

Supporting Good Academic Practice: Policy and Process

Purpose of this policy

1. The purpose of this policy is to set out for students what Birkbeck, University of London (the College) means by 'good academic practice.' This is so that students know what is expected of them, where they might be falling short of appropriate practice and the supportive measures which can be put into place to avoid academic misconduct. If students do not work within the College's guidance, or if it is considered that they should be reasonably aware of good academic practice because of prior study and experience, any failure to meet expected standards is likely to be considered under the College's Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy.
2. The remainder of this policy references 'you' when we mean 'the student' and 'we' when we mean 'the College.'
3. You will encounter different types of assessment during your study, including essays, tests and projects. The point of these assignments is to showcase your learning and that you can demonstrate that you, personally, can meet the programme aims. We need to ensure that our students can do the things outlined in their degree and that you have acquired skills and learning that will serve you in the future. By choosing to study, you are also choosing to be part of an academic community and to adhere to the rules and regulations designed to uphold the integrity of that community's knowledge and work. There is more detail about this in the next section.
4. The College expects you to familiarise yourself with the expectations of academic study, but we do not assume that students will immediately be aware of all the conventions. We have support available to you and it is for you to make sure you use this, to ensure you can get the most from your time at the College. Further resources are available from: [Study skills — Birkbeck, University of London \(bbk.ac.uk\)](https://www.bbk.ac.uk/study-skills).

Why is academic integrity important?

5. Part of your study is to develop key skills, such as critical thinking, evaluating evidence and the ability to develop your academic writing. Ensuring that academic integrity is observed at all times, means that marks and academic credit are awarded for work which accurately demonstrates your true efforts and abilities and

prevents students who have produced work by unfair means from being advantaged for doing so.

6. The College has a 'whole community' approach to academic integrity. This means that every member of the College, whether a student or member of staff, has a responsibility to maintain academic integrity.

Examples of Good Academic Practice

7. The following is a list of ways in which students can make sure that they are exhibiting good academic practice, including following the conventions of references and being clear about who has prepared the work and whose ideas it contains. You should:
 - a. properly acknowledge all sources of information, knowledge and ideas by consistently and correctly using an acceptable referencing system;
 - b. produce work that is the product of your own, individual efforts (although see below);
 - c. where an assessment brief specifically requires a single piece of work be submitted on behalf of a group of students, you should ensure that each student's contribution to group work is represented honestly;
 - d. encourage others to behave with academic integrity;
 - e. comply with all assessment instructions;
 - f. adhere to and comply with all applicable regulatory, legal and professional obligations and follow any relevant ethical requirements;
 - g. present accurate information and data that has been obtained appropriately;
 - h. represent honestly the results of research or experimental data;
 - i. avoid any action which would give you an unfair advantage over others.
8. The list below includes things you should do and not do, to avoid finding yourself in the territory of academic misconduct.
 - a. Make sure that you understand the assessment brief and what tools and resources you can use (for example, if the assessment explicitly permits you to use generative AI tools, such as Chat GPT) or not use. This is not the same as spell-checking your work or checking the translation or accuracy of a word or short phrase.
 - b. Do not copy and paste someone else's material whether that's another person's essay or a Wikipedia entry.

- c. Keep a note of your references, in the required format and remember to include them with your work. Ensure that it is clear when you are quoting someone else's words.
- d. Make sure you understand if you are working on a joint assignment, what that means for your part in the work, your responsibilities to the group and what will be assessed.
- e. Remember, there's further guidance at [Study skills — Birkbeck, University of London \(bbk.ac.uk\)](https://www.bbk.ac.uk)

What happens if your work does not meet the expected standard of academic practice?

9. Students are provided with advice and support to meet the required standards of academic practice and the College's Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy is there to outline what steps and penalties will be applied, should you not meet these standards in your academic work.
10. We do not wish to penalise students early in their learning journeys, those returning to study after a long break, or if you have come from a different academic tradition. Your tutors have the discretion to determine whether something really is 'misconduct' (i.e., you have deliberately sought to obtain an advantage through prohibited behaviour) or whether it is 'poor academic practice', as you are acquiring the appropriate skills to meet our expected standards.
11. If your work is found to contain evidence of poor academic practice, you will be required:
 - a. to undertake and pass the College's academic integrity training; and
 - b. to meet with your Personal Tutor to discuss your poor academic practice and to receive warning that any future examples of poor academic practice will likely be considered as academic misconduct and referred to the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy.
12. Matters considered under this 'Supporting Good Academic Practice Policy' are not considered to be 'misconduct', so there will not be a 'misconduct' penalty applied to your work. A penalty is not the same as the marking criteria which will be applied by the person marking your work.
13. If you do not participate in the required training or meetings (it is up to you to ensure you can evidence you have tried to meet with your Personal Tutor), this matter can be escalated through the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy. If your tutor

considers that this is more than poor academic practice, they can escalate the matter through the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy.

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