

6.11 Academic Misconduct Procedure

6.11.1 Introduction

Any form of academic misconduct is unacceptable at Griffith College. This policy outlines the different categories of academic misconduct, and the associated means of prevention and detection. It details the penalties associated with levels of academic misconduct and describes the investigation, disciplinary and appeals procedure associated with cases of academic misconduct. Academic misconduct will in the first instance be the subject of a disciplinary process within the relevant faculty.

In cases where it is established by an investigation that there is a case to answer, the alleged misconduct will be the subject of a disciplinary panel hearing resulting in a decision as to a disciplinary sanction as appropriate.

This policy is anchored in the Griffith College [Academic Integrity policy](#) (QAE Document 6.10) and **drawing heavily** from the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN)³ and specifically their publications, [Academic Integrity: National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms](#) (QQI, 2021) and the [Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Case Management](#) (QQI, 2023) as best practice.

This policy includes concepts, sections, chronology, and visuals explicitly taken from the [Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Case Management](#) (QQI, 2023) with adaptations made for Griffith College's governance and operational policies, procedures and structures.

6.11.2 Objectives

- To set out a framework for the identification, recording and case management of cases of academic misconduct within Griffith College.
- To provide disciplinary and sanction procedures applicable to cases of academic misconduct.
- To ensure that learners suspected of academic misconduct have the right to a fair and impartial determination of the issues concerned, considering any other relevant or appropriate evidence, factors, or circumstances.
- To relate penalties to associated levels of academic misconduct, and to ensure that any disciplinary action arising is reasonable and proportionate.

³ The [National Academic Integrity Network \(NAIN\)](#) is focused on actively supporting higher education institutions to (i) effectively engage with the challenges presented by academic misconduct, (ii) embed a culture of academic integrity among providers and (iii) develop national resources and tools for providers to address the challenges presented by academic misconduct. The work of the network is coordinated and supported by QQI.

6.11.3 Scope

This policy attempts to deal with academic misconduct in the many forms of assessment. However, it is recognised that experience shows that the circumstances of each case vary both within and across the different faculties.

It is to be read in the context of the Griffith College [Academic Integrity Policy](#) as Stage 1 where “Prevention is always preferable to detection and punishment” (QQI, 2023: p. 12) (See Figure 9 below).

This policy lays out the case management framework from Stages 2 to 6 of this approach.

The Stages of Framework for Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct Management	
Stage 1: Education and awareness	QAE Manual Section F, 6.10 Academic Integrity Policy
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Stage 2: Detection and initial investigation	QAE Manual Section F, 6.11 Academic Misconduct procedure
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Stage 3: Full investigation	
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Stage 4: Consideration, classification and sanction	
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Stage 5: Recording and reporting	QAE Manual Section F, 6.11 Academic Misconduct procedure
↓	
Stage 6: Reviewing	

Figure 9: Stages of Framework for Academic Misconduct Case Management aligned to the lifecycle of Academic Misconduct (QQI, 2023: p. 9)

6.11.4 Responsibility

Learners

Implementing Staff:

Year Head/Programme Director/Head of Faculty/Head of Faculty nominees

Lecturers

Invigilators

Senior Invigilator

Senior Examinations Officer

Faculty Academic Integrity Committee

Faculty Administrator

QAE Officer

6.11.5 Definitions

Based on the National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) Lexicon⁴, the classifications of academic misconduct are:

Plagiarism	Plagiarism includes copying or incorporating material derived from pre-existing work (published or unpublished) without the permission of the originator, or without an established form of acknowledgement. It includes verbatim quotation, editing, paraphrasing, imitation or other devices, use of AI-generated or edited material, which give the impression of the material being a learner's original work. It also includes the exploitation of ideas from others or via AI, without proper acknowledgement or authorisation, which mostly occurs in research, project work or assignments.
Collusion	Collusion occurs when a learner submits, without appropriate acknowledgement of source, work that is done in collaboration with another person or AI application. It also occurs when a learner produces work for another learner, or permits another learner to copy all or part of their work, or use that piece in order to generate work via an AI application, knowing that the work will be submitted by the other learner as their own work, other than where such behaviour is expressly permitted in relation to that particular piece of coursework. For more information reference the Guidelines on the Prevention and Detection of Collusion in Coursework (Appendix 27).
Misrepresentation	Misrepresentation is a statement or conduct in assessment, which intentionally conveys a false or wrong impression of material significance in the context of the work under assessment. Misrepresentation does not include unintentional inaccuracy.
Fraud	Fraud is defined as deception, which includes, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, the invention, distortion, fabrication or falsification of data or other results of research or work of others.
Impersonation	Impersonation is where an individual assumes the identity of another person with the intention of gaining unfair advantage during an examination or any other form of assessment. It also refers to a person who knowingly and willingly allows their identity to be used with the intention of gaining an unfair advantage for the person impersonated.

