



FORMISSION

## Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures 2023-24

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# Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures 2023-24

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 ForMission College is committed to developing a culture of academic integrity and to conducting fair and equitable assessment for all students. Academic integrity involves a commitment to the core values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all academic endeavours.
- 1.2 Individuals sometimes fail to act with academic integrity in an attempt to gain an unfair advantage in an assessment. This is often termed **academic misconduct** and it will be dealt with by the College in accordance with the procedure set out below. As explained below, academic misconduct includes unintentional acts, where students have not familiarised themselves with good academic practice.
- 1.3 ForMission's staff engage in training in academic integrity provided by organisations such as QAA, OIA and Turnitin. ForMission is a signatory of the QAA's Academic Integrity Charter (<https://www.qaa.ac.uk/about-us/what-we-do/academic-integrity/charter>). ForMission has an Academic Integrity Lead. Currently this is the Peter Cooper, Undergraduate Programme Director.

## 2. Scope

- 2.1 The following procedures apply to all students at ForMission College.

## 3. What constitutes academic misconduct?

- 3.1 Academic misconduct may take several forms. The following is not an exhaustive list, but academic misconduct includes:
  - a) Plagiarism: this happens where you incorporate the work of others (published or unpublished) in your own work without properly acknowledging it. You are effectively claiming ownership for work that is not your own. This includes word-for-word borrowing as well as copying with minor changes (poor paraphrasing). "Work" is not limited to text, but also includes statistics, assembled facts or arguments, figures, photographs, pictures, or diagrams. You must follow the correct referencing guidelines provided by your programme. (See 3.2 below)

- b) Self-plagiarism, i.e., using the same work that you submitted for a previous summative assessment at any point during your degree. See below for further comment. (See 3.3 below)
- c) Commissioning: Using an essay-writing service, buying, or otherwise obtaining work online or elsewhere which you then submit for an assessment. Commissioning an essay is fraud and the most severe penalty, termination of your programme, may apply. (See 3.4 below)
- d) Fraudulent or fabricated coursework, such as reports of practical work that is untrue and/or made up; fabrication of research or dishonest interpretation of data; falsification of references; fictitious entries on a bibliography; unethical research practice.
- e) Submitting assessments that have been written and/or created by Artificial Intelligence (AI). Students are expected to write and create their own assessments. (See 3.5 below)
- f) Collusion: submitting work produced jointly with another student (save where the terms of the assessment require collaboration).
- g) Deception, for example faking mitigating circumstances or forging a signature relating to a work-based learning. If a student is found to have submitted fabricated supporting evidence for an extension request, this is likely to attract a severe penalty.
- h) Undertaking fieldwork without approval from the ethics committee: When doing a dissertation or similar research project which requires ethnographic research, students are required to submit a proposal, and be given prior approval by the research ethics committee. It is an academic offence to commence ethnographic research before approval has been given. It is also an academic offence to not comply with ethical requirements that were covered in a proposal and approved by the ethics committee, e.g., not obtaining consent forms from participants prior to conduct research.
- i) During live assessments, students are required to form the audience for their peers. Students are expected to put their laptops away whilst their peers are presenting. If a student is caught editing their presentation whilst another student is presenting, this will be regarded as a form of academic misconduct.
- j) Bribery, for example bribing a member of staff before they mark your assessment.
- k) Breaching ForMission's Proofreading Policy. (See 3.6 below)

### 3.2 Examples of plagiarism include:

- a) inclusion of several sentences or more from another person's work without the use of quotation marks and/or acknowledgement
- b) summarising another person's work without acknowledgement by simply changing words and/or altering the sequence or order.

- c) the substantial and unauthorised use of the ideas of another person without acknowledgement.
- d) copying the work of another student without their knowledge or agreement.

3.3 Special Note on Self-Plagiarism: Self-plagiarism is specific form of plagiarism where a student submits the same material for an assessment which they have previously submitted for a different assessment. Here some example scenarios of what is regarded, and what is not regarded as self-plagiarism.

