

## Academic Malpractice Policy

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## Section 1: Overview

### 1.1 Purpose and Scope

#### 1.1.1 The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure that Frontline, Lancaster University, and Frontline’s participants and stakeholders have confidence in the value and basis of the awards made;
- outline Frontline’s expectations of learners at all stages of study on the programme, and the responsibilities of participants and staff members respectively in meeting those expectations and upholding academic integrity; and
- provide a consistent and coherent approach to the treatment and progression of matters under this policy.

### 1.2 Definitions

1.2.1 **Academic Malpractice** is defined as a participant attempting successfully or unsuccessfully to obtain for themselves, or another participant, an unfair advantage with a view to achieving a higher grade, mark or more favourable outcome that they would otherwise secure. Any attempt to convey deceitfully the impression of acquired knowledge, skills, understanding or credentials, shall represent a contravention of the regulations of Frontline and Lancaster University, and may constitute grounds for exclusion.

1.2.2 **Poor Academic Practice** means an unintended breach of academic practice or contravention where there has been no attempt to gain an unfair advantage and which has occurred because of poor study skills.

### 1.3 Categories of Academic Malpractice

The following are examples of ‘academic malpractices’:

1.3.1 **Collusion:** This occurs where a piece of work prepared by a group is represented as if it were the participant’s own. This can also occur by enabling a fellow participant to obtain academic credit to which they are not entitled. This includes providing material or negligence in protecting work (in hard copy and electronic format) or performing all or part of an assigned task so that



unfair advantage or credit may be obtained by another participant. This applies to both examination and coursework assessments.

1.3.2 **Plagiarism:** This occurs in the following circumstances:

- The act of copying or paraphrasing content into an assessment from a source text, ~~whether in manuscript, printed or electronic form~~, without appropriate acknowledgement (this includes quoting directly from another source with a reference but without quotation marks);
- The submission of all or part of another participant's work, whether with or without that participant's knowledge or consent;
- The commissioning or use of work by the participant which is not their own and representing it as if it were;
- The submission of all or part of work purchased or obtained from a commercial service;
- The submission of all or part of work created by another person;
- The reproduction of a participant's own work, or submission of almost identical own work, in full or in part, which has previously been submitted for assessment. This does **not** include those assessments where the participant is permitted or required to develop previously assessed work into a larger argument, for example the dissertation; or
- Directly copying from a model/solutions/answers made available in previous years.

1.3.3 **False Authorship:** This is a form of plagiarism where the participant has deliberately engaged with a third party and/or software tool to complete an assessment, either in part or whole. This engagement can be direct or through an intermediary. This may include work produced by another individual, an essay mill, a tutoring service, or through the use of Artificial Intelligence software. As it is the authorship of the work that is contested, there is no requirement to prove that the work has been purchased. The submission of work which is generated and/or improved by language model software for the purposes of gaining marks will be regarded as False Authorship and seen as an attempt to gain an intentional unfair academic advantage.

1.3.4 **Fabrication or Falsification of Results:** This occurs when a participant claims to have carried out tests, experiments or observations that have not taken place, or presents results not supported by the evidence, with the object of obtaining an unfair advantage. This also includes practical work, number of hours completed (including hours in Practice and Contrasting Learning Experiences), oral presentations, interviews, and reports. It includes instances where practical



work has been carried out and the details of that work have then been misrepresented (for example, work has been carried out with a personal acquaintance where the assessment guidance required it to be with a person with whom the participant has worked in practice).

1.3.5 **Cheating:** This consists of attempts to complete an examination or in-class test (including remote examinations) by unfair means, including but not limited to:

- Deliberately acquiring advance knowledge of the content of an examination or an in-class test;
- Obtaining help from others in a manner not explicitly permitted by the regulations for the examination or test, including the use of mobile phones or any other electronic device capable of sending or receiving text and/or accessing the internet and/or stored information in whatever form and use thereof;
- Bringing into the examination or test any unauthorised materials or information;
- Communicating or attempts to communicate with a fellow participant or individual who is neither an invigilator nor a member of staff; or
- Copying, or attempting to copy, from a fellow participant.

