



“Enabling Students to Accomplish their Academic Goal”

Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy

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1. Introduction

Bellmont College is committed to promoting, protecting and embedding academic integrity across all aspects of its higher education provision. Academic integrity is fundamental to academic standards, public confidence, fair assessment, student achievement and the credibility of Belmont College's academic community.

This policy is written in a developmental, supportive and regulatory style. It recognises that students may enter higher education from a wide range of educational, professional, cultural and linguistic backgrounds, and that good academic practice must be taught, reinforced and supported throughout the student journey.

Bellmont College currently works with Liverpool Hope University through collaborative provision arrangements. Under these arrangements, relevant Liverpool Hope University academic regulations, assessment rules and misconduct procedures (*LHU Academic Regulations*) apply to programmes awarded by Liverpool Hope University, while Belmont College is responsible for local teaching, student support, guidance, communication and operational implementation. Belmont College is also seeking Office for Students approval for its own funding arrangements and future regulatory development. Future changes may affect academic governance, awarding, reporting or procedural arrangements, but Belmont College continues to protect student interests, maintain academic standards and manage any transition clearly, proportionately and transparently.

This policy should be read alongside (*QGP1 Belmont College Quality Assurance Handbook*), (*QGP3 Belmont College Student Handbook*), (*CAP5 Belmont College Academic Appeals Policy*), (*CAP3 Belmont College Complaint and Appeal Policy and Procedure*), (*CAP1 Belmont College Student Protection Plan and Policy*) and (*LHU Academic Regulations*) for the relevant programme.

2. Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to establish a clear, fair and academically robust framework for promoting academic integrity and for managing suspected academic misconduct. The policy supports students to understand expectations, helps staff apply procedures consistently and protects the reliability of assessment decisions.

The policy is intended to ensure that Belmont College provides accurate guidance, educates students about good academic practice, investigates suspected misconduct fairly, applies proportionate outcomes, records decisions securely and uses institutional learning to improve teaching, assessment design and student support.

The policy also supports Belmont College's wider consumer protection, quality assurance, student protection and equality responsibilities by making academic integrity expectations and consequences clear to students at induction, during teaching, in assessment briefs and throughout the student lifecycle.

3. Scope of the Policy

This policy applies to all students registered on higher education programmes delivered by Belmont College, including collaborative provision delivered with Liverpool Hope University and any future provision delivered under Belmont College's own regulatory or funding arrangements.

The policy applies to all forms of assessed work, including coursework, examinations, presentations, portfolios, projects, reflective work, group work, practical tasks, online submissions, digital assessments and any work submitted for formative or summative academic judgement where academic integrity expectations apply.

The policy also applies to staff, Directors, academic advisers, professional services staff, external contributors, contractors and third parties involved in teaching, assessment, support, quality assurance, misconduct investigation or record management. Former students may also fall within the scope of this policy where a concern relates to work submitted while they were registered or where an award may have been affected.

4. Regulatory and Legal Framework

This section summarises the main legal, regulatory and partnership requirements that inform this policy.

Framework / Requirement	Relevance to this policy
Office for Students Conditions B1-B5	Academic experience, support, student outcomes, valid assessment, credible awards and sector-recognised standards.
Office for Students Conditions C1-C4	Clear student information, fair complaints routes, student protection planning and action where student interests are at risk.
Office for Students Condition E6	Relevant where academic misconduct concerns intersect with harassment, sexual misconduct, safe learning or wellbeing.
Higher Education and Research Act 2017	Provides the statutory basis for OfS regulation of higher education providers in England.

Framework / Requirement	Relevance to this policy
UK Quality Code for Higher Education 2024	Supports academic integrity, inclusive assessment, responsible use of technology and fair complaints and appeals processes.
CMA consumer law guidance, Consumer Rights Act 2015 and Consumer Contracts Regulations 2013	Require clear, accurate and timely information about academic rules, misconduct procedures, penalties and appeal routes.
Equality Act 2010	Requires non-discrimination, fair treatment and reasonable adjustments.
UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018	Govern secure and lawful handling of assessment, misconduct, support and wellbeing records.
Office of the Independent Adjudicator Good Practice Framework	Informs fair, accessible, evidence-based and proportionate handling of academic disciplinary matters, complaints and appeals.
Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022	Reinforces the seriousness of contract cheating, essay mills and commissioning.
Liverpool Hope University academic regulations and partnership requirements	Apply to Liverpool Hope University collaborative provision, including misconduct definitions, investigations, penalties, boards and appeals (<i>LHU Academic Regulations</i>).
Safeguarding, health and safety and wellbeing obligations	Support safe participation in learning and appropriate management of wellbeing or safeguarding concerns.

