



## Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure

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### Amendment History

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# **Irish Baptist College**

## **Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure**

### **Introduction**

1. The purpose of this document is to state the Irish Baptist College's (the College) policy on academic integrity for students on theological programmes and courses. It sets out the procedures staff should follow if they suspect a theology student has committed academic malpractice.

### **Section 1: Policy Statement**

2. The College values a culture of honesty and mutual trust in its academic work (academic integrity) and expects all members of the College, staff and students to respect and uphold these core values.
3. The College expects that when completing work for assessment, students will adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy, taking personal responsibility for their work. This means that students will do nothing that has the potential for them to gain an unfair advantage in assessment.
4. The College views academic malpractice very seriously and regards it as a serious disciplinary matter that may incur a range of penalties, including exclusion.
5. The College will make information on how to maintain academic integrity available to students in ways that are appropriate and accessible. However, it is the sole responsibility of the student to act in a way that is consistent with the Academic Integrity Policy and to seek advice and guidance if they are unclear.
6. Inexperience, intention, lack of intention or unfamiliarity with the Academic Integrity Policy will not be regarded as a defence in the event that the policy is breached.
7. It is the responsibility of the student to take reasonable precautions to guard against unauthorised access by others to their work, both before and after assessment.
8. The College will act fairly in all its academic integrity procedures. In practice this means that the student should receive full disclosure of the case against them and adequate warning of the date of any hearing so the student can prepare. All parties should hear each other's perspectives and clear reasons for decisions taken will be communicated promptly. Those making the decision must be unbiased and decisions taken must be demonstrably reasonable and not irrational.
9. The College will take steps to minimise any distress caused to the student by:
  - Dealing with the matter as quickly as possible, whilst ensuring that this procedure is followed correctly;
  - At every stage, giving clear information about the procedure and the role that the student is expected to take;

- Recognising that breaches of academic integrity relate to pieces of assessment and are not judgements about the character of the individual student involved;
- Arriving at an outcome that is just and proportionate.

## **Scope**

10. This document applies to all student assessments which must be completed in order to receive a Higher Education award offered by the validating institution. Work submitted for formative assessment is expressly excluded from its provisions.
11. These procedures are applicable to the preparation and presentation of all assessed work irrespective of the form that assessment takes.

## **Definitions**

12. Academic malpractice is any activity—intentional or otherwise—that is likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research. It includes plagiarism, collusion, contract cheating, fabrication or falsification of results, and anything else that could result in unearned or undeserved credit for those committing it.

### Plagiarism

13. Plagiarism is the presentation, intentionally or unwittingly, of ideas, intellectual property or work of others without acknowledgement or, where relevant, permission.
14. Self-Plagiarism is the submission, in whole or in part, of a student's own work, where that work has been submitted for a different assessment, either at the College or at a different institution. Students who use a previous piece of work or publication in a future piece of work should ensure that they properly reference themselves. This will not apply where a student is making a resubmission for the same assessment component in the same module, unless specifically prohibited in the assessment information.

### Collusion

15. Collusion is the unauthorised collaboration between two or more students resulting in the submission of work that is unreasonably similar, but which is submitted as being the product of the submitting student's individual efforts. Both the copier and the provider of the work are liable to be penalised.
16. The College does, however, allow collaboration where students work in groups as part of their programme of research or in the preparation of projects and similar assessments. Students should ensure that they are able to identify their contribution to the piece of work in group submissions.

### Contract cheating

17. Contract Cheating (commissioning) is where a student submits work for assessment having used another person or organisation to complete an assessment, whether a financial transaction has taken place or not.

18. Contract Cheating may include the use of essay writing services or essay mills, but also covers the provision of material that is non-essay based such as portfolios, wikis or blogs. Contract cheating includes Ghost Writing where someone else writes or produces any work (paid or unpaid) that a student submits for their assessment, either fully or partially. The receipt of, purchase or intention to purchase, material from a third party to use in full or in part in any form of assessed work is always considered malpractice.

#### Falsification

19. This is the presentation of fictitious or distorted documents, data, evidence or any other material, including submitting the work of another person as if it is their own. This includes the submission of false evidence in an application for Exceptional Circumstances or in an academic appeal. Falsifying data or material includes:

- falsifying the data or material presented in reports or any other assessment.
- falsely purporting to have undertaken experimental or experiential work or to have obtained data about such work undertaken by others.
- the fabrication of references or a bibliography.

