

## **PLAGIARISM POLICY**

### **Regulations on Unfair Practices and Disciplinary Action & Procedure**

#### **Introduction:**

These regulations have been made to ensure the academic integrity and professional reputation of Whitechapel College (“College”) examinations, assessments and awards. They will promote integrity and produce guidelines for both students and staff to achieve excellence in learning

While this is a policy document for the College and all staff and students, its main purpose is to alert students whose action, intentional or otherwise, may constitute unfair practice in examinations and assessments and how students should avoid them; information and strategies designed to prevent unfair practice; procedures to be followed where unfair practice is alleged; penalties that may be imposed where an allegation of unfair practice is established; procedures for appeal in the event of a finding of unfair practice and the sanctions that can be imposed.

For members of the College staff this policy document is the authority for them to be vigilant in identifying and tackling unfair practices and to encourage them to report such malpractice to their department heads.

#### **General Principles:**

It shall be the duty of the College to investigate all allegations of unfair practice and where evidence exists to assess the evidence of such unfair practice against the student or students and to take appropriate measures in accordance with the procedure set out in this document.

An allegation of unfair practice shall be treated seriously by the College and investigated thoroughly, and may be determined as an alleged infringement or as an alleged violation according to the definitions and criteria set out below.

The College shall ensure absolute fairness in the procedures it sets and follows to safeguard the students and members of staff. To enable this ideal to be achieved any member of staff who raises such allegations against a student shall have no part to play in appeal procedure herein, other than as a witness of fact.

#### **Student Education Information on Unfair Practice:**

The College shall publish these Unfair Practice Regulations & Procedures, and make them available to students, at various stages by including them in the prospectus, at enrolment and at the start of the programme.

The College shall furthermore alert students to the Unfair Practice Regulations & Procedures during the induction period at the start of the programme.

The College shall provide guidance to students on the best practices and procedures & conventions to be followed appropriate to their disciplines including correctly giving references and citing sources in their work. Whenever a student submits an assignment or other work, they shall be required to certify in writing that the work presented is their own and that any contributions derived from third parties or other sources have been properly attributed in accordance with instructions on giving references and citing sources and established practice. Furthermore the students will be required to give their authority that their work may be submitted to such as turnitin or viper to assess it for possible plagiarism

Any student found to have committed an infringement or a violation in relation to these regulations shall, depending on the nature of the offence, be offered further guidance and training to make sure that the procedures are not breached again. However this is, without prejudice, to right of the College to take disciplinary action, if the nature of the breach warrants it or such a breach has been committed by the student before.

At all times the paramount consideration shall be the preservation of the integrity of the College and the awarding bodies and the College will take all appropriate steps to achieve this aim.

### **What is Unfair Practice?**

An unfair practice is defined as any act, or attempted act of a student, which leads to the obtaining of an unfair advantage on his/her programme particularly in an examination or assessment. It also includes any act, which leads to an unfair result or grade and covers cheating, plagiarism and similar activity. It is intended that no perpetrator of such unfair practice will be advantaged over other students who have conducted their examinations and assessments honestly. Where an infringement or other violation of the regulations is suspected, the College will investigate such conduct. In the event an unfair practice has been proved the College's initial aim shall be to educate the students as to the concept and meaning of an unfair practice and to explain why it is necessary to avoid such unfair practice and the student will be expected to refrain from any future malpractice.

### **Criteria for identifying infringements and violations.**

Where a case of unfair practice is suspected, an assessment will be made as to whether the student's conduct does amount to an infringement of the regulations and whether such violation is a minor breach or a fundamental breach. In distinguishing between minor and fundamental the following criteria will be taken into account:

- (a) the impact of the violation;
- (b) the circumstances in which the violation was committed;
- (c) the student's capability and whether or not the violation was intentional or reckless.

### **Initial Assessment of Unfair Practice: The Exercise of Discretion**

Where an unfair practice is found to have occurred, in deciding on a penalty, discretion must be exercised having regard to all the circumstances appropriate to the case and taking account of the criteria listed under the heading of 'What acts can amount to Unfair Practice' below and in addition:

- (a) relevant details of circumstances of the student or students alleged to have committed the unfair practice;
- (b) whether a penalty was more appropriate which aimed to develop the student's understanding of what constitutes unfair practice or alternatively which aimed to protect the integrity of the assessment process;
- (c) established and documented practice on the past treatment of related cases.

