ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY
OPEN TRAINING COLLEGE

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the College's commitment to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity from all staff, learners and stakeholders. It will define what areas constitute breaches of academic integrity and specify the consequences of such breaches, and the procedures which are to be followed in such cases.

The policy is referenced to the following QQI NAIN (National Academic Integrity Network) publications:

"Academic Integrity Guidelines (non-statutory)" (QQI, 2021a)

and

"Academic Integrity: National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms" (QQI, 2021b).

The latter publication defines 'Academic Integrity' as: "Compliance with ethical and professional principles, standards, practices and a consistent system of values, that serves as guidance for making decisions and taking actions in education, research and scholarship." (QQI 2021b, p.10)

2. Scope

This policy and the associated procedures apply to all individuals at Open Training College engaged in academic work, including all registered students of OTC and academic staff engaged in assessment of academic work which contributes to an award or credits.

The policy also entails an undertaking to collaborate with relevant stakeholders in upholding and updating this policy and its related procedures in line with best practice and to report any findings relating to cheating sites to relevant stakeholders, including QQI.

3. Statement

The College commits to the following in relation to **communicating** Academic Integrity across all programmes and through assessment guidelines:

- Upholding Academic Integrity is a strategic objective of the College, supported by appropriate structures and with a repository of relevant and clear information on the subject being available to all staff and students.

- Staff and Students will be communicated with clearly and available supports will be made known to them.
- There will be an emphasis on <u>preventing</u> breaches of academic integrity.
- Assessment design will focus on reducing the risk of plagiarism.

The College commits to the following in relation to **learners** in particular:

- Creating awareness of Academic Integrity and the consequences of breaching this policy from the point of induction to the College; including consequences for using 'cheating sites' or plagiarising.
- Ongoing awareness-raising in this area during the programme of study, particularly at the point of sharing assessment guidelines; including the use of 'Turnitin'.
- All learners will have access to information on Academic Integrity, including supports available to those under investigation, and general and additional supports available under the College's 'Student Support Policy'.
- Awareness of relevant legislation such as the 'Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Amendment Act 2019'.

The College commits to the following in relation to **staff** in particular:

- Initial training in recognising and preventing instances of breaches of Academic Integrity; including training in assessment design, recognising plagiarism and the use of College tools such as 'Turnitin' to detect possible plagiarism.
- Ongoing CPD in this area to ensure that current best practice is followed.
- Awareness of relevant legislation such as the 'Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Amendment Act 2019'.

Furthermore, the College is committed to ensuring that anti-plagiarism software is always part of the learning environment and will continue to invest in developments in this area.

The aim of these provisions will be to provide clarity at all times pertaining to Academic Integrity, its upholding and the consequences of any contravention. Parties involved in all aspects of providing information on and investigating breaches of this policy will be supported at all times and

treated in a fair, consistent and transparent manner, while taking account of special provisions for recording and storing such information under the College's GDPR Policy.

4. Definitions

Selected definitions are provided below, with a full lexicon provided at:

https://www.qqi.ie/Downloads/Final_AcademicIntegrityLex_pagesv3.pdf

Advertising Cheating Services/ Essay Mills/ Provision of Cheating Services:

"Advertising the provision of assignments for learners where this has not been authorised by the provider. Advertising the undertaking of assignments (in whole or in part) on behalf of an enrolled learner, or sitting an exam, or have someone sit an exam, in place of an enrolled learner where this has not been authorised by the provider."

(QQI 2021b, p.10)

The College undertakes to inform relevant stakeholders should it become aware of such services being offered and to make every effort to block such sites from its internal systems, as used by both staff and students.

Plagiarism:

"**Presenting work / ideas taken from other sources without proper acknowledgement.**

'Plagiarism, i.e. the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit, including those obtained through confidential review of other's research proposals and manuscripts.'

Auto-Plagiarism

Instead of creating an original piece of work, the author adds insignificant additional data and/ or information to his/ her previously published work and changes title, modifies aim of the study, and recalculates results. Also, it is the omission of cross-citation to own previous publications.

Self-Plagiarism/ Redundant Publication

A form of redundant publication by recycling or borrowing content from the author's own previous work **without citation**. Self-plagiarism is the use of one's own previous work in another context **without appropriate citation**. Related to self-plagiarism is the practice of data fragmentation or

salami slicing where the author(s) separate aspects of a study and publishes it as more than one publication. Writers should recycle their own material carefully and sparingly."

(QQI 2021b, p.18)

In instances of suspected plagiarism the procedure which follows this policy will be used: "Procedures to be taken by the College if a student's work is suspected of plagiarism".

Policy Title:		Academic Integrity Policy
OTC Policy No		**2102**
Version		**2.0**
Date approved: Jan 2022	Date policy will take effect: Jan 2022	Date of Next Review: In 2 years
Approving Authority:		**Academic Council**
Document Owner/Contact:		Head of Quality & Academic Affairs
Supporting documents, procedures & forms of this policy:		Student Handbooks, Induction and Assessment Guidelines "Procedures to be taken by the College if a students' work is suspected of plagiarism."
Audience:		**Public access**
Reference(s)		General Data Protection Regulation, 2018 Data Protection Acts, 1988-2018 "Academic Integrity Guidelines (non-statutory)" (QQI, 2021a) "Academic Integrity: National Principles and Lexicon of Common Terms" (QQI, 2021b) Qualifications and Quality Assurance (Education and Training) Amendment Act 2019