#### Impersonation

20. Impersonation is the assumption by one person of the identity of another person with intent to deceive, either in an examination or other forms of assessment.

#### Cheating in exams

21. Cheating is any action before, during or after an assessment or examination which has the potential for a student to gain an unfair advantage in assessment or assists another student to do so. This includes failure to adhere to the examination regulations. Specifically, it is an offence to:

- copy from the work of another candidate, or allow copying from one's own work.
- obtain assistance from another candidate, or provide assistance to them, by whatever means.
- impersonate another candidate or allow oneself to be impersonated.
- introduce any written or printed material into an examination room (unless expressly permitted by the regulations for that assessment).
- Introduce any electronically stored information into an examination room (unless expressly permitted by the regulations for that assessment).
- use a mobile phone or similar electronic device.
- disrupt the examination room by causing undue noise or disturbance.
- talk, pass written communication or make social media contact with any person other than a properly authorised invigilator or another authorised member of staff during the examination.
- deliberately destroy any notes or rough working which you make during the course of the examination.
- gain access to any unauthorised material relating to an examination during or before the specified time.

### Proof reading and copyediting services

22. Major changes by a third party which lead to students submitting work which is substantially different from what they originally wrote is not legitimate. While students may ask someone to read through their work and suggest changes, such changes must be implemented by the student to ensure that the submitted work is the student's own.

### Indicators of types of academic malpractice

23. Indicators of types of academic malpractice may include (but are not limited to) the following:
- A significant block or numerous blocks of material or copied text expressing ideas or concepts taken from the work of others without appropriate acknowledgement or citation. This can include material which is:
    - not appropriately contained in quotation marks.
    - referenced in a bibliography but not cited properly.
    - copied from others and which has been subjected to minor or superficial linguistic changes and presented as the student's own work, with or without citation.
  - Collusion between students as evidenced by structure, sources, a significant block or numerous blocks of copied text (including copied text subjected to minor or superficial linguistic changes).
  - Blocks of copied illustrations, computer code, graph, diagrams or other resource taken from another student or the work of others without appropriate referencing.
  - Results or data which cannot be substantiated on the basis of the material submitted by the student.

### Poor academic practice

24. Poor academic practice involves poor citation practice, where there is evidence that the student did not apply the appropriate rules of academic writing and/or where the extent of copied material is so limited that it does not meet the level of significance such that it can be considered academic malpractice. Instances of poor academic practice normally stem from a misunderstanding of academic conventions or sloppiness in presentation.

### **Institutional responsibilities**

25. The College will endeavour to introduce all students to the topic of academic malpractice and associated issues at an early stage of their studies (most likely in Induction Week for undergraduates and Study Skills module for postgraduates).
26. The College will endeavour to design and structure assignments to reduce the likelihood of academic malpractice.
27. The College will take reasonable steps to ensure that all students, whatever their level or mode of study, understand the academic standards and requirements they must

follow. This may be through study skills sessions, induction sessions, within programme handbooks, on the College website and on the VLE. It is the student's responsibility to engage with the advice provided by reading the information and attending induction sessions.

28. The College will always make clear that:

- acts of academic malpractice are not acceptable in any circumstances; and
- where such acts are shown to have occurred, an appropriate penalty will always be applied.

29. Although students may present evidence of mitigating circumstances (which may be taken into account when determining the penalty to be applied) students should inform the College of these at the earliest possible opportunity so that appropriate help can be offered. Busyness and pressure of work do not constitute mitigating circumstances.

30. The College will, when determining a penalty to be imposed as a consequence of academic malpractice, take account of the consequences which the penalty will have for the academic progression of the student concerned.

## **Section 2: Procedure**

### **Introduction**

31. Cases of poor academic practice are dealt with by individual lecturers.

32. All suspected cases of malpractice are referred by lecturers to the Director of Training, who is designated by the Principal to ensure that the process of dealing with academic malpractice within the College is correctly managed and consistent.

33. The College's malpractice procedure is conducted through the Special Cases Committee. In cases of poor academic practice the Director of Training or Principal will reiterate the seriousness of the issue with the student involved. For repeated offences and/or academic malpractice the issue will be taken to the Special Cases Committee.

34. On the recommendation of the Director of Training, and in exceptional circumstances, a serious first offence may be referred directly to the Special Cases Committee.

