

College Policies and Procedures

Academic Offences Policy and Procedure for Students Studying for Pearson BTEC HNC/D qualifications at South Essex College of Further and Higher Education 2016-17

**To be read in conjunction with the HE Admissions Policy**

**First Review: September 2016**

**Academic Offences Procedures**

This policy relates to students studying for Pearson HNC/D qualifications at South Essex College.

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:**

1. 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;
2. using work previously submitted for another assignment without full acknowledgement;
3. falsifying data or evidence;
4. submitting a fraudulent claim of extenuating circumstances;
5. assisting another student to commit an academic offence;
6. submitting written work produced collaboratively, unless this is explicitly permitted;
7. copying the work of another student or otherwise communicating with another student in a timed assessment;
8. introducing any written, printed or electronically stored information into a timed assessment other than material expressly permitted in the instructions for that assessment;
9. 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**.

Students have a duty to familiarise themselves with the Pearson HNC/D Academic Offences 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. For further advice refer to the Student Programme Handbooks.

Individual members of the academic staff are not permitted to make decisions about any case of suspected plagiarism and must refer these to the Head of HE or nominee.

**Determination of whether an offence has occurred**

The determination of whether cheating, plagiarism, or other form of seeking unfair advantage has occurred the Head of HE or nominee can take decisions about all suspected academic offences where:

* the offence is the first academic offence that if confirmed will result in a penalty

that is graded 1-4;

* The alleged offence does not involve any breach of the College’s disciplinary

 regulations.

All other cases must be referred to the Academic Offences Committee meeting.

**Decisions Available to an Academic Offences Committee**

The following penalties may be applied:

* 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.

**Record of Offences**

A record of admitted or found offences will remain on the student’s file for

the duration of their study in the College.

**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 Head of HE or nominee.

**Assessment Board**

Assessment Boards are authorised to:

* note any instance of cheating, plagiarism and other forms of unfair

practice.

**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 HE and

two members of staff from outside the student’s department who have no connection with the case.

**Chair**

* Normally the Head of HE or nominee.

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**

1. The members of the Committee have a preliminary discussion without the student, the student’s representative;
2. The student, the student’s representative academic staff enter the room and the Chair introduces all those present;
3. The Chair checks that the student has received details of the case and any supporting documentation;
4. The Chair explains the order of proceedings to the student;
5. The evidence relating to the alleged offence is then presented by the a member of the academic team (usually the Head of Department) and members of the Committee are invited to put questions to the academic team;
6. 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;
7. The Chair invites the student’s representative to put forward any additional statement;
8. The Chair invites the student to make any final response;
9. The student, the student’s representative and the staff members are then asked to leave the room;
10. The Committee then deliberates and comes to a decision as to whether an offence has been committed;
11. The Committee then determines the appropriate penalty from the set of penalties available to it, clarifying the reasons for the choice of penalty;
12. 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**

Head of Higher Education

Head of HE or nominee is required to:

1. Inform in writingeach student whose case has been referred to him or her about the nature of the alleged offence;
2. Check the Academic Offences Records to determine whether there has been any previous confirmed academic offence;
3. 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).

Any cases involving breaches of the College’s disciplinary regulations must be referred to the Assistant Principal Student Support.

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

**Head of Department/or nominee**

The Head of Department or Head of HE or nominee will attend the Committee to set out the evidence relating to the alleged offence (i.e. to act as prosecutor). The Head should not present any mitigating circumstances of which he/she is aware unless they relate to the Colleges procedures or teaching. Neither should the Head propose or comment on any penalty that might be imposed.

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

Heads may, if they wish, delegate their duties in relation to Academic Offences Committees to an appropriate member of the academic staff in the College.

**Student Attendance and Representation**

If the student admits to the charge by informing the Head of HE or nominee in writing 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.

**Appeals**

A student who wishes to appeal against the outcome of these procedures should write to the Head of HE 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 Vice Principal Curriculum and 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.

**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**

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|  | **Offence** | **Penalties graded by severity** |
| **Band A** | Relatively minor offence – 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** | severe offence – 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 an early unit of assessment for a module, 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** | Very severe offence – 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 towithdraw from the programme of study. |

**Table 2: Guidelines for penalties for subsequent offences for**

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| **Subsequent Offence** **is Band A** | **Subsequent Offence** **is Band B** | **Subsequent Offence** **is Band C** |
| **2.**Unit of assessment reassessed. Resubmission 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. | **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  | **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. |

The College is under a duty to report instances of assessment malpractice directly to Pearson (reporting should be to the following e-mail address: pqsmalpractice@pearson.com). This is in line with the guidance provided by Pearson: *Centre Guidance Dealing with Malpractice: For all Pearson approved centres delivering vocational qualifications* (02/2015), Pearson.