

LFA Procedure 6.2 Academic Misconduct

1. Introduction

London Film Academy (LFA) defines academic misconduct as behaviour (whether deliberate or inadvertent) that results in, or may result in, the student or any other student gaining an unfair advantage in one or more components of assessment. This can range from poor referencing practices to intention to deceive.

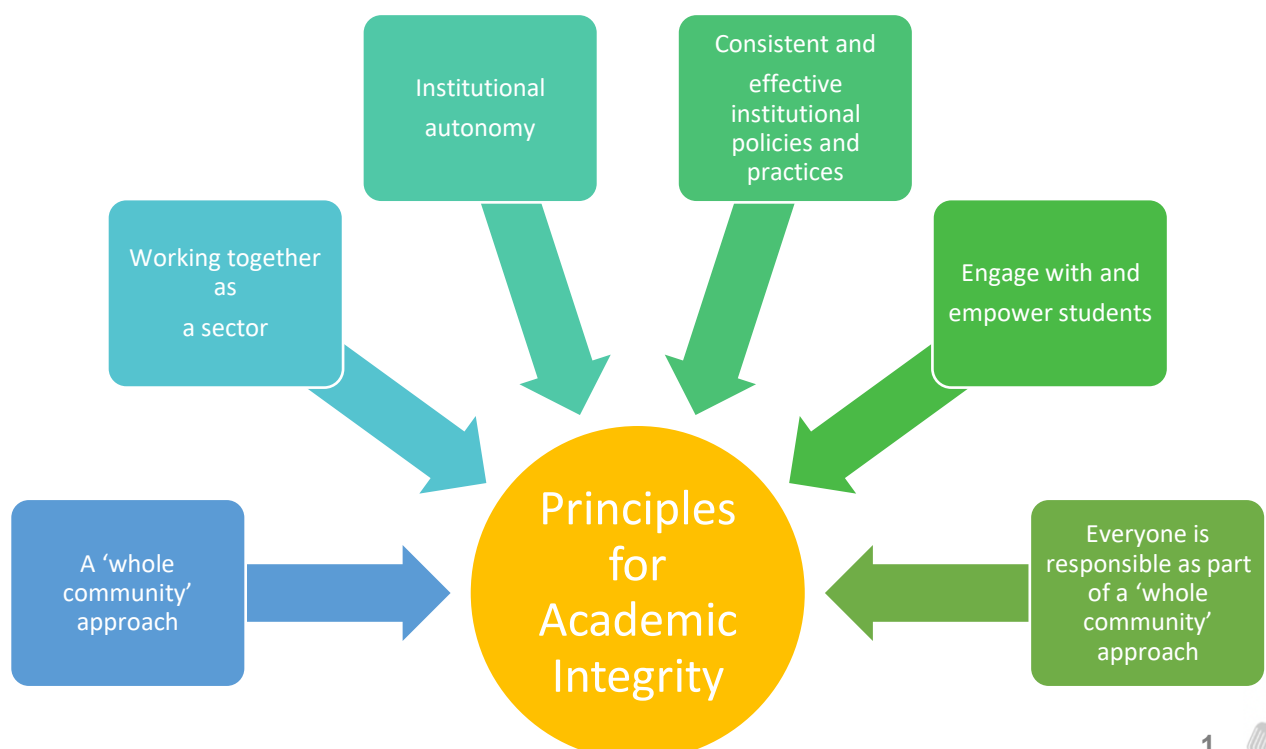
A qualification is awarded when a student has achieved a certain body of knowledge and acquired certain high level skills. If the student had not actually gained that knowledge or could not use those skills, because in fact they had misled the assessors about the extent of their accomplishment, then the qualification could not be treated by employers or others as a reliable indicator. As a consequence, the award would be devalued for all those who had earned it honestly.

For these reasons, LFA has a duty to all its students, and to its awarding organisations, to ensure that all certificates and diplomas are earned by students by their own efforts and not by cheating. Consequently, there are penalties for any student who commits an act of academic misconduct, ranging from failure in the module to exclusion from the course of study. There are also intermediate requirements to resit or retake a module. This would cost the student a substantial additional investment of time and money. The penalties extend to long periods of suspension from the course and possible permanent exclusion.

2. Principles for Academic Integrity

LFA considers academic integrity essential to the maintenance of the highest academic and professional standards. Academic Integrity takes a wide variety of forms including the use of essay and degree mills, plagiarism, collusion between students and forged or altered qualification certificates.

