
- 6.4 Any malicious allegation made by a student against another will result in disciplinary action being taken against the student making the allegation.
- 6.5 Supporting evidence can include, but is not limited to:
- i A report from text-matching software. All written assessments are reviewed by text-matching software. This tool compares the words in your assessment against published on-line sources and provides a report on the level of similarity. Supporting evidence in a suspected report of academic misconduct will not normally be based on text-matching software reports alone. Reports will be contextualised by the person making the report stating why the nature and extent of similarity is of concern in relation to the specific assessment brief.
 - ii Extracts from hard-copy or on-line published sources and a comparison with relevant sections of the student's work.
 - iii Similarity to the work submitted by another current or previous student and a comparison with relevant sections of the student's work.
 - iv How the student's style (e.g. writing style) significantly changes within the assessment or when compared with a previous assessment.
 - v Data or analysis of data that does appear true or has been manipulated inappropriately.
 - vi Absence of ethical approval as part of the assessment process or where actions have been taken outside the ethical approval.
 - vii A report of misconduct during examination or test conditions (in-person or online) which may be provided by another individual in that setting or from the official recording of a proctored session.
 - viii The outcome report of an investigatory viva where unauthorised use of generative artificial intelligence or contract cheating is suspected.
- 6.6 A referral will indicate the suspected level of intent and level of impact of the misconduct in question, in line with the categorisations in Section 3.

7. Investigating alleged academic misconduct

- 7.1 Most cases are straightforward and following a preliminary review of the report form and supporting evidence by the Chair of the Academic Integrity Panel (the Chair) or their nominee, they will determine whether
- i There is no case to answer.
 - ii The concern is a case of poor academic practice (e.g. unacknowledged quotations) where you are undertaking your first assessment. See Section 8 for next steps.
 - iii The concern goes beyond poor academic practice, and the evidence suggests that possible **academic misconduct** may have occurred.
- 7.2 Where the Chair concludes that academic misconduct may have occurred, you will be informed about the allegation by the Secretary of the Academic Integrity Panel (the

Secretary) who will clarify why the case has arisen and the steps that will follow next. You will also be advised of other support services available to you during the investigation process.

- 7.3 At this stage, if you know that you have engaged in academic misconduct you should share this fact with the Secretary. You should also include your reason for engaging in misconduct and any mitigating factors we should consider.
- 7.4 If you do not admit to having engaged in academic misconduct, or the suspected offence is deemed to be significant and/or complex in its nature, the Chair may appoint a Case Officer to investigate the allegation. Any member of staff undertaking an investigation will have relevant experience and/or training.
- 7.5 As part of any investigation, you may be invited to meet with the Case Officer to share your perspective on the allegation and to provide any other evidence, such as logs, earlier drafts etc. It is more likely that you will be invited to meet where the allegation suggests significant and/or complex misconduct as opposed to likely poor academic practice. You will be able to have another student or friend with you at that meeting.
- 7.6 If you know you have engaged in academic misconduct you should share this fact with the Case Officer. You should also include your reason for engaging in misconduct and any mitigating factors we should consider. This information will be included in the investigation report that will be considered by the Academic Integrity Panel (see Section 9) which has a responsibility for determining any penalty.
- 7.7 The investigation process should normally be completed within 14 calendar days of you being notified of the allegation. We will let you know if there are any delays to this timescale and the reason why. The investigation will identify:
 - i That there is no case to answer or that this is a clear case of poor academic practice.
 - ii Where there may be a case to answer, the likely level of intent, and the scale of affected material.
 - iii Any novel or unclear elements of the case that may require discussion and recommendation for the adjustment of policy or practice.

8. Cases of poor academic practice

- 8.1 Where poor academic practice is identified, the Chair of the Academic Integrity Panel will ask your Programme Leader to meet with you to discuss the findings and to agree any further support you need before the next assessment/s.

