

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Approving Authority:	Academic Council				
Responsibility:	Registrar, Heads of school				
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Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy:	Continuous Assessment Policy (including coversheet), https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html Academic Integrity Report, https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html				
Reference(s)	Plagiarism - how to avoid it, https://dkit.ie.libguides.com/Plagiarism How to avoid it/plagiarism DkIT Library Hub: https://2022-moodle.dkit.ie/course/view.php?id=3977 Fabrication, https://www.dkit.ie/documents/code-conduct Cheating, https://www.dkit.ie/examinations/documents-and-policies/conduct-examinations Unethical Research, http://ww2.dkit.ie/about dkit/documents and policies/policies/ethics _policy				
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Version Control and Change History

Version Control	Date Effective	Approved By	Amendment(s)
1	01/09/2011	Academic Council (AC:DOC:119:05:01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None.
2	29/09/2014	Academic Council (AC:DOC:139:07:01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in procedure. • Addition of plagiarism penalty grid.
3	29/05/2015	Academic Council (AC:DOC:142:10:01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Section 9: Dealing with breaches of Academic Integrity. • Updated the definitions of minor and major infringements in Section 5: Plagiarism. • Updated the procedure in Section 9: Dealing with Breaches of Academic Integrity.
4	20/06/2016	Academic Council (AC:DOC:148:10:01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amended penalty grid (Appendix 1: Plagiarism Penalty Grid) following policy implementation review in March 2016 with Heads of Department.
5	10/12/2021	Academic Council (AC:DOC:178:11:01)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included two appendices: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plagiarism Advisor role description. ○ Guidelines for Staff on the Conduct of Oral Verification Interviews.
6	28/04/2023	Academic Council (Meeting No. 186; AC:DOC:186:14:03)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated to include the use of generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g. ChatGPT).

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1 Purpose of Policy

1. The purpose of this policy is to set out the Institute's commitment to Academic Integrity.

2 Application and Scope

1. The policy set out here applies to all DkIT staff, learners and researchers.

3 Academic Integrity

1. Dundalk Institute of Technology (DkIT) is dedicated to the highest standards of scholarship and values honesty of endeavour. Professional integrity is recognised as one of the most important attributes of an academic community. By displaying integrity, the community and society can have trust in the Institute and in its graduates.
2. Academic Integrity is a key element in the formation of a graduate and is as important an attribute as any technical skill. There are specific detailed guidelines for ethical behaviour in each of the professional programmes offered by the Institute but there are also a number of generic attributes underpinning ethical behaviour. These can be grouped together as the elements of Academic Integrity.
3. DkIT recognises that in some instances, due to ignorance or misunderstanding, learners / researchers may engage in conduct which may bring dishonour to their studies. Such conduct contravenes the principles of Academic Integrity. This document identifies some of these practices and outlines the procedures used by the Institute for investigation of possible contraventions of Academic Integrity.
4. In general these contraventions fall into four categories:
 - Plagiarism;
 - Fabrication;
 - Cheating;
 - Unethical Research;
5. It is the policy of the Institute in the first instance to train its staff, researchers and learners on the conventions, rules and regulations pertaining to Academic Integrity. Such training should be compulsory for first year students and should occur early in the semester before any assignments are submitted for academic credit. Periodic training should be available to staff.
6. It is the responsibility of Departments to ensure that staff and learners are adequately trained. There is an onus on staff and learners / researchers to be aware of Institute policies, procedures and guidelines in relation to Academic Integrity and to adhere to these.
7. For the purposes of this policy, the following practices have been identified as potential contraventions of the principles of Academic Integrity. Guidelines and procedures have been developed in respect of these. Such guidelines, procedures and policies should be published widely.

Academic Misconduct	Institute Policy and Procedures
Plagiarism	https://dkit.ie.libguides.com/Plagiarism_How_to_avoid_it/plagiarism
Fabrication	http://ww2.dkit.ie/student_life/regulations/code_of_conduct
Cheating	https://www.dkit.ie/about-dkit/policies-and-guidelines/academic-policies.html (Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations)
Unethical Research	http://ww2.dkit.ie/about_dkit/documents_and_policies/policies/ethics_policy

8. Action to be taken by the Institute for breaches of Academic Integrity will be in conformance with its Student Code of Conduct or Staff Disciplinary Procedures as appropriate.

4 Plagiarism

This policy and these procedures are closely informed by the Plagiarism Policy of the National University of Ireland, Galway¹, with their kind permission. It is also informed by the work of Dr Jude Carroll, Oxford Brooks University, UK². The Plagiarism Penalty Grid is informed by the Benchmark Plagiarism Tariff which was an output of the AMBeR Project³ in the UK.

