ACADEMIC MALPRACTICE
Academic Malpractice

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1. **Introduction**

1.1. The rules of discipline contained herein apply to all registered ICA candidates irrespective of their mode, level or place of study.

1.2. Academic malpractice is any activity – intentional or otherwise – that is likely to undermine the integrity essential to the qualifications offered by ICA. It includes plagiarism, collusion, fabrication or falsification of results, and anything else that could result in unearned or undeserved credit for those committing this offence.

1.3. Academic malpractice can result from a deliberate act of cheating but may be committed unintentionally through failures to cite sources of information adequately. Whether intended or not, all incidents of academic malpractice will be treated seriously by ICA.

1.4. No circumstances justify academic malpractice, and a penalty must always be applied. Although candidates may present evidence of mitigating circumstances, it must always be borne in mind that they are encouraged to bring such circumstances to the attention of ICA at the earliest possible opportunity.

1.5. Evidence of mitigating circumstances will always be assessed, but it is for ICA to decide whether it may be taken into account when determining the penalty to be applied. This will enable ICA to consider offering appropriate help, in accordance with the ICA Policy and Procedures on Mitigating Circumstances. Lack of time, or too much work, do not constitute mitigating circumstances.

1.6. ICA is obliged, when determining a penalty to be imposed as a consequence of academic malpractice, to take into account the consequences that the penalty will have for the academic progression of the candidate concerned.

1.7. ICA regards any form of academic malpractice as a serious matter. Where academic malpractice is proven, anyone guilty risks having their qualifications permanently withheld and having their professional membership cancelled.

2. **Responsibilities of ICA**

2.1. It is the responsibility of ICA to ensure that all candidates, irrespective of the level of programme or model of learning (face-face or distance/online) or place of learning (UK or international), are given ample opportunity to understand fully the academic standards and requirements that they must satisfy.

2.2. It must be clearly understood that:
   - acts of academic malpractice are not acceptable in any circumstances;
   - where such acts are shown to have occurred, an appropriate penalty will always be enforced.
2.3. No circumstances justify academic malpractice, and a penalty must always be applied. Although candidates may present evidence of mitigating circumstances (which may be taken into account when determining the penalty to be applied), it must always be borne in mind that candidates are encouraged to bring such circumstances to the attention of the ICA at the earliest possible opportunity so that the ICA can consider offering appropriate help; this is in accordance with the Policy and Procedures on Mitigating Circumstances. Lack of time, or too much work, do not constitute mitigating circumstances.

2.4. Factors that ICA will take into account when determining the penalty and its proportionality include the following.
   a. The candidate’s level of study – the more advanced and experienced the candidate, the more serious the offence.
   b. The proportion of the whole course represented by the piece of work that was subject to malpractice: the higher the proportion, the more serious the offence.
   c. The candidate’s previous history: a subsequent offence, occurring after a candidate has already received a warning or a penalty for academic malpractice, is more serious than a first offence.
   d. The degree of intention to deceive in the piece of work in question (which might be assessed by, for example, efforts to change wording, poor referencing or lack of referencing of plagiarised material, evidence from earlier drafts) and also in the hearing itself by failure to tell the truth.

3. Responsibilities of ICA candidates

3.1. All candidates are responsible for making themselves aware of the policy and procedures contained herein, for understanding the seriousness of academic malpractice and for taking every reasonable step to ensure that academic malpractice does not occur.

3.2. Candidates have access to guidance on understanding the academic requirements in the ICA Assessment Handbook and should familiarise themselves with the requirements prior to starting their assessment.

4. Principles governing the submission of work

4.1 The assessment of candidates is based on the principle that, unless clearly stated in the assessment criteria, the work submitted by a registered candidate for assessment has been carried out by that candidate and is their own work.

4.2 Where group work is an approved part of the assessment process, the assessment instructions will make clear the nature and content of, and assessment criteria for, such group-based activity.
4.3 All elements of assessment must be the candidate's own work and any passages quoted or paraphrased, or opinions relied upon, must be properly attributed and cited using the correct method (guidance on how to reference work is in the ICA Assessment Handbook).

4.4 The ICA accepts that a candidate's writing can be influenced by the work of others, but such work must not be copied or paraphrased in whole sentences or paragraphs without appropriate acknowledgement.

4.5 By submitting work for assessment, candidates are declaring that the submitted work is their own, and that it has not been submitted in a similar or identical form towards any other assessment or qualification by the candidate or any other person.

