Academic Quality Framework

Academic Integrity

Approved by Academic Council

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1. Introduction

1.1 TU Dublin is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity. It supports its students and staff to uphold high standard of academic integrity and provides educative resources and tools that support best academic practice.

1.2 TU Dublin recognizes that the great majority of students can be trusted to approach their studies consistent with academic integrity principles. They strive to achieve the best possible learning outcomes for themselves and are rewarded for this through their successful graduation from their programme of study.

1.3 Academic integrity is considered a fundamental cornerstone in our commitment to honourable behaviour in all academic endeavours. It embraces all activities by students and staff in the generation and communication of knowledge and, from a student perspective, includes all documentation and artefacts submitted to the university for academic assessment purposes. The term 'assessment' here refers to all forms of student assessment or examination used to evaluate, measure and record student learning whether in-person or online.

1.4 Responsibility for demonstrating academic integrity in the completion of academic coursework rests with the learner. It is expected that all interactions with TU Dublin are approached with a **value system based on honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage**.

1.5   Academic misconduct occurs when the values and principles of academic integrity are not adhered to. Such conduct is always unacceptable because it undermines our core values, the quality of student learning, graduate outcomes, and the standing and recognition afforded to the qualifications we award. Ultimately, all work submitted by a student for academic assessment purposes must be their own independent and original work; the student must not claim or present as their own, either intentionally or unintentionally, the ideas and/or work of others without appropriate acknowledgment.

1.6   Unintentional academic misconduct is misconduct that occurs when a student exercises poor academic practice (e.g., poor referencing) without an explicit intent to cheat; however, such misconduct is still misconduct.

1.7   This policy is intended to underpin academic integrity across all TU Dublin learning and teaching activities, by stipulating the principles of academic integrity, and the responsibilities of the university, its staff, and students.

2. Scope

2.1   This policy applies to all registered students at TU Dublin. It also applies to past registered students, and students on any form of leave from their studies, where an incident forming the basis of an allegation of academic misconduct occurred during their registration.

2.2   It applies to TU Dublin staff members in terms of their commitment to and the promotion and communication of academic integrity, and the detection, reporting, and management of allegations of academic misconduct, and the improvement of academic integrity supports.

3. Definitions

3.1 The National Academic Integrity Network (NAIN) has adopted the following definition of academic integrity as taken from the ENAI Glossary:

'*Compliance with ethical and professional principles, standards and practices and consistent system of values, that serves as guidance for making decisions and taking actions in education, research and scholarship'.*

3.2 A key component of academic integrity is assessment integrity, i.e., the principles of honest and trustworthy assessment, are upheld so that the learner undergoes a fair assessment of their learning to determine whether programme / module learning outcomes have been achieved.

3.3 Conversely, academic misconduct has taken place when a learner has behaved in a way which undermines and corrupts the integrity of the assessment. Academic misconduct may be defined as:

Morally culpable behaviours perpetrated by individuals or institutions that transgress ethical standards held in common between other individuals and/ or groups in institutions of education, research, or scholarship.

3.4 Morally culpable behaviours refer to behaviours that constitute a breach of academic integrity and include, but are not limited to:

- Breaches of assessment regulations
- Exam cheating
- Plagiarism
- Unauthorised use of technology devices, web browsers, or cognitive offload (e.g., essay writing tools, paraphrasing tools, etc.)
- Data falsification
- Impersonation

- Purchase of examination material or contracting of another to complete examinations or other coursework whether for payment or not; and,
- Other acts which dishonestly use information to gain academic credit.

3.5 Any action or attempted action that undermines academic integrity and may result in an unfair academic advantage or disadvantage for any member of the academic community or wider society is academic misconduct.

4. Guiding Principles

4.1 Academic misconduct is always unacceptable. The following principles are intended to serve and guide TU Dublin academic integrity policy and practice.

1. The Primacy of University Autonomy

TU Dublin provides a first line of defence against plagiarism and other breaches of academic integrity. As a designated awarding body with responsibility for the quality of our academic courses and awards, the university is best placed to provide its own students with tools and support needed to avoid academic misconduct.

2. Everyone Is Responsible

All members of the TU Dublin community are responsible for ensuring the maintenance of academic integrity and each has a role to play to ensure that students undertake learning tasks with integrity.

3. A Whole-of-University-Approach

Academic misconduct can take many forms and there are many reasons why students engage in such misconduct, whether deliberate or unintentional. As such, the university response cannot be one-dimensional. International best practice demonstrates that a holistic, whole-of-university-approach is more effective for minimising academic misconduct and will combine elements of the following:

- a strong educative focus on academic integrity policy and practice for staff and students.
- a robust, consistent, fair, and timely process for dealing with suspected breaches.
- a standard and centralised model of reporting across the university's schools and faculties; and
- using the data gained from reporting, anonymised as appropriate, to improve teaching and learning practices and quality enhancement.

4. Consistent and Effective University Policies and Practices

TU Dublin will clearly define what it considers to be academic integrity, and maintain a suite of academic integrity policies and practices that:

- Focus on educative and preventive measures and activities.
- Provides a clear lexicon of terms and definitions that distinguish between kinds of academic misconduct of policy breach.
- Categorise suspected cases according to the severity of the breach, circumstances surrounding the alleged breach, the stage of the student's educational development, and the weighting attaching to the assignment in question.

- Provide guidance on the level and type of proportionate sanction applicable to different categories of breach; and

- Have processes for investigating and assessing possible breaches that are clear, robust, easy to follow, and fair. Such processes will also include a right of appeal.