LFA has signed up to [Quality Assurance Agency Academic Charter](#) and subscribes to the following shared principles for Academic Integrity:



Principle 1: Everyone is responsible as part of a ‘whole community’ approach

All members of a higher education provider’s community are responsible for ensuring academic integrity is embedded and upheld.

Principle 2: A ‘whole community’ approach

Academic misconduct takes many forms and happens for many reasons, intentional or unintentional. A higher education provider’s response cannot, therefore, be one-size-fits-all. Detection and penalties are important, but they cannot provide the whole solution.

A holistic, whole community approach by a higher education provider, including its students, is an effective model for promoting trust and confidence in independent learning and minimising academic misconduct.

This approach often combines elements of the following: education and support for staff and students; limiting opportunities to commit academic misconduct; deploying institution-wide detection methods; case reporting and data collection to improve practice; and clearly stated institutional values.

Principle 3: Working together as a sector

Academic misconduct is an issue that can affect the integrity of all higher education providers and have a severe impact upon the reputation of the entire UK sector.

Sector collaboration can address this including by sharing best practice, collaboration on benchmarking or working together on issues of mutual concern - such as, sharing intelligence on essay or degree mills that are targeting their students or staff. By combining knowledge, experience and resources, the academic integrity of the overall UK sector can be maintained and strengthened.

Principle 4: Engage with and empower students

Higher education providers can support their students by ensuring that they have a reasonable and continuing opportunity to learn about their policies and processes in an accessible manner and through a variety of formats (for example, through handbooks, course inductions, introductory materials, teaching).

Students are responsible for the integrity of their own learning, and decisions to break codes of academic conduct (for example, by using an essay mill) are ultimately their own. However, providers can work to ensure that students have as much knowledge as possible about, and are supported in the development of, academic integrity and the possible consequences of misconduct - including the impact on future careers.

Teaching and other frontline staff can be role models for academic integrity principles and appropriate academic behaviour; they actively involve and engage students and student representative bodies in these matters in order to support their development. Providers can consider ways in which student academic integrity ‘champions’ could be recognised and supported.

Principle 5: Empower and engage with staff

Frontline teaching and professional staff have a critical role to play in deterring and identifying incidents of student academic misconduct. Higher education providers can consider ways in which academic staff members could be given formal roles and recognition to ‘champion’ staff academic integrity.

Providers can proactively communicate their academic integrity policies to staff and develop a framework that describes the processes that need to be followed when misconduct cases are identified. Tools and resources to detect and deter breaches such as best practices in course delivery, course design and assessment, and admissions verification and technology can be made available to teaching and professional services staff. This could include providing training and development for staff.



Principle 6: Consistent and effective institutional policies and practices

Higher education providers can clearly define what they consider to be academic integrity, and maintain a suite of academic integrity policies and practices that:

- focus on educative and preventive measures and activities
- have clear terms and definitions that distinguish between different types of academic misconduct through the use of examples that can be understood by students
- establish with transparency the level of penalties or developmental support applicable and proportionate to different types of academic misconduct
- have clear, easy to follow and fair processes for investigating and assessing possible cases
- are subject to periodic review, which can include a review of adherence with the commitments in this Charter.

Principle 7: Institutional autonomy

As autonomous institutions, UK higher education providers are the first line of defence against academic misconduct. They are responsible for promoting and maintaining the quality and integrity of their own provision and securing the academic standards of the awards they offer. In doing so, they protect their reputation. They are in the best position to provide their students with the tools and support needed to promote trust and confidence in independent learning and to avoid academic misconduct.

Students are expected to adopt sound academic practices and an honest approach to carrying out academic and scholarly work. Honesty is demonstrated by undertaking and completing one's own work, avoiding plagiarism and not relying upon dishonest means to gain advantage. Processes aimed at promoting academic integrity include:

- Providing information about academic integrity and academic misconduct policy at student orientations, during class and at staff inductions
- Providing a secure system for handing in student work
- Ensuring that appropriate systems of identity check and invigilation are in place for examinations
- Ensuring that electronic plagiarism-detection software (such as Turnitin) is applied on assessed written work where appropriate
- Supporting staff development to improve learning and teaching strategies for academic integrity

3. Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is commonly defined as any act whereby a student obtains an unpermitted advantage for themselves or for another when in pursuit of a qualification. Misconduct applies whether the student acts alone or in collusion with others. Types of academic misconduct can vary, but the four most common categories are plagiarism, cheating, collusion and falsification.