9. Cases of academic misconduct: Academic Integrity Panel

- 9.1 We will contact you by email to let you know the outcome of the investigation, and you will be provided with a copy of the investigation report, including supporting evidence. A copy of the report and supporting evidence will also be shared with the Academic Integrity Panel (the Panel) which will be made up of suitably trained academic and professional staff.
- 9.2 All Panel members will have experience of, or training in, academic misconduct panels. They will also have no prior involvement with you or the alleged misconduct case.

- 9.3 Where there is no evidence of academic misconduct, the Panel will note the investigation report. The investigation will not sit on your permanent record.
- 9.4 Where the investigation identifies that academic misconduct has likely taken place, a meeting of the Academic Integrity Panel will be scheduled.
- i Where the Chair of the Academic Integrity Panel, guided by the investigation report, deems a case to be of lower magnitude, they may convene a meeting of a subset of the full Panel.
 - ii Where the Chair deems a case to be of higher magnitude, they will convene a meeting of the full Panel.
- 9.5 You will be invited to meet with the Panel to provide your view on the findings. You will be given 14 calendar days' notice of the meeting (which may be online or in person) and you may be accompanied to the meeting by a friend. If you have a valid reason (e.g. illness, classes) as to why you cannot attend the meeting on the date and time given, you will be given the opportunity for the meeting to be rescheduled.
- 9.6 We will ensure that any reasonable adjustments that you require are accommodated where you have notified us of their need.
- 9.7 In the meeting, the concerns and evidence will be presented to you, and you will be invited to respond. The Panel members may ask you questions, and you may also have questions of the Panel. If you choose not to attend the meeting, it will go ahead in your absence.
- 9.8 In cases that involve more than one student (e.g. collusion) the Panel will meet with each student separately.
- 9.9 You will be asked to leave the meeting when the Panel decides the outcome. Potential cases of academic misconduct are considered on the balance of probability. This means that for an allegation of academic misconduct to be upheld, the Panel needs to show sufficient evidence that the misconduct occurred or is more than likely to have occurred.

10. Outcomes from the Academic Integrity Panel meeting

- 10.1 The outcome from the Panel meeting will be one of the following:
- i There is insufficient evidence to show on the balance of probabilities that academic misconduct occurred, and no further action will be taken
 - ii You admit misconduct in the meeting and will be tasked with an appropriate follow up action.
 - iii There is sufficient evidence to show that on the balance of probabilities that academic misconduct occurred, and you will be tasked with an appropriate follow up action.
 - iv Very exceptionally, further investigation may be required, and a follow-up meeting will be held with you once that investigation has concluded. This follow-up meeting will normally take place within 14 calendar days of you being notified that further investigation is required.
- 10.2 The outcome notification will outline the Panel's reasons for reaching their decision, where relevant the appropriate follow up action, and the factors that contributed to and/or mitigated its severity.

10.3 We will inform you of the outcome of the Panel meeting within 7 calendar days. You will have the right to appeal the outcome based on specific criteria. More information is in section 12.

11. Follow up actions

11.1 Walbrook prioritises restorative action wherever appropriate in resolving cases of academic misconduct. This means that there is a balance of penalty and active learning in the actions you will be asked to take following an upheld case.

11.2 The appropriate follow up action will be informed by an assessment of the following three criteria:

- i The level of intent.
- ii The proportional impact on the overall assessment task.
- iii The size of the assessment task in terms of module weighting.

11.3 There will also be a consideration of any extenuating personal circumstances which could be judged to have impaired your judgement at the point of committing the confirmed misconduct.

11.4 The likely follow-up actions, based on the level of intent and severity of impact, are as follows:

Intent → / Context ↓	Tier 1 – Mistake	Tier 2 – Careless	Tier 3 – Reckless	Tier 4 – Deliberate
Low impact • Low weight	Feedback + reflection task; resubmit uncapped	Reflection + resubmit (capped)	Resubmit with integrity coaching; capped outcome	Resubmit with integrity coaching; capped or zero for task
Medium impact OR Medium weight	Resubmit (capped) + reflection task	Zero for affected part; reflective essay + workshop	Zero for assessment; behaviour plan + resubmission	Zero for assessment or module; restorative action + misconduct record
High impact OR High weight	Zero for affected part; reflective task	Zero for assessment; integrity workshop + coaching	Zero for module; reflective plan + learning interview	Zero for module; record of misconduct + structured restorative pathway

11.5 In cases of collusion where there is more than one student, the Panel will ensure consistency of approach in any follow up action that it applies. Any differentiation will normally only apply where there is a difference in mitigating circumstances or an admission of the misconduct. The Panel will ensure that there is a fair and equal opportunity for both or all students to be heard individually before a decision is reached.

