

## **031. Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures**

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## A) Academic Misconduct Policy

### 1. Overview of the Academic Misconduct Policy

IFG seeks to promote the highest level of educational standards and will ensure that students who graduate from IFG achieve their aims on the backdrop of merit. In this respect IFG will ensure that no form of inappropriate practices is tolerated. These include cheating, plagiarism, personation (impersonating someone else) and so on. These are forms of academic misconduct and are entirely unacceptable for any student of IFG.

This Academic Misconduct Policy seeks to:

- Define different categories of academic misconduct that may occur in an academic setting;
- Give guidance to students and staff to help prevent the occurrence of such misconduct;
- Set out the procedures to be adopted in suspected cases of minor and major academic misconduct

This Policy is also in place to ensure compliance with OfS regulatory conditions of registration (notably, but not exclusively, OfS Conditions B4 and B5 governing Quality and Reliable Standards and Positive Outcomes for All Students).

## 2. Scope of the Academic Misconduct Policy

The Policy described here applies to all IFG students undertaking any form of assessment, either under formal examination conditions, or as assessed coursework (including but not limited to, written coursework, presentations, practical work ); whether formative or summative, as part of their studies for credit towards an IFG academic award.

The use of the word “academic” in the title seeks to define the scope of the Academic Misconduct Policy as it relates to the delivery and assessment of the curriculum. It is intended to include vocational courses and assessed programmes. It should be noted that this Academic Misconduct Policy is not a contract document and therefore no contractual remedies could be sought on the basis of this document.

## 3. Principles of the Academic Misconduct Policy and its procedures

- Fair, transparent, and consistent handling of academic misconduct.
- Clear communication and support for students throughout the process.
- Proportional sanctions that reflect the severity of the misconduct and take account of the context of the student.

## 4. Purpose of the Academic Misconduct Policy

The Academic Misconduct Policy is aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- To ensure the academic integrity of the programmes and awards of IFG.
- To establish clear and equitable channels for addressing allegations of misconduct.
- To provide a fair opportunity for proper investigations of student’s concerns regarding the matters of academic misconduct
- To ensure that all students are fairly treated in academic misconduct investigations.
- To provide adequate flexibility for an aggrieved student to seek appropriate legal redress.

The following forms of academic misconduct are covered in the corresponding numbered sections:

- Plagiarism;
- Cheating;
- Collusion;
- Falsification;
- Personation
- Plagiarism

## 5. Appropriate Practice

In their essays, reports, papers and dissertations, students should always give credit to sources, whether quoting directly or paraphrasing. Information, ideas or quotations obtained from any primary or secondary source must be acknowledged according to the convention operated for that particular module or programme. Students who are unclear as to procedure must seek advice from academic staff, as inadequate or lack of appropriate referencing may result in disciplinary action ranging from the failure of a piece of submitted work to permanent exclusion on the grounds of fraudulence.

**Guidance Note:**

- In the context of this policy, the term examination is deemed to include all assessments and tests carried out under examination conditions.

**6. Academic misconduct in work submitted for formative assessment**

Formative assessments are designed to develop students in their academic skills and learning, and to provide feedback and guidance to support this development, rather than to contribute to a final grade.

Whilst this Policy applies equally to academic misconduct in formative and summative assessment, academic misconduct in formative assessment will normally be handled with feedback and a preventative, educational approach rather than with formal penalties, as formative assessments do not contribute to module marks or overall awards.

However, where academic misconduct is deemed to have occurred in a formative assessment, there will normally be no indicative mark and/or feedback given for that assessment, save for specific feedback addressing the instance/offence of misconduct, to ensure the student has a full understanding of the misconduct offence, encourage behaviour change and prevent future occurrences.

