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Academic Integrity (Misconduct)

Procedure

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Oakwood Academic Integrity (Misconduct) Procedure

(For Oakwood College Students Only)

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Please also see (found at the end of this document):

- **Appendix 1 – Table of Penalties (Academic Misconduct)**
- **Appendix 2 – Guidance on Proof-Reading, Writing Services, Software and Technology**



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1. Introduction

- This policy sets out to define the procedures to be followed in the event of any concern or allegation regarding student academic misconduct in the assessment of internally marked academic assignments, tests and examinations, and also regarding tests and examinations invigilated by staff at Oakwood College and marked externally.
- This Policy is underpinned by the following sector guidelines:
 - [OIA Good Practice Framework: Disciplinary procedures](#)
 - [QAA Academic Integrity Charter for UK Higher Education](#)

2. Principles

- Where Oakwood College finds that academic misconduct has occurred on the part of a student:
 - All decisions reached about whether academic misconduct has occurred will be made on the balance of probabilities (i.e. whether it is more likely than not), taking account of all available evidence, the circumstances of the case and any mitigating/aggravating factors.
 - It will be determined whether the academic misconduct is Level 1 (minor) or Level 2 (Major), and students will receive one or more penalties according to the circumstances of the case.
 - Where a student is found guilty of Level 1 academic misconduct, an educational approach will be taken to support the student to reach and maintain the expected standards of academic integrity in the future.
 - A student found guilty of Level 2 academic misconduct should never receive a more favourable outcome than if they had simply failed to submit the assessment or sit the examination in question. This is important not only for fairness, but to ensure the overall academic integrity of the academic awards and standards.
 - Failure to comply with instructions issued as an academic misconduct outcome, (e.g. to complete academic integrity/academic skills training or attend specific tutorials) will be taken into account in the event of any future allegations of academic misconduct, both when determining whether academic misconduct has occurred, and in determining any appropriate penalty/ies.
 - If work is submitted for moderation/verification or for marking which raises suspicions that it is not the candidate's own work, the awarding body may not be able to give that candidate a result. The Programme Leader is responsible for ensuring that the work in question enters these Academic Misconduct Procedures and that following the conclusion of the case under these procedures, the student's academic records are updated appropriately. Depending on the timing, the Awarding Body may need to be notified that an

investigation into work is pending; it is the responsibility of the Head of Academic Affairs to ensure that the Awarding Body is appropriately notified.

When and how intent will be taken into account

- The question of the intent of a student will not be taken into account when determining whether or not academic misconduct has occurred on any level. This is because intent is not material as to whether academic misconduct has in fact occurred. For example, it is possible for a student to submit work that contains plagiarism, even if they did not intend for it to contain plagiarism.
- Therefore, in the event that academic misconduct has been established, on the balance of probabilities, intent will be considered as a mitigating or aggravating factor in determining the appropriate penalty/ies.

3. Academic Integrity: Statement of Expectations

- Oakwood College expects students to uphold academic integrity by acting honestly, fairly, and responsibly in all aspects of their learning and assessments. This means students must submit their own original work, fully acknowledge all sources and contributions, avoid all forms of plagiarism, cheating, collusion, and unauthorized use of artificial intelligence in assignments. Breaches of academic integrity — such as falsifying data, copying work, or seeking unfair advantage — damage trust within the academic community and may result in disciplinary action up to expulsion from the Oakwood College.

Responsibilities of students

- Students are expected to:
- Take responsibility for learning, producing and submitting their own original work that is authentic and meets Oakwood College standards.
- Seek support when needed and be proactive in understanding expectations for academic integrity.
- Behave with honesty and integrity at all times in all academic activities, whether working individually or as part of a group, and in communicating with staff and with other students.
- Fully acknowledge all sources and contributors, attribute all sources correctly, and avoid all forms of plagiarism, cheating, collusion or misrepresentation.
- Follow ethical practices in research and assessment activities.
- Not resubmit academic work that has already been submitted for, and/or has been awarded, academic credit, unless expressly authorised to do so.
- Refrain from the unauthorised use of artificial intelligence tools in assessments.
- Maintaining academic integrity protects the credibility of qualifications and ensures fairness for all students.

Responsibilities of staff

- Staff should:
- ensure that students have appropriate guidance and opportunities to familiarise themselves with this policy and procedure, and associated guidance.
- familiarise students with the academic conventions required for their programme and the expectations of the academic community.
- provide students with access to help on plagiarism and academic integrity, such as the relevant Oakwood College academic integrity/skills training.
- ensure that students are aware of professional requirements (if applicable).
- ensure that any concerns regarding academic integrity are considered in line with this policy and procedure.

Students with SpLDs/Reasonable Adjustments

- Oakwood College makes reasonable adjustments for students who require them. These may extend to, for example, assistive software, support from an amanuensis, or proof-reading support. Where reasonable adjustments are in place, the student is still expected to maintain the requisite academic integrity. Please see **Appendix 1** at the end of this Policy: Guidance on Proof-Reading, Writing Services, Software and Technology, which contains guidance to support all students to ensure that their academic work is not compromised.

