

## Academic Misconduct Policy

### Introduction

1. BEC Teacher Training (BECTT) has a duty to maintain academic standards by ensuring the integrity of all aspects of the assessment process and is concerned to ensure that the regulations and policies governing assessment are fairly implemented. To this end, BECTT will take action against any trainee who contravenes these regulations and policies, whether inadvertently or through negligence or deliberate intent, and who, by so doing, could gain unfair advantage over other trainees. This aligns with the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education's (QAA) Quality Code Advice and Guidance for assessment that institutions ensure that "trainees do not obtain credit or awards through any form of unacceptable academic practice relating to assessment." BECTT also recognises its responsibility to "implement effective measures to encourage trainees to develop and internalise academic values and good academic practice."

### Scope

2. This policy applies to all trainees enrolled on BECTT's course. It covers any academic misconduct in any form of assessment including assignments, written tasks, reflective journal entries, assessed coursework (in whatever form the coursework might take) and oral/practical assessments.
3. There is no time limit beyond which academic misconduct will not be investigated. Suspected academic misconduct, whether discovered before or after completion of the course, will be investigated and dealt with in accordance with this policy. Where academic misconduct is proven after work has been formally assessed, this may lead to the withdrawal of awards previously ratified by an Assessment Board or withdrawal of a conferred award.
4. In addition to consideration under this policy, all proven offences of academic misconduct by trainees on courses leading to professional registration will be referred to the relevant Fitness to Practise Group for further consideration under the Fitness to Practise Policy.
5. Depending on the nature of the offence, trainees may also be subject to additional action under the Trainee Discipline Policy.

### Principles

6. BECTT expects that all work submitted for assessment by trainees is the trainee's own work, without falsification of any kind. Trainees are expected to offer their own analysis and presentation of information gleaned from research, even when group exercises are carried out. Insofar as trainees rely on sources, they should reference these in accordance with the appropriate convention in their discipline.
7. It is the responsibility of the trainee to familiarise themselves with the rules governing assessment including the correct academic conventions for referencing and acknowledging the work of others.
8. Allegations of academic misconduct will be treated in the strictest confidence. No trainee will be recorded, or referred to, as having committed an academic misconduct offence until the full process (as detailed in paragraphs 33 to 60) has been completed and the allegation proven.

## **Definitions of Academic Misconduct**

9. Academic misconduct typically falls under one of the following headings:
- Plagiarism
  - Collusion
  - Fabrication
  - Cheating
  - Failure to have ethical approval

### **Plagiarism**

10. Plagiarism is defined as the presentation of another person's work or ideas as the trainee's own, without proper acknowledgement. This could be in direct copy or close paraphrase.
11. In the context of the policy, another person's work or ideas includes text, images (graphics, illustrations or photographs), designs, computer code, diagrams, data and formulae or any other representation of ideas (written, visual or oral) in print, electronic or other media, and may be from any published or unpublished source including books, journals, newspapers, the internet, course handouts or another trainee's work.
12. Plagiarism can occur in assessment which may take a variety of forms including, but not limited to, assignments, tasks, reports, presentations, reflective journal entries and projects.
13. The reproduction of a trainee's own previously submitted work, without acknowledgement, is regarded as self-plagiarism and will be treated in the same way as any other form of plagiarism.
14. Collusion is the unauthorised co-operation between at least two people, normally with the intent to deceive. It can take the following forms:
- a. the conspiring by two or more trainees to produce a piece of work together with the intention that at least one passes it off as his/her own work
  - b. the submission by a trainee of the work of another trainee in circumstances where the former has willingly lent the latter the work, and where it should be evident to the trainee lending the work that by so doing an advantage could be gained by the other trainee. In this case both trainees are guilty of collusion
  - c. the unauthorised co-operation between a trainee and another person in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the trainee's own work
  - d. the commissioning and submission of work as the trainee's own where the trainee has paid or solicited another person to produce the work on the trainee's behalf
15. Various forms of collaborative assessment undertaken in accordance with published requirements evidently do not fall under the heading of collusion.

### **Fabrication**

16. Fabrication is the invention, alteration or falsification of data and evidence that contributes towards assessment. This includes data such as: the origin and results of questionnaires; research data; certificated or portfolio evidence in claims for the recognition of prior learning; and entries and signatures in records of assessment of practice in the workplace.

