



Tipperary
ETB

Bord Oideachais & Oiliúna Thiobraid Árann
Tipperary Education & Training Board

Academic Integrity Policy
(for Further Education and Training)

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Academic Integrity Policy

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Definitions

Academic Dishonesty	Behaviours perpetrated by individuals or institutions that transgress ethical standards held in common between other individuals and/or groups in institutions of education, research or scholarship.
Academic Integrity	'is the commitment to, and demonstration of, honest and moral behaviour in an academic setting. It is compliance with ethical and professional principles, standards and practices and consistent system of values, that serves as guidance for making decisions and taking actions in education, research and scholarship'.
Academic Misconduct	covers all actions which contravene academic integrity. Academic misconduct is any attempt by someone to seek unfair advantage in relation to academic activity or which facilitates others to gain an unfair advantage, or to profit from the sharing or selling of your own or others' work without permission.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	refers to systems that display intelligent behaviour by analysing their environment and taking actions – with some degree of autonomy – to achieve specific goals. AI-based systems can be purely software-based, acting in the virtual world (eg voice assistants, image analysis software, search engines, speech and face recognition systems) or AI can be embedded in hardware devices (eg advanced robots, autonomous cars, drones or Internet of Things applications)." ¹
Blackmail*	where there is a demand for payment or favours from a learner in return for keeping their purchase of an assignment which has been submitted to their institution, secret.
Bribery*	the offering, promising, giving, accepting or soliciting of an advantage as an inducement for action.
Cheating*	actions that attempt to get advantage by means that undermine values of integrity.
Coercion*	using force, intimidation, authority or persuasion to compel a person(s) to author work for a learner which is subsequently submitted to the institution as that learner's own work without acknowledging the author's work.
Collusion*	undisclosed collaboration of two or more people on an assignment or task, which is supposed to be completed individually.

¹ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on Artificial Intelligence for Europe, Brussels, 25.4.2018 COM(2018) 237 final.

Contract Cheating*	form of academic misconduct when a person uses an undeclared and/or unauthorised third party, online or directly, to assist them to produce work for academic credit or progression, whether or not payment or other favour is involved.
Data Fabrication*	making up data and presenting that data as genuine.
Data Falsification*	data falsification or falsification of data is the unjustified manipulation of research data with the intention of giving a misleading impression.
Essay mill*	an organisation, or individual, usually with a web presence, that contracts with students to complete an assignment or assignments for the student, for a fee.
File-sharing sites	<p>an online platform that enables the distribution and access to digital media, such as documents, audio, images, videos, and other electronic files. These websites facilitate the private or public sharing of resources with either the general public or a network of authenticated users who are required to log in.</p> <p>There may be legal and/or security issues when accessing file sharing sites, as the material available may be copyrighted, pirated, and/or contain malicious viruses. A file-sharing site is not classed as AI.</p>
Intentional Cheating*	intentional action or behaviour that violates established rules and gives one student an unfair advantage over another.
Impersonation*	<p>undertaking in whole or in part any work required as part of a programme in the place of an enrolled learner, without permission from the provider.</p> <p>Sitting an exam, or having someone else sit an exam in place of an enrolled learner, without permission of the provider.</p>
Misrepresentation*	misrepresentation is any act or omission that is intended to deceive.
Plagiarism*	presenting work/ideas taken from other sources without proper acknowledgement.
Research Integrity	means conducting research in such a way that allows others to have confidence and trust in the methods and the findings of the research. It relates both to the scientific integrity of conducted research and to the professional integrity of researchers ¹ .
Research Misconduct*	is providing false or incomplete information in research.

*The above definitions are taken from [National Academic Integrity Network: National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms](#); Published by Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI), September 2021 (1st edition).

¹ Taken from: Edinburgh Research Office: [What is research integrity? | Edinburgh Research Office](#)

Acronyms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AISG	Academic Integrity Steering Group
ETB	Education and Training Board
FET	Further Education and Training
NAIN	National Academic Integrity Network
TEL	Technology Enhanced Learning
QA	Quality Assurance
QQI	Qualification and Quality Ireland

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction.....	7
1.1	Purpose	8
1.2	Scope	8
1.3	Responsibilities for Implementation	8
1.4	Other Relevant Policies, Procedures, Guidelines	9
2.	Academic Integrity Core Values	9
3.	Academic Integrity and Mitigating Risk – Education and Awareness	10
3.1	Staff information and Professional Development.....	11
3.2	Importance of Academic Integrity.....	11
3.3	Deliberate Misconduct Versus Poor Understanding or Underdeveloped Skills.....	12
3.4	Supports for Learners.....	12
3.5	Vulnerable Learners.....	16
3.6	Teaching Methodologies	16
3.7	Assessment Planning.....	17
3.8	Assessment Design	17
3.9	Feedback Processes.....	18
3.10	Programme Development and Review.....	18
4.	Academic Integrity and Mitigating Risk – Detection and investigation of Learner Misconduct	18
4.1	Detection and Investigation Approach	18
5.	Academic Integrity and Mitigating Risk – Classification and Sanction of Learner Academic Misconduct	19
5.1	Type, Classification and Sanctioning of misconduct.....	19
5.2	Recording, Reporting and Security	21
6.	Appeals	22
7.	Internal Monitoring and Review of this Policy	22
8.	Evidence of Implementation of this Policy.....	22
9.	Monitoring of Effectiveness Evidence of this Policy.....	23
	Appendix A: Sample Academic Code of Conduct for Learners.....	24
	Bibliography.....	25

