

Reference Number: AQ_28

Academic Misconduct Policy

Revision History

Version	Last revised	Next review date	Policy Owner	Notes
1.0	15 January 2014	30 June 2015	James Stephenson	For publication. Replaces PD14, CEAZ01 and Appendix B of PD34
1.1	22/01/2015	30 June 2015	James Stephenson	Additional appendix added
AQ_28-a01	10 June 2015	30 June 2016	James Stephenson	Reviewed
AQ_28-a02	January 2018	30 June 2019	Matthew Baldwin	Full review and update
AQ_28-a03	31 January 2019	30 June 2020	Matthew Baldwin	Minor clarifications
AQ_28-a04	19 December 2019	30 June 2021	Matthew Baldwin	Added clarification regarding self-plagiarism
AQ_29-a05	11 February 2021	30 June 2022	Matthew Baldwin	New document format.

Academic Misconduct Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. Definition

NCC Education defines **Academic Misconduct** as malpractice committed by a candidate during the course of any assessment, including both those completed in controlled environments and coursework. It may also be termed **Candidate Malpractice**. Definitions of most common types of Academic Misconduct are listed in the table in Section 2 of this document.

1.2. Summary

All work submitted for an assessment must be the candidate's own work. It is an offence for any candidate to be guilty of, or party to, collusion, plagiarism, or any other act which may mislead the examiners and moderators about the development and authorship of work presented in assessments. This includes misleading examiners and moderators about the sources of information included in an assessment.

All academic writing must fully acknowledge all sources of information used in preparing the work being submitted. This includes acknowledging all written and electronic sources. For all NCC Education qualifications, it is expected that candidates will use Harvard-style referencing standards. Where work is produced under examination conditions it is sufficient to acknowledge the source without providing a full reference.

For detailed guidance on the correct procedures for maintaining the security and integrity of examinations, Centres should consult NCC Education's *Instructions for Conducting Examinations* document. However, candidates should be aware of the following requirements:

Candidates must not take any means of accessing information into an examination room, unless the rubric for that examination explicitly states that this is allowed. This includes:

- all internet-connected devices – computers, tablets, smart watches, etc.
- mobile phones, pagers or other messaging devices
- books, journals, or notes.

Where it is absolutely necessary to take any such materials into the room, they must be left with the invigilator (and, if an electronic device, switched off) prior to the exam commencing.

Unless explicitly permitted and/or required in the specification or an assessment itself, candidates must always work alone on preparing their assessments.

1.3. Scope of policy

This policy document applies to the following NCC Education qualifications:

- Level 2 Award in Computing
- Level 3 International Foundation Diploma for Higher Education Studies

- Level 3 Diploma in Computing
- Level 3 Diploma in Business
- Level 4 Diploma in Computing
- Level 4 Diploma in Business
- Level 4 Diploma in Business IT
- Level 5 Diploma in Computing
- Level 5 Diploma in Business
- Level 5 Diploma in Business IT
- Level 7 Diploma in Business Management
- BSc (Hons) Business Computing and Information Systems (awarded by the University of Central Lancashire)

Candidates studying for the BA (Hons) Business Administration, awarded by the University of Worcester, should consult the University's *Procedures for Investigations of Cases of Academic Misconduct*.