**What acts can amount to Unfair Practice:**

Examples of unfair practice include but are not limited to the following:

**Plagiarism:**

Examples of plagiarism are supplied below, but the examples are not exhaustive and other possible violations may be covered in the definition of unfair practice:

- (a) copying the work of any another person without proper acknowledgement;
- (b) copying from any text books without proper acknowledgement;
- (c) downloading and incorporating material from the internet in any assignment without proper acknowledgement;
- (d) paraphrasing, imitating or passing off the work of another without proper acknowledgement.

**Collusion:**

Collusion is the act of aiding, or being aided by any other person in the preparation or final production of an assessment for submission to an examiner. This is committed where the General or Programme Assessment Regulations do not expressly permit collaboration, and where the assessment is submitted or otherwise presented by a student as his/her own original work. Specific examples are as follows, but these are not exhaustive:

- (a) unauthorised collaboration in the preparation for an assignment or a seen assessment is collusion.
- (b) communication with another student during an unseen examination.

Collaboration in the course of a moot or group project where it is explicitly permitted by the regulations does not constitute collusion. Examination or assessment regulations cover and include any formal documents issued by Examining bodies.

**Fabrication:**

Fabrication is the presentation of data or other findings, which are falsely represented to be based on empirical research. It includes, inter alia, presenting surveys that were never completed or were inadequately completed and other data, which has been deliberately invented or falsified.

**Impersonation:**

Impersonation is the act of one person assuming the identity of another with the intent to gain an unfair advantage for the impersonated person. An example is undertaking of an examination on the other person's behalf. Both parties, the impersonator and the impersonated, shall prima facie be considered guilty of an unfair practice where such occurs.

**Other examples of unfair practice are as follows:**

- (a) during an examination it is not acceptable to be in possession of prohibited materials or any other unauthorised items.
- (b) mobile phones and handheld devices within an examination or assessment room unless expressly permitted by the examination and assessment regulations;
- (c) using unauthorised material, including electronic devices or item in an examination or unseen assessment;
- (d) consulting or trying to consult any books, electronic devices, notes or similar materials while temporarily absent from the examination room during the period of the examination.
- (e) gaining access to a copy of an examination paper or assessment material in advance of its authorised release how so ever obtained.
- (f) helping or trying to help another student; obtaining or trying to obtain help from another student;
- (g) attempting to influence any examination or similar officer of Whitechapel College to obtain an undeserved mark or grade by any form of bribery or other inducement.
- (h) applying for any privilege or concession based on mitigating circumstances, which have been falsely presented and concocted; submitting evidence in support of mitigation, which is misleading, untrue or false.
- (i) exceeding the specified word limit in any assessment by declaring a lower word count than the assessment permits.

**Procedures to be followed when Unfair Practice is suspected.**

A member of staff suspecting unfair practice must:

- (a) clarify the nature of the action suspected of constituting unfair practice, identify relevant evidence and complete a report on the action.
- (b) where an alleged unfair practice occurs contemporaneously with its discovery and where it is necessary to interrupt the student involved, for example to prevent the unfair practice continuing or to secure evidence, the member of staff involved shall, if feasible, complete a contemporaneous report and shall invite the student to verify the report and /or to add a statement to the report;
- (c) the staff member shall submit the completed report form to the programme leader for the programme to which the alleged unfair practice relates.

The programme leader shall evaluate the case presented and seek an explanation from the student concerned, after which he may decide whether to:

- (a) dismiss the case and inform the student within five working days of receiving the report; or,

(b) recommend to the Academic Director to proceed with the case under the infringements procedure; or

(c) recommend to the Academic Director to proceed with the case under the violations procedure. Where the programme leader discovers the unfair practice they shall prepare the report and a person nominated by the Chief Executive, shall adopt the role of the programme leader.

The programme leader must make a recommendation to the Academic Director within five working days, or as soon as reasonably practicable.

The Academic Director, having taken account of all the circumstances, shall either:

- confirm the recommendation of the programme leader;

or

- amend the recommendation of the programme leader such that the case is progressed under the alternative head; or
- reject the recommendation of the programme leader and dismiss the case.

The Academic Director shall inform the student concerned of his or her decision in writing within three working days of receiving the report. If the decision is to proceed with the allegation the letter shall set out the allegation and the range of sanctions that might be imposed and invite the student, within five working days, to explain the allegation and to provide any relevant evidence in support. If the student admits the allegation they may provide any evidence explaining their actions and such mitigating evidence as they wish to put forward.

