

LAINÉ

THEATRE ARTS

Policies

Academic Misconduct Policy

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

1. POLICY OVERVIEW

1.1 This Policy sets out what happens when there is a suspected breach of academic regulations. At the beginning of each phase of the process, an appropriate person(s) will be appointed to progress the case to the earliest resolution. This will either be an Authorised Person, Investigator or panel (see appendix A for definition of roles). All decisions under this policy will be made on the balance of probabilities.

1.2 Principles

The College will apply this policy in accordance with the following principles:

- Fairness and transparency in all decision-making
- Consistency of approach across similar cases
- Proportionality of outcomes relative to the severity of the offence
- Timely resolution of cases
- Support for academic development, particularly in early-stage or minor breaches

2. DEFINITIONS

2.1 Breach of Academic Regulations Definition is defined, as stated by the OIA (2018), as: "Any action by a student which gives or has the potential to give an unfair advantage in an examination or assessment or might assist someone else to gain an unfair advantage, or any activity likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research." Decisions will take into account intent, extent, and material impact of the alleged misconduct.

2.2 Distinction between Poor Academic Practice and Academic Misconduct

The College recognises that not all breaches arise from deliberate intent. Minor or first-time issues (e.g. referencing errors) may be treated as poor academic practice and addressed through education and support rather than formal sanction.

2.3 Examples of academic misconduct given by the OIA (2018) and recognised by this Policy include:

- a. Plagiarism - presenting someone else's work or ideas as the student's own;
- b. Self-plagiarism - submitting the same work that the student has already submitted for another assessment when this is not permitted;
- c. Taking a copy of another student's work without their permission;
- d. Falsifying data, evidence or experimental results;
- e. Collusion - working with someone else on an assessment which is intended to be the student's own work;
- f. Contract cheating - where someone completes work for a student who then submits it as their own (including use of essay mills or buying work online);
- g. Arranging for someone else to impersonate a student by sitting their examination;
- h. Cheating in examinations (or other formal assessment), including possession of unauthorised material or technology during an examination, and attempting to access unseen assessment materials in advance of an examination;
- i. Submitting fraudulent extenuating circumstances claims or falsifying evidence in support of extenuating circumstances claims (this may also be considered a non-academic disciplinary matter);

3. TIMESCALES

3.1 The College will aim to resolve cases within the following indicative timeframes:

- Phase 1: within 10 working days
- Phase 2: within 20 working days
- Phase 3: within 30 working days

Where delays occur, students will be informed and provided with revised timelines.

4. ACADEMIC REGULATIONS - PHASE 1 INTERVENTION

4.1 If a member of staff, student, or third party raises a concern about a breach of academic regulations, the concern should be passed to the Director of Courses, who will identify an Authorised Person to take the case forward. For an indicative list of job roles that can act as an Authorised Person, see Appendix A. Individuals involved in decision-making must have no conflict of interest or prior involvement that would compromise impartiality.

4.2 The Authorised Person shall review the concerns and write to the student to explain the suspected breach of academic regulations. The student will be provided with any evidence at this phase.

4.3 The Authorised Person will meet with the student, who will have the opportunity to respond to the concerns raised. The meeting will also seek to discuss possible interventions that can be put in place to mitigate or address the concerns raised and provide support to those involved.

4.4 If the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of both parties there is no further action required. The Authorised Person will communicate the outcome by email or letter to the student and the person who reported the matter. If the matter cannot be resolved at this stage, or if the matter is regarded to be of

a serious nature, for example a level 2 or 3 offence, the Authorised Person should proceed to a Phase 2 Investigation. All outcomes will be communicated in writing and will include clear reasons for the decision, including how evidence was considered.