1.3.6 **Impersonation:** This is the assumption by any person of the identity of a participant with intent to deceive or gain an unfair advantage.

1.3.7 **Misrepresentations of Hours in Practice and Competencies:** This is in the case of the falsification of hours completed in practice or claiming to have achieved competencies when this is untrue.

## Section 2: Policy and procedures

### 2.1 General principles

2.1.1 Frontline values a culture of honesty and mutual trust in its academic endeavours (academic integrity) and expects all members, participants, and staff to respect and uphold these core values.

2.1.2 Frontline shall provide advice and guidance to participants on academic integrity and what constitutes academic malpractice and make participants aware of these regulations and the possible outcomes of proven academic malpractice. Participants have a responsibility to ensure



that they are aware of Frontline's and Lancaster University's expectations and the regulations, and to take responsibility for the academic integrity of their own work.

- 2.1.3 Any participant who is alleged to have been involved in an act of academic malpractice can choose to access support and advice from Lancaster University Students' Union at all stages of the procedures contained in these regulations.
- 2.1.4 Where assessments are text based, they must be submitted in an electronic format so that text matching technology can be used. No hand-written assessments will be accepted.
- 2.1.5 Frontline reserves the right to use electronic software (e.g., Turnitin) for the purposes of the detection of suspected academic malpractice. External Examiners shall also have the right to request access to this.
- 2.1.6 Decisions taken under this policy by a member of staff or panel shall be made on the basis of the balance of probability and will be informed by the principles of natural justice, fairness and equity.
- 2.1.7 Frontline will monitor the incidence of academic malpractices for each participant and for the sharing of data with partner agencies as appropriate.
- 2.1.8 Every participant invited to an Academic Malpractice Panel (see 2.5) has the right to submit or to present information in support of their case. They may also bring someone to support them at the panel, such as a friend, colleague or union representative, or students' union representative.

## 2.2 Suspension while the Panel is pending

- 2.2.1 Where a participant is subject to an investigation regarding possible academic malpractice, the chief social worker may suspend the person's place on the programme until the Academic Malpractice Panel has met.
- 2.2.2 Such a suspension may be requested by the module or assessment lead, or by the relevant Practice Tutor, Principal Practice Tutor, or Head of Delivery. They must submit the reasons for the request and supporting evidence to academic registry who will present this information to the



chief social worker.

## 2.3 Academic Malpractice identification and investigation

- 2.3.1 The initial responsibility for detecting instances of suspected academic malpractice in all forms of assessment, including examinations, in-class tests (remote and in person) and coursework, rests with academic markers who need to be vigilant when assessing work. This is a responsibility of their academic employment and a vital part of ensuring the academic integrity of assessment.
- 2.3.2 Where academic malpractice is suspected this policy **must** be followed. It is not acceptable to ignore a potential matter or to attempt to impose informal penalties.
- 2.3.3 Where work submitted by participants is subject to investigation under these procedures, it may be marked and graded on the basis of the submission but should not be processed at the relevant Examination Board until the issue is concluded and an outcome determined.
- 2.3.4 The academic marker shall work in conjunction with the module lead when a concern is identified. They will use their judgement to determine whether the matter is clearly poor academic practice, or is potentially academic malpractice. Where the marker is external to Frontline the module or assessment lead will make this judgement.
- 2.3.5 Where it is determined that the participant's work displays some form of poor academic practice, and this is the first occasion on which this had been identified in work submitted by the participant, the academic marker will deal with this as part of the normal feedback and assessment procedures. The academic judgement of the academic marker may be that poor academic practice should lead to a significant reduction in the mark awarded or that the affected work should be set aside, and the remaining work marked as normal. The participant must be informed, usually via the marker's feedback, of the nature of the problem and why it is unacceptable and a note of 'poor academic practice' shall be recorded in the participant's record. Further guidance on dealing with poor academic practice can be found in the Lancaster Plagiarism Framework.
- 2.3.6 Where the participant's work displays some form of poor academic practice, and this follows the identification of poor academic practice in earlier work submitted by the same participant, then



the matter will be referred to be reviewed by the Academic Malpractice Panel which may determine that an 'Academic Warning' be recorded on the participant record system.

