



Academic Offences Policy and Procedure for Students Studying for Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications

SLT Member Responsible	Adam Fahey
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Author of Policy/Procedure	Matthew Twitchett
Original date of Policy	August 2019
Date approved by (EQB)	15th Sept 2022
Next Review Date	August 2024

SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FOLLOWING REVIEW

South Essex College Group

11th August 2023

Academic Offences Policy and Procedure for Students Studying for Pearson BTEC Higher National qualifications at South Essex College 2023-24

Page Number or Heading Name	Details of significant change	Changes made by
3 & 4	This document refers students to the College policies and procedures for plagiarism for additional guidance on that specific case of student academic misconduct.	Matthew Twitchett
5	Academic Offence panel will be chaired by Head of Quality and Compliance of Director of HE operations	Matthew Twitchett
7	Appeals will be heard by the Director of Quality, Teaching and Learning rather than Head of Quality and Compliance	Matthew Twitchett
Throughout document	Changes to job titles	Sharon Dunphy
3 and 4	Equality Impact Assessment added	Sharon Dunphy
8	Harvard referencing style added	Sharon Dunphy
8	ProMonitor added to student file for recording of information in relation to academic offence	Sharon Dunphy
10	10 working days to communicate academic offences meeting and outcome of academic offences meeting.	Sharon Dunphy

Equality Impact Assessment

The aim of an equality impact assessment (EIA) is to consider the equality implications of any new or amended policy, procedure, practice, project, function on different groups of staff, students and visitors to the college. This EIA tool provides a simple framework that helps evaluate whether the change may inadvertently disadvantage protected characteristics and identify ways to proactively advance and promote equality.

You will need to consider each of the equations and provide information as to consideration and any changes made in relation to Equality, diversity and inclusion.

Date EIA completed.	11 th August 2023
Name of person responsible for completing the EIA	Sharon Dunphy
Role of person responsible for completing the EIA	Head of Quality and Compliance
Who is affected by the policy / decision / change	Students and Staff
What's the reason for the new policy / change in policy, practice, process etc.	This is a yearly review and update required by awarding organisations

You will need to consider whether its possible that the proposed new policy / change in policy /procedure/practice etc could discriminate or unfairly discriminate or disadvantage people. You should consider:

Who gets to participate	Who does not, or who now does not due to the changes proposed / made.
Who is at an advantage	Who is at a disadvantage, and again has this changed?
Who will benefit	Who will not benefit (or who did and now doesn't due to the changes proposed in policy
Who can access the policy	Who cannot, or now cannot.

Protected Characteristic	What degree of impact does the change have (score 1-5 with one being lowest impact and 5 being the highest)	What is a potential positive, neutral or negative impact? Include what you have considered. Are there any barriers?	What action will be taken to address any negative impact or remove any potential barriers identified? Note if we are not able to resolve anything identified.	Date by when and whom will this action be taken.
Age	1	None identified		
Disability	2	Some Students with a disability may need support in understanding the policy. This will be provided by the academic and student support teams in the College.	Students with an identified disability can seek support from their personal tutor, programme or student support team at the college	As and when required
Gender (Sex)	1	None identified		
Gender Reassignment	1	None identified		
Marriage or Civil Partnership	1	None identified		
Pregnancy / Maternity	2	A student may not be able to attend a meeting due to pregnancy, birth or maternity leave. Support and guidance will be provided to the students by the academic/support team mitigate any negative impact	A student will be able to submit evidence in relation to pregnancy/maternity to request additional time for the meeting. The college will support the additional time for a meeting with evidence and inline with awarding organisation requirements.	College will respond to request for extension to meeting within 2 working days.
Race	1	None identified		
Religion or Religious Belief	2	A student may not be able to attend a meeting due to religious holiday and can request a change of date	The college will move date of meeting to not coincide with religious holiday.	College will respond to student request within 2 working days.
Sexual Orientation	1	None identified		
Any other element that needs to be considered.	1	None identified		

Note:

1. The terms stated under protected characteristics are the terminology used in the Equality Act 2010. As part of the policy approval process Executive Board will consider the EIA assessment and any potential barriers which we may not be able to overcome and whether the action proposed will mitigate sufficiently within legislation or whether we decide to not implement the new policy if the risk are significant. If the policy is approved the EIA is also approved

1. Academic Offences Procedures

This policy relates to students studying for Pearson Higher National qualifications at the South Essex College Group. It should be read in conjunction with the Student Plagiarism Policy FE including BTEC Higher Nationals and the Procedure – Cases of suspected plagiarism FE including BTEC Nationals. These can be accessed from the HE website

[HE Policies, Procedures and Downloads | South Essex College](#)

2. Academic Offences

Any attempt to gain an unfair advantage may be considered as an offence and dealt with under this and associated procedures. Each case will be considered on its own merits, and on the basis of:

- the gravity of the case;
- the circumstances of the case;
- the level at which the offence took place;
- whether the offence was a repeat offence.