4.6 Submission is undertaken by uploading the work online through a candidate account. If this procedure has not been followed, the ICA has the right to refuse to mark the piece until the candidate has complied.

5. Definitions of academic malpractice

5.1 Cheating in examinations consists of any of the following activities.
- Communicating with or copying from any other candidate during an examination, except in so far as the rubric may specifically permit.
- Other than where the rubric specifically permits, communicating during an examination with any person other than a properly authorised invigilator or another authorised member of staff.
- Introducing any written, printed or electronically stored information into an examination room, unless expressly permitted by the criteria/rubric for the examination.
- Gaining access to any unauthorised material relating to an examination during or before the specified time.
- Making use of electronic calculators and other portable electronic devices except as permitted under the rubric of the examination, and in the provision for candidates with additional assessment requirements.
- Fabricating information in an examination, e.g. use of artificial citations.
- Impersonating another candidate or procuring an impersonator.

5.2 Plagiarism

Plagiarism consists of unacknowledged use of someone else's work and attempting to pass it off as one's own. It includes the representation of work (written, visual, practical or otherwise) of any other person, including another candidate or anonymous web-based material, or any institution, as the candidate's own. It may take any of the following forms.

- Wholesale verbatim copying or insertion of multiple paragraphs of another person's work (published or unpublished and including
material freely available in electronic form and including work of another candidate) without acknowledgement of sources.

- The close paraphrasing of another person’s work by simply changing the wording or altering the order of presentation, without acknowledgement.
- Unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another person’s work.
- The deliberate and detailed presentation of another person’s concept as one’s own.
- Ghost writing – where a candidate requests another candidate or external body to write/produce material for them for purposes of submitting it as their own. This also includes the downloading or purchasing of essays from the Internet.
- Resubmitting in its entirety (or substantial sections of) one’s own work which has previously been submitted for another module or programme.

ICA provides guidance on referencing through its Assessment Handbook.

5.3 Collusion

Collusion occurs where a candidate:

- knowingly submits as entirely his/her own work, work produced in collaboration with another person without approval of the ICA
- collaborates with another candidate in the production of work that they know 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 candidate’s own unaided work.

5.4 Fabrication and falsification

- Fabrication of results occurs when a candidate falsely claims, for example, to have carried out tests, research or observations as part of his/her assessed work, or presents fabricated results arising from the same with the object of gaining an advantage.
- Fabrication may also include, for example, reporting/presentation of artificial references or other source material purporting to demonstrate a depth of reading/knowledge beyond that undertaken, or to deflect the reader from plagiarised material, e.g. embellishment of the bibliography.
- Falsification also includes making false statements or falsifying evidence in support of applications, for example for mitigating circumstances or academic appeals. Where evidence is related to disability and reasonable adjustments, ICA reserves the right to seek a second opinion and/or further information if there is a substantial concern about the level, or standard, of evidence.
5.5 Impersonation
Impersonation is the assumption by one person of the identity of another, with intent to deceive in the assessment process, and constitutes malpractice.

5.6 Producing inappropriate or offensive material that includes, but not limited to:
- obscenities, offensive comments
- racist remarks, lewd comments and drawings
- material that may cause offence to ICA markers or ICA members of staff.

6. Procedures for dealing with academic malpractice

6.1 All assessment items submitted (assignments and examinations) will be subject to scrutiny for malpractice until the point at which marks are confirmed by the ICA Assessment Board.

6.2 Where malpractice has been suspected at a late stage in the assessment process and has not been resolved at the time of the Assessment Board meeting, the Board will not consider the candidate’s marks until the investigation has been conducted and the matter resolved.

6.3 Where suspected malpractice requires consideration under major malpractice procedures, and a Malpractice Committee therefore convened, the Committee shall consider only that work specifically identified.

6.4 It is not the business of the Malpractice Committee to seek to unearth wider evidence of malpractice by the same candidate(s). However, where a candidate has been subject to these procedures at an earlier date, the Malpractice Committee will receive appropriate notification of such.

6.5 Should multiple incidents of malpractice arise simultaneously for the same candidate, the Malpractice Committee will investigate all incidents at the same time.

7. Matters of academic malpractice not normally referred to a Malpractice Committee

Matters of academic maladministration that shall be noted at the Assessment Board and reported to the candidate, but which do not require referral to a Malpractice Committee include the following.