Framework / Requirement	Relevance to this policy
Awarding body regulations	Take precedence for academic decisions where they apply; Belmont College maintains fair local implementation, support and records.

5. Academic Integrity Principles

Academic integrity means acting honestly, responsibly and ethically in learning, research, assessment and scholarly communication. Belmont College adopts the core values commonly associated with academic integrity: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage.

Belmont College recognises academic integrity as a shared responsibility. Students submit authentic work, use sources properly and seek guidance where unsure. Staff design clear assessments, explain expectations, model good practice and apply procedures consistently. Committees monitor trends and ensure that this policy operates effectively.

Academic integrity is promoted through education as well as regulation. Belmont College therefore treats many early concerns as opportunities for learning where appropriate, while also recognising that serious or repeated misconduct may require significant penalties to protect academic standards and fairness for other students.

6. Definitions and Examples of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is any action or attempted action, whether intentional or unintentional, that may result in an unfair academic advantage for a student or an unfair advantage or disadvantage for another student. The examples below are not exhaustive.

Type of misconduct	Explanation
Plagiarism	Presenting another person’s words, ideas, images, data, research, structure or intellectual property as one’s own without appropriate acknowledgement.
Poor scholarship	Insufficient or inaccurate referencing, weak paraphrasing, over-reliance on source wording or failure to follow academic conventions, which may become misconduct depending on seriousness and context.
Collusion	Unauthorised collaboration with another student or person where work is required to be completed independently.

Cheating	Dishonest behaviour in an assessment, including unauthorised materials, prohibited devices, impersonation, copying or unauthorised communication.
Commissioning or contract cheating	Requesting, paying for, obtaining or submitting work produced by another person, organisation, essay mill or digital service as if it were the student's own work.
Unauthorised use of generative artificial intelligence	Using AI tools in a way that is not permitted by the assessment brief or failing to acknowledge permitted use where acknowledgement is required.
Duplication or self-plagiarism	Submitting the same or substantially similar material for more than one assessment without approval.
Fabrication or falsification	Inventing, altering or misrepresenting data, evidence, citations, results, practical work, attendance, mitigating circumstances or research findings.
Facilitation	Helping or enabling another student to commit academic misconduct, including sharing work inappropriately or allowing work to be copied.
Breach of ethical approval requirements	Starting or changing research activity without required ethical approval or failing to follow conditions attached to approval.
Bribery, coercion or improper influence	Attempting to obtain assessment material, marks, feedback or academic advantage through improper pressure, inducement or influence.
Misuse of digital systems	Using learning platforms, Turnitin, student accounts or assessment systems in a way that compromises assessment integrity or student records.

Bellmont College considers the seriousness, intent, extent, recurrence, level of study, assessment weighting, evidence and any relevant mitigating or equality-related circumstances when determining outcomes.

7. Promoting Academic Integrity and Good Academic Practice

Bellmont College promotes academic integrity proactively through induction, study skills sessions, assessment briefings, module teaching, academic tutorials, online learning resources and targeted support. Academic integrity training is repeated at appropriate points during the student journey rather than provided only at the start of a programme.

Students receive guidance on referencing, citation, paraphrasing, research practice, source evaluation, academic writing, group work, acceptable collaboration, academic use of digital tools and the consequences of academic misconduct.

Student Representatives may support academic integrity awareness by signposting students to appropriate academic support routes. They must not provide editing, writing or assessment assistance that could compromise academic integrity.

Bellmont College ensures that academic integrity guidance is accessible and available in appropriate formats where required under *(SWP2 Belmont College Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy)* and *(SWP3 Belmont College Disability Policy)*.

8. Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence and Digital Tools

Bellmont College recognises that generative artificial intelligence and other digital tools may support learning when used appropriately, transparently and in accordance with assessment instructions. Students must follow the guidance in the assessment brief and any applicable Liverpool Hope University guidance for the programme.

Where AI use is permitted, students must use it honestly, responsibly and only within the limits specified by the tutor or assessment brief. Students may be required to acknowledge the tool used, explain how it was used, retain prompts or outputs, or submit a declaration of AI use. Where AI use is not permitted, use of AI-generated content may constitute academic misconduct.