4. Examples of Academic Misconduct

- Academic misconduct by students, whether actual or attempted, will not be tolerated. The following list sets out examples of academic misconduct. Please note this list is not exhaustive, and Oakwood College reserves the right to determine that academic misconduct has occurred even in the event that the conduct in question is not listed in the examples below:
- **Plagiarism:** the copying and/or passing off as the candidate's own work, the whole or part of another person's work/ideas, including unacknowledged close paraphrasing or summarising of material from other sources;
- **Self-plagiarism:** re-using work without citation or acknowledgement that a student has previously submitted for academic credit;
- **Collusion:** working collaboratively with one or more other students to produce work that is submitted as if the candidate had produced it entirely themselves;
- **Falsification:** falsifying or fabricating research results, questionnaire responses, or other evidence, in support of or as part of academic work submitted for assessment;
- **Violating copyrights and licensing agreements:** using Oakwood College's systems and/or equipment to make illegal copies of copyrighted or license materials;

- **Failing to abide by the instructions of an assessor:** using resources or methods in the production of work submitted for assessment that have been prohibited by the assessor;
- **Contract cheating:** the use of custom writing services and/or essay mills, including the use of materials created by third parties (whether individuals or companies, and whether paid for or freely available)
- **Unauthorised use of Artificial Intelligence (AI):** submitting either summative or formative work created using AI without authorisation to use AI or exceeding the permitted use of AI.
- **Tampering with Oakswood College feedback and/or results:** Students are not permitted, under any circumstances, to alter any marks or feedback provided to them by academic staff, whether these are provisional or confirmed by an Examination Board.
- **Providing or arranging cheating services to students for financial gain:** please see Academic Misconduct, which is also a criminal offence, below.
- **Advertising cheating services (e.g. essay mills):** please see Academic Misconduct, which is also a criminal offence, below.

Examination Misconduct

- Academic misconduct also extends to Examination Misconduct. The following are examples of Examination Misconduct by students with regards to examinations. This list is not exhaustive:
 - Talking during an examination;
 - Taking a mobile phone into an examination;
 - Taking any item other than those expressly permitted under the Examination Rules into the examination, such as a book or notes;
 - Leaving the examination room without permission;
 - Causing disruption to other candidates during an examination;
 - Passing notes or papers to another candidate, or accepting notes or papers from another candidate;
 - Tampering with any examination materials with the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage;
 - Assuming the identity of another student in an examination;
 - Willingly allowing, or forcing, another person to assume the identity of the student in an examination.

If an invigilator suspects a candidate of academic misconduct during an examination, the candidate will be informed, and the allegations will be explained. The candidate will have an initial opportunity to give their side of the story before the matter is referred into the academic misconduct procedure set out in Section 4 of this Policy.

Academic Misconduct which is also a criminal offence

- The [Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022](#) sets out that it is a criminal offence to provide or arrange cheating services for financial gain to students enrolled at a higher education provider in England. It is also an offence to participate in advertising these services.
- When conducted by a student of Oakwood College, such activities also breach this policy as forms of academic misconduct, because they egregiously compromise our values and expectations regarding academic integrity, honesty and fairness.
- Staff and students who become aware of, or suspect any activity related to the provision or advertisement of contract cheating services which occurs within the Oakwood College community, should report it to the Programme Leader (students may report concerns to their Personal Tutor who is responsible for then escalating the matter to Programme Leader). Where the activity may constitute a criminal offence, action may be taken to report the concerns to police, and/or for the matter to be considered in line with this policy. If the activity concerns a member of staff, the matter will normally be referred into the staff disciplinary procedures.
- Where alleged misconduct could also constitute an offence under the criminal law, this will normally necessitate Oakwood College pausing any internal investigation into such matters until such time as the police and/or courts have completed their investigations and proceedings, although this will not prevent Oakwood College from implementing any 'without prejudice' measures to support individuals and minimise disruption where appropriate and reasonable.

5. Student Academic Misconduct Procedure

Timeline of academic misconduct activities and response times

Stage	Trigger / start point	Activity / decision	Responsible role	Response time / deadline
Summative Assessment marking *Feedback given on formative assessments showing concerns	Suspected or alleged academic misconduct in a summative assessment	Initial investigation completed, and either: No case to answer/case of poor academic practice; written outcome issued to student or Possible case to answer; written notification issued to student	Module Leader (coordinates; may also act as/appoint Academic Misconduct Investigator)	Normally within 10 working days of the result
Stage 1: Investigation		Issue Stage 1 Academic Misconduct Investigation		Normally within 5 working days



	Commencement of the investigation	Outcome Letter confirming findings and next steps; No case to answer: release assessment / feedback / results in the normal way Finding of Level 1 minor misconduct: Apply Level 1 penalty/(ies) as appropriate or refer to Panel if necessary Suspected Level 2 major misconduct: Proceed to organise Misconduct Panel	Academic Misconduct Investigator	of commencement
Stage 2: Panel (notice)	Panel hearing is scheduled	Provide written notice of hearing date and issue invitation letter (with agenda and documentation)	Panel Secretary / College (invitation issued by email)	At least 5 working days' notice
Stage 2: Panel (attendance confirmation)	After invitation issued and before hearing date	Student confirms whether attending	Student	Not less than 2 working days before the hearing
Stage 2: Panel (written outcome)	Date of Panel Hearing	Issue Academic Misconduct Panel Hearing Outcome Letter (or notify student if delayed, with revised expected date)	Panel Chair (supported by Panel Secretary)	Normally within 5 working days of the hearing
Stage A: Internal appeal (submission)	Date of Panel Hearing Outcome Letter	Submit Stage A appeal by email with evidence to the CEO	Student	Within 10 working days
Stage A: Internal appeal (decision)	Date appeal received	Issue Stage A Academic Misconduct Appeal Outcome Letter	CEO or nominee (Stage A Appeal Reviewer)	Normally within 15 working days of receipt
Stage B: Awarding Body appeal (submission)	Date of Stage A Academic Misconduct Appeal Outcome Letter	Submit Stage B appeal to Awarding Body (details provided with Stage A outcome)	Student	Within 10 working days

Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter	Final written decision on the case (including conclusion of any Stage B appeal where exercised)	Issue Completion of Procedures Letter	Oakwood College (CEO via email where student requests early CoP)	Within 28 calendar days of the final written decision
OIA / Awarding Body escalation window (post-CoP)	Date of CoP Letter	Student may submit complaint to the Relevant Awarding Body or Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)	Student	Within 12 months of the CoP letter

Presumption of Innocence

- It should not be assumed that because an allegation has been made, or academic misconduct is suspected, that it has in fact occurred. All suspected and/or alleged academic misconduct will be investigated impartially and a student accused of academic misconduct will be presumed to be innocent until and unless the Academic Misconduct Investigator is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that academic misconduct is more likely than not proven.

Suspected academic misconduct in formative assessments

- As formative assessments do not carry credit weighting towards a student's award, the normal academic misconduct procedures do not apply. Instead, an educational approach is taken, so that the student can benefit from learning and, where applicable, improve their academic practice for the future.
- In the event that behaviour that would constitute academic misconduct is suspected in a student's formative assessment, the following procedure will follow:
 - The module leader will convene with either the Module Leader or another module leader on the same programme, to conduct any necessary investigation regarding the concerns and review the work in question, in order to reach a consensus on whether there are any academic integrity concerns in the work in question. If it is found that on close examination there are no academic integrity concerns, the work will be released for feedback and any indicative marks to be issued to the student in the normal way.
 - If there are any concerns, the student will be invited to a meeting with the Module Leader, to discuss their work. The Module Leader should explain any academic integrity concerns and why these are being brought to the attention of the student. At the end of the meeting:



- if the Module Leader is satisfied that any concerns are substantiated, the student will be given an informal warning and reminded about the Academic Misconduct Procedure and Academic Integrity. Where appropriate, they may be advised to complete academic integrity/skills training;
OR
- if, after discussing the matter with the student, the Module Leader is satisfied that there are no academic integrity concerns, they should proceed to inform the student that their work will be released back with any feedback and indicative marks (as applicable) in the normal way. If there may be a short delay in releasing this work to the student, this should be indicated.

Suspected academic misconduct in summative assessments

Investigations into suspected or alleged academic misconduct in summative assessments will be coordinated by the Module Leader who:

- Will ensure the initial investigation is carried out and a written outcome issued to the student, normally within 15 working days, and
- Will either act as the Academic Misconduct Investigator or will appoint a member of academic staff to this role.
- The Academic Misconduct Investigator is the person responsible for conducting the investigation, and who this is will depend on the assessment being investigated. The investigation will involve establishing the full facts and circumstances of any alleged academic misconduct. Assessments include all types of assessments including examinations.
- The Academic Misconduct Investigator can, where preferred, be supported by a member of College administrative staff (including, where necessary, an External Officer) in conducting the investigation and managing communications. However, only the Academic Misconduct Investigator, as an academic member of staff, can reach a judgement on the balance of probabilities about whether or not academic misconduct has occurred.

6. STAGE 1: Academic Misconduct Investigation process

To conduct the investigation, the following steps will be followed:

- The Academic Misconduct Investigator will gather all the relevant available documentary evidence. They may be supported in conducting the investigation by a member of Professional Services staff, to ensure that the procedure is followed in accordance with this Policy.

- Where appropriate, the student, any staff member concerned and any potential witnesses (including examination invigilators), may be interviewed or asked for a written witness statement, as part of the investigation process.
- The Academic Misconduct Investigator will consult as necessary with the student's Programme team to ensure that they have clarity on:
 - The rubric of the assessment/examination under investigation;
 - All published information and any instructions issued regarding the assessment/examination in question;
 - Whether the work/examination in question is a first or subsequent attempt, and how many assessment attempts remain (in accordance with the relevant academic regulations).

For essays, assignments and other 'non-examination' assessments:

- It is the responsibility of the referring academic member of staff to clearly set out the case to the Academic Misconduct Investigator as to why they believe academic misconduct may have occurred. For example, in the case of an essay, it is not enough just to forward a Turnitin or other software Similarity/Text Match Report without reviewing and interpreting it; the area(s) suspected of being compromised should be made clear to the Investigator by the academic member of staff making the allegation(s).