⁴ Original definitions are in the NAIN Academic Integrity Guidelines (QQI, 2023: 42) These definitions were refined with particular reference to Griffith College through consultation with academic staff and approved by Academic and Professional Council.

Cheating	Cheating is the offence of gaining or seeking to gain an unfair or fraudulent advantage in assessment, where the conduct is of such seriousness as to be regarded as major academic misconduct
Unfair Advantage	Unfair Advantage is the offence of gaining or seeking to gain, conferring or seeking to confer, an unfair advantage by any unlawful device or ill practice, including the improper use of AI applications.
Unauthorised content generation (UCG) / Misuse of AI	Unauthorised content generation is the production of academic work, in whole or part, for assessment, academic credit, progression or award, using unapproved or undeclared human or technological assistance. This includes Artificial Intelligence (AI) assistance. Submission of AI-generated content without explicit permission, and/or without acknowledging the use of AI, is regarded as academic misconduct.

6.11.6 Framework Overview

This Framework situates academic misconduct case management within the context of Griffith College fostering a strong culture of academic integrity as outlined in the [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

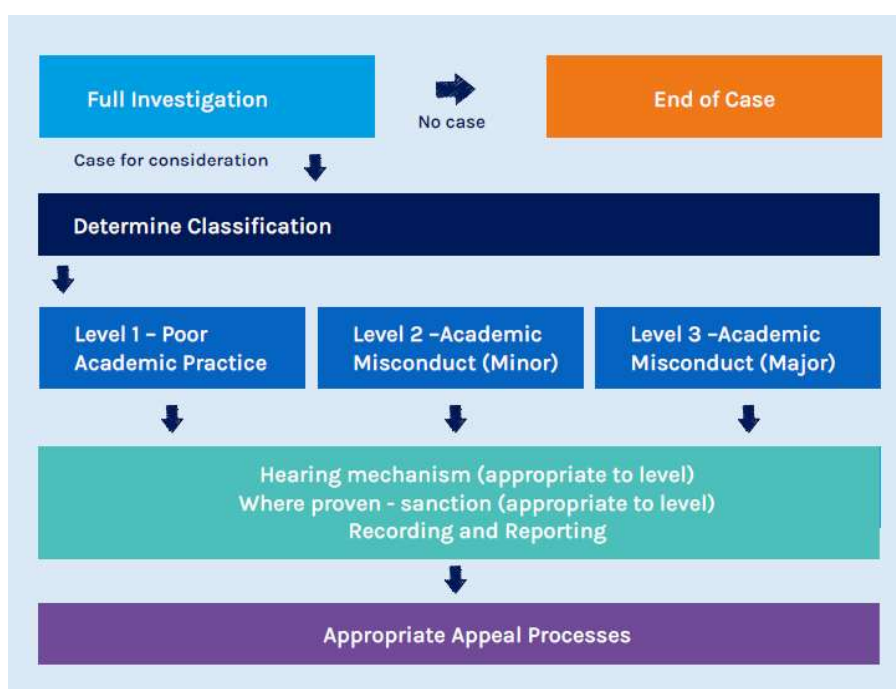


Figure 10: NAIN Key Steps in the full investigation, consideration, classification and sanction of academic misconduct (QQI, 2023: p. 7)

6.11.7 Process Stage 1: Education and awareness

This is addressed in the QAE document Section F, 6.10 [Academic Integrity Policy](#).

