HSE Oifig an Stiúrthóra Seirbhísí Altranais & Cnáimhseachais | Office of Nursing & Midwifery Services Director	CCNME Consortium of Centres of Nursing and Midwifery Education

Procedure on Academic Integrity: Detection and Management of Academic Misconduct

Policy ☐   Procedure ☒   Protocol ☐   Guideline ☐

Office of the Nursing and Midwifery Services Director (ONMSD): Consortium of Centres of Nursing and Midwifery Education (CCNME)

Title of PPPG Development Group:	Consortium of Centres of Nursing and Midwifery Education (CCNME)
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Version	Date Approved	List section numbers changed	Author
Version 2 Draft	Seeking approval January 2025	**Title Change & Purpose** • Procedure on Promotion of Academic Integrity among Learners [CCNME06(22)2022] and Procedure for Investigating Academic Misconduct in a Formal Examination [CCNME06(23)/2022] will be referred from here on as Procedure on Academic Integrity: Detection and Management of Academic Misconduct. • Section 1.0 Purpose amended to reflect title change and processes • Section 2.0 Detection of Academic Misconduct amended • Section 3.0 new section included on Investigating Academic Misconduct • Section 4.0 Amended to reflect procedure for classification and sanction of academic misconduct • Section 5.0 Panel Decisions amended to reflect new processes and removal of table **Inclusion of Appendices to support** • Section 3.0 Investigating Academic Misconduct: Appendix 1 A Tariff Score System to Determine the Level of Academic Infringement • Section 5.0 Panel Decisions Appendix 2: Rubric to Map Classifications of Academic Misconduct to Sanctions **Inclusion of additional reference to support amendments to processes** • National Academic Integrity Network (2023) Framework for Academic Misconduct and Case Management. Dublin: Quality and Qualifications Ireland.	Academic Integrity Committee
Version 1	04/11/2022	Original Publication	CCNME

1.0   Purpose

The CCNME is committed to maintaining the highest level of academic integrity for the benefit of both learners and staff to maintain learner and public confidence. The core values of academic integrity; honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage (NAIN 2021) are central to all assessment of all the CCNME activities. This procedure outlines the processes for identification and management of cases of academic misconduct. This includes maintaining ethical, honest and trustworthy behaviours in the submission of academic work.

2.0   Procedure for Detecting Academic Misconduct

2.1   The CCNME *Procedure on Regulations for the Conduct of Written Examinations* will be followed when investigating suspected cases of academic misconduct that take place during examinations.

2.2   Evidence of academic misconduct may include, but is not limited to, one or more of the following:

2.2.1   The learner admits academic misconduct;

2.2.2   The learner incorrectly references the materials by inclusion of data, reference or literature without adherence to correct referencing guidelines, or represent others' material as their own work;

2.2.3   An unusual or suspicious degree of similarity in work submitted by past or current learners;

2.2.4   There is evidence of collusion between learners.

2.3   Plagiarism detection software will be utilised to scan learners' submissions for potential instances of plagiarism and to support academic judgement in the case of suspected academic misconduct.

2.4   In evaluating suspected academic misconduct in a written assignment, a member of Centre team considers the following (Some of the most common are listed below, although this is not exhaustive):

2.4.1   Document properties - strange document properties: e.g., few minutes of editing time, no author name, author name different from the learner's, or a different author name on each assessment;

2.4.2   Quality of writing - significant improvement in performance: take note of sudden and significant improvements in a learner's performance, especially if it is inconsistent with their previous work or overall academic record. Such improvements may raise suspicions of academic dishonesty, collusion or unauthorized assistance;

2.4.3   Inconsistencies in writing style: look for inconsistencies in the writing style and language used within a learners work. Sudden shifts in vocabulary, tone, or grammar may indicate that the work has been sourced from multiple authors or outside sources:

2.4.3.1 Language or concepts used: the language, ideas and/or readings used in the assessment were not covered;

2.4.3.2 Unusual word choices: the specific word choices used in the assessment are unusual;

2.4.3.3 Unreadable language, including jargon filled sentences and misuse of words.

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2.4.4 Content not focused on the brief provided;

2.4.5 Textual signals or evidence e.g. document properties: author/creation date/editing time/version number;

2.4.6 Not appropriate to discipline area;

2.4.7 Quality different to or above expectations;

2.4.8 Unusual or unfamiliar references: pay attention to references or citations that seem out of place or unfamiliar. Check the validity and relevance of the sources cited by the learner to ensure they are reliable and appropriate for the assignment;

2.4.9 Collaboration and communication: look for signs of unauthorised collaboration or similarities in content, structure, or ideas between submissions from different learners. (This could also be relevant to 3.3.4);

2.4.10 Lack of originality: assess the originality and uniqueness of a learners work. Look for signs of excessive reliance on direct quotations, verbatim copying, or lack of critical thinking and analysis.