**NOTE:**

**Repeated offences of academic misconduct in formative assessments will normally result in a formal warning from IFG and will be taken into account in the event of any finding of academic misconduct in a summative assessment.**

**7. Types of academic misconduct****Plagiarism**

Plagiarism includes:

- Copying the words, ideas and/or work of another person or Artificial Intelligence and presenting them as your own;
- Copying another student's work;
- The close unacknowledged paraphrasing or summarising of material from other sources;
- Presenting ideas that were developed in collaboration with other students, with no recognition of the contribution made by other members of the group.
- Quoting without appropriate referencing from a magazine, a newspaper, a journal, a book, a website or web-based essay bank;
- Self-plagiarism i.e. reusing work that you have previously submitted for credit, either in part or in full, without proper citation or acknowledgment.
- Violating copyrights and licensing agreements.

**Guidance note - self-plagiarism:**

- Self-plagiarism, whereby a student attempts to submit in a particular module a piece of work which has already been assessed for another module either at IFG or any other institution, is wholly

unacceptable. Work may be based on research previously undertaken by the student, but this should be acknowledged in the new piece of work to show the development in the student's thinking. Lecturers may ask to see the original work in order to compare the two. The reason it is not acceptable is that it is not permitted within the academic regulations for the same work to be awarded academic credit more than once.

**Guidance note - violating copyrights and licensing agreements:**

- The use of IFG's equipment to make illegal copies of copyrighted or licensed materials is considered as serious as other forms of academic dishonesty. In addition to the possible disciplinary action taken by IFG, the student may be faced with legal action.

**Cheating**

Cheating is acting unfairly, or dishonestly, to gain an advantage. Cheating by students occurs mainly under examination conditions and is covered by the relevant examination body's own procedures. Cheating includes:

- Communicating with, or copying from any other candidate during an examination except insofar as the examination regulations may specifically permit this, e.g. group assessments;
- Communicating during an examination with any person other than a properly authorised invigilator or another authorised member of staff;
- Introducing any written or printed materials into the examination room unless expressly permitted by us or the partner awarding institution's course regulations;
- Introducing any electronically stored information into the examination room, unless expressly permitted by us or the partner awarding institution's course regulations;
- Gaining access to unauthorised material relating to an examination before or during the examination;
- Obtaining a copy of an "unseen" written examination paper in advance of the date and time of its authorised release;
- Obtaining premature access to test or examination papers;
- In any other ways, the provision, or assistance in the provision, of false evidence or knowledge or understanding in examinations.

**Contract cheating**

Contract cheating constitutes the unauthorised use of a third party, whether that be an individual or a company such as those that offer custom writing services. Contract cheating includes:

- The use of custom writing services, whether the service is provided by a single individual or whether a company is engaged by the student;
- Materials created by third parties such as essay mills, website and/or software / paraphrasing / image tools that are submitted and presented as the student's own work;
- The use of, running of, or participation in, auction sites and essay mills to attempt to buy or use assessments or answers to questions set;
- To provide one's own work to others with the intention of personal gain.

### **Misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is continuously evolving, and IFG recognises that there will be instances where student engagement with AI in the production of academic work will support students' future development, provided it is carried out transparently and responsibly by students. AI functionality may be embedded within commonly used software and platforms, as well as through external tools.

However, students should exercise caution when using AI to produce academic work for their IFG course to avoid breaching this Policy. Students are expected to comply with the assessment instructions and published marking criteria for each assignment and, where the permitted use of AI is unclear, must seek clarification from their Module or Programme Leader in advance of submission.

Any use of AI must result in work that demonstrates the student's own knowledge, skills, and understanding, and align with IFG's principles of academic integrity.

Examples of misuse of AI include:

- The use of AI to generate text, materials, data, or other outputs that are presented as the student's own work;
- The use of generative AI tools to produce content which is copied or closely adapted as part of an assessment submission;
- The use of AI in ways that do not comply with assignment instructions or assessment requirements;

### **Collusion**

Collusion includes situations where a student:

- Submits as entirely his/her own, with intention to gain unfair advantage, work done in collaboration with another person;
- Collaborates with another candidate in the completion of work which is intended to be submitted as that other candidate's own unaided work;
- Knowingly permits another candidate to copy all or part of their own work, and to submit it as that other candidate's own unaided work.
- Aiding another student to plagiarise.