### **Distinguishing between poor academic practice and academic malpractice**

35. Poor academic practice includes:

- inadequate referencing, such as the failure to repeat footnote references each time a text is drawn on.
- an incomplete bibliography, which as a result of carelessness fails to include sources mentioned in the main text and references, or gives inadequate or inaccurate information about them

- isolated examples of the omission of quotation marks from quotations (i.e., cases where it is clear that sloppiness or a misunderstanding of academic conventions is to blame)
- close paraphrasing of a phrase or sentence of someone else's material without direct and immediate acknowledgement
- limited collusion between students as evidenced by structure, source or copied text; this includes cases where the written work is original throughout
- failure to give a complete record of the sources drawn on (e.g., omitting reference to the secondary source when using secondary quotations).

36. Academic malpractice includes:

- Referencing, where inadequacy in this area undermines the integrity of the work
- a bibliography that omits texts drawn on in the main body of the work
- more than isolated examples of the omission of quotation marks from quotations
- repeated close paraphrasing of phrases or sentences of someone else's material without direct and immediate acknowledgement
- extensive misuse of secondary quotations
- copying the work of another student, or submitting material from 'essay banks/mills' (contract cheating)
- collusion, impersonation, falsification and cheating in exams.

Instances of malpractice will always be referred to the Director of Training.

### **Detecting Academic Malpractice**

37. The onus is on the College to establish that malpractice has occurred. The standard of proof is the balance of probabilities. This means that, for a finding of malpractice to be supported, based on the information presented, it is more likely than not that the student engaged in academic malpractice.
38. Lecturers can employ various detection methods to gather evidence of suspected academic malpractice. These include, but are not limited to:
- Turnitin reports.
  - Use of internet search engines or electronic databases.
  - Searching essay mills or file sharing sites.
  - Use of online reference sources.
  - Metadata captured from within a submitted document or file.
  - Consulting hard copy textbooks.
39. While some cases of plagiarism are easy to detect, others are more difficult to identify. The following are clues that may signal that the student's work should be examined closely or investigated further:
- Citation styles and bibliographic citations are inconsistent and mixed or non-existent. The College referencing guidelines have not been used.

- The work is clearly written, or in the case of non-written work, produced, at a level beyond the student's usual abilities and may include advanced vocabulary, jargon or combined formal and informal language.
- The document/submission contains a mix of spellings or regionalisms.
- Inconsistencies from one submitted assignment to another, for example, one piece of work being far superior.
- The references used throughout the document/submission are dated (e.g., all more than five years old). Such cases may indicate that the work was purchased through an essay writing service or written by another student. An excessive number of inactive websites may also indicate that the paper is old.
- References are made to tables, diagrams, pieces of text or citations when none of this content is reflected in the document/submission.
- References are made to obscure journals or books to which the lecturer believes the student may not have had access.
- The topic of the submission is inconsistent with the one assigned, or with the learned course content.
- Parts of the document/submission are inconsistent with each other, and the writing style changes from section to section.
- When asked, the student cannot produce any research notes for their work or summarise the main points in the document/submission.

40. Students submit written summative assignments as Word or PDF documents through the College's VLE platform. All submissions are subject to checking by Turnitin, a web-based text-matching tool, which is widely used in UK universities. Turnitin searches the current and archived internet, and papers submitted by other students, to identify similarities between online text and the assignment submission. It produces an "originality report" expressed in percentage terms, identifying suspected sources. This report is examined by lecturers.

41. All Turnitin reports require interpretation by lecturers concerned. For example, there may be a high similarity rating in the report, but no malpractice has been committed because all quotations have been correctly marked as such. Lecturers do not rely solely on the Turnitin report, but also employ other detection methods as outlined above.

42. If appropriate, and with the agreement of the Director of Training, lecturers can interview students about their assignment submissions in order to gather information to evidence suspected academic malpractice. This is particularly appropriate when lecturers notice a sudden change or improvement in a student's submission and wish to establish that the student has a good grasp of the work that they submitted. If lecturers are not satisfied with the student's responses, they will compile a report as evidence for the Director of Training to consider in line with the normal processes.