AI tools must not be used as a substitute for producing original assessed work. Students remain responsible for the accuracy, originality, reliability and integrity of all submitted work, including work that has been supported by digital tools.

Bellmont College does not normally rely solely on AI detection tools as proof of misconduct. Any concern involving suspected AI misuse is considered alongside wider evidence, such as the student's prior work, drafts, writing process, viva evidence, metadata, assessment requirements and the student's explanation.

9. Student Information, Training and Academic Support

Bellmont College introduces this policy during induction and reinforces it during teaching, assessment briefings and tutorial support. Students are informed where to access this policy, how to seek academic skills support and what to do when they are unsure about referencing, collaboration, proof-reading, AI use or assessment expectations.

Bellmont College provides academic skills support through Academic Support Tutors, Module Tutors, Programme Coordinators and the Head of Academic Programmes. Students requiring additional support with English language, academic writing or referencing may be referred for targeted guidance.

Students who use external proof-reading or editing support remain responsible for ensuring that all substantive intellectual work, analysis, structure, argument and final wording remain their own. Proof-readers must not rewrite, generate, restructure or substantively improve assessed work in a way that gives unfair advantage.

Students with disability, mental health or wellbeing needs may be supported through reasonable adjustments or learning support arrangements under (*SWP1 Belmont College Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy*) and (*SWP4 Belmont College Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy*).

10. Assessment Design, Turnitin, Viva and Evidence

Bellmont College supports academic integrity through clear assessment design, assessment briefings, marking guidance, moderation, Turnitin originality checking, viva processes where appropriate, staff development and review of academic misconduct trends.

Turnitin and similar tools may be used to support originality checking and academic feedback. Similarity reports are indicators for academic judgement and must not be treated as automatic proof of misconduct. Staff must review the nature, source and context of similarity before deciding whether a concern should be referred.

Where authorship is unclear or contract cheating, AI misuse or third-party assistance is suspected, a viva may be used to gather additional evidence. The purpose of the viva is to explore the student's understanding of the work, the development of the submission, sources used, drafts, notes, data and any tools or support involved.

Students invited to a viva receive clear information about the concern, the process, the evidence to be discussed and any materials they should bring. Viva evidence is recorded appropriately and handled in accordance with (*BCP5 Belmont College General Data Protection & Regulation (GDPR) Policy*).

11. Procedure for Suspected Academic Misconduct

Bellmont College operates a staged procedure that is intended to be fair, proportionate, evidence-based and transparent. The procedure may be adapted where required by (*LHU Academic Regulations*) or another relevant awarding body.

11.1 Initial identification and referral

Where a tutor identifies suspected academic misconduct, the work is not given a confirmed grade until the concern has been reviewed. The tutor gathers relevant evidence, which may include Turnitin reports, assessment instructions, marked work, source comparisons, drafts, metadata, viva notes, AI-use declarations or other relevant material. The matter is referred to the School Academic Adviser using the Academic Misconduct Referral Form.

11.2 Stage 1: School Academic Adviser investigation

The School Academic Adviser reviews the evidence and determines whether the matter can be resolved at Stage 1 or is referred to Stage 2 because of seriousness, recurrence or complexity. The student is normally informed of the allegation, the evidence, the process, the potential outcomes and the available support. Students normally receive at least five working days' notice of any meeting and may be accompanied by a friend,

relative or student representative for support. Legal representation is not normally permitted unless required by exceptional circumstances or applicable awarding body procedures.

Following investigation, the School Academic Adviser may decide that no misconduct occurred, that the work should be marked on academic merit, that a minor offence occurred and an assignment-level penalty should be applied, or that the case must be referred to an Academic Misconduct Panel. Decisions are made on the balance of probabilities.

11.3 Stage 1a: Appeal from a School Academic Adviser decision

A student may appeal a Stage 1 decision within five working days using the Academic Misconduct Appeal Form. Appeals are normally considered only where the decision was incorrect in fact, new relevant evidence is available for good reason, or the procedure was not followed properly. The appeal reviews the soundness of the decision and is not normally a complete reinvestigation.

11.4 Stage 2: Academic Misconduct Panel

Serious, repeated or complex cases are referred to an Academic Misconduct Panel. This includes cases involving suspected contract cheating, commissioning, substantial plagiarism, fabrication, impersonation, serious AI misuse, repeated misconduct or conduct that may affect the credibility of an award. The panel normally includes an experienced School Senior Academic Adviser as Chair, at least two School Academic Advisers with no previous involvement in the case, and an officer appointed by the Head of Quality & Operations.