17. Where a trainee enrolled on a course leading to professional registration is alleged to have committed an offence of fabrication, the trainee may instead or additionally be subject to action under the Fitness to Practise Policy.
18. Allegations of fabrication of research data may instead or additionally be considered under the Research Misconduct Policy.

### **Cheating**

19. This includes any behaviour which the trainee would reasonably know would interfere with the fair operation of the assessment process and could gain unfair advantage, such as:
  - behaviour in a manner likely to prejudice the chances of another trainee in an assessment;
  - offering a bribe or inducement to invigilators, examiners or other persons connected with the assessments;
  - being party to an arrangement whereby a person other than the trainee would fraudulently represent him/her at an assessment;
  - submitting a fraudulent claim for extenuating circumstances.

### **Definition of Poor Academic Practice**

20. The term “poor academic practice” is used in the context of this policy to cover instances where the work submitted for assessment includes evidence that the trainee has attempted to acknowledge another person’s work but has not correctly or consistently done so in accordance with the appropriate academic convention of their discipline. A first instance of poor academic practice should not normally lead to a formal allegation of academic misconduct, particularly if it occurs in the first semester of the trainee’s course. However, the course team should ensure that the trainee is provided with appropriate feedback and guidance to avoid such practice in future assessments and to develop their academic writing skills.

### **PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH SUSPECTED CASES OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

21. All suspicions of academic misconduct must be reported to the Executive Director for consideration before any allegation of academic misconduct is put to the trainee. Where the suspected academic misconduct is discovered by the marker (for example in work submitted), he/she should discuss their suspicions with the Executive Director.
22. It is the responsibility of the person raising the suspicions to clearly set out the nature of their suspicions and provide supporting evidence showing how and where the suspected academic misconduct has taken place.
23. Where a marker suspects academic misconduct, he/she will, if appropriate, note on the trainee's work the nature of the alleged offence and report their concerns to the Executive Director.
24. Any suspected academic misconduct should be reported to the Executive Director as soon as possible after initial discovery, and normally no later than ten working days (excluding school holiday periods) after the relevant submission date to allow time for consideration by the Executive Director before the normal release of feedback to trainees.

### **Consideration by the Executive Director**

25. Upon receipt of any reports of suspected academic misconduct, the Executive Director will consider the evidence provided and decide how to proceed. Training and guidelines for the consideration of

suspected academic misconduct will be provided to all staff. It is important for staff to be aware that in some instances, particularly in the early stages of a course, it might not always be appropriate to proceed to a formal allegation. In particular the Executive Director should satisfy him or herself that the trainee has been given appropriate advice on attributing sources and the production of bibliographies prior to assessment.

26. Having reviewed the evidence, the Executive Director will decide that either:
  - no offence has been committed;
  - there is insufficient evidence of an offence;
  - there is poor academic practice; or
  - there is sufficient evidence that an offence may have been committed.
27. If the Executive Director decides that no offence has been committed, he/she shall request the marker to consider the work on its academic merits and mark it in accordance with the assessment criteria. No further action will be taken with the trainee.
28. If the Executive Director decides that there is insufficient evidence of an offence, he/she shall request the marker to consider the work on its academic merits and mark it in accordance with the assessment criteria. He/she may also recommend that the trainee is made aware of the concerns and offer further support and guidance to avoid any similar concerns about their academic practice in future. This advice, along with details of where to go for further support, should be given to the trainee with the feedback on their assessment.
29. If the Executive Director decides that there is poor academic practice, for first instances he/she shall request the marker to consider the work on its academic merits and mark it in accordance with the assessment criteria. In such cases, the trainee should be issued with a warning about their academic practice. The warning should be issued by the Executive Director verbally and/or in writing. If this is a second instance, the Executive Director may decide to proceed to a formal allegation.
30. If the Executive Director decides that there is sufficient evidence that an offence may have been committed, he/she shall proceed to a formal allegation.
31. To proceed to a formal allegation, the marker in liaison with the Executive Director should:
  - a. complete the Allegation of Academic Misconduct form (Appendix B) with the following information:
    - the trainee's name, ITT course details;
    - module details, including information about the weighting of the component of assessment;
    - the formal allegation to be put to the trainee;
    - a summary of the alleged offence.
  - b. collate the relevant supporting evidence, with the assistance of the Course Director/Programme Administrator. This may include:
    - a report of the incident, where relevant;
    - a copy, or the original of, unauthorised material used;
    - a copy of the original script marked with the allegedly plagiarised passages or passages where there is suspected collusion;
    - a copy of source material marked with passages which have allegedly been plagiarised or where there is suspected collusion;
    - a copy of the instructions given to the trainee regarding the component of assessment and a copy of the referencing instructions given to the trainee where relevant;

- a copy of any relevant material that has allegedly been fabricated (for example: the record of practice or work-based evidence; assignments, tasks; reflective journal entries and certificated or portfolio evidence in claims for recognition of prior learning);
- any other evidence to support the allegation.

