

## Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism Policy

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| <b>External reference points</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Office for Students (OfS)—Conditions</b> of Registration, including <b>Condition C1</b> (Consumer Protection) and <b>Condition C3</b> (Student Protection Plan)</li> <li>• <b>UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2024</b> – Chapter B6: <b>Assessment of Students</b> and Chapter B4: <b>Enabling Student Development and Achievement</b></li> <li>• <b>The Higher Education and Research Act 2017</b></li> <li>• <b>Consumer Protection (Amendment) Act 2014</b></li> <li>• <b>The Education (Student Information) (Amendment) Regulations 2020</b></li> <li>• <b>Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)</b> – Guidance on Complaints and Appeals</li> </ul> |                        |                        |

## Contents

|                                                |   |
|------------------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Introduction .....                          | 3 |
| 2. Rationale and Scope .....                   | 3 |
| 2.1 Rational.....                              | 3 |
| 2.2 Scope.....                                 | 3 |
| 3. Aims and Objectives .....                   | 4 |
| 3.1 Aims.....                                  | 4 |
| 3.2 Objectives .....                           | 4 |
| 4. Definitions .....                           | 4 |
| 4.1 Academic misconduct .....                  | 4 |
| 4.2 Plagiarism .....                           | 4 |
| 4.3 Collusion.....                             | 4 |
| 4.4 Cheating in Examinations .....             | 5 |
| 4.5 Fabrication or Falsification of Data ..... | 5 |
| 4.6 Self-Plagiarism.....                       | 5 |
| 4.8 Misrepresentation .....                    | 5 |
| 5. Prevention and Education .....              | 5 |
| 5.1 Orientation and Training.....              | 5 |
| 5.2 Workshops and Resources .....              | 6 |
| 5.3 Academic Integrity Campaigns.....          | 6 |
| 6. Detection and Investigation .....           | 6 |
| 6.1 Reporting Academic Misconduct.....         | 6 |
| 6.2 Investigating Allegations .....            | 6 |
| 6.3 Sanctions .....                            | 6 |
| 7. Penalties for Academic Misconduct.....      | 7 |
| 7.1 Educational Sanctions.....                 | 7 |
| 7.2 Assessment Penalties .....                 | 7 |
| 7.3 Course Penalties .....                     | 7 |
| 7.4 Expulsion.....                             | 7 |
| 8. Appeal Procedure .....                      | 7 |
| 9. Conclusion .....                            | 7 |

# 1. Introduction

This **Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism Policy** establishes the principles and procedures for maintaining academic integrity at **Magna Carta College (MCC)**. It outlines the responsibilities of students and staff in preventing and addressing academic misconduct, including **plagiarism, collusion, cheating**, and other forms of dishonesty. The policy aims to create a fair and transparent environment where students' academic achievements are solely reflective of their individual efforts.

In accordance with **Condition C1 (Consumer Protection)** of the **Office for Students (OfS)**, this policy ensures that **MCC** is transparent in defining and handling academic misconduct cases, safeguarding students' financial and academic interests. The policy also complies with the **UK Quality Code for Higher Education**, particularly **Chapter B6: Assessment of Students**, which sets out expectations for maintaining academic integrity across assessments.

## 2. Rationale and Scope

### 2.1 Rationale

The rationale for this policy is to preserve the credibility of **Magna Carta College** qualifications and uphold academic standards. Academic misconduct undermines the value of degrees and the integrity of the institution, affecting not just individual students but the academic community. By implementing a clear, structured approach to preventing and addressing misconduct, MCC ensures fairness and transparency in all decisions.

As stated in **Condition C3 (Student Protection Plan)** of the **OfS**, the College is committed to maintaining a fair and supportive academic environment. This policy is part of that commitment, ensuring that the academic integrity of the college is upheld and that students are provided with the necessary resources to avoid misconduct.

### 2.2 Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled in academic programmes at **Magna Carta College**, including undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. It covers all forms of academic misconduct in relation to assessments, including:

- **Plagiarism:** The use of someone else's work, ideas, or data without proper citation.
- **Collusion:** Unauthorised collaboration on individual assignments or assessments.
- **Cheating:** Using unauthorised materials or devices in examinations or assessments.
- **Fabrication or Falsification:** Creating or altering data, results, or findings to mislead.
- **Self-Plagiarism:** Re-submitting the same work for multiple assessments without prior permission.
- **Contract Cheating:** Outsourcing academic work to third parties.
- **Misrepresentation:** Submitting work that misrepresents one's abilities or effort.

This policy covers all forms of assessment, including but not limited to essays, exams, dissertations, and projects.

### 3. Aims and Objectives

#### 3.1 Aims

The primary aim of this policy is to:

- **Promote academic integrity** across the institution and within all levels of academic work.
- **Prevent academic misconduct** by educating students on the importance of academic honesty and providing clear guidelines on proper referencing.
- **Ensure consistency and fairness** in dealing with academic misconduct cases.
- **Maintain the value** of **Magna Carta College's** qualifications by upholding high standards of academic conduct.

#### 3.2 Objectives

The key objectives are to:

- Provide **clear guidance** on what constitutes academic misconduct and how to avoid it.
- Ensure that all students understand **proper referencing** and citation practices.
- Establish clear **procedures** for reporting, investigating, and resolving allegations of academic misconduct.
- Ensure that **sanctions** for academic misconduct are consistent, fair, and proportionate to the severity of the violation.
- **Educate students** on how to avoid plagiarism and academic misconduct by providing access to resources and support.

