

Academic Misconduct Policy



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PURPOSE

This policy outlines Velindre Oncology Academy's (VOA) approach to addressing academic misconduct within its offerings.

It aims to ensure a fair and transparent process for handling such incidents, uphold academic integrity, and maintain the high standards expected within the Academy. Students are expected to demonstrate care, respect, and accountability in line with the VOA's values to help sustain these standards.

The policy defines what constitutes academic misconduct, provides clear procedures for reporting, investigating, and resolving incidents, and ensures that all students are held to consistent ethical standards.

Ultimately, it seeks to promote an environment of trust and fairness within the educational community while preserving the integrity of postgraduate learning

SCOPE

This policy would encompass all aspects related to academic misconduct within Velindre Oncology Academy's educational offerings. This includes:

- **Academic Programs and Courses:** The policy applies to all postgraduate and other academic programs offered by the VOA, covering all forms of academic misconduct within these programs.
- **Types of Misconduct:** It addresses various types of academic misconduct such as plagiarism, cheating, fabrication of data, falsification of records, unauthorized collaboration, and other unethical academic behaviors.
- **Students:** The policy applies to all current students enrolled at the VOA, including those in postgraduate courses, as well as those in any other training or educational programs.
- **Reporting and Investigation:** The policy outlines the procedures for reporting incidents of academic misconduct, investigating these incidents, and resolving them fairly and consistently. It also defines the roles and responsibilities of faculty, staff, and students in the process.
- **Academic Integrity and Ethical Standards:** It ensures that all students are held to consistent ethical standards, and that the integrity of the academic process is maintained at all times.
- **Environment of Trust and Fairness:** The policy aims to promote an environment of trust, fairness, and respect within the academic community, reinforcing the VOA's commitment to high standards and academic excellence.

AUTHORISED PERSONNEL

Head Of Velindre Oncology Academy

REFERENCES/RELATED DOCUMENTS

- Academic Appeals Policy
- Submission of Work for Assessment
- Personal Tutor Policy
- Plagiarism and Collusion
- Admissions Feedback, Appeals and Complaints

PROCEDURE

Introduction

This policy outlines Velindre Oncology Academy's (VOA) approach to handling academic misconduct within Academy's offerings.

The aim is to ensure a fair and transparent process for addressing academic misconduct, uphold academic integrity, and maintain the high standards expected within the Velindre Oncology Academy. Students are expected to be caring, respectful and accountable in line with the values of the VOA in order to maintain these high standards.

Objectives

To define what constitutes academic misconduct within the Velindre Oncology Academy.

To outline clear procedures for reporting, investigating, and resolving incidents of academic misconduct.

To maintain the academic integrity of the post graduate learning and ensure that all students are held to consistent ethical standards.

To promote an environment of trust and fairness within the educational community.

DEFINITIONS/TYPES OF MISCONDUCT

Academic Misconduct: Any action by a student that provides, or has the potential to provide, an unfair advantage in an examination or assessment, or assists another in gaining such an advantage. This also includes activities that undermine the fundamental principles of academic integrity, scholarship, and research. Examples include:

Plagiarism: The act of presenting another person's work, ideas, or research as if they are the student's own. This includes:

- Using someone else's written material without proper citation.
- Utilizing automated paraphrasing software to reword existing work without proper attribution.

Self-Plagiarism: Submitting work that the student has previously submitted for another assessment or purpose, when this is not explicitly permitted by the academic guidelines. This includes both work on your current module or work from a different module at the Academy or at another educational institution.

Collusion: Collaborating with another individual on an assignment or assessment that is intended to be completed independently, resulting in a submission that is significantly different from the student's original work.

Falsifying Data: Fabricating or altering data, evidence, or experimental results to misrepresent findings.

False Authorship: The act of submitting work that has been completed by someone else and presenting it as the student's own. This includes:

- Using essay writing services online.
- Producing work for another student to submit as their own.
- Arranging for someone to impersonate a student during an assessment.
- Impersonating another student during an assessment.
- Accessing and submitting work obtained from file-sharing services.
- Using AI tools to generate material for submission, where such use is not permitted.
- Submitting another student's work as if it were one's own.

Submitting False Mitigating Circumstances: Providing fraudulent claims or falsifying evidence in support of mitigating circumstances or other university processes, which may also be addressed under the Student Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

Breaching Research and Ethics Policies: Conducting research without the necessary approvals or violating ethical guidelines in research practice. Refer to trust policy.

Enabling Plagiarism: Making assignment work, including past submissions, available to others in a way that facilitates plagiarism.

Poor Academic Practice: A minor breach of academic conventions, such as improper or incomplete referencing, over-reliance on cited material, or failure to follow assessment guidelines. This category involves lapses that do not meet the threshold of academic misconduct but still represent a failure to maintain high academic standards.

Assessment: Any form of evaluation that contributes to a student's final grade or academic standing, such as exams, coursework, practical assessments, or other forms of academic evaluation that count toward earning credits.

