

Academic Policy

Implemented: September 2017 (André Murray)
Revised: August 2019 (André Murray)
Revised: March 2020 (André Murray)
Revised: January 2021 (André Murray)
Next review: January 2022

Policy Aims

The Academic Policy sets out how WE Bridge Academy will ensure that our Statement of Educational Purpose is achieved.

Statement of Academic Purpose

WE Bridge Academy Educational Purpose is to:

- provide a modern, multi-cultural learning environment that reflects the use of the English language internationally.
- offer a wide range of courses and levels to help students achieve their academic, career and life goals.
- ensure that our courses are useful and relevant to students' needs and interests.
- offer serious academic study delivered by highly professional teaching staff.
- embrace different learning styles and reflect this in the type of lessons delivered.
- provide a beneficial and enjoyable all-round learning experience as well as an insight into British life, culture and values.
- encourage learners to take possession of their learning and develop their study skills.
- encourage learners to think critically and freely.
- prepare our learners to engage in lifelong learning.

Language Courses

Initial Assessment

All new students will be assessed on arrival to ascertain their current level of English. For English language students, the information gained from this assessment will be used to place the student in the appropriate level for their level. The school will seek to place the student in a level that has the appropriate level of challenge and offers the best prospect of progress. While every effort is made to ensure that the initial assessment is as accurate as possible, there may be instances where the initial language assessment does not fully reflect the student's language level. Teachers will monitor new students who join their class and inform the Academic Centre Manager if they feel that they are in the wrong level. The Academic Centre Manager will then discuss the teacher's concerns with the student and move them to another level if deemed appropriate. If moving the student to a lower level class care must be taken to ensure that this is done in a way that minimises any negative effect on the student's self-confidence.

Course Materials

The class teacher will, in consultation with the Academic Centre Manager, choose appropriate course materials for each class. Classes will usually follow a set course book for the duration of a course of study, though it may be decided that for certain group / class of students it may be more appropriate not to follow one set coursebook. Teachers are not expected to dogmatically follow the chosen coursebook. When using a course book, teachers should use their professional judgement to evaluate the material within and decide what parts to use and which to omit. Teachers are expected to supplement the any course books that they do use as appropriate, and to consider the students' ability, interests and cultural background when deciding what additional material to use in class.

Types of Class Activities

General English

Learners should be given the opportunity to develop all aspects of using English effectively including the skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. In addition, learners should be helped to develop their grammatical and syntactic knowledge and expand their knowledge of vocabulary. Teachers should use a range of engaging activities catering to different learning styles.

IELTS

Learners should be given the opportunity to develop the vocabulary, grammar and skills required to meet the requirements of the IELTS examination. Learners should be familiarised with the format of the IELTS exam and given feedback on how they are performing across all four bands with reference to the IELTS band score descriptors.

Skills classes

Skills classes are an opportunity for learners to practice and develop their reading, listening, speaking and writing skills through applying them to work on a project. Learners will work on topic-based project which will last for a week. During the project learners will work towards creating an end product such as a written report, a spoken presentation, a video or a web page.

Virtual learning Environment

WE Bridge Academy uses a virtual learning environment (Moodle) to support student learning. Teachers should use this to:

- record work completed in class
- set students homework
- set students assessment / practice activities
- upload extra materials for students

Learning Beyond the Classroom.

WE Bridge Academy recognises that the ultimate aim of language learning is to gain communicative competence in the language. To help to achieve this aim, teachers are encouraged to explore ways to take learning beyond the classroom and use learning opportunities outside of the school to help students communicate in English in real-world situations. Using activities such as 'English Out There' as well as utilising local amenities such as museums, art galleries and other places of interest to plan lessons, helps students to appreciate the real world uses of what they learn in the classroom and expose them to authentic language in situ. Research has shown that this has beneficial effects on student motivation.

Homework

Teachers are expected to set their students regular homework in order to help the students consolidate their learning outside of the class. WE Bridge Academy expects teachers to use their professional judgement and knowledge of their students to determine what homework to set. Any homework set should give the student the opportunity to further practice and apply