

National Specialist SCITTs

National Mathematics and Physics SCITT

National Modern Languages SCITT

Academic Misconduct Policy

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The accredited provider for both the National Mathematics and Physics SCITT and the National Modern Languages SCITT, is Chorus Education Trust operating as National Specialist SCITTs.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This guidance explains the procedure that the SCITT will follow in investigating concern about a trainee's academic misconduct.
- 1.2 This guidance relates to suspected cases of trainee academic and/or professional misconduct. Matters pertaining to trainee conduct of a non-academic nature are covered by other policies and procedures of the SCITT e.g. the **Disciplinary Policy and procedure**. Where there is overlap within a particular case of disciplinary and academic professional misconduct precise arrangements shall be determined by the SCITT Director following the principles set out in the respective procedures. Such arrangements will be clearly communicated to the trainee(s) and staff concerned.
- 1.3 The procedures provide a framework for the investigation of breaches of acceptable academic and/or professional conduct to ensure that they are treated equitably, without bias and in a fair and transparent manner. It is not intended to be exhaustive and it is, in fact, impossible to provide for all conceivable instances of misconduct within such a procedure. The overall aim of the policy and procedure is to ensure that all trainees are treated in an equitable manner and that no advantage is provided to students who act without integrity or due diligence in their studies.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 The SCITT expects its trainees to act with personal integrity, self-discipline and respect for others in their personal, professional and academic conduct. Academic integrity refers to training conducted in an open, honest, and responsible manner. All training activity builds upon the work of others and is subject to scrutiny. Trainees are expected to show respect for the intellectual property of the people who have helped them to develop their own ideas by always attributing and acknowledging source material.
- 2.2 SCITT trainees will be supported in a process of authentic learning and trainees will be able to demonstrate independent thought and analysis which enables the SCITT to uphold the academic standards of its awards and the value of its training activities.
- 2.3 Professional integrity refers to conduct which consistently adheres to the values of the teaching profession and will involve acting within defined codes of ethics or conduct. It also refers to acting in accordance with socially accepted professional standards such as honesty, respect for colleagues and compliance with rules.
- 2.4 All trainees will be required to complete written tasks and assignments as part of a PGCE qualification. This work is subject to all the conditions, rules and regulations of the PGCE Provider with respect to submission and re-submission of work.

3. Poor Academic Practice

- 3.1 Poor scholarship is characterised by limited or inadequate technical skills or adherence to academic conventions, whether through negligence or a lack of understanding. It is a trainee's responsibility to ensure that they fully understand the academic conventions described in programme material, such as the appropriate referencing system and use of quotation marks and

make use of the support that is available. Failure to properly attribute the work of others may be regarded as plagiarism or cheating and misuse of source material may be regarded as falsification.

- 3.2** Work submitted for assessment must be a new, original piece of work produced specifically for the course. Any re-purposing of a trainee's own material must be explicitly acknowledged as such and must show how ideas or concepts have been developed in the new work. Reproducing passages verbatim should be avoided and any self-citations should be clearly identified. Failure to do so will be regarded as an attempt to mislead and will not count. The use of Artificial Intelligence for academic assignments and formal assessments is strictly prohibited.

4. Academic Misconduct

- 4.1** Academic misconduct encompasses all kinds of academic dishonesty, whether deliberate or unintentional, which infringes the integrity of the SCITT's assessment procedures. Any suspected instance of misconduct will be investigated following the procedures below. What follows are the most common types of academic misconduct. However, this list is not exhaustive and occurrences of other types of suspected misconduct may be investigated under these procedures.
- 4.2** Plagiarism is a form of cheating which involves presenting another person's ideas or expressions without acknowledging the source. Any work submitted for assessment or evidence used to demonstrate meeting the Teachers' Standards must, unless collaborative work has been specifically permitted in the guidelines, be the trainee's own work or evidence. In any event, whether the work is from an individual trainee or the result of a permitted collaboration, any material, from whatever source, must be clearly acknowledged. All passages quoted must be shown in quotation marks, and such quotations and any passages which are paraphrased must be properly attributed to the author(s). The SCITT endorses the clear guidance on academic writing skills from the PGCE Provider and ignorance on the part of the trainee will not be accepted as a defence in a case of plagiarism.
- 4.3** Trainees who take part in unauthorised or illicit collaboration with others will be regarded as having colluded regardless of whether any advantage was gained or enabled for any parties involved. Collusion undermines the academic integrity of assessments and training programmes that are designed to test an individual trainee's abilities and understanding. Trainees who commission or purchase work from a third party which they then present as their own and trainees who make available their own work, or parts thereof, whether or not for financial gain, will also be regarded to have colluded.
- 4.4** It is a trainee's responsibility as author to proof-read and edit their own work and any assistance from a third party, whether a professional service or friend, family or fellow trainee or Artificial Intelligence may be regarded as collusion. Trainees are encouraged to seek advice on academic writing skills from the SCITT, and PGCE Provider tutors, although it is emphasised that this support does not extend to proof-reading.
- 4.5** The use of translation services involving a third party is expressly forbidden and will be regarded as collusion. The use of translation software is permitted, although students should be aware of its limitations as it is unable to consider context and meaning can be lost. English language entry requirements are designed to ensure that trainees are equipped with the language skills to enable them to submit evidence and work for assessment in English and additional language support is

