



Wessex Schools Training Partnership

## Academic misconduct Policy

October 2021

Claire Porter October 2021 – review June 2022

### Introduction

This policy applies to academic misconduct and covers procedures for those assessments issued and accredited by the SCITT in relation to the award of QTS. Where trainees have an academic issue with the PGCE provider, that organisation's procedures for academic malpractice will be applied. It is the trainee's responsibility to be familiar with both the SCITTs and HEIs procedures for academic misconduct. All such regulations are available on the WSTP and University websites.

### Definition

1.1 For the purpose of this policy, academic misconduct is defined as any attempt by a trainee to gain an unfair advantage in assessment. This may include:

- (i) fabricating information for an assessment towards the award of QTS;
- (ii) falsification of data to misrepresent results;
- (iii) impersonating another trainee, or procuring an impersonator;
- (iv) the deliberate and detailed presentation of another person's concept as one's own;
- (v) resubmitting one's own work or documents in entirety (or substantial sections) which has previously been submitted for another programme.

1.2 The SCITT values a culture of academic integrity, which underpins the WSTP Framework.

The assessment of trainees is based on the principle that, unless stated in the assessment criteria, the work and documentation is their own work.

1.3 Where suspected malpractice has been discovered at a late stage in the assessment process and has not been resolved at the time of the Awards Board meeting, the assessors will not consider the trainee's grades until the academic misconduct investigation has been conducted and the matter resolved.

### 2. Aims

2.1 To provide a fair and respectful academic misconduct procedure which is clear and easy to use.

2.2 To publicise the existence of our academic misconduct procedure so that people know how the process operates.

2.3 To ensure all academic misconduct cases are investigated fairly, confidentially and promptly.

2.4 To ensure that academic misconduct cases are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired.

2.5 To gather information which helps us to improve what we do.

2.6 To support the mission, vision and values of the Trust and its establishments.

### 3. Who is responsible for this policy?

3.1 The WSTP has overall responsibility for the effective operation of this policy and for ensuring compliance with the relevant statutory or SCITT framework. The WSTP has delegated day-to-day

responsibility for operating the policy to the Partnership Director and the Strategic Management Committee (SMC).

3.2 The SMC and Partnership Director has a specific responsibility to ensure the fair application of this policy and all members of staff are responsible for supporting trainees and colleagues in ensuring its success.

#### 4. Stage one – informal resolution

4.1 The WSTP expects that before seeking to use formal procedures, the case:

4.1.1 will have been raised with the trainee; and

4.1.2 reasonable attempts to seek an informal resolution will have been made.

4.2 Where a minor problem arises at source, or where minor academic malpractice is identified, this should be dealt with at source with explanation and mediation being the key forms of resolution.

#### 5. Stage two – Formal procedure

5.1 Only when the informal stages have been exhausted and the tutor or mentor remains convinced that s/he has firm grounds for academic malpractice, should the formal academic misconduct procedure be initiated. The final decision on whether to proceed with an Academic Misconduct Panel rests with the Chairman of the Partnership.

5.2 The Chairman shall have a discretion, which will be exercised reasonably, to consider whether the matter can be resolved before an Academic Misconduct Panel hearing.

5.3 An investigation of the academic misconduct will be carried out by the nominated senior member of staff who will report to the Partnership Director and the Chairman.

5.4 The Director and Chairman will discuss the matter with the trainee(s). Whenever reasonably possible, such discussion will take place within 5 working days of the academic malpractice being identified.

5.5 The Director and Chairman will then put their findings in writing and indicate what steps, if any, should be taken in order to resolve the matter. Whenever reasonably possible, this will be done within 5 working days of the discussion with the trainee(s).

5.6 A copy of the Academic Misconduct Form and the written response will be submitted to the SMC by the Director and the Chairman.

#### 6. Stage 3 – Academic Misconduct Panel

6.1 The Academic Misconduct Panel of the SCITT will comprise of two members of the SMC who have not previously been involved in the case, and one person independent of the management and running of the SCITT. The selection of the independent member will be supported by the Governors of Poole High School (Lead School). The candidate will be permitted to bring a representative/witness. The SCITT will do this within 10 working days.

6.2 A trainee who has been informed that their case is to be considered by Academic Misconduct Panel must, by the deadline stated, submit all the evidence referred to in the initial notification and a response to any queries raised by the SMC.