7.1 A lack of proper referencing
a. Assignments that do not comply with the requirements to properly reference material that is not the candidate’s own original work may result in a deduction in the mark or the award of a mark of zero.
b. The nature of the penalty applied will be a matter of professional academic judgement by the Chief Examiner.

7.2 Late submissions
Penalties will be applied to those candidates who submit their assignment or coursework after the due date as follows:

- **c.** an assignment received between 1 and 7 days after the due date will receive an initial penalty of five marks deducted from the mark awarded
- **d.** an assignment received between 8 and 15 days after the due date will receive additional penalties of two marks per day up to 15 days (30 marks)
- **e.** an assignment received 15 or more days after the due date will not be accepted for marking.

7.3 Exceeding word count
Penalties (mark reductions) will be applied for excessive word count as follows:

- 1% - 10% over the specified word limit 10 marks
- 11% - 25% over the specified word limit 20 marks
- 26% - 50% over the specified word limit 30 marks
- an assignment in excess of 50% over the specified word limit will not be marked and a mark of zero will be recorded.

7.4 Excessive appendices
Possible sanctions for an excessive number or extent of appendices include the following.

- A requirement for the candidate to revise the original document, with appropriate corrections to the affected sections. This will normally require submission within 48 hours of the Assessment Board’s meeting but will not incur a penalty.
- Reduction in the mark for the assessment item – with a maximum adjustment of 10% of the total mark
- A requirement for the candidate to resubmit the assessment item or resit the examination, for a maximum mark of 50.

7.5 ICA retain the right to refer any cases listed above to an Academic Malpractice Committee where there are concerns that it is part of a wider or repeated similar behaviour.
8. Reporting concerns about suspected malpractice in examinations and assessments

8.1 Sometimes, a candidate or member of the public has reason to believe that malpractice has occurred or will occur in an examination or assessment. Concerns should be reported to ICA icaassessments@int-comp.org

8.2 Members of staff who wish to report suspected malpractice relating to where they work are protected under the Public Interest Disclosure Act (PIDA). Members of the public are not protected by PIDA, but ICA will make every effort to protect their identity if that is what they wish, unless legally obliged to release it.

8.3 ICA takes all reports of malpractice seriously, but in order to investigate concerns effectively we will require information of a reasonably detailed standard. We will accept anonymous reports, although knowing how the information has been obtained and the reporting party’s relationship with the candidate(s) may add credibility.

8.4 Anyone wishing to report suspected malpractice to ICA should include as much of the following information as possible/is relevant:

- the qualifications and subjects involved
- the candidate(s) involved
- the regulations breached/specific nature of suspected malpractice
- when and where the suspected malpractice occurred
- how the issue became apparent.

8.5 Documentary evidence can be particularly useful and should be provided where it is available. Reports of suspected malpractice should be sent to icaassessments@int-comp.org

9. Suspected malpractice in examinations

9.1 A candidate suspected of cheating will be allowed to complete his/her examinations in the normal way and the normal assessment procedures will be initiated.

9.2 When cheating is suspected, the ICA Senior Manager (Qualifications and Assessment) will be informed immediately by the invigilator(s) or other members of staff involved, who will provide a full report in writing.

10. Suspected malpractice in assignments

10.1 If academic malpractice is suspected in an assignment, written portfolio or similar piece of work, the work should continue to be marked or assessed to gather evidence of the extent of the alleged malpractice, and the matter
should be reported to the Chief Examiner. The formal assessment process should then be suspended, and the result withheld pending an investigation.

10.2 The Chief Examiner(s) should submit a brief report, identifying the possible malpractice to ICA, which will undertake the investigation.

11. Appeals

11.1 A formal appeal may be initiated against action taken in regard to academic malpractice or maladministration. It must be made in writing and submitted to the ICA Assessment team (icaassessments@int-comp.org) within 20 working days of notification of the result or decision. The candidate should submit, with the appeal, any documents they wish to be considered in the appeal.

11.2 An appeal may be made only on grounds alleging:

- that there exists or existed circumstances affecting the candidate’s performance of which, for good reason, the Assessment Board may not have been made aware when the decision was taken, and which might have had a material effect on the decision1
- that there had been a material administrative error or procedural irregularity in the assessment process or in putting into effect the regulations for the programme of study of such a nature as to cause significant doubt whether the decision might have been different if the error or irregularity had not occurred
- that there is evidence of prejudice or bias or lack of proper assessment on the part of one or more of the examiners.