2. Types of Academic Misconduct

Collusion	<p>The preparation or production of work for assessment jointly with another person or persons. The only exception to this is when group work is explicitly permitted by the specification and/or assessment guidance).</p> <p>An act of collusion is understood to encompass those who actively assist others as well as those who derive benefit from others. Where joint preparation is permitted but joint production is not, the submitted work must be produced solely by the candidate making the submission. Where joint production or joint preparation and production of work for assessment is specifically permitted, this will be published in the appropriate assessment rubrics.</p>
Plagiarism	<p>The use, without acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of others, and the act of representing the ideas or discoveries of another as one's own in written work submitted for assessment.</p> <p>To copy sentences, phrases or even striking expressions without acknowledgement of the source (either by inadequate citation or failure to indicate verbatim quotations) is plagiarism. To paraphrase without acknowledgement is also plagiarism. Direct quotations must be either in quotation marks, or indented, and directly acknowledged.</p> <p>The failure to correctly reference the work of others is deemed to be plagiarism regardless of whether occurs intentionally or through ignorance of referencing requirements.</p>
Impersonation	<p>Occurs where someone other than the candidate prepares the work submitted for assessment. This includes purchasing or commissioning essays from third parties (including essay writing websites and other students) or asking someone else to sit an examination.</p>

	Candidates who attend an examination without their student ID card or other acceptable form of photo-ID will not have their script marked until their identity has been confirmed.
Exam Misconduct	Includes having access, or attempting to gain access, to any books, websites, networks, memoranda, notes, unauthorised calculators, or any other material which has not been supplied by the invigilator or authorised in the rubric on the front of the examination paper. It also includes aiding or attempting to aid another candidate, or obtaining or attempting to obtain aid from another candidate, or any other communication within the Examination Room.
Fabrication of results or observations	The reporting of artificial data from practical activities carried out by the candidate, or the use of artificial observations to support a hypothesis/conclusion.

For further information on the many different types of plagiarism and academic misconduct, please see the Turnitin White Paper entitled *The Plagiarism Spectrum*.¹

NCC Education deems all instances of academic misconduct as serious failures to respect the integrity and fairness of the assessment process.

2.1. Poor Academic Practice

Poor Academic Practice is the term used by NCC Education to describe circumstances in which a candidate is judged to have committed Academic Misconduct, but either through extenuating circumstances or a lack of severity it is not easily classifiable under any of the types of misconduct listed above. In cases of Poor Academic Practice, a more severe penalty is deemed inappropriate, and therefore NCC Education may decide to instead issue a warning, or to cap the candidate's mark at the pass boundary (40).

In order to differentiate between Poor Academic Practice and Academic Misconduct as defined in Section 2, any person(s) investigating must be satisfied that there was no intention to deliberately mislead the markers and moderators, or to knowingly present someone else's intellectual property as the candidate's own work. There **must also be some attempt to reference correctly** and the **vast majority of the candidate's work must be their own work**. Where a candidate fails to reference throughout an entire assignment, this is always deemed to be Plagiarism, even where unintentional and/or due to lack of understanding of referencing requirements.

2.2. Self-plagiarism

NCC Education accepts that candidates may sometimes wish to re-use identical or nearly identical parts of their own previous work. This practice is acceptable, however when re-using content from their own previous work **for which credit has been awarded**, it is

¹ http://pages.turnitin.com/rs/iparadigms/images/Turnitin_WhitePaper_PlagiarismSpectrum.pdf

important that candidates always acknowledge the origin of this content as they would when citing any other sources.

3. Investigation of Academic Misconduct by NCC Education

Allegations of Academic Misconduct may be raised by Centres (see Section 4 below), by NCC Education markers and moderators, or by whistleblowing. NCC Education will investigate all allegations of Academic Misconduct.

For assignments marked centrally by NCC Education, all candidate assignments are uploaded to Turnitin to return an Originality Report. These are reviewed internally prior to any penalty being recommended to the Assessment Board.

NCC Education review all available evidence in order to establish if Academic Misconduct has occurred. Where an allegation of Academic Misconduct is supported by the evidence, NCC Education must establish whether the issue is confined to one candidate's work or is more prevalent in the cohort. In order to establish this, NCC Education may need to request a further sample of locally marked work from the Centre, up to and including submission of the full cohort, or may require the Centre to re-check the cohort for evidence of Academic Misconduct.