1. Introduction

The security and integrity of academic standards is essential to achieving confidence and trust in Further Education and Training (FET) in Tipperary Education and Training Board (ETB). *“Academic integrity is the commitment to and demonstration of honest and moral behaviour in an academic setting”*²

Academic integrity is relevant to all academic activities undertaken by learners and programme staff. It includes all activities related to the achievement of the award, all learning modes and practices including in the classroom, research, online, work-based learning and for all types of assessment.

Assessment integrity plays a key role in supporting good academic integrity standards and practices. Assessment integrity is built on principles of honesty and trust in the assessments that are used to decide whether the learning outcomes of the module or programme are achieved. Assessment integrity, and therefore academic integrity, is threatened when there is engagement in unethical behaviours that undermine honesty and trustworthiness of the assessment ie academic misconduct.

The continual development of artificial intelligence (AI) tools along with websites and online companies that offer bespoke assignment-writing services to learners, poses a serious threat to academic integrity in FET. In response to ‘contract cheating’, Section 43A of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act, 2019, created new offences related to a) the facilitation of cheating, b) the advertisement of cheating services and c) the publication of such advertisements. Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is identified as prosecutor of these parties that facilitate cheating by learners. Broadly speaking the act incorporates cheating facilitated by friends, family, other learners and does not have to be for profit or at scale.

It is in everyone’s interest that the status and integrity of qualifications is maintained. This policy describes the *active* commitment needed by all, to sustain academic integrity in Tipperary ETB. It recognises that academic integrity is based on the behaviour of the ETB, it’s centres and staff, and the learners. Collaborations are vital - between learners, staff and senior management, and, between Tipperary ETB and its regulators (QQI) and relevant partners. *“From a learner perspective, cheating is less common where it is clear that the learning is relevant and the relationship between staff and students is good”*³.

This document was written to closely align to the academic integrity framework proposed by the [National Academic Integrity Network](#) (NAIN) in 2023⁴. Tipperary’s approach to embedding academic integrity and mitigating risk will follow the NAIN’s lifecycle stages of academic integrity management. These stages support education and awareness-building of academic integrity, enable detection, reporting, consideration, decision, response, recording and reviewing of suspected cases of academic misconduct.

² [Academic Integrity – The Writing Center • University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill \(unc.edu\)](#), Accessed 3 May 2024

³ QQI discussion event. Academic and Professional Integrity: Supporting Integrity and Responsible Citizenship in Future Professionals. 5 December 2023.

⁴ A peer-driven network coordinated by Qualification and Quality Ireland (QQI) and comprising of membership from public higher education institutions and universities, private providers and student representatives

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to:

- Promote an educative approach to upholding academic integrity and preventing academic misconduct.
- To identify the forms and categories of academic misconduct.
- Describe the approach to mitigating academic integrity risks and the approach to detecting and managing academic misconduct.

1.2 Scope

This document applies to FET programmes which lead to the making of awards or qualifications. This includes any 2nd providers or third parties under the governance and oversight of Tipperary ETB and any other collaborative arrangements that involve the assessment of learners.

1.3 Responsibilities for Implementation

Responsibilities for implementation of this policy are as follows:

- **Learners** are responsible for engaging and supporting good academic practices throughout their course.
- All **staff** who are involved in **delivering** academic programmes have responsibility for promoting academic integrity along with monitoring learner academic practices and detection and escalation of misconduct.
- **Assessors** are required to adhere to all assessment policies and procedures of the ETB's assessment process.
- The Technology Enhanced Learning (**TEL**) **Coordinator** has responsibility for liaising with centre and ETB staff to support academic integrity practices.
- **Programme development staff** have responsibility for ensuring regard for academic integrity in programme design.
- The **IT Department** is responsible for blocking contract cheating websites and file sharing sites.
- The FET **Senior Management Team (SMT)** is responsible for appropriate allocation of resources to implement and maintain good academic integrity practices in centres.
- The **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)** has executive responsibility for ensuring that academic integrity policies and practices are sufficient to pose limited, or no, threat to academic matters of the ETB.
- Tipperary ETB's **Academic Integrity Steering Group (AISG)** consists of 10 members and has an advisory role in the area of academic integrity operations, practices and policy.

