



Academic Integrity Policy

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kcetb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Chill Chainnigh agus Cheatharlach
*Kilkenny and Carlow
Education and Training Board*

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Contents

Glossary of Terms	3
1. Introduction	5
2. Policy Statement	5
3. Related Policies, Documents, Guidelines and Resources	5
4. Expectations of staff	6
5. Expectations of Learners.....	7
6. Mitigating Risks to Academic Integrity	7
6.1. Communicating with Learners	7
6.2. Learners Vulnerable to Academic Integrity Threats	8
6.3. Assessment Design.....	8
6.4. Programme development and review	9
7. Threats to Academic Integrity	9
7.1.1. Artificial Intelligence	9
7.1.2. Contract cheating services	9
8. Assessment Malpractice	10
8.1. Learner Assessment Malpractice	10
8.1.1. Plagiarism	10
8.1.2. Unacceptable behaviour in relation to assessment	11
8.2. Procedures in this Policy Area	11
8.2.1. Malpractice in relation to assessment events (i.e. examinations, skills demonstrations).....	11
8.2.2. Malpractice in relation to coursework (i.e. assignments, projects, collection of work) 11	
8.3. Reporting and investigation process	12
9. Academic Integrity Committee	12
10. Supplementary Documents	12

Glossary of Terms

Academic integrity*	The commitment to, and demonstration of, honest and moral behaviour in an academic setting
Academic misconduct*	Academic misconduct is any attempt by someone to seek unfair advantage in relation to academic activity or which facilitates others to gain an unfair advantage, or to profit from the sharing or selling of your own or others' work without permission.
Assessment Malpractice	Any behaviour engaged in by assessor or learner which enhances the learners' attainment in assessment beyond what they might have attained unaided. Assessment malpractice also includes any action that compromises the integrity of the process.
Assessment Regulations	The rules governing the assessment
Blackmail*	Where there is a demand for payment or favours from a learner in return for keeping their purchase of an assignment which has been submitted to their institution, secret.
Bribery*	The offering, promising, giving, accepting or soliciting of an advantage as an inducement for action.
Cheating*	Actions that attempt to get advantage by means that undermine values of integrity.
Coercion*	Using force, intimidation, authority or persuasion to compel a person(s) to author work for a learner which is subsequently submitted to the institution as that learner's own work without acknowledging the author's work.
Collusion*	Undisclosed collaboration of two or more people on an assignment or task, which is supposed to be completed individually.
Contract cheating*	Form of academic misconduct when a person uses an undeclared and/or unauthorised third party, online or directly, to assist them to produce work for academic credit or progression, whether or not payment or other favour is involved.
Centre Manager	The individual responsible for managing Further Education and Training (FET) centres. In a Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) setting, this role is typically filled by a Principal. Centre managers have the authority to delegate responsibilities to other staff members (designates).
Data Fabrication*	Making up data and presenting that data as genuine.

Data Falsification*	Data Falsification or Falsification of Data is the unjustified manipulation of research data with the intention of giving a misleading impression.
Designate	A person appointed by the centre manager to take on the responsibilities of the centre manager.
ETBI	Education and Training Boards Ireland
Fabrication of Evidence	Making up assessment evidence e.g. pretending to have completed a practical task that you did not do
FET	Further Education and Training
Impersonation*	Undertaking in whole or in part any work required as part of a programme in the place of an enrolled learner, without permission from the provider; Sitting an exam; or having someone else sit an exam in place of an enrolled learner, without permission of the provider.
KCETB	Kilkenny and Carlow education and Training Board
NAIN	National Academic Integrity Network
Plagiarism*	Presenting work / ideas taken from other sources without proper acknowledgement.
QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland

* Taken from: National Academic Integrity Network: [National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms; Published by Quality & Qualifications Ireland \(QQI\), September 2021 \(1st edition\)](#)

1. Introduction

This Policy outlines the principles and responsibilities for academic integrity within Kilkenny and Carlow Education and Training Board (KCETB) Further Education and training (FET) centres and colleges. KCETB is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. This policy outlines the expected behaviours and practices regarding academic conduct for all learners and staff.

The aim of this policy is to:

- Outline expectations of both staff and learners in relation to academic integrity
- Describe how risks to academic integrity can be mitigated against
- Outline threats to academic integrity including the availability of Artificial Intelligence services and contract cheating services
- Explain what assessment malpractice is and how it is dealt with at KCETB
- Describe how KCETB manages issues and concerns around academic integrity

2. Policy Statement

Academic Integrity is an essential element of the 'Fair and Consistent Assessment of Learners'. KCETB is committed to implementing supports and providing information to staff, learners and other stakeholders in the areas of:

- Academic integrity
- Assessment malpractice
- Artificial Intelligence

KCETB is aware of the constantly evolving plagiarism platforms and tools that are freely available online. Although some are referenced in this policy, the principles apply to all such platforms and tools that are, or may become available, at any time.