For examination assessments:

- It is the responsibility of the Examinations Officer to gather all relevant evidence and submit it to the Academic Misconduct Investigator. The Module Leader will determine who should act as the Academic Misconduct Investigator, but this should be an academic member of staff unconnected with the student's programme of study.
- Once the Academic Misconduct Investigator is satisfied that there may be a case to answer, the student will be:
 - Informed in writing of the allegation(s) made against them;
 - Informed what evidence there is to support the allegation(s), and issued with a copy of the evidence so that they are in a position to fully understand and respond to the allegation(s);
 - Given a copy of this Policy, drawing their attention to its procedures, and an offer of support with any queries they have;
 - Notified that the student is not deemed to have committed academic misconduct unless any allegations are found to be proven, on the balance of probabilities;
 - Informed of the possible consequences, should academic misconduct be proven (refer to Table of Penalties);

- Given the opportunity to consider their response to the allegations;
 - Given the opportunity to submit a written statement;
 - Given the opportunity to seek advice (as necessary) and to provide a supplementary statement (if relevant);
 - Offered the opportunity for an interview with the Academic Misconduct Investigator, to which they can be accompanied by a family member, a friend or a member of Oakswood College staff for support;
 - Informed of the applicable academic misconduct appeal procedure, should an allegation of academic misconduct be upheld;
 - Informed of the possibility that information relating to a Level 2 (Major) case of academic misconduct will be shared with the relevant awarding body.
- Once they are satisfied that they have completed their investigation, the Academic Misconduct Investigator will determine, on the balance of probabilities, whether or not the alleged misconduct has been established (i.e. whether it is more likely than not that what is alleged has occurred), concluding the investigation by following the process set out in Stage 5.

7. STAGE 1 Academic Misconduct Investigation Report and Outcomes

In determining whether academic misconduct has occurred on the part of the student, the Academic Misconduct Investigator will take into account any mitigating and aggravating factors, such as the circumstances and context in which the work was produced, assessment instructions and rubric (and the clarity of these), any personal circumstances pertaining to the student relevant to the period during which the work was produced/examination undertaken. They will reach one of the following outcomes on the balance of probabilities:

- No academic misconduct (therefore no case to answer)
- No academic misconduct (but evidence of poor academic practice)
- Evidence of Level 1 academic misconduct
- Evidence of possible Level 2 academic misconduct

Stage 1 Academic Misconduct Investigation Report

The Academic Misconduct Investigator will produce a report of their investigation, that sets out the findings of the investigation and the reason(s) for any judgements reached. The Stage 1 Academic Misconduct Investigation Report will include the following:

- Details of the assessment/examination that has been subject to investigation for academic misconduct;
- The type(s) of academic misconduct alleged to have occurred on the part of the student;

- A summary of the investigation (e.g. documentation reviewed, persons interviewed, key evidence and information that has come to light and been considered);
- The findings of the Academic Misconduct Investigator, including whether they find on the balance of probabilities that any allegations are upheld.

Please see below for the related procedures pertaining to these findings.

8. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT INVESTIGATOR FINDINGS

Finding of no academic misconduct

Where the Academic Misconduct Investigator makes a finding that no academic misconduct has occurred, assessments, feedback and results will be released in the normal way. The student should be issued with the Stage 1 Academic Misconduct Investigation Outcome Letter confirming the findings and outcome of the investigation and what the next steps are, normally within 15 working days of the commencement of the investigation.

Finding of poor academic practice

Whilst a finding of poor academic practice is not a finding of academic misconduct, where the Academic Misconduct Investigation Officer makes a finding that poor academic practice has occurred, the student will be advised in the Stage 1 Outcome letter of the various support they are expected to engage with (e.g. training/specialised tutorials), and issued with an informal warning about academic integrity and future practice. In this event:

- the Academic Misconduct Investigation Officer will take proactive steps to identify whether the student's poor practice might reasonably have affected any other assessments;
- they will work with the Programme Team and Registry staff as relevant to put in place any necessary extensions/deferrals;
- the student may be referred into Support Through Study for an Action/Support Plan to be put in place, with a bespoke revised assessment schedule and training/support programme as and where appropriate.

Finding of Level 1(minor) academic misconduct

In the event that the Academic Misconduct Investigator determines that academic misconduct has occurred on the part of the student, they will look at whether this is considered to be Level 1 (minor), or potentially Level 2 (major).

Where the Academic Misconduct Investigator determines that Level 1 academic misconduct has occurred, they will:

- proceed to issue one or more of the Level 1 penalties from the Table of Penalties (see Appendix 1 to this Policy);
- issue the Academic Misconduct Investigation Outcome letter to the student, setting out the findings of the investigation, and the student's right of appeal to

have their case heard by the Academic Misconduct Panel if they do not accept the Stage 1 outcome.

Finding of Level 1 Academic Misconduct that is Examination Misconduct

- If the candidate is found guilty of Level 1 Academic Misconduct that is Examination Misconduct, the Awarding Body will be informed, and the candidate's examination paper will either be amended or withdrawn, depending on the penalty awarded.

Finding of possible Level 2 academic misconduct

- Where, on the balance of probabilities, the Academic Misconduct Investigator finds there to be a possible case to answer of Level 2 academic misconduct, they will refer the case to the Academic Misconduct Panel (see Section 6 of this Policy).

Concurrent and Consecutive Offences

- Where academic misconduct has been admitted or proven on a previous occasion, the Academic Misconduct Investigator, or the Academic Misconduct Panel will consider whether a second/subsequent occurrence is a consecutive or a concurrent offence.