- a) At times it is appropriate for a student to refer to ideas or work that has formed part of a different submission. References must be included, and usage of previous material should be kept to an absolute minimum. This will not be regarded as self-plagiarism.
- b) On the undergraduate programme, students should submit a PDP Journal each year, and they should submit a PDP Analysis each year. The PDP Journal should be an entirely new composition each year, and the PDP Analysis should be an entirely new composition each year. Students are expected to develop academically each year, with reflections that are deeper. If a student's PDP Journal or PDP Analysis contains material that has been copied, or recycled from a previous year's submission, then the student is likely to be accused of self-plagiarism. Please note that it is appropriate for a student to quote their PDP Journal (with references) and/or summarise their PDP Journal (with references) in their PDP Analysis.
- c) If a student has submitted a formative essay, then it may be appropriate for material from that essay to be used in a summative essay. It is hoped that the student will have revised that material and improved it. This will not be regarded as self-plagiarism, since the first assessment was formative.
- d) If a student has written a proposal, and then later submitted a dissertation or research project, then it is possible that there will be similarity between the proposal and the dissertation. It is expected that the student's ideas will have developed significantly between writing the proposal and submitting the final project, so any similar material will have been revised and improved. There is no need to include references to the proposal into a dissertation. This will not be regarded as self-plagiarism, since the dissertation is weighted at 100% of the module mark.
- e) If a student has failed an assessment and needs to resubmit an improved version of that assessment, the student will not be accused of self-plagiarism if there are similarities between the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> attempt (Turnitin should discount similarity matches to the 1<sup>st</sup> attempt).

3.4 Special Note on Commissioning: Commissioning includes paying someone to write an essay for you or purchasing an essay from a company (often referred to as an 'essay mill'). This is cheating, and it will attract a more severe penalty. Since April 2022 it has been illegal to sell essays ([Skills and Post-16 Education Bill](#)). Your work should be your own

work. If you become aware of students who are submitting essays that they have purchased, or who are advertising an essay mill, please report this to ForMission, as per the Whistleblowing Policy.

- 3.5 Special Note on Artificial Intelligence (AI): ForMission has an AI Policy with more details. Students should write their own text, rather than using AI to create text for them (This also applies to images and other content created by AI). If there are any exceptions to this, it will be made clear the assessment guidance for that assessment.
- 3.6 Special Note on Proofreading: Please refer to ForMission's Proofreading Policy for further details. Your work should be your own work.

#### **4. Your responsibilities**

- 4.1 It is your responsibility to develop good academic practice by taking part in sessions provided for you by your tutors and librarians. Good academic practice means improving your note-making and writing skills, being motivated to direct your own studies, seeking advice if in doubt and acknowledging the sources you use by referencing correctly.
- 4.2 You are encouraged to show the results of your reading by referring to and quoting from works on your subject, but you *must* make it clear which work is yours and which has come from elsewhere. This will ordinarily be through in-text referencing. Occasionally references will be included as part of prose footnotes. Please refer to the Style and Referencing Handbook for information about how to reference. You should take particular care not to copy a third party's summary or paraphrase of an author's work.
- 4.3 When you submit assessed work, you will be asked to confirm it is your own, and you must do so.
- 4.4 It is your responsibility to access the support provided by the College to help you to develop good study skills. Some examples of the support we provide include:
  - a) Regular tutorials teaching the study skills you need for your programme
  - b) Online resources including quizzes and reading recommendations
  - c) Regular personal tutorials with college staff where you can ask questions
  - d) Feedback on your essays to indicate where you might need help
  - e) Access to Turnitin so that you can test your work

#### **5. Consequences**

- 5.1 Being accused of academic misconduct is a serious offence at the College and has the potential to result in a number of penalties depending on the stage you are at in your studies. It can mean that you are required to re-submit the work; it may mean that you are given a capped mark; in the most serious cases, your studies may be terminated.

## **6. Monitoring and review**

- 6.1 The College will keep and dispose of all correspondence relating to cases of academic misconduct in accordance with its records management process.
- 6.2 A report on academic misconduct cases and their outcomes will be produced annually and may be submitted to ForMission's trustees, the relevant validating university or other regulatory higher education body for consideration. This process will ensure appropriate monitoring of all academic misconduct cases and related outcomes.