- 4.5 We support and encourage a restorative approach to intervention measures. However, where early evidence and/or discussion with the student clearly indicates that a breach of academic conduct has occurred, and an escalation to Phase 2 would neither be proportionate nor helpful to the student, formal sanctions at Phase 1 may be deemed appropriate. Phase 1 sanctions will normally apply only to minor or first offences, and must be proportionate and educational in nature.
- 4.6 The following sanctions and/or actions in Table 1 may be applied for the first offence. It is important to consider mitigating factors when determining sanctions such as whether the student has shown remorse, admitted the offence quickly, the student was found in possession of unauthorised material but did not intend to gain an advantage, the student has compelling personal circumstances that affected their judgment etc:

SANCTIONS FRAMEWORK

- Sanctions will be applied consistently and will take into account:
- Severity of the offence
- Whether the offence was deliberate
- Whether it is a repeat offence
- Level of study and experience of the student
- Any mitigating circumstances

TABLE 1

Types of Academic Misconduct considered at this phase (Level 1 Offences) <i>*this is not an exhaustive list</i>	Types of sanctions/actions for Level 1 (first offence)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Plagiarism▪ Collusion▪ Cheating in an examination▪ Falsifying extenuating circumstances▪ Failure to provide an electronic copy when asked▪ The late return of College equipment which is required by other students to complete an assessment;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Educational support for better academic practice▪ Warning issued to student - held on their record for 12 months▪ Mark for assessment reduced▪ Student expected to undertake training to ensure that future occurrences do

5. ACADEMIC REGULATIONS – PHASE 2 INVESTIGATION

5.1 Where a case has not, or cannot, be resolved under Phase 1 (Early Intervention) which may be due to the seriousness of the case or repeat offence(s), an Investigator will be appointed by either the Director of Courses or Academic Director to formally investigate further. The Investigator will be someone who has no previous involvement in the case.

5.2 The Investigator will seek to:

- a. Determine whether a breach of academic regulations has taken place.

- b. Whether it was the student who was responsible for this breach.
- c. Whether the investigation will consider Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body expectations associated with the Student's course

5.3 The Investigator will write to the student who has been reported to have breached the academic regulations inviting them to a meeting with the Investigator. This correspondence will confirm the following:

- a. The alleged breach and scope of the investigation.
- b. Details as to how the investigation will be undertaken.
- c. Any supporting evidence of the alleged breach.
- d. A copy of the Academic Misconduct Policy.
- e. Details of additional support services available to the student.
- f. Right to be accompanied at the meeting by a Supporter who could be a student representative or colleague.

5.4 Upon conclusion of the meeting with the student, the notes (not a full transcript) of the meeting will be shared with the student. Following the above meeting, the Investigator will write to any other persons who they have identified as being necessary to meet with for the purposes of gathering evidence. The student will be given a reasonable opportunity to review and respond to all evidence before a decision is made.

5.5 All meeting arrangements should incorporate the following:

- a. Meetings should be confirmed in writing (for example via email) making it clear that the purpose is to gather information.
- b. Initial meeting correspondence should provide an offer to make an appropriate referral to additional support services.
- c. Any person invited to a meeting is entitled to bring a supporter who could be a student representative, a family member or friend.

d. The investigator must provide a note taker for the meeting. Following the meeting the notes will be circulated to the student. The meeting notes do not have to be confirmed.

5.6 Should the student be unable to attend the meeting in person, the student should contact the Investigator before the meeting, who can then make alternative arrangements to consider the allegation (normally virtually).

5.7 Should the student fail to attend the meeting without good reason, the Investigator may proceed in their absence.

5.8 The Investigator will consider the evidence and determine whether, on the balance of probability, the academic regulations have been breached by the student about whom the concerns were raised.

5.9 The Investigator will draft a report which will set out the scope and phases of the investigation, meetings that took place and evidence considered. The report will provide an assessment of the concerns raised and recommendations for next steps, including support for those involved.

5.10 There are four possible conclusions arising from the Phase 2 investigation. These are as follows:

- a. The matter is resolved, with sanctions applied under a Level 2 Academic Offence agreed by both parties, and the case is closed;
- b. The Investigator determines that the matter should be considered a Level 1 Academic Offence and refers it accordingly;
- c. The Investigator determines that the matter constitutes a Level 3 Academic Offence and escalates it to Phase 3 of this process (see Appendix B).
- d. The student has not been considered to be in breach of the academic regulations and the matter will be closed.