11.3 Any appeals submitted by candidates must make it clear which of the above grounds applies to their case. Appeals submitted without that information will automatically be rejected.

11.4 An appeal which questions the academic or professional judgement of those charged with the responsibility for assessing a candidate’s academic performance or professional competence will not be permitted.

11.5 On receipt of the formal appeal, the ICA will initially consider whether the appeal is made on one or more of the grounds specified in section 11.2. If this test fails, the candidate will be notified within ten working days of the appeal being received that the appeal is not eligible, with reasons given. There will be no opportunity for the candidate to appeal against this decision.

11.6 If the appeal is shown to have been made on one or more of the grounds set out in section 11.2, then ICA will form an Appeal Committee to consider the appeal.

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1 Candidates who wish to appeal on such grounds must give credible and compelling reasons with supporting documentation explaining why this information was not made available prior to the decision being made.
11.7 The appeal will then be considered by the Appeal Committee, which may make any of the following decisions:

- to uphold the appeal and amend the result of the assessment or the decision which the candidate has appealed against
- to reject the appeal, or
- to refer the appeal to a Malpractice Panel, on the basis that it has raised serious or complex issues that require further investigation and consideration.

11.8 Candidates whose appeal has been dismissed by ICA as being without substance can request a review if they believe that their appeal has not been handled properly or fairly. Requests for review, with reasons given, should be submitted in writing to ICA within 20 working days of receipt of the letter informing them of the outcome.

Letters should be addressed to:
The ICA President
ICA
Wrens Court
52 – 54 Victoria Road
Sutton Coldfield
Birmingham
B72 1SX.

12. Malpractice Committees

Appeals that are considered by ICA to raise serious or complex matters that require further investigation and enquiry will be referred to a Malpractice Committee. The composition of the Malpractice Committee may include but not be limited to:

- ICA’s Director of Quality Assurance (who will chair the meeting)
- the Chief Examiner for that discipline
- an ICA representative (who will minute the meeting)
- a member of teaching staff or representative from the partner organisation with which the candidate is registered.

No member of the Committee shall be someone who would have been involved in the assessment of the candidate’s work.

13. Convening a Malpractice Committee

13.1 The candidate will be given ten working days’ notice of the date and time of the Malpractice Committee meeting and will be invited to attend the meeting of the Malpractice Committee to present their case. Candidates may choose to attend the Malpractice Committee via video conference.

13.2 Together with notice of the meeting the candidate shall be sent information specifying:
• the nature, date and time of the suspected malpractice, including a copy of the evidence
• that they may call up to three persons to support their case, but that they must inform the secretary of the Committee prior to the hearing of the names of those persons and their relationship to the candidate
• that they may be accompanied by a supporting person
• the procedures to be followed if the candidate wishes to appeal against any decision arising from the Malpractice Committee’s report.

13.3 The designated supporting person must be eligible to provide support to the candidate at the time of the meeting. This would normally involve their being in attendance and, where necessary, assisting the candidate with their responses.

13.4 It is not normal for the supporting person to speak throughout on the candidate’s behalf, owing to the purpose of the inquiry. They may, however, assist with articulation of responses and, where appropriate, issues of recall.

13.5 The candidate will be sent copies of all documents to be made available to the Malpractice Committee. The Malpractice Committee is empowered to call members of staff with knowledge of the case to attend the meeting to give evidence and to correspond with external examiners or others as appropriate. The candidate and the accompanying person will be permitted to speak and to question any persons giving oral evidence to the Malpractice Committee.

14. Assessing the severity of academic malpractice

14.1 Each case is different, and Malpractice Committees are expected to use their judgement in deciding the seriousness of an offence and deciding whether there are circumstances that might affect the severity of the penalty.

14.2 Committees must attempt to ensure consistency of treatment between cases, making and recording a judgement about what is a proportionate penalty.

14.3 Committees must ensure that the penalty chosen does not have consequences for academic progression owing to any disproportionate impact.

14.4 Factors to take into account when determining the penalty and its proportionality include:
• the candidate’s level of study: the more advanced and experienced the candidate (the more serious the offence)
• the proportion of the whole course represented by the piece of work that was subject to malpractice (the higher the proportion, the more serious the offence)
• the candidate’s previous history (a subsequent offence, occurring after a candidate has already received a warning or a penalty for academic malpractice, is more serious than a first offence)

• the degree of intention to deceive in the piece of work in question (which might be assessed not only by, for example, efforts to change wording, poor referencing or lack of referencing of plagiarised material, evidence from earlier drafts, but also in the hearing itself by failure to tell the truth).