The student is invited to attend the hearing, receive the evidence in advance and have an opportunity to respond. The panel may find that no misconduct occurred, that a minor offence occurred, or that serious academic misconduct occurred. The panel determines outcomes on the balance of probabilities and applies penalties in accordance with this policy and any applicable awarding body regulations.

11.5 Stage 3: Appeal against an Academic Misconduct Panel decision

A student may appeal an Academic Misconduct Panel decision within five working days, normally to the Head of Quality & Operations or nominee. The appeal must state the grounds and provide any relevant evidence. Where credible grounds exist, the case may be referred to a new panel or reviewed in accordance with applicable academic regulations. A review panel may uphold, reduce or increase the original penalty where justified by the evidence and regulations.

11.6 Completion of procedures and external review

When internal procedures are complete, the student receives written confirmation of the outcome and, where applicable, information about completion of procedures and the right to seek independent review through the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

Students are also signposted to (*CAP5 Belmont College Academic Appeals Policy*) and (*CAP3 Belmont College Complaint and Appeal Policy and Procedure*) where relevant.

12. Academic Misconduct Penalties

Penalties are proportionate, consistent and appropriate to the seriousness of the misconduct. Penalties may be applied at assignment, module, level or programme level, subject to the applicable awarding body regulations. Repeated misconduct normally results in more serious outcomes.

Level	Penalty	Decision maker
Assignment level	Formal warning	School Academic Advisor
Assignment level	Grade for assignment reduced to bare pass	School Academic Advisor
Assignment level	Grade for assignment reduced to fail	School Academic Advisor
Module level	Final written warning	Academic Misconduct Panel
Module level	Grade for assignment reduced to fail and resit rights removed	Academic Misconduct Panel
Module level	Grade for module reduced to fail	Academic Misconduct Panel
Module level	Grade for module reduced to AG / academic misconduct grade where applicable	Academic Misconduct Panel
Module level	Grade for module reduced to AG with repeat module capped at bare pass	Academic Misconduct Panel
Module level	Grade for module reduced to AG and right to repeat module withdrawn	Academic Misconduct Panel
Module level	Grade for module reduced to AG and right to repeat equivalent credits withdrawn	Academic Misconduct Panel
Programme level	Termination of studies, subject to confirmation by the Head of Quality & Operations and applicable academic regulations	Academic Misconduct Panel / Head of Quality & Operations

A formal warning is normally reserved for a first referral where there is evidence of misconduct beyond poor scholarship but not sufficient seriousness for a capped grade or harsher penalty. Findings of contract cheating, commissioning, impersonation, fabrication or serious AI misuse may result in severe penalties, including failure of a module, withdrawal of reassessment rights or termination of studies.

13. Assessment Boards, Progression and Award Decisions

Assessment Boards are responsible for implementing academic misconduct outcomes but must not vary penalties determined through this policy or through the applicable awarding body procedure. Where misconduct outcomes are pending, the Assessment Board may defer a decision until the investigation is complete.

Where a penalty affects progression, reassessment, module outcome, classification or award, the outcome is applied in accordance with Belmont College procedures and (*LHU Academic Regulations*). Students are informed clearly of the academic consequences of the decision and any available appeal or review route.

Academic misconduct trends, penalties and assessment board implications are reviewed through quality assurance processes and may inform assessment design, staff development and student support planning.

14. Student Support, Equality, Wellbeing and Safeguarding

Bellmont College implements this policy fairly, consistently and with appropriate regard to equality, disability, mental health, wellbeing, safeguarding and personal circumstances. The existence of support needs does not prevent misconduct procedures from being applied, but reasonable adjustments and accessible communication are considered where required.

Students may be signposted to academic support, wellbeing support, disability support, safeguarding support or external advice where appropriate. Support arrangements are normally considered under (*SWP4 Belmont College Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy*), (*SWP3 Belmont College Disability Policy*), (*HSP1 Belmont College Safeguarding and PREVENT Policy*) and (*SWP1 Belmont College Reasonable Adjustment and Special Considerations Policy*).

Where a misconduct allegation involves harassment, coercion, exploitation, threats, safeguarding concerns or sexual misconduct, Belmont College may take action under the relevant safeguarding or conduct procedures while ensuring that academic integrity concerns are still addressed appropriately.

15. Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Board of Directors	Retains ultimate governance oversight of academic standards, student protection, regulatory compliance, institutional risk and assurance that academic integrity arrangements are effective.