KCETB is committed to combating attempts to undermine academic integrity by providing information, resources and support to staff and learners. Where possible, plagiarism detection systems are used. Reporting and monitoring systems are also available to both staff and learners.

3. Related Policies, Documents, Guidelines and Resources

KCETB QA website has a dedicated page to [Academic Integrity Information](#). Below is a non-exhaustive list of related policies, documents and guidelines:

- [National Academic Integrity Network \(NAIN\) Academic Integrity Guidelines](#)
- [National Academic Integrity Network \(NAIN\): National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms](#)
- KCETB [Research Integrity Policy](#)
- KCETB [Assessment Policy](#)

- Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019; [New section 43A of Principal Act - offence to provide or advertise cheating services](#)
- [Academic Writing Handbook for Learners in the Further Education and Training \(FET\) sector](#) (published on the KCETB QA website and available internally for KCETB staff on the QA portal and for KCETB learners on the Learner portal)
- [Referencing Handbook for the Further Education and Training \(FET\) Sector](#) (published on the KCETB QA website and available internally for KCETB staff on the QA portal and for KCETB learners on the 'Welcome to FET' Learner portal)
- [Learner guide to referencing](#) (published on the KCETB QA website and available internally for KCETB staff on the QA portal)
- [Staff guide to referencing](#) (published on the KCETB QA website and available internally for KCETB staff on the QA portal)
- [A Learner's Guide Academic Integrity](#) (published on the KCETB QA website and available internally for KCETB staff on the QA portal and for KCETB learners on the 'Welcome to FET' Learner portal)
- A series of step-by-step guides on how to reference correctly in Microsoft Word for:
 - Reference to a [Book](#)
 - Reference to a [Journal Article](#)
 - Reference to a [Website](#)
 - Reference to a [Film](#)
 - A [final guide](#) for all of the referencing exercises detailed above

Note 1: Any updated relevant information will be included on the KCETB QA website, on the staff QA portal and / or the 'Welcome to FET' Learner portal as required. Up to date information is also published by Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI) on their [FET Digital Library](#) and [Further Education and Support Services \(FESS\)](#).

Note 2: Centres using the Microsoft Office suite of software packages, should use the Harvard referencing system as indicated in the documents above. Centres that do not use Microsoft software packages may use an alternative referencing system eg. APA.

4. Expectations of staff

Staff are expected to be aware of threats to academic integrity and endeavour to:

- take all reasonable steps to prevent, detect and deal with instances of academic misconduct.
- make clear to students what constitutes plagiarism, collusion and other forms of academic misconduct in their courses or programmes.
- use plagiarism detection software and other methods to check assignments and assess originality of student work. Witten assessment material at levels 4, 5 and 6 (or equivalent) must be submitted through plagiarism detection software eg Turnitin. More information is available in the [Guidance Document for Digital File Management](#) (available internally for KCETB staff on the QA portal)

- correct, mark and grade assessments based only on the demonstrated knowledge and abilities of the individual student.
- report suspected assessment malpractice events as per procedure outlined in section 10
- notify Quality Assurance (QA) of any contract cheating opportunities identified

5. Expectations of Learners

All assignments must be the student's own original work. Learners should note that:

- copying another learner's work or allowing work to be copied is a violation of academic integrity and is not allowed.
- sources should be properly acknowledged for all ideas, information, or wording that comes from another source. Failure to properly cite sources is considered plagiarism.
- work must be produced independently, unless otherwise directed by teaching staff. Collusion with another student on assessed assignments is not permitted unless it has been explicitly authorised.
- giving unauthorised aid in assignments or examinations is not allowed.

Learners should read [A Learner's Guide Academic Integrity](#) for more information, explanations and examples. Learners should also know how to reference correctly; There is a series of step-by-step guides on how to reference correctly in Microsoft Word available for:

- Reference to a [Book](#)
- Reference to a [Journal Article](#)
- Reference to a [Website](#)
- Reference to a [Film](#)
- A [final guide](#) for all of the referencing exercises detailed above

6. Mitigating Risks to Academic Integrity

KCETB encourages acknowledgement and open discussion around integrity in assessment. Academic integrity is defined as 'the commitment to, and demonstration of, honest and moral behaviour in an academic setting'¹. To mitigate the risk to academic integrity, KCETB is committed to considering academic integrity throughout the learner journey as outlined in the sections below.

6.1. Communicating with Learners

An open discussion around the value of academic integrity with learners is encouraged at the beginning and throughout the course. It is important to emphasise the ethics and principles around plagiarism and cheating and how a strong ethical approach to work is an important vocational attribute.

¹ National Academic Integrity Network: National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms; Published by Quality & Qualifications Ireland (QQI), September 2021 (1st edition)

It is important to explain the difference between collusion and collaboration. Group work and teamwork is a great way to learn. However, colluding to find shortcuts and cheating opportunities, is not an honest and sincere approach to education.

