Cardiff Academy

POLICY /// ACADEMIC QUALITY AND STANDARDS

Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy

How Cardiff Academy promotes honest academic work, what counts as academic misconduct (including plagiarism, contract cheating, collusion, impersonation and misuse of generative AI), how suspected cases are investigated, the penalties, and how partner universities are informed.

REFERENCE	**CA-ACA-05**	VERSION	**1.0 (Approved)**
POLICY OWNER	**Director of Studies**	APPROVED BY	**Academic Board**
ISSUE DATE	**October 2026**	APPROVAL DATE	**October 2026**
REVIEW CYCLE	**Annual**	NEXT REVIEW DUE	**October 2027**
APPLIES TO	**All students and teaching staff; partner universities**	PUBLISHED	**Website; Student Handbook; programme handbooks; induction**

RELATED POLICIES CA-ACA-04 Assessment, Marking and Moderation; CA-ACA-07 Academic Appeals; CA-ACA-01 Academic Regulations; CA-WEL-04 Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary; CA-INF-03 Online Safety and Acceptable Use

LEGAL ENTITY Cardiff Education Group Ltd, trading as Cardiff Academy (Company No. 14569122). Registered office: 168 City Road, Cardiff CF24 3JE. Teaching premises: 8 Drake Walk, Cardiff CF10 4LG

1 Our commitment

Honesty is one of the Academy's core values. Our awards are only valuable to students and universities if they are earned honestly. We teach students the skills of academic integrity – referencing, paraphrasing, using sources and using technology responsibly – because these are essential for success at a UK university. We also treat academic misconduct seriously.

2 Teaching academic integrity

- All students complete an academic integrity module at induction and must pass a short online test before submitting their first assessed work.

- Referencing, paraphrasing and appropriate use of AI are taught within EAP and study skills.
- Each assessment brief states what use of AI tools, if any, is allowed.
- Students sign a declaration of authorship with every summative submission.

3 Generative AI

Each assessment is classified as one of the following:

Category	Meaning
AI not permitted	No use of generative AI tools at any stage
AI assistive use	AI may be used for specified purposes (for example to brainstorm ideas, check grammar or generate practice questions) but not to produce submitted content. Use must be acknowledged
AI integral	Use of AI is part of the task, as described in the brief, and must be documented

Submitting AI-generated content as one's own work, where not permitted, is academic misconduct.

4 What is academic misconduct?

Type	Description
Plagiarism	Presenting someone else's words, ideas or work as your own without acknowledgement, including from the internet, books, other students or AI tools
Self-plagiarism	Re-submitting your own previously assessed work without permission
Collusion	Working with others on an assessment intended to be individual, or allowing your work to be copied
Contract cheating	Having someone else (a person, company, website or tool) complete work for you, whether paid or not
Unauthorised AI use	Using AI in ways not permitted by the assessment brief
Fabrication or falsification	Making up or altering data, references, results, evidence or extenuating circumstances documents
Examination misconduct	Taking unauthorised materials or devices into an examination, communicating with others, copying, or disrupting the examination
Impersonation	Having another person sit an assessment for you, or sitting one for someone else
Bribery or attempted improper influence	Offering money or favours to staff to change marks or obtain papers

5 Principles for handling cases

- Cases are investigated promptly, fairly and confidentially.
- Students are told the allegation and evidence and have the opportunity to respond, and may be accompanied by a friend, parent (under 18) or student representative.
- Decisions are made on the **balance of probabilities**.
- Penalties are proportionate, taking into account the seriousness, the student's level of study, and whether it is a first or repeat offence.
- Similarity scores alone are not proof of misconduct; academic judgement is applied.

6 Procedure

6.1 Stage 1 – Minor first offences (poor academic practice)

Where a marker identifies a minor, first instance of poor referencing or limited plagiarism in formative work or a small part of summative work, and the student is in their first term, the module leader may deal with it as **poor academic practice**: the student is given feedback and further guidance, the case is recorded on the Academic Integrity Register, and the work is marked on its merits, disregarding the affected parts.

6.2 Stage 2 – Investigation

All other suspected cases are referred to the Director of Studies, who appoints an investigating officer not involved in marking.

1. The student is informed in writing within **5 working days** of the referral, with the evidence, and invited to an investigation meeting.
2. At the meeting (or in writing), the student may explain. The investigator may ask questions about the work to test understanding (a viva).
3. The investigator decides whether misconduct is proven and recommends a penalty, within **10 working days** of the meeting.
4. For major cases (contract cheating, impersonation, examination misconduct, repeat offences, or where the penalty may include failure of the programme or withdrawal), the case is referred to an **Academic Misconduct Panel** (Principal or nominee as Chair, a senior teacher and a student representative where the student agrees), which hears the case and decides.

7 Penalties

Level	Examples	Possible penalty
Minor	First offence, small proportion of the work	Formal warning; resubmission with mark capped at the pass mark
Moderate	Substantial plagiarism or unauthorised AI use; collusion	Zero for the assessment component, with one reassessment opportunity capped at the pass mark
Serious	Repeat offence; contract cheating; examination misconduct	Zero for the module with reassessment capped, or no reassessment; disqualification from the award of a merit grade
Very serious	Impersonation; bribery; fabrication of evidence; repeated serious misconduct	Failure of the programme; withdrawal from the Academy under CA-WEL-04; revocation of an award already made

The Assessment Board is informed of all penalties.

8 Universities and external bodies

- Students are told that proven cases of serious or very serious misconduct may be reported to the partner university at which they hold an offer, and may be referred to in references, in line with the partnership agreement and the privacy notice.
- Where the Academy delivers external qualifications, suspected malpractice is reported to the awarding body under its rules.

- Evidence of impersonation or fraud involving Student visa holders may be reported to UKVI.
- Websites and individuals offering contract cheating services to our students may be reported to the hosting platform.

9 Appeals

Students may appeal against a misconduct decision under CA-ACA-07 on the grounds set out there.

10 Records and reporting

The Director of Studies keeps an **Academic Integrity Register** of all cases and outcomes. An anonymised annual report on numbers, types, programmes and outcomes is considered by the Academic Board, informs teaching and assessment design, and is included in Annual Monitoring Reports.

11 Staff misconduct

Any member of staff who assists a student to cheat, discloses assessment content, or falsifies marks or attendance will be subject to the staff disciplinary procedure, and the matter reported to the relevant partner, awarding body or regulator.

Compliance mapping

This policy has been written to meet, and to evidence, the following external requirements. Inspectors and university partners can use this table to locate the relevant provisions.

ISI Educational Oversight (PFE) standards	Standard 11 (reliable assessment); Standard 17 (students take responsibility for progress)
British Council Accreditation UK criteria	T16 (reliable monitoring and recording of progress)
University partner due diligence	Partner due diligence – academic misconduct procedure, local investigation before referral, reporting of proven misconduct affecting progression; QAA guidance on academic integrity and contract cheating
Legislation and statutory guidance	Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022, s.26 (offence of providing or advertising contract cheating services to students in post-16 education in England – Wales is not covered, but the Academy treats contract cheating as serious misconduct); Fraud Act 2006

Document control

Version	Date	Author / reviewer	Summary of changes
0.9	Pre-2026	Various	CA Non Examination Policy (JCQ); NCUK Academic Misconduct Policy (reference)

1.0	October 2026	Director of Studies	New policy written for university partnerships, ISI Educational Oversight and British Council Accreditation UK. Supersedes all previous versions.

APPROVED ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD	SIGNATURE	DATE
Chair of the Board of Governors		