6.3 The Academic Misconduct Panel shall consider only that work specifically identified and forwarded by the Director and Chairman. It is not the business of the Panel to seek to unearth wider evidence of malpractice by the same trainee(s).

6.4 Should multiple incidents of malpractice arise simultaneously for the same trainee, the panel will investigate all incidents at the same time (as is realistic).

6.5 At the end of that 10-day period the SMC will convene a hearing of the Academic Misconduct Panel. That hearing will be held as quickly as practicable given the need to find a date that is reasonably convenient for the trainee, the SCITT and the members of the Panel. Whenever possible, the hearing will be held within 10 working days of the end of the SCITT's response time.

6.6 All parties will be provided with a minimum of 5 working days' notice of the date of the Academic Misconduct Panel.

6.7 The Panel will formulate its response as quickly as reasonably possible, aiming to do so within 10 working days, and the SMC will notify all concerned.

6.8 The Panel findings and recommendations will be:

6.8.1 sent in writing to the trainee within the 'Completion of Procedure' letter (template at Appendix 2);

6.8.2 available for inspection on the SCITT's premises.

6.9 A written record will be kept of all academic misconduct cases by the SCITT.

6.10 Correspondence, statements and records relating to individual academic appeals will be kept confidential except where the Secretary of State or a body conducting an inspection under section 162A of the Education Act 2002 requests access to them or where the Trust is otherwise required by law to disclose them.

6.11 The decision of the SCITT's Academic Misconduct Panel is final, although the trainee would have recourse to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

## 7. Accountability

7.1 The Director holds delegated responsibility for discharging the sound application of all SCITT policies. Staff and trainees have a responsibility to be aware of the policy and procedures contained herein, to understand the seriousness of academic malpractice and to take every reasonable step to ensure that academic misconduct does not occur.

7.2 The Director should inform the SMC of all matters relating to serious breaches of this policy including any major incident to be addressed under this policy promptly, preferably prior to action being taken insofar as is reasonably practicable.

## 8. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

8.1 The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the SCITT.

8.2 The SCITT Trust will monitor the operation and effectiveness of arrangements referred to in this policy.

8.3 The Director will review this policy every two years in consultation with the SMC.



Appendix 1  
Academic Misconduct Form

Tutor /Mentor name	
Role Position	
Trainee Name	
Please give details of your grounds for suspecting academic misconduct	
What action, if any, have you already taken to try to resolve your academic issue? Include details of any previous advice or warnings given to the trainee.	
What actions do you feel might resolve this issue at this stage?	
Are you attaching any paperwork or evidence? If so please give details.	

For office use only	
Date acknowledgement sent	
Aknowledgement sent by	
Academic misconduct referred to	
Academic misconduct referred on (date)	



## Template completion of procedures letter

<\* Please add required detail/ deletion options as appropriate. Do NOT delete any non\* parts within the letter as it is a statutory template. Seek guidance from the Governance Team of the Central Office if required>

Dear <\*Name of complainant>  
Completion of Procedures Letter

This letter confirms that the internal procedures of this establishment in relation to your Academic Misconduct Panel regarding <\*please describe> have been completed.

The issues that were raised at your Academic Misconduct Panel were <\*please summarise>.

The issues that were considered in relation to the academic misconduct were: <\*brief summary of the complaint >.

The final decision of the SCITT is <\*detail> because <\*reasons>.

The <\*procedure/ policy / regulation> applied were: <\*details >.

Under the Higher Education Act 2004, the Establishment subscribes to the independent scheme for the review of academic appeals. If you are dissatisfied with the outcome, you may be able to apply for a review of your academic misconduct outcome to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) providing that the appeal you take to the OIA is eligible under its Rules. Should you decide to make an appeal to the OIA, your OIA Academic Appeal must be received by the OIA within three months of the date of this letter, that is, it must be received by the OIA on or before <insert date - e.g. if the Completion of Procedures Letter is dated 7 January, this date should be 7 April>.

The OIA's leaflet, 'An Introduction to the OIA for Students', can be downloaded from [http://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/34396/oia\\_intro\\_leaflet.pdf](http://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/34396/oia_intro_leaflet.pdf). Alternatively, you can telephone or write to the OIA for a form. You should send a copy of this letter to the OIA with your OIA Form.

Please note that the OIA will normally only review issues that have been dealt with through the Establishment's internal procedures.

Yours sincerely  
<Authorised signatory>