Concurrent means either:

- that a second or subsequent occurrence of academic misconduct is deemed to have been produced either around the same time as an earlier assessment, or,
- that whilst it was not produced around the same time, the student had not had the opportunity to learn from the academic misconduct process and similar issues are presenting themselves.

Consecutive means:

- that the student has already had a finding of academic misconduct made against them, and has had the opportunity to learn/remedy their practice.

To determine whether an offence is concurrent or consecutive, the following will be considered:

- Whether the student has had any warnings about the behaviour connected with the offence prior to submitting the work in question;
- Whether the student has reasonably had the opportunity to learn from any warnings prior to submitting the work in question;
- The timing(s) of the assessments and their submissions in relation to each offence.

A second alleged instance of academic misconduct deemed by the Academic Misconduct Investigator to be **concurrent** to an allegation they are already investigating or that has been found to be a case of Level 1 academic misconduct, will be considered on its own merits. However, the Academic Misconduct Investigator has the discretion to determine that the matter warrants some or all of the allegations being referred to an Academic Misconduct Panel for consideration, even where they consider all assessments affected to constitute Level 1 academic misconduct.

A second alleged instance of academic misconduct by a student that is deemed by the Academic Misconduct Investigator to be **consecutive** will normally be treated as potential Level 2 misconduct and referred to the Academic Misconduct Panel, except in exceptional circumstances.

9. Stage 2: Academic Misconduct Panel: Procedure and Hearing

Panel membership

- When the Academic Misconduct Investigator determines that a Panel is needed, CEO will appoint the Panel. Membership of the Academic Misconduct Panel will consist of 3 impartial members of staff as follows:
- **Panel Chair** – the Head of Academic Affairs or a senior academic, not from the student’s programme
- **Panel Member** – an academic member of staff not from the student’s programme
- **Panel Member** – an academic member of staff not from the student’s programme, or an External Officer who holds – or has held - an academic role in higher education for at least 5 years.
- Nobody shall serve on the Panel who is from the student’s programme of study.

In attendance at the Panel Hearing

- The Academic Misconduct Investigator, or a nominated member of academic staff from the student’s Programme team, shall attend as the Case Officer to present the case to the Panel. Where nobody is available to present the case, the Academic Misconduct Investigator’s report and accompanying Panel documentation shall stand as the Oakwood College presentation of the case.
- The Panel will be supported by a member of Student Services Staff who will act as the Panel Secretary and will coordinate the Panel, the Hearing arrangements and ensure that all documentation is complete and issued to all parties, and that the procedures in this Policy are followed.

Panel Procedure

- The student will be given at least 7 calendar days’ notice of the date of the Panel Hearing in writing. The invitation letter will be issued by email together with the Panel Hearing Agenda and a copy of the same documentation that will be issued to the Panel. The Invitation Letter will include the following:
 - Date, time and location of the Panel Hearing
 - Membership of the Panel
 - The relevant section of this Policy pertaining to the Academic Misconduct Panel Process
 - Instructions on when to arrive (e.g. 10 minutes before the Hearing time)

- Their right to be accompanied for support by a family member or friend, should they choose
- Their right to be represented at the hearing (e.g. by an Advocate), should they choose
- Their right to submit any written representations for the Panel's consideration
- Their right to submit any witness statements or other evidence they would like the Panel to consider
- The deadline by which they must confirm whether they are attending (not less than 2 working days before the date of the Hearing)
- Their right to request a different date, if they have valid reason(s) for being unable to attend on the scheduled date.

Hearings will normally only be rescheduled once at the student's request.

- In the event the student fails to confirm that they will be attending a scheduled Hearing, the Hearing will normally proceed in their absence.
- In the event that neither the student nor the Case Officer are to be present, the Academic Misconduct Panel will proceed to hold the Hearing and will consider the case solely on the basis of the Panel documentation.

Panel Hearing particulars

- Hearings may be held in person or remotely for flexibility. Attendance by the student is encouraged but not mandatory. Questions from either the student and/or the Case Officer should be addressed through the Chair, rather than directed to each other, to avoid confrontational situations.

Panel Hearing documentation

- All parties shall receive exactly the same documentation, issued by email, which shall comprise the following:
 - A copy of the Stage 1 Academic Misconduct Investigation Report
 - A copy of all documentary evidence submitted by the Academic Misconduct Investigator for the Panel's consideration
 - The Agenda for the Panel Hearing
 - A copy of this Policy

Panel Hearing procedure

The Hearing will follow the procedure set out below:

- The Chair will conduct introductions, and confirm the order of proceedings
- The Case Officer will be invited to begin proceedings by summarising the case, and drawing any specific points to the attention of the Panel
- The student will be invited to provide an initial response, should they wish
- The Panel will ask any questions they have of the student and/or the Case Officer

- The student can present or call to the attention of the Panel any evidence they wish, and can ask any questions directed through the Chair
- The Case Officer will be invited to provide any concluding statement, should they wish
- The student will be given the opportunity to make a final statement before the Hearing is closed.
- The Chair will draw the Hearing to a close once they are satisfied there are no further questions, advising the student of next steps, that they should receive a written outcome within 7 calendar days of the date of the Hearing, and that in the event of a finding of academic misconduct they will have the right of appeal.