- A **FET QA Officer** is the nominated lead for AISG in Tipperary ETB and has responsibility for leading the activities of the group and for the wider FET communications and information.
- The **FET QA Office**, in conjunction with the TEL Coordinator and FET SMT, monitors this policy to ensure it is up-to-date with current technological trends, regulations and standards.

1.4 Other Relevant Policies, Procedures, Guidelines

- [Academic Misconduct Procedure](#)
- [Artificial Intelligence Guidelines](#)
- [Examinations Procedure](#)

2. Academic Integrity Core Values

Academic integrity is a commitment to six fundamental values which are at the heart of learning, knowledge discovery and creativity and are essential to upholding a sustainable and reputable learning environment. When embraced, teachers, learners, staff and management create a ‘community’ of learning that nourishes integrity and informs and improves ethical behaviour.



Figure 1: Core Values of an Academic Integrity Framework

Honesty:

- For learners this means a commitment to being truthful and ethical in their work and the processes and tools they used, giving credit to others, providing factual evidence
- For ETB this means having commitment for honesty through practice, policies and procedures.

Trust:

- For learners this means preparing and submitting work on the basis of being true and reliable where staff can trust in the quality of the work
- For ETB this means having clear and consistent standards and guidelines and their fair implementation or evaluation to uphold the reputation and quality of the awards

Fairness:

- For learners this means learners are fair to each other by doing original work, and their fair share when working as part of a group. They acknowledge other authors. Learners uphold academic policies, assessment rules and guidelines and take responsibility for own actions. They uphold the ETB's reputation. They have respect for classmates and teachers and value every opportunity to learn and get advice
- For ETB this means staff and management provide an environment that enables fairness and actions are predictable. They respond to dishonesty accurately, impartially, consistently and in a timely way.

Respect:

- For learners this means learners value and take all opportunities available to learn and commit to do their best. Learners respect different and diverse views of other learners in the group. They lead by example.
- For ETB this means leading by example; facilitating an active learning environment that recognises diverse views and people; providing full and honest feedback.

Responsibility:

- For learners this means being responsible for own learning by actively engaging, understanding, seeking support and following procedures. Learners commit to performing to the best of their ability and hold themselves accountable. They model good behaviour.
- For ETB this means collective understanding and implementing academic integrity policies and procedures.

Courage:

- For learners this means promoting good academic practices, resisting temptations to cheat, follow the rules; ask questions, seek help even if difficult. Having the courage to address and report dishonesty.
- For ETB this means clear information and communications around policies; adherence to them; and willingness to discourage and manage academic dishonesty⁵.

3. Academic Integrity and Mitigating Risk – Education and Awareness

The first stage of promoting academic integrity and mitigating misconduct risk is education and awareness-building. Prevention of academic misconduct begins with education and

⁵ Taken from: The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity, (3rd edition) by International Centre for Academic Integrity, 2021

awareness. Preventing academic misconduct should always be preferable to detection and sanctioning.

3.1 Staff information and Professional Development

Tipperary ETB supports the education of FET staff on academic integrity and recognises the key role that staff play in protecting the ETB and its learners from academic misconduct. Staff therefore have a key role in minimising the extent and impact of academic misconduct.

Tipperary ETB supports staff professional development through various mechanisms, for example:

- Face-to-face information events
- Training on Tipperary ETB's Policy on Academic Integrity*
- Tipperary ETB resources and additional guidelines on the [Academic Integrity](#) space on the QA SharePoint site and the Academic Integrity section of [ETBI's FET Digital library](#)
- Communication of online webinars and PD events by reputable educational and support organisations or networks
- Dissemination of QQI's periodic alerts to providers on current essay writing sites and services on Tipperary ETB's QA SharePoint space – [News section](#).
- Support services from Tipperary ETB QA and TEL staff.

Note: The minimum mandatory training for all programme staff is completion of Tipperary ETB's training on Academic Integrity Policy.

3.2 Importance of Academic Integrity

NAIN (2021) state that:

“Open and transparent discussion about academic integrity and academic misconduct are the most effective tools for creating an institutional culture where honesty is the expected standard, grounded in support, transparency and communication”⁶.

Open discussions on the six values of academic integrity, and how the ETB, centres, staff and learners can act to uphold these, is a core to embedding academic integrity.

The damage that can be caused by engaging in academic misconduct includes:

- Loss of learning experience and achievement of authentic knowledge, skills and competence
- Damage to the reputation of FET Centre and the ETB
- Loss to employers if learners are ill-equipped for the work or role
- Damage to the reputation of the qualifications/awards made.

⁶ NAIN, Academic Integrity Guidelines, September 2021, p.16.

3.3 Deliberate Misconduct Versus Poor Understanding or Underdeveloped Skills

Information and development of academic skills are essential to help avoid unintentional academic misconduct. Poor academic practice may result from a lack of understanding or underdeveloped skills. Errors and malpractice can arise from inexperience or carelessness rather than a deliberate effort to deceive or cheat.