32. The completed Allegation of Academic Misconduct form (Appendix B) and supporting documentation should be submitted to the Accounting Officer for the formal allegation to be put to the trainee.

### **Formal Allegation**

33. Upon receipt of the Allegation of Academic Misconduct form (Appendix B) and supporting documentation from the Executive Director, the Accounting Officer shall write to the trainee concerned to:
- a. put the allegation as defined by the Executive Director;
  - b. request a written statement in response to the allegation and submission of any evidence he/she deems appropriate;
  - c. request confirmation of whether the trainee also wishes to attend an investigative meeting of the Academic Misconduct Panel to respond in person;
  - d. request a reply within ten working days of the date on which the letter is sent;
  - e. enclose a copy of this policy;
  - f. enclose copies of any evidence or reports.
34. The letter from the Accounting Officer to the trainee shall be copied to the relevant Chair of the Assessment Board, Executive Director, Course Director and Programme Administrator. Where possible, every effort should be made to resolve the matter before the meeting of the Assessment Board. However, where it remains unresolved, the Assessment Board will record a deferred decision (DD).
35. If no written reply to the allegation is received from the trainee within ten working days of the date on which the letter is sent, this is deemed to be acceptance of the allegation. In such cases, the Accounting Officer will refer the case to the Academic Misconduct Panel for consideration (see paragraphs 39 to 47 below).
36. If the trainee replies accepting the allegation and does not wish to also respond in person, the Accounting Officer will refer the case to the Academic Misconduct Panel for consideration (see paragraphs 39 to 47 below).
37. If the trainee replies denying the allegation, or if he/she asks to also respond in person, the Accounting Officer shall invite the trainee to attend an investigative meeting of the Academic Misconduct Panel (see paragraphs 39 to 44 and 48 to 58 below). The trainee should be given at least five working days' notice of the meeting.
38. While the allegation remains unresolved, the trainee shall have the right to continue on the course or commence the next part or stage of the course (where permitted within the relevant assessment regulations) unless the alleged offence is deemed by the Accounting Officer to jeopardise the welfare of the subject (pupil) and/or contravene any relevant professional code of conduct and/or is incompatible with behaviour required by the profession. In these circumstances, the Accounting Officer shall make a report to the Strategic and Finance Board to determine whether action under the Fitness to Practise Policy should proceed concurrently.

## **Academic Misconduct Panel**

39. The Academic Misconduct Panel (the Panel) shall comprise:

- Chair of Compass Education Trust Ltd
- At least two members of academic staff

Membership of the Panel may be varied to ensure that the academic staff members are not considering any allegations concerning their own subjects, but have the necessary understanding of the discipline to inform discussions. A representative from the SCITT office will be in attendance to record the Panel's decision and justification for that decision.

40. The Panel will be convened at regular intervals to consider all formal allegations of academic misconduct. This will ensure consistency of approach. The Panel has the authority to determine:

- a. that no offence has been committed, or there is insufficient evidence of an offence, in which case the allegation will be removed from the trainee's record; or
- b. that an offence has been committed and recommend the penalty to be imposed, as set out in the Academic Misconduct Penalties (Appendix A).

41. The decision of the Panel as to whether an offence has been committed is final and will be reported to the trainee and relevant Assessment Board. The Assessment Board will consider the penalty recommended by the Panel and inform the trainee of the penalty imposed and the impact of that penalty on their studies and/or award.

42. In determining whether an offence has been committed, the judgement will be made on the balance of probability.

43. In determining the recommended penalty, the Panel will take into account:

- a. the severity of the offence;
- b. the intent;
- c. whether it is a first or subsequent offence;
- d. the academic stage of the trainee;
- e. any mitigation;
- f. the proportionality of the penalty to the offence.