Panel Deliberations

The Panel's deliberations will be held in private and will proceed as follows:

- Determination, on the balance of probabilities, of whether academic misconduct has occurred or whether there is no case to answer;
- In the event that the Panel finds there to be a case of academic misconduct, it will determine whether this is Level 1 or Level 2 in respect of each allegation presented to it;
- The Panel will then move to determine an appropriate penalty/ies.

Determining Level 1 or Level 2 Academic Misconduct, and Mitigating/Aggravating factors

- The Table of Penalties (Academic Misconduct) can be found at the end of this Policy as Appendix 1.
- What penalty/ies are issued to the student are dependent on whether the case is deemed to be Level 1 or Level 2. A student may be issued with more than one penalty from the table of penalties set out in Appendix 1, depending on the circumstances of the case. In reaching their judgement about Level 1 or potential Level 2 academic misconduct and determining any appropriate penalty(ies), the Panel will consider the following mitigating/aggravating factors:
 - Whether it is a first or subsequent offence (please see also 'Concurrent and Consecutive Offences' in Section 5)
 - Whether the offence is concurrent or consecutive (see below)
 - The level of study of the student
 - The level of academic experience of the student
 - The clarity of the instructions and rubric of the assessment, and whether there was any ambiguity or room for misinterpretation;
 - Whether there have been any prior Oakswood College warnings about the type(s) of misconduct
 - Credit value and weighting of the assessment(s) in question
 - Material impact of the offence on the assessment(s) in question, including how critical the compromised work is

- Material impact(s) of the offence on other students and/or on Oakwood College
- Any evidence that the student sought to gain unfair advantage
- Any pre-meditation or intent to deceive
- Whether there has been a misunderstanding on the part of the student
- Whether there has been any misunderstanding on the part of the student
- Demonstrable lack of understanding of academic rigour (eg where poor referencing/citation has led to plagiarism)
- Exceptional personal circumstances that likely have a bearing on the case, including evidence of serious, unforeseen personal distress, illness or acute pressure/crisis that clearly affected the student's judgement at the time of the breach, and where the student can demonstrate prior good conduct and remorse
- Admission of misconduct, responsibility taken and remorse shown
- The student's behaviour during the academic misconduct procedures, including cooperation and engagement with these

Penalties for academic misconduct and reassessment opportunities

- The Panel will also consider the implications for the student of any penalty afforded, including whether reassessment attempts are permitted/feasible. The Panel has the jurisdiction to withdraw or prohibit reassessment of assessment where it deems this appropriate for Level 2 academic misconduct. Where necessary, so that it is fully informed in its decision-making, the Panel may seek clarification from the student's Programme team on the student's academic attainment to date and what reassessment opportunities are normally in place under the applicable academic regulations, before coming to its decision.

Academic Misconduct Panel Hearing Outcome Letter

- The Chair of the Panel (supported where necessary by the Panel Secretary) will write to the student with the Academic Misconduct Panel Hearing Outcome Letter normally within 7 calendar days of the Hearing. Where this timeframe is unlikely to be met, the student facing the allegations will be notified in writing and informed of the new date when they should expect their Outcome Letter. The Academic Misconduct Panel Hearing Outcome Letter will set out a summary of the considerations, decisions and findings of the Panel along with next steps for the student (which include information about the right of appeal in the event of a finding that academic misconduct occurred). Please see below for full details of what should be included in the Outcome Letter pertaining to the circumstances the case:

Where allegations are not upheld

In the event that allegations are not upheld, the Outcome Letter should contain:

- a summary of the considerations, decisions and findings of the Panel
- reasons for the Panel's decisions and findings
 - confirmation of what happens next (eg assignment/examination released to be marked in the normal way);
 - Any warnings for future conduct (if appropriate)
 - Signposting to relevant academic/pastoral support
 - Acknowledgement of the student's engagement in the process where this has been cooperative.

Where allegations are upheld

In the event that allegations are upheld, the Outcome Letter should set out:

- a summary of the considerations, decisions and findings of the Panel
- reasons for the Panel's decisions and findings, in particular any mitigating/aggravating factors taken into account in reaching any decisions and/or findings, including where such factors have informed the penalty/outcome
 - details of any penalties/conditions/sanctions awarded by the Panel
 - the student's right of appeal and the appeal process, including the deadline to appeal (see Section 7 below for details).

10. Academic Misconduct Appeal

Grounds for Appeal

- Students have the right to appeal an academic misconduct decision on the following grounds:
 - There is evidence that the assessment process was not conducted in accordance with published procedures.
 - There was a material administrative or procedural error in the assessment process.
 - There is new, relevant information that was not previously available for good reason and may have affected the outcome.
 - The findings and/or penalty given were manifestly unreasonable or disproportionate based on the evidence submitted.
- Academic Misconduct Appeals that do not fall within any of these grounds or that are based solely on disagreement with academic judgment will not normally be considered.

Academic Misconduct Appeal Procedures

- Oakwood College operates a 2-stage appeal process to ensure fairness and appropriate oversight by its awarding body in matters of academic misconduct:

STAGE A - Internal Appeal:

- Stage A appeals must be submitted via email together with any accompanying evidence to the CEO within 14 calendar days of the date of the Hearing Outcome Letter
- The appeal should set out the specific ground(s) under which the student is making their appeal. An appeal can be made on more than one ground – the student should clearly set out all grounds that apply to their appeal.
- The student should explain how they believe their appeal meets the respective ground(s) under which it is being made.
- The student should explain what outcome they are seeking.