available. It is a trainee's responsibility to seek support through the appropriate channels should it be needed.

Note: special dispensation to the rules on collusion and use of writing services may be provided to trainees who are registered with a disability and who have a specific requirement agreed with the Dyslexia & Disability Support Services and identified within their learning support plan.

- 4.6** Any trainee found to have made up data or other such content, or to have manipulated content or tampered with documentation will be regarded as having fabricated/falsified material. This includes the content of teaching materials and work submitted for assessment and any records or documentation associated with meeting the Teachers' Standards at the career appropriate level and academic progress such as entry statements or qualifications, false claims for exemption or mitigation, misrepresentation of a word count or contribution to a group assessment. In some cases, fabricated/falsified material may also be deemed to be professional misconduct, for example in relation to teaching standards and *Code of Conduct*.
- 4.7** All research which contributes to the trainee meeting the Teachers' Standards at the career appropriate level or assessment of taught programmes must be conducted in an ethical and responsible manner. This includes requirements to secure ethical approval prior to the commencement of primary research, the conduct of the research, the relationship and dealings with participants and proper handling of data.
- 4.8** Any trainee found to be assuming the identity of a third party, or where a trainee is impersonated by another person, in order to gain or enable access or advantage will be deemed guilty of impersonation.
- 4.9** Any breach of procedure which compromises the integrity of the evidence submitted against the Teachers' Standards or an assessment will be regarded as academic misconduct, irrespective of whether any advantage was gained, or there was any intention to do so. These principles apply equally to all evidence submitted, records of meetings, subject knowledge audits, tests, assessments and observations.

5. Professional Misconduct

Professional misconduct encompasses any actions on the part of a trainee which might render them unsuitable to undertake/continue a professionally oriented component of their programme of study.

Examples of professional misconduct include:

- 5.1** If a trainee's lack of preparation for/engagement with a professional component of their programme of training/study renders them unlikely to succeed on that component or would put the reputation of the SCITT/placement school at risk should the trainee undertake/continue the component, this may be deemed professional misconduct. It is the trainee's responsibility to manage their placement experience and to communicate with the SCITT, as set out in course literature. Failure to manage their placement or communicate with the SCITT poses a risk to the institution and will be deemed professional misconduct.
- 5.2** If a trainee fails to comply with the placement school's code of conduct (or any other policy which outlines expectations of staff) or the *SCITT's Code of Conduct*, as detailed in the *trainee contract*, this will be deemed professional misconduct.

6. General Inappropriate Behaviour

- 6.1 If a trainee's behaviour is found to be such that it renders them unlikely to succeed on a professional component in their programme or would put the reputation of the SCITT at risk should the trainee undertake/continue the component, or is putting other trainees at a significant disadvantage, this may be deemed professional misconduct. Trainees should consider this Academic Misconduct Policy and the Trainee Contract for examples of inappropriate or unprofessional behaviours.

