INSTITUTE OF
HIGHER EDUCATION

Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure

Academic Board Approved Policy

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1. Preamble

a. Purpose

The purpose of the Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure (the 'Policy') is to ensure that all students and academic staff uphold academic integrity standards, safeguard the integrity of courses and subjects, and promote an honest and ethical culture across Richmond Institute of Higher Education (the 'Institute' or 'RIHE').

b. Background

The Institute upholds academic integrity through a preventative, educative and risk-based approach embedded in assessment design, student guidance, staff capability development and institutional quality assurance processes. This Policy is consistent with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Plagiarism Policy and the HEC guidelines on the use of text-matching software, and with the laws of Pakistan.

The Institute manages the risks associated with emerging technologies, including generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), through clearly defined assessment conditions. Each assessment task specifies whether it is conducted under open or secure conditions and states the permitted or prohibited use of GenAI tools.

Failure to maintain academic integrity will result in corrective and disciplinary action in accordance with this Policy.

c. Definitions

For definitions, please refer to the 'Glossary of Terms'.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all students and academic staff of RIHE.

3. Policy Statement

RIHE students and staff are expected to conduct their academic work ethically and in accordance with the principles of academic integrity, including appropriate acknowledgement of the work of others.

4. Principles

a. RIHE considers the development of students' academic integrity as central to educational success and to the attainment of the Institute's Graduate Attributes. In undertaking academic activities, the Institute expects students and academic staff to:

   i. take responsibility for their own work;

   ii. acknowledge and reference the work of others that they have used;

   iii. follow the instructions in the Subject Outline when submitting assessment tasks;

   iv. provide accurate and truthful information, for example medical certificates for special consideration or the results of research projects;

   v. keep information confidential as appropriate; and

   vi. encourage others to act with academic integrity.

b. The Institute provides consistent guidance and structured opportunities for students to understand and demonstrate integrity in their coursework and assessment, including the appropriate use of sources, collaboration and GenAI in accordance with assessment requirements.

c. The Governing Council ensures that assessment tasks are designed to uphold academic integrity, validly demonstrate student learning and minimise opportunities for academic misconduct, including GenAI-related risks. Strategies include, but are not limited to:

   i. not recycling examination questions or papers;

   ii. regularly updating assessment items;

   iii. requiring an early low-risk assessment task from students;

   iv. requiring a group report detailing each individual's contribution;

   v. clearly stating in assessment task descriptions the conditions under which GenAI tools may be used, including expectations for acknowledgement and responsible use;

   vi. using open and secure assessments, as appropriate, to support authentic learning and verification of student achievement; and

   vii. using assessment methods that allow verification of student work, including oral, in-class or supervised components where required.

d. Text-matching software (such as Turnitin, as made available through the HEC) is used as an educational tool for students, to promote appropriate acknowledgement practice, and as a detection tool for staff to identify potential cases of academic misconduct. A similarity report is an indicator only and is always reviewed by a person before any finding is made.

e. The Institute adopts a two-lane assessment model that distinguishes open assessments from secure assessments. Open assessments may permit the use of GenAI tools under clearly defined conditions, while secure assessments verify individual student achievement under controlled conditions. The conditions for each assessment, including whether GenAI use is permitted, are specified in the assessment task description.

f. Where the academic integrity of a student's work is in question, the Institute follows a consistent and fair process of investigation and determination as described in this Policy.

5. Responsibilities

a. **Governing Council:** approves this Policy, receives regular reports of academic misconduct incidents, monitors the effectiveness of this Policy and Procedure, and oversees the development of academic resources, training and support for students and academic staff.

b. **Director Higher Education:** monitors all academic integrity matters to identify areas of risk and improve teaching and learning practices, approves appropriate courses of action, and, in conjunction with the Governing Council, considers recommendations for student expulsion.

c. **Program Coordinator:** acts as the Academic Conduct Officer (ACO) for the program, and is responsible for identifying and reviewing possible academic misconduct, deciding outcomes in accordance with this Policy, and educating students about scholarly practice and academic integrity, including the appropriate use of sources and GenAI.

d. **Administration Manager:** maintains the Academic Misconduct Register (AMR) and the records of notifications, and coordinates the referral of students to learning support.

e. **Academic Staff:** maintain their own academic integrity, conduct teaching and assessment in accordance with this Policy and Procedure, and clearly communicate assessment requirements and conditions relating to academic integrity and GenAI.

f. **Students:** adopt an integrity-based approach to academic work and assessment, and comply with assessment requirements, including conditions relating to academic integrity and the use of GenAI.