### **Process when poor academic practice is evident**

43. When poor academic practice is evident in written assessments, the marking lecturer will mark the piece of work as normal but will forward to the Registrar a Poor



Academic Practice Feedback Form which will be sent to the student by the Registrar on mark release day. In cases of doubt, where the piece of work lies on the border of poor practice and malpractice, the lecturer will consult with the Director of Training. The awarded mark will reflect the poor practice elements as the assessment marking criteria explicitly include marks for presentational elements (e.g., the use of quotation marks, adequate referencing, and the provision of a complete bibliography).

44. A completed Poor Academic Practice Feedback Form provides the student with information about the nature of their poor practice, and they are given the opportunity to arrange a meeting to discuss the piece of work with the lecturer in question.
45. It is usually helpful for lecturers to include in their feedback comments a statement that indicates that the mark awarded has taken into consideration the poor practice contained within the essay.
46. All marking is undertaken anonymously but the Registrar will lift anonymity when Poor Academic Practice Feedback Forms are received so that students can be sent the forms on mark release day. Lecturers can lift anonymity once they have uploaded the mark and their comments onto the VLE platform; this enables them to offer appointments to students to discuss the poor practice.
47. The Registrar will save issued Poor Academic Practice Feedback Forms on the Server along with the downloaded essay. This will alert staff to continued poor practice cases.

### **Referral process when academic malpractice has been detected**

#### Essay based summative assessment

48. Lecturers should save a copy of the essay showing the Turnitin originality report and print it out. They can then highlight the sections of the essay which contain examples of malpractice and annotate the script as appropriate. It may be necessary to copy and annotate pages from textbooks, course notes and other sources not detected by Turnitin to supplement the case for malpractice.
49. Lecturers will write up a report of their findings using the 'Academic Malpractice Lecturer Report Form', providing supporting evidence that has been discovered and indicating the location of suspected instances of malpractice. The lecturer will then pass their evidence and completed form to the Director of Training.
50. Lecturers should use the following abbreviations when they mark-up essays:
  - **WFW** for word for word plagiarised text
  - **LR** for lightly reworded sections
  - **P** for paraphrased sections not referenced
51. Examples of documents that may constitute evidence are:
  - an annotated copy of the assignment (showing Turnitin report, other plagiarised text and lecturer feedback on the assignment if appropriate)

- a printout of the annotated plagiarised source(s)
- a printed textbook, course notes or source material
- other electronic sources detected
- metadata captured from within a submitted document
- the Academic Malpractice Lecturer Report Form
- examples of the student's normal writing style
- evidence of submission to an essay mill or similar
- evidence of third-party editing
- report on any interview which has been held (if appropriate)

52. Lecturers should normally record a pre-penalty mark at the conclusion of their feedback comments in cases where malpractice is localised and restricted to one portion of the assignment. This would indicate the notional mark that the portions of the work uncontaminated by malpractice would have received. This pre-penalty mark can sometimes guide members of the Special Cases Committee when they wish to impose a penalty of mark reduction rather than a mark of zero in relatively minor cases of malpractice.

#### Dissertations/Long Essays/Project Reports/Theses

53. If academic malpractice is suspected in a thesis, dissertation or similar piece of work, the work should continue to be marked or assessed to gather evidence of the extent of the alleged malpractice. The formal examination process should then be suspended, and the result withheld pending an investigation.
54. The examiner(s) should refer the case to the Director of Training (and Postgraduate Director if it is a piece of postgraduate work) using the `Academic Malpractice Referral Form` and accompanying it by the evidence collated.

#### Other Summative Assessment

55. Academic malpractice in non-essay assignments should follow the process for essay-based assessment as far as possible (without the use of Turnitin if irrelevant). The evidence submitted will vary according to the type of assessment.
56. If malpractice appears in a group submission, then the group will normally be expected to take collective responsibility for the work and will be called to the same disciplinary hearing, unless individual members are able to:
- identify who contributed the element containing malpractice; and/or
  - distinguish their contribution from that of other members of the group.

#### **Examinations in Biblical Languages**

57. Students are informed prior to the start of examinations that they should not have any unauthorised materials on their person. This might include any electronic device, revision notes or anything else which could give them an unfair advantage in the examination compared to their fellow students. The material need not be pertinent to the examination for it to be unauthorised.

