

# Guide to Academic Integrity



## **Academic Integrity and the FET Learner**

Academic Integrity is a commitment to act honestly, fairly and with responsibility during the process of teaching, learning and assessment. This commitment incorporates everyone involved in the process, the learner and the practitioner. In order for there to be a culture of robust academic integrity, it is important that all stakeholders have a good understanding of what academic integrity means in practice and that each individual is aware of their own responsibility in ensuring that they conduct themselves with integrity in an educational setting. Academic integrity is not a punitive concept. Instead, it should be considered as an essential part of the WWETB culture of learning and assessment and learners should be made aware of the benefits of academic integrity as well as their responsibility to uphold it. Having integrity in the pursuit of formal accreditation has multiple benefits for the learner to be aware of:

- Instils confidence in the learner in respect of their learning and their achievements.
- Instils confidence in the learner in respect of their successful progression to further studies and the world of work.
- It helps engender greater respect for the learning process.
- Promotes critical-thinking skills, creativity and can lead to ground-breaking ideas.
- Cultivates trust in the credentials and qualifications of others.
- Develops additional skills like time-management, organisation.
- Engenders ability to take personal responsibility.





## Academic Misconduct ‘Triggers’

Learners who act without academic integrity will do so for a number of reasons. Often, the reason is related to a lack of awareness or understanding of academic integrity and its importance. Where a learner wilfully acts with academic misconduct, there can be certain triggers that lead to this such as:

- Poor time-management and/or self-organisation skills.
- Pressure of other commitments.
- General feeling of pressure and lack of confidence.
- Poor IT and typing skills.

Creating awareness of academic integrity early on in the course and offering supports to learners in their academic endeavours can help to offset some of the triggers or pitfalls in relation to submitting for assessment. There are many resources that have been developed for the FET sector that can serve as a support to both the learner and the practitioner in this regard. [See page 4.](#)

## Academic Integrity- Roles and Responsibilities

Stakeholder	Responsibility	How
<b>WWETB</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Give guidance on academic integrity.</li> <li>▪ Develop and review academic integrity related polices and policies where appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Academic Integrity Guide</li> <li>▪ Plagiarism detection software</li> <li>▪ Assessment Malpractice Policy &amp; Procedure</li> </ul>
<b>Programme Managers</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Implement good practice guide, policy, and procedure.</li> <li>▪ Make staff aware of and support staff with responsibilities.</li> <li>▪ Support a whole centre understanding of responsibilities re academic integrity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop inhouse strategy for academic integrity including roles, responsibilities, and support structures.</li> <li>▪ Develop inhouse strategy for implementation of WWETB assessment malpractice policy &amp; procedures.</li> <li>▪ Ensure consistent application.</li> </ul>
<b>Practitioners</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure academic integrity is part of the T &amp; L process.</li> <li>▪ Support Learners how they can ensure their academic integrity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Utilise the resources to ensure that learners understand academic integrity in line with inhouse strategy.</li> <li>▪ Ensure learners confirm their assessment work is their own.</li> <li>▪ Check and asses for academic misconduct consistently and apply WWETB and Centre procedures.</li> </ul>
<b>Learners</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Respond to assessment events as advised by practitioner.</li> <li>▪ Always act with academic Integrity</li> <li>▪ Avail of support where necessary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Follow guidance and instruction from practitioner.</li> <li>▪ Implement the appropriate referencing convention where appropriate.</li> <li>▪ Never pass another’s work off as your own.</li> <li>▪ Ask for support as soon as you think you may need it.</li> </ul>

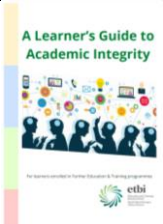



## Academic Integrity Promoting Practices

**Assessment:** Assessment is generally where academic integrity comes into keener focus. With the advent of widely accessible artificial intelligence technology, certain forms of assessment have become more susceptible to academic misconduct. One of the benefits of *Locally Devised Assessments* is the scope to tailor the piece of work associated with the assessment methodology to suit the learner cohort and maximise the learning in the context of the desired outcomes and the level of learning. For assignment-based assessment, using specific problem-based or scenario-based formats can help to ensure that learner responses are developed with more specificity and authenticity.





**Learner Feedback:** Formative feedback has become common practice for assessment activity, particularly for larger pieces of work that require the learner to build their response over time. Formative feedback shouldn't be just one-way. The process should allow the learner too to feedback on their progress in respect of the assessment piece. This process can help to support and promote the learner's commitment to academic integrity by asking them to give some detail on the main thrust of their work. It can also help in identifying any red flags in the assessment process or the aforementioned 'triggers' that can sometimes lead to academic malpractice.



