

Code of Conduct Policy

1. Purpose:

This document outlines the policy addressing the code of conduct, aiming to create a positive and inclusive environment, foster trust, and contribute to the overall success and reputation of Al-Mahdi Institute (AMI) by guiding individuals in making ethical decisions and interacting with others in a manner aligned with the AMI's values and principles. It also addresses academic integrity, specifically tackling issues like plagiarism and cheating. This holistic approach underscores our commitment to upholding ethical academic standards.

2. Scope

This policy applies to faculty and students enrolled on AMI's Hawza Programme (HP).

3. Principles

AMI's code of conduct outlines the expected behaviour and academic standards for students. Our aim is to establish guidelines for professional and academic integrity, respect, confidentiality, compliance with laws and regulations, handling conflicts of interest, promoting diversity and inclusion, ensuring safety, and encouraging ongoing professional development.

4. Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment

- 4.1 AMI commits to maintaining an environment for both students and staff from discrimination and harassment and provides procedures for reporting and addressing such incidents.
- 4.2 AMI acts in accordance with UK's '[Equality Act 2010](#)' to ensure fair treatment for all.
 - 4.2.1 The Equality Act 2010 prohibits the following forms of discrimination:
 - 4.2.2 Direct discrimination: Treating someone less favourably than another person because of a protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy, and maternity).¹
 - 4.2.3 Indirect discrimination: Putting in place a rule, policy or practice that applies to everyone but disadvantages someone with a protected characteristic.²
 - 4.2.4 Victimisation: Treating someone unfairly because they have made a discrimination complaint or helped someone else make one.³
- 4.3 The Equality Act 2010 defines harassment as "unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual's dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual."⁴
- 4.4 If any members of AMI staff or students have experienced any form of discrimination and harassment while studying or teaching on the HP they can contact the Education Manager at education@almahdi.edu or the Head of Education at hashim@almahdi.edu to resolve any issues confidentially.

5. Confidentiality

- 5.1 AMI is committed to following GDPR rules and regulations, and the [Data Protection Act](#) with students' confidential data. AMI will not sell or forward any personal data to any third-party companies or individuals.
- 5.2 AMI staff will handle any sensitive information shared from students confidentially and will not be shared outside of their professional relationship.

6. Academic Integrity

- 6.1 Academic misconduct encompasses any action through which a student seeks to gain an advantage, either for themselves or for others, potentially resulting in a higher grade than their abilities would naturally achieve. The policy addresses various examples of academic misconduct, which are outlined below.
- 6.2 Plagiarism refers to the act of presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own without proper acknowledgment or citation. This can involve copying and pasting directly from a source, paraphrasing without giving credit, or submitting someone else's work as if it were your own. Plagiarism is considered a

¹ Equality Act 2010, 2010, sec. 13, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/13>.

² Equality Act 2010, 2010, sec. 19, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/19>.

³ Equality Act 2010, 2010, sec. 27, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/27>.

⁴ Equality Act 2010, 2010, sec. 26, <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/section/26>; Explanatory Notes to the Equality Act 2010, 2010, para. 60, <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/notes/division/3>; ACAS, "Harassment and Discrimination: Harassment," Accessed December 21, 2023, <https://www.acas.org.uk/harassment-and-discrimination/harassment>.

serious breach of academic integrity and is prohibited by AMI. Students must familiarise themselves with correct referencing, academic citation guidelines can be found in the student handbook.

- 6.2.1 Poor Academic Practice: This is defined by the severity of errors in presentation and referencing, as well as the absence of proper attribution to reused work. This form of misconduct may be categorised as poor academic practice rather than plagiarism, particularly if it occurs early in a student's academic career. Poor academic practice involves failing to reference source material in a way that amounts to misconduct but is not classified as academic misconduct. However, if a student commits a subsequent offense of poor academic practice, it is likely to be treated as academic misconduct and addressed accordingly.
- 6.2.2 Initial Plagiarism: In the event that a student becomes subject to these procedures for the first time, and if the allegations of plagiarism have been made but the investigation results are either pending or not yet communicated to the student, each case will be addressed as an initial instance of plagiarism until all investigation outcomes are conclusively determined.
- 6.2.3 Repeated Plagiarism: This is where a student who has gone through the procedures explaining poor academic practice and been found guilty of initial plagiarism but has continued to plagiarise. Any students found of repeated plagiarism will be removed from the course.
- 6.2.4 Students who have learning disabilities that impacts their ability to write essays or exams, must let the Education Manager know. AMI within its capacity will endeavour to assist such students in submitting exams, and written assignments.
- 6.3 Cheating:
 - 6.3.1 Cheating is characterised by dishonest behaviours during examinations or tests, such as communicating with or copying from other candidates, using written or printed materials when not permitted, using unauthorised electronic devices (e.g., mobile phones) to gain an unfair advantage, or acquiring a copy of a closed written examination paper ahead of its designated release (papers distributed to students in advance are referred to as 'open' papers).
 - 6.3.2 Cheating includes falsely inventing data, for example for research purposes.
- 6.4 Collusion:
 - 6.4.1 Collusion involves unauthorised and unattributed collaboration among students in the creation of an evaluated piece of work with the aim of gaining an impermissible advantage. Such collaboration may occur when two or more students knowingly collude on a portion or the entirety of a piece of work, presenting it as their own individual efforts.

7. Respectful Behaviour

- 7.1 Students must ensure that they behave respectfully and courteously towards course tutors and lecturers as well as fellow students whether online (e.g. emails or messages on Canvas) or in person.
 - 7.1.1 Any student engaging in abusive or disruptive behaviour will lead to the removal of students from their courses. Students who are removed from a course will be ineligible for enrolment in any other courses offered by HP, and their existing enrolment will be revoked.
 - 7.1.2 Students may be removed from the HP for engaging in unethical behaviour, including but not limited to plagiarism, cheating, bullying, and harassment, subject to the discretion of the Education Manager.

8. Live Lectures:

- 8.1 Students enrolling on any live online courses must be mindful that they are entering a shared space with fellow students and course tutors. Consequently, students recording or sharing course materials outside of this designated space is strictly prohibited, as it constitutes a violation of AMI policies on confidentiality.
 - 8.1.1 Students should be mindful that participating in live online classes constitutes a form of consent, as AMI may record certain online courses for its HP.
 - 8.1.2 Students joining live online lectures must keep their microphones muted unless given permission to unmute by the course tutor. This avoids unwanted disruptions during lectures. Students must follow the instructor's guidelines regarding use of microphones and chat functions.
 - 8.1.3 Recording lectures by students using any device is strictly prohibited, as it is considered an act of theft.

9. Canvas

- 9.1 AMI's uses Canvas for its HP. Students enrolled on courses on the HP are given login details so that they can access recordings and course materials on Canvas. Students are not permitted to share their login details with non-users outside of the AMI HP. If a student is found to do this their membership will be revoked.

Policy dated: 01/11/2023

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