58. Some material may be permitted for an examination, but this will have been confirmed to the student in advance of the examination.
59. Invigilators monitor the conditions of an examination, including the detection of unauthorised material or devices, impersonation, and copying work of other candidates.
60. Where any cheating is detected, the preliminary details of this should be recorded, including the time and nature of the cheating. Where unauthorised material is detected, the invigilator should include the type and content of the material, the time it was found, the examination title and start time etc. Often students are asked to leave the examination at the point unauthorised material is detected whilst the above details are obtained and the material is confiscated, but they may later be allowed to return to complete the examination in the time remaining.
61. Invigilators who suspect cheating or impersonation should complete the Academic Malpractice Report Form and refer it to the Director of Training as soon as possible.
62. The student will then be asked to attend a post-examination interview with the Director of Training or the Principal. At the interview additional information will be sought from the student.
63. If it is agreed that it is likely that an offence has been committed, then the case will be referred to the Special Cases Committee for appropriate consideration and disciplinary action.

### **Contract cheating**

64. If there is a reasonable suspicion that a student may have commissioned a piece of work from a third party, but there is no direct evidence of this, then in agreement with the Director of Training an interview can be arranged to give the student the opportunity to demonstrate that they:
  - Produced the work,
  - Undertook the reading and research themselves,
  - Undertook the preparatory work themselves and
  - Understand what they have written.
65. If an interview is to be conducted it should normally take place within 30 days of the assessment post date.
66. The student should be given at least 5 working days' notice of the requirement to attend the interview. An explanation of what the interview is, the purpose of it and the potential outcomes should be outlined in the invitation. It should be made clear that the interview is arranged due to the detection of potential academic malpractice and it is to allow the student an opportunity to demonstrate that the work is their own; it will not contribute to any mark obtained for the piece of work.

67. Two members of academic staff (at least one of whom must be a subject specialist) must conduct the interview; this will normally be the Director of Training or Principal and the examiner of the assessment.
68. The student may be accompanied by a person of their choice for support only (normally a fellow student or member of staff). Legal representation is not permitted. Any individual accompanying the student should under no circumstances participate in the interview.
69. Reasonable adjustments must be made to ensure that candidates with additional support needs are not disadvantaged for reasons relating to a long-term medical condition, sensory impairment, specific learning difficulty and/or disability.
70. The interview will not normally exceed 30 minutes and should normally be held in person. In exceptional circumstances it can be conducted via Zoom/video link.
71. Intensive questions are expected in the interview. The questions asked should provide the student with the opportunity to demonstrate that the work is their own.
72. An accurate record of the interview should be taken; this record may be used to form the evidence base for any future disciplinary hearing. It may be necessary for a member of the professional staff to be present at the interview to make the record. The student is entitled to have a copy of the record.
73. The interview can have one of two outcomes:
  - i. The staff conducting the interview will confirm that they accept that the student wrote the work in question; no further action will be taken. The work should then be marked on its own merit, if it has not already been marked.
  - ii. If the staff conducting the interview still remain doubtful of the authorship of the work in question, or the student admits that it is not their work, then the case should be referred for consideration by the Special Cases Committee.

The member of staff who conducted the interview will not be permitted to attend the Special Cases Committee making the decision in that instance. The interview, in itself, will not result in a penalty being applied; a penalty can only be applied by the Special Cases Committee.

### **Assessing the evidence that academic malpractice has taken place**

74. The Director of Training will assess whether or not the evidence suggests that academic malpractice may have been committed. It is sufficient for the Director of Training to progress the case “on the balance of probabilities” as a standard of proof.
75. When a suspected case of malpractice is referred to the Director of Training, and it is decided that there is a prima facie case to answer, anonymity will be lifted in order to ascertain the identity of the student.

76. If the module lecturer and Director of Training agree, it is possible to make a decision to hold a Special Cases Committee before all the evidence is collected. This will help to speed up the initial stages of the process. However, the full documents will need to be compiled by the lecturer in good time for the evidence to be circulated to and examined by the student and all members of the Committee prior to the meeting.