11.6 Examples of other actions that are available to Panels may include but are not limited to the following:

- i A warning

- ii Capping the mark of the assessment/s in which misconduct occurred at the minimum pass mark, subject to you submitting a revised version of the assessment/s with the offending material corrected
- iii Capping the mark of the module in which the misconduct occurred at the minimum pass mark, subject to you submitting a revised version of the assessment/s with the offending material corrected
- iv Awarding a mark of zero for the assessment/s in which misconduct has occurred
- v Awarding a mark of zero for the module in which the misconduct has occurred
- vi Awarding a mark of zero for all assessments taken in that assessment period and requiring resits
- vii Exclusion from Walbrook with the award of an exit qualification where the thresholds have been met.
- viii Exclusion from Walbrook without the award of an exit qualification, even where the thresholds have been met

12. Appealing a Panel decision

12.1 You may use the Appeals Policy to appeal a decision of the Academic Integrity Panel.

13. Revisiting academic misconduct previously unfounded or dismissed: current students

13.1 We may revisit cases of potential academic misconduct that have been previously unfounded or dismissed if new evidence is presented.

14. Academic misconduct identified after graduation

14.1 We may investigate cases of potential academic misconduct after you have graduated where new evidence is presented and will use the procedure set out in this policy. We reserve the right in the Academic Regulations to rescind an award and/or credit where this would be an appropriate penalty in response to the nature of the academic misconduct and where a case is upheld.

15. How we record information and decisions

15.1 We will keep a record of all initial meetings, Chair's decisions, Panel meetings and Appeal hearings.

15.2 We will use anonymised records of all cases and outcomes to inform review of institutional policies and practices in this area, and in the design of our assessment frameworks.

16. Any questions?

16.1 Please contact the Quality, Policy and Regulations team or the named contacts in this document.

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Appendix One: Types of Academic Misconduct

1. Plagiarism

- 1.1 Plagiarism is where you include ideas and concepts from other sources and present them as your own. This means that you have not completed the assessment appropriately and it therefore cannot be marked as your own work. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:
- i Copying sections from published materials and not appropriately referencing the original author/s
 - ii Rewording sentences, paragraphs or larger sections of published materials and not appropriately referencing the original author/s. This may include excessive dependence on one or more sources without adequate referencing
 - iii Copying the work of another student, including in group work, or copying the work of a former student who has completed the same or similar assessment in the past
 - iv Paraphrasing the work of another student, including in group work, or paraphrasing the work of a former student who has completed the same or similar assessment in the past
 - v Copying the written style of another person without referencing the source
 - vi Self-plagiarism (see definition below)
- 1.2 Published materials include, but are not limited to books, articles, journals, reports, digital storage media, data, on-line sources, creative pieces of work and information created through artificial intelligence.

2. Self-plagiarism

- 2.1 Self-plagiarism is where you use all or part of a piece of work for assessment that you have submitted previously for a different assessment, whether this is in your current programme or for submission at any other institution. This means that you have not completed the assessment appropriately and it therefore cannot be marked as your own work.