Academic Offences

These include:

- a. plagiarism: that is, using or copying the work of others (whether written, printed or in any other form) without proper acknowledgement in any assignment, test or other assessed work;
- b. using work previously submitted for another assignment without full acknowledgement;
- c. falsifying data or evidence;
- d. submitting a fraudulent claim of extenuating circumstances;
- e. assisting another student to commit an academic offence;
- f. submitting written work produced collaboratively, unless this is explicitly permitted;
- g. copying the work of another student or otherwise communicating with another student in a timed assessment;
- h. introducing any written, printed or electronically stored information into a timed assessment other than material expressly permitted in the instructions for that assessment;
- i. attempting to interfere with the assessment process.

This list is not exhaustive.

In submitting any piece of work, a student shall acknowledge any assistance received or any use of the work of others.

A student may be found guilty of an academic offence whether or not there has been any intention to deceive; that is, **a judgement that negligence has occurred is sufficient to determine guilt.**

3. Student responsibility

Students have a duty to familiarise themselves with this policy and the College plagiarism policy and procedure and of the academic conventions used for correctly citing and acknowledging the work of others, including the correct use of quotation marks using the Harvard referencing style. For further advice refer to the Student Programme Handbooks or personal tutor.

4. Determination of whether an offence has occurred

If the academic offence relates to plagiarism the College procedure for plagiarism will be followed. The Head of School and tutor will apply the penalties identified in Appendix one of this document for Higher National students.

All other types of academic offences must be referred to the Academic Offences Committee meeting.

5. Record of Offences

A record of admitted or found offences will remain on the student's file on ProMonitor for the duration of their study in the College.

6. Right of Appeal

A student has the right to appeal a finding of an Academic Offences Committee. Grounds on which the appeal is made must be included in the notification of appeal. A simple request for a re-hearing does not constitute valid grounds for appeal.

The alleged academic offence(s) will be dealt with by the Executive Director of Quality, Teaching and Learning.

7. Assessment Board

Assessment Boards are authorised to:

- note any instance of cheating, plagiarism and other forms of unfair practice.

8. Academic Offences Committee

Record of Attendance

A full list of members of the Academic Offences Committee present must be recorded. The Academic Offences Committee shall consist of the Head of Quality and Compliance and Director of HE operations and two members of staff from outside the student's department who have no connection with the case. The student and a student representative.

Chair

Head of Quality and Compliance Manager or Director of HE operations

Each student is informed in writing of the Committee's decision and of the student's right to appeal against the decision.

Order of Proceedings

- a. The members of the Committee have a preliminary discussion without the student, the student's representative;
- b. The student, the student's representative academic staff enter the room and the Chair introduces all those present;
- c. The Chair checks that the student has received details of the case and any supporting documentation;
- d. The Chair explains the order of proceedings to the student;
- e. The evidence relating to the alleged offence is then presented by the a member of the academic team this maybe the programme leader)and members of the Committee are invited to put questions to the academic team;
- f. The Chair then invites the student to put forward a case verbally if he or she wishes to do so including any mitigation, and members of the committee (but not the academic staff) are invited to put questions to the student;
- g. The Chair invites the student's representative to put forward any additional statement;
- h. The Chair invites the student to make any final response;
- i. The student, the student's representative and the staff members are then asked to leave the room;
- j. The Committee then deliberates and comes to a decision as to whether an offence has been committed;
- k. The Committee then determines the appropriate penalty from the set of penalties available to it, clarifying the reasons for the choice of penalty;
- l. The student is then recalled to the room to be told the decision as to whether the alleged offence is confirmed and, if so, the penalty and the reasons why this is the appropriate penalty. Members of the academic team may be present during this final stage.

Responsibilities

The chair is required to

- a. Inform in writing each student whose case has been referred to him or her about the nature of the alleged offence within 10 working days;
- b. Check the Academic Offences Records to determine whether there has been any previous confirmed academic offence;
- c. Inform each student in writing of his or her decision and the student's right to appeal against the decision (a copy must be kept both in the student's file and in the central file) within 10 working days of the meeting being held.

