



Academic Year (if applicable): 2008

Target Audience:

Academic Staff
Students

Summary of Contents:

- Definition of plagiarism
- Gives examples of unacceptable academic misconduct outside externally set examinations
- Outlines College response to suspected cases
- Outlines Student Disciplinary Procedure

Enquiries: Any enquiries about the contents of this document should be addressed to:-

Name/Title: Michael Malone

Director of Curriculum & Information Services

Final approval

By: CMT 02/09/2008

By: Governing Body 17/09/2008

Review date:

Related Documents:

Student Disciplinary Policy

Superseded Documents (if applicable):

Document Control Administrator

FOI Ref: Policies and Procedures

SERC ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

1. Introduction

Plagiarism, cheating, collusion and attempting to obtain an unfair academic advantage are forms of academic misconduct and are entirely unacceptable for any student at the South Eastern Regional College. This policy:

- Defines what the College means by plagiarism
- Gives examples of the categories of other forms of unacceptable academic misconduct outside externally set examinations
- Outlines how the college will respond to suspected cases and indicates the academic penalties which may be appropriate in proven cases
- Outlines where the Student Disciplinary Procedure should be implemented

In establishing this policy, the College is seeking to maintain the integrity of its academic awards and procedures and to give any students affected a fair opportunity to respond to any allegation of academic misconduct. Each case will be determined on its own facts and merits. It may be necessary for the College to seek legal advice in specific cases.

The policy is for use outside public examinations, where the examining boards' own procedures will apply. The policy includes College-assessed work which contributes towards external examination marks.

An abridged version of the policy is provided for use with students. (Appendix 1) For full time students this will be included on their E ISLA and part time students will be required to read and sign a copy during their induction.

2. Definitions

Plagiarism – Plagiarism has occurred when a student submits or presents work as required by a course as if it were the student's own, completed specifically for that particular course, when in fact it is not.

Most commonly plagiarism exists when:

- The student submits work done in whole or in part by a person other than the student who is submitting the work,
- Parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
- The whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,
- A student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the lecturer involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted. Plagiarism is an extremely serious academic offence.

3. Academic Misconduct (Cheating/Other Academic Misconduct)

Examples of other forms of academic misconduct (such as cheating, collusion and attempting to obtain an unfair academic advantage) would include:

- Getting someone else to produce part or all of the work submitted;
- Colluding with one or more student(s) to produce a piece of work and submitting it individually as one's own;
- Copying the work of another student, with or without their permission;
- Knowingly allowing another student to copy one's own work;
- Resubmitting one's own previously graded work;
- Using forbidden notes or books in producing assigned work or tests;
- Fabrication of results (including experiments, research, interviews).

4. Responding to Suspected Academic Misconduct

The College response to Academic Misconduct will be tempered by the level of seriousness of the misconduct. A classification of Academic Misconduct or Gross Misconduct is used (Appendix 1). There is also a differentiation between misconduct that is **admitted** by the student and that which is **denied** and an investigation needs to take place.

When the student is under 18 parents/guardian should be informed.

Where the student **admits** Academic Misconduct one or more of the following is suggested:

Academic Misconduct

1. Discuss the situation with the student individually, warning the student about future conduct
2. Deduct marks from the students work
3. Return work to be re-done and re-submitted for marking
4. Award a mark which may be on a scale between a minimum pass mark only and a zero grade or reduced assessment grade
5. Withdraw the right of the student to re-sit an exam/test or re-submit an assessed piece of work
6. Implement the first stage of the Student Disciplinary Procedure and initiate an oral/written warning

Gross Academic Misconduct

1. Refer immediately to Head of School to take action.
2. Award a zero grade or withhold from awarding a grade.
3. Withdraw the right to re-sit the exam or test or withdraw right to re-submit work for assessment.
4. Implement the appropriate stage of the Student Disciplinary Procedure for Gross misconduct which could result in one of the following:
 - The removal of the student from the course.
 - The recommendation of exclusion from the College.

Where the student **denies** Academic Misconduct the course coordinator will carry out a full investigation and prepare a report with recommendations for the Head of School.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY – Guidelines for Students

The following are dishonest and therefore unacceptable and not allowed by the College:

- Taking someone else's work, images or ideas and passing it off as your own – this is called plagiarism.
- Using the computer, either the internet, or information stored on a hard copy or memory stick which belongs to someone else, and passing it off as your own.
- Cheating, that is acting unfairly or dishonestly to gain an advantage.
- Secretly agreeing with another to cheat or deceive - this is known as collusion.

All these are called **Academic Misconduct**. If you are discovered or suspected of any of the above, the College will investigate and this may result in disciplinary action being taken.