Any learner that does not complete an assessment as intended will have gaps in their knowledge, skills and / or competence irrespective of the certificate they obtain.

6.2. Learners Vulnerable to Academic Integrity Threats

Staff should be alert to learners that might be vulnerable to Academic Integrity threats and be ready to support them. Vulnerable learners might include:

- learners under pressure for time
- learners with poor participation levels in class
- learners struggling to meet assessment deadlines
- learners with mental or physical health difficulties that might impact their ability to complete assessments as directed
- learners with poor attendance records
- learners who are struggling to meet the required standard for the award
- learners who are unable or unwilling to follow the referencing guidelines

For these learners, additional supports, compassionate consideration, reasonable accommodation or directing them to guidance counsellors may be appropriate.

Supporting documents have been listed in section 3.

6.3. Assessment Design

Internal assessors are encouraged to acknowledge the risk to academic integrity when designing assessments. This can be done by considering:

- Alternative versions of examinations that are reviewed and changed annually
- Assessment Briefs that require the presentation by the learner of project and assignment type assessments
- Conducting interviews with learners about their work that has been submitted. This could be a 'capstone interview' across many or all the modules in a course
- Outlining the requirement to reference in the Assessment Brief
- Reviewing and modifying Assessment Briefs regularly
- Outlining clearly in the Assessment Brief (and associated use of Artificial Intelligence in assessment form) whether the learner is permitted to use Artificial Intelligence for assessment. This indicates to the learner if:
 - the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software is not permitted in any way by the learner for this piece of assessment
 - the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software is permitted but only in the instances selected by the assessor, and the specific use must be referenced in the learner submission
 - the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) software is permitted for all or any part of this assessment

Note: Assessments other than those outlined in a descriptor are possible. Alternative assessments can be reviewed by the QA team as per *Process 7: Submit an alternative Assessment Brief or update a current Assessment Brief* which is detailed in the [Programme and Awards Approval and Review Policy](#). If a descriptor update is required, *Process 4: Review an existing award (major/minor/special purpose/supplemental) and update it*, can be followed.

6.4. Programme development and review

The programme development and review process at KCETB is detailed in the [Programme and Awards Approval and Review Policy](#). This applies to new and existing awards. KCETB is committed to considering academic integrity at all stages of programme development and review.

7. Threats to Academic Integrity

7.1.1. Artificial Intelligence

‘AI is the ability of a machine to display human-like capabilities such as reasoning, learning, planning and creativity’ (Taken from ‘What is Artificial Intelligence and how is it used?’)².

KCETB recognises the generative Artificial Intelligence tools that are available and in use in education and training. The European Union (EU) is currently developing a regulation on Artificial Intelligence³ that outlines new rules to establish obligations for providers and users depending on the level of risk from Artificial Intelligence.

KCETB is aware of Artificial Intelligence tools (acknowledging that this is a fast-evolving area and that many more will be available and updated by the time this policy is issued) and staff can access this list on the [QA Portal](#):

KCETB permits use of Artificial Intelligence for the purposes of teaching and learning in controlled circumstances that are transparent and fair to all learners and complement the delivery of a module. The use of Artificial Intelligence in submitted assessment material must be carefully and accurately acknowledged by the learner in line with recommendations on referencing (as outlined in section 3). To provide guidance on this, assessors can attach the use of Artificial Intelligence form when issuing Assessment Briefs. If the learner is permitted to use Artificial Intelligence for assessment.

7.1.2. Contract cheating services

In addition to threat from Artificial Intelligence, there are individuals and online companies that offer bespoke assignment writing services to learners across all discipline areas and award types on the National Framework of Qualifications. The use of these services is known as ‘contract cheating’. These services can modify assignments to combat anti-plagiarism tools (such as Turnitin) and provide bespoke assessment material on demand; normally for a fee.

² <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/society/20200827STO85804/what-is-artificial-intelligence-and-how-is-it-used> (accessed 29/08/2023)

³ [EU AI Act: first regulation on artificial intelligence](#) (accessed 09/08/2023)

Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) is the state agency responsible for the external quality assurance of further and higher education and training in Ireland. The QQI website outlines the Legislation that was introduced in November 2019. 'Section 43A of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) (Amendment) Act 2019 makes it an offence to:

- facilitate a learner to cheat in any way;
- advertise cheating services to learners; and
- publish advertisements for cheating services to learners'⁴

Anyone can report an incidence of contract cheating to the QA team using the form [AI 01 KCETB Contract Cheating Notification](#).

