

## 1. Document Details

<b>Title:</b>	Policy Governing Academic Honesty, Plagiarism and Infringements Relating to Examinations and Assessments
<b>Author(s):</b>	The Regulations Committee of Academic Council
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**Important Note:** If the 'Status' of this document reads 'Draft', it has not been finalised and should not be relied upon.

## 2. Revision History

Version Number	Revision Date	Summary of Changes	Changes tracked?
1.0	October 2012	Initial version using new Academic Policy template	No
1.1	June 2013	Correction of minor typographical errors	No

## 3. Relevant/Related Existing Internal Documents


## 4. Relevant/Related Existing External Documents


## 5. Consultation History

***This document has been prepared in consultation with the following bodies:***

Academic Management, Academic Staff and Students (via Academic Council)

## 6. Approvals

***This document requires following approvals (in order where applicable):***

Name	Date	Details of Approval Required
<b>Academic Council</b>	<b>14-6-2013</b>	
<b>Governing Body</b>	<b>4-7-2013</b>	

# ACADEMIC POLICY

## 7. Purpose

Academic honesty must be fostered and protected because it is a principle that lies at the core of all valid academic endeavours. In the first instance academic honesty must be preserved in order to protect the integrity of the academic qualifications awarded by CIT. Beyond this it is important to instil the principle of academic honesty in our graduates in order that they will have respect for knowledge and ideas as well as an understanding of their ethical responsibility towards the work and ideas of others.

Plagiarism and other infringements relating to examinations and assessments run counter to the goals and principles of higher education and academic honesty. It is therefore the expressed policy of CIT that there is no acceptable level of plagiarism or other infringements and appropriate action should be taken in relation to each and every instance detected.

This policy is intended to define plagiarism and the other infringements which constitute a breach of academic honesty. The policy also outlines the formal means of addressing these when they have been detected.

## 8. Scope

This policy applies to all programmes of study leading to a Cork Institute of Technology award. This includes both taught and research programmes and also applies to joint award programmes and programmes delivered by other institutions as may be authorised by Cork Institute of Technology.

## 9. Principles

Plagiarism and other infringements relating to examinations and assessments run counter to the goals and principles of higher education and academic honesty. It is therefore the expressed policy of CIT that there is no acceptable level of plagiarism or other infringements and appropriate action should be taken in relation to each and every instance detected.

## 10. Definitions

### **Defining Academic Honesty, Plagiarism and Infringements Relating to Examinations and Assessments**

At all times the Institute is seeking to encourage the practice of academic honesty. There are two distinct classes of activity that constitute a breach of academic honesty:

1. Plagiarism
2. Infringements relating to examinations and assessments

### **10.1 Defining Plagiarism**

Plagiarism involves taking work or ideas from other sources and representing them as one's own original work.

Students are entitled to draw on other people's ideas, using for instance books, journals and websites as sources of information. Some assignments will involve working collaboratively with others, and in some cases students will have access to other people's work on computer disk or over

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a computer network. However, other people's work must be used in a principled way, with due acknowledgement of authorship. In particular, care should be taken to ensure the accurate use of quotation marks and in providing references and bibliography.

It is important to note that the necessity to reference applies not only to text, but also to other media, such as computer code, illustrations, graphs, architectural plans, photographs, multimedia works, etc. It applies equally to published material drawn from books and journals, and to unpublished material, whether from lecture hand-outs, theses or other students' essays. Students must also attribute text or other resources downloaded from web sites. There are various forms of plagiarism and it is worth clarifying the ways in which it is possible to plagiarize:

### Failing to appropriately acknowledge the work of others

It is not permitted to submit others' work or ideas without appropriate acknowledgement. All work which is not a student's own must be clearly identified and must be accompanied by appropriate citation(s). Items which must be cited include:

- Quotations taken word-for-word from written works such as books, journals, newspapers, and websites.
- Reworded or paraphrased information or ideas from the work of another person.

It is important to cite correctly according to the guidelines provided by the relevant lecturer(s) or programme regulations.

### Collusion

Collusion arises when there is unauthorized collaboration between students.

### Purchased or commissioned materials

It is not permitted to submit work as one's own which has been purchased. Equally it is not permitted to submit material which has been created for a student by another person.