Role	Responsibilities
Chief Executive Officer	Ensures institutional leadership, resources and accountability for effective implementation of academic integrity and misconduct arrangements.
Head of Quality & Operations	Owns this policy, oversees compliance, coordinates reporting through quality and governance routes, and ensures misconduct trends inform enhancement and regulatory assurance.
Head of Academic Programmes	Ensures programme teams explain academic integrity expectations, apply procedures consistently, address academic misconduct concerns and maintain assessment standards.
Programme Coordinators	Coordinate programme-level implementation, support tutors and advisers, maintain records and ensure assessment and misconduct matters are escalated appropriately.
Module Tutors	Explain assessment expectations, identify potential misconduct, gather relevant evidence, provide academic guidance and refer concerns through the approved process.
Academic Support Tutors / School Academic Advisers	Provide academic skills, referencing, writing and study support, investigate Stage 1 cases where appointed, and help students understand good academic practice.
Academic Misconduct Panel	Considers serious, repeated or complex cases, reviews evidence, reaches decisions on the balance of probabilities and applies proportionate outcomes.

Role	Responsibilities
Professional Services Team	Maintains accurate records, supports communications, manages administrative evidence and ensures relevant documents are available for meetings and reporting.
Student Support and Wellbeing Team	Advises on disability, wellbeing, safeguarding and reasonable adjustment matters that may affect participation in the process or access to support.
Liverpool Hope University	Retains authority for relevant academic regulations, progression, award and appeal arrangements for Liverpool Hope University collaborative provision.
Students	Submit authentic work, follow assessment and academic integrity guidance, use sources appropriately, declare permitted AI use where required and seek support promptly when unsure.

16. Governance and Committee Oversight

Academic integrity is implemented and monitored through Belmont College’s governance and committee framework as part of academic quality, student protection, risk management, student experience, equality and partnership oversight.

Board of Directors: Retains ultimate oversight of academic standards, student protection, institutional risk and regulatory assurance, and receives assurance on serious trends or systemic risks.

Audit & Risk Committee: Reviews institutional risks relating to assessment integrity, regulatory compliance, data protection, partnership delivery and operational controls.

Academic Committee: Provides academic oversight of academic standards, assessment governance, academic regulations and the integrity of awards within Belmont College’s responsibilities.

Senior Management Committee: Oversees operational implementation, resourcing, staff training, risk escalation, regulatory readiness and corrective action.

Quality Committee: Reviews misconduct trends, assessment risks, external examiner feedback, appeals, complaints, quality reports and enhancement actions.

Learning & Teaching Committee: Monitors assessment design, academic skills provision, AI guidance, inclusive teaching, feedback and academic integrity education.

Recruitment, Admissions & Registry Committee: Monitors student records, admissions integrity, student engagement, assessment administration and communication of academic rules to students.

Student Staff Committee: Provides student feedback on assessment clarity, guidance, support, student understanding and accessibility of academic integrity information.

Safeguarding and wellbeing arrangements: Ensure that safeguarding, coercion, exploitation, harassment, wellbeing and reasonable adjustment concerns linked to academic misconduct cases are referred to the appropriate support route.

Where academic misconduct matters relate to Liverpool Hope University awards or regulations, Belmont College works with Liverpool Hope University in accordance with the applicable partnership arrangements and ensures that students are signposted to the relevant rules and procedures.

17. Conclusion

Bellmont College is committed to maintaining a strong culture of academic integrity, ethical learning and responsible scholarship. This policy supports students to understand expectations, provides staff with clear procedures and ensures that suspected misconduct is managed fairly and consistently.

Through proactive education, robust assessment practice, proportionate investigation, clear governance oversight and continuous monitoring, Belmont College seeks to protect academic standards while supporting student development and success.

Bellmont College continues to work with Liverpool Hope University where partnership regulations apply and manages any future Office for Students registration or funding-related transition carefully, transparently and with the protection of student interests, academic standards and fair decision-making at the centre of its approach.

Bellmont College Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy					
Version	Date	Author(s)	Amendments	Approved by	Next review
1	March 2023	Head of Quality and Operations	New document	Board of Governors	February 2024
2	February 2024	Head of Quality and Operations	Revised; no update or changes made	Board of Governors	October 2024
3	October 2024	Head of Quality and Operations	Revised document	Board of Governors	October 2025

4	March 2026	Head of Quality and Operations	Revised document	Board of Directors	March 2027
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