### **Assessing the severity of academic malpractice**

77. The Special Cases Committee is expected to use its judgment in deciding the seriousness of an offence and whether there are aggravating circumstances that might affect the severity of the penalty. The Committee must attempt to ensure consistency of treatment between cases, making a judgment about what is a proportionate penalty and ensuring that the penalty chosen does not have consequences for academic progression which are disproportionate in impact.
78. Factors to take into account when determining the penalty and its proportionality include the following:
- The student's level of study: the more advanced and experienced the student, the more serious the offence.
  - The proportion of the piece of work that was subject to malpractice: the higher the proportion, the more serious the offence.
  - The weighting of the piece of work towards the credit rating of the module: the higher the weighting/credit, the more serious the offence.
  - The student's previous history: a subsequent offence, occurring after a student has already received a warning or a penalty for academic malpractice, is more serious than a first offence.
  - The degree of intention to deceive in the piece of work in question (which might be assessed by, for example, efforts to change wording, poor referencing or lack of referencing of plagiarised material, evidence from earlier drafts) and also in the hearing itself.
79. The minutes will record details of the relevant factors taken into account, stating the degree to which they contributed to the decision, and will state the Committee's intentions in terms of the impact of the penalty on progression/degree awarded. It will also refer to any other matters taken into account, e.g., any mitigating/aggravating circumstances, so that precedence and best practice may be established. The written record will also be important in the event that the student appeals the disciplinary process/outcome.

### **Conduct of the Special Cases Committee (in relation to Academic Malpractice)**

80. Minutes will be taken of the proceedings and decisions of all Special Cases Committee meetings, using the College template. Normally the Registrar attends as minute secretary to make this record. If no member of the professional staff is available to attend, a member of the Committee will make the record.

81. The Special Cases Committee will consist of the Director of Training plus another member of the teaching staff. The member of staff who originally made the allegation will not sit on the panel. The Registrar will also be in attendance.
82. The case must not be discussed by the Committee before the student is present, other than to agree or clarify procedure and to decide the issues that need to be explored with the student. The student must be given the opportunity to hear all the evidence and to present an explanation, but should not be present whilst the Committee comes to a decision.
83. If the offence is admitted or proven, the Committee will apply the most appropriate penalty. In the event that the Committee needs to make further enquiries before reaching a decision, the hearing may be suspended pending completion of those enquiries.
84. In determining whether an instance constitutes a repeat (subsequent) offence, any offences committed during a student's current career as either an undergraduate or a postgraduate student will be taken into account.
85. However, an offence committed during the course of an undergraduate programme does not constitute a previous offence in the case of the same student who has moved on to a postgraduate programme.
86. In applying penalties the Committee should ensure that it is fully aware of the impact of the penalty on the student's ability to progress/final degree result and intended career if appropriate, and that the likely impact is proportionate to the offence committed.
87. Decisions of the Special Cases Committee override all other decisions on assessment. For example, the Committee can impose a mark of zero but specifically allow a student a reassessment opportunity even if the degree regulations would not normally permit a reassessment.

## **Process**

### **Pre-meeting**

88. The Director of Training will send all documents relating to the case to the Registrar with confirmation that the case will be handled by the Special Cases Committee.
89. The documents will be sent to the student with an invitation to attend a meeting of the Special Cases Committee. Students must be notified as early as possible of the requirement to attend the meeting (and not later than 5 working days before the meeting), together with full information about the allegation being made against them and informed of the possible consequences if they are deemed to be guilty of academic malpractice. They must be advised of their right to be accompanied by a person of their choice (who may speak on their behalf), normally a fellow student or member of

staff. Legal representation is not permitted. They should receive the same paperwork prior to the meeting as the members of the Committee.

90. The documents will also be sent to all members of the Committee at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

### Meeting

91. At the meeting of the Committee the case against the student will be presented and the student (and/or companion) will be invited to respond.
92. Once all the evidence from both parties has been heard, the Committee will ask the student, and companion if relevant, to leave. The Committee will then come to a decision.
93. If malpractice has been found to have occurred, one of the following penalties is imposed:
- a) a reprimand and warning about future behaviour.
  - b) requirement to undertake a piece of work, not connected to the student's academic programme but related to the offence committed.
  - c) the relevant lecturer to be informed that the piece of work be marked, if not already marked, according to the criteria; such a mark will normally be low, to reflect inappropriate use of sources.
  - d) a mark already awarded for the piece of work or for the module to be reduced by a specified amount.
  - e) a recorded mark of zero for the assessed work in which malpractice occurred.
  - f) a recorded mark of zero for the module(s) in which the malpractice occurred.

The below penalties are reserved for those whose offence is a repeat offence.