8. Assessment Malpractice

8.1. Learner Assessment Malpractice

Learner Assessment Malpractice is defined as intentional malpractice perpetrated by a learner during the assessment process. Within the scope of Learner Assessment Malpractice, KCETB recognises two further sub-categories of:

- plagiarism
- unacceptable behaviour in relation to assessment

8.1.1. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as 'Presenting work / ideas taken from other sources without proper acknowledgement'⁵. This is the practice of learners submitting work for assessment that is not their own original work. KCETB has a plagiarism spectrum to support the understating of what is plagiarism. There is a Plagiarism Spectrum for Learners (AI 11) and a Plagiarism Spectrum for Staff (AI 12).

KCETB considers such practices as malpractice and fraudulent and all suspected cases will be investigated and dealt with appropriately in accordance with procedures (see section 10).

KCETB expects all work submitted by learners for assessment to be accompanied by a copy of the relevant Assessment Brief, with the Declaration of Original Work signed by the learner. The Use of Artificial Intelligence form should also be completed. Work submitted electronically must also be authenticated e.g. by tick box. All suspected cases of plagiarism will be investigated in accordance with procedures if the work has been signed and deemed as authentic by the learner.

To support learners in recognising and understanding plagiarism and assessment malpractice, KCETB has introduced a 'Plagiarism Spectrum for Learners' (AI 11). The plagiarism Spectrum can be used to guide learners in understanding the different categories of plagiarism. There is also a corresponding

⁴ <https://www.qqi.ie/what-we-do/quality-assurance-of-education-and-training/prosecution-of-contract-cheating>

⁵ [National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms; Published by Quality & Qualifications Ireland \(QQI\), September 2021 \(1st edition\)](#)

'Plagiarism Spectrum for Staff' (AI 12)

8.1.2. Unacceptable behaviour in relation to assessment

Unacceptable behaviour in assessment may include but is not limited to when a learner:

- engages in behaviour that undermines the integrity of the assessment event or process
- engages in violent, disruptive or offensive behaviour in relation to assessment
- impersonates another person for the purpose of completing an assessment
- fabricates or falsifies data, results or evidence for the purpose of assessment
- removes or assessment material from the assessment location without authorisation
- tampers, interferes with, damages or demolishes assessment related materials including those of other learners
- uses electronic communication technology or other materials during the assessment without authorisation
- assists other learners during the assessment without authorisation
- communicates with other learners during an assessment event such as an examination without authorisation
- Colludes with other learners on an assessment, beyond what is authorised
- Engages in unsafe practices in assessment
- Engages in blackmail / coercion / bribery in relation to assessment

This list is not exhaustive.

8.2. Procedures in this Policy Area

8.2.1. Malpractice in relation to assessment events (i.e. examinations, skills demonstrations)

Suspected learner malpractice in an assessment event e.g. examination or skills demonstration, will be dealt with promptly by the Assessment Invigilator and in accordance with procedure outlined in KCETB's policy and procedures pertaining to Examinations: Preparing, Conducting and Concluding. These instances must be recorded and where applicable, evidenced on the Examination Invigilation Report, see [AP15 Exam Invigilation Report](#). Material that forms the basis for the suspicion of malpractice will be confiscated. The learner will be permitted to continue and complete the examination or skills demonstration.

8.2.2. Malpractice in relation to coursework (i.e. assignments, projects, collection of work)

The assessor may be able to check learner evidence in respect of assessment as it progresses or develops. This may include draft submissions of work in progress. Where the assessor is not able to directly observe or verify the work in progress, he/she may employ a number of approaches designed to enhance the reliability of the evidence and discourage/detect malpractice. These include:

- Learner's Declaration of Original Work (Mandatory)
- Personal diaries/logs/statements
- Independent testimony from third parties
- Peer reports (for group assessments)
- Questioning/Interviewing
- Use of plagiarism detection software

8.3. Reporting and investigation process

Cases of suspected Assessment Malpractice involving coursework (assignment, project, collection of work) must be dealt with by the assessor who has detected malpractice and is unable to verify the reliability of the evidence. Learners, or stakeholders other than teaching staff, may also detect and report suspected cases of assessment malpractice.

Separate procedures are available with detailed content on how Assessment Malpractice is monitored and reported (see section 10).

9. Academic Integrity Committee

Responsibility for monitoring the implementation and use of the Academic Integrity Policy lies with the Academic integrity committee. This committee reports to the KCETB Quality Assurance Oversight Committee (QAOC).

Full terms of reference for this committee are issued on the KCETB QA website.

10. Supplementary Documents

Supplementary procedures are available to provide additional information in relation to this policy area:

Doc. No.	Title	Published
AIP 01	Monitoring Assessment Malpractice	QA Portal
AIP 02	Reporting Assessment Malpractice	QA Portal
AIP 03	Communicating with learners (Assessment Malpractice)	QA Portal
AIP 04	Investigating Assessment Malpractice allegations	QA Portal
AIP 05	Appealing Assessment Malpractice allegations	QA Portal