5.11 The Investigator will communicate in writing the conclusions to: the student; the person who reported the breach of academic regulations; and, if appropriate, the Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body associated with the student's course. This correspondence should include the Investigator's report. Where appropriate, the College may separate the roles of investigation and decision-making to ensure fairness and independence.

TABLE 2

<p>Types of Academic Misconduct Typically considered under Phase 2 (Level 2 offences)</p> <p><i>*this is not an exhaustive list</i></p>	<p>Types of sanctions typically applied</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Plagiarism ▪ Collusion ▪ Cheating in an examination ▪ Falsifying extenuating circumstances ▪ Failure to provide an electronic copy when asked ▪ Repeated level 1 offence ▪ Purchase of an online assessment (first offence) ▪ The late return of equipment loaned by a Faculty or Department which is required by other students to complete an assessment; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Warning issued to student - held on their record until completion of their current course ▪ Mark for assessment/module reduced ▪ Student required to undertake training to ensure that future occurrences do not arise

6. ACADEMIC REGULATIONS – PHASE 3 ESCALATION

6.1 If the Investigator believes that a Level 3 Academic Offence has been committed, the case shall be escalated to Phase 3 and the Investigator will submit a signed and dated Phase 3 Academic Report to the Academic Director. Where serious sanctions (e.g. suspension or exclusion) are being considered, the Panel will ensure that:

- The student has had full opportunity to respond
- All mitigating factors have been considered
- The decision is proportionate and justified

6.2 The Phase 3 Escalation Report must:

- a. set out clearly the name of the student whose academic conduct has been drawn into question, the nature and full details of the breach in academic regulations and all the supporting evidence to be presented;
- b. explain the steps taken to confirm that evidence exists that the breach in academic regulations has taken place and that it could be the responsibility of the student;
- c. explain why the breach in academic regulations is considered to justify the taking of Phase 3 disciplinary action in accordance with this Policy.

Note: The Academic Director may direct that a Phase 3 Report Form be withdrawn at any time before the issue of a Decision Notice.

6.3 The Academic Director shall consider the allegation and determine whether it is valid in accordance with 6.1 i, ii, iii above and, if valid, whether it is to be treated as a Phase 3 Academic Offence.

- 6.4 If the Academic Director believes that the allegation should not be treated as a Level 3 Academic Offence, the allegation will be returned to the relevant Authorised Person at the relevant level with a recommendation of Level 1 or 2 Academic Offence support and/or sanctions.
- 6.5 If the Academic Director believes that the allegation should be treated as a Phase 3 Academic Offence, they shall give notice of the decision in writing to the student and Investigator within ten working days of its receipt.
- 6.6 After the decision that a Level 3 Academic Offence is valid, the Academic Director will appoint an Escalation Panel, who have no previous involvement with the matter. The Escalation Panel will have a quoracy of three members, and may consist of:
- a member of Academic Board;
 - a senior academic or professional services staff;
 - any additional member(s) where required by the relevant Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body associated with the Student's course of study;
 - a Secretary appointed by the Academic Director who will keep records of the proceedings.
- 6.7 The Academic Director shall give notice of an Escalation Panel meeting relating to behaviour of each student named in a Phase 3 Academic Report which has been found valid. This notice shall consist of:
- a copy of the Phase 3 Academic Report;
 - the date, time and venue of the meeting;
 - details of where help and advice may be sought;
 - a copy of any evidence that will be considered;
 - details of a student's right to representation or support at the panel.

6.8 The Academic Director shall supply all members of the Escalation Panel and the Investigator who submitted the Phase 3 Academic Report with copies of the notice issued to the student.

6.9 If the student is unable to attend (physically or virtually) they can submit a written statement of case which will be considered at the Escalation Panel meeting.

6.10 The Escalation Panel will consider the evidence and form a conclusion based on the balance of probability.

6.11 The panel will determine

- Whether misconduct has occurred
- The level of offence
- The appropriate sanction

Decisions will be reached by majority decision where necessary, and sanctions will ensure that no student gains an unfair academic advantage as a result of misconduct.

