

H2 Academic Misconduct: Cheating and Plagiarism

2 Introduction

2.1 RCS values academic and creative honesty and integrity. Consequently, student academic misconduct at RCS includes cheating, collusion, and plagiarism. Essentially, all work submitted for assessment should be yours except in cases where group work is a specific requirement of an assignment.

2.2 You should not obtain specific help which could be regarded as cheating. Obtaining specific help includes contract cheating, collusion with another person, collusion with generative AI.

2.3 RCS students are thus required to actively avoid the following:

2.3.1 Contract cheating

At RCS, the definition of contract cheating is limited to where a student pays a third party (such as an essay writing service) to produce or help them produce an assessment.

2.3.2 Collusion

Collusion is where a student consciously enlists the help of either another person/s or generative AI to help them produce an assessment without official approval. This is not the same as collaboration, which is normally characterised as approved group work with responsibilities on the part of each member of the group to submit their own work.

More specifically, collusion includes:

- the conscious collaboration, without official approval, between two or more students in the preparation and production of work which is ultimately submitted by each in an identical or substantially similar form and/or is represented by each to be the product of his or her individual efforts
- where there is unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the student's own
- where there is unauthorised co-operation between a student and generative AI in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the student's own

2.3.3 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the representation of the work, artefacts or designs, written or otherwise, of any other person, from any source whatsoever, as the student's own. Examples of plagiarism may be as follows:

- the word-for-word copying of another's work without clear identification and acknowledgement including the downloading of materials from the Internet without proper referencing of materials;
- the paraphrasing of another's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without clear identification and acknowledgement;
- the unidentified and unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another's work;
- the deliberate and detailed presentation of another's concept/ performance/ composition as one's own.

Further to H2.3 the following applies:

- 2.4 Work submitted for assessment should not include material borrowed or stolen from published or unpublished work, or generated using AI tools, unless the correct conventions for referring to other people's work are observed. That is, if parts of the text, tables or diagrams are copied from books, journals or other publications this must be made clear by giving the name of the author and publication.
- 2.5 Work submitted for assessment must be original and should not include previously submitted work by the student or another individual unless the correct conventions for referring to other people's work are observed.
- 2.6 All assessable work must be signed and dated by the student following this standard declaration 'I confirm that this assignment is my own original work and where I have drawn on other sources, I have provided appropriate references'.

Procedure following suspected case of cheating/ plagiarism

- 1.7 A student (singularly or in conjunction with others) who is suspected of having violated the obligation to present work that is their own, or to have cheated in an assessment, will be reported to the **Assistant Registrar (Secretariat)** on behalf of the Quality and Standards Committee by the relevant Head of Department/Programme.
- 1.8 On receipt of such a report, the **Assistant Registrar (Secretariat)** is responsible for implementing The Conservatoire's plagiarism and cheating procedures.
- 1.9 Where necessary, the Academic Registrar and Secretary or their Deputy has delegated authority from the Academic Board to hear cases relating to plagiarism, cheating and collusion.
- 1.10 The procedure applied once such a report has been submitted to the **Assistant Registrar (Secretariat)** is determined by the year of study a student is in, whether the student has been accused of plagiarism before, and whether the student is an undergraduate or on a postgraduate taught programme.
- 1.11 Students in the first two years of an undergraduate programme and the first accusation of plagiarism:
 - 1.11.1 Assistant Registrar (Secretariat) invites a student against whom a report has been made to explain and confirm plagiarism, cheating or collusion by email;
 - 1.11.2 If student **confirms**, the student is informed by email of next steps and likely outcome as well as advice to avoid reoccurrence; If the student voluntarily admits to cheating or plagiarism (or the attempt to do so), the decision on the consequences for the assessment of the relevant component will be at the discretion of the Board of Examiners.
 - 1.11.3 If student **disagrees** with the report and does not voluntarily admit to cheating or plagiarism, the student is asked to attend a hearing with the Academic Registrar and Secretary or their Deputy. This hearing is to determine whether there has been any form of cheating or breach of regulations in order to gain an unfair advantage in terms of their assessments. The meeting is required to occur as soon as is practicable after the alleged offence and usually before the meeting of the relevant Board of Examiners.
 - 1.11.4 If the allegation(s) is substantiated, the Academic Registrar and Secretary or their Deputy will recommend the appropriate course of action to the appropriate Convenor of the Board of Examiners. Depending on the seriousness of the infringement this could entail failure of the component concerned (with or without the opportunity for resit or retake), or failure of all assessments taken in that term or academic year (with a recommendation that these be either resat or retaken), or withdrawal from the programme of study.

- 1.11.5 The decision about the Academic Registrar and Secretary or their Deputy's recommendations will be at the discretion of the Convenor of the relevant Board of Examiners.
- 1.12 Students in third year or above in an undergraduate programme (and/or not the first accusation of plagiarism) and students on a postgraduate taught programme:
- 1.12.1 Assistant Registrar (Secretariat) invites a student against whom a report has been made to attend a hearing with the Academic Registrar and Secretary or their Deputy. This hearing is to determine whether there has been any form of cheating or breach of regulations in order to gain an unfair advantage in terms of their assessments. The meeting is required to occur as soon as is practicable after the alleged offence and usually before the meeting of the relevant Board of Examiners.
- 1.12.2 If the student voluntarily admits to cheating or plagiarism (or the attempt to do so), the decision on the consequences for the assessment of the relevant component will be at the discretion of the Board of Examiners.
- 1.12.3 If the student does not voluntarily admit to the allegation, the Academic Registrar and Secretary or their Deputy will ask the Student Community Conduct Officer (SCCO) to undertake an investigation in order to review the report submitted.
- 1.12.4 If the allegation(s) is upheld by the SCCO's investigation, the Academic Registrar and Secretary or their Deputy will recommend the appropriate course of action to the appropriate Convenor of the Board of Examiners. Depending on the seriousness of the infringement this could entail failure of the component concerned (with or without the opportunity for resit or retake), or failure of all assessments taken in that term or academic year (with a recommendation that these be either resat or retaken), or withdrawal from the programme of study.
- 1.12.5 The decision about the Academic Registrar and Secretary or their Deputy's recommendations will be at the discretion of the Convenor of the relevant Board of Examiners.
- 2.11 Resits due to cheating or plagiarism shall also be subject to a fee of £125 per component per resit within a module.