Examination misconduct: any action in an examination venue which is against examination rules and/or which may lead to an unfair advantage over other students. This may include bringing unauthorised materials or items into an examination, copying the responses of another student, communicating with any person other than the examination invigilator in an examination by speaking, text, telephone, gestures or on any other platform, impersonating another student, or allowing yourself to be impersonated. .

Any attempt to gain an unfair advantage in an assessment.

Dishonesty: when information or actions that are not true or authentic are presented or there is deliberate deception

DEFINITIONS / ABBREVIATIONS

Velindre Oncology Academy – VOA

“Student” - any person enrolled or registered to follow a Programme of Study or module(s) offered by the VOA and persons who have been students of the VOA for up to 3 months after they have left the VOA.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Roles and Responsibilities

1.1. The final decisions regarding sanctions for academic misconduct are overseen by the Head of the Velindre Oncology Academy.

1.2. The Head of the Velindre Oncology Academy is responsible for overseeing the policy and procedural framework, ensuring the consistent application of this policy across all post graduate modules.

1.3. The Head of Velindre Oncology Academy/nominated representative plays an essential role in addressing suspected academic misconduct. Their duties include:

- Conducting the initial investigation into potential misconduct.
- Making recommendations on whether the case should progress to a formal review.
- Providing advice and guidance to both students and staff regarding academic integrity issues and the correct procedures for handling misconduct.

1.4. A member of the Velindre Oncology Academy team will be appointed as the Investigating Officer and will be responsible for evaluating cases of academic misconduct. Their responsibilities include:

- Conducting an initial assessment of the alleged misconduct.

- Making recommendations about the outcome of the case.

1.5. A Senior representative from the Velindre Oncology Academy, who has not been involved in any previous stages of the case, will review any appeal made against decisions regarding academic misconduct.

Student Responsibilities:

1.1. Students are expected to be aware of and fully understand the academic integrity regulations set out by Velindre Oncology Academy. They must commit to upholding these standards throughout their studies.

1.2. Students must take all necessary precautions to avoid engaging in academic misconduct, including plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of dishonest behavior in assessments.

1.3. Students must regularly check their email accounts and stay informed by reviewing the information on updates regarding academic misconduct, policy changes, and other important academic matters.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

1.1. Support for Students with Disabilities: Students who have registered a disability or learning difficulty with Velindre Oncology Academy are encouraged to contact the Head of the Velindre Oncology Academy who can provide advice and assist with obtaining the necessary documentation in alternative formats to support their learning needs.

1.2. Deadlines and Extensions: If a student anticipates difficulty meeting deadlines due to a registered disability or learning difficulty, they should notify the Academy as soon as possible, ideally before the deadline passes. In such cases, additional time may be granted for assessments or submissions based on the circumstances.

1.3. Declaration of Disability During Misconduct Process: If a student has not previously declared a disability before an academic misconduct process begins, they are strongly encouraged to do so as early as possible within the process to ensure that appropriate reasonable adjustments can be made.

1.4. Right to Accompaniment: Students have the right to be accompanied by a person of their choice at any meetings related to the academic misconduct process. They must inform the Academy in writing in advance if they plan to be accompanied. Legal representation is only permitted in exceptional circumstances, and any request for legal representation must be made in writing to the Academic Office. The accompanying person may attend but will not normally participate in the discussions.

SUPPORT

1.1. Informal Support: Students who have concerns related to academic integrity or academic misconduct can approach a member of staff, such as their Lecturer or the Head of the Velindre Oncology Academy for informal advice and guidance. Staff are available to discuss any concerns and offer support at any stage of the process.

1.2. Guidance after Allegation: Once an allegation of academic misconduct has been made, students can seek further advice and support from a member of the Velindre Oncology Academy and their Personal Tutor to provide information on the next steps in the process and offer guidance on how to navigate the procedure.

PROCEDURES PRINCIPLES

1.1. All cases of academic misconduct will be managed by a suitably independent member of staff from Velindre Oncology Academy.

1.2. While the procedures outlined in this policy ensure consistency, Velindre Oncology Academy reserves the right to adjust the process to suit the circumstances of individual cases. Students will be notified if any changes are made to the procedure.

1.3. If new or alternative allegations arise during the process, the student will be informed and given an opportunity to respond to the updated or additional claims.

1.4. The Academy reserves the right to adjourn any investigation or hearing and reconvene it at a later date if necessary.

1.5. All students, their representatives, and staff are expected to act fairly and respectfully throughout the academic misconduct process.

1.6. Students will be invited to attend meetings related to academic misconduct, with at least two days' notice given before the meeting.

1.7. If a student does not attend a meeting after being properly notified, or if they are unable to attend the scheduled meeting, the Academy may offer one alternative date. If the student leaves the meeting mid-session, the Academy reserves the right to continue. Where necessary, students will be offered the opportunity to attend meetings virtually.