In some cases, Centres may be required to interview candidates as part of the investigation process. In such cases, NCC Education will write to the Head of Centre setting out exactly what information is required. Centres are expected to comply with any such requests in a prompt manner, and failure to comply with any requests as part of an investigation will be deemed to be Malpractice on the Centre's part, as defined in NCC Education's Malpractice and Maladministration Policy. Candidates are also expected to comply fully with any investigation.

NCC Education holds the right to withhold marks as appropriate beyond the published results release date pending the outcome of any investigation into alleged Academic Misconduct.

Once an investigation is complete, all penalties are communicated to candidates in a Candidate Academic Misconduct Report. The candidate is entitled to challenge this decision by requesting a Post-Results Service, as outlined in NCC Education's published *Post-Results Services Process*.

While Academic Misconduct investigations usually take place in the period leading to results release, there is no time limit on investigations and the application of appropriate penalties where evidence of Academic Misconduct is present. NCC Education holds the right to rescind an award if evidence of Academic Misconduct arises at a later date.

4. Academic Misconduct Identified by Centres

4.1. In Examinations:

Cheating during an examination needs to be recorded by the Invigilator in an Irregularities Report and submitted with the *Invigilator's Report* (see *Instructions for Conducting Examinations* for more information and copies of these reports). This report must be submitted along with the candidate's script for marking (for global examinations) or with the sample for moderation (for the local examinations).

4.2. In Assignments:

All assignments marked by Centre markers should be uploaded to Turnitin to obtain an Originality Report. NCC Education strongly recommends that the Turnitin reports for all copies of work are reviewed, however if the report produces a **similarity score of 40% or more**, the assignment **must** be examined for plagiarism and/or collusion by Centre markers.

If impersonation is suspected, then an interview should be arranged with the candidate. The candidate should be clearly informed of the allegation against them when the interview is arranged. At the interview, the candidate should be asked to explain key parts of their assignment. Candidates unable to explain concepts from their own submission, or simply repeating the contents of their assignment verbatim, should be considered evidence supporting the allegation of impersonation. Should a candidate fail to attend the interview or refuse to answer questions, this will be interpreted as the candidate not wishing to challenge the allegation.

If a Centre marker uncovers any form of academic misconduct in assignments submitted by candidates, penalties must be applied as set out in Section 5 below. Candidates are not permitted to work in groups unless explicitly stated in the rubric for an assessment. Any candidates whose work show an inappropriate level of similarity should have their marks reduced. If a candidate willingly permits a fellow candidate to access and copy their work, both candidates should be penalised.

For every locally marked assessment cohort, Centres must complete a *Candidate Misconduct – Centre Declaration Form*. This form is required to confirm the marker has checked all work for evidence of Academic Misconduct, in line with this policy document. The marker should either indicate that no evidence of misconduct was found by signing Section A or should use the table in Section B to record any misconduct identified and the penalty applied. The completed form must be submitted with every unit moderation sample.

4.3. Guidance on reviewing Turnitin reports

Although Turnitin reports give percentage scores, they do require careful interpretation before a penalty is applied. For example, a similarity score of 50% could mean that half of the work is identical to a single other source – which would be clear misconduct. However, it could mean that 50% of the assignment is made up of quotations from 10 different academic sources, and if they are all correctly referenced (and the remaining half of the assignment is original work) then the submission may well be excellent.

There is also a “background score” in every Turnitin report. This is caused by text which is shared between many different candidates’ assignments – for example, the wording of the Statement of Confirmation of Own Work, unit names, assignment tasks, etc. A typical background score, which can be ignored, is between 22 and 27% for most NCC Education candidates. This is slightly higher (around 35-40%) for computer programming assignments, where legitimate strings of code will also generate matches.

5. Sanctions

The following is a list of Sanctions which NCC Education may impose on candidates where evidence suggests that Academic Misconduct has occurred:

1. Warning

Marks are not reduced, but the candidate is issued with a warning against repeating their actions at future assessment cycles, with further escalated sanctions likely to be applied in this event.