44. BECTT does not normally accept a trainee's medical or personal circumstances as an excuse or reason for academic misconduct. However, where the Panel deems that the evidenced circumstances have severely impaired the trainee's capacity for rational judgement, the Panel may take account of the circumstances in determining the recommended penalty for the offence.

### **Standard meeting of the Academic Misconduct Panel**

45. The consideration of accepted allegations of academic misconduct where the trainee does not wish to also respond in person need not involve a physical meeting of members of the Panel if alternative methods of discussion and mutual deliberation are available.
46. The documentation for accepted allegations will be distributed to the Panel for consideration within five working days of receipt of the trainee's written acceptance or once the ten working day deadline has passed in cases where no response has been received.
47. The Panel's decision and recommended penalty will be based on the documentary evidence provided.

### **Investigative meeting of the Academic Misconduct Panel**

48. Where a trainee denies the allegation, or wishes to respond to the allegation in person, an investigative meeting of the Panel will be arranged. This will normally take place no later than twenty working days after the date of the letter putting the formal allegation to the trainee.
49. The Accounting Officer will inform the trainee, in writing, of the date, time and venue of the investigative meeting. The meeting will normally take place at the SCITT office.
50. The trainee may be accompanied at the meeting by a friend. A friend is defined as a member of staff of BECTT or a registered trainee of BECTT, or a member of staff or sabbatical officer of a teachers' union. The role of the friend is to act as an observer, give moral support and to assist the trainee to make their case. In addition, where reasonable adjustments are required, a trainee may be accompanied by a supporter eg. a sign language communicator or a notetaker, and a trainee with difficulty in understanding English may be accompanied by an interpreter.
51. If the trainee does not appear at the meeting, the Panel may proceed with the consideration of the allegation in the trainee's absence provided the Panel is satisfied that the trainee has received proper and timely notification of the meeting.
52. The Chair of the Panel shall explain that the purpose of the meeting is to establish whether an offence of academic misconduct has been committed. He/she will put the allegation to the trainee and make available for scrutiny any relevant documentary evidence, including any statements by staff or trainees, sources of allegedly plagiarised passages and/or passages where collusion is suspected, annotated coursework or scripts, and falsified documents.
53. The trainee will make a statement in response to the allegation, following which the members of the Panel have the right to put any questions to the trainee.
54. At any time during the meeting, the Chair of the Panel may decide to suspend proceedings in order to seek more evidence. The trainee will be advised of the action that will be taken and the date of the reconvened meeting.
55. If the trainee admits the offence at the meeting, the Chair of the Panel shall invite the trainee to sign a written statement to this effect.
56. At the end of the questioning, the trainee will be asked to leave the meeting for the Panel to deliberate and reach its decision in private.

57. The Panel shall determine its decision based on the written and oral evidence. If the Panel finds that there is no case to answer, the Chair will inform the trainee accordingly, in writing via the Accounting Officer, and all record of the alleged academic misconduct will be removed from the trainee's record. The Executive Director, Course Director, Programme Administrator and the Chair of the Assessment Board will be informed of the decision and the work will then be marked on its academic merit.
58. If the Panel finds that an offence of academic misconduct has been committed, the Panel will agree a penalty to be recommended to the Assessment Board.

#### **Notification to Trainee and Assessment Board**

59. The decision of the Panel will be communicated to the trainee and the relevant Assessment Board in writing within five working days of the Panel meeting (or conclusion of the Panel deliberations if a physical meeting is not held).
60. The notification to the trainee will include the decision and the rationale for the decision. The Assessment Board will also be notified of the recommended penalty.

#### **Action by Assessment Board**

61. Following receipt of the Panel's decision, the Assessment Board will meet (where necessary as an extraordinary meeting) to consider the penalty recommended by the Panel and determine the penalty to be imposed and the consequence of that penalty in the context of the trainee's overall profile, the relevant assessment regulations and any Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements. The Assessment Board do not have the authority to amend the decision of the Panel as to whether or not an offence has been committed. The Chair of the Assessment Board will notify the trainee, in writing, of the penalty imposed and the appropriate course of action within fifteen working days of the date of the letter informing the trainee of the Panel's decision. A copy of the letter should be sent to the Accounting Officer.
62. Where the trainee concerned is in employment or about to be employed and where the employer has a material interest in the matter, the Assessment Board will inform the employer of the decision and consequence, in writing, within the same timescale.

