

10. Academic Impropriety

Version	Description of Amendments	Approval Date	Implementation Date
1.0	Original Draft copy of QA Guidelines	18/05/2018	18/05/2018
2.0	Re-engagement process		
2.1	Addition of AI Policy	25/04/2023	24/05/2023
2.2	Amendments to policy text	25/08/2023	31/08/2023

Learners are advised that Dorset College takes all cases of academic impropriety very seriously and will apply penalties up to expulsion from the College with no right to return or refund.

Academic impoverishment should not be confused with academic impropriety with the latter clearly being an intention to secure an unfair advantage through dishonest academic practice(s) including but not limited to cheating.

Academic impoverishment shall be addressed through formative and summative feedback throughout the academic term.

Cheating includes but is not limited to:

- Cheating
- Collusion
- Essay Mills
- Plagiarism

Plagiarism is an example of a serious offence, which constitutes academic impropriety. Plagiarism is the act of presenting another individual(s) work as your own. It is defined by the act not the intention, so even careless accidental copying is still classed as plagiarism, for it gives the false impression that the learner is the author and denies the genuine author their due acknowledgement.

As an education institute, Dorset College aims to foster academic integrity within its learner body. A [Type here]

work submitted for assessment or publication. The attribution of these sources should be in the form of standard and consistent referencing and bibliographic conventions.

Should an instance of Academic Impropriety such as plagiarism be identified, the College has a two-stage process for dealing with such instances:

- The first stage is an informal process and the second stage is a formal process.
- The decision as to whether a suspected instance of plagiarism should follow the informal or formal process will be made by the lecturer and Programme Leader. Other staff members, such as the Quality Assurance Lead may also be consulted if necessary.
- In determining if a suspected instance of plagiarism should follow either the informal or formal the investigator must process, the severity of plagiarism.

The severity of plagiarism (assessed through the similarity score determined by a plagiarism checking software such as Turnitin) as well as academic judgment as to the perceived intention of the learner (assessed through whether the learner is deemed to intentionally pass off another person’s work as their own or whether the plagiarism has arisen as a result of poor referencing or over-quotation etc.), and the previous academic record of the learner (assessed through whether a learner has previously been found guilty of plagiarism) will be appraised by the lecturer and Programme Leader.

- Should all of these three indicators be present, the College will adopt the formal process.
- Should the severity indicator be negative, and the other indicators positive for the learner, the College must make a decision as to whether to adopt the informal or formal process. The decision will be determined by the level of severity of the plagiarism score as well as academic judgment.

10.1 Policy on dealing with AI in relation to Assessments

Policy Title	AI and Academic Integrity
Date Approved	24/05/2023
Effective From	25/04/2023
Monitor	Academic Registrar/ QA Committee
Summary	This purpose of this policy is to protect academic integrity in relation to the use of AI in relation to Assessments.
Related Policies	
Revision History & Commencement	Version 2 – 2023 (Version 1): 24/05/2023 August 2023
Reviewed:	
Purpose	The purpose of this policy is to clarify how the college manages cases of academic impropriety using AI, and to provide an appropriate procedure to asses manage and deter such behaviour in the student population. In line with other policies consistency, transparency and fairness will be the cornerstone of this policy to ensure that no individual is discriminated against.
Scope	This policy applies to all learners in both FET and HET programmes of Dorset College and is referenced in the Dorset College learner Handbook.
Policy Statement	Dorset College generally forbids the use of artificial intelligence programmes for the writing of academic essays, reports, dissertations, or

other academic papers. This policy supplements and compliments the policy on plagiarism in academic writing.

Procedure to implement this policy The initial indicator might be simply intuitive but in regard to the Turnitin score we will now permit just 20% as the maximum. AI use must be checked for when downloading. If it exceeds 20% but the combined total is below 30% then no action is required by this policy. If the combined total exceeds 30% then we must investigate. Refer to the procedure for Academic Impropriety for how to proceed.