This is what is expected of you whilst you are at the College –

- You will only hand in your own original work for assessment.
- You will show when you have used information provided by someone else by giving the person's name and where you found the information in your work (or in your portfolio). For example, if you use someone else's words you will enclose the quote with inverted commas. You will also repeat this information at the end of the piece (this is called a bibliography/references section). Your tutor or lecturer will give you help with this. You should seek advice and guidance from tutors if you are unsure how to do this properly.
- You will show when you have downloaded information from the internet.
- You will never use another's saved work as if it were your own work, or copy work from a disk belonging to someone else and use it as if it were your own
- You will never use someone else's artwork, pictures or graphics (including graphs, spreadsheets etc.) as if they were made by you or let other students use or copy from your work and pass it off as if they had done it themselves
- In the case of group work you will produce your own report of the work done or identify your contribution to the final product as directed by your lecturer.

All cases of suspected academic misconduct will be fully investigated using the College Disciplinary Procedures for Academic Misconduct.

If proved disciplinary action will be taken. The outcome will depend on the severity of the offence. The member of staff who has looked into what you have done will decide how serious the case is at first and will then consult senior colleagues. The claims against your wrongdoing will be written down so that you know the case you have to answer.

The College classes some Academic Misconduct as Gross and deals with it more severely.

The following section gives information on this classification, together with guidance on the actions College will take.

Cases of Academic Misconduct include:

- Copying from books without acknowledgement which has a significant contribution to the overall work
- Limited plagiarism from professional work (not course books)
- Limited copying of other candidates work (hard copy or from a disk), or excessive help within one piece of work
- Limited downloading of information from the internet or the use of model answers downloaded from the internet

In the situation where the assessed work contributes to a final grade the College may take the following action:

1. Your academic misconduct will be discussed with you in a private tutorial
2. Your mark or assessment grade will be reduced or you will have work returned to re-do and hand in for remarking or you will be awarded zero, depending on how serious what you have done appears to the College
3. You may not be allowed to take the unit/exam/test again
4. You will be given a warning about how you must act in the future: this constitutes the first stage of the Student Disciplinary Procedure

Cases of Gross Misconduct include:

- Extensive copying of textbooks in one piece of work or limited copying in two or more pieces of work which makes a significant contribution to the work/s
- Extensive plagiarism of professional works (more than 100 words)
- Buying, selling or stealing of work
- Repeated evidence of extensive use of information from the internet without acknowledgement or using model internet answers
- Using past candidates' work from previous years
- Undue help from outside the College
- Repeated cases of Misconduct

The College may take any of the following actions:

Initiate the Student Disciplinary Procedure for Gross Misconduct (which could lead to exclusion from the college).

Additionally -

1. A zero grade in the exam/test/module is given or the assessed work is not awarded a grade
2. You are not allowed to re-sit the exam or test, or you are not allowed to re-do the piece of assessed work
3. You are disqualified from your course

In all instances of Academic Misconduct the College may:

- a) Inform the relevant examining body in accordance with the examining board's policy
- b) Inform external examiners/verifiers in accordance with the examining board's policy

In all cases, a note will be made on your file of the allegation, the outcome and any penalty you are given. You need to know that this information may be used by the College when it is asked to provide a reference for you, for example if you want to go to another College or get a job.

You must sign the statement below to show that you have read and understood the College rules on Academic Misconduct as they are shown on this paper.

“I agree that I have read and understood the South Eastern Regional College Policy on Academic Misconduct. I understand that if I cheat and present others’ work as my own, without showing who did the work and where I found it, the College will take action.

I agree that all the work I hand in during my course or put in my portfolio will be entirely my own, unless I show clearly in my work where I have used someone else’s work, have worked with someone else, or have received help.”

Signed..... **Date**.....

Tutor..... **Date**.....

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY – Procedures for Staff

Plagiarism, cheating and collusion and attempting to obtain an unfair academic advantage are entirely unacceptable and not allowed. As such, these forms of academic misconduct will be subject to disciplinary procedures.

