

Assessment and Academic Misconduct Policy

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Purpose and Scope:

This policy sets out the principles, standards and procedures for assessment and the management of academic misconduct at the International College of Contemporary Sciences. It applies to all students and staff engaged in the design, delivery, marking, moderation and oversight of assessment on programmes delivered or assessed by ICCS, including those offered in partnership with awarding bodies and universities.

The policy should be read alongside programme specifications, module guides, student and staff handbooks, the Academic Appeals Policy, the Extenuating Circumstances Policy, and relevant awarding body regulations.

External Reference Point:

- United Kingdom Quality Code for Higher Education including Core Practices and the Advice and Guidance on Assessment
- Office for Students regulatory expectations for quality and standards including reliable and fair assessment
- Ofqual and awarding organisation requirements for assessment integrity where relevant
- Awarding body and partner university academic regulations and external examining procedures

Principles of Assessment:

All assessment at ICCS is designed and conducted to be authentic, valid, reliable, consistent and fit for purpose. Assessment arrangements must enable students to demonstrate the achievement of intended learning outcomes and must be operated transparently and fairly. External examiners appointed by awarding bodies provide independent oversight of standards and processes.

- Authenticity: the evidence of achievement must be the student's own work
- Validity: assessment tasks and evidence must be appropriate to the stated learning outcomes and criteria
- Reliability and consistency: academic judgements must be consistent regardless of who marks or when marking occurs

- Fitness for purpose: assessment design, timing and feedback should support learning and progression

Assessment Briefs and Criteria

- Students will receive written assessment briefs that set out the task, format, word limits or other constraints, assessment criteria and any marking scheme.
- Assessment criteria will be internally and, where required, externally scrutinised before publication. They will be discussed with students in class and will inform feedback.
- Assignments should use realistic scenarios where appropriate and reflect the programme learning outcomes.

Submission, Late Submission and Extenuating Circumstances

- Assignments must be submitted by the published deadline through the required platform.
- Where work is submitted late without approved extenuating circumstances, the attempt will normally be accepted with the mark capped at Pass, in line with awarding body rules.
- Claims for extenuating circumstances must follow the ICCS policy and be supported by evidence.
- Feedback and Return of Assessed Work
- Marked work will normally be returned with developmental feedback within four to six weeks of submission. Where this is not possible for valid reasons, a revised timescale will be communicated to students.
- All marks remain provisional until confirmed by the relevant assessment panel or university board.
- Formative feedback opportunities will be provided during the term to support improvement prior to final submission.
- Internal Verification and Moderation
- Assessment briefs will be internally verified before issue. Assessment decisions will be sampled to secure consistency across assessors and modules.
- Sampling will cover every unit, each assessor and a range of outcomes. Records of verification and moderation will be retained in accordance with ICCS retention schedules.
- ICCS reserves the right to conduct academic integrity checks before or after assessment panels and to audit assessment decisions across programmes.
- Confirmation of Decisions and Publication of Results
- Assessment panels will meet at least once each term to confirm module results and make recommendations on progression and awards in line with awarding body regulations.
- Official results will be published via the secure Virtual Learning Environment. Students are responsible for checking their results.
- Reassessment and Repeat Study
- Reassessment and repeat study are managed in accordance with awarding body or partner university regulations. Typically a single reassessment opportunity is permitted for failed components, with capped marks where specified. A failed module may be repeated once with attendance, normally capped at Pass, subject to programme rules.

Use of Artificial Intelligence in Academic Work

- ICCS supports the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence tools for learning, including research assistance, idea generation and language support. AI must not be used to generate assessed content that is then presented as the student's own work. All use of sources and tools must be transparent and appropriately referenced.
- All submissions are subject to originality screening using Turnitin or equivalent services and may be subject to additional checks.
- Similarity indicators inform but do not determine academic judgement. Where helpful context is needed, a viva voce may be used to test authorship.
- Definition of Academic Misconduct
- Academic misconduct is any act or omission that confers an unfair academic advantage or compromises the integrity of assessment. The following examples are illustrative and not exhaustive:
- Plagiarism including copying or paraphrasing without acknowledgement and presenting the work of others as one's own
- Collusion including unauthorised collaboration and commissioning work from third parties such as essay mills
- Impersonation and any breach of examination rules including possession of unauthorised materials or advance access to unseen papers
- Fabrication or falsification of data, references or evidence and dishonest claims for extenuating circumstances
- Misuse of AI tools to generate assessed content that is presented as original work
- Detection and Reporting
- All submitted work will be screened through Turnitin. Tutors will mark work in the normal manner and will not record allegations of misconduct in routine feedback.
- Where a tutor suspects misconduct, an Academic Integrity Report will be sent to the Programme Leader with relevant evidence including originality reports and annotated scripts.
- The Programme Leader will conduct an initial review and, where there is an arguable case, will invite the student to an investigatory meeting. A viva voce may be used to test authorship.