2.3.7 Where the academic marker and module lead decide that the quantity of affected text is too great to be dealt with by setting the text aside as this would result in a mark of failure or not meeting learning outcomes or that there is suspicion of some form of academic malpractice then the matter shall be referred to the Academic Malpractice Panel. The academic marker will provide the panel and participant with the details of the alleged malpractice that may include, for example, the Turnitin report, annotated assignment, and any other relevant information.

## 2.4 Relationship to Fitness to Practise

2.4.1 As the Frontline Programme establishes suitability for social work training and professional practice, and further confers fitness to practise as approved by Social Work England, academic malpractice should be considered (where necessary and relevant) in reference to question of fitness to practise. For example, a proven academic malpractice matter may be considered under the [Fitness to Practise Policy](#).

2.4.2 The implications that academic malpractice is likely to have for a participant's fitness to practise should only be considered once the outcome of the academic malpractice is confirmed. The Academic Malpractice Panel must be held and concluded before a Fitness to Practise Panel is held.

## 2.5 Academic Malpractice Panel

2.5.1 The purpose of the Academic Malpractice Panel is to ensure that all alleged cases are investigated to determine if academic malpractice has been committed, and, if proven, that they are dealt with formally. This is to uphold the academic integrity of the programme and to guarantee consistency of approach across Frontline.

2.5.2 The Academic Malpractice Panel will consider any previous history of poor academic practice and/or academic malpractice noted on a participant's file.



- 2.5.3 The Academic Malpractice Panel will have a minimum of three members, drawn from: head of curriculum, principal curriculum leads, principal practice tutors, practice tutors and the academic registrar. The panel will be chaired either by the head of curriculum, a principal curriculum lead or the academic registrar.
- 2.5.4 The participant will be notified, in writing as per 2.5.6, once a matter has been referred to the Academic Malpractice Panel.
- 2.5.5 Participants invited to an Academic Malpractice Panel are able to present information in defence or mitigation of their situation. They may also bring someone to support them at the Panel, such as a friend, colleague, union or student's union representative. Where the participant is to be accompanied by a legally qualified representative, the participant must inform Frontline at least 5 calendar days prior to the meeting or hearing. Frontline reserves the right to have its own legal representative at the meeting or hearing.
- 2.5.6 The participant will be notified, normally via email, no later than 10 working days before the panel date and provided with the following information:
- confirmation of the allegation and which assessment is being reviewed by the panel;
  - the hearing date, time and location (participants will normally attend remotely);
  - that they can be accompanied by a friend, colleague, union or student's union representative, should they wish to do so;
  - that they may call witnesses to support their case (whose identity must be notified to the co-ordinator of the panel a minimum of two days prior to the hearing in order that their attendance can be assured);
  - copies of the evidence which will be considered by the panel;
  - that only in exceptional circumstances will a change of the date of the panel be considered. In such circumstances the participant can request in writing that the date be changed, providing evidence relevant to support their request;
  - that the panel can go ahead without the participant in attendance. If this is the case, the participant will be invited to provide written submissions to be provided to the panel coordinator no less than two days before the panel convenes. If the participant is not in attendance, friends, colleagues, union or students' union representatives are also not permitted to attend.





2.5.7 At the hearing of the Academic Malpractice Panel a member of Frontline staff may be in attendance to provide evidence. The participant will be asked to respond (if in attendance) to the allegations regarding their work and may also wish to consider if there are any exceptional circumstances which should be made known to the Academic Malpractice Panel.

## 2.6 Academic Malpractice Panel decision and penalties

2.6.1 In consideration of the case due account will be taken by the panel of such things as the level of intent, the proportion of assessment affected and any previous offences of the same kind.

2.6.2 The panel's determination of the case is on a majority decision. The outcomes are that:

- academic malpractice has occurred;
- academic malpractice has not occurred;
- academic malpractice has not occurred, but there is evidence of poor academic practice.