### **Guidance Note - sharing practice but avoiding collusion:**

- IFG encourages all students to share ideas and exchange reference material prior to each student writing up their own personal presentation of an assessed piece of work. However, students should take care not to 'co-produce' work where each student is required in the rubric of the assessment to complete and submit work on an individual basis.

## **Falsification**

Falsification is the presentation or submission of false information within an attempt to gain academic credit.

Examples of falsification include:

- Fabricating research results, or questionnaire responses.
- The false presentation of data in laboratory reports, projects, etc.
- Submitted work that is based on experimental work falsely purported to have been carried out by the candidate or obtained by unfair means.

## **Personation**

“Personation” is the legal term for what is usually referred to as “impersonation”. Personation is the assumption by one person of the identity of another person with intent to deceive, or to gain unfair advantage.

Personation may exist where:

- One person assumes the identity of a student, with the intention of gaining unfair advantage for that student;
- The student is knowingly and willingly impersonated by another with the intention of gaining unfair advantage.

## **Guidance on Academic Misconduct – Preventative Action by Staff**

To prevent the occurrence of academic misconduct, IFG staff should:

- Inform students clearly of the Academic Misconduct Policy on academic integrity and honesty and of any guidelines on academic misconduct, recording the date(s) and occasion(s) for future reference;
- Include statements on academic misconduct in the Student Handbook;
- Make students aware of the penalties for academic misconduct at the earliest stage of the course, e.g. a zero mark for the assessment, expulsion, etc.;
- Provide students with guidance on the format of formal acknowledgement of source material;
- Be very clear in assessment rubrics about the use of AI, including whether it is permitted and if so in what way, and what is not permitted;
- Inform students in writing if possible, of the extent to which they can collaborate in coursework;
- Refer to the notes in the guidelines from the awarding body as to what is, and is not, allowed when collaborating;
- Be aware that most students are very computer literate and can scan text and surf the web for model essays, etc., with ease;
- Devise assessment design and procedures for assessing work in such a way that plagiarism, cheating and collusion are more detectable.

## **8. Record Keeping and Confidentiality**

- A formal record of the case is kept on the student's file for the duration of their studies, unless no misconduct is found.
- All records are confidential and only accessible by authorised personnel.

## 9. Review and Continuous Improvement

- This Policy and its procedures are reviewed at least once every two years by the Academic Committee to ensure ongoing compliance with the OIA's Good Practice Framework, OfS Conditions of Registration and regulatory requirements, and other sector-aligned good practice.

## B) Academic Misconduct Procedures

### 10. Operational principles

All instances of suspected academic misconduct should be fully investigated utilising the Academic Misconduct procedures set out in this policy.

#### **Burden of proof**

All judgements reached and decisions made regarding suspected academic misconduct by a student will be made on the balance of probabilities i.e. what is more likely than not to have occurred.

#### ***Presumption of innocence***

In all cases, all students will be considered innocent unless and until an allegation of academic misconduct is found by IFG to be proven on the balance of probabilities. Where, following an initial review it is determined that there may be a case to answer, any allegations against a student should be provided in writing to the student before any action is taken, so that:

- the student is appropriately notified of the case to be answered;
- the student is given the opportunity to understand the allegations;
- the student has the right of reply to the allegations, in accordance with the principles of natural justice.

### 11. Reporting and initial review

Suspected misconduct can be reported by staff, or students. The determination of whether an instance of academic misconduct has or may have occurred is a matter for the Module Leads and IFG's Director of Studies.

A written report with evidence (e.g., Turnitin similarity report, suspicious exam behavior) must be submitted to the Director of Studies in the first instance. Where the Module Lead is not available, the submission should be sent to the Director of Studies who will nominate an academic member of staff to undertake the initial review.

