



## Academic Conduct Policy

Date Adopted: 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020

This policy document outlines the expectations with regard to academic conduct, appeals and complaints, for both students and staff involved in Higher National (HN) Engineers Academy programmes.

It includes the following sections:

1. Malpractice & Maladministration Policy
2. Appeals Policy
3. Complaints Policy

### 1. Malpractice & Maladministration Policy

Engineers Academy is committed to maintaining the authenticity and validity of student work, so that students' academic efforts are reflective of their achievements on their study programme.

- 1.1. Engineers Academy is opposed to any instance of **staff malpractice**, where the following should be considered a non-exhaustive list of examples of such:
  - 1.1.1. Improper assistance to candidates, or other undue assistance that breaches the assessment guidelines of the awarding body.
  - 1.1.2. Awarding or changing marks of assessed work, in order to award marks or criteria that are not justified by the student's work.
  - 1.1.3. Fraudulent submissions that could lead to false claims for certificates.
  - 1.1.4. Inappropriate retention of certificates.
  - 1.1.5. Producing falsified witness statements, for example, for work that the student has not generated.
  - 1.1.6. Allowing evidence, which is known by the staff member not to be the student's own, to be included in a student's submitted assessment work.
  - 1.1.7. Facilitating and/or allowing impersonation.
  - 1.1.8. The falsification of records and/or certificates.
- 1.2. Engineers Academy regularly reminds and encourages students as to the importance of good academic conduct, and to avoid instances of **student misconduct**, of which a non-exhaustive list of possible examples follows:
  - 1.2.1. Plagiarism
  - 1.2.2. Collusion by working collaboratively with other students to produce work which is then submitted as individual student work.
  - 1.2.3. Copying, duplication or distribution of assessment work, with the intention of aiding other students, or being aided by other students, in comparable assessment work.
  - 1.2.4. The deliberate interference with, impeding or destruction of another students work.
  - 1.2.5. The fabrication of results or evidence for work that will be formally assessed.

- 1.2.6. The false declaration of authenticity in relation to the contents of formally assessed work.
- 1.2.7. Impersonation, by pretending to be someone else in order to produce assessment work for another, or to arrange for another to take one's place in an assessment scenario.
- 1.3. Engineers Academy adheres to systems designed to minimise the possibility of maladministration, where such maladministration is defined as being any non-deliberate activity, neglect, default or other practice that results in Engineers Academy or its student(s) not complying with the specified requirements for the delivery of a given qualification. Namely:
  - 1.3.1. Student approach to assessment is to be carried out in line with the awarding body specification.
  - 1.3.2. Staff approach to assessment, internal and external verification, is to be carried out in line with the expectations of the awarding body.
  - 1.3.3. Staff approach to student registration, and claiming for certification, is to be carried out in line with awarding body expectations.
- 1.4. For the above sections 1.1 and 1.3, the following procedure will apply, should Engineers Academy become aware, or suspect that a student or staff member has been involved in an instance of malpractice, or maladministration:
  - 1.4.1. Engineers Academy will conduct an investigation, which will take a form that is commensurate with the nature of the allegation, suspicion, or revelation.
  - 1.4.2. Where a member of staff is suspected of malpractice, the Directorship of Engineers Academy must be immediately informed.
  - 1.4.3. The Directorship, or a designated nominee of the Directorship (if deemed appropriate and/or to avoid a conflict of interest), will conduct a preliminary investigation to determine the seriousness of the issue.
  - 1.4.4. Engineers Academy will make the individual(s) aware at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice/maladministration and of possible consequences, should it be proven to the satisfaction of the Directorship.
  - 1.4.5. The consequences of the investigation supporting the allegation, suspicion or revelation will ultimately lie with the directorship, in line with the contractual terms of staff involved.
  - 1.4.6. Should an Engineers Academy student or stakeholder be the party that first raised the issue or suspicion of malpractice, that party is made aware that they can report cases of malpractice to the Awarding Body, should they feel that the issue has not been satisfactorily resolved by the steps given above.
- 1.5. For the above section 1.2, the following procedure will apply, should Engineers Academy staff become aware, or suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct:
  - 1.5.1. Typically, evidence of academic misconduct will likely be first identified by the course tutor or internal verifier on a given study programme. This individual will perform a preliminary investigation, to determine the merit of any initial suspicion or discovery of apparent misconduct.
  - 1.5.2. Should the initial investigation lend weight to such a suspicion or discovery, the issue will be brought to the programme leader of the study programme involved. The programme leader will continue this investigation, and discuss the issue with student(s) and staff involved, if deemed appropriate.