10.2. Procedure for Academic Impropriety (Informal)

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	<p>Identification: The Lecturer will identify and highlight instances of suspected academic impropriety such as plagiarism and consult these with the Programme Leader. They will jointly agree if the suspicion is sufficient to merit further investigation. If it is, they will jointly agree as to whether the suspected instances should be classified as warranting the formal or informal process.</p>	<p>Lecturer</p> <p>Programme Leader</p>	
2	<p>Learner Notification: Should the suspicion of plagiarism be judged to warrant further investigation, the learner will be notified of this, and as to the process that will be followed in the investigation.</p>	<p>Programme Leader</p> <p>Quality Assurance Lead</p>	<p>Communication to Learner of suspicion of academic impropriety</p>
3	<p>Collation of Evidence: The lecturer shall collate and present the evidence as to the suspicion of academic impropriety.</p> <p>This evidence may include, but is not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of the source of the materials used by the learner without proper attribution, or represented as the learner's own work. • A demonstrably marked difference in the writing style of the learner, as compared to previous work, or 	<p>Lecturer</p>	<p>Evidence of Suspected instance of academic impropriety</p>

	<p>variations in font, grammar and spelling from section to section.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testimony from others regarding a learner’s use of academically dishonest means to complete a piece of coursework. • First-hand observation of the learner engaging in improper academic behaviour. • An unusual or suspicious degree of similarity in work submitted different learners. <p>Admission by the learner that s/he engaged in improper academic behaviour.</p>		
<p>4</p>	<p>Decision: The Lecturer and the Programme Leader will jointly decide as to whether the evidence presented is sufficient to conclude that there has been an instance of academic impropriety.</p> <p>Should the Lecturer and the Programme Leader not be able to reach an agreement, the Quality Assurance Lead shall be consulted in order to reach a majority decision.</p>	<p>Lecturer</p> <p>Programme Leader</p> <p>Quality Assurance Lead if necessary</p>	<p>Plagiarism Report – Informal Process</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Penalty: If the decision is that the evidence does not support the suspicion of plagiarism, there is no penalty and the learner will be graded without prejudice or bias. If the decision is that plagiarism was detected, the potential penalties are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment mark is reduced by an agreed amount. This may result in the learner still receiving a pass mark, but lower than the mark originally given. • However, the mark may also be reduced to a point that would result in the assessment being awarded a fail mark. • The assessment mark is reduced to zero and the learner must re-submit the assessment instrument. This resubmission would count as a 	<p>Lecturer</p> <p>Programme Leader</p>	<p>Notification to learner of penalty (if necessary)</p> <p>Warning on Learner file (if necessary)</p>

	<p>subsequent sitting of that assessment, with the appropriate penalty applied for a resubmission.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should either penalty option be adopted, the learner shall also receive a formal warning of academic impropriety, which will be placed on their academic record for the duration of their programme of study. 		
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10.3 Procedure for Academic Impropriety (formal)