### 4. Definitions

#### 4.1 Academic misconduct

'Academic misconduct' refers to any dishonest activity that gives a student an unfair academic advantage. The main forms of academic misconduct include:

#### 4.2 Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when a student presents someone else's ideas, work, or data as their own, without proper acknowledgement. This includes:

- Copying text, images, or data directly from a source without citation.
- Paraphrasing another person's work without providing credit.

As noted in **Chapter B6: Assessment of Students** of the **UK Quality Code for Higher Education**, plagiarism undermines the fairness and transparency of academic assessment and is a violation of academic integrity.

#### 4.3 Collusion

'Collusion' refers to unauthorised collaboration between students or individuals on work that is intended to be completed individually. This includes:

- Sharing answers or solutions in assessments or assignments where independent work is required.
- Joint submission of assignments without prior approval.

#### 4.4 Cheating in Examinations

Cheating involves using unauthorised materials, devices, or sources of information during an exam. Examples include:

- Bringing in unauthorised materials (notes, mobile phones) during exams.
- Communicating with others during the exam without permission.

#### 4.5 Fabrication or Falsification of Data

This involves the creation, alteration, or manipulation of data, results, or findings to mislead assessors. This includes:

- Inventing data for experiments or research.
- Altering results to match expectations or desired outcomes.

#### 4.6 Self-Plagiarism

Self-plagiarism occurs when a student submits the same work for different assessments without obtaining prior consent from the instructor. This includes:

- Reusing previous assignments, essays, or reports for other modules without permission.

#### 4.7 Contract Cheating

Contract cheating is when a student hires a third-party service to complete their assignments or exams. This is a severe form of academic dishonesty that violates both **consumer protection** and academic integrity guidelines as outlined in the **Consumer Protection (Amendment) Act 2014**.

#### 4.8 Misrepresentation

This occurs when a student submits work that misrepresents their abilities or effort. This includes:

- Submitting work done by someone else or falsifying academic credentials.

### 5. Prevention and Education

#### 5.1 Orientation and Training

At the start of each academic year, all students will attend an induction session that covers academic integrity, proper citation methods, and the consequences of misconduct. This will include:

- What constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it.
- How to properly reference academic sources.

- The importance of maintaining academic honesty.

## 5.2 Workshops and Resources

The college will offer workshops on academic writing and referencing, as well as provide access to resources, including:

- **Turnitin** plagiarism detection software for students to check their work before submission.
- **Guides on proper referencing styles** (e.g., Harvard, APA).
- Access to academic writing support and citation guides.

## 5.3 Academic Integrity Campaigns

MCC will conduct regular campaigns to raise awareness about academic integrity, including the consequences of misconduct and how to avoid it.

# 6. Detection and Investigation

## 6.1 Reporting Academic Misconduct

Students, faculty, and others who suspect academic misconduct should report it to the relevant academic office. All reports will be handled confidentially. Reports may be made:

- In person to a staff member.
- Via the college's online reporting system.

## 6.2 Investigating Allegations

Upon receiving a report of academic misconduct, the following steps will be taken:

1. **Initial Review:** The incident will be assessed to determine whether there is evidence of academic misconduct.
2. **Formal Investigation:** If required, a formal investigation will be conducted, gathering evidence from the student, faculty, and any other relevant parties.
3. **Outcome:** The findings of the investigation will be communicated to the student, and any penalties will be outlined.

## 6.3 Sanctions

If misconduct is confirmed, appropriate sanctions will be applied, based on the severity of the offence. These may include:

- Educational sanctions (e.g., mandatory workshops).
- Penalties to the assessment (e.g., failing the assignment or module).
- Disciplinary actions, such as suspension or expulsion.

## 7. Penalties for Academic Misconduct

### 7.1 Educational Sanctions

Students found guilty of academic misconduct may be required to attend workshops or take online modules to understand academic integrity better.

### 7.2 Assessment Penalties

In cases of minor misconduct (e.g., accidental plagiarism), penalties may include:

- A reduction in the grade for the assignment or exam.
- Resubmission of the assignment.

### 7.3 Course Penalties

For more severe or repeated misconduct:

- Failure of the course or module.
- Suspension from the programme.

### 7.4 Expulsion

In cases of significant or repeated misconduct, students may face permanent exclusion from the college.

## 8. Appeal Procedure

Students have the right to appeal any decision related to academic misconduct. Appeals can be made on the grounds of:

- **Procedural Errors:** Failure to follow the college's procedures.
- **New Evidence:** Discovery of new evidence that was not considered.
- **Disproportionate Sanctions:** If the penalty is considered disproportionate to the offence.

The appeal must be submitted in writing within **10 working days** of the decision.

## 9. Conclusion

This **Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism Policy** ensures that **Magna Carta College** maintains high standards of academic integrity. By understanding and adhering to this policy, students contribute to preserving the value of their qualifications and maintaining the college's reputation for academic excellence. The policy provides clear guidelines, fair procedures, and appropriate sanctions for any violations of academic integrity.

This policy has been developed in alignment with **OfS regulations**, the **UK Quality Code for Higher Education**, and all relevant **consumer protection laws**. It is designed to promote fairness, transparency, and consistency while safeguarding the academic standards of **Magna Carta College**.