## **7. Fair treatment**

- 7.1 This procedure shall be implemented with due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations. The procedure applies equally to all students irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy or maternity, race, ethnic origin or national identity, religion or belief, sex, or sexual orientation.
- 7.2 The College is committed to procedures that are fair and transparent, and decisions that are reasonable and have regard to law.
- 7.3 Where penalties are to be applied for academic misconduct, ForMission intends for the penalties to be fair and proportionate. (This is in keeping with OIA's Principles as found in the Good Practice Framework: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/resources-and-publications/good-practice-framework/principles/>).

## **Procedures**

*It is the College's responsibility to establish that academic misconduct is more likely than not to have taken place.*

## **What happens if you are suspected of academic misconduct?**

### **8. Investigating Alleged Academic Misconduct in Assessments**

- 8.1 If you are suspected of academic misconduct in an assessment, this concern will be reported to your programme director who will decide whether a further investigation is warranted and will record the decision and the reasons for it.
- 8.2 The person who is investigating the allegation will determine the best way of doing this. This may include the use of plagiarism detection software. You may also be asked to provide your notes, drafts and any other records relating to your preparatory work for the assessment. Any failure to provide this material is likely to be considered when a decision is made about potential academic misconduct.
- 8.3 Once the investigation described above is complete, and normally within ten working days after you were notified about the issue, you will be given a copy of all the evidence

or given access to the evidence. You will be invited to a meeting in person or by video conferencing, ordinarily this will be a minimum of five working days after the notification was sent to you. At least two members of the academic staff will be present at this meeting. You may be accompanied by a fellow student to provide support, but not to speak on your behalf. Should your supporter behave inappropriately at any point during the oral examination or the following procedures, they will be asked to withdraw.

- 8.4 At the meeting you will have the chance to comment on the evidence and respond to the allegation of academic misconduct made against you. You may be questioned on your work to allow you an opportunity to demonstrate that the work is indeed yours or provide an explanation which can be considered. The examination will focus on the content of the work.

## **9. Outcome of Investigation of Alleged Academic Misconduct in Assessments**

- 9.1 At this meeting, the College will decide whether:

a) There is insufficient evidence to justify a finding of academic misconduct. If so, no further action will be taken under these procedures.

OR

b) The matter should be considered poor scholarship rather than academic misconduct. No further action will take place under these procedures, although the poor scholarship will be considered through the normal marking process. The finding will be noted on your student record and may be considered in the context of any future allegations that you have committed academic misconduct

OR

c) There is a case to be answered that academic misconduct has indeed taken place. You will be informed of this decision and the penalty.

- 9.2 Whichever decision is made, you may be referred to appropriate support and guidance to develop your academic skills. If you fail to take up the support offered, this will be considered negatively should any further allegation of academic misconduct be made against you.

## **10. Right to appeal**

- 10.1 If you wish to appeal the decision that has been made, you have the right to appeal. Please refer to ForMission's appeals policy for details.

## 11. Penalties

- 11.1 As noted above in section 7, ForMission intends for the penalties to be fair and proportionate. Students on programmes validated by Newman University are likely to be penalised in accordance with penalties recommended by Newman University. The penalty should clearly state:
- a) How much of your work is affected (an assessment component; the assessment(s) for an entire module; or all assessments carried out during a specified period).
  - b) The maximum mark allowed for any repeated attempt (capped pass, other capped mark).
- 11.2 The penalty may be made more or less severe depending on the evidence available. Relevant factors may include amount of your work affected by the academic misconduct, the level of your studies, whether you knowingly committed the offence, and the level of deception involved. You may ask for other factors to be considered but note that personal difficulties are unlikely to be seen as excusing academic misconduct. A penalty will not be reduced because you ran out of time to complete your work, or you mistakenly submitted a draft rather than a final version. You are responsible for what you submit.
- 11.3 No mark is awarded, or credit assigned for work affected by academic misconduct. The penalties below are examples of how you may be permitted to resubmit work, with the opportunity to be awarded credits, provided that the resubmitted work is free from academic misconduct, and of a passing standard.
- 11.4 You may be obliged to undertake an alternative assessment. You will only be permitted to resubmit work where you are entitled to another resubmission attempt in accordance with the College's regulations. If the academic misconduct affects resubmitted work, you will not normally be entitled to a further attempt.
- 11.5 If a student commits repeated academic misconduct, the penalties for are likely to increase in severity. A third offence is likely to result in termination. More serious offences, will normally lead to more severe penalties, including termination of studies.