Late-Stage A appeals

- Stage A Appeals that are not submitted within the 14-day deadline will not normally be considered. Where an appeal is submitted late, it should be accompanied by an explanation setting out the reason(s) why the student was unable to submit the appeal by the published deadline. Where the CEO (or their nominee) is not satisfied that there is a valid reason for the late submission, the appeal will not be considered.

Impartiality and Conflict of Interest

- All academic misconduct appeals at both stages will be reviewed by staff who were not involved in the original assessment or any part of the academic misconduct investigation and decision.
- Appeal reviewers must be independent of the case and free from any conflict of interest.
- Where necessary, the CEO may delegate consideration of a Stage A Internal Appeal to another senior member of staff.

Stage A Appeal Review and Outcome Letter

- The CEO or their nominee will act as the Stage A Appeal Reviewer and will determine whether or not it meets any ground(s) under which it is made.

Appeal not upheld

- If the Stage A Appeal Reviewer finds that no grounds are met, the appeal will not be upheld. The Stage A Appeal Outcome Letter will set out the considerations and findings of the Stage A Appeal Reviewer, and notify the student that a Completion of Procedures Letter will be issued within 28 days of the date of the Stage A Appeal Outcome Letter (see Section 8 'Completion of Procedures').

Appeal upheld

- If the Stage A Appeal Reviewer finds that one or more grounds are met, they will uphold the appeal, and issue one of the following outcomes:

- The original findings of the Misconduct Panel that academic misconduct has occurred should be modified or reversed;
- The original penalty/ies ordered by the Misconduct Panel should either be set aside and replaced with a new penalty, or modified, or fully revoked.
- In the event of replacing or modifying a penalty, the Stage A Appeal Reviewer should refer to the Table of Penalties (Appendix 1).
- The decision of the Stage A Appeal Reviewer constitutes the final decision of Oakwood College, however the student has a further right of appeal to the Awarding Body (Stage B of the Academic Misconduct Appeal Procedure).
- The Stage A Appeal Reviewer will issue the Stage A Academic Misconduct Appeal Outcome Letter normally within 21 calendar days of the date that the appeal was received. The letter will set out the following:
 - the considerations, findings and decision of the Stage A Appeal Reviewer
 - the student's final right of appeal to Awarding Body, including the 14-calendar day deadline for doing so
 - that the Stage A Appeal Outcome Letter constitutes Oakwood College's final decision on the matter.
 - that regardless of whether the student exercises their right of appeal to Awarding body, Oakwood College will issue a Completion of Procedures Letter within 28 days of the date of the Stage A Appeal Outcome Letter (see Section 8 'Completion of Procedures')
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- The Stage A Appeal Outcome Letter will be copied to the relevant Awarding Body by way of notifying them that the student has been advised of their right to appeal to Awarding Body (please see next section 'Stage B Appeal to Awarding Body').
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STAGE B – Appeal to Awarding Body

- Students registered on Awarding Body qualifications have the right of final appeal on the matter to Awarding Body only if they have completed Oakwood College's Stage A Internal appeal process in full.
 - An appeal must be made to Awarding body within 14 calendar days of the date of the Stage A Academic Misconduct Appeal Outcome Letter. Late appeals will not normally be accepted by the Awarding Body. Details of how to make a Stage B Appeal to the Awarding Body together with a copy of the applicable full procedure to follow, will be issued to the student together with their Stage A Appeal Outcome Letter.
 - Oakwood College will proceed to issue a Completion of Procedures Letter within 28 days of the date of issue of the Stage B Final Appeal Outcome Letter. Where no Stage B appeal is made, Oakwood College will proceed to issue a Completion of Procedures Letter within 28 days of the Stage A Appeal Outcome Letter.

11. Completion of Procedures (CoP)

- Once the academic misconduct case has been fully concluded and the procedures exhausted (including the conclusion of procedures regarding any Stage B Appeal to the Awarding Body), students will be issued a Completion of Procedures (CoP) Letter by Oakwood College. This letter confirms that:
 - Internal processes are complete.
 - No further right of appeal is available within **Oakwood College**
 - A further right of appeal to the relevant Awarding Body has/has not been exercised by the student, including what the outcome of that appeal was (if applicable)

The CoP Letter will:

- Outline the details of the case, including the nature of the misconduct, the final decision, and any sanctions imposed.
 - Explain the reasons for the decision and reference the relevant policies and procedures applied.
 - Inform the student of their right to escalate the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) if dissatisfied.
 - Provide OIA contact details and confirm that students have 12 months from the date of the letter to submit a complaint.
- Oakwood College will issue the CoP Letter within 28 calendar days of the date of issue of the final written decision on the case, in line with the OIA's Good Practice Framework.
 - If a student wishes to challenge the decision but does not meet the appeal grounds and therefore has not exhausted internal procedures, they may request a CoP Letter by writing to the CEO via email. In such cases, the CoP Letter will confirm the stage reached and clarify that the full procedure has not been completed.