**Universal Design for Learning (UDL):** Text-based assignments can be unfairly difficult for learners that might have specific learning difficulties/disability such as dyslexia. The practice of UDL encourages us to design assessments in a way that eliminates any unnecessary hurdles in the assessment process. Assignments in the form of structured presentations can be a way not only to accommodate universal design for learning, but also to create a more authentic opportunity to for a learner to show and an assessor to assess learning. If unsure about a proposed plan for assessment, consult with the WWETB Quality Team.

## Support Resources

Resource Name	Description	Link	
<a href="#">A Learner's Guide to Academic Integrity</a>	This resource is a guide for the learner as to the principles of academic integrity and has been developed as a reference for the FET Learner and is written in simple English. It is available as a pdf and there is a phone friendly version available (see QR code on the inside cover of the PDF version)	<a href="#">A Learner's Guide to Academic Integrity</a>	
<a href="#">Academic Writing Handbook for Learners</a>	This resource has been designed as a support for the learner who has to complete assignments. It covers aspects like research, using graphics, how to start your assignment, structuring an academic argument, proof-reading, references etc.	<a href="#">Academic Writing Handbook for Learners</a>	
<a href="#">FET Referencing Handbook</a>	The Referencing Handbook deals specifically with referencing conventions.	<a href="#">FET Referencing Handbook</a>	
<a href="#">ETBI Digital Library- Assignment Calculator</a>	This resource has been specifically designed to help the FET learner with <b>Time Management</b> when preparing to undertake assignments. Simply input the start date for the assignment work and the submission date and the Assignment Calculator will suggest when you should aim to have certain elements/stages of the work complete. It also explains each stage and how they might be approached. There are many other resources on the ETBI Digital Library that pertain to academic integrity.	<a href="#">ETBI Digital Library – Assignment Calculator</a>  <a href="#">Academic Integrity - Avoiding Plagiarism - LibGuides at Education and Training Boards Ireland, ETBI</a>	

## Academic Integrity Considerations at FET Levels

<p><b>Level 1 Learner</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the learner demonstrated <i>independent</i> achievement of the discreet assessment pieces associated with the Learning Outcomes?</li> </ul> <p><b>Note for Practitioner:</b> Ensure that there is a distinction between coursework and assessment work. Coursework will imply coaching, prompting, cueing etc. whereas assessment work will not.</p>
<p><b>Level 2 Learner</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the learner demonstrated <i>independent</i> achievement of the discreet assessment pieces associated with the Learning Outcomes?</li> </ul> <p><b>Note for Practitioner:</b> Ensure that there is a distinction between coursework and assessment work. Coursework will imply coaching, prompting, cueing etc. whereas assessment work will not.</p>
<p><b>Level 3 Learner</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the learner been made aware of the importance and benefits of good academic integrity?</li> <li>Has the learner demonstrated <i>independent</i> achievement of the assessment pieces associated with the Learning Outcomes?</li> <li>Is the learner aware of the difference between using sources to inform their own work, and using sources directly <u>as</u> their own work (copy and paste)?</li> </ul> <p><b>Note for Practitioner:</b> Where groupwork activity has taken place, can each learner's full achievement of the relevant learning outcomes be evidenced? (Ensure that groupwork tasks or group projects are not divided so that a learner may miss the opportunity, by design or otherwise, to engage in a specific learning outcome.</p>
<p><b>Level 4 Learner</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has the learner been made aware of the importance and benefits of good academic integrity?</li> <li>Has the learner been made aware of the potential consequences of poor academic integrity and academic misconduct?</li> <li>Has the learner demonstrated <i>independent</i> achievement of the assessment pieces associated with the Learning Outcomes?</li> <li>Is the learner aware of the difference between using sources to inform their own work, and using sources directly <u>as</u> their own work (copy and paste)?</li> <li>Has the learner listed their sources clearly in their assessment work including images?</li> </ul> <p><b>Note for Practitioner:</b> Ensure the structures for assessment are conducive to a culture of promoting good academic integrity, such as; developing the assessment activity to test the application of learning rather than regurgitation of learning- and tailoring the feedback process to help identify risks to academic integrity.</p> <p>Ensure exam situations are appropriately explained to learners, there is preparation for same and exams take place in an adequately controlled and fair manner.</p> <p>Where groupwork activity has taken place, can each learner's full achievement of the relevant learning outcomes be evidenced? (Ensure that groupwork tasks or group projects are not divided so that a learner may miss the opportunity, by design or otherwise, to engage in a specific learning outcome.</p>