- g) recorded mark of zero for the piece of work or module(s) in which the malpractice occurred and the student not being allowed a re-assessment.
- h) recorded mark of zero for the piece of work or module(s) in which the malpractice occurred and the student not being allowed a re-assessment or to substitute any other assessed work.
- i) recorded mark of zero for all examination papers and other assessed work taken during the particular examination period (i.e., end of first semester (January); end of second semester (May/June); re-sit (August/September)) in which malpractice occurred.
- j) recorded mark of zero for all examination papers and other assessed work taken during the academic year.
- k) the Progression and Awards Board to be required to reduce the class of degree by one or more classes from that which would have been awarded on the basis of the student's academic progress, or to award a lesser qualification.
- l) suspension from the College for a fixed period, up to a maximum of twelve months. A student who is so suspended will be prohibited from entering College

premises and from participating in College activities although the suspension may be subject to qualification.

- m) cessation of the student's registration for their accredited course.
- n) expulsion from the College.

94. In the case of (e) and (f), the Committee will permit the student to re-sit the exam or resubmit the assessed work, for a capped mark or (in less severe cases) for the full range of marks. However, the penalty of a zero mark may be imposed 'without loss of credit' in circumstances in which it is judged that the penalty would otherwise have a disproportionate consequence, for example if the candidate is in their final semester and has no opportunity for a resubmission. In such cases, the candidate gains the credit for the module that is required towards successful completion of the academic level; the penalty consists in the mark, which may reduce the student's final classification.
95. In the case of (g) and (h), the penalty may be imposed 'without loss of credit' in circumstances in which it is judged that the penalty would otherwise have a disproportionate consequence. In such cases, the candidate gains the credit for the module that is required towards successful completion of the academic level; the penalty consists in the mark, which may reduce the student's final classification.
96. The student will not have to wait for the Progression and Awards Board to formally grant the re-sit or resubmission.

#### Post-meeting

97. The Registrar will write up the minutes of the Committee using the agreed template and:
- send an email or letter, as soon as possible, to the student confirming that the meeting has taken place and communicating details of the nature of the penalty applied (and any deadlines).
  - record the decision and establish the deadline for any resubmission if a resubmission has been granted.
  - keep all documentation relating to the Committee on the Malpractice files which have restricted access.

#### Students who are unable to attend the Special Cases Committee

98. Students are expected to attend the Special Cases Committee called to consider their work. This will usually be heard at the Irish Baptist College Campus. Students will be responsible for any travel costs associated with attending such meetings.
99. Students who:
- for legitimate reasons are unable to attend the Committee.
  - are not resident in the UK and/or have returned home.
- will be offered the opportunity to have their Panel/Tribunal conducted via appropriate online means.



- 100.If this is not possible, or the opportunity is declined, or no response is received within a reasonable time frame (bearing in mind the student's location), the case will be heard 'in absentia'.
- 101.Students will be supplied with full details of the case against them and informed of the possible consequences if they are deemed to be guilty of academic malpractice. They should receive the same paperwork prior to the meeting as the Committee members, i.e., copies of the relevant assignment(s) and supporting evidence. If they are unable to attend, they will be asked to respond to the allegation detailed in the paperwork. This response should be provided as a written statement, and any supporting material, and must have been received by the Registrar at least 24 hours prior to the meeting.
- 102.Students should normally be given up to 10 working days for a response and be informed that if they do not respond the case may be heard in absentia and a decision will be made on the basis of the evidence available. Once a decision has been made and if malpractice is found to have occurred the Registrar will write up the minutes of the Committee using the agreed template and:
- send an email or letter, as soon as possible, to the student confirming that the meeting has taken place and communicating details of the nature of the penalty applied (and any deadlines).
  - record the decision and establish the deadline for any resubmission if a resubmission has been granted.
  - keep all documentation relating to the Committee on the Malpractice files which have restricted access.

### **Loss of credit**

- 103.Students gain credit when they successfully complete a module by attending as required and by satisfying the criteria for assessment.
- 104.The assumption which underlies penalties for academic malpractice is that a mark of zero for a whole module involves loss of the associated credit for the module. The student may attempt to regain the lost credit by resubmitting the module assignment(s) should the Special Cases Committee permit them to do so. Similarly, a mark of zero for one assessed piece of work may result in the module as a whole being failed. The student may attempt to regain the lost credit by resubmitting the one assessed piece of work should the Special Cases Committee permit them to do so.
- 105.The Special Cases Committee may direct the Progression and Awards Board that a penalty of mark of zero can be imposed 'without loss of credit'. This enables panels to act proportionately in circumstances where otherwise the penalty would have a disproportionate effect on the outcome for the student. The Special Cases Committee is responsible for determining the proportionality of the impact of any penalties imposed.