6. Academic Misconduct

RIHE takes all cases of academic misconduct seriously. Students and staff who breach academic integrity requirements are subject to corrective and disciplinary action in accordance with this Policy. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following:

a. **Plagiarism:** presenting the work of others without acknowledging the original source. It may occur when:

   i. other students' work is copied in full or in part;

   ii. phrases and passages are copied without quotation marks and/or without a reference to the author or web page; or

   iii. lecture notes are reproduced without due acknowledgement.

b. **Recycling:** submitting or resubmitting one's own previously assessed work without appropriate acknowledgement.

c. **Fabricating information:** making up information for research-focused assessment tasks, such as experimental or interview data, or inventing sources of data, evidence or ideas by citing publications that are incorrect or do not exist. It includes the unauthorised use of artificial intelligence tools to generate content, data, analysis or references and presenting them as the student's own work.

d. **Collusion:** more than one student contributing to a piece of work that is submitted as the work of an individual. Individual assessment work must be entirely the work of the student submitting it. Working together on work that will be submitted for individual assessment is not permitted and can result in an allegation of academic misconduct against all students involved.

e. **Use of unfair means in examinations:** not complying with the rules and conditions of the examination, including:

   i. taking prohibited materials into an examination, such as notes, textbooks or unapproved devices;

   ii. communicating with or copying from another student during an examination;

   iii. using electronic devices, such as a mobile phone or smartwatch, to access examination-related information while the examination is in progress;

   iv. discussing an examination with another person outside the examination venue while it is in progress; or

   v. removing confidential examination papers from the examination venue.

f. **Contract cheating:** engaging a third party to complete assessments. The academic consequences are severe, and contract cheating may also amount to fraud or another offence under the laws of

Pakistan. Some contract cheating providers blackmail students who buy completed assessments, and this may continue long after graduation. Contract cheating includes:

i. buying a completed assessment from a tutoring or ghost-writing service;

ii. asking a relative, friend or other person to write part or all of an assessment;

iii. paying a private tutor or tutoring service to complete or assist with an assessment;

iv. submitting 'model' assessment answers provided by a private tutor or tutoring service;

v. having someone sit an examination in one's place, or sitting an examination for someone else; or

vi. buying, selling or swapping completed assessments or answers through sharing websites or social media platforms.

g. **Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools:** RIHE upholds academic integrity while addressing the opportunities and challenges of AI in higher education. AI tools may be used to support learning and skill development where explicitly permitted, and students may use generative AI tools to enhance their understanding of subject content and to engage with the ethical and responsible use of such technologies. The assessment task description for each subject states whether AI tools may be used in the assessment. Unless explicitly permitted, the use of AI tools in assessments that require students to demonstrate their own original work is not allowed. Using AI tools in a way that does not comply with the assessment task requirements, including generating content in place of the student's own work where this is not permitted, constitutes academic misconduct.

Academic misconduct also includes, but is not limited to:

a. dishonest behaviour;

b. any act that impairs the learning or study of others;

c. any act that conflicts with study or assessment instructions; and

d. reusing one's own work (self-plagiarism).

The Institute reserves the right to require a student suspected of academic misconduct to undertake a viva voce (oral) defence of their submission.

7. Non-academic Misconduct

Non-academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

a. submitting fraudulent documents to gain admission;

b. behaving inappropriately in an activity under the administration or supervision of RIHE;

c. placing others or themselves at potential risk in relation to health and safety;

d. altering or defacing any document or record belonging to RIHE;

e. misusing, altering, stealing, destroying or damaging any property, including computers, records and communication facilities;

f. wilfully disobeying or disregarding any order, direction, rule, penalty or condition made by RIHE;

g. interfering with the freedom of others to pursue their studies or of staff to carry out their work at RIHE;

h. harassing or intimidating another person because of ethnicity, sex, gender, marital status, disability, age, religious belief or political conviction, or for any other reason; and

i. possessing, using or supplying prohibited substances on RIHE premises.

For further information on non-academic misconduct, see the Student Code of Conduct.