3. Collusion

- 3.1 Collusion is where you and another student/s liaise or work together on preparing or compiling an assessment task where collaboration is not part of the assessment brief. This means that the work has had input from another student and cannot be marked as your work; it also means that the student who has inputted to your work has given you an unfair advantage which is also unacceptable and considered academic misconduct. Examples of collusion include, but are not limited to:
- i Working together to plan how you will respond to an assessment task
 - ii Helping another student/s develop the ideas and concepts in their assessment task
 - iii Including the ideas and concepts of another student/s in your assessment task

- iv Providing another student/s with access to part or all the material that will form the assessment submission, including any draft work
- v Using the materials provided by another student within your assessment without acknowledging the source (see also the definition of plagiarism)

4. Using Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- 4.1 Misuse of Generative AI is where you use one or more tools to give you an unfair advantage in your assessment. The following examples of misuse of Generative AI include, but are not limited to:
- i Plagiarising information from Generative AI sources without appropriate referencing (see also the definition of plagiarism)
 - ii Using a Generative AI tool to generate all or part of your assessment (see also the definition of contract cheating)
 - iii Using a Generative AI tool to improve the standard of your assessment beyond your own competence. This includes for example, the style of your usual written English
 - iv Falsifying information resulting from the Generative AI tool you use (see also the definition of falsification)
 - v Undertaking any other action using Generative AI which constitutes academic misconduct
- 4.2 The Generative AI Usage Policy provide more information about how the tool can be used to the benefit of teaching, learning and assessment and where it becomes academic misconduct as set out above.

5. Contract Cheating

- 5.1 Contract cheating is where you engage with another person or organisation to complete part or all your assessment which you then submit as your own work. We cannot therefore assess this work as your own. Contract cheating can take place with or without a formal contract. It includes, but is not limited to:
- i Engaging with an essay writing service that you may seek out online or in person, or which may try to contact you online or in person. The UK Government criminalised essay mills in 2022 and their operations are therefore illegal
 - ii Asking another person to contribute to, or undertake in full, an assessment. This includes but is not limited to asking other students, friends, family, private tutors and copy-editing services
 - iii Using an AI tool to create part or all of your assessment

6. Cheating in Test or Examination Conditions (in person or online)

- 6.1 Cheating in a test or examination is your attempt to gain advantage, for you and/or for another student/s which means that you have not acted with integrity in your assessment. Such actions include but are not limited to:
- i Attempting to acquire or acquiring advance knowledge of the content of an examination or test before it is issued

- ii Attempting to communicate or communicating with other student/s or other individual (other than an invigilator or member of staff) during the assessment, including through technology and social media
- iii Attempting to copy, or copying from another student
- iv Allowing another student to attempt to copy, or copy from you
- v Obtaining, or attempting to obtain, any other assistance from another student
- vi Using, or attempting to gain access to, any material or device not permitted as part of the assessment
- vii Impersonating another student or allowing another student or any other individual to impersonate you in the assessment
- viii Refusing to comply with a reasonable request made by a member of staff where they suspect potential cheating
- ix Any other action that you take with the intention of gaining unfair advantage

7. Falsification of information

7.1 Falsification of information is where you include information in your assessment that is not real. This means that we cannot mark the assessment as a valid and reliable piece of work. Falsification includes but is not limited to:

- i Claiming to carry out practical research when you have not done so
- ii Creating false data
- iii Manipulation and/or selection of data or imagery that creates a false outcome
- iv Using an AI tool that may provide you with false information
- v Creating or obtaining information illegally

8. Fraud

8.1 Fraud is where you take actions to deceive Walbrook or tamper with information and which gives you unfair advantage over other students. This includes but is not limited to:

- i Tampering with, or forgery of, assessment results documentation
- ii Falsely obtaining, or creating forged, assessment results or documentation (e.g. transcript)
- iii Falsely stating the word count on your assessment

8.2 We will either investigate alleged fraud under this Policy or under the broader Student Disciplinary Policy dependent on the nature of the alleged action.

9. Ethics

9.1 It is not acceptable to bypass Walbrook's ethics requirements where approval is required for a particular piece of work or assessment. Doing so means that you have acted unethically, and the assessment cannot be marked as a reliable piece of work. This includes but is not limited to:

- i Conducting research without ethical approval
- ii Changing the research methodology from what was approved on the ethics form, such as collecting data from different participant group.