### Duplication or Self-plagiarism

It is not generally permitted to submit work for assessment when that work has already been submitted (either partially or in full) for a previous assessment. In a limited number of situations this may be allowed and if so, this will be clearly indicated in the programme regulations and guidelines.

## 10.2 Defining Infringements in Relation to Examinations and Assessments

An infringement in relation to an examination or assessment (henceforth referred to as an infringement) is defined as any action which may confer an unfair advantage in relation to performance in an examination or assessment. Infringements are usually associated with assessments that are structured around real-time written examinations, but may also occur in relation to performance evaluations, oral examinations and presentations.

Actions which constitute infringements include the following:

### Accessing Information during an examination

It is generally not permitted to access any sources of information during an examination, such as books, study notes, the internet or another student's work. Exceptions to this will be clearly identified in the programme guidelines.

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## Communicating with others during an examination

It is generally not permitted to communicate with any third party during an examination except for the examiner and/or the invigilators.

## Malfeasance

It is not permitted to commit any act which is intended to subvert the fairness and integrity of the Institute's examination and assessment processes. Examples of actions that fall under this heading are obtaining an examination paper in advance of the examination and impersonation of an examination candidate.

## Electronic Devices

Due to the fact that electronic and communication devices such as MP3 players and mobile telephones may be used to facilitate infringements, all electronic and communication devices, apart from authorised calculators, are prohibited in all examinations. It is important to note that the possession of the device during an examination is prohibited and not just its use.

## 10.3 Actions not contained in these definitions

While this section has sought to define and classify the various forms of plagiarism and infringements it does not represent a complete and comprehensive listing. Examples of other breaches of academic honesty covered by this policy include the fabricating the results of a study or research and assisting other students to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

The Institute reserves the right to re-interpret, modify, amend or supplement the list of actions covered by this policy on an ongoing basis as the need arises.

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### 11.1 Possible Penalties for Plagiarism and Infringements

If the Institute determines that an infringement or instance of plagiarism has occurred a range of penalties may be applied. The possible penalties in order of severity are:

1. mark of zero recorded for the assessment item (or part of assessment item) affected
2. failure of module
3. failure of the module, without right to be reassessed within the current academic year
4. failure of the module, without right to be reassessed within the current academic year and without the right to progress to the next stage of the programme until the module in question is completed
5. failure of the stage (i.e. student is required to repeat the stage in full)
6. restriction of final award classification
7. temporary or permanent suspension of studies

The penalty applied in a specific case will depend on an assessment of the degree of intent and also the impact (i.e. the scale of the unfair advantage that would have been gained had the plagiarism or infringement gone undetected) of the infringement or plagiarism.

Penalties 2 to 7 above may only be applied following a formal hearing by the Assessments Infringements Board.

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## 11.2. Detecting and Addressing Instances of Plagiarism

Following on from the principle that there is no acceptable level of academic dishonesty it is the duty of all examiners, invigilators and other relevant officers of the institute to take reasonable steps to detect instances of plagiarism. If an instance of plagiarism is detected it is the duty of the relevant officer(s) of the Institute to take the appropriate action as set out in this policy.

### 11.2.1 Detecting Plagiarism

The detection of plagiarism requires a case by case approach because the possibilities for plagiarism will vary from assignment to assignment, from module to module and from discipline area to discipline area. To facilitate the detection of plagiarism and the effective implementation of this policy the Institute will provide training, guidance and other supports.

### 11.2.2 Assessing Plagiarism

Any instance of plagiarism should be assessed according to two factors:

**The Impact of the plagiarism** on the student's assessment performance i.e. the scale of the unfair advantage that would have been gained had the plagiarism or infringement gone undetected. Obviously it is far more serious if plagiarism is practised in relation to an award year project worth 50% of a module's mark as opposed to plagiarism in relation to a first year essay worth 10% of a module's mark. In both cases the plagiarism should be addressed but the level of intervention/penalty should reflect the possible impact of the plagiarism.