3.4 Supports for Learners

To support learner education and training, resources have been developed for use by staff and are available on the [Academic Integrity](#) page of the QA SharePoint space.

3.4.1 Value of Academic Integrity

Open discussions with learners on the six values of academic integrity, and how learners can act to uphold these, is a core component of the learner induction process and should continue throughout the course.

3.4.2 Collusion Versus Collaboration

It is important to know the difference between collusion and collaboration. Group work and teamwork is a great way to learn. However, colluding to find shortcuts or cheating opportunities, is not an honest or fair way of approaching education or progression.

Collusion includes:

- Learners providing their work to another learner before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time
- Paying another person to perform an academic task and passing it off as your own
- Learners completing a project together which was supposed to be done individually
- Acquiring another person's academic work and copying it
- offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

Collusion should not be confused with academic collaboration where there has been a general group discussion about a topic or question but where each learner produces their own response.

Teachers should provide clear information and instruction to learners when collaboration is appropriate (or not) for particular assessment tasks or parts.

3.4.3 Helping Others Versus Assisting Others to Cheat

It is important to understand the difference between supporting others and facilitating assessment malpractice. Learners sharing own work to others without permission is assessment malpractice. Use of file-sharing sites to sell or purchase work, or, submitting work produced by a friend, family member or other is identified as 'Contract Cheating'.

Teaching and assessment staff need to be cognisant of their own (and third-party) 'helper' practices and situations around learner assistance, that could impact assessment integrity and inadvertently constitute staff assessment malpractice.

For example,

- providing sample assignments
- providing past exam papers where there is little scope with the assessment's learning outcomes to refresh the exam questions
- providing an absent learner with assistance prior to the exam
- accepting assessments with knowledge of third-party involvement eg from SNA or support person.

3.4.4 Using Contract Cheating Services and Implications

Contract cheating examples include:

- Buying a completed assignment from a tutoring or ghost-writing company⁷ (purchasing from online essay mill websites)
- Asking a partner, friend, advocate, mentor or family member to write part or all of an assignment
- Paying a private tutor or tutoring company to coach on how to complete an assignment
- Submitting 'model' assignment answers provided by a private tutor or tutoring company
- Getting someone else to sit an exam for you; sitting an exam for someone else
- Submitting another learner's work as your own
- Buying, selling or swapping assignments or assignment answers via 'sharing' websites or social media platforms eg Facebook, TikTok etc.

Six types of services that learners can use to have work produced for them that are prohibited include:

⁷ Ghost Authorship is the practice of using a non-named (merited, but not listed) author to write or prepare a text for publication, NAIN [Academic Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms](#), p.16.

- essay writing services
- friends, relatives, other learners, lecturers or any other person providing input⁸
- private tutors
- copyediting services
- agency websites
- reverse classifieds

Processes should ensure learners' understanding of repercussions of engaging in contract cheating:

- That it is now an offence to use and advertise cheating services that offer to complete assignments
- The presence of a permanent 'digital footprint' if the learner buys an assignment and the exploitative nature of some of these services (eg engagement with criminal enterprise, lifelong burden, exposure to blackmail)
- Consequences and damage for learners engaging them may be personal, professional, significant or long-term (eg marks downgraded, lose course place, loss of award, loss of employment).

Learners should be encouraged to resist attempts to seek shortcuts and seek assistance from centre staff when under pressure.

See video from QQI: [Your own work, Your own degree, Your own achievement! \(qqi.ie\)](http://qqi.ie).

It is known that contracted cheating services are approaching academic staff to invite them to contribute completed assignments and other services (advertising, proofing, tuition etc). Tipperary ETB staff should not provide any form of assistance to contract cheating companies and if found to have done so, may be subject to disciplinary procedures.

If an approach is made, report immediately to FET QA Office: qualityoffice@tipperaryetb.ie.

3.4.5 Use of Artificial Intelligence

Processes should ensure learners':

- Understanding of AI and that AI is a learning aid, not a replacement
- Recognition of its limitations
- Familiarity on exactly what AI tools can and cannot do

⁸ 'Input' means that the third party makes a contribution to the work of the learner, such that there is reasonable doubt as to whose work the assessment represents.

- Guidance on use of AI in course and assessment work. See [Tipperary ETB's Artificial Intelligence Guidelines](#).

Further information about academic integrity and AI for learners and staff can be found in [ETBI's FET Digital library](#).

3.4.6 Learner Academic Code of Honour

NAIN (2023)⁹ advise that an academic code of honour for learners can positively support learners' understanding and buy-in of academic integrity, as well as promoting learner responsibility and accountability. See appendix for a sample [Academic Code of Conduct for Learners](#).