6.12 There are three possible outcomes for Phase 3, each are as follows:

- a. the matter is resolved to the satisfaction of all parties and the case is closed;
- b. the student is found to have committed an academic offence, in which case the panel will decide whether a sanction should be applied at level 1, level 2 or level 3;

- c. the student has not been considered to be in breach and the matter will be closed.

TABLE 3

Types of Academic Misconduct Typically considered under Phase 3 (Level 3 offences) <i>*this is not an exhaustive list</i>	Types of Level 3 sanctions typically applied
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Plagiarism▪ Collusion▪ Cheating in an examination▪ Falsifying extenuating circumstances▪ Failure to provide an electronic copy when asked▪ The late return of equipment loaned by a Faculty or Department which is required by other students to complete an assessment;	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Mark for the module reduced to 0▪ Marks for the whole year reduced to 0▪ Student is suspended from their studies for a period of time▪ Student is excluded from the College permanently

6.13 Following the meeting the Escalation Panel will communicate in writing to the student and the Authorised Person a Decision Notice copied to the Director of Courses. The notice shall consist of the following:

- a. a summary of the major points made during the meeting;
- b. a concise statement of the Escalation Panel's findings;
- c. in the case of any finding that a student's academic conduct is unacceptable, the actions required in line with a Phase 1, Phase 2 or Phase 3 Academic Offence and the arrangements for its application;

- d. appropriate support available for the student and where appropriate the person who reported the breach of academic regulations;
- e. an explanation of the student's right of appeal.

6.14 Where appropriate the Escalation Panel will communicate in writing to the Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body associated with the student's course the conclusion of the process and any actions expected of the student which affect the Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body. This correspondence will be reviewed by the University's Information Disclosure team prior to being sent to ensure GDPR compliance.

7. MONITORING AND OVERSIGHT

7.1 The College will maintain a central record of all academic misconduct cases. An annual analysis will be undertaken to identify trends and inform academic quality enhancement, and a summary report will be provided to the Academic Board.

8. APPEALS AGAINST ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT OUTCOMES

8.1 Following the conclusion of any phase of the Academic Misconduct process, students will be informed in writing of the outcome and their right to appeal, where applicable. Escalation from one phase of the process to the next is not considered an outcome and is therefore not open to appeal. Students who wish to challenge an academic misconduct decision must do so under the Laine Theatre Arts Academic Appeals Policy.

8.2 Appeals will be considered by individuals not previously involved in the case, ensuring independence and procedural fairness.

8.3 Appeals must:

- Be submitted within the stated timeframe (normally 10 working days)
- Be based on permitted grounds for appeal (as defined in the Academic Appeals Policy)
- Include supporting evidence

The Academic Appeals process consists of:

- Stage 1 – Early Resolution
- Stage 2 – Formal Appeal
- Stage 3 – Review Stage
- Process for appealing/raising a complaint with to the awarding body (BA and Diploma Students)
- Process for appealing to the OIA (BA Students only).

Following completion of internal procedures, eligible students may submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), which will review whether the College has acted fairly and reasonably.

Full details of the procedure, grounds, and submission requirements are available in the Academic Appeals Policy.

9. CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

- 9.1 All information relating to academic misconduct cases will be handled in accordance with UK GDPR and Data Protection legislation and shared only where necessary for the purposes of investigation and decision-making.

APPENDIX A – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Authorised Person/Investigator

The Authorised Person/Investigator is any person who has the responsibility for the preparation, review and/or investigation of an allegation raised against a student. This role can be undertaken by academic and professional services staff, and more typically will be referred to:

- Principal and Artistic Director
- Director of Courses
- Director of Dance
- Director of Musical Theatre
- Director of Performance
- Heads of Departments

Student

Any person currently registered for a programme of study or module(s) and who has registered as a student on that programme at the College.

Suspension

Involves either total or selective restriction on attendance at or access to the College, including placement arrangements. The exact details of any suspension will be communicated in writing.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Version:	2
Approved by:	Approved by Academic Board on 23rd April 2026 by email
Review Interval:	1 Year
Last Review Date:	April 2026
Next Review Date:	March 2027