6.11.8 Process Stage 2: Detection and Initial Investigation

i. Prevention and Detection

As a preventative measure, the following process is be in place:

- a. There is a preparation stage where the role of the design of assessments is discussed, and academic integrity is championed.
- b. The examination and grading stage, key questions provide a guide for the investigator to determine if there is a case to answer.
- c. Valuation of the data leads to a conclusion of the investigation.

ii. If at the end of their investigation a lecturer or examiner has reason to believe that academic misconduct may have occurred, the case must be progressed to a full investigation.

iii. All cases of suspected academic misconduct are investigated to assure the integrity of the assessment work completed by learners.

6.11.9 Process Stage 3: Full investigation

Where appropriate, cases are progressed to the full investigation stage by the PD / PD's nominee / Academic Integrity Investigator. In addition to ensuring that unfair advantage is not provided to those who engage in academic misconduct, investigations act as a deterrent to other learners, protecting the reputation of the assessment work completed and the academic awards conferred upon all learners. Investigations are completed in a timely manner, with a consistent approach taken throughout.

6.11.9.1 Standard of Proof

Having regard to the gravity of the matter for decision, a learner is deemed to have committed one of the forms of academic misconduct defined in sub-section 6.11.5, in circumstances where the investigator is satisfied that the charge is proven, on the balance of probabilities, based on an assessment of the evidence before it, and in accordance with the principles of natural justice and fair procedures.

The general principles that guide investigations of alleged academic misconduct are:

- i. Investigations are instigated as soon as an incident of academic misconduct is suspected and completed as quickly as possible. However, investigations are not time bound to the period in which the assessment has been considered; where necessary, a retrospective investigation can take place, including following completion of an academic programme and/or the granting of an award to a learner.
- ii. Investigations can take place in relation to:
 - Any form of assessment (formative and summative), as each assessment is a measure of the learner's achievement of the learning outcomes associated with their academic work.

- Work submitted for assessment at any level (undergraduate, postgraduate and for taught or research based academic work).
- iii. If, following initial investigation, it is determined that there is no case to answer, the case will be closed without delay and all relevant stakeholders informed of this decision, and appropriate supports offered to the learner.

6.11.9.2 Staff are trained in the investigation of academic misconduct based on the tools provide in the NAIN publication as well as any other process that the college deems necessary. Relevant resources and templates are available via QAED.

6.11.10 **Process Stage 4: Consideration, classification, and sanction**

Following a full investigation, it will be determined if there is a case for consideration. In such instances, it is recommended that the alleged misconduct is classified prior to consideration. This will include reference to mitigation, detailing what this is, if the learner admits to the misconduct.

6.11.10.1 Consideration

The following general principles are considerations of alleged academic misconduct:

6.11.10.2 Academic Misconduct Disciplinary Hearings

- i. Any learner investigated for academic misconduct is presumed innocent until proven otherwise, through an investigation and subsequent upholding of a case.
- ii. The disciplinary hearing is held no less than 5 working days from the date of the notice to the learner, or such lesser period as the learner agrees.
- iii. The disciplinary hearing is attended by at least two staff (which could be the Year Head, PD, Head of Faculty, Head of Faculty nominee, or another member of staff), and the learner (and the learner's representative where the right of representation is exercised). If the Year Head/PD/Faculty Head/Faculty Head nominee is the complainant, they appoint some other member of their faculty to adjudicate at the disciplinary hearing.
- iv. The investigation of academic misconduct is based on the actions of the learner rather than their submission of a defence of not intending to engage in academic misconduct.

6.11.10.3 The principle of consistency, equity and fairness governs:

- i. The management of all investigations conducted.
- ii. The penalties applied for academic misconduct, with any applied penalties aligned with the severity of the academic misconduct and/or the learner's history of engaging in academic misconduct.

6.11.10.4 PD / PD's nominee / Academic Integrity Investigator

- i. The academic integrity investigator determines whether an infringement has in fact occurred, the extent of the infringement in

relation to insights and explanations provided by relevant individuals and any mitigating circumstances.

