

Academic Misconduct Policy

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Linked policies:	Student Code of Conduct and Student Disciplinary Policy Learning Teaching and Assessment Strategy Policy Academic Appeals Policy
Audience:	Students, Academic Staff, Programme Coordinators, Registry staff and any other relevant staff

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1 Introduction

This policy and procedures document outlines how Oxford Business College (OBC) addresses concerns and allegations of academic misconduct. Non-academic misconduct issues are handled under separate policies such as the Student Disciplinary Policy. It is essential to read this procedure alongside the Learning Agreement in the General Student Handbook and the academic regulations of partner institutions.

2 Purpose

This policy applies to all students upon acceptance of an offer to study at OBC. Students are defined as those who have signed a Student Declaration with the College, encompassing full-time, part-time, and short-course attendees. The policy applies universally, irrespective of term time, location, or specific College-related activities. All members of OBC are expected to adhere strictly to standards of academic integrity as defined herein. Students who are members of Oxford Business College are expected to avoid all forms of academic misconduct as described in this policy.

3 Precedence

Each partner institution, such as Buckinghamshire New University (BNU), the University of West London (UWL), Ravensbourne University London (RUL), and New College Durham (NCD), has its own definition and procedures for academic misconduct. If you are enrolled in a programme awarded by BNU, you must follow BNU's Academic Offences procedures outlined [here](#). Similarly, students on programmes awarded by UWL should refer to UWL's Academic Offences regulations available [here](#), and those at RUL can find the relevant procedures [here](#). For students at NCD, please refer to the College's Academic Offences procedures provided [here](#).

Oxford Business College is expected to abide by the academic regulations of all partner institutions although the specific process to follow will be determined by partner-specific arrangements as enshrined in the operations manual and any other local arrangements.

Academic misconduct cases for UWL and RUL students studying at OBC will be investigated by OBC in line with both institutions processes and procedures in their regulations and outcomes communicated to the partner institutions via OBC's registry.

Academic misconduct cases for NCD and BNU students will be investigated directly by both institutions in line with agreed processes in collaboration with OBC's registry and academic staff.

4 Scope

This policy covers students enrolled on all partner institutions' programmes as well as all programmes of study offered directly by OBC.

It covers all forms of academic misconduct enshrined in the academic regulations of partner institutions as well as any other form(s) in this policy.

5 Aims & Objectives

5.1 Aims

The aims of the Academic Misconduct Policy are to:

5.1.1 Promote Academic Integrity: To foster a learning environment where students are encouraged to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and integrity in all their academic pursuits.

5.1.2 Ensure Fairness: To provide a clear and consistent framework for handling allegations of academic misconduct, ensuring all students are treated fairly and equitably throughout the process.

5.1.3 Clarify Procedures: To establish clear procedures for identifying, reporting, investigating, and resolving instances of academic misconduct in accordance with the academic regulations of partner institutions and Oxford Business College.

5.1.4 Protect Academic Standards: To safeguard the credibility and integrity of academic awards issued by Oxford Business College and its partner institutions.

5.1.5 Ensure Transparency: To ensure that all actions related to academic misconduct, from investigation to resolution, are transparent and well-documented, fostering trust and accountability within the academic community.

5.2 Objectives

The objectives of the Academic Misconduct Policy are to:

5.2.1 Define Academic Misconduct: To provide a clear and comprehensive definition of academic misconduct, covering all forms of dishonest academic practices including plagiarism, cheating, collusion, impersonation, and any other relevant behaviours.

5.2.2 Establish Reporting Mechanisms: To outline the proper channels through which staff and students can report suspected cases of academic misconduct.

5.2.3 Ensure Consistent Investigation Processes: To ensure that all suspected cases of academic misconduct are investigated in a consistent, fair, and timely manner, in line with the procedures of partner institutions.

5.2.4 Provide Clear Sanctions: To outline a range of sanctions that may be applied for instances of academic misconduct, with penalties proportionate to the severity of the offence.

5.2.5 Support Students' Right to Appeal: To provide a clear and accessible appeals process for students who wish to challenge the outcome of an academic misconduct investigation.

5.2.6 Collaborate with Partner Institutions: To ensure that academic misconduct cases involving partner institutions (BNU, UWL, RUL, NCD) are managed according to their specific regulations while ensuring consistency with OBC's policies and procedures.