1. All work submitted by learners for assessment purposes, or for written or oral publication, must be their own work. Where this is informed by the work of others, the source must be properly referenced using the accepted norms and formats of the appropriate academic discipline.

See: http://ww2.dkit.ie/student_life/regulations/plagiarism/dkit_referencing_guidelines_and_how_to_avoid_plagiarism

2. Plagiarism is the act of submitting for academic credit someone else's work as one's own, without acknowledging the source and without using accepted referencing norms. The submission of plagiarised materials is always fraudulent and all suspected cases will be investigated and dealt with appropriately by the Institute following the procedures outlined here and with reference to the DkIT Code of Conduct.

3. Plagiarism is usually associated with the written text, but also extends to other forms of work, including, but not limited to: drawings, diagrams, charts, flowcharts, algorithms, computer programmes, performance, concepts and ideas.

4. Using generative artificial intelligence tools (e.g. ChatGPT) in an assessment unless explicitly permitted to do so and with proper acknowledgement, is a form of plagiarism.

5. Deliberately facilitating plagiarism by permitting another to copy one's work contravenes the principles of Academic Integrity.

¹ Code of Practice for dealing with Plagiarism

http://www.nuigalway.ie/geography/documents/plagiarism_student_code_of_conduct_nui_galway.pdf [Accessed 26 September 2014]

² Carroll, Dr J, (2011) Detering, detecting and dealing with student plagiarism, Carlow Institute of Technology, 25 February.

³ Benchmark Plagiarism Tariff, AMBeR Project (2010), <http://www.plagiarismadvice.org/resources/institutional-approaches/item/tenant-benchmarkreport>

6. In some cases the suspected plagiarism is of minor academic value and / or represents poor academic practice. Such cases include, but are not limited to:
 - apparently innocent misuse of materials;
 - inadequate citation such as poor referencing or inappropriate paraphrasing;
 - those in which the suspected plagiarism is a small proportion of the work only and/or an element in a piece of work which makes a small contribution to the mark for the module
7. More serious cases are those which may include, but are not limited to:
 - purchasing work from another / others and submitting this as one's own;
 - copying multiple paragraphs in full without acknowledgement of the source;
 - taking work from the Internet without revealing the source;
 - copying all or much of the work of a fellow learner with, or without, his/her knowledge or consent;
 - submitting the same piece of work more than once to gain academic credit;
 - cases involving award year learners;
 - second and subsequent offence(s) where the learner / researcher has been in receipt of an earlier written warning.
8. All incidences of plagiarism, whether minor or major, even where unintentional, constitute a breach of Academic Integrity and shall be recorded in a Departmental log and the learner / researcher so advised. Records shall be retained for five years.

5 **Fabrication**

1. Learners must be careful when designing, recording and handling experimental data. Only information in which the learner has confidence may be used in a final report. The learner must also identify why specific data sets have been ignored in their conclusions and identify the processes which were used in collating data.
2. Results may be presented in any of a variety of formats e.g. as text, tables, graphs, diagrams, photographs, images etc. The term "Results" is intended to convey the meaning of:
 - a physical set of measurements;
 - the results of a survey or field study;
 - the results of a clinical trial; and
 - any other similar activities where evidence is gathered.
3. The responsibility lies with the learner to ensure that the information presented is as accurate as possible and that due care has been taken in its production. In each of the major disciplines, there are established experimental protocols, survey methods and error handling techniques. It is the responsibility of the learner to be familiar with the appropriate technique.
4. Fabrication is understood as the act of presenting information as the results from an experiment, a trial or a survey which was not carried out. Fabrication includes presenting results which were not generated by the experiment or survey, i.e. 'inventing data'. Fabrication also includes the act of deliberately removing, suppressing or selecting data from any experiment or survey in order to advance a particular hypothesis.
5. Fabrication could also include manipulation of images using software or similar, in order to create an erroneous interpretation. (It is recognized that during the design

of a trial or in setting up phase of an experiment, that spurious results may be generated and it is legitimate to ignore these, provided the same conditions are replicated, with different and consistent results). Where results have been knowingly falsified, the learner is open to charges of fraud and professional misconduct.

