



**RCSI**

# Academic Integrity Policy

RCSI DEVELOPING HEALTHCARE LEADERS WHO MAKE A DIFFERENCE WORLDWIDE

## Policy/Regulation History

Document Title		Academic Integrity Policy				
Rev	Status	Author(s)	Reviewed by	Approved by	Origin	Issue Date
	Approved	Academic Integrity Sub-Working Group	Academic Integrity Working Group	MHSB	Academic Integrity Sub-Working Group	27 <sup>th</sup> May 2021



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## 1 Introduction

The purpose of this policy, is to set out RCSI's arrangements and supports for enabling students\* to understand and value academic integrity; and to provide a framework for effective, fair, consistent and timely processes in the event of an allegation of academic misconduct being made against a student. The policy includes: the pathways for investigating an allegation of academic misconduct against a student at School and University level <sup>1</sup>

(\*refers to both undergraduate students and postgraduate scholars and the term “student(s)” where used hereinafter applies to either category of student as appropriate)

This policy and any associated procedures apply to all work submitted for assessment by all students registered to RCSI, on all taught and research programmes.

## 2 Academic Integrity Statement

RCSI, as a health sciences University and surgical Royal College, espouses the highest standards of professionalism among its students both at undergraduate and postgraduate level – the showing of respect for the work of others and acting with honesty and responsibility in preparing and submitting coursework and completing examinations is a key component of professionalism and underpins all academic activities.

Academic integrity is the commitment to and demonstration of honest and moral behaviour in an academic setting by the enrolled learner<sup>2</sup>.

It has been defined as

*“Compliance with ethical and professional principles, standards, practices and a consistent system of values, that serves as guidance for making decisions and taking actions in education, research and scholarship.”<sup>3</sup>*

The six fundamental values for academic integrity as identified by the International Centre for Academic Integrity (2021) are honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage. <sup>4</sup>

Responsibility for demonstrating academic integrity lies with the enrolled learner, and this includes:

*“compliance with ethical and professional principles, standards and practices by individuals or institutions in education, research and scholarship”<sup>5</sup>.*

Academic integrity is relevant to all areas of academic endeavour undertaken by the enrolled learner. This includes, but is not limited to, all activities related to the achievement of academic credit for awards; all methods

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<sup>1</sup> University College Dublin (UCD) *Student Plagiarism Policy*. Available at [https://sisweb.ucd.ie/usis!/W\\_HU\\_MENU.P\\_PUBLISH?p\\_tag=GD-DOCLAND&ID=222](https://sisweb.ucd.ie/usis!/W_HU_MENU.P_PUBLISH?p_tag=GD-DOCLAND&ID=222). Accessed 15/2/2021

<sup>2</sup> <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/esl/resources/academic-integrity/>

<sup>3</sup> The National Academic Integrity Network (2020). *Interim Academic Integrity Guidelines (v2)*. Quality & Qualifications Ireland, p5

<sup>4</sup> International Centre for Academic Integrity (2021). *The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity (3<sup>rd</sup> edition)*. Available at [https://www.academicintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20019\\_ICAI-Fundamental-Values\\_R12.pdf](https://www.academicintegrity.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/20019_ICAI-Fundamental-Values_R12.pdf). Accessed 22 February 2021

<sup>5</sup> ENAI 2018, pp. 7-8 in the European Network for Academic Integrity (2018) Glossary for Academic Integrity Report.



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of learning practice including in the classroom, research, online, distance and work-based learning; in all methods and forms of assessment including examinations and various forms of continuous assessment and in academic scholarship.

### 3 Academic Misconduct

Any behaviour or action which contravenes academic integrity and breaches its fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage is considered to constitute Academic Misconduct. Academic misconduct is any attempt to seek unfair advantage in relation to any academic activity. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating in any forum or form, misrepresentation of research (e.g. data falsification and fabrication of data), contract cheating, copy-editing, purchase of examination material, breaches of the Examinations and Assessment Regulations, impersonation, and any other act which dishonestly uses information to gain academic credit.

#### 3.1 Plagiarism

The unacknowledged inclusion, whether intentional or unintentional in any form of assessment for a programme of study of material without due acknowledgement of its original source.