3.4.7 Academic Skills Development and Support

Learners should be provided with opportunities to develop their academic study, writing, referencing, and other relevant skills to ensure they can engage effectively and appropriately. These could include:

- Induction information
- Academic Integrity training and workshops such as citing and referencing classes, writing skills development classes, including paraphrasing conventions, AI workshops and expectations for examination conduct.
- Access to, and training on use of [resource material](#) eg ETB-sector learner handbooks such as The Referencing Handbook, The Academic Writing Skills Handbook, A Learner's Guide Academic Integrity and Academic Integrity: FAQ.
- Study practices, for example, getting organised, time-management, note-taking, skills preparation or techniques.

3.4.8 Academic Misconduct

Processes should ensure learner understanding of academic misconduct in advance of assessment, to include:

- Definitions and examples of misconduct
- The consequences for learners of substantiated misconduct
- Procedures for addressing and sanctioning misconduct, including investigation methods used. (This enables learners to understand the scrutiny of which any suspected piece of work may undergo)

⁹ National Academic Integrity Network, (2023) Framework for Academic Misconduct Investigation and Case Management. Available from: [National Academic Integrity Network | Quality and Qualifications Ireland \(qqi.ie\)](#) [Accessed 12 November 2023].

- Supports and resources on how to avoid misconduct
- Encouragement to report academic dishonesty.

3.4.9 Continued reminders about Academic Integrity

Ongoing discussions about academic integrity should be facilitated within courses. Whilst academic integrity is initiated at the point of learner induction, conversations (formal or informal) should be ongoing during the period of enrolment.

3.5 Vulnerable Learners

Staff should be alert to learners that might be vulnerable to academic integrity threats. Vulnerable learners might include:

- learners under pressure for time
- learners struggling to meet assessment deadlines
- learners with poor participation levels in class
- learners with poor attendance records
- learners with mental or physical health difficulties that might impact their ability to complete assessments as directed
- learners who are struggling to meet the required standard for the award
- learners who are unable or unwilling to follow referencing guidelines
- learners who are unable or unwilling to engage with teacher/tutor feedback
- learners with additional needs
- learners who don't have English as their first language.

3.6 Teaching Methodologies

Adequately preparing and equipping learners with knowledge and tools required to engage with assessment can reduce learner stress. Merry (2024) stresses the importance of teaching the technical and assessment terminology to support learner 'assessment literacy'.

Choose effective teaching material and resources that align with the intended learning outcomes.

Use plain language as much as possible to ensure that information is accessible to all learners through the teaching and learning processes.

3.7 Assessment Planning

Assessors are encouraged to cooperate to consider integrated assessment opportunities along with a coordinated approach to assessment planning across modules. This can reduce learner stress and motivation to cheat.

3.8 Assessment Design

3.8.1 Inclusive Assessment

To reduce learner stress and motivation to cheat, assessment design should consider any barriers to interpreting the written assessment. According to Merry (2024), one of the challenges faced by learners is having to ‘decode’ the written brief. Assessors should consider the following - background information within the assessment, the assessment instructions, and the language used - as potential barriers that may challenge learner understanding of the assessment task.

Assessors should use plain language as much as possible to ensure that information is accessible to all learners through the assessment processes.

3.8.2 Authentic Assessment

Assessors are encouraged to be cognisant about creating assessments that promote academic integrity. Assessments that are more authentic, current and more learner-focused are less susceptible to cheating instances. For example:

- Alternative versions of examinations that are reviewed and changed regularly
- Assessment briefs that require the presentation of project and assignments
- Using a ‘capstone’¹⁰ assessment across some of the modules in a course eg incorporating a ‘capstone interview’ or presentation
- Reviewing and modifying assessment briefs regularly, including proofing for AI possibilities
- Incorporating more variety in ways/UDL approach to assessment
- Aligning assessment to personalised tasks, individualised experiences or work placement reflections
- Considering the types of academic misconduct possible relative to the assessment mode
- Outlining the parameters of AI use in the assessment brief.

See [Tipperary ETB’s Artificial Intelligence Guidelines](#) and ETBI’s FET Digital Library for [more ideas on assessment design relative to AI](#).

¹⁰ A capstone assessment is a final independent piece of assessment in a programme designed to assess the skills, central knowledge, and expertise acquired by the learner to ensure they are in line with the intended learning outcomes of a programme. A capstone project could be a culminating set of personal, academic, and professional experiences.

3.9 Feedback Processes

Giving learner feedback has positive benefits for learning and achievement and also has a significant role in preserving academic integrity.

Effective feedback is timely and clear and guides learners to address the gaps in their performance and the standards expected of them. The importance of learner engagement with feedback, including the submission of ongoing draft assessment work, is central to monitoring learner's progress and provides early warning signals to the assessor of emerging support needs.

The teaching and learning environment should work to ensure that the provision of feedback is regular, is seen as standard practice, and encourages learners to actively seek feedback on their work or study.

3.10 Programme Development and Review

The programme development and review processes must consider academic integrity to minimise academic misconduct.

4. Academic Integrity and Mitigating Risk – Detection and investigation of Learner Misconduct

The second stage of promoting and sustaining academic integrity is having appropriate detection systems.