<p><b>Level 5 Learner</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Has the learner been made aware of the importance and benefits of good academic integrity?</li> <li>▪ Has the learner been made aware of the potential consequences of poor academic integrity and academic misconduct?</li> <li>▪ Has the learner demonstrated <i>independent</i> achievement of the assessment pieces associated with the Learning Outcomes?</li> <li>▪ Has the learner Harvard referenced all sources used in assessment material including images?</li> </ul> <p><b>Note for Practitioner:</b> Ensure the structures for assessment are conducive to a culture of promoting good academic integrity, such as; developing the assessment activity to test the application of learning rather than regurgitation of learning- and tailoring the feedback process to help identify risks to academic integrity.</p> <p>Ensure exam situations are appropriately explained to learners, there is preparation for same and exams take place in an adequately controlled and fair manner.</p> <p>Where groupwork activity has taken place, can each learner’s full achievement of the relevant learning outcomes be evidenced? (Ensure that groupwork tasks or group projects are not divided so that a learner may miss the opportunity, by design or otherwise, to engage in a specific learning outcome.</p>
<p><b>Level 6 Learner</b></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the learner been made aware of the importance and benefits of good academic integrity?</li> <li>• Has the learner been made aware of the potential consequences of poor academic integrity and academic misconduct?</li> <li>• Has the learner demonstrated independent achievement of the assessment pieces associated with the Learning Outcomes?</li> <li>• Has the learner Harvard referenced all sources used in assessment material including images?</li> </ul> <p><b>Note for Practitioner:</b> Ensure the structures for assessment are conducive to a culture of promoting good academic integrity, such as developing the assessment activity to test the application of learning rather than regurgitation of learning- and tailoring the feedback process to help identify risks to academic integrity.</p> <p>Ensure exam situations are appropriately explained to learners, there is preparation for same and exams take place in an adequately controlled and fair manner.</p> <p>Where groupwork activity has taken place, can each learner’s full achievement of the relevant learning outcomes be evidenced? (Ensure that groupwork tasks or group projects are not divided so that a learner may miss the opportunity, by design or otherwise, to engage in a specific learning outcome.</p>

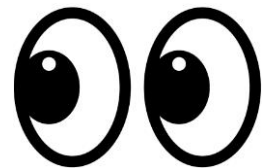
## Being Responsive to Academic Malpractice

The most effective way to promote academic integrity across WWETB FET provision is to create a culture of it. Focussing on the importance, the benefits and the ‘how to’ of academic integrity, along with putting supports in place to offset some of the aforementioned ‘triggers’ that lead to poor integrity, can go a long way to creating the organisation’s academic culture. We also need to be able to discourage learners who may choose to persist with poor academic integrity so that we can be confident about the veracity of our assessment processes and the integrity of WWETB bestowed awards.

WWETB has in place a policy & procedure handbook for **Assessment Malpractice**. WWETB centres should ensure that local procedures around academic misconduct are in line with the procedures outlined in this document. Assessors should be vigilant as to potentially problematic submissions or submissions that may not be all the learner’s own work in the context of all the learner group. There are certain markers or elements to be mindful of when marking submissions. See next section on ‘Assessor Vigilance.’

## Assessor Vigilance

As practitioners, ‘*catching people out*’ is not something we ideally want to be a part of assessment process. That said, identifying academic misconduct and plagiarism is a key element to limiting it and contributing the aforementioned culture of academic integrity. Oftentimes, External Authenticators raise questions about plagiarism in reference to specific pieces of work submitted by one or more learners. Again, as practitioners, we need to be alert to the prospect of academic misconduct and ensure that we are satisfied with the integrity of all learner submissions. Unlike the EA, assessors have the benefit of knowing the learner in an academic context. This can help us greatly when reviewing a submission and being reassured that we are viewing the learner’s own work. Some things to consider in this regard:



- **Poor Attendance-** How has the learner’s attendance been in the context of the learning process? If their attendance has been very poor, are there other genuine factors that might enable a learner to submit a very high standard of work?
- **Procrastination:** Were you aware that the learner did not start the assignment until very close to the submission date? Does the submission look more complete and creditable than might’ve been likely?
- **Writing Style:** How does the submitted piece appear in relation to other pieces of work that the learner has completed. Is there comparability in the scope of language? Does the style of writing seem to change in the submitted piece? Is it difficult to match the learner to the piece of writing?
- **Other signs:** Different font types used. Unrelated hyperlinks within the text. Outdated facts. Elements of the submission that are off point in the context of the brief.

## Plagiarism Software

WWETB licenses the Turnitin plagiarism software. The software also has the ability to offer insight into the probability of AI being used in all or parts of a submission. Turnitin can serve as a useful



tool to show evidence of academic malpractice that can assist in resolving such a situation, particularly where a learner initially denies any misconduct or failure to work with academic integrity.