**The Intent or degree to which the act of plagiarism was deliberate** on the part of the student. While intent is a difficult concept to assess definitively it is none the less an important factor that needs to be considered. It is possible that students may not understand that they are engaging in plagiarism especially in the early years of their course. The educational experience of a student (e.g. year of course, previous academic experience, etc.) as well as any previous instances of academic dishonesty should be taken into account when assessing whether there was deliberate intent on the part of the student to engage in plagiarism. Deliberate plagiarism will naturally attract a different level of intervention/penalty from accidental instances of plagiarism.

It is important to note that while intent is a relevant factor in assessing an instance of plagiarism and how it should be addressed this should not be taken as giving a license, or tacit approval, for the use of intent (or lack thereof) as a valid defence against allegations of plagiarism. All students are required both to understand, and adhere to, the Institute's academic regulations.

### 11.2.3 Addressing Instances of Plagiarism

Once an instance of plagiarism has been detected it should be assessed by the Module Examination Board according to the criteria above and arising out of this assessment one of the following interventions should be chosen:

- Notify and educate
- Impose a penalty
- Refer to Assessment Infringements Board

#### *Notify and educate*

Where the assessment of the plagiarism concludes that the impact was minor to moderate and that it was determined that the instance was unintended or accidental, it is appropriate that this would be handled by notifying the student that he/she has engaged in plagiarism. This notification should

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also be accompanied by an appropriate level of education to help the student to fully comprehend the issues involved. This intervention should be carried out by the internal examiner (in consultation with the relevant module co-ordinator) and should entail the following steps:

- The assessment material must be graded on its own merits (i.e. in accordance with the marking scheme and as if the plagiarism had not occurred) and the appropriate mark awarded
- Student is notified in writing – this notification is also sent to the relevant module coordinator
- Student is invited to make a submission to the MEB either written or orally in relation to the allegation
- Student is informed/educated about what has occurred and how it should be rectified

### *Penalise*

Where the assessment of the plagiarism concludes that it was deliberate and where there is a significant impact on assessment performance the Module Examination Board may impose a penalty in accordance with Section 11.1 of this policy. This intervention should be carried out by the relevant MEB and should entail the following steps:

- The assessment material must be graded on its own merits (i.e. in accordance with the marking scheme as if the plagiarism had not occurred) and the appropriate mark awarded
- The Internal Examiner will report the matter to the Module Co-ordinator and/or Head of Department giving details of the plagiarism together with all relevant materials.
- Student is notified in writing by the Module Co-ordinator (on behalf of the Module Examination Board - MEB) that he/she is alleged to have engaged in plagiarism
- The student is invited to make a submission to the MEB either written or orally in relation to the allegation
- The appropriate penalty, if any, is determined following consideration of the relevant facts and related submissions by the MEB.
- This penalty must be in accordance with the penalty guidelines contained in Section 11.1 of this policy
- The student and any relevant Heads of Department (and/or PABs) are notified of the penalty
- The decision of the MEB must be recorded on the official signed module grade sheet and the relevant PAB broadsheets. The decision must also be communicated to and recorded by the Registrar's Office
- If the student considers that he/she has been wrongly accused/penalised he/she may request that his/her case be referred to the Assessment Infringements Board (in such cases any penalty applied by the MEB is rescinded)

### *Refer to Assessment Infringements Board*

Where the assessment of the plagiarism is deemed to be deliberate with major impact on assessment performance the case can be formally referred to the Assessment Infringements Board.

### **11.3. Detecting and Addressing Infringements Relating to Examinations and Assessments**

Following on from the principle that there is no acceptable level of academic dishonesty it is the duty of all examiners, invigilators and other relevant officers of the Institute to take reasonable steps to detect infringements. If an infringement is detected it is the duty of the relevant officer(s) of the Institute to take the appropriate action as set out in this policy.

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## 11.3.1 Detecting Infringements in Relation to Assessments and Examinations

An infringement may be detected in the following ways:

1. during the conduct of an examination-based assessment of coursework where the infringement is observed by an examiner or other officer of the Institute (e.g. assessment supervisor)
2. during formal invigilated examinations where the infringement is observed by an examiner, invigilator or other authorised officer of the Institute
3. during the marking of an assessment or examination where the examiner concludes that an infringement may have occurred. Given that the infringement is usually not directly observed in such instances appropriate documentation and/or other evidence substantiating the claim will be required.