- 1.5.3. If the allegations of misconduct remain upheld following previous steps, then the matter is referred to the **HE Assessment Board**, which may elect to issue one or more of the following sanctions:
  - 1.5.3.1. A formal written warning, explaining the reasons for such warning, as well as explaining the damaging consequences of academic misconduct.
  - 1.5.3.2. The amendment of grades awarded, if it is deemed that such grades have been awarded for work that is deemed to be a result of misconduct.
  - 1.5.3.3. A requirement to repeat any assessment(s) deemed to be inadmissible due to misconduct, or to undertake alternative assessment.
  - 1.5.3.4. A limiting grade placed upon assessment work that is deemed to be involved in such misconduct, or a limiting grade placed upon repeated work that has been issued as a result of said misconduct.
  - 1.5.3.5. A requirement to repeat the entire unit(s) or module(s) found to be involved in misconduct, again with possible limiting grade.
  - 1.5.3.6. In the most serious cases, the removal of a student from the study programme, and expulsion from Engineers Academy.
- 1.6. The documentation of any investigations, decisions and their consequences lies with the HE Assessment Board, who will retain any such documentation to allow for any external scrutiny from the awarding body, as well as any appeals (see Section 2).

## 2. Appeals Policy

It is the policy of Engineers Academy to allow students an opportunity to appeal against any assessment decision, where that student feels that the assessment procedures have not been properly conducted, or that an assessment decision has been made unfairly.

For such appeals to be recognised and dealt with appropriately, the following policy applies:

- 2.1 Any student wishing to question an assessment decision should bring the matter to the attention of the assessor as quickly as possible, and certainly within one working week of receiving the assessment decision.
- 2.2 If subsequent discussion between the student and assessor satisfactorily justifies the assessment decision to the appellant, then the matter is closed.
- 2.3 If any such dialogue fails to resolve the issue, then the matter is brought to the designated **internal verifier** for that given unit or module. The internal verifier may then either uphold the assessment decision or amend the assessment decision. The result of this process is then communicated to the appellant within one week.
- 2.4 If the previous process fails to resolve the issue, the matter is referred to the HE Assessment Board, who will consider the matter at the next board session, where the board may review a wider sample of student work in order to make a balanced judgement. The date of this session will be communicated to the appellant, but this date shall be no longer than three weeks after the issue has been referred to the board.
- 2.5 The assessment board will make a final internal decision regarding the appeal. The appellant may attend the relevant portion of the board meeting that relates to their appeal, either in person, by video-call or similar. The appellant will receive a written statement as to the board's decision.
- 2.6 Records of any such appeal being addressed by the board are recorded in the meeting minutes, and are referred to the external examiner. Should the appellant remain

dissatisfied by the board's decision, then Engineers Academy will outline to the appellant the process of raising the issue with the external examiner and/or the awarding body.

### 3. Complaints Policy

Engineers Academy is committed to delivering a positive experience for its students, and a dependable service for its external stakeholders. Despite the sense that any complaint signals our failure in this commitment, Engineers Academy are determined to handle complaints in a transparent and effective manner, and to use such complaints to further drive improvement. Recognising that mistakes are occasionally made, or that the services offered by Engineers Academy are not aligned with a student, customer or external stakeholder's needs, means that Engineers Academy can handle complaints in a manner which results in its services being improved for the benefit of all.

- 3.1. Engineers Academy is committed to continuous improvement. In this regard, any complaints will be:
  - 3.1.1. Treated seriously and received openly
  - 3.1.2. Acknowledged immediately, preferably in writing
  - 3.1.3. Investigated appropriately
  - 3.1.4. Resolved where possible or practicable
  - 3.1.5. Used as effective feedback to improve the service which Engineers Academy offers.
- 3.2. In line with the open and receptive nature towards complaints as outlined above, Engineers Academy is committed to ensuring that any complainant is not treated any less favourably by Engineers Academy staff.
- 3.3. Engineers Academy is committed to investigate complaints made by those who are directly involved with or affected by such complaint. Engineers Academy is also prepared, where deemed appropriate, to investigate complaints made by those peripheral to the involved party; for example, the parent, guardian or employer of a student affected. Engineers Academy is not prepared to guarantee any investigation of those complaints that are made anonymously.
- 3.4. All Engineers Academy staff have a responsibility for receiving complaints, treating them seriously, and dealing with them promptly and courteously in accordance with this policy. Staff are expected to acknowledge the receipt of any such complaint, preferably within three working days, and to return, where possible, a proposed resolution within two working weeks of the initial complaint being made.
- 3.5. The Directorship of Engineers Academy is responsible for resolving any complaints that cannot be promptly and satisfactorily resolved following the previous point. The Directorship will acknowledge to the complainant that the issue has been received by the directorship, within one working week of the initial complaint, and, where possible, a written statement of the decision of the Directorship with regard to the complaint within three working weeks of the initial complaint.
- 3.6. Any complaints that cannot be satisfactorily resolved amongst the Directorship will be deferred to the CEO of Engineers Academy for a resolution, who will make a decision in this regard. The decision made by the CEO is final.
- 3.7. If any of the timescales in the previous points cannot be adhered to for any reason, the complainant will be informed of any such delay within the original timescale.