#### **Appeals Procedure**

63. Trainees may appeal against the verdict of academic misconduct and/or the penalty imposed under the provisions of the Academic Appeals Policy.

#### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

64. Cases of academic misconduct will be reported annually to the Strategic and Finance Board. The reports will include equality monitoring data.



## Appendix A: Penalties for Academic Misconduct

<b>Minor Offence</b>	<b>Penalty 1</b>	The work submitted will be marked in accordance with the assessment / grading criteria but the component mark be capped at the minimum pass mark. The trainee will receive a formal written warning.	<b>Indicative offences:</b> Making work available to another trainee, either intentionally or as a result of naivety or negligence, that can be presented as their own
	<b>Penalty 2</b>	The work submitted will be marked in accordance with the assessment/grading criteria but the work submitted will not count towards the Teachers' Standards. The trainee will receive a formal written warning and will be informed of the consequences of this offence, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• breach of part 2 of the Teachers' Standards;</li> <li>• breach of the contract between the trainee and BECTT.</li> </ul>	Limited use of quotes or close paraphrasing (not more than a few lines) without use of quotation marks and/or correct referencing, where the trainee has cited the plagiarised material in the reference list and/or bibliography.  Using work previously submitted for another assignment/ journal entry without acknowledgement (self-plagiarism).
<b>Serious Offence</b>	<b>Penalty 3</b>	The work submitted will be marked in accordance with the assessment/grading criteria but the work submitted will not count towards the Teachers' Standards. The trainee will receive a formal written warning and will be informed of the consequences of this offence, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• breach of Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards;</li> <li>• breach of the contract between the trainee and BECTT.</li> </ul>	Extensive use of quotes or close paraphrasing without the use of quotation marks and/or correct referencing, where the trainee has cited the plagiarised material in the reference list and/or bibliography.  Submission of work produced in collaboration by two or more trainees as the work of a single trainee.  Using another person's work or ideas and submitting some of it as if it were the trainee's own.  Submitting a fraudulent claim for extenuating circumstances.
	<b>Penalty 4</b>	The work submitted will be marked in accordance with the assessment/grading criteria but the work submitted will not count towards the Teachers' Standards. The trainee will receive a formal written warning and will be informed of the consequences of this offence, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• breach of Part 2 of the Teachers' Standards;</li> <li>• breach of the contract between the trainee and BECTT;</li> <li>• the offence will be noted in future reference responses and current employers informed.</li> </ul>	Using another person's work or ideas and submitting all of it as if it were the trainee's own.  The presentation of data based on work purporting to have been carried out by the trainee but which has been fabricated (i.e. invented, altered or falsified).  Failure to have ethical approval where required and embarking on research activities which require ethical approval without that approval being formally granted.  Extensive use of quotes or close paraphrasing without the use of quotation marks and/or correct referencing, where the trainee has not cited the plagiarised material in the reference list and/or bibliography.

<b>Grave Offence</b>	<b>Penalty 5</b>	<p>The piece of work submitted will be marked and the trainee will be asked to withdraw from the course. The trainee's transcript will show that the trainee was required to withdraw for academic misconduct.</p>	<p>Commissioning another person to complete an item of assessment that is submitted as the trainee's own work. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of professional essay writing services and essay banks as well as friends and family members.</p> <p>Disguising work in a deliberate attempt to conceal its origins.</p> <p>Offering a bribe or inducement to persons connected with the assessment in order to gain an unfair advantage.</p> <p>Attempting to persuade another trainee or a member of staff to participate in any other actions in order to gain an unfair advantage.</p>
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**Appendix B Allegation of Academic Misconduct**

Trainee's name	
ITT Course	
Module name (include weightings)	
Formal allegation put to trainee	
Summary of the alleged offence	
Supporting evidence	
Report of the incident	
Copy or the original of, unauthorised material used	
Copy of the original script marked with the allegedly plagiarised passages or passages where there is suspected collusion	
Copy of source material marked with passages which have allegedly been plagiarised or where there is suspected collusion	
Copy of the instructions given to the trainee regarding the component of assessment and a copy of the referencing instructions given to the trainee where relevant	
Copy of any relevant material that has allegedly been fabricated (for example: the record of practice or work-based evidence; assignments, tasks; reflective journal entries and certificated or portfolio evidence in claims for recognition of prior learning)	
Any other evidence to support the allegation.	

Completed by.....(Name of marker)

Signature:.....