2.5 Where alleged academic misconduct has occurred, Centre staff will not release learners' assessment mark/grade/feedback until procedures are completed.

3.0 Procedure for Investigating Academic Misconduct

3.1 An investigation should be conducted, providing the learner with an opportunity to present and gather additional evidence if necessary.

3.2 The investigation should adhere to policies and procedures to ensure fairness and protect the rights of all parties involve.

3.3 The Centre team member who considers or suspects that academic misconduct has occurred, will report to the Programme Co-ordinator, identifying the relevant evidence, within five working days of their consideration of learner's work.

3.4 The Programme Coordinator notifies the Chairperson of HET/FET Programme Committee who determines the level of academic infringement according to *A Tariff Scoring System to Determine the Level of Academic Infringement (Appendix 1).*

3.5 The Programme Co-ordinator compiles the following documentation in preparation for submission to the Disciplinary Committee.

3.5.1 Completed Tariff Scoring System to Determine the Level of Academic Infringement Form

3.5.2 Copy of the allegedly plagiarised work

3.5.3 Copy of the original source of the allegedly plagiarised work

3.5.4 Examination Attendance and Invigilation Record detailing the suspected breach of the Examination Regulations

3.5.5 Supporting evidence e.g. report generated by Plagiarism Detection Software Tool.

3.6 The Chairperson of the HET/FET Programme Committee refers the matter to the Chairperson of the Disciplinary Committee to determine classification and sanction of academic misconduct.

4.0   Procedure for Classification and Sanction of Academic Misconduct

4.1   In cases where the academic misconduct requires referral to the Disciplinary Committee, the learner will be notified, in writing, by the Programme Co-ordinator, of the suspected infringement. The Chairperson of Academic Integrity Committee is also notified.

4.2   The learner is invited to attend the disciplinary hearing and is entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by a support person.

   4.2.1   The learner against whom the allegation is made, must be given at least five working days' notice of the time and place of the hearing.

   4.2.2   In the event that a learner fails to attend the disciplinary hearing, a second hearing is convened. Should the learner fail to attend the second convened hearing, the hearing proceeds in the absence of the learner and a decision is taken on the evidence available.

4.3   The companion, if required, attends the meeting as a support person for the learner and will not be considered as a legal representative.

4.4   The learner is provided with an opportunity to discuss the work submitted and respond to any questions raised

4.5   The Disciplinary Committee evaluates the alleged breach of academic integrity and establishes whether or not it constitutes academic misconduct.

4.6   The Disciplinary Committee records the outcome of the hearing using the relevant sections of the Academic Integrity Report Form.

5.0   Panel Decisions

5.1   If it is agreed that academic misconduct has not taken place the learner's awarded assessment grade stands or the learner is afforded the opportunity to re-sit the examination and the case is suspended;

5.2   If it is agreed that academic misconduct has taken place, refer to *Rubric to Map Classifications of Academic Misconduct to Sanctions (Appendix 2).*

5.3   The learner will be notified in writing, by the Chairperson, of the panel decision and the penalty and appeals procedure within three working days of the disciplinary hearing.