4.1 Detection and Investigation Approach

The second stage of the lifecycle for academic integrity management is detection and investigation. This cyclic approach to the investigation of cases defines three key stages:

- a) Preparation stage in early-module stages - learners are guided through assessments tasks, criteria and expectations. This phase provides opportunities for further support or education. Academic integrity is championed from the outset.
- b) Examination and grading stage – the assessor asks key questions as a guide to determine if there is misconduct.
- c) Evaluation stage of the data and information leads to a conclusion of the investigation (see Figure 2).

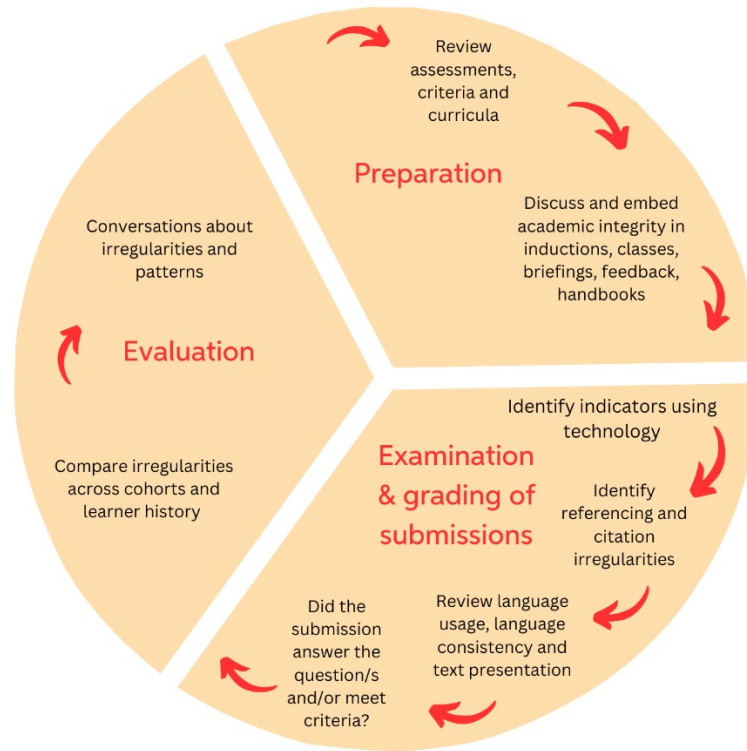


Figure 2: Process for assessment preparation, examination and evaluation

5. Academic Integrity and Mitigating Risk – Classification and Sanction of Learner Academic Misconduct

Following detection and investigation stage, the next stages in the lifecycle of management of academic integrity is the determination of academic misconduct type, it's classification and subsequent sanctioning.

5.1 Type, Classification and Sanctioning of misconduct

Aligned to, and supported by NAIN's Lexicon, the types or forms of misconduct are:

- Plagiarism
- Self-plagiarism
- Contract cheating
- Misuse of AI (and AI Cheating)
- Collusion
- Non-compliance with assessment/exam regulations
- Cheating
- Coercion
- Impersonation
- Fraud/data fabrication or falsification
- Reuse of previous work
- Use of file sharing sites
- Misrepresentation
- Unauthorised content generation
- Promoting ways to breach academic integrity
- Other

See [definitions](#) of each at the start of this document.

The severity of academic misconduct can be classified into one of three levels:

