



## Academic Integrity Policy

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### **1. Purpose**

Leigh UTC Dartford is committed to developing learners who act with honesty, responsibility, and respect for the work of others. Academic integrity forms the foundation of all successful learning, ensuring students become independent thinkers who can conduct research, analyse information, and produce original work that reflects their own understanding. This policy sets out the expectations for students and staff, explains what constitutes academic misconduct, outlines the procedures for investigating concerns, and establishes the principles for the ethical use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).

The policy applies to all programmes offered by Leigh UTC Dartford, including GCSEs, A-Levels, T-Levels, and vocational and technical qualifications, as well as internal assessments, classroom learning, and examination contexts.

### **2. Commitment to Teaching Academic Integrity**

Academic integrity is not simply a set of rules: it is a culture that must be taught, reinforced, and lived. Staff at Leigh UTC Dartford play a crucial role in modelling honest academic behaviour and in explicitly teaching the skills students need to succeed ethically. Throughout the curriculum, students are introduced to ideas such as how to evaluate sources, how to paraphrase and quote effectively, and how to reference material they have used.

Teachers also help students understand why integrity matters: because it builds trust, promotes fairness, develops resilience, and ensures that learning genuinely represents what students know and can do. By embedding these values consistently across subjects, Leigh UTC nurtures principled learners who understand not only *what* is expected of them, but *why* those expectations exist.

### **3. Responsibilities**

#### **Staff Responsibilities**

Staff at Leigh UTC Dartford are responsible for creating an environment in which academic integrity is understood and upheld. This includes guiding students in how to carry out research, modelling the ethical use of sources and AI tools, and designing assessments that require authentic thinking rather than replication. Teachers provide clear instructions for each task so that students understand how originality will be judged and how much external support is permitted. When work is submitted, teachers make every reasonable effort to ensure that it represents the student's genuine understanding.

Where AI tools are used in learning, teachers clarify when such tools may be used, in what capacity, and what students must do to acknowledge them appropriately. Any concerns about authenticity or misconduct are followed up in accordance with this policy and with national regulations for qualifications.

### **Student Responsibilities**

Students are expected to take responsibility for the originality of the work they produce and to conduct themselves with honesty in all aspects of their learning. This includes producing work that reflects their own thinking, acknowledging the ideas and sources of others, and ensuring they understand the expectations for any assessment or piece of work. Students must avoid sharing their work with others except when a task has been explicitly designed as collaborative.

Students are also asked to seek guidance whenever they feel unsure about how to reference correctly, how to use AI appropriately, or how to approach a task without crossing academic boundaries. Using AI tools does not remove responsibility; students must ensure that any content generated through AI is clearly identified and that it does not substitute for their own knowledge or skills.

### **Parent Responsibilities**

Parents and carers support academic integrity by encouraging students to complete work independently and by reinforcing the values of honesty and responsibility at home. They are encouraged to speak with their child about the importance of originality and to seek clarification from the school if they have any concerns.

## **4. Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

AI tools are increasingly present in education, and Leigh UTC Dartford supports their informed, ethical, and transparent use. AI can be a helpful tool for generating ideas, clarifying concepts, or supporting early planning; however, it is not a substitute for a student's own thinking, creativity, or problem-solving. Students must therefore use AI in ways that enhance learning, rather than replace it.

Any content generated through AI, even if adapted or paraphrased, must be acknowledged. Students must state which tool they used, the prompt they provided, and the date the content was generated. They must also apply critical judgement when using AI, recognising that these tools can produce inaccurate, biased, or fabricated information.

Teachers will make clear whether AI is permitted for a particular task. In situations where it is not allowed (such as in examinations, controlled assessments, or work that contributes directly to a qualification) any use of AI will be considered misconduct.

Misuse of AI includes presenting AI-generated work as one's own, fabricating data or quotations using AI tools, relying on AI to produce complete answers or essays, or inserting AI-fabricated references. Such behaviour will be treated as academic malpractice in the same way as plagiarism or collusion.

## **5. Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct covers a range of behaviours that undermine the principles of fairness and honesty. Plagiarism, in which a student uses the ideas or work of another person without proper acknowledgment, remains one of the most common forms of misconduct and can occur whether the source is another student, a website, a textbook, or an AI tool. Collusion (defined as: allowing another student to copy or submit your work) also constitutes misconduct, as does duplicating the same work for multiple assessments when this is not permitted.

Other forms of malpractice include fabricating data, altering results or evidence in research tasks, copying during examinations, breaching JCQ exam rules, or discussing examination content within the restricted window after an exam. Any form of behaviour that may give any student an unfair advantage is considered an infringement of academic integrity.

## **6. Investigating Academic Misconduct**

Leigh UTC Dartford aims to prevent misconduct through high-quality teaching, clear expectations, and supportive interventions. However, where misconduct is suspected, the matter will be handled sensitively, fairly, and in accordance with both the school's policies and national guidance.

A teacher who believes a breach may have occurred will review the work carefully and consult with the Director of Learning and the Exams Officer. The student will be invited to discuss the work and to explain their process honestly. The aim at this stage is to understand not only what has happened, but the student's level of intent and understanding.

If misconduct is confirmed, consequences may include completing an alternative piece of work, resubmitting part or all of the task, losing credit for the assignment, or in more serious cases referral to the awarding body, particularly where examinations or NEAs are affected. Parents will be informed and appropriate support offered to help the student avoid further issues.

## **7. Referencing**

Accurate referencing is an essential academic skill and is required in all subjects at Leigh UTC Dartford. The school uses the Harvard Referencing System, which students will be taught explicitly through lessons, library sessions, and academic skills workshops. Referencing enables students to give credit to the original authors of ideas and allows readers to trace information back to its source.

Students are expected to include in-text citations whenever they quote, paraphrase, or draw on someone else's ideas, and to provide a complete reference list at the end of their work. This applies equally to books, websites, journal articles, images, data sources, and AI tools. Consistent referencing supports academic integrity and strengthens students' preparedness for further study.

## **8. Further Information**

This policy should be read alongside Leigh UTC Dartford's [Assessment, Recording and Reporting Policy](#), current JCQ regulations, and awarding-body guidance on malpractice and non-examination assessments. The school will continue to review this policy annually in response to changes in qualifications, educational technology, and national expectations.