



The Sysco Group

HE Academic Misconduct Policy

Date: January 2026

This policy is written in line with the Expectations and Core practices of the UK Quality Code for Higher Education (Quality Code), which are a key reference point for higher education providers in all parts of the UK.

1. Introduction

Assessment is a fundamental aspect of the student learning experience. Engagement in assessment activities and interaction with staff and peers enables learning, both as part of the task and through review of their performance. It is a vehicle for obtaining feedback. Ultimately, it determines whether each student has achieved their course's learning outcomes and allows the awarding body to ensure that appropriate standards are being applied rigorously. Deliberate, systematic quality assurance ensures that assessment processes, standards and any other criteria are applied consistently and equitably, with reliability, validity and fairness.

Sysco Business Skills Academy will embrace the QAA Quality Code for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education on assessment of students.

Where plagiarism is detected, penalties will apply. Sysco Business Skills Academy policy on penalties is based on the AMBeR tariff – Appendix 1.

Examples of Academic Misconduct

What is Academic Malpractice? It is deemed to cover (this is not an exclusive list):

- a. Cheating
- b. Plagiarism
- c. Collusion
- d. Falsifying data or material
- e. Other forms of dishonest practice to gain an unfair advantage in assessments that does not fall within the above definitions

a. Cheating:

- Having notes, programmable calculators or other materials that are not permitted in the examination room.
- The use of calculators with storage capabilities may be permitted where use has been agreed by the module leader and is related to the examination material.
- Deliberately acquiring knowledge of the detailed content of an examination.
- The submission of false claims of previously gained qualifications, research or experience in order to gain credit for prior learning.
- Submission of work for assessment that has already been submitted as all or part of the assessment for another module without prior consent of the module leader.
- Accessing an electronic communication device.
- Copying from the examination script of another candidate.
- Providing information to another candidate in an examination.

b. Plagiarism:

Significant use of other people's work and the submission of it as though it were one's own in assessed coursework. This applies to all types of work submitted by students, including, for example, written work, diagrams, designs, charts, musical compositions and pictures.

Plagiarism may take the following forms:

- Verbatim (word-for-word) copying of another's work without appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgement.
- Paraphrasing of another's work by changing a few words without appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgement.
- Unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another person's work.
- Self-plagiarism. Any attempt to take any of your own previously submitted assignments – or parts of – and make it appear brand new.
- The deliberate and detailed presentation of another person's concepts as one's own.

Minor Plagiarism:

- Using unattributed graphic images, a small amount of paraphrasing, quotation or use of diagrams, charts, etc. without adequate citation. This may result from poor scholarship (inexperience or carelessness, failure to reference properly)
- Several sentences of direct copying without acknowledgement of the source
- Inappropriate paraphrasing
- Poor referencing
- Unattributed quotations
- Incorrect or incomplete citations

Major plagiarism:

- Extensive paraphrasing or quoting without proper citation of the source.
- Copying directly from a text or other academic source without reference (Where material is taken directly from a text or other source, the cited material should be demarcated with quotation marks or in some other accepted way **and** the source should be cited).
- The use of essays, or parts thereof, from essay banks, either downloaded from the internet or obtained from other sources, including improper use of AI.
- Presenting another's designs or concepts as one's own.
- Continued instances of what was initially regarded as minor plagiarism despite warnings having been given to the student concerned.

c. Collusion:

The conscious collaboration, without official approval, between two or more students in the preparation and production of work which is ultimately submitted by each in an identical or substantially similar form and/or is represented by each to be the product of his or her individual efforts.

Collusion also occurs where there is unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the student's own.

Collusion must not be confused with the good practice of collaborative learning and peer support. Collaborative learning means that a student may benefit from sharing third-party material (books, articles etc.) but unless the student is explicitly instructed to plan, organise and write an assignment in a group of two or more, the student must plan, organise and write assignment work individually.

d. Falsifying data or material:

It is an academic offence for a candidate to claim to have carried out experiments, observations, interviews or any form of research which s/he has not, in fact carried out.

- Embellishment of data – when a small amount of data is enhanced or exaggerated in order to emphasise data, which has been obtained by legitimate means.
- Fabrication of data – this occurs when a student creates and presents an extensive amount, or significant amount, of data in order to conceal a paucity of legitimate data or wholly fabricates data in the absence of legitimate data.

3. Common procedure for dealing with cases of academic misconduct

Where staff suspect plagiarism, collusion or fabrication of data in a student's work, they must take immediate steps to provide the Programme Lead with documented evidence.