Use of Turnitin Similarity Indicators:

Turnitin originality reports are used to inform academic judgement. ICCS applies the following thresholds as a guide to action, recognising that the nature of matches, use of quotations and legitimate referencing must always be considered:

- Where the similarity match is twenty-five percent or less, the assessment will be marked in the usual way without regard to any additional malpractice regulations.
- Where the similarity match is greater than twenty five percent, the assessment will be marked using normal academic criteria with attention to accurate citation of statutory regulations, regulatory guidance and other authoritative sources.
- Where the similarity score is more than thirty percent and up to fifty percent, the report will be scrutinised and considered for poor referencing as well as evidence of plagiarism. Where the matches are not attributable to legitimate referencing of key policies or reference sources, the case will be referred and the student notified of suspected malpractice.
- Where the similarity score exceeds fifty percent, the work will be referred to the Programme Leader to review the nature of similarities and may have grades reduced or be failed for plagiarism subject to the level and nature of similarity. In the case of grade reduction, a formal warning will be issued and the consequences of further offences set out in line with awarding body regulations.
- Investigatory Meeting and Decision Making
- Students will receive written notice of the allegation, the evidence, and the date and time of the meeting. They may be accompanied by a friend, representative or Students' Committee nominee.
- If the student does not attend without valid reason, the panel may proceed in absentia.
- Following consideration of evidence and the student's explanation, the panel will reach a decision and record the outcome. Findings and penalties will be confirmed to the student in writing.

Penalties:

Penalties are proportionate to the nature, extent and intent of the misconduct and take account of any previous offences and awarding body rules. Indicative penalties include:

- Official warning letter where poor academic practice is evidenced without intent to deceive. The original mark stands and any failed component is reassessed in line with regulations.
- Fail for the component with a permitted resubmission capped at Pass where a first offence is minor or evidence is borderline.
- Fail with final warning where serious plagiarism is confirmed. Resubmission, where permitted, is capped at Pass.
- Exclusion from the unit, module or programme for repeated offences, commissioned work, impersonation or examination misconduct.

For programmes validated by partner universities, penalties are applied in accordance with the relevant university regulations. All penalties for ICCS regulated programmes are confirmed by the Academic Assessment Panel.

Appeals:

Students may appeal against a finding or penalty within ten working days of notification, citing one or more grounds permitted under the Academic Appeals Policy such as a material procedural irregularity or new evidence. Where applicable, students may also use external procedures provided by the awarding body or partner university after internal routes are exhausted.

Record, Retention and Data Protection:

Records of assessment decisions, internal verification and academic misconduct cases will be retained securely in accordance with ICCS retention schedules and data protection law. Evidence of assessed work is retained for a minimum of twelve weeks after certification, and records of assessment and verification for at least three years.

Responsibilities:

- Academic Board approves the policy and receives assurance reports on assessment and integrity.
- Head of Quality and Academic Standards oversees implementation and review.
- Programme Leaders ensure local compliance, conduct investigations and make recommendations to panels.
- Assessors and Internal Verifiers design, mark and moderate assessments in line with this policy.
- Students engage honestly with assessment and seek guidance where unsure about academic conventions.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure continuing alignment with regulatory requirements and good practice, and earlier if required by changes to awarding body or partner university regulations.

Appendix A: Misconduct Review Meeting

CONFIDENTIAL

[Student name and address]

[Date]

Dear [Student name]

Course and Module: [Insert]

I am writing to inform you that there is a concern regarding possible academic misconduct in the above module in relation to coursework recently submitted. You are invited to attend a meeting at ICCS as follows:

- Date: [Insert]
- Time: [Insert]
- Place: [Insert]

Academic misconduct is any action that may confer an unfair advantage in assessment including plagiarism and collusion. The purpose of the meeting is to review the evidence and offer you the opportunity to respond. You may be accompanied by a friend or representative. If you do not attend and do not provide a valid reason, the panel may proceed in your absence. Please confirm your attendance.

Kind regards,

[Programme Coordinator name]

Tel: [Insert]

Email: [Insert]

Appendix B: Misconduct Review Outcome

CONFIDENTIAL

[Student name and address]

[Date]

Dear [Student name]

Course and Module: [Insert]

Following the Academic Misconduct Meeting held on [date], this letter confirms that your conduct was found to be contrary to the Academic Misconduct Regulations and this letter constitutes an Academic Misconduct Warning.

The assessment component concerned will be awarded a mark of zero. Provided you have not exhausted your assessment opportunities, you may resubmit the work. Any reassessed mark will be capped at Pass, and the component or module mark will be capped accordingly in line with awarding body regulations.

- Familiarise yourself with referencing conventions and the ICCS Referencing Guide on the VLE.
- Read the guidance on plagiarism in your programme and student handbooks.
- Seek advice from your lecturer or Programme Leader if you are unsure about the rules.
- Note that any future academic misconduct is likely to result in a more serious penalty.

Kind regards,

Programme Leader

Tel: [Insert]

Email: [Insert]



References and Further Reading:

- Turnitin UK: www.turnitinuk.com
- Turnitin Teaching and Learning Innovation's Instructional Resources: <https://www.turnitin.com/resources/>
- International College of Contemporary Sciences Virtual Learning Environment: <https://vle.iccs.uk>
- JISC How to maintain academic integrity in an AI age: <https://www.jisc.ac.uk/training/how-to-maintain-academic-integrity-in-an-ai-age-he>
- UK QAA Academic Integrity: <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/what-we-do/academic-integrity>
- UK Office for Students: Quality and standards: <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/what-we-do/regulation/delivery-of-regulation/quality-and-standards/>