#### **Initial Review**

The Module Lead will conduct an initial review to determine if there is sufficient evidence to pursue an academic misconduct investigation. In doing so, the Module Lead will reach one of the following judgements:

- a) That there is no case to answer, in which case the assessment in question will be released to be marked in the normal way
- b) That there may be evidence of possible minor academic misconduct, in which case the student will be notified of the alleged academic misconduct and invited to meet and respond before a judgement is reached;
- c) That there may be evidence of possible major academic misconduct, in which case the student will be referred to the IFG Academic Misconduct Panel.

In reaching their Initial review judgement, the Module Lead will take account of whether the allegation in question would constitute a first possible offence, or a possible subsequent offence. They will also take account of whether the alleged misconduct constitutes a multiple offence, and if so whether this is deemed to be concurrent or consecutive. Please see below for further information.

### **Multiple, concurrent, consecutive and subsequent offences**

For the purposes of this Policy and its procedures:

- **Established case of academic misconduct** - where an allegation of academic misconduct has been upheld by either the Module Lead (if minor) or the Academic Misconduct Panel (whether major/minor).
- **Multiple offence** - more than one allegation of academic misconduct
- **Concurrent offence** - two or more allegations of academic misconduct arising at the same time (eg where a student has produced 3 pieces of coursework around the same period which all have suspected academic misconduct, these would be considered concurrent)
- **Consecutive offence** - an allegation of academic misconduct that arises following an established case of either major or minor academic misconduct on the part of the student

Where more than one allegation of academic misconduct comes to light at the same time, the Module Lead will determine whether these are concurrent (occurring at the same time) or consecutive (occurring subsequent to an established case of academic misconduct).

Where the Module Lead determines that there may be a case of minor academic misconduct to answer and the student has two or more records of previous minor academic misconduct, or one or more record of major misconduct, the Module Lead will determine whether or not the matter warrants referral of the student to the Academic Misconduct Panel in light of an alleged possible repeat offence.

In reaching this determination, the Module Lead will take account of learning opportunities afforded to the student and previous guidance and support given and/or offered.

In the event the Module Lead determines that the student should be referred to the Academic Misconduct Panel, the alleged misconduct will be considered as possible major academic misconduct in light of the student's established record of academic misconduct.

Where it comes to light that the student may have committed several concurrent instances of academic misconduct, the Module Lead will consider whether the student has any previous record of academic misconduct and whether they have engaged or had a reasonable opportunity to engage with any support/guidance in this regard.

The module Lead may seek more evidence and information from the referring staff member and/or other relevant staff (eg the Module Team, exam invigilators) before coming to an initial review judgement.

## 12. Minor instances of academic misconduct

Established minor instances of academic misconduct will receive a proportionate outcome which will usually be centred on educational development and guidance.

Where the Module Lead is satisfied that there may be a case to answer of minor academic misconduct by the student, the following process will be followed:

- The student will be notified in writing of the concerns regarding their work and the specific allegation(s) of minor academic misconduct, together with a copy of the work in question and all relevant supporting evidence, and invited to attend a meeting to discuss their work
- The student will be given normally at least 48 hours' notice of the meeting
- The student will be advised that they can attend the meeting accompanied by a member of IFG staff for support, should they wish
- The Module Lead and another academic member of staff, normally from the subject area or a cognate subject area, will hold the meeting with the student during which they will ask any questions they have about the work in question
- Following the meeting with the student, the Module Lead, in consultation as necessary with the other academic member of staff, will determine one or more of the following outcomes as they deem appropriate:
  - a) That there is no evidence of academic misconduct, and the work should be released to be assessed in the normal way;
  - b) That minor academic misconduct has occurred as a result of misunderstanding and/or poor academic practice, warranting specific guidance/intervention and, as appropriate, an informal verbal warning or a formal written warning;
  - c) That minor academic misconduct has occurred and that there is insufficient mitigation, warranting a formal written warning. In this instance, the work will be marked with the exclusion of the affected sections;
  - d) That academic misconduct has occurred in a formative assessment which, if summative, would be considered major academic misconduct, but will be dealt with in accordance with Section 6 of this Policy ('Academic misconduct in formative assessment');
  - e) That there is evidence of possible major academic misconduct, warranting referral of the case to the Academic Misconduct Panel;
  - f) That there is evidence of minor academic misconduct but that there are circumstances warranting a referral of the case to the Academic Misconduct Panel. Such circumstances include, but are not limited to:
    - i) the allegation, if proven, would constitute a second or subsequent offence;