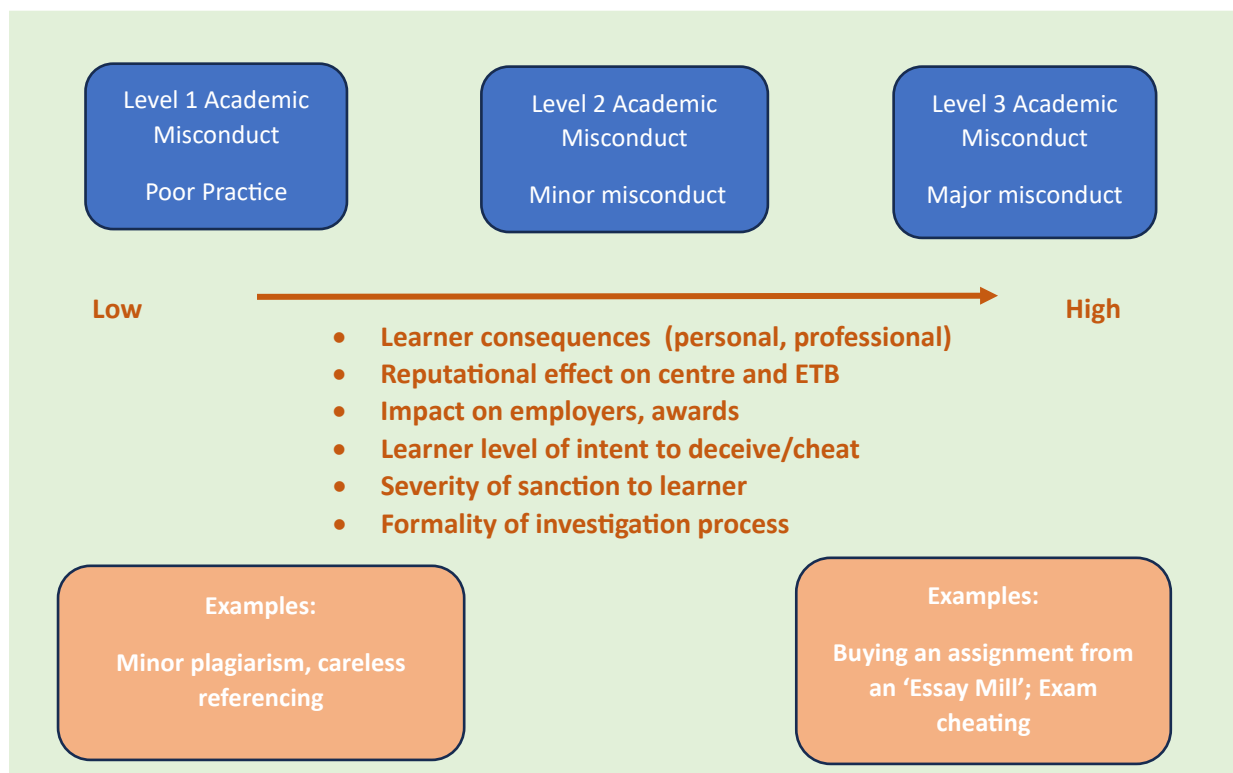


Figure 3: Severity of Academic Misconduct

Sanctioning is linked to the impact of misconduct and higher level misconducts attract more severe sanctioning. Sanctioning is objective, relevant and balanced as well as appropriate to misconduct.

When considering severity and appropriate sanctioning, it is important to account for learner mitigating factors, willingness to admit, learner’s stage within the programme, learner history and any other contextual factors.

Lower level cases are managed by the local FET centre/programme team. More serious cases (Level 3) are escalated to Tipperary ETB’s formal Academic Investigation Committee for review and decision.

Note: the primary focus here is on the suspected misconduct (or malpractice) of a learner. However it’s important to note that in cases where staff are suspected of involvement in poor academic integrity practices or misconduct activity, separate policies and procedures apply for investigations and evaluations. The alleged issues should be reported to FET senior management.

The following flowchart summarises the series of stages in the full investigation, classification, consideration and sanctioning of academic misconduct.