It may include but is not limited to the following<sup>6</sup>:

- Presenting in your own name, work authored by a third party, such as other students, friends or family (with or without permission), or work purchased through any source or given to you by a third party<sup>7</sup>, including organisations such as essay mills. The original source may be in written form or in any other media (for example, audio or video);
- Presenting ideas, theories, concepts, methodologies or data (including research data) from the work of another without due acknowledgement;
- Presenting text, digital work (e.g. computer code or programs), video recordings or images copied with only minor changes from sources such as the internet, books, journals or any other media, without due acknowledgement;
- Paraphrasing (i.e., putting a passage or idea from another source into your own words), without due acknowledgement of the source;
- Failing to include appropriate citation of all original sources;
- Representing collaborative work as solely your own;
- Presenting work for an assignment which has also been submitted (in part or whole) for another assignment at RCSI or another institution (i.e. self-plagiarism).

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<sup>6</sup> University College Dublin (UCD) *Student Plagiarism Policy*. Available at [https://sisweb.ucd.ie/usis!/W\\_HU\\_MENU.P\\_PUBLISH?p\\_tag=GD-DOCLAND&ID=222](https://sisweb.ucd.ie/usis!/W_HU_MENU.P_PUBLISH?p_tag=GD-DOCLAND&ID=222). Accessed 15/2/2021

<sup>7</sup> The purchasing of work from any such source is prohibited under Section 43A of the Qualifications & Quality Assurance (Education & Training) Act 2012 as amended by the Amendment Act 2019



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### 3.2 Falsification<sup>8</sup>

The presenting or making use of fictitious, altered or misrepresented data, evidence, references, citations or experimental results. It also covers documents such as Exceptional Circumstances evidence, or any other information that could be used to gain an unfair academic advantage.

### 3.3 Contract Cheating<sup>9</sup>

Having an assignment completed by a third party, and submitting it as though it were your own work. Also known as “Ghost writing” or the use of “Essay mills”.

## 4 Academic Integrity and Student Responsibilities

The purpose of assessment, both formative and summative, is to support learning, ascertain learner understanding and demonstrate the achievement of specific learning outcomes by that learner. It is the responsibility of the enrolled learner to ensure that all submitted work for assessment purposes in an academic setting, which includes but is not limited to text, graphics, tables, formulae, results or any representation of ideas in print, electronic or any other media, in addition to artefacts, computer software and algorithms, correctly acknowledges the source of any data which is not original to the learner.<sup>10</sup>

All students must be willing to sign a declaration that the work they are submitting is their own; that there is no unacknowledged use of another person’s work; and that the work has not been previously submitted by the student or anyone else.

Students must not mislead an examiner by submitting work that suggests that the information gathered and analysed was their own when this was not the case.

Students need to be aware that legislation pertains in Ireland which allows students to be prosecuted for breaches of academic integrity, specifically the provision or advertising of cheating services. Section 43A of the Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Act 2012 as amended specifically empowers the Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) agency to prosecute those who facilitate academic cheating. The provisions cover: impersonation; provision of or advertising of cheating services and the publishing of advertisement for cheating. QQI is responsible for bringing prosecutions in respect of these offences.

The provision of the necessary support, encouragement and learning opportunities is essential if the integrity, reputation and culture of academic honesty within RCSI is to be maintained and students are to commit to and pursue their studies in accordance with the principles which underpin academic integrity. In addition to this policy, there are various supports available to students including

- i. The RCSI Examination & Assessment Regulations
- ii. The RCSI Library’s guides and tutorials on EndNote® and Referencing
- iii. The Marks & Standards for the programme they are completing (as appropriate)
- iv. Joint Schools Undergraduate / Postgraduate Scholar’s Code of Conduct

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<sup>8</sup> University College London (UCL). *Academic Integrity- Students*. Available at <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/students/exams-and-assessments/academic-integrity>. Accessed 21/2/2021

<sup>9</sup> *ibid*

<sup>10</sup> The National Academic Integrity Network (2020). *Academic Integrity- National Principles & Lexicon for Academic Integrity*. Quality & Qualifications Ireland pp2-3



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- v. Professionalism In the Health Sciences module (Foundation year medicine and physiotherapy)
- vi. RCSI Plagiarism Resource

If a student is in doubt as to what constitutes academic integrity, they are encouraged to seek advice and guidance from a member of the academic staff.