2.6.3 The Academic Malpractice panel may impose one of the following outcomes:

- That no action of any kind will be taken. Where appropriate, this may mean that the academic marker shall be instructed to mark the work normally;
- That the matter should be considered as a matter of poor academic practice and dealt with as described at 2.3.5;
- That an academic warning is noted on the participant record system: this is normally when a participant has repeated poor academic practice as per 2.3.6;
- That the participant be required to submit an alternative piece of work and such work shall be eligible to receive only the minimum pass mark. If the participant refuses or fails to submit the work, a mark of zero shall be recorded. This submission would constitute a reassessment opportunity. This outcome is never available where the malpractice is in connection with cheating in an in-class test or an already granted resubmission opportunity, whether that arose as a result of earlier failure or previous malpractice. Where a second attempt has been permitted as a result of approved mitigation, this outcome is available;
- That the case should be referred to the Standing Academic Committee, held by Lancaster University, due to the seriousness of the matter or because there are repeated allegations.



2.6.3 The Chair will convey the outcome decision in writing, normally by email, to the participant concerned within 5 working days of the Academic Malpractice Panel hearing.

2.6.4 If the participant does not accept the decision of the Academic Malpractice panel, they can petition the Standing Academic Committee at Lancaster University to rehear the case, if they have reasonable belief that:

- there is new evidence that could not reasonably have been made available prior to the hearing;
- there is a material procedural irregularity which, had it not occurred, may have significantly affected the decision, outcome or both; or
- the penalty was too severe given the nature of the allegation.

The participant has seven working days of receipt of the outcome to petition the Standing Academic Committee.

2.6.5 If the participant is deemed as having grounds for review the matter will proceed to a Standing Academic Committee Hearing, where the participant will be able to present their case and can be accompanied by a friend or representative if desired.

## 2.7 Standing Academic Committee

2.7.1 Further details of the process and principles of the Lancaster University Standing Academic Committee can be found in the Academic Malpractice chapter of Lancaster University's Manual of Academic Regulations and Procedures at the following link:

<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/academic-standards-and-quality/regulations-policies-and-committees/manual-of-academic-regulations-and-procedures/>

2.7.2 A participant who has been judged to have committed academic malpractice by the Lancaster University Standing Academic Committee or another appropriate University body can appeal against the judgement. Information can be found in the Academic Appeals chapter of Lancaster University's Manual of Academic Regulations and Procedures.

## 2.8 Retrospective Detection



- 2.8.1 Retrospective detection is defined as the discovery of alleged academic malpractice in work that has been subject to final moderation, including by a relevant Board of Examiners.
- 2.8.2 Lancaster University and/or Frontline shall reserve the right to review work retrospectively and to apply the appropriate procedures, and where reasonable, the appropriate penalties.
- 2.8.3 Approval by an Examination Board of a degree classification and/or award shall not prevent the reasonable application of retrospective review.
- 2.8.4 Lancaster University reserves the right to review and present the matter to the Standing Academic Committee as necessary. Please refer to Lancaster University Academic Malpractice Regulations and Procedures for more information:  
<https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/academic-standards-and-quality/regulations-policies-and-committees/manual-of-academic-regulations-and-procedures/>
- 2.8.5 In cases where academic malpractice has been upheld, following the Academic Malpractice Panel and/or Lancaster University Standing Academic Committee, where a penalty has been imposed which means that a participant has failed an assessment previously ratified as a pass (either with or without the opportunity for resubmission), any progression which was dependent on the pass will be reconsidered by the examination board. Where participants have registered with Social Work England on the basis of passed assessments which have subsequently been failed as a result of proven academic malpractice, this will be reported to SWE at the appropriate time.

## Section 3: Relevant references

### 3.1 Policies and documents

- 3.1.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies and guidance:
- Frontline’s [Fitness to practise policy](#)
  - Lancaster University Academic Malpractice Regulations and Procedures, in particular the following chapters:



- Academic Appeals
- Academic Malpractice Regulations and Procedures
- Lancaster University 'A Plagiarism Framework'