5. Engage With and Empower Students

Students are responsible for the integrity of their work, and decisions to breach codes of academic conduct are ultimately their own. However, the university should work to ensure that students are as knowledgeable as possible of the nature of academic integrity decisions and the possible consequences.

TU Dublin will ensure that students have reasonable opportunity to learn about institutional policies and processes through various channels such as student handbooks, webpage information, course induction and introductory materials and teaching. An emphasis should be on supporting student active, participatory learning rather than relying on passive discovery.

6. Empower and Engage with Staff

Frontline teaching and professional staff play a critical role in building awareness of academic integrity and in deterring and identifying student academic integrity breaches. The university will proactively communicate to teaching staff institutional policies relating to academic integrity and develop a framework that describes the processes that need to be followed when cases are identified. Tools and resources, including best practices in course delivery, course design and assessment (to deter breaches) and technological aids (to detect breaches) should be made available to teaching staff, who should be tasked with using them.

7. Work Together

Academic integrity is an issue that affects all universities and can impact upon the reputation of the entire sector. The university will work with national agencies to share best practice and collaborate on benchmarking or other inter-institutional processes. Combining knowledge, experience and resources will strengthen the academic integrity of the overall sector, nationally and internationally.

5. Policy

5.1 TU Dublin will promote and uphold the highest standards of academic integrity and support its students and staff to be aware of and uphold academic integrity and provide educative resources and tools that support best academic practice.

5.2 TU Dublin will develop, maintain, and implement processes to investigate academic integrity breaches that are consistent, fair, and timely in their execution.

5.3 TU Dublin will ensure that students have a reasonable opportunity to learn about institutional policies and processes through such channels as university handbooks, course induction and introductory materials and teaching and through 'peer awareness raising' opportunities.

5.4 Academic misconduct is always unacceptable. All academic work submitted by a student for academic assessment purposes must be the students own independent and original work.

- Students must not claim or present as their own, either intentionally or unintentionally, the ideas and work of others without appropriate acknowledgment.

5.5 University decisions arising from investigations of suspected breaches of academic integrity will be based upon balance of probability, not absolute proof. This standard means that, based on an examination of the available evidence, that a suspected misconduct was more likely than not.

5.6 Investigations of suspected academic misconduct can include informal and/or formal processes.

5.7 Sanctions to be applied for academic misconduct will be proportionate to the nature of the infringement under investigation and where imposed, they will balance punishment with opportunity for rehabilitation and redemption. However, gross misconduct may carry the sanction of permanent withdrawal from the university with no award.

5.8 Students will have access to an appeal process for decisions involving academic misconduct.

5.9 TU Dublin will maintain a standard secure and centralised model of reporting across the university's schools and faculties to record cases of academic misconduct.

5.10 TU Dublin will use the data gained from reporting, anonymised as appropriate, to improve teaching and learning practices and assure the maintenance of academic integrity in all its educational activity.

5.11 The university reserves the right to amend and update these policy and procedures as required.

6. Responsibilities

The University

The University has a responsibility to:

a) Provide and implement policy and procedure that is clear, consistent, fair and timely in its execution, and ensure that policies and processes are used consistently and effectively across all schools and faculties.

b) Provide guidance and resources to educate students on the principles of academic integrity, good academic practice, and the avoidance of academic misconduct.

   • The TU Dublin Library Service will play a key role in the promotion and support of good academic practice among students.

c) Provide guidance, resources, and professional development opportunities for staff addressing best practices in curriculum design, and learning, teaching and assessment to deter academic misconduct and provide tools to help detect it where it occurs.

d) Mitigate against foreseeable risks to academic integrity and address underlying causes to help prevent and deter academic misconduct.

e) Provide students with access to an appeal process for decisions involving academic misconduct.

f) Collate and record appropriate data on academic integrity and review this data for the purposes of quality enhancement. Annual reports will be presented by Faculties to the Academic Regulations Policy & Procedures Oversight Committee (ARPPOC) for consideration and a response as necessary.

g) Maintain accountability for academic integrity in collaborative arrangements with third party organisations or HEIs who provide programmes of education or training leading to TU Dublin awards or awards approved by TU Dublin.

h) Support planning, development, and delivery of academic integrity educative activities (orientation, directed self-learning, and educational workshops) for students and faculty and in support of National Academic Integrity weeks.

i) Contribute to and support national or international actions and forums related to academic integrity.

Staff

Staff have a responsibility to:

a) Be cognizant of the university policies and procedures related to academic integrity.

b) Model academic integrity in their professional practice and engage with professional development opportunities supporting best practice in maintaining academic integrity in learning, teaching and assessment.

c) Inform students about academic integrity and the academic norms associated with their specific area of study (e.g., preferred referencing conventions), and establish clear expectations of students in the completion of coursework and assessments.

d) Provide students with formative active learning opportunities and feedback on academic integrity.

e) Design assessment tasks that minimise the potential for breaches of academic integrity.

f) Report suspected breaches of academic integrity consistently in accordance with this policy.

Students

Students have a responsibility to:

a) Will comply with the university academic integrity policy and the expectations of students in the completion of coursework and assessments.

b) Adhere to the values and principles of academic integrity and avoid all behaviours that might be considered academic misconduct.

c) Access and utilise the educative resources and support provided by the university to foster good academic practice and the maintenance of academic integrity in all their course submissions, including the completion of any university mandated academic integrity education or training opportunities provided by TU Dublin.

d) Whenever unsure, to ask questions and seek clarifications from lecturers on academic requirements.

e) Ensure that all their submitted coursework submitted is the product of their own independent and original work; the student must not claim or present as their own, either intentionally or unintentionally, the ideas and work of others without appropriate acknowledgment.

f) Support awareness building for academic integrity through attendance at and engagement with events in this domain.