Any cases involving breaches of the College's disciplinary regulations must be referred to the Executive Director Student Experience

Where appropriate, a student is entitled to see a copy of paperwork relating to the alleged offence at least one day prior to the meeting Academic Committee meeting

Programme Leader

The Programme Leader will attend the Committee to set out the evidence relating to the alleged offence. The Programme Leaders should not present any mitigating circumstances of which he/she is aware unless they relate to the Colleges procedures or teaching. Neither should the Programme Leader propose or comment on any penalty that might be imposed.

The Programme Leader is not a member of the Committee and can only attend when the student is present (not before or after). The Programme Leader is not permitted to ask questions of the student during the meeting except through the Chair.

Student Attendance and Representation

If the student admits to the charge within five working days of notification of the charge, he or she need not attend the Academic Offences Committee meet and the Committee shall be free to proceed without student attendance. In such a case a student may submit a statement in mitigation.

The student charged will be invited to be present at the committee whenever verbal evidence is being heard by the Committee. He or she may bring a member of the College, or Students' Union to help him or her in presenting his or her case to the Committee.

Where appropriate, a student is entitled to see a copy of paperwork relating to the alleged offence at least one day prior to the Academic Offences Committee.

Decisions Available to an Academic Offences Committee

The following penalties may be applied by the committee (see appendix 1):

- unit assignment reassessed;
- assign a “Fail” grade and only permit submission of pass criteria;
- determine that the student has failed the level and is required to withdraw from the programme of study.

9. Appeals

A student who wishes to appeal against the outcome of these procedures should write to the Executive Director of Quality, Teaching and Learning within 2 weeks of the hearing setting out in detail the nature of the evidence to support the claim that there were procedural irregularities in the appeals process. If *prima facie* there is evidence to support the claim then the case will be reviewed by a Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints or appeals. When the College’s internal procedures for dealing with complaints and appeals have been exhausted, the College will issue a Completion of Procedures letter. Students wishing to avail themselves of the opportunity of an independent review by the OIA must submit their application to the OIA within three months of the issue of the Completion of Procedures letter. Full details of the scheme are available on request and will be enclosed with the Completion of Procedures letter.

Appendix 1 - Penalties

Guidelines

The guidelines presented below are guidelines only and it is very important that those making decisions about penalties take the evidence with which they have been provided and any mitigating circumstances into account.

Table 1: Guidelines for penalties for offences

	Offence	Penalties graded by severity
Band A	<u>Relatively minor offence</u> – e.g. plagiarising a few lines; taking a few notes into test.	1. A formal written warning only 2. Unit of assessment to be referenced correctly/rewritten.
Band B	<u>severe offence</u> – e.g. plagiarism is somewhat more extensive (but less than 25%), the sources plagiarised are not listed but there is still a substantial proportion of the student's own work; or the plagiarism is more extensive but the work submitted is <u>an early unit of assessment for a Unit</u> , and the evidence indicates that there has been a failure to understand the academic conventions.	2. Unit of assessment reassessed. Work may be an alternative assessment. 3. Assign a "Fail" grade. Resubmission will be a maximum of a "Pass" grade. Reassessed work may be an alternative assessment.
Band C	<u>Very severe offence</u> – e.g. plagiarism extending to a substantial proportion of the work (25% or more); obtaining work from someone else; copying the work of another student almost in its entirety; attempts to avoid detection by plagiarism software.	4. Assign a "Fail" grade Resubmission will be a maximum of a "Pass" grade. Reassessed work may be an alternative assessment. 5. Assign a "Fail" grade with no resubmission or second attempt. 6. Determine that the student has failed the level and is required to withdraw from the programme of study.

Table 2: Guidelines for penalties for subsequent offences for

Subsequent Offence is Band A	Subsequent Offence is Band B	Subsequent Offence is Band C
<p>2.Unit of assessment reassessed. Resubmission may be an alternative assessment.</p> <p>3.Assign a “Fail” grade Resubmission will be a maximum of a “Pass” grade. Reassessed work may be an alternative assessment.</p>	<p>4. Assign a “Fail” grade Resubmission will be a maximum of a “Pass” grade. Reassessed work may be an alternative assessment.</p> <p>5. Assign a “Fail” grade with no resubmission or second attempt</p>	<p>5. Assign a “Fail” grade with no resubmission or second attempt.</p> <p>6.Determine that the student has failed the level and is required to withdraw from the programme of study.</p>

The College is under a duty to report instances of assessment malpractice directly to Pearson. This will be completed by the Executive Director of Quality, Teaching and Learning.