It is important to acknowledge that not all suspected incidences of academic misconduct are intentional. RCSI acknowledges that students are learners of varying abilities and the skills of appropriate scholarly research and attribution require time to learn. It is further acknowledged that some students come from different educational cultures with varying perceptions and accepted styles of referencing and acknowledging original work. These students may require time to learn what is required to demonstrate academic integrity as it applies to higher education in Ireland.

Some students at the commencement of their educational journey at RCSI may unintentionally fail to fulfil the required standards of academic integrity, where students in the early stages of their programme of studies or research are not learning as expected, they will be supported in addressing their shortcomings with regard to demonstrating academic integrity.

## **5 Suspected Incidences of Academic Misconduct**

Any behaviour or action which contravenes academic integrity and breaches its fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage is considered to constitute Academic Misconduct.

RCSI reserves the right to avail of any technological or other means available to it to detect the suspected occurrence of plagiarism or any other act of academic misconduct in respect of any assessment or other academic activity undertaken by any of its students.

Where a suspected incidence of academic misconduct occurs during an examination, it will be addressed in accordance with the university's Examinations & Assessment Regulations.

Suspected incidences of academic misconduct by any student other than in an examination setting will be investigated in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

Where a suspected incidence of academic misconduct comes to the attention of any member of the university's staff, they are required to bring that to the attention of the relevant authority such as Programme Director, Cycle Director, Year Lead or equivalent in the School or Academic Unit in which the student is enrolled. Following an assessment of the suspected breach by the appropriate subject matter expert(s), the relevant School or academic unit will classify the response level (Level 1, 2 or 3) for the suspected breach in accordance with the criteria provided for in Table 1 below.

The classification of response level identified on a case-by-case basis will determine the further course of action to be pursued in respect of the suspected breach as identified. The determination of the relevant response level will be made under the supervision of the relevant Programme Director, Cycle Director, Year Lead or equivalent in consultation with the Head of School or Academic Unit as appropriate.

To guide the classification of response level in accordance with Table 1, a breach of academic integrity associated with academic misconduct of a serious nature involves any behavior or activity, which would likely



have the effect of more than marginally enhancing the grade or outcome awarded to the student as part of any associated assessment process. The advice of RCSI Registry may be sought by the relevant School/Academic Unit in its determination of the appropriate response level in any individual case.

Any determination made in accordance with the provisions of this policy may be reviewed in accordance with the appeal provisions of university's Disciplinary Regulations.

*Table 1 Response Levels to Academic Misconduct*

Response Level	Description	Associated Course of Action
Level 1	Unintentional breach of Academic Integrity resulting in academic misconduct considered to be of a less serious nature: first occasion	Support the student in addressing the deficiencies in their knowledge, understanding and awareness of what is required to demonstrate Academic Integrity and avoiding committing further acts of academic misconduct. A Level 1 response does not normally incur any sanction such as a penalty in respect of the grade awarded but this is at the discretion of the School/Academic Unit on a case-by-case basis. The School/Academic Unit will advise Registry for noting the details of each incidence where a Level 1 response is applied to an individual student.
Level 2	Breach of Academic Integrity resulting in academic misconduct considered to be of a less serious nature: first occasion <b>OR</b> Breach of Academic Integrity resulting in academic misconduct considered to be of a less serious nature where a Level 1 response has previously been applied to that student.	The School/Academic Unit to determine the sanction to be applied and the corrective action to be undertaken by the student within a specified timeframe, including any penalty in respect of grade awarded .Where a Level 2 response is applied to a student, the School/Academic Unit will advise Registry of the relevant details for formal recording in the individual student's record.
Level 3	Breach of Academic Integrity Standards by a student resulting in academic misconduct considered to be of a serious nature <b>OR</b>	The School/Academic Unit to refer the alleged breach of academic integrity to Registry for investigation and referral as appropriate for adjudication by a committee



	<p>Breach of Academic Integrity Standards resulting in academic misconduct considered to be of a less serious nature where a Level 2 has previously been applied to the student <b>OR</b></p> <p>Failure by a student to satisfactorily comply with an approved course of action identified under either a Level 1 or Level 2 response</p>	<p>convened in accordance with the university's Disciplinary Regulations.</p>
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