12. Record-Keeping and Monitoring

- All documentation related to academic misconduct investigations and academic misconduct appeals—including initial reports, student responses, decision letters, and evidence—is retained securely for a minimum of five academic years after the student is no longer a registered student with Oakwood College. These records may be reviewed as part of external quality assurance visits from awarding organisations or internal audits. The College will use data from academic misconduct cases to inform annual quality monitoring and continuous improvement.



Oakwood College
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ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY APPENDICES

Appendix 1: TABLE OF PENALTIES (Academic Misconduct)

The Level of academic misconduct and appropriateness of any penalties is determined by the severity, intent, recurrence and academic significance of the misconduct, as well as any aggravating or mitigating factors identified during the course of the academic misconduct investigation.

Level of Academic Misconduct	Guidelines	Penalties
Level 1	<p>Minor, first-time offences (e.g. poor referencing, low-level plagiarism, minor breaches of exam rules, accidental collusion);</p> <p>Concurrent minor offences;</p> <p>A consecutive offence of a minor nature where it would be disproportionate to consider it Level 2</p>	<p><i>At Level 1, an educational approach will generally be taken, provided that the Academic Misconduct Investigator is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that there was no intent to deceive or behave dishonestly, or to deliberately attempt to gain academic credit unfairly.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Formal written warning b) Mark deduction on affected part of assessment only c) Assessment component capped at the pass mark d) Mark deduction on component of assessment by up to 25% e) Removal of credit for specific content f) Requirement to resubmit assessment, with the component but not module being capped at the pass mark g) Requirement to resubmit assessment, with the module being capped at the pass mark h) Student required to attend skills or integrity training session by a specified date (<i>failure to comply will result in the application of another Level 1 penalty</i>)
Level 2	More serious/major offences (e.g. repeated)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Final written warning j) Mark of zero for assessment component



	breaches, intent to gain unfair academic advantage, significant collusion, substantial plagiarism, contract cheating, examination cheating, data falsification, major academic impact; academic misconduct that constitutes a criminal offence)	k) Mark of zero for whole module l) Module mark capped at pass mark m) Failure of the module with opportunity to resit n) Failure of the module with no opportunity to resit o) Failure of the Level (year) p) Suspension q) Expulsion, with programme credits already achieved permitted to be retained r) Expulsion, with some/all programme credits already achieved removed
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Appendix 2: Guidance on the use of AI, Proof-Reading, Writing Services, Software and Technology

GENERAL GUIDANCE ON MAINTAINING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- Where a student chooses to ask another individual to proof-read their work, engages a private tutor to assist with assessments, or uses writing technologies, this should be limited to learning activities which do not form part of the final stages of assessments submitted for credit, or highlighting errors in spelling, punctuation or grammar.
- Any service the student is engaging with must not assist with substantive content creation or structuring of the assessment.
- Third parties must not:
 - make substantive changes which compromise the authorship of the text (for example, translating whole sections of text, rather than individual phrases).
 - revise calculations, formulae, equations, or code.
 - alter charts, figures or diagrams.
 - correct information or references or
 - involve any tutoring.
- Additional assistance provided by a third party may be considered under this policy as a form of academic misconduct if it provides an unfair advantage or casts doubt on the intellectual ownership of the content from the submitting student.
- For the avoidance of doubt, generative Artificial Intelligence writing programmes are third party technologies and must only be used in accordance with Oakwood College permission.

Third party involvement:

- The involvement of any third party in the preparation and/or production of academic work (including examinations) must be explicitly authorised by Oakwood College (e.g. via a Personal Academic Arrangements Plan).
- When a student receives unauthorised assistance from a third party which results in the submission of an individual assessment which Oakwood College cannot be satisfied wholly represents the student's own work or understanding.
- Third party involvement is considered misconduct when it involves presenting someone else's ideas as your own or calls into question the integrity of the assessment. Third party production: when work submitted is substantively the product of a third party. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - when a substantial part, or all, of an assessment is produced or translated by another person.

- when extensive changes to the content of an assessment are made by another individual.

It does not necessarily involve payment for the services of the third party, but this may be considered an aggravating factor.

GUIDANCE ON THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

- Oakwood College accepts that there is an increasing integration of artificial intelligence into everyday word processing software and that there is a range of tools externally available which is ever evolving.
- Prudent, ethical and constructive use of tools is increasingly likely to form part of the production of assessed work. Students are expected to comply with the published assessment/examination rubric at all times regarding the use of AI and to ascertain with their Module/Programme Leader what is permitted if this is not made clear in the rubric.
- Any use of writing technologies must adhere to the same principles as third-party services. This means that any work submitted must represent a genuine demonstration of the student's own work, skills and subject knowledge, adheres to the guidelines of the assessment task, and respects the Oakwood College's values and practices concerning academic integrity.

Students are asked to note the following:

- the use of generative AI tools to produce output which is then copied as part of a submission is not appropriate and may lead to a case of academic misconduct.

PROOF-READING

- Proof-reading is the final stage of producing a piece of written work and therefore students should carry out their own proof reading.
- The work submitted by a student must be their own work and any use of a third-party proof reading or editing service must not compromise the authorship of the work submitted. Please refer to the General Guidance at the start of this Appendix for examples where authorship would be compromised.
- Students should consult their academic department for advice with respect to the use of proof-readers for academic work.
- Oakwood College does not offer a proof-reading service to students, nor does it recommend the use of any proof-reading services.