1.0 Document Control

Document Title	Procedure on Academic Integrity Detection and Management of Academic Misconduct	
Author	*Academic Integrity Committee*	
Version Control	Version	Date of Approval
	Version 2.0	*21/01/2025*
Policy review		
Supporting documentation	- European Commission. (2019). *Academic Integrity – fighting plagiarism, academic misconduct and fraud in higher education* [online]. Available from: https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/media/file-uploads/ACA.pdf [accessed 23 January 2022]. - Hibernia College. (2019). *Academic Impropriety Investigation in Coursework Procedure* [online]. Available from: https://qualityframework.hiberniacollege.com/download.php?id=34&version=1 [accessed 20 June 2022]. - National Academic Integrity Network (2023) Framework for Academic Misconduct and Case Management. Dublin: Quality and Qualifications Ireland. Available from: https://www.qqi.ie/sites/default/files/2023-09/NAIN%20Framework%20for%20%20Academic%20Misconduct%20Investigation%20and%20Case%20Management%202023.pdf [accessed 19th January 2024]. - Regional Centre of Nursing and Midwifery Education. (2009). *Quality Assurance Policies and Procedures RCNME*. Tullamore: Regional Centre of Nursing and Midwifery Education.	
Related Policy & Procedures	- Policy on Assessment of Learners [PDF, 8 Pages] - Policy on Reasonable Accommodation in Assessment [PDF, 5 Pages] - Policy on Submission of Assessment [PDF, 4 Pages] - Procedure on Submission of Assessment [PDF, 5 Pages] - Procedure on Regulations for the Conduct of Written Examinations [PDF, 8 Pages] - Procedure on Grading and Certification of Learner Assessment [PDF, 8 Pages] - Procedure for Internal Verification as part of the Authentication Process (FET) [PDF, 4 Pages] - Policy on External Authentication (FET) [PDF, 6 Pages] - Policy on Promoting and Maintaining Academic Integrity [PDF, 7 Pages] - Policy on External Examination (HET) [PDF, 9 Pages] - Policy on Assessment Appeals [PDF, 7 Pages]	

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	• [Procedure on Review, Recheck and Appeal of Learner Assessment Decisions](#) [PDF, 6 Pages] • [Policy on Supports for Learners](#) [PDF, 4 Pages] • [Policy on Data Protection, Usage & Management](#) [PDF, 7 Pages] • [Learner Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy](#) [PDF, 5 Pages]
Related resources	• A Tariff Score System to Determine the Level of Academic Infringement [Appendix 1] • Rubric to Map Classifications of Academic Misconduct to Sanctions [Appendix 2]

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Appendix 1: A Tariff Score System to Determine the Level of Academic Infringement (Adapted from NAIN (2023) Framework

A learner assignment is any piece of academic work to be completed by learners for the purposes of academic grading including but not limited to examinations, in-class assessments, assignments, or project work. Descriptors in bold text are derived from NAIN's 'Academic Integrity: National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms' which in turn may derive from definitions used internationally as referenced in the Lexicon

Criterion #1 Number of previous violations

The guidelines support the principle that cases involving learners with a history of academic integrity violations warrant a more serious disciplinary response. A violation is determined to have occurred when a learner previously accepted responsibility or was held responsible for an academic integrity violation

1st Violation	20	
2nd Violation	50	
3rd Violation	100	

Criterion #2: Types of Violations

The guidelines support the principle that more serious violations warrant more serious disciplinary actions.

Basic Violations / Assignment Misconduct	Basic violations, include, but are not limited to, submitting a portion of the same material more than once without prior authorisation; giving your own academic work to others even when doing so was not explicitly prohibited; attendance/participation points misrepresentation; violation of instructor policies if behaviour not listed elsewhere in the guidelines; poor academic writing skill e.g., poor referencing or the passing off of somebody else's ideas as if originally discovered by the learner, or small errors made through carelessness or misunderstanding	15
Limited Plagiarism	Limited plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, presenting work / ideas taken from other sources without proper acknowledgement. Paraphrasing from sources without attribution; verbatim copying from sources without attribution when what was copied was not a critical aspect (key, central ideas) of the assignment and was less than 30% of the assignment; looking online for a solution to an assignment and copying that solution/ answer in whole or in part.	25
Collusion	Undisclosed collaboration between two or more people on an assignment or task, which was supposed to be completed individually. Collusion includes unauthorised collaboration; inappropriate or unauthorised collaboration by two or more people in the production and submission of assessment task; learners providing their work to another learner before the submission deadline, or for the purpose of the other learner's plagiarism at any time. Allowing another (e.g., friend / relative / roommate / classmate / tutor) to edit / write / translate one's assignment without acknowledging that help.	100