- ii. Any committee established is made up of a minimum of two academics, one of whom acts as the chairperson (nominated by the relevant PD / PD's nominee / Academic Integrity Investigator). All panel members are to be independent of the matter being investigated.
- iii. The academic integrity investigator may invite relevant individuals to comment on the matter.

6.11.10.5 Appeals Process

There is to be a formal process for recording of any learner infringement where misconduct has been determined, including checking any previous infringements on the part of the learner.

A learner wishing to appeal against the decision of the Faculty Academic Integrity Committee / Academic Integrity Investigator may do so by invoking the [QAE Document 6.4 Appeals Procedure](#), using the appropriate application process.

6.11.11 Classification of Alleged Academic Misconduct Severity

The severity of academic misconduct can then be classified as:

- i. Level 1: Poor academic practice/conduct
- ii. Level 2: Academic misconduct (minor infringement)
- iii. Level 3: Severe academic misconduct (major infringement).
- iv. Academic misconduct within examination settings is typically not considered a level 1 infringement.

In determining the level of severity of misconduct, considerations may include:

- i. the nature of the alleged offence
- ii. a poor approach to referencing vs contract cheating
- iii. the stage that the learner is at in the programme
- iv. the assessment modality
- v. if the assessment was low-stakes or high-stakes
- vi. if this was a first or subsequent offence
- vii. any extenuating circumstances

Please see "Appendix **XXX**: A Tariff Score System to Determine the Level of Academic Infringement", for the full tariff points table.

6.11.11.1 Sanction

In cases where academic misconduct has been established, steps are taken to determine an appropriate sanction. As outlined above, in determining the severity of the alleged academic misconduct, consideration is given to the following elements:

- i. The learner's stage of academic advancement

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- ii. The extent of the alleged academic misconduct
- iii. The evidence available
- iv. Any Professional, Regulatory, Statutory Body (PRSB) requirements
- v. The impact of the alleged misconduct on the candidate's overall result
- vi. Any admission of guilt
- vii. Any previous record of academic misconduct

This points system provides a structured approach driven by an educational agenda.

Rubric to Map Classifications of Academic Misconduct to Sanctions		
Level 1	Points range	Disciplinary Actions
(Poor Academic practice / conduct)	0 - 100	Mandatory academic integrity training and one or more of the following sanctions is applied
		a) Reprimand – a formally recorded warning kept on the learner's record for the duration of the learner's enrolment on the programme of study.
		b) Grade reduction – the work should be graded, but the mark may be reduced.
	101 - 200	Mandatory academic integrity training and one or more of the following sanctions is applied
		a) Reprimand – a formally recorded warning kept on the learner's record for the duration of the learner's enrolment on the programme of study.
		b) Grade reduction – the work should be graded, but the mark may be reduced.
		c) For assignments worth < 50% of the total module marks, require re-examination/assessment within the semester as a first sitting with no cap on module grade.
		d) For assignments worth > 50% of the total module marks, require re-examination/assessment as a supplemental assessment with no cap on the module grade*.

Level 2	Points range	Disciplinary Actions
Academic Misconduct (Minor Infringement)	201 - 350	Mandatory academic integrity training and one or more of the following sanctions is applied
		a) Reprimand – a formally recorded warning kept on the learner’s record for the duration of the learner’s enrolment on the programme of study.
		b) For assignments worth < 50% of the total module marks, require re-examination/assessment within the semester as a first sitting.
		c) For assignments worth < 50% of the total module marks, require re-examination/assessment as a supplemental assessment with no cap on module grade*.
		d) For assignments worth > 50% of the total module marks, require re-examination/assessment as a supplemental assessment with a cap on the module grade*.
	351 - 500	Mandatory academic integrity training and one or more of the following sanctions is applied
		a) Reprimand – a formally recorded warning kept on the learner’s record for the duration of the learner’s enrolment on the programme of study.
		b) For assignments worth < 50% of the total module marks, require re-examination/assessment within the semester as a first sitting with a cap on module grade.