- ii) the student has persistently failed to engage with previous guidance and support arising from the academic misconduct process
  - iii) the allegation, if proven, would set a new precedent for IFG in its academic misconduct process
- g) That there is evidence of minor or major academic misconduct but that there are circumstances warranting a referral of the case into an alternative IFG procedure (such as the Non-Academic Misconduct Procedure or the Support to Study Procedures). In such circumstances, the academic misconduct case will normally be placed in abeyance to let those other procedures take precedence, and IFG will take into account the outcome of those other processes in determining whether to pursue the alleged academic misconduct and how to proceed.

Examples of minor cases could include a student:

- Receiving undue help in good faith because instructions have been misunderstood;
- Copying a couple of sentences or using someone else's diagrams;
- Copying small amounts of text from books without direct acknowledgement, but which does not make a significant contribution to the overall work;
- Downloading from the internet without acknowledgement, using another's disk or copying work from another's disk;
- Not referencing work properly;
- Failing to acknowledge the source of a small section of an assignment;
- Infringing the Academic Misconduct Policy when the assessed work does not contribute to final grade.

### **Disagreement with a finding of minor academic misconduct**

Where a student disagrees with a finding of minor academic misconduct by the Module Lead, including with any penalty/sanction imposed, they can request their case be considered by the Academic Misconduct Panel.

### **13. Major cases of academic misconduct**

Following the Initial Review, allegations of serious academic misconduct (referred to in this Policy and its procedures as 'major academic misconduct') should be referred to the Academic Misconduct Panel to be dealt with through the formal academic misconduct procedure set out below.

### **Academic Misconduct Panel**

A summary of the Academic Misconduct Panel is set out below, followed by the relevant procedure:

- a. **Membership of the Academic Misconduct Panel**
- b. **Notification of Allegations**
- c. **Academic Misconduct Panel: Hearing Process**
- d. **Academic Misconduct Panel Outcomes**
  - Findings
  - Decisions (Penalties and Sanctions)
- e. **Right of Appeal**

**a. Membership of the Academic Misconduct Panel**

- i. The Director of Studies (Chair)
- ii. An academic staff member not involved in the case
- iii. An optional academic staff member not involved in the case

The quoracy of the Panel will be 2, including the Director of Studies. Where the Director of Studies is unavailable to Chair the Panel, the Academic Director will appoint another appropriate member of staff with an academic remit to act as Chair, and an additional academic member of staff not involved in the case will be asked to join the Panel. A notetaker will be in attendance at the Panel, to support the Panel with its recordkeeping of the Hearing.

**b. Notification of allegations:**

- i. The student is notified in writing of the allegations, together with:
  - A clear summary of the case being brought against them;
  - A copy of the work in question;
  - Any relevant supporting evidence/documentation;
  - A copy of this Policy and its procedures, and any relevant student guidance;
  - An invitation to attend the Academic Misconduct Panel Hearing, with notification that they are permitted to attend accompanied by a friend or family member.
- ii. The student is given at least 5 working days to provide any written representations and confirm that they will/will not be attending the Hearing. Where the student fails to provide a response, the case will proceed to the Academic Misconduct Panel on the basis of the available evidence and documentation.