2. Mark capped at 40 (pass mark)

Marks are reduced to 40, allowing the candidate to pass the assessment component but limiting them from achieving a merit or distinction grade.

3. Loss of all marks for a specific task of assignment or TCA

Where Academic Misconduct is identified in only one particular task of an assignment or TCA, the marks for that task may be set to zero. Where plagiarism is found in isolated tasks, but the combined marks for those tasks make up 50% or more of the total available marks in the assessment, the mark for the whole assessment component must be set to zero.

This penalty is not applicable to examinations, as any evidence of academic misconduct in an exam is a breach of the conditions under which a controlled assessment must be sat, and therefore affects all questions answered.

4. Loss of all marks for an entire assessment component

Where Academic Misconduct is identified throughout a particular assessment component (or individual tasks making up 50% or more of the assessment), the marks for that assessment component will be set to zero.

5. Loss of all marks for a Unit

Where Academic Misconduct is identified in the same Unit at consecutive assessment cycles, the marks for **all assessment components** for the unit may be set to zero.

6. Disqualification from a Qualification

Where severe or repeated Academic Misconduct has been identified, a candidate may be disqualified from a qualification for a period of time. The candidate would

then be required to re-register on the qualification, though credit could be transferred from the first attempt at the qualification (subject to the rules laid out in NCC Education's Academic Regulations). NCC Education reserves the right to extend disqualification to all NCC Education qualifications. Any decisions to disqualify candidates from a qualification are at the discretion of the Head of Quality and Compliance.

The table below demonstrates the appropriate penalty to be applied according to the type of offence committed by the candidate. This is not an exhaustive list - NCC Education retains the right to impose penalties as appropriate on a case-by-case basis - but includes the most common types of offences identified and penalised by NCC Education.

Type of offence	Penalty
Bringing unauthorised materials into the exam room	Loss of all marks for an entire assessment component
Attempting to communicate with others in an exam, disruptive behaviour, etc.	Loss of all marks for an entire assessment component
Copying from or allowing another candidate to copy from you during an exam	Loss of all marks for an entire assessment component
Directly quoting text from NCC Education learning materials without appropriate referencing (Not applicable to TCAs or Examinations)	Warning
Self-plagiarism, i.e. reusing content from the candidate's own previous work for which credit has been awarded without appropriate acknowledgement of the source.	Warning
Evidence of collusion in the work of two or more candidates from the same cohort, with evidence of collusion present in all or the majority of tasks (making up more than 50% of the total mark) in the assessment.	Loss of all marks for an entire assessment component
Evidence of collusion in the work of two or more candidates from the same cohort, with evidence of collusion present in only certain tasks in the assessment (making up less than 50% of total mark).	Loss of all marks for a specific task of assignment

<p>Isolated examples of plagiarism:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Plagiarised text is generic in nature, e.g. definitions, common phrases - Plagiarised text is in key parts of the assignment which should always be the candidate's own work. - Where plagiarism is found in isolated tasks, but the marks for those tasks make up 50% or more of the total marks available in the assessment. 	<p>Mark capped at 40 / Warning (where original mark is less than 40)</p> <p>Loss of all marks for a specific task of assignment</p> <p>Loss of all marks for an entire assessment component</p>
<p>Poor referencing, e.g. citation of sources is attempted but inconsistent, or fails to use Harvard style.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where poor referencing leads to small amounts of plagiarism occurring - Where referencing is poor, but no evidence of any significant plagiarised content 	<p>Mark capped at 40 / Warning (where original mark is less than 40)</p> <p>Warning</p>
<p>Consistent failure to reference throughout an assessment resulting in severe plagiarism.</p>	<p>Loss of all marks for an entire assessment component</p>
<p>Commissioning/attempting to commission others to write assessment on the candidate's behalf (impersonation)</p>	<p>Loss of all marks for an entire assessment component</p>
<p>Falsification/alteration of results/data presented in an assessment</p>	<p>Loss of all marks for an entire assessment component</p>
<p>Repeated academic misconduct in same unit at two assessment cycles (do not need to be sequential)</p>	<p>Loss of all marks for a Unit</p>
<p>Repeated academic misconduct in any units at three or more assessment cycles (do not need to be sequential)</p>	<p>Loss of all marks for a Unit</p>
<p>Repeated academic misconduct in any units at four or</p>	<p>Disqualification from</p>