6. It is not fabrication where a learner forms erroneous conclusions from valid data.
7. Minor cases of fabrication are those in which the suspected fabrication is of minor academic value and/ or represents poor academic practice. Such cases include, but are not limited to:
 - apparently innocent misuse of a protocol;
 - poor understanding of protocol;
 - bad experimental technique;
 - interpolating and extrapolating from insufficient evidence;
 - over enthusiastic inferences without sufficient evidence and in which the suspected data represents only a small proportion of the work and/or an element in a piece of work which makes a small contribution to the mark for the module;
 - selection and rejection of material without sufficient justification.
8. Major cases are those which may include, but are not limited to, for example:
 - providing results for an experiment or survey which was not conducted;
 - claiming that a result has been verified where it has not been tested;
 - deliberately altering results from an experiment or survey;
 - fabrication involving an award year learner will always be considered as a major case;
 - selection and rejection of results without plausible justification;
 - subsequent offence(s) where the learner has been in receipt of an earlier written warning

6 Cheating

1. It is extremely important that examinations and assessments be both fair and impartial. Any attempt by a learner to subvert the fairness of an examination event is considered cheating and must be reported. Cheating is a form of deception and relates solely to the examination process. Cheating is where the learner seeks to gain an unfair advantage over other learners by having access to material or equipment at a time or at a place where it is not intended, by the examiner, to be available.
2. Examples of cheating include but are not limited to:
 - Impersonation;
 - Use of / or access to telecommunications aids, written materials or data devices when not explicitly permitted in the context of the examination;
 - Reading or attempting to read the material of another learner;
 - Acquiring improper knowledge of sight unseen examination questions;
 - Accessing restricted material, e.g. tutor guides or sample answers.
3. All cases of alleged cheating will be dealt with under the Institutes' Code of Conduct.
See: <http://ww2.dkit.ie/student life/regulations/conduct of examinations>

7 Un-Ethical Research

1. Please refer to the Institute's Ethics Policy.

See: <https://www.dkit.ie/health-science/research/research-ethics>

8 Dealing with Breaches of Academic Integrity

A number of staff will be identified in each Department as Plagiarism Advisers (see Appendix 2: Plagiarism Advisor Role Description) and shall form a Plagiarism Panel. These advisers will be trained in deterring, detecting and dealing with plagiarism. They will become aware of current best practice guidelines, including current national and international developments across the Higher Education sector.

Procedure

1. It is good practice for Schools and Departments to require learners to attach a declaration (i.e. continuous assessment coversheet) to all submitted work, where appropriate, indicating that the work is their own. The statement should indicate that the learner has read and understood these regulations. The purpose of this statement is to reinforce the importance of Academic Integrity. The Institute reserves the right to verify the originality of any submitted work.
2. Once work is submitted learners receive feedback from lecturers in respect of the submitted work.
3. The lecturer(s) may employ a variety of mechanisms to verify the originality/ authenticity of the submitted work. Verification may take the form of an oral verification interview (see Appendix 3: Guidelines for Staff on the Conduct of Oral Verification Interviews) with the submitting learner or learners, using plagiarism detection software (e.g. Turnitin), or any other process appropriate to a particular discipline to safeguard Academic Integrity.
4. Where, arising from the verification processes outlined above, a suspicion of a breach of Academic Integrity exists, an Academic Integrity Report is completed by the lecturer(s), signed by both the learner and lecturer(s) and submitted to the Head of Department.
5. In the event of the infringement being deemed by the lecturer(s) to be of little academic significance, he/she may propose that the matter is resolved informally by referring the student for training on academic writing and referencing. In order to make such a decision the lecturer(s) must consult with a Plagiarism Advisor or their Head of Department and obtain agreement. In such a case the incident is still recorded.
6. In cases where the incident is to be referred to a Disciplinary Panel, the learner will be notified, in writing by the Department, of the suspected infringement and provided with:
 - the Academic Integrity Report completed by the lecturer and learner;
 - a copy of the allegedly plagiarised work;
 - a copy of the original source of the allegedly plagiarised work, where available;
 - evidence which may support or establish a breach of Academic Integrity (e.g. Report generated by Plagiarism Detection Tool; Report of Verification interview or other report appropriate to the discipline involved).
7. A Departmental Disciplinary Hearing is convened where a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy is suspected and its purpose is to establish whether a prima facie exists. The Departmental Disciplinary is comprised of the following:

- Chair will be a Head of Department or Head of School from another discipline. The learner is invited to attend the Departmental Disciplinary Hearing.
 - Two members of the Institute's Plagiarism Panel.
8. A record of the Departmental Disciplinary Hearing will be made using the relevant sections of the Academic Integrity Report.
 9. The Head of Department, in which the alleged infringement occurs, will present the evidence to the Departmental Plagiarism Panel to establish whether a prima facie case exists. This is to give the learner and the panel a clear explanation of what has been alleged.
 10. The learner will have the right to be accompanied by and assisted at the Departmental Disciplinary Hearing by a representative. The Chair will make clear to the learner that the panel may apply penalties if a minor breach of the Academic Integrity Policy is established or alternatively may refer the matter to the Institute's Disciplinary Committee where a major breach is suspected. The panel members are provided with the following documents:
 - the Academic Integrity Report completed by the lecturer and learner;
 - a copy of the allegedly plagiarised work;
 - a copy of the original source of the allegedly plagiarised work, where available;
 - Evidence which may support or establish a breach of Academic Integrity (e.g. Report generated by Plagiarism Detection Tool; Report of Verification interview or other report appropriate to the discipline involved).
 11. The learner is given the opportunity to justify the work submitted and is invited to admit or deny responsibility.