Criterion #2: Types of Violations		
The guidelines support the principle that more serious violations warrant more serious disciplinary actions.		
Falsification / Fabrication	Falsification/Fabrication includes, but is not limited to, altering a graded assessment provided by another person and submitting for re-grade; fabricating data for a lab or research assignment; submitting data you didn't yourself collect; lying/giving a false excuse to miss or receive unfair accommodation on an assessment. Types of major misconduct in an education setting: Forging educational images, data, equipment or processes so that they are inaccurately represented. Fabrication: Fabrication in the context of research means making up data, experiments, or other significant information in proposing conducting or reporting research.	125
Exam Cheating	Intentional cheating: Intentional action or behaviour that violates established rules and gives one learner an unfair advantage over another. Exam cheating includes, but is not limited to, copying from another or allowing another to copy during a supervised exam; having an unapproved aid directly related to the exam (e.g., 'cheat sheets'; course-related notes; textbook; whether electronically or hard copy); having ubiquitous smart technology (e.g., cell phone, smart watch) accessible during an exam	175
Fraud / Impersonation	Actions that are intended to deceive for unfair advantage by violating academic regulations. Using intentional deception to gain academic credit. Fraud includes some of the most egregious violations – e.g. stealing or fraudulently obtaining answers to an assessment prompt/exam before submitting the assessment for grading; changing/helping to change any recorded assignment or course grade on an instructor's or university record; illicitly obtaining an assessment completed by another (without their knowledge) and submitting it (in part or whole) as one's own; submitting fake or false documents (e.g. medical notes)	225
Contract Cheating	Form of academic misconduct when a person uses an undeclared and/or unauthorised third party, online or directly, to assist them to produce work for academic credit or progression, whether or not payment or other favour is involved. Contract cheating is any behaviour whereby a learner arranges to have another person or entity ('the provider') complete (in part or total) an assessment (e.g. exam, test, quiz, assignment, paper, project, problems) for the learner. If the provider is also a student, both students are in violation	225
Criterion #3: Stage in the Learner Taught Programme		
The guideline supports the principle that learners further along in their academic study should be more knowledgeable about academic integrity. Thus, the seriousness of disciplinary actions increases concurrently with the amount of experience a learner has at the institution.		
Year 1	25	

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Criterion #4a: Value of the Assessment		
The guideline supports the principle that violations are more serious when they occur in more highly valued work. Thus, the seriousness of disciplinary actions increases concurrently with the value of the assessment.		
The assessment in question is < 25% of the total marks possible for the module	20	
The assessment in question is > 25% and < 50% of the total marks possible for the module	30	
The assessment in question is > 50% of the total marks possible for the module	50	
Criterion #4b: Value of the Assessment		
The module carries up to 5 ECTS	15	
The module carries more than 5 ECTS but less than or equal to 10 ECTS	30	
The module carries more than 10 ECTS	apply 15 points per 5 ECTS	
Criteria #5: Additional Considerations		
The additional considerations address common but atypical situations, such as learners who may have had very specific training in class on academic integrity or learners who have taken action to hide their violation.		
Evidence that the programme/class/instructor offered enhanced academic integrity education to the learners	25	
Evidence that the learner previously completed academic integrity training through e.g. programme content	50	
Evidence that the learner failed to complete academic integrity training assigned as a result of a previous violation	75	

Learner Total Score: Max (* based on a max 30 ECTS module)	505	

Classification can be determined based on the total score as follows:

• Level 1: 0-200

• Level 2: 201-450

• Level 3: 451+

Appendix 2: Rubric to Map Classifications of Academic Misconduct to Sanctions

Level 1 (Poor Academic practice / conduct)	Points range	Disciplinary Actions
	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*.

		Rubric to Map Classifications of Academic Misconduct to Sanctions
Level 2 Academic Misconduct (Minor Infringement)	**Points range**	**Disciplinary Actions**
	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 - 450	*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 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.

Rubric to Map Classifications of Academic Misconduct to Sanctions

Level 3 Severe academic misconduct (Major Infringement)	Points range	Disciplinary Actions
	451 - 505	*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 as a supplemental assessment with a cap on the module grade and on award classification if at award stage.
		c) Award of zero for the module mark and credits awarded for progression, with an opportunity to resit the assessment.
		d) Award a 'fail' mark for the assessment component with an opportunity to resubmit the assessment for grading. If passed, credit for the module will be awarded in recognition of the learning outcomes being met, but a module mark of pass only will be recorded.
		e) 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.
		f) 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.
		g) 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 will also limit 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.

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