more assessment cycles	qualification
------------------------	---------------

- The table above is not an exhaustive list of offences. Where serious Academic Misconduct occurs, NCC Education may escalate to more severe penalties as appropriate.
- Where a candidate is given warning, if the candidate then commits a similar offence at a subsequent assessment cycle then the penalty may be escalated by NCC Education.

6. Information Sheets

Appended to this policy are four information sheets, which are also made available separately for download from Connect and NCC Education's website. Centres are strongly encouraged to disseminate this information widely and frequently amongst staff and students.

Information Sheets:

- A. Academic Misconduct: Guidance for Tutors
- B. What is Academic Misconduct? Guidance for Candidates
- C. Avoiding Plagiarism and Collusion: Guidance for Candidates
- D. Avoid Plagiarism and Collusion in Coding Units

Information Sheet A: What is Academic Misconduct? Guidance for Tutors

What is Academic Misconduct?

There are five main types of academic misconduct, and tutors should be vigilant against all of them:

Collusion is the preparation or production of work for assessment jointly with another person or persons (except where group work is explicitly permitted by the specification and/or assessments guidance).

Plagiarism is the use, without acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of other people, and the act of representing the ideas or discoveries of another as one's own in written work submitted for assessment.

Impersonation is where someone other than the candidate prepares the work submitted for assessment.

Misconduct in examinations includes having access, or attempting to gain access, to any books, memoranda, notes, unauthorised calculators, or any other material which has not been supplied by the invigilator or authorised in the rubric on the front of the examination paper.

Fabrication of results or observations in practical or project work.

What is Poor Academic Practice?

Poor Academic Practice is the term used by NCC Education to describe circumstances in which a candidate is judged to have committed Academic Misconduct, but either through extenuating circumstances or a lack of severity it is not easily classifiable under any of the types of misconduct listed above. There must be some attempt to reference correctly and the vast majority of the candidate's work must be their own work, and any person(s) investigating must be satisfied that there was no intention to deliberately mislead the markers. Where a candidate fails to reference throughout an entire assignment, this is always deemed to be Plagiarism, even where unintentional and/or due to lack of understanding of referencing requirements.

How do I find misconduct in assignments?

All assignments should be uploaded to Turnitin to obtain an Originality Report. If the report produces a similarity score of 40% or more, the assignment should be examined for plagiarism. If any of the main types of misconduct listed above are detected, a penalty should be applied in line with Section 5 of the Academic Misconduct Policy).

It is important that a high similarity index is not used as justification for reduction of marks in itself, but that all reports with a high index are scrutinised and interpreted by a qualified marker to determine the cause of the high score and potential misconduct. An assignment with a similarity index of over 40% may in fact be completely acceptable, provided all quotations are properly referenced.

What should I do if I identify academic misconduct?

In Assignments:

A penalty should be applied in line with Section 5 of NCC Education's Academic Misconduct Policy.

Candidates are not permitted to work in groups unless explicitly stated in the rubric for an assessment. Any candidates whose work show an inappropriate level of similarity should have their marks appropriately reduced. If a candidate willingly permits a fellow candidate to access and copy their work, both candidates should be penalised.

If a marker uncovers plagiarism or other academic malpractice in assignments submitted by candidates, marks must be deducted as appropriate, and this should be recorded in the unit *Candidate Misconduct – Centre Declaration Form*.

In Examinations:

Cheating (or attempted cheating) during an examination needs to be recorded by the Invigilator in the Invigilator's Report. This report and the examination script must be submitted with the work for marking (for global examinations) and with the sample for moderation (for the local examinations).