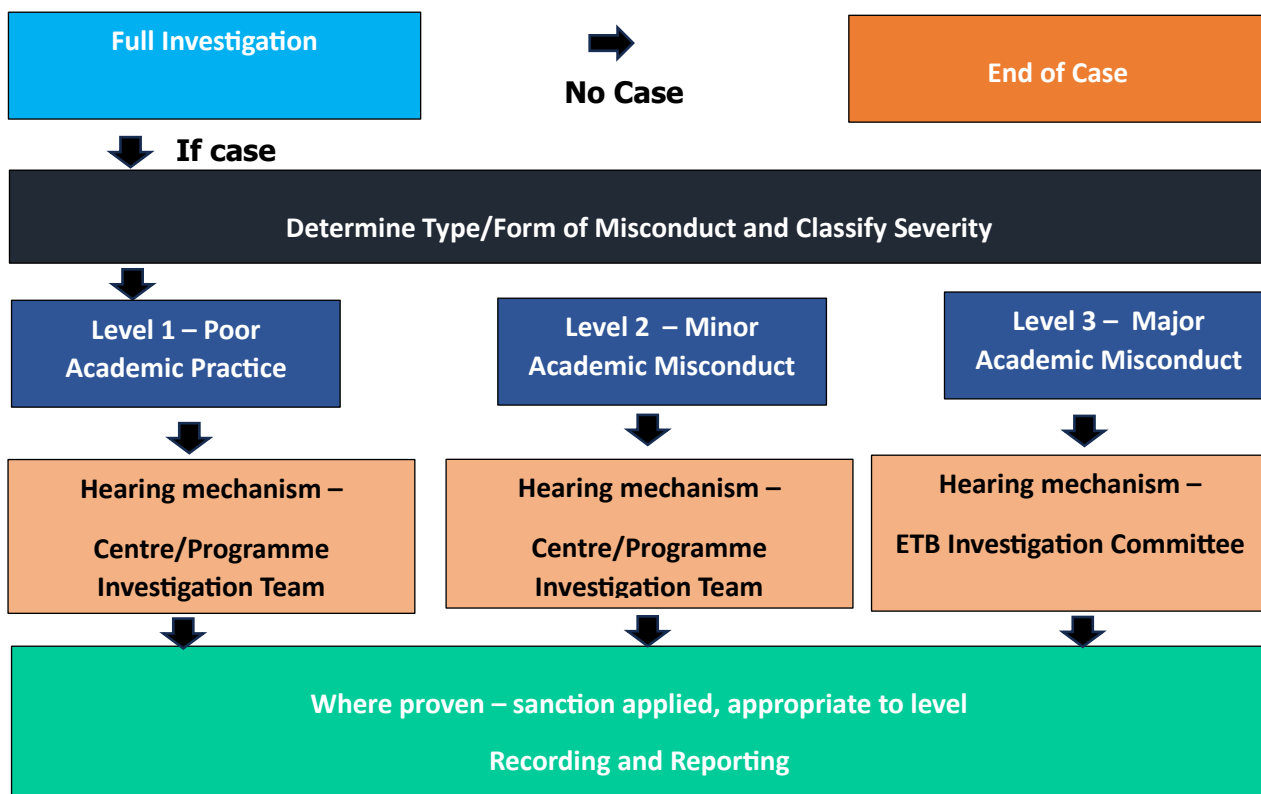


Figure 4: Stages of Investigation of Academic Misconduct

5.2 Recording, Reporting and Security

Records of learner misconduct cases are kept at both centre/programme level and ETB level and are used for the following purposes:

- At centre/programme level, records can be used to identify repeat instances, to inform assessor/assessment practice, to inform improvements to academic practices, to inform prevention strategies and to improve the management of misconduct cases
- At ETB level, records can be used to inform programme development, assessment strategy, programme review, inform policy and procedure review and to support annual monitoring processes.

Minor cases of misconduct (Level 1) are not reported by centres to Tipperary ETB; Level 2 and 3 cases are.

Any commercial contract cheating companies or opportunities identified by centres/programme staff are reported to the FET QA office: qualityoffice@tipperaryetb.ie and directly to QQI: academicintegrity@qqi.ie.

Recording systems (databases and reports) are cognisant of GDPR requirements with learner confidentiality and anonymity protected by reference to learner PLSS number only.

Record retention is in line with Tipperary ETB’s Retention schedule.

Access to the centre records and systems are limited to key centre/programme staff, as designated to them by the Head of Centre. The ETB's centralised records and system is limited to staff of the Development, Support & Quality Department.

6. Appeals

Following a determination of academic misconduct, if the learner does not accept the decision, the option to appeal is available. Appeals are handled formally by Tipperary ETB's Academic Integrity Committee. (See details of the appeals process in the [Academic Misconduct Procedure](#)).

7. Internal Monitoring and Review of this Policy

The FET QA Office is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of this policy and ensuring its compliance with standards and regulations. Monitoring and review is supported by the TEL Coordinator the relevant QA governance groups and informed by stakeholder's feedback.

The review schedule is shown on the table on page 2.

8. Evidence of Implementation of this Policy

Evidence to confirm implementation of this policy may include, for example:

- Information, communications and professional development of staff, learners and relevant stakeholders
- Records of feedback
- Implementation of Academic Misconduct Procedure

9. Monitoring of Effectiveness Evidence of this Policy

The following can be considered when evaluating the effective implementation of this policy, for example:

- Evaluating staff awareness and professional development needs
- Evaluating resources needed to support the embedding of the ETB's Academic Integrity Policy and misconduct cases
- Evaluating and reviewing feedback from internal staff and stakeholders and recording systems
- Analysis of quality assurance reports and findings – internal and external
- Assessing and evaluating academic integrity trends and regulations

Appendix A: Sample Academic Code of Conduct for Learners

To maintain academic integrity, learners must adhere to a code of conduct that prohibits various forms of misconduct, such as plagiarism, cheating, and falsification of information.

To ensure compliance with these standards, learners commit to the following practices:

1. Engaging in educational training to enhance awareness of academic integrity.
2. Properly preparing for classes, assessments, and research tasks.
3. Using textbooks, reading materials, and conducting independent research.
4. Carefully reviewing assessment instructions and seeking explanation when needed.
5. Citing sources appropriately and acknowledging the use of AI tools.
6. Using AI tools as aids rather than replacements for personal work.
7. Participating in educational support activities to enhance knowledge and skills.
8. Work together with peers in group activities while avoiding collusion.
9. Valuing feedback from teachers and combining it to enhance learning.
10. Seeking help from authorised sources rather than using unauthorised individuals or websites.
11. Reporting instances of AI misuse and contract cheating.
12. Proving AI-generated information with reliable sources.
13. Respecting privacy and data security by avoiding the use of confidential information with unauthorised AI tools.

Declaration

I understand that if I do not follow this Academic Code of Conduct and break the rules, I will face consequences. The consequences will include a warning and may also include loss of marks, withdrawal of an award and expulsion from Tipperary ETB programmes.

I am aware that academic misconduct can have effects on my professional life.

By upholding these principles, I will commit to academic honesty and ethical behaviour in my course work and research.

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