To prevent the occurrence of academic misconduct, staff should:

1. Inform students clearly of the policy on academic integrity and honesty and of the guidelines on academic misconduct, recording the date/s and occasion/s for future reference.
2. Make students aware of the penalties for academic misconduct at the earliest stage of the course.
3. Provide students with guidance on the format of formal acknowledgement of source material.
4. Inform students, in writing if possible, of the extent to which they can collaborate in coursework.
5. Be aware that most students are very computer literate and can scan text and surf the web for model essays with ease. Ensure adequate access controls are in place and that students are adequately supervised when using computers (especially when networked) to prevent students from copying or printing out other people's work as part of their own.
6. Devise procedures for assessing work in such a way that plagiarism, cheating and collusion are more detectable. This might include - ensuring that coursework assessment is supported by unseen and supervised work under test conditions, changing assignment topics yearly, on at least a three-yearly cycle; making less use of generic assignments in favour of tailored assignments; getting to know the style of students' writing/submissions, early on in the course; comparing subsequent work to initial assessment tests. Ideally, mark/assess a class group's coursework on a single occasion, to enhance the likelihood of the assessor spotting plagiarised passages.
7. Fully investigate all instances of suspected academic misconduct utilising the following disciplinary procedures.

Guidelines for Carrying out an Investigation into Academic Misconduct

1. Interview is called and chaired by the Course Coordinator and attended by relevant lecturers, Personal Tutor and the Student.
2. Written notice of the nature of the Interview and the allegations should be sent to the student (and parents if under 18) a minimum of **5 working days** before the interview is due to take place.
3. This letter should inform the student of where and when to attend, and invite them to be accompanied by a relative, friend or advocate.
4. At the interview the alleged incident is described by the assessor with evidence produced.
5. The student is questioned to test his/her knowledge of the work.
6. The student has the opportunity to explain any discrepancy.
7. The Course Coordinator makes a decision which is forwarded in writing to the student within **5 working days** of the hearing.

Possible outcomes.

1. No academic misconduct has taken place and the assignment remains marked as it stands.
2. The student accepts that academic misconduct has taken place and action is taken as described previously.
3. The student denies that any academic misconduct has taken place and is referred to the second stage interview with the Head of School.

The Second Stage Interview Process

1. This should be chaired by the Head of School and be attended by the Course Coordinator, assessor and student. A minute taker should be present to record the meeting.
2. The student should be sent a written notification as per Parts 2 and 3 in the First Stage Interview. This should also outline the possible outcomes of the Second Stage Interview.
3. Copies of any relevant documents should be made available to the student with this written notification.
4. The assessor presents the allegations.
5. The student states his/her case.
6. The panel members ask appropriate questions to test the student's knowledge or skills.
7. The Chair reaches a decision which is sent in writing with **5 working days** of the hearing.

Possible Outcomes

1. No academic misconduct has taken place and the assignment is marked as it stands.

2. The Course Coordinator's decision is upheld and the appropriate action is taken related to the offence being Misconduct or Gross Misconduct.
3. The relevant examining body is informed and asked to make a decision as to whether the student is awarded any credits for previously submitted work.
4. The student is found in breach of the Academic Code of Conduct and either:
 - a) Receives a Written Warning or Final Written Warning as outlined in the Student Disciplinary Procedure or
 - b) Is removed from the programme and
 - c) A decision is made as to whether the student is excluded from the College.

N.B. At all stages consider:

a) Notifying the examining body, in line with their procedures

b) Inform external examiners/verifiers in line with procedures

In all cases a note of the allegation, outcome and action taken should be recorded in the student's file. It should be made clear to students that these notes may be used if the College is asked to submit a reference.

APPEALS

Appendix 3

For sanctions other than exclusion

1. The student has the right of appeal against the decisions reached. This appeal should be sent to the senior person in the School identified in the Disciplinary letter sent to the student. The student should state in his/her letter the grounds for the appeal and it should be received by the College within **10 working days** of the date on the Disciplinary letter.
2. An appeal hearing will be organised by the College and chaired by a member of staff of the School more Senior than the person who chaired the First Stage Interview.
3. If the Appeal is against a Final Written Warning given by the Head of School in a Second Stage Interview the Appeal will be chaired by the designated Senior Manager
4. A letter of invite to the Appeal Hearing will be sent out to the student (and parents) using the guidelines for the Second Stage Interview.
5. It should be stressed to students that the outcome of an unsuccessful appeal may lead to an increase in the sanction imposed if on further investigation the offence appears more serious than originally thought.

Appeal against Exclusion

1. Any appeal against exclusion should be sent to the designated Senior Manager within **10 working days** of the date on the letter of exclusion sent by College. Grounds for the Appeal should be stated.
2. A letter inviting the student in to an Appeal Hearing will be sent according to the previous guidelines.
3. The designated Senior Manager will Chair the Appeal Hearing. A senior representative from the School and the assessing teacher will also be in attendance to present the case against the student.
4. The procedure will follow that laid down for the Second Stage Interview.
5. A decision will be reached by the Chair of the Appeal Hearing and will be communicated in writing to the student within **5 working days** of the hearing.