## **Previously assessed work**

106. Unless there are very good reasons, there is no expectation that, on the finding of academic malpractice in a piece of assessed work, previous work will be routinely checked, although the option remains to review all the student's assessed work if the Special Cases Committee determines that it is appropriate to do so.

## **Communication of outcome**

107. Following the hearing, the decision of the Committee must be communicated to the student in writing within 5 working days. The communication will summarise the decision and the factors that were taken into account, and clarify the potential consequences for the student's academic progress/achievement. The letter should also inform the student of the appeals procedure (see below), and of their right to appeal.
108. The communication should also suggest sources of study skills advice (where appropriate) and warn about the consequences of a repeat offence.
109. A copy of the letter should be placed on the student's file. The official mark transcript for the student concerned should record the marks only, and not indicate that malpractice has taken place.
110. The Registrar will maintain a record of the number and nature of cases dealt with including the level of penalty imposed. A report on such cases will be presented as required (for example, to the Special Cases Committee).

## **Malpractice decisions and the Progression and Awards Board**

111. The Special Cases Committee have the right to refer work for resubmission without reference to the Progression and Awards Board. They also can make recommendations for consideration to the Chair of the Progression and Awards Board in respect of resubmissions, for example allowing a student to resubmit the work for a module on two further occasions after the first, if they believe it is in the student's academic interest.

## **Information management and malpractice**

112. In accordance with College policy, markers are not informed of the ID numbers of students who are suspected of malpractice in a module(s) other than the one they are marking.
113. Details of students undergoing investigation should only be shared with those involved in the process. Documentation should be held in accordance with College policies and relevant data protection legislation.
114. Student transcripts, provided as a record of marks achieved, will not make reference to marks affected by plagiarism penalties.

## Appeals

115. A student who is found guilty of malpractice will have the right of appeal against both the finding of guilt and any penalty imposed on one or more of the following grounds:
- procedural irregularity.
  - availability of new evidence which could not reasonably have been expected to be presented to the original hearing.
  - the disproportionate nature of the penalty.
116. Appeals will be submitted to the Director of Training and directed to the Special Cases Appeal Committee when a penalty has been imposed.
117. An appeal, including a statement of the grounds on which the appeal is being made, must be submitted by the student concerned in writing within 15 working days of the date on which written notification of the decision is sent to the student. A request for an appeal received after this time with good cause shown for its late submission will only be granted at the discretion of those designated to hear the appeal. Any student who has failed to participate in the original disciplinary hearing when invited or required to do so will be entitled to appeal only by special permission of those hearing the appeal.
118. Those considering an appeal will have the authority to confirm, set aside, reduce or increase the penalty previously imposed. The decision of those hearing the appeal will be final and there will be no further opportunity for appeal against that decision.
119. Those hearing an appeal will not re-hear the case afresh, but will consider whether the initial hearing and outcome were fair by:
- reviewing the procedures followed.
  - establishing whether the appellant has presented any new evidence that could not reasonably have been expected to be presented to the original hearing and that this evidence is material and substantial to the findings.
  - reviewing the penalty imposed.
120. Those hearing an appeal will seek to deal with the case on the basis of documentary evidence and may, at their discretion, call a meeting to which the appellant is invited to present their appeal in person. The appellant will be given at least a week's notice of any meeting. In such an event, the appellant may be accompanied by a fellow student or College staff member of their own choosing, who may speak on their behalf.
121. The Special Cases Appeal Committee will comprise the Principal who will act as chair, a member of the teaching staff not previously involved in hearing the case, a Management Committee Member and a student representative.
122. The Special Cases Appeal Committee will make their findings on the balance of probabilities and decisions may be by a majority. The Chair may vote and will have, in addition, a casting vote.

123. Minutes will be taken of the proceedings and any decisions will be recorded, along with the reasons for those decisions. All documentation from the Special Cases Appeal Committee must be sent to the Registrar, who will keep it in accordance with the College's GDPR policy.

#### **Completion of procedures and independent review**

124. Once a student has finished the internal appeals or complaint procedures the College will send a Completion of Procedures letter to the student within 2 weeks. This will set out clearly what issues have been considered and the College's final decision.
125. If the appeal is rejected and this procedure has been completed, students registered on a course validated by Spurgeon's College may appeal to them.