Academic misconduct examples are provided in section 3-. This is not an exhaustive list. During induction they will be explained to all new students and Course Leaders are expected to provide appropriate reminders on a regular basis.

3.1 Plagiarism

The LFA has adopted the standard definition for plagiarism. Common examples of plagiarism include:

- Use of any quoted material from the published or unpublished work of other persons, without the use of quotation marks or citations of the source
- Use of another person's words or ideas that have been slightly changed or paraphrased to make it look different from the original, without reference to that person in the text and entering the source in the bibliography



- Summarising another person's ideas, judgments, diagrams, figures, etc. without reference to that person in the text and then entering the source in the bibliography
- Other than what is permitted as Fair Usage in copyright law, the use of previously published material (scripts, short stories, magazine articles, photographs, commercial products etc.) without obtaining permission from the copyright owner
- Use of services of script/essay banks and/or any other agencies
- Use of unacknowledged material downloaded from the Internet
- Re-use of one's own material (or resubmission of previously assessed work from another module) without express authorisation from the appropriate Course Leader.

LFA considers the use of another person's words or ideas and presenting them as their own can be construed as theft of another individual's intellectual property. As a result, LFA requires students to sign a declaration as part of the assignment assessment forms that the work submitted is their own.

3.2 Cheating

Cheating refers to the means by which a student seeks to gain unfair advantage over their peers specifically in an examination or in a test. All examinations and tests are invigilated. The invigilators are accountable to LFA for reporting any incidents of suspected cheating. Students are cautioned at the start of such tests that any sources of information found on their person will be used as evidence of cheating and that the instance will be reported to the Disciplinary Committee. The student may elect to complete the examination or test at the point where the evidence has been found, or, alternatively, they may leave the room, but the examination or test will be left behind. Thereafter the Disciplinary Committee will investigate the occurrence and render a final judgment on the basis of their findings.

3.3 Collusion

Collusion is an agreement between two or more students, and or students and staff/tutors, to act in a way which either gives them an unfair advantage, or disadvantages others. Collusion may include such behaviours as providing information about marking criteria of tests, or dissuading students from pitching for certain production roles to 'fix' crew allocations of student productions.

3.4 Falsification

Falsification refers to deliberate actions taken by students to produce something for assessment that lacks authenticity with the intent to commit fraud or deception. Examples of such behaviour include inventing quotes or titles of books which do not exist, inventing anecdotal information, or recording incorrect information on production paperwork.

BA and MA students should also refer to Part J of the University of Derby Academic Regulations, which includes a full list of all academic offenses:

<https://www.derby.ac.uk/media/derbyacuk/assets/departments/the-registry/academic-regulations2018-aug/Part-J-Academic-Offences-2018-19.pdf>

4. LFA Copyright

All work/films produced by a student or participant during a course remain the property of LFA, with the exception of the MA Screenwriting, where copyright is reassigned to students on successful completion of the course; this is in accordance with the Terms & Conditions of application. However, any student from any course may request an assignment of copyright by email to the Joint Principals. This request will be granted entirely at the discretion of the Joint Principals.



LFA promotes films produced on its courses and may seek the sale and exhibition of films and DVDs. Students are not permitted to enter into any contractual agreement regarding sale, exhibition or distribution of a film without prior agreement from the Joint Principals. Any breaches of LFA copyright by students will be considered to constitute academic misconduct.

5. Identification of Academic Misconduct

To assist in the identification of plagiarism, cheating, collusion and falsification the following process is followed:

- Assignments and/or examinations are submitted to via the VLE with full Turnitin reports
- The paper is assessed on its own merit, without reference to concerns arising in respect of plagiarism
- The Tutor and/or Course Leader proceeds to investigate Turnitin results and other sources available in respect of tracking information. If suspicions still remain following initial investigations, then the Tutor and/or Course Leader reports the incident to the Head of Course and recommends that the student's case be investigated and reviewed by the Disciplinary Committee
- The student is advised formally by LFA that doubts about the authenticity of the work have been raised and that their case has been sent to the Disciplinary Committee for review.