Once both sides have presented their case and answered any questions the Head of Department in which the alleged infringement occurs and the learner are asked to leave the room. The members of the Departmental Disciplinary Panel then adjudicate as to whether there is a case to answer or not.
 12. If a prima facie case is established the Departmental Disciplinary Panel uses the *Plagiarism Penalty Grid* provided in Appendix 1 to determine the appropriate penalty. Breaches scored up to 524 points are considered to be of a minor nature and the penalty is determined at the Departmental Disciplinary Hearing.

If the points exceed 524 this constitutes a possible major offence and the matter is referred to the Institute's Disciplinary Committee who shall deal with the matter in the same manner as it deals with all breaches of the Institute's Code of Conduct (<https://www.dkit.ie/documents/code-conduct>).
 13. Once the Departmental Disciplinary Panel have concluded their adjudication the Head of Department and learner will be requested to re-enter the room and the panel decision only will be communicated to the learner.
 14. The learner will be notified of the panel decision, penalty and appeals procedure if relevant, in writing by the Chair, within three working days of the Departmental Disciplinary Hearing.
 15. Where a learner fails to attend the departmental disciplinary hearing, a second hearing will be convened. Should the learner fail to attend the second convened hearing, the hearing will proceed in the absence of the learner and a decision will be taken on the evidence to hand.

16. During the Academic Integrity process, the relevant sections of the Academic Integrity Report must be signed by the learner.
17. In keeping with the Institute's Code of Conduct, the learner shall be entitled to appeal a decision to the Registrar.
18. Records of all proven infringements shall be held by Departments and can be consulted by lecturing staff and members of the Plagiarism Panel to determine whether a new case is potentially a second, or subsequent, offence.
19. Statistical information covering the number of cases referred to Plagiarism Advisers, the number of formal warnings and other penalties applied by the Departmental Disciplinary Panel will be collected and collated annually by the Registrar's Office. This will inform subsequent modifications to these Regulations and ascertain the requirement for wider training and information dissemination on this topic.

9 Roles and Responsibilities

1. It is the policy of the Institute in the first instance to train its staff, researchers and learners on the conventions, rules and regulations pertaining to Academic Integrity. Such training should be compulsory for first year students and should occur early in the semester before any assignments are submitted for academic credit. Periodic training should be available to staff.
2. It is the responsibility of Departments to ensure that staff and learners are adequately trained. There is an onus on staff and learners / researchers to be aware of Institute policies, procedures and guidelines in relation to Academic Integrity and to adhere to these.

10 Appendix 1: Plagiarism Penalty Grid

The Plagiarism Penalty tool is a points based grid that attempts to standardise the treatment of penalties for plagiarism. It also provides institutions with a tool against which they can benchmark their policy and associated practice.

- Each suspected case of plagiarism is scored against a number of criteria (history, amount/extent, level/stage, value of assignment, additional characteristics) and the resultant total score is matched against a sliding scale of penalties. The tool is applied in a two-step process: Step 1: Assign Points Based on Criteria Step 2: Apply Penalties Based on Points (Penalty Determination)

Step 1: Assign Points Based on Criteria

History

1 st Time	100 points
2 nd Time	150 points
3 rd / + Time	200 points

Amount/Extent

Below 5% OR less than two sentences	80 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised	105 points
Between 5% and 20% OR more than sentences but not more than two paragraphs	105 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised	130 points
Between 20% and 50% OR more than sentences but not more than five paragraphs	130 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised	160 points
Above 50% OR more than 5 paragraphs	160 points
Submission purchased from essay mill or ghost writing service	225 points

**critical aspects are key ideas central to the assignment*

Level/stage

1 st Year	70 points
Undergraduate (not 1 st or final year)	115 points
Final Year/Postgraduate	140 points

Value of Assignment

Standard assignment	30 points
Large project (e.g. final year dissertation, thesis)	150 points

Additional Characteristics

Evidence of deliberate attempt to disguise plagiarism by changing words, sentences or references to avoid detection	40 points
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Step 2: Apply Penalties Based on Points Summative Work

In all cases a formal warning is given and a record made contributing to the student's previous history.