8. Levels of Academic Misconduct and Penalties

There are three levels of academic misconduct: Minor, Intermediate and Major Academic Misconduct. If the Institute finds a student responsible for any level of academic misconduct, the student's details and the outcome are recorded in the Academic Misconduct Register (AMR).

a. **Minor Academic Misconduct** normally occurs in the first year of study, with no prior record of misconduct against the student, and where the Academic Staff member considers the misconduct to be the result of inadequate understanding of academic integrity requirements (such as poor writing or referencing skills where some acknowledgement of the source is made). In such cases, remedial rather than punitive consequences are considered appropriate.

b. **Intermediate Academic Misconduct** is where the student's conduct is considered dishonest and unfair in relation to their academic work, and/or where the student has previously been warned of the misconduct and is therefore aware of the requirements for academic integrity. In such cases, the following may apply:

    i. a formal academic misconduct warning;

    ii. resubmission of the assessment with a reduced maximum mark; or

    iii. a reduced mark for the assessment.

c. **Major Academic Misconduct** may occur in all academic misconduct situations not deemed minor or intermediate. A student may be alleged to have committed major academic misconduct where they have engaged in activities that may include:

    i. bringing in or referring to unauthorised material in an examination room;

    ii. communicating with other students under examination conditions;

    iii. reading the work of other students under examination conditions;

    iv. engaging in or agreeing to any form of dishonest act; and/or

    v. submitting assessable material with a similarity index above 19% (excluding the bibliography and properly quoted text), where review by the Academic Conduct Officer finds that the material is not the student's own work, in line with the HEC Plagiarism Policy.

d. **Outcomes:** depending on the severity of the academic misconduct and any prior record, a student may:

    i. be awarded a reduced or zero grade for the assessment task in that subject;

    ii. receive a 'Fail' grade in the subject; or

    iii. be suspended from the Institute.

For a detailed guide to the levels of academic misconduct, see Appendix I: Guide to Levels of Academic Misconduct. For additional information on outcomes, see Appendix II: Levels of Academic Misconduct and Associated Penalties.

9. Procedure

Any allegation of academic misconduct must be based on material evidence. If an Academic Staff member identifies a case of suspected academic misconduct by a student, the following procedure applies:

a. The Academic Staff member reports their concerns by completing the Academic Misconduct Report Form and submitting it, with supporting evidence including the relevant assessment task description, in writing to the student and the Academic Conduct Officer (Program Coordinator) within two (2) working days of the assessment submission;

b. The Academic Conduct Officer reviews the report and the Administration Manager enters the allegation in the Academic Misconduct Register (AMR);

c. While the matter is under review, the Academic Staff member must not mark the assessment;

d. The Academic Conduct Officer sends a first email notification to the student, copied to the Academic Staff member and the Director Higher Education or nominee, giving the student an opportunity to respond within five (5) working days;

e. If the student does not respond within five (5) working days, the Academic Conduct Officer issues a second email notification with a decision made in accordance with this Policy;

f. In the event of confirmed misconduct, the Academic Conduct Officer applies the penalty in accordance with the RIHE Guide to Levels of Academic Misconduct (Appendix I);

g. All decisions are recorded in the AMR against the student's ID, except where the Academic Conduct Officer is satisfied that the allegation is unproven;

h. Penalties are communicated to the student in writing, and the student is informed that the misconduct has been recorded in the AMR;

i. Students are informed of their right to appeal a decision on academic misconduct within five (5) working days of notification, using the process in the Student Grievance Management Policy and Procedure;

j. Students recorded in the AMR are referred to appropriate learning support services to develop good academic practice and academic integrity; and

k. A copy of the email notifications, with the dates on which they were sent, is kept in the student's record for confirmed misconduct.

10. Academic Misconduct Offences and Penalties

a. First Offence

RIHE acknowledges that a first offence may result from a poor understanding of academic practice. In such circumstances, the Academic Conduct Officer records the incident in the AMR and chooses an appropriate outcome to educate the student on correct academic practice. This may include one or more of the following:

a. a warning to the student or a penalty;

b. requiring the student to do (or redo) the Academic Integrity Module;

c. requiring the student to attend learning support classes as available; and

d. requiring the student to resubmit the assessment.

b. Second Offence

a. If a student has a pre-existing record of academic misconduct or a warning in the AMR, marks are deducted according to the severity of the misconduct (for example, as identified through text-matching software).

b. The student is informed that they risk an outcome of unsatisfactory academic progress, and may be required to attend the mandatory referral described in section 9. The matter is recorded in the AMR.

c. Third Offence

If a student has two (2) prior records of academic misconduct or warnings in the AMR, the outcome may be a grade of zero for the assessment item, zero for the subject, exclusion for a specified period, or termination of study.

Note: if the period of exclusion or suspension is longer than one semester, the student must apply for re-admission for the following semester in order to be considered for re-enrolment. The outcome is determined by the Director Higher Education.