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		c) For assignments worth < 50% of the total module marks, require re-examination/assessment as a supplemental assessment with no cap on module grade.
		d) For assignments worth >50% of the total module marks, require re-examination/assessment as a supplemental assessment with a cap on the module grade*.
		e) For assignments worth >50% of the total module marks, require re-examination/assessment as a supplemental assessment with a cap on the module grade and on award classification if at award stage*.
		f) Reduced award classification.
		g) Recession/withdrawal of award, in line with HEI policies – where an offence is proved after the conferring of the award.

Level 3	Points range	Disciplinary Actions
Severe academic misconduct (Major Infringement)	501 - 615	Mandatory academic integrity training and one or more of the following sanctions is applied
		a) Reprimand – a formally recorded warning kept on the learner's record for the duration of the learner's enrolment on the programme of study.
		b) For assignments worth < 50% of the total module marks, require re-examination/assessment within the semester as a first sitting with a cap on module grade.
		c) For assignments worth >50% of the total module marks, require re-examination/assessment as a supplemental assessment with a cap on the module grade and on award classification if at award stage.
		d) Award of zero for the module mark and credits awarded for progression, with an opportunity to resit the assessment.
		e) Award a 'fail' mark for the assessment component with an opportunity to resubmit the assessment for grading. If passed, credit for the module is be awarded in recognition of the learning outcomes being met, but a module mark of pass only is to be recorded.
		f) Award zero for the module mark and associated credits awarded for progression – failure in the assessment component with no opportunity to resubmit the assessment for grading.
		The learner is suspended from the programme but may be awarded a lower NFQ level award commensurate with other learning outcomes achieved during the programme. This sanction should not normally be applied to foundation or year one undergraduate learners or year 1 international learners.
		g) Award zero for the module mark and remove all credits achieved – the learner is suspended from the programme but may be awarded a lower NFQ level award in recognition of other learning outcomes achieved during the programme.
		h) Learner at award stage is exited with a reduced NFQ level award commensurate with learning achieved through legitimate means.
		i) Suspension for academic dishonesty is listed on transcript during the length of the suspension.
		j) Recession/withdrawal of award, in line with HEI policies – where an offence is proved after the conferring of the award.

**For these options, where the learner is at an award stage, the adjudicator should consider whether this also limits the award classification in cases where HEI assessment regulations might require that a failing grade at award stage will result in a pass award only. The adjudicator(s) should also consider whether this is proportionate to the severity of offence.*

6.11.12 **Stage 5: Recording and Reporting**

6.11.12.1 Outcome shared with Learner

If having regard to the evidence presented at the disciplinary hearing and the submissions made by or on behalf of the learner, the PD / PD's nominee / Academic Integrity Investigator considers that a case of academic misconduct has been proven, they notify the learner of the decision in writing and the notification states:

- i. The decision that academic misconduct has occurred
- ii. The penalty which is to be imposed
- iii. The learner's right of appeal to an Appeal Board
- iv. The period within which this appeal is to be lodged by or on behalf of the learner and a direction to resources

If having regard to the evidence presented at the disciplinary hearing and the submissions made by or on behalf of the learner, the PD / PD's nominee / Academic Integrity Investigator considers that a case of academic misconduct has not been proven, they notify the learner of the decision in writing and the notification states:

- i. The decision that academic misconduct has not occurred
- ii. There is no penalty and the case has been closed
- iii. A record of the meeting will be held in the Faculty
- iv. There will be no recording on the learner's academic record

6.11.13 **QAE and Faculty Records**

6.11.13.1 Records to be kept

Maintaining records on academic misconduct is essential for quality assurance and enhancement purposes. A recording system for all cases of academic misconduct, particularly those brought to the full-investigation stage, is maintained centrally within Griffith College in the QAE Department, cognisant of GDPR requirements. Regular review of this, twice a year reporting on the previous semester(s), informs annual monitoring and review processes at programme / faculty and institutional level, training for learners and staff, enhancements to academic practice, and the prevention and management of infringements.

All recording policies and procedures is to be mindful of the GDPR implications of retaining data in relation to minor infringements including:

- Information most appropriately stored at local (school, department) level and stored centrally in the QAE Department
- Institutional records including all of those cases escalated to the full investigation stage (Stage 3), including where – ultimately – no case is brought forward for consideration. Where no case is brought forward, records should be anonymised