7. Procedures for the Investigation of Suspected Misconduct

Investigation and consideration of suspected misconduct

- 7.1 All suspected infringements of academic and/or professional integrity will be investigated. In the case of evidence of meeting, the Teachers' Standards or work submitted for assessment the initial investigation will be by the person receiving this evidence or work. Subsequent handling of the case will be proportionate to the seriousness of the alleged offence.
- a) Minor instances of poor academic practice and misconduct will be identified by the school and resolved via the feedback process.
 - b) Moderate and more serious instances of academic misconduct will be reported to the Course Leader or the Hub Lead Teacher, who will conduct an investigatory interview with the trainee. For moderate instances of misconduct, a conclusion may be drawn at the end of the interview with the trainee but in cases that are more serious, they will be referred to the SCITT Director who may refer them to the Hub Lead Teachers' Committee.
 - c) Moderate and serious instances of professional misconduct whilst on School-Based Training must be reported to the Course Leader, who will conduct an investigatory interview with the trainee in all instances. Whilst on school-based training, all cases involving professional misconduct are deemed serious and will be referred where appropriate through the **SCITT's Disciplinary Policy and Procedure**.
 - d) Serious and more complex allegations of misconduct will be heard by the Hub Lead Teachers' Committee.
 - e) This process for investigation of suspected misconduct recognises the complexities of the decisions surrounding poor professional and academic practice and misconduct, which are ultimately a matter of professional and academic judgement and should be reached through discussion between the SCITT and the placement school.
- 7.2 If the case is not upheld or is classified as a minor offence of professional or academic misconduct the SCITT Director will inform the trainee at the end of the meeting of the outcome for example the evidence or work will be disregarded by the assessor, and consequently the final assessment will reflect poor professional or academic practice.
- 7.3 If the SCITT Director decides that a case of moderate or more serious academic and/or professional misconduct has been substantiated, they shall consider the trainee's record, including profile of assessment against the Teachers' Standards and previously substantiated allegations of academic and/or professional misconduct when determining a penalty.
- 7.4 The penalty may consist of a formal or final warning and the SCITT Director will:

- 7.5 Explain to the trainee that they are being given a formal warning, which will be confirmed in writing, and that any further allegations will be regarded as a serious offence, for which the consequences will be much more severe.
- 7.6 In the case of professional or academic misconduct of evidence or work submitted for assessment, explain to the trainee that the relevant portions of the evidence/work will be disregarded by the assessor and will not be assessed, and consequently the final assessment will reflect poor academic practice.
- 7.7 The SCITT Director will ask the trainee to confirm that they understand how they have breached the requisite academic and/or professional conventions and that they will take all necessary steps to ensure that they do not do so again.
- 7.8 The SCITT Director may also inform the trainee that they will be required to undertake a professional or academic integrity tutorial, where appropriate, and remind them of the support that is available to them.
- 7.9 The SCITT Director will advise the trainee of their right of appeal.
- 7.10 The formal record of the meeting will be recorded and circulated and will be considered in any future cases involving the trainee.
- 7.11 In the most serious cases, the SCITT Director will refer the case to a panel of three members of the Hub Lead Teachers' Committee for consideration with the resulting outcome possibly leading to the trainee being expelled from the training programme.

Appeals Procedure

- 7.12 A trainee who is found guilty of academic or professional misconduct may appeal against the decision to the Appeals Committee only on the following grounds:
- a) New evidence of special circumstances which the trainee could not have made known previously.
 - b) A material procedural irregularity in the conduct of the case.
- 7.13 An appeal will only be considered if it is submitted in writing within seven calendar days of the date of the notification to the trainee of the outcome of the investigation. Any appeal must state the grounds for the appeal and must be supported by appropriate evidence.
- 7.14 On receipt of an appeal the chair of the Appeals Committee shall determine whether there are grounds for an appeal to proceed. Once he/s is satisfied then an appeal hearing will take place.
- 7.15 The Appeals Committee will consider the appeal and make a decision as to whether the appeal should be upheld or dismissed. The chair will communicate the outcome of the appeal to the trainee and the SCITT Director, as soon as possible after the investigation has been completed. The decision of the Appeals Panel shall be final, and a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued with the outcome of the appeal. If, on exhaustion of the SCITT's internal procedures detailed above, a trainee wishes to seek an independent external review, then they should apply to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).
- 7.16 If the trainee has failed to comply with the expectations of the 'Academic Conduct' requirements of the SCITT and the SCITT is no longer prepared to accept the trainee, the SCITT will confirm that the trainee should no longer attend their placement. In such circumstances, the 'Student Academic Conduct Regulations' procedures will be followed by the PGCE Provider.

8. Publishing this Policy

This policy is available through the SCITT website and our SCITT Intranet. A copy can also be requested via our SCITT office.

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. Chorus Education Trust operating as National Specialist SCITTs, and the accredited provider for the National Modern Languages (NML) SCITT and the National Mathematics and Physics (NMAP) SCITT is a member of this scheme. If a trainee teacher is unhappy with decisions made by the SCITT regarding this Policy, they may be able to ask the OIA to review this decision. More information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can't look at and what it can do to put things right if something has gone wrong can be found here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>.

You normally need to have completed Academic Misconduct Policy before you complain to the OIA. The NML SCITT will send you a letter called a "Completion of Procedures Letter" when you have reached the end of our processes and there are no further steps you can take internally. If your appeal is not upheld, The NML SCITT will issue you with a Completion of Procedures Letter automatically. If your appeal is upheld or partly upheld, you can ask for a Completion of Procedures Letter if you want one. You can find more information about Completion of Procedures Letters and when you should expect to receive one here: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/providers/completion-of-procedures-letters>