14.5 The judgement made on any case shall give details of the relevant factors taken into account, stating the degree to which they contributed to the decision and will state the Malpractice Committee’s intentions as regards the impact of the penalty on progression/qualification awarded. It will also refer to any other matters taken into account; for example, any mitigating circumstances, so that precedence and best practice may be established.

14.6 The written record will also be important in the event that the candidate makes an appeal concerning the disciplinary process/outcome.

15. Outcomes of cases referred to the Malpractice Committee

15.1 If the Malpractice Committee finds that there is no evidence of malpractice, the assessment should take place as normal.

15.2 Where the Malpractice Committee decides that there is de facto evidence that malpractice has occurred, one of the following recommended penalties will be applied.

• Where there are exceptional mitigating circumstances, assessment is set aside and the candidate is required to submit a new or revised item without incurring a penalty.

• The mark for the specific item is reduced. Where this results in a fail grade, the candidate will be subject to normal reassessment procedures.

• The mark for the specific item is reduced. Where this results in a fail grade, the candidate will have the right to only one opportunity of reassessment.

• The candidate is deemed to have failed in the specific element of assessment where the malpractice has occurred. The candidate will be subject to normal reassessment procedures.

• The candidate is deemed to have failed in the specific element of assessment where the malpractice has occurred. The candidate will have no right to reassessment opportunities.

• The candidate may be expelled from the course without the award for which they registered.

• The candidate may be expelled from the course without the award for which they registered and barred from any future assessment.
• The candidate may be expelled from the course without the award for which they registered, barred from any future assessment and a withdrawal of Membership, which ICA reserve the right to make public.

16. Matters following the meeting of the Malpractice Committee

16.1 The Secretary to the Malpractice Committee shall compile a written report to be agreed by the Chair and to be forwarded to the ICA Assessment Team and the relevant Assessment Board(s) as appropriate.

16.2 The candidate will be informed of the Malpractice Committee decision, with reasons, within five working days and will be issued with a Completion of Procedures Letter.

16.3 Where the Malpractice Committee is of the opinion that malpractice has occurred, its report will include an assessment of the seriousness of the incident and the outcome recommendation. A statement outlining the findings of the Malpractice Committee shall be communicated in writing to the candidate as soon as possible after the meeting.

16.4 The Chair will sign the Malpractice Committee’s report.

16.5 In all cases a record of the proceedings shall be kept, including details of the evidence presented by both sides and the decision of the Committee. Records will be retained for five years.

17. ICA use of Turnitin software

17.1 To check that candidates are working in a fair and academically appropriate manner, ICA uses text comparison software to detect potential cases of plagiarism in work that is submitted for assessment.

17.2 Turnitin carries out the equivalent of an Internet search, looking for matches between the text included in a piece of work submitted by a candidate with all forms of information and resources publicly available on the Internet.

17.3 The main use of Turnitin is to check for cases of direct copying, and/or not properly referencing various types of source materials. It can also be used to compare each candidate’s assignments with the module materials and other commonly used or provided references.

17.4 For each assignment submitted to Turnitin, an ‘originality’ report is produced showing the percentage of text that matches specific websites.

17.5 These reports will be made available to the Assessment Team and in some cases they may decide to take the matter further. This may result in some further guidance about academic conduct and support to avoid any further incidents or, if more serious, may result in further action being taken.

17.6 Depending on the questions being asked and the format of the submitted answer, some level of matching between scripts and with other sources is expected. The Assessment Team will take all such matters into account.
when reviewing each of the reports and deciding whether a candidate has plagiarised.

17.7 The ICA Designated Officer will assess whether or not the evidence suggests that academic malpractice may have been committed.

17.8 If the ICA Designated Officer judges that the case does not constitute academic malpractice but rather poor academic practice, the matter will be noted to the candidate, with appropriate advice as to how to proceed.

17.9 In determining whether an instance constitutes a repeat (subsequent) offence, penalties applied in a previous programme of study/award shall not be included. Repeat offences are those that take place in work contributing to a single award.

17.10 After a penalty is applied to an assessment within a programme, any further infringement within that programme will be considered a repeat offence.