**c. Academic Misconduct Panel: Hearing Process**

- i. Hearings may be held in person or online.
- ii. The case along with these procedures is reviewed by the Academic Misconduct Panel in a private pre-meeting, to ensure all Panel members are familiar with the documentation and process.
- iii. The Module Lead will be invited to present the case to the Panel, drawing attention to any particular relevant points, information and evidence.
- iv. If attending, the student will be invited to respond to the allegations and provide any mitigation.
- v. The Panel will ask questions. The student and the Module Lead may ask questions of each other provided that these are addressed to the Chair, who will determine if the question should be allowed or dismissed.
- vi. The Module Lead will be given a final opportunity to make closing remarks. The student will then be afforded the opportunity to make any final representations to the Panel before the Hearing draws to a close.
- vii. The Panel will then proceed to deliberate the case in private in order to reach its decision (*please see 11 d) Academic Misconduct Panel Outcomes*).

- viii. The findings and decision of the Panel will be communicated in writing to the student, normally within 5 working days of the date of the Panel Hearing, notifying them of their right of appeal. This notification will be copied to the Academic Director and, where applicable:
- the awarding/examining body, in line with their procedures;
  - external examiners/verifiers in line with awarding/examining body's procedures.

**Procedural notes:**

- Academic Misconduct Panel Hearings may be conducted in person or online.
- Hearings and meetings of the Panel will be held in private; attendance by members of the public or any other unauthorised party will not be permitted.
- The decision to allow any witnesses to attend is at the discretion of the Chair of the Panel.
- The Module Lead will normally attend the Panel Hearing to present the case of alleged academic misconduct. Where they are unavailable, the Panel may request an alternative member of the Course Team attends to answer any course-related queries, or may proceed to consider the case on the basis of the documentary evidence and any written and/or in-person representations made by the student.

**d. Academic Misconduct Panel Outcomes**

All findings reached and decisions made by the Academic Misconduct Panel will be made on the balance of probabilities. In reaching its findings and decisions, the Panel will take account of any mitigating or aggravating factors. Where it is satisfied it is appropriate, the Academic Misconduct Panel will consider appropriate penalties as well as sanctions which are intended as preventative measures.

Where the Panel determines that there is no case to answer, no record of the allegation(s) will be kept save for a copy of the Panel Outcome Letter exonerating the student.

***Aggravating and Mitigating Factors***

- Aggravating factors:
  - Repeated offences.
  - Pre-meditated misconduct.
  - Attempts to conceal the misconduct.
  - Involvement of third parties (e.g., contract cheating services).
- Mitigating factors:
  - First offence with no prior warning.
  - Demonstrated lack of understanding of referencing or citation rules.
  - Admission of misconduct and cooperation with the investigation.
  - Exceptional personal circumstances (e.g., illness).

### **Findings**

Following an Academic Misconduct Panel Hearing, the Panel will reach one of the following findings on the balance of probabilities:

- i. That there is no case to answer, and the work should be released to be marked in the normal way;
- ii. That there is a case of minor academic misconduct to answer, and an appropriate penalty and/or any remedial action should be imposed;
- iii. That there is a case of major academic misconduct, warranting an appropriate penalty and/or sanction.

### **Decisions (penalties and sanctions)**

In the event of a finding of major or minor academic misconduct, the Panel may order one or more of the following outcomes:

- **Penalties for minor academic misconduct:**

- i. Formal warning - A written caution regarding future conduct.
- ii. Assessment in question capped at the pass mark.
- iii. Reduced grade – A small reduction in the overall mark (e.g. 5-10% penalty).
- iv. Zero marks for the affected section – the section of work affected by academic misconduct receives no credit.
- v. Assignment resubmission – With or without a capped grade (i.e. capped at the pass mark).
- vi. A mark of zero for the assessment in question, with the right to resit retained.
- vii. Mandatory academic integrity training – Requirement to attend workshops, tutorials or complete online modules.

Where the Panel has reached a finding that major academic misconduct has occurred, in determining an appropriate penalty the Panel will take into consideration evidence of intentional deception, repeated violations, or severe breaches of academic integrity.

In determining a penalty/ies for major academic misconduct, the Panel may order any of the penalties for minor misconduct be imposed where they deem these to be appropriate, either in lieu of, or alongside any of the penalties set out below.