6. Academic Infringement Process

Students should be aware that the purpose of the process is to ensure that judgments rendered in respect of academic misconduct have been investigated properly and that students have had fair and reasonable opportunities to respond to concerns raised. If a case or cases should arise, the Disciplinary Committee will convene to:

- consider the evidence submitted to it on the allegation of unfair practice
- determine whether the allegation has been substantiated. Such a determination shall normally be made on the balance of probabilities
- determine, in appropriate cases, the penalty to be imposed

In cases where two or more students are accused of related offences or collusion, the Chair may decide to deal with the cases together. However, each student may be given the opportunity to request that the cases be heard separately. In the case of a formal exam setting The Examinations Invigilator shall present the case against the student, calling such witnesses and presenting such evidence as considered necessary. In the case of non-exam based work evidence will be presented by either the first marker of the coursework under consideration or the internal moderator or Course Leader. Additional documentary evidence in support of the case against the student may only be presented to the Committee on the day of the hearing, with the express permission of the Chair.

Students will have the right to be represented or accompanied, and to hear all the evidence brought against them; to call and to question witnesses, and to submit other evidence. Additional documentary evidence, including evidence of mitigating circumstances, may only be presented to the Committee on the day of the hearing, with the express permission of the Chair. The Chair may invite contributions from the person accompanying the student and members of the Committee may ask questions of the student, the Invigilator of Examinations /Marker (Tutor) of the Coursework and of the witnesses.

Decisions about the allegations will be made in private by the Committee, which shall consider the student's record, including profile of marks, and any assessment conventions and regulations for the scheme of study in question as well as the evidence presented. The Committee would not normally be required to prove intent on the part of the student but additional proof of intent may be relevant when arriving at an appropriate penalty. Students will be informed of the Committee's decision in writing. Should the case be dismissed, all mention will be removed from the student's file.



7. Penalties for unfair practice

The Disciplinary Committee may apply one or any combination of the following penalties:

- The issue of a formal reprimand to the student, a written record of which shall be retained on file.
- The cancellation of the student's marks in part or in whole for module(s) concerned, or in all of the modules for the year in question, with a recommendation as to whether or not a re-assessment should be permitted, either with eligibility for the bare pass mark only or for the full range of marks.
- An instruction to the examiners, when marking, to ignore any plagiarised text, which may result in a reduced mark.
- The reduction of the qualification result by one class or the non-award of a distinction.
- Disciplinary warning where repeat offenders lead to the disqualification of the student from future LFA examinations and/or coursework assessment. If the Disciplinary Committee decides that the above penalties are inappropriate, it may use its discretion to decide upon an alternative appropriate penalty.



8. Appeals by students found guilty of unfair practice

All students found guilty of unfair practice have the right to appeal. However, the London Film Academy (LFA) is only prepared to consider appeals which are based on one or both of the following grounds:

- Irregularities in the conduct of the unfair practice procedure, which are of such a nature as to cause reasonable doubt whether the Disciplinary Committee would have reached the same decision had they not occurred
- Exceptional personal circumstances which were not known to the Disciplinary Committee when the student's case was considered and which can be shown to be relevant to the unfair practice (in appeals based on these grounds, the appellant must show good reason why such personal circumstances were not made known to the Disciplinary Committee before its meeting. Where a student could have reported exceptional personal circumstances to the Committee prior to its meeting, those circumstances cannot subsequently be cited as grounds for appeal).

Any appeal shall be sent in full, in writing, and within one month, to the Academic Board (appeals@londonfilmacademy.com) and the Chair of the Academic Board shall acknowledge receipt normally within five working days. The appeal will be considered by the Academic Board Appeal Panel. The decision concluded by this appeal panel will be final and will be communicated to the student within 15 working days of the original appeal being lodged.

The Chair of the Academic Board shall be empowered to take one of the following decisions:

- To reject the appeal
- To disallow the original penalty and to refer the case back for further consideration.

9. Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

If students remain dissatisfied with the final outcome and all processes above are complete, they will be issued with a Completion of Procedures (COP) letter and they may request an independent review of their case by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education:

Office of the Independent Adjudicator,

Second Floor Abbey Gate,
57-75 Kings Road,
Reading
RG1 3AB

Telephone: 01189 599813,
Email: enquiries@oiahe.org.uk,
Website: www.oiahe.org.uk

Normally a student cannot complain to OIA without a COP letter.