The Programme Lead will arrange for the work to be second marked, if required, and notify students of their suspicions and of the intention to report the matter to the HE Manager for further action.

All initial and minor instances of impropriety are dealt with by Sysco Business Skills Academy, while any continued instances potentially qualifying for suspension or reduced overall achievement grade, may involve the awarding body.

On receipt of a report of alleged academic misconduct, the student will be informed in writing of the allegation, enclosing details of the procedure to be followed in such cases. For any repeated or particularly serious instances of academic conduct, the student will be informed that the matter has been referred to the Higher Education Academic Misconduct Practice Panel who will hold a hearing into the allegations.

The Panel will not comprise any representative who has been involved in the assessment of student cases being heard and therefore substitute members must be available to attend the Panel for such cases. The higher education admin will provide secretarial support and a record will be kept of the meeting.

The HE Manager will chair the panel and there will be two other members who should consist of the Programme Lead (or if they were the original assessor/marker, another staff member in the curriculum area who has programme knowledge but was not involved in the original marking process), a member of staff with at least one year's experience of second marking and/or internal verification at HE level. The student and the original marker/assessor will also be invited to attend.

The student will be notified of the person they should reply to, the time and date of the hearing and informed that, in line with the procedures, failure to attend the hearing or submit evidence will not prevent the Panel from proceeding and may be interpreted as an admission of guilt. However, if the student is prevented from attending through ill health or other exceptional circumstances, the Panel will adjourn its proceedings until a later date.

The student will be given seven calendar days from the receipt of the letter to respond to the allegation by stating if they wish to accept or contest the allegation and indicating whether they will be attending the hearing in person or submitting a written statement. The student may be accompanied to the hearing by a colleague or a parent.

The Panel will notify the Assessment Board of its findings and notify actions for ratification:

- a. consider an allegation of impropriety, having given regard to the evidence presented to it by the staff and student
- b. determine whether impropriety has occurred and, if so, the extent to which a student/s has/have attempted to gain unfair advantage
- c. notify the Assessment Board of its findings.

The Panel may call for written and/or oral evidence at its discretion from those staff and students who have been involved in the matter, and will invite the student against whom the allegation has been made to attend and present evidence.

At the conclusion of the Panel's proceedings, the findings will be made available to the student in writing and a report will be submitted to the relevant Assessment Board.

In all instances of academic misconduct, Sysco Business Skills Academy may inform the relevant awarding body of the nature and status of the impropriety, as well as external examiners/verifiers. Specific action to be taken may be influenced by the requirements of the awarding body, as this policy does not supersede any regulations in place at partner universities or Examining Bodies.

4. Procedure for academic impropriety relating to examinations

An invigilator who suspects cheating in an examination will:

- Inform the student of the suspicions and the intention to report the incident. Confiscate any relevant evidence (e.g. any unauthorised material).
- Clearly annotate the examination script of the suspected student(s) at the point when the alleged misconduct is noticed. The annotation of the examination script should include the time and the signature of the invigilator.
- Attach a full report to the script.
- Alert the appropriate Programme Lead after the conclusion of the examination.

Not later than one working day after the conclusion of the examination, the invigilator will submit a written report to the Programme Lead. The report will provide an account of the incident, including the time of the incident and the student's response to the allegation, and be accompanied by any relevant supporting evidence, including any confiscated materials. Where possible, the report will include the comments, and signatures, of other invigilators who were present at the time at which the alleged cheating took place.

Thereafter the process follows the common procedure for dealing with cases of academic

misconduct.

5. Related Policies & Procedures

- Sysco HE Policy on Assessment
- Sysco HE Academic Appeals Policy
- Sysco HE Concerns, Complaints and Appeals Policy

6. Academic Misconduct Categories and Penalties

Academic misconduct is classified in four different categories and a tariff points penalty system is applied for each category. The tariff breaks down the case by measurable and quantifiable elements and sets a point value to them. If you are the person being graded on this tariff, points would be considered undesirable and you would want to make it to the other side with as few points as possible as that is the lightest punishment.

The Academic Misconduct Benchmarking Research (AMBeR) project chose what to focus on with the tariff after discussing the matter with educators. As a result, the completed tariff, which you can read here, focused on five key areas:

1. **History:** How many times has the student been caught plagiarising?
2. **Amount/Extent:** How much of the work is plagiarised?
3. **Student Level/Stage:** How far along is the student in school?
4. **Value of the Assignment:** How important was the assignment in terms of the student's grade?
5. **Additional Characteristics:** Did the student attempt to hide the plagiarism and other miscellaneous factors.