The range of sanctions that might be imposed range from an informal warning, counselling, written warning, final written warning and removal from the College

### **Academic programmes covered by Statutory and Professional Body**

In any programme, which leads to the award from a Statutory or Professional body, or on any programme accredited by a Statutory or Professional body the College will report any violation of the unfair practice regulation to the body concerned where the College is obliged by contract to so do.

### **Appeals and Procedure:**

The College has set up the following appeal procedure where a student has been found to be violation of the unfairness procedure and wishes to appeal to an Academic Appeals Panel against a sanction imposed. After hearing the Appeal the Academic Appeal Panel may recommend a sanction, which can be the same as originally imposed or it may recommend a different sanction from the range of sanctions from a written warning, final written warning to removal from the College in extreme cases

### **Grounds of Appeal:**

A student may appeal against the decision of a programme leader in the case of infringements or the Unfair Practice Panel in the case of violations, on the grounds that:

- (a) there is reasonable ground supported by objective evidence to believe that there has been administrative or procedural error of such a nature as to have affected the outcome of the investigation;
- (b) the decision of the programme leader in the case of infringements and the Unfair

- Practice Panel in the case of violations was against the weight of the evidence;
- (c) the penalty imposed was unreasonable;
  - (d) that no reasonable body could have come to such a decision
  - (e) there is new evidence that for good reason, objectively and authoritatively documented, could not reasonably be submitted earlier.

### **Appeal time limits**

Appeals must be lodged within 10 working days from the date of the posting of the letter from the programme leader.

The College will consider an appeal lodged out of time only where the student is able to prove to the satisfaction of the College that due to special circumstances the appeal could not be lodged in time. The special circumstances shall be determined as a preliminary issue by the Board.

### **Procedure for lodging an appeal**

An appeal must be made in writing and it must include:

- (a) the appellant's full name, address and date of birth, and the course reference number;
- (b) the ground(s) of appeal;
- (c) any other evidence by way of statements or documents the appellant wishes to rely upon.

### **Appeal Bundles**

The student appellant is responsible for ensuring that all evidence that he intends to rely upon is sent to the College seven days before the Hearing and that two copies of the bundle are supplied

Any evidence referred to in the appeal form but not appended to it and not included in the appeal bundle will not be taken into account by the College, unless the student appellant can show that the said documents were not available earlier, in spite of reasonable attempts to obtain them.

Documentary evidence appended to an appeal may be copies of the original documents but the student appellant may be required to produce original documents for inspection on request or at the hearing.

### **Procedure to be followed leading up to Hearing**

Upon receipt of an appeal the College will issue the student appellant with an acknowledgement of receipt, which the student must retain as proof that an appeal has been submitted.

The College will determine, within ten working days, whether the information presented by the student satisfies the condition for a valid appeal.

The College will inform the student in writing that either:

- (a) the appeal does not satisfy the conditions for a valid appeal and is rejected together with the reasons for the rejection.
- (b) that the appeal is valid and will proceed forward to a hearing.

If the Appeal proceeds forward then the College shall advise the student appellant of the date and place of hearing and the time when the appeal shall be heard.

The College shall provide the student with written information on the procedure to be followed at the hearing.

The student appellant shall be advised that he or she may be represented by a friend or relative or such other person as shall be approved by the Academic Appeals Panel.

The student appellant shall advise the College if they require an interpreter and the language required.

**Procedure at the Hearing:**

The Academic Appeals Panel shall determine the procedure to be followed at the hearing, subject to the general principles of fairness and the duty to give all sides a fair opportunity to present their case. Generally the hearing will follow these steps.

The case against the student appellant shall be outlined and evidence presented by way of documents and witnesses.

The student appellant shall have opportunity to cross examine the witnesses. The student appellant will present his or her case including any documents they wish to rely upon and witness evidence. The Academic Appeal Panel may ask any questions.

There shall be final submissions by the College and the student appellant.

The Academic Appeals Panel may retire to consider their decision or give decision immediately. In any event a copy of a written decision shall be sent to appellant student within ten working days setting out the findings of the Academic Appeals Panel and any sanctions that it recommends.

**Post decisions actions:**

Any sanctions recommended by the Academic Appeal Panel shall be imposed by the Academic Director of the College within seven days of the decision.

**Review**

The efficacy of the Unfair Practice Regulations will be monitored, evaluated and reviewed annually. An annual report will be published to supply any deficiencies identified by the report. The review will be communicated to the relevant Authorities.