	Procedure Stage	Responsibility	Evidence
1	<p>Identification: The Lecturer will identify and highlight instances of repeated or an emerging pattern of suspected serious academic impropriety such as plagiarism and consult these with the Programme Leader. They will jointly agree if the suspicion of academic impropriety such as plagiarism is sufficient to merit further investigation. If it is, they will jointly agree as to whether the suspected instances should be classified as warranting the formal or informal process.</p>	<p>Lecturer</p> <p>Programme Leader</p>	
2	<p>Learner Notification: Should the suspicion of academic impropriety be judged to warrant further investigation, the learner will be notified of this, and as to the process that will be followed in the investigation.</p>	<p>Quality Assurance Lead</p>	<p>Communication to Learner of suspicion of academic impropriety.</p>
3	<p>Collation of Evidence: The lecturer shall collate and present the evidence as to the suspicion of academic impropriety. This evidence may include, but is not limited to, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification of the source of the materials used by the learner without proper attribution, or represented as the learner's own work. A demonstrably marked difference in the writing style of the learner, as compared to previous work, or variations in font, grammar and spelling from section to section. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testimony from others regarding a learner’s use of academically dishonest means to complete the assignment. • First-hand observation of the learner engaging in plagiarism. • An unusual or suspicious degree of similarity in work submitted by different learners. • Admission by the learner that they acted improperly or plagiarised. The Academic Operations Lead and/or Programme Leader shall supplement this evidence with details of the learner’s academic record, if necessary. 		
<p>4</p>	<p>Interview with Learner: After the collation of evidence, the learner will be invited to meet with the Programme Leader, Quality Assurance Lead, Academic Operations Lead and Student Experience Leader, who will outline the evidence for the suspicion of plagiarism. This will focus on the severity of the suspected plagiarism and the perceived intention. The learner will also be informed as to whether their academic record will have any bearing on the investigation. The learner will be given 3 working days notice of this meeting. The learner will also be advised of their right to be accompanied to this meeting, should they so wish. This meeting shall be minuted and constitutes a Sub-Committee of the AI Committee</p>	<p>Programme Leader, Quality Assurance Officer, Academic Operations Lead and Student Experience Leader-Academic Impropriety Committee</p> <p>Learner</p>	<p>Plagiarism Report – Formal Process</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Decision: The Academic Impropriety Sub-Committee will present the Plagiarism Report to the Academic Impropriety Committee who will decide as to whether the evidence presented is sufficient to conclude that academic impropriety such as plagiarism has been committed by the learner.</p> <p>The learner will be advised of their right of appeal to the Appeals Committee within 3 working days of the outcome.</p>	<p>Programme Leader, Quality Assurance Officer, Academic Operations Lead and Student Experience Leader.</p>	

<p>6</p>	<p>Penalty: If the decision is that the evidence does not support the suspicion of academic impropriety such as plagiarism, there is no penalty and the learner will be graded without prejudice or bias.</p> <p>If the decision is that academic impropriety such as plagiarism was detected, the potential penalties are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero Mark Assessment: The assessment mark is reduced to zero and the learner must re-submit the assessment instrument. This resubmission would count as a subsequent sitting of that assessment, with the appropriate penalty applied for a resubmission. • Zero Mark Module: The module mark is reduced to zero and the learner must register for the next available assessment session for the module. The subsequent sitting would have the appropriate penalty applied for a repeat sitting. • Suspension: This would apply in instances of repeat offending of plagiarism. Should a suspension be warranted, the Academic Operations Lead and Dean of Academic Affairs shall agree to the duration of the suspension, which should be no shorter than one week of term. The learner shall be marked as absent during this period and will not be eligible to submit or sit for assessments during the suspension period. • Expulsion: This would be an extreme outcome and would only be applicable in the event of multiple instances of plagiarism. This decision would come, only come after a suspension penalty has been applied. Should an expulsion be warranted, the learner will be removed from 	<p>Programme Leader, Quality Assurance Officer, Academic Operations Lead and Student Experience Leader-Academic Impropriety Committee</p> <p>Final: Dean of Academic Affairs</p>	<p>Notification to learner of penalty (if necessary)</p> <p>Warning on Learner file (if necessary)</p>
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	<p>their programme of study, and the relevant stakeholders will be informed.</p> <p>Should any penalty option be adopted, the learner shall also receive a formal warning of academic impropriety, which will be placed on their academic record for the duration of their programme of study.</p> <p>There is one final appeal to the Dean of Academic Affairs. This decision is final.</p>		
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10.4. Review of Assessment Policies and Procedures

The College will review these Assessment policies and procedures on an annual basis. The following individual(s) will be involved in this review:

- Dean of Academic Affairs
- Programme Lead
- Examinations Officer
- Quality Assurance Lead
- 1 Lecturer
- 1 Learner