From there, the students' scores are tallied, and they are assigned a penalty ranging from blue to black. Blue being a mere formal warning and black being (up to) expulsion. See Appendix 1 for full tariff.

Table 6A: Academic Misconduct Categories and Penalties

Category	Action	AMBeR Tariff
CATEGORY: Minor Misconduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutorial support and guidance to help the student understand what is and is not acceptable and • Written advice for the student on where they can seek help (such as Perlego or Sysco Business Skills Academy Study/Learning Support). 	<p><u>280 - 329</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further action beyond formal warning • Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required, with no penalty on mark <p><u>330 - 379</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further action beyond formal warning • Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required, with no penalty on mark • Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required but mark capped or reduced
CATEGORY : Moderate Misconduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normally a Fail mark for that unit with the opportunity to resubmit the affected assignment. All resubmissions will be capped at a Pass. • Where the student has already been given the opportunity to resubmit, the Board will normally adjust the penalty to Fail for that unit with the opportunity to retake the unit. All retaken units will be capped at Pass and charged full fees. 	<p><u>380 - 479</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required but mark capped or reduced • Assignment awarded 0% - no opportunity to resubmit <p><u>480 - 524</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment awarded 0% - no opportunity to resubmit • Module awarded 0% - re-sit required, but mark capped or reduced • Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, but credit still awarded

<p>CATEGORY : Serious Misconduct</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normally a Fail mark for that unit with the opportunity to retake the unit. All retaken units will be capped at Pass and charged full fees. <p>Or, for the most serious misconduct:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A mark of Fail for that level/stage with the opportunity to retake the stage. All retaken units will be capped at Pass and charged full fees. • Exceptionally, the Board may, at its discretion and for reasonable cause, decide that a candidate may not be reassessed. 	<p>525 – 559</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module awarded 0% - re-sit required, but mark capped or reduced • Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, but credit still awarded • Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, and credit lost • Award classification reduced • Qualification reduced (e.g. Honours -> no Honours) • Expelled from institution but credits retained • Expelled from institution with credits withdrawn
<p>CATEGORY : Disciplinary Offences (Gross Misconduct)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate suspension from the course. • Expulsion. • Revoking a previously awarded degree. 	<p>560+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to resit, and credit lost • Award classification reduced • Qualification reduced (e.g. Honours -> no Honours) • Expelled from institution but credits retained • Expelled from institution with credits withdrawn

Appendix 1: AMBeR Tariff

1 Assign points based on the following criteria

HISTORY

1st Time	100 points
2nd Time	150 points
3rd/+ Time	200 points

AMOUNT / EXTENT

Below 5% AND less than two sentences	80 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised	105 points
Between 5% and 20% OR more than two sentences but not more than two paragraphs	105 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised	130 points
Between 20% and 50% OR more than two paragraphs but not more than five paragraphs	130 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised	160 points
Above 50% OR more than five paragraphs	160 points
Submission purchased from essay mill or ghost-writing service [†]	225 points

* *Critical aspects are key ideas central to the assignment*

[†] *Some institutions may consider this to be a separate form of academic malpractice*

LEVEL / STAGE

Level 4	70 points
Level 5	115 points
Level 6	140 points

VALUE OF ASSIGNMENT

Standard weighting	30 points
Large project (e.g. final year dissertation)	60 points

ADDITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Evidence of deliberate attempt to disguise plagiarism by changing words, sentences or references to avoid detection **40 points**

2 Award penalties based on the points

PENALTIES (Summative Work)

In all cases a formal warning is given and a record made contributing to the student's previous history

Available Penalties (select one)

280 - 329	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further action beyond formal warning Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required, with no penalty on mark
330 - 379	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No further action beyond formal warning Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required, with no penalty on mark Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required but mark capped or reduced
380 - 479	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required but mark capped or reduced Assignment awarded 0% - no opportunity to resubmit
480 - 524	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assignment awarded 0% - no opportunity to resubmit Module awarded 0% - re-sit required, but mark capped or reduced Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, but credit still awarded
525 - 559	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module awarded 0% - re-sit required, but mark capped or reduced Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, but credit still awarded Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, and credit lost Award classification reduced Qualification reduced (e.g. Honours -> no Honours) Expelled from institution but credits retained Expelled from institution with credits withdrawn
560+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to resit, and credit lost Award classification reduced Qualification reduced (e.g. Honours -> no Honours) Expelled from institution but credits retained Expelled from institution with credits withdrawn

PENALTIES (Formative Work)

280 - 379	Informal warning
380+	Formal warning, with record made contributing to the student's previous history