- **Penalties for major academic misconduct:**

- viii. Module capped at the pass mark.
- ix. Mark of zero for the assessment with or without the right to resit retained.
- x. Mark of zero for the module, with or without the right to resit retained.
- xi. Mark of zero for the Level of study.
- xii. Deduction of 10 percentage points of the overall degree award classification (*eg where the student's final grade is calculated as a 2:1, the penalty would be applied at the point of degree classification determination reducing this to a 2:2*).
- xiii. Suspension from the Course for a specified period, with any required remedial actions (eg academic integrity training) required to be satisfied before the suspension can be lifted.

- xiv. Termination of studies with the right to retain any credits thus far gained without any academic misconduct.
- xv. Expulsion from IFG, with all academic attainment on the Course cancelled (*in this instance, the student will not normally be permitted to reapply to a Course of Study with IFG*).
- xvi. Revocation of award (*in the event of the discovery of academic misconduct affecting the award after the student has graduated*).

#### **e. Right of Appeal**

The Academic Misconduct Panel's findings and decisions will be communicated to the student in writing, normally within 5 working days of the date of the Panel Hearing. In this written outcome, the student will be notified of their right to appeal the Panel outcome.

An appeal may be made under one or more of the following grounds:

1. Procedural Irregularity: A failure in due process.
2. New Evidence: Previously unavailable, material evidence.
3. Disproportionate Penalty: If the sanction is deemed excessive.

An appeal should be submitted in writing to the Academic Director within 10 working days of the date of the Academic Misconduct Panel Outcome Letter, and made under one or more of the grounds of appeal.

The Academic Director will determine whether any of the grounds of appeal have been met.

#### ***Where one or more appeal grounds are met***

In the event that one or more appeal grounds are met, the Director will:

- a. order the Panel to review its decision in the face of new evidence that was not previously considered. In the event the Panel reviews its decision following an appeal, the decisions and findings of the Panel following that review will be final;
- or
- b. review the decision of the Academic Misconduct Panel, in consultation with the Chair of the Panel, in order to determine whether a new decision should be reached, the original decision amended, or the original decision overturned. Following this review, the decision reached by the Academic Director and the Chair of the Panel will be final.

#### ***Where no appeal grounds are met***

In the event that the Academic Director determines no grounds have been met, the original findings and decisions of the Panel will stand, and the student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter (see 11 f) Completion of Procedures, below).

#### **f. Completion of Procedures**

Following the conclusion of the IFG academic misconduct procedures, the student will be issued with a Completion of Procedures (CoP) Letter if the procedures have been exhausted and there is no further

avenue of appeal. This letter confirms that IFG's internal processes are complete and that no further right of appeal is available within the institution.

The CoP Letter will outline the details of the case, including the nature of the misconduct, the final decision, and the sanctions imposed. It will also explain the reasons for the decision and reference the relevant policies and procedures applied during the investigation.

The CoP Letter will inform the student of their right to escalate the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) if they remain dissatisfied. It will include the OIA's contact details and specify that the student has 12 months from the date of the letter to submit a complaint.

IFG will issue the CoP Letter within 28 calendar days of the final decision, in line with the OIA's Good Practice Framework.

Where a student wishes to challenge the decision of the Academic Misconduct Panel but does not believe they meet any of the applicable appeal grounds and thus has not exhausted the internal procedures but wishes to progress their case to the OIA, they can write to the Academic Director to request a CoP Letter. In this instance, the CoP Letter will set out the stage of procedures the student reached and will clarify that the full procedure has not been exhausted.

### **Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs)**

As part of IFG's commitment to embedding inclusive practices and removing barriers for all students, not only those from underrepresented groups, IFG carries out Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) where appropriate including when making changes to this policy.

EIAs enable the College to identify potential or existing barriers and to proactively consider and implement reasonable adjustments. This supports the College in meeting its anticipatory duty under the Equality Act 2010.

EIAs may be conducted in relation to both student and staff matters for key policies and student experience matters.

See Appendix A within IFG's Equality Impact Assessment Template and Guidance.