1.8. The recording of meetings is prohibited unless prior agreement has been made. Any meeting notes, minutes, or approved recordings will be provided to all parties.

1.9. If a meeting is to be recorded, the student will be asked for their consent beforehand.

1.10. Students will be provided with a copy of this policy to ensure they are fully informed of the procedures and their rights.

1.11. All written records related to an academic misconduct case will be maintained in a clear, accurate, and appropriate manner, in compliance with relevant data protection legislation.

IDENTIFYING ALLEGATIONS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

1.1. The Head of the Velindre Oncology Academy or nominated representative will oversee the recording and coordination of any allegations of academic misconduct.

1.2. Allegations:

1.2.1. If a Module Tutor suspects academic misconduct in relation to coursework, or other assessments the tutor should gather and document any relevant evidence as thoroughly as possible.

1.2.2. The Module Tutor must complete the misconduct referral and submit it to the Head of the Velindre Oncology Academy for further investigation, along with a copy of all relevant evidence, as soon as possible.

Allegations During or After the Marking Period:

If an internal tutor/member of staff suspects academic misconduct during the marking process, or after the assessment has been completed, they must report the matter in writing to the Head of the Velindre Oncology Academy for further investigation at the earliest opportunity.

INITIAL INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGATIONS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

1.1. The Head of the Velindre Oncology Academy/Nominated representative is responsible for conducting an initial investigation into any allegation of academic misconduct. This investigation will assess whether there is sufficient evidence to proceed with the case.

1.2. The Head of the Velindre Oncology Academy/Nominated representative should refer to the Velindre Oncology Academy's Academic Misconduct Policy to determine the nature and extent of the alleged misconduct, ensuring consistency and fairness in the investigation.

1.3. If the investigation concludes that there is insufficient evidence to support the allegation of academic misconduct, the Module Tutor will be instructed to mark the student's work in accordance with standard procedures. A full record of the investigation and related documentation will be maintained by the Academic Office.

1.4. If sufficient evidence of academic misconduct is found, it will trigger the next stage of the academic misconduct process, which will be managed in line with the policy and procedures.

PROCESS FOR CONSIDERATION OF ALLEGATIONS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

1.1. Upon receiving an allegation of academic misconduct, the Head of the Velindre Oncology Academy/a member of the Velindre Oncology Academy team will be appointed to oversee the investigation centrally.

1.2. The Head of the Velindre Oncology Academy will contact the student to inform them of the following:

- The details of the academic misconduct allegation.
- The available evidence supporting the allegation.
- The Academic Misconduct Guidelines and the potential penalties.
- A preliminary indication of the penalty that would be applied if the student admits to the misconduct.

1.3. The student will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation, normally within 14 days, either by accepting or denying the accusation.

1.4. If the student does not respond within the specified time frame, they will be deemed to have accepted the allegation of academic misconduct.

1.5. If the student accepts the allegation or is deemed to have accepted it, the corresponding penalty will be applied, and the student will be formally notified in writing of the decision.

1.6. If the student denies the allegation, they must submit a written explanation outlining their reasons, along with any supporting evidence.

INVESTIGATION OUTCOMES

Decision

The Head of the Velindre Oncology Academy is authorised to make one of the following decisions regarding the allegation of academic misconduct:

- To uphold the allegation of academic misconduct and substantiate it;
- To dismiss the allegation of academic misconduct and reject it.

Determining Penalty

If the allegation is upheld, the Head of the Velindre Oncology Academy must determine the extent of the misconduct and decide on an appropriate penalty to be imposed.

Notification of Rejected Allegations

If the investigation finds that the allegation is not substantiated, the student will be formally notified in writing of the decision, and the matter will be considered closed.

Notification of Substantiated Allegations

If the investigation finds that the allegation is substantiated, the student will be formally informed in writing of both the decision and the penalty imposed.

Resources

Time and Personnel: Sufficient time for the Plagiarism Officer and academic staff to investigate suspected cases and conduct formal meetings.

Training: Training for staff and students on plagiarism and collusion prevention, academic writing, and proper citation practices.

Support Materials: Access to online resources and guides on academic integrity, as well as support packages for students found to have committed minor offenses.

Training

Training for staff and students on plagiarism and collusion prevention, academic writing, and proper citation practices.

Integrated Impact Assessment

In accordance with the Trust's Equality policy, this policy will not discriminate, either directly or indirectly, on the grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, age, union membership, disability, carer's status, offending background or any other personal characteristic.

Audit, Implementation and Policy Compliance

This policy will be implemented and monitored by the Velindre Oncology Academy Implementation Board. The policy will be reviewed every 3 years, unless where it will be affected by internal changes such as:

- Legislation
- Practice change or change in system/technology

Getting Help

A copy of this policy and other VOA policies and procedures referenced are available on the VOAs website. The VOA team can be contacted and is available to provide advice, guidance and support via email at Velindre.OncologyAcademy@wales.nhs.uk