## 11.3.2 Addressing Infringements in Relation to Examinations and Assessments

### *Infringements Detected During the Assessment of Coursework*

The following procedure is to be followed if an infringement is detected during the conduct of an assessment of coursework.

- The Internal Examiner or assessment supervisor shall inform the candidate that the alleged infringement of the Regulations will be reported to the Module Examination Board.
- The Internal Examiner or assessment supervisor shall annotate the relevant document(s) and remove the material(s) that form the basis for the suspicion.
- The student shall be permitted to continue the assessment.
- The assessment material must be graded on its own merits (i.e. in accordance with the marking scheme and as if the infringement had not occurred) and the appropriate mark awarded
- The Internal Examiner or assessment supervisor shall immediately report the matter to the Head of Department, or nominee.
- The report prepared by the Internal Examiner or assessment supervisor shall contain details of the infringement together with all materials relating to the incident.
- Student is notified in writing by the Module Examination Board (MEB) that he/she is alleged to have engaged in plagiarism
- The student is invited to make a submission to the MEB either written or orally in relation to the allegation
- The appropriate penalty, if any, is determined following consideration of the relevant facts and related submissions by the MEB.
- This penalty must be in accordance with the penalty guidelines contained in Section 11.1 of this policy
- The student and any relevant Head of Department (and/or PAB) are notified of the penalty
- The decision of the MEB must be recorded on the official signed module grade sheet and the relevant PAB broadsheets. The decision must also be communicated to and recorded by the Registrar's Office
- If the student considers that he/she has been wrongly accused/penalised he/she may request that his/her case be referred to the Assessment Infringements Board (in such case any penalty applied by the MEB is rescinded)

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## *Infringements Detected During a Formal Invigilated Examination*

The following procedure is to be followed if an infringement is detected during a formal invigilated examination.

- The Invigilator shall inform the candidate that the alleged infringement of the Regulations will be reported to the Examinations Secretary.
- The Invigilator shall annotate the relevant document(s) and remove the material(s) that form the basis for the suspicion.
- The candidate shall be permitted to continue the assessment.
- The assessment material must be graded on its own merits (i.e. in accordance with the marking scheme and as if the infringement had not occurred) and the appropriate mark awarded
- A report shall be prepared without delay by the Invigilator on the Invigilator's Report Form and presented, together with any material(s) confiscated, to the Examinations Secretary.
- The Examinations Secretary will, in consultation with the Head of Department, or nominee, refer the matter to the Assessment Infringements Board.
- Where necessary the relevant Examination Board(s) will be notified that the results of the candidate may be affected by the decision of the Assessment Infringements Board.

## *Infringements Detected During Marking*

The following procedure is to be followed if an Internal Examiner suspects, during the marking of an examination script or other assessment material, that a candidate may be guilty of an infringement.

- The assessment material must be graded on its own merits (i.e. in accordance with the marking scheme and as if the infringement had not occurred) and the appropriate mark awarded.
- A written report shall be compiled by the Internal Examiner giving details of the cause for suspicion.
- The report, together with all materials relating to the incident, shall be presented to the Head of Department, or nominee.
- The Head of Department, or nominee, will refer the matter to the Assessment Infringements Board.
- Where necessary the relevant Examination Board(s) will be notified that the results of the candidate may be affected by the decision of the Assessment Infringements Board.

### **11.4. Formal Inquiry by Assessment Infringements Board**

Serious breaches of academic honesty are referred for formal inquiry to the CIT Assessment Infringements Board.

### **11.5. Appeal**

A student may challenge the findings of an MEB to impose a penalty by initiating an Examination Appeal on the grounds of Procedural or Administrative Error on the part of CIT.

A student may challenge the findings of the Assessment Infringements Board by initiating an Appeal to the President.

## **12. Procedures**

This policy refers to the following procedures:



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- Appeal to the President
- Formal Inquiry by Assessment Infringements Board
- Examination Appeals

### **13. Responsible Officer(s)**

The Vice President for Academic Affairs and Registrar

### **14. Supporting Documents**

*Guidelines, etc. – pointing to top level sources*