5.2.7 Ensure Awareness: To raise awareness among students, academic staff, and other relevant stakeholders about the importance of academic integrity and the implications of academic misconduct.

6 Definition of Academic Misconduct

Each partner as per their policy will define academic misconduct individually. But broadly the following is a non-exhaustive list of conduct which where proven will normally constitute

academic misconduct:

6.1 Plagiarism: This involves knowingly or recklessly presenting another person's work or ideas as one's own, which includes the use of direct citations or paraphrasing of published or unpublished work without appropriate acknowledgement of the source.

6.2 Cheating: Acting dishonestly or unfairly in order to gain an academic advantage. This includes the falsification of information and any form of dishonest behaviour during examinations.

6.3 Collusion: Assisting or attempting to assist another member of the College in gaining an unfair academic advantage.

6.4 Impersonation: Obtaining or purchasing work from another person or organisation and submitting it as one's own.

6.5 Breaches of College Rules: Violating any College rules, regulations, policies, or procedures related to academic activities or assessments.

6.6 Other forms of Academic misconduct: any other forms of academic misconduct not covered in this policy or partner institutions' policy will still be covered and duly investigated.

7 Partners Academic Misconduct Investigation

The College collaborates with its partners, each of which maintains distinct procedures for assessing academic misconduct. Students enrolled in programmes awarded by our university partners, including Bucks New University (BNU), University of West London (UWL), Ravensbourne University London (RUL), and New College Durham (NCD), are subject to the academic misconduct policies and procedures of these institutions.

Each partner institution defines and implements its own Academic Misconduct process within their regulations, policies and processes. This section provides an overview of how OBC coordinates with its university partners to address allegations of academic misconduct. The specific procedures followed by each partner institution will guide the assessment, investigation, and resolution of cases involving suspected breaches of academic integrity.

For detailed information regarding the AMP processes of our university partners, please refer to the respective policies and regulations provided by BNU, UWL, RUL, and NCD. OBC remains committed to ensuring that all procedures align with the highest standards of academic integrity and fairness as set forth by our partnering institutions.

7.1 BNU:

7.1.1 Reporting and Suspected Offences

Suspected academic misconduct can be reported by academic staff, invigilators, other students, or external sources. The report must include detailed evidence and is initially managed by Academic and designated staff member and overseen by the Programme Leader.

7.1.2 Investigation Process

The process begins with the identification of the potential academic misconduct case(s), by the identifier who would normally be the Academic or this could also be picked up during the moderation process.

Identifiers will then provide all the necessary evidence for the potential case and forward them to BNU who will take over the process of investigating the potential academic misconduct case(s) in line with their stipulated processes and procedures within their regulations.

7.1.3 Tariffs and Sanctions

Sanctions are based on a points tariff system, with penalties ranging from formal warnings and mark reductions to reassessment, module failure, or expulsion. Penalties consider the severity of the offence and any previous misconduct.

7.1.4 Updating the Student Record

Outcomes and sanctions are recorded in the student's academic record. Significant cases, especially those involving professional qualifications, may be reported to relevant professional bodies or employers. Appeals against decisions can be made, and the process is overseen by the Registry to ensure fairness and consistency.

For more detailed information, refer to the full [BNU Academic Integrity Policy](#).

7.2 UWL:

7.2.1 Reporting and Suspected Offences

Suspected academic offences must be reported to the Programme Leader and Coordinators who will assist the identifier and guide them in the process.

Investigation Process

Initial interview is carried out with the student and if after the initial investigation it is deemed to be a minor offence such as poor academic practice, the Programme Leader and or Coordinator/designated staff could make a determination, and the student is referred to the relevant department for additional support and resubmission. All major offences, however, are investigated by the Academic integrity panel set up by OBC's Registry which will conduct formal investigations and come up with a determination which will then be communicated to UWL.

7.2.2 Tariffs and Sanctions

Sanctions range from formal warnings and mark reductions to module failure and discontinuation of studies. Penalties are based on the severity of the offence and may include resubmission of work or re-sitting exams with capped marks.

7.2.3 Updating the Student Record

All offences and outcomes are recorded in the student's academic file by the Registry. Students may appeal decisions through the University's appeal regulations.

For detailed information, refer to the full [UWL Academic Offences Regulations](#).