Important: Please ensure that NCC Education is notified of all academic misconduct penalties applied during centre marking and/or internal moderation.

Please refer to NCC Education's Academic Misconduct Policy for further information.

Information Sheet B: What is Academic Misconduct? Guidance for Candidates

What is Academic Misconduct?

Academic Misconduct includes any act which misleads your Centre or NCC Education about the source of the work that you submit for assessment, whether intentional or not.

Common types of academic misconduct include:

Collusion is the preparation or production of work for assessment jointly with another person (except where group work is explicitly permitted).

Plagiarism is the use without acknowledgement of the intellectual work of other people, and the act of representing someone else's ideas as your own in written work submitted for assessment.

Impersonation is where someone else prepares the work which you submit for assessment.

Misconduct in examinations includes having access, or attempting to gain access, to any books, memoranda, notes, unauthorised calculators, or any other material which has not been supplied by the invigilator or authorised in the rubric on the front of the examination paper.

Fabrication of results or observations in practical or project work.

What is Poor Academic Practice?

Poor Academic Practice is the term used by NCC Education to describe circumstances in which a candidate is judged to have committed Academic Misconduct, but either through extenuating circumstances or a lack of severity it is not easily classifiable under any of the types of misconduct listed above.

What happens if I commit Academic Misconduct?

Academic Misconduct is a serious issue which affects the integrity of assessments and qualifications. Because of this, NCC Education can take any of the following actions where misconduct is identified:

- You may be given a mark of zero for a specific Task in an assessment, or the whole assessment
- You may be given a mark of zero for the whole Unit

In severe cases of Academic Misconduct, you may be disqualified from a Qualification.

If Academic Misconduct has been identified in your work, you will receive a Candidate Academic Misconduct Report alongside your Statement of Results.

You will also have a right of appeal as outlined in our published Post-Results Services Policy, available on our website.

Information Sheet C: Avoiding Plagiarism and Collusion: Guidance for Candidates

What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and NCC Education will take action against candidates who commit it. Your work is checked for plagiarism by your Centre and by NCC Education markers and moderators. If you are found to have plagiarised, or to have helped someone else to do so, you will be penalised.

Plagiarism occurs when you copy from one or more sources without correctly referencing these sources. The main types of plagiarism are:

1. Quotes are taken from a source (website, book, article) and not correctly referenced. All direct quotes should be contained within quotation marks or by indenting the text – it is not sufficient to just cite the author.
2. Text taken from a source (website, book, article) is paraphrased, but no citation/reference is included.

You can commit plagiarism by directly copying, rephrasing or summarising someone else's work without acknowledging that you have done so.

Cutting and pasting pieces of work from websites is the same as handing in work downloaded from the Internet, and both amount to plagiarism.

You should always acknowledge any direct quotations from another person's work using quotation marks or indenting.

When handing in completed assignments all sources you have used should be itemised in a reference list at the end of the piece of work.

What is the difference between plagiarism and poor academic practice?

Poor Academic Practice is the term used by NCC Education to describe circumstances in which a candidate is judged to have committed Academic Misconduct, but either through extenuating circumstances or a lack of severity it is not easily classifiable under any of the types of misconduct listed above.

In order to differentiate between Poor Academic Practice and more severe Academic Misconduct, any person(s) investigating must be satisfied that there was no intention to deliberately mislead the markers and moderators, or to knowingly present someone else's intellectual property as the candidate's own work. In cases of suspected plagiarism, there must also be some attempt to reference correctly and the vast majority of the candidate's work must be their own work. Where a candidate fails to reference throughout an entire assignment, this is always deemed to be Plagiarism, even where unintentional and/or due to lack of understanding of referencing requirements.

What is Collusion?

Collusion is the preparation or production of work for assessment jointly with someone else, usually a friend or classmate.