11. Staff Misconduct

Misconduct by staff includes, but is not limited to:

a. falsifying qualifications and experience to obtain a position or promotion at RIHE;

b. plagiarising or falsifying data in teaching and learning or in research and publication;

c. accepting bribes from students for admission or grades; and

d. falsifying student results.

RIHE staff who engage in misconduct are subject to disciplinary action in accordance with the Institute's Human Resource Management Policy, with outcomes determined by the severity of the matter.

12. Appeals

Students and staff may appeal a decision made under this Policy. Appeals are managed in accordance with the Student Grievance Management Policy and Procedure and the Human Resource Management Policy.

Appendix I: Guide to Levels of Academic Misconduct

Use this guide to determine the level of academic misconduct for an allegation.

	Minor Academic Misconduct	Intermediate Academic Misconduct	Major Academic Misconduct
Typical conduct	Isolated instances of: i. direct copying (a few sentences, one paragraph, or one minor graphic or other form of output); and ii. inadequate referencing or attribution, numerous minor referencing errors or inappropriate paraphrasing.	Frequent instances of: i. failure to reference and/or cite adequately; ii. copying short segments of another student's assessment work; iii. copying fragments of material from websites, books or other publications (two or three paragraphs, a segment of the work, or a small component of another form of output); iv. recycling parts of previous assessments where this contravenes the declaration on the Cover Sheet or the instructions of Academic Staff; and v. falsely indicating contribution to group work.	i. Extensive plagiarism (large blocks of text copied, significant appropriation of ideas or artistic work, or multiple pages or sections of text, graphics or other output copied); ii. use of unfair means in an examination; iii. fabricating references or citations; iv. submitting purchased assessments; v. stealing the work of others; vi. collusion; and vii. use of AI tools in a manner that does not comply with assessment task requirements, including generating content in place of the student's own work where this is not permitted.
Context	i. Evidence suggests the misconduct is due to lack of skill, knowledge or understanding. ii. There may be no explicit advice in the assessment task description about what to avoid. iii. The student may be in the first semester of the first year.	i. Evidence suggests the misconduct is due to carelessness rather than lack of knowledge. ii. Advice in the assessment task description about conventions may be inadequate or obscure. Students may have discussed a topic or shared results or information without adequate reworking or citation of each other's contributions; this appears to be a misunderstanding of the limits of collaborative work rather than collusion. iii. The student may be in the second or a later year.	i. There is no evidence that the misconduct is due to lack of knowledge or mere carelessness. ii. Advice in the Subject Outline may not be full and clear. iii. The student may be in the second or a later year.

Appendix II: Levels of Academic Misconduct and Associated Penalties

Experience of the Student	Minor Academic Misconduct	Intermediate Academic Misconduct	Major Academic Misconduct
New student First-year, first-semester undergraduate and graduate students who have not attempted this type of assessment before. Cultural considerations and mitigating circumstances apply, for example no prior instruction or unclear instructions given.	i. Provide counselling to the student. ii. Award no marks for the plagiarised components of the assessment item in question.	i. Require resubmission of the assessment item in question (one opportunity to revise and resubmit in accordance with the advice given); or ii. downgrade the mark for the assessment item in question.	i. Refer to the Director Higher Education or nominee. ii. May specify a maximum mark of 50% or 'satisfactory' in the relevant subject; or iii. mark zero for the assessment item in question.
Limited experience Students after the first semester of the course but before the final year, after completion of formal instruction in avoiding plagiarism or academic misconduct.	i. Require resubmission of the assessment item in question (one opportunity to revise and resubmit in accordance with the advice given); or ii. downgrade the mark for the assessment item in question.	i. Downgrade the mark for the assessment item in question.	i. Refer to the Director Higher Education or nominee. ii. Mark zero for the assessment item in question; or iii. impose a 'Fail' grade in the relevant subject.
Experienced Final-year, experienced students, who are expected to fully understand and exhibit academic integrity.	i. Downgrade the mark for the assessment item in question.	i. Refer to the Director Higher Education or nominee. ii. Mark zero for the assessment item in question; or iii. impose a 'Fail' grade in the relevant subject.	i. If a student has two (2) prior records of academic misconduct or warnings in the AMR, refer to the Director Higher Education. ii. The outcome may be a penalty of zero for the assessment item, zero for the subject, exclusion for a specified period or termination of study.

Appendix III: Academic Misconduct Register

Date	Student Name	ID No.	RIHE Course	Phone No.	Email Address	Subject	Item No.	Academic Misconduct	Decision / Penalty