7.3 RUL:

Suspected academic misconduct will be investigated by the Course leader for the relevant course, or nominee who will act as the official Investigating Officer and this is normally within 10 working days of the discovery of the potential academic malpractice

7.3.1 Process

The investigating officer will meet with the student to discuss the allegation to determine whether:

- 7.3.1.1 There is no academic malpractice and to close the investigation;
- 7.3.1.2 The actions amount to poor academic practice and recommend an appropriate remedial action; or
- 7.3.1.3 The actions amount to academic misconduct and refer the case to the OBC's registry to convene an Academic integrity panel to investigate and decide on the case.
- 7.3.1.4 Students have the right to appeal in line with the academic appeals policy of the partner institution.

7.3.2 Updating the Student Record

Proven cases after the investigations are sent to the partner institution who will record this in the student's academic record. This ensures that all actions taken are documented and can impact the student's academic progression and future assessments.

For detailed information, refer to the full [RUL General Academic Regulations](#).

7.4 NCD:

7.4.1 Reporting and Suspected Offences - Examinations/Controlled Assessments:

- 7.4.1.1 The invigilator reports the allegation to OBC's registry on the same day.
- 7.4.1.2 The Registry forwards the evidence to the Programme Leader within 24 hours.
- 7.4.1.3 The Programme Leader informs the student of the suspected malpractice and determines, if further investigation is needed.
- 7.4.1.4 If further investigation is required, the Programme Leader submits an investigation report to NCD

7.4.2 Reporting and Suspected Offences - Written Coursework:

- 7.4.2.1 The staff member informs the Programme Leader of the suspected malpractice.
- 7.4.2.2 The Programme Leader informs the student and determines, if further investigation is needed.
- 7.4.2.3 If further investigation is required, the Programme Leader submits an investigation report to NCD who will investigate and make a determination.

7.4.3 Updating the Student Record

All proven outcomes are recorded in the student's file for the duration of enrolment plus six years.

For more detailed information, refer to the full [NCD Academic Malpractice Procedure](#).

8 Appeals

The appeals process provides an avenue for students to seek review of decisions that they believe were not reached in accordance with the established procedures or were unjustly decided. It is designed to ensure that all students have the opportunity to challenge decisions where there is perceived procedural irregularity, significant new evidence, or where they believe the decision was disproportionate to the alleged misconduct.

Students enrolled in programmes delivered in partnership with our university partners, including Bucks New University (BNU), University of West London (UWL), Ravensbourne University London (RUL), or New College Durham (NCD), must adhere to the specific appeals procedures outlined by these institutions. These procedures may vary in detail but are uniformly intended to uphold standards of academic integrity and procedural fairness and students may seek further guidance from Academic staff and OBC's registry.

8.1 BNU:

Students on programmes awarded by BNU should use the University's Academic Offences procedures here:

<chromeextension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.bucks.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2024-09/Academic%20Integrity%20Policy.pdf>

8.2 UWL:

Students on programmes awarded by UWL should use the University's Academic Offences procedures here: <https://www.uwl.ac.uk/about-us/policies-and-regulations/academic-offences-regulations>

8.3 RUL:

Students on programmes awarded by RUL should use the University's Academic Offences procedures here: <https://www.ravensbourne.ac.uk/asset-bucket/prod/2022-08/General%20Academic%20Regulations%202022-23.pdf>

8.4 NCD:

Students on programmes awarded by NCD should use the College Academic Offences procedures here: <https://www.newcollegedurham.ac.uk/higher-education/165-academic-appeals-application-form-2020-2-1/file>

9 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator

Seeking review from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provides students with an independent avenue to challenge decisions made by their educational institution. This process is particularly valuable if a student believes that the institution's internal procedures were not followed correctly, if new evidence has emerged that was not considered initially, or if they feel the outcome of their case was disproportionate to the alleged misconduct. The OIA is an impartial body separate from the university, established to

ensure fair treatment and transparency in handling student complaints. Decisions made under the procedures outlined in this policy may be eligible for review by the OIA, which reviews student complaints independently. For more information about the OIA and its processes, please visit <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.

You can also reach the OIA at 0118 959 9813 or via email at enquires@oiahe.org.uk. Where applicable, students will receive a Completion of Procedures Letter along with details on how to request a review of a decision through the OIA.