Under no circumstances should you make your assignment available to another candidate. If you share your assignment with another candidate and he or she plagiarises it, **both of you** will have committed academic misconduct, since you enabled this to take place.

Closely related to Collusion is **Impersonation**, or passing off someone else's work as your own. This includes the use of "essay mills" – websites where you can purchase pre-written assignment text – and "commissioning sites", where you pay someone to do the work for you. Another form of impersonation is attempting to sit an exam on behalf of someone else. All of these types of misconduct are extremely serious, and may result in you being expelled from your programme of study.

What does a good assignment look like?

A good assignment should contain original work in your own words.

It should include appropriate references to sources such as books and articles, but these will be used to support and justify your own ideas.

All references will be clearly labelled using the Harvard System and included in a reference list at the end of the assignment. Even when using text from NCC Education learning materials, you still need to include appropriate references.

Paraphrasing and Summarising

It is particularly important to identify the difference between acceptable and unacceptable forms of paraphrasing.

In order to paraphrase a passage from source material you need to understand it thoroughly and be able to express it in your own words. Even if the concept has been re-worded, the original source must still be acknowledged in a citation. It is not acceptable to simply reproduce large chunks of someone else's work, whether or not these have been acknowledged. Similarly, it is unacceptable to use electronically translated material from foreign language sources without acknowledgement.

Summarising also involves putting ideas into your own words. This must be done so that only the main points are mentioned. Summaries are there to provide an overview and are therefore much shorter than the original material. Again, original material that has been summarised must be acknowledged in your work to avoid committing plagiarism.

What happens if I commit Plagiarism or Collusion?

Plagiarism and Collusion are serious issues which affect the integrity of assessments and qualifications. Because of this, NCC Education may take any of the following actions where misconduct is identified:

- You may be given a mark of zero for a specific Task or Section of an assessment, or for the whole assessment.
- You may be given a mark of zero for the whole Unit
- You may be disqualified from a Qualification

Information Sheet D: Avoiding Plagiarism and Collusion in Coding Units

This guidance applies to the assessment of NCC Education computer programming units in which candidates are required to generate code.

Please also refer to NCC Education's Avoiding Plagiarism and Collusion: Guidance for Candidates for more information on Academic Misconduct in general, including the sanctions that may be applied to any piece of work where misconduct is detected.

Avoiding Plagiarism when writing Code

- Plagiarism in code occurs when significant amounts of code are taken from external (usually online) sources.
- NCC Education recognises that re-using existing code is common practice in the software industry, and as such small amounts of code may be re-purposed from external sources, so long as this code is significantly modified and edited to fit the purpose of the assessment, and fully referenced in comments within the code (including the source URL where appropriate).
- Candidates should always avoid taking entire structures from external sources. Simply changing variables and functions names is not considered by NCC Education to be a significant modification, and is deemed to be academic misconduct.
- No marks will be awarded where Learning Outcomes and Assessment Criteria are met through borrowed external code only, even where it is referenced. **Code taken from external sources must always be modified significantly and never used unchanged and must always be used alongside the candidate's own original work.**

Avoiding Collusion when writing code

- Collusion in the use of code occurs where candidates work together, resulting in inappropriate similarities in their code, such as the same data structure/flow of logic, order of classes and objects.
- NCC Education accepts that some similarities in software code are inevitable, especially where the same programming language and development tools are employed. However, candidates' work must always be substantially different from each other's so that the examiner can be confident that the individual candidate has demonstrated mastery of the learning outcomes.

- Examples of acceptable and unacceptable levels of similarity:

Acceptable	Unacceptable
Minor similarities may exist, but candidates' work show differences in implementation algorithms and data structures.	Candidates' work show similarities in data structure and implementation algorithms. The only differences are in variables/function names. The user interface generated by the code is the same.

Please note that **group work is not permitted** when completing any NCC Education assessments **unless explicitly stated in the rubrics of that assessment.**