Points	Available Penalties (select one)
280 - 329	No further action beyond formal warning Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required, with no penalty on mark
330 - 379	No further action beyond formal warning Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required, with no penalty on mark Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required but with capped* or reduced mark
380 - 479	Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required but with capped* or reduced mark Assignment awarded 0% - repeat required within current academic year
480 - 525	Assignment awarded 0% - repeat required within current academic year Case referred to Discipline Committee
525+	Case referred to Discipline Committee

**Normally, marks will be capped at the pass mark for the assignment*

Formative Work

Points	Available Penalties
280-379	Informal warning
380+	Formal warning, with record made contributing to the student's previous history

11 Appendix 2: Plagiarism Advisor Role Description

The role of Plagiarism Advisor has responsibility for:

1. Promoting and embedding the fundamental values of Academic Integrity within the School/Department and across the Institute, building a Community of Practice as appropriate.
2. Being aware of current best practice, including national and international developments across the Higher Education sector relating to Academic Integrity, particularly Plagiarism.
3. Be knowledgeable of the Institute's Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures.
4. Supporting School/Department(s) with deterring, detecting and dealing with breaches of Academic Integrity, particularly Plagiarism.
5. Engaging and advising member(s) of teaching staff in a School/Department who suspect a breach of Academic Integrity, particularly those relating to Plagiarism, and provide appropriate support and guidance.
6. Participating in Departmental Disciplinary Panels where a breach of the Institute's Academic Integrity Policy, particularly those relating to Plagiarism, is suspected.
7. Collaborating with the Head(s) of Department/Section with the Academic Integrity monitoring reports, particularly those relating to Plagiarism, which are submitted annually to the Academic Council.
8. Contributing to both the Institute and School/Department/discipline specific Community of Practice relating to Academic Integrity, particularly relating to Plagiarism.
9. Supporting the School/Department with Plagiarism education in conjunction with other Institute supports (e.g. Library, Student Learning and Development Centre (SDLC)).

Appointment

- Each Department will appoint at least two Plagiarism Advisors.

- Expressions of interest to act as a Plagiarism Advisor are accepted at Department level at any time and training will be provided by the Registrar's Office.

Register

- A list of the current Plagiarism Advisors will be maintained by the Registrar's Office and made available to all Schools and Departments in the Institute.

12 Appendix 3: Guidelines for Staff on the Conduct of Oral Verification Interviews

1. Students should be informed in advance of the Oral Verification Interview in the communication from the module lecturer(s) as follows (as indicated in the notification templates provided with the Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures):

You are requested to attend an interview on <date> at <time> in <location> to discuss a suspected infringement of the Institute's Academic Integrity Policy. I/we may also conduct an oral verification interview in relation to the submitted work.

2. Where a learner fails to attend the Oral Verification Interview, a second interview will be arranged. Should the learner fail to attend the second interview, the lecturer(s) will record the absence in the Academic Integrity Report.
3. If only one lecturer is responsible for the assessment they should ask a colleague(s) to accompany them during the oral verification interview. The Head of Department should not be present as they have a specific role at a later stage of the process. The student is entitled to bring a supporter to the Oral Verification Interview. The supporter will be an observer only and will not be permitted to answer questions on the student's behalf.
4. The scope of the Oral Verification Interview should be limited to questions which assess the students' knowledge of the subject matter of the relevant assessment. The student may also be asked to describe how they approached the assessment task and the sources of information they used. It is advisable that the lecturer(s) should prepare in advance of the interview and collect relevant facts to support the process.
5. If the lecturer deems that the infringement is of little academic significance then Section 8.5 of the policy applies. Following the Oral Verification Interview, if the lecturer(s) suspect(s) that the student has breached the Academic Integrity Policy, the relevant part of Section 5 of the Academic Integrity Report is concisely completed. The Chair of the Departmental Disciplinary Panel will subsequently notify the student in writing of the suspected infringement (Point 6 in policy) and a Departmental Disciplinary Panel will be convened. The report of the Oral Verification Interview will become part of the evidence presented to the Departmental Disciplinary Panel.
6. In cases where a breach of the policy is suspected following an Oral Verification Interview, a lecturer should not invoke any penalty (academic or otherwise). If an infringement of the [Academic Integrity Policy](#) is suspected, the Head of Department will appoint a Departmental

Disciplinary Panel. It is this panel who will ultimately decide if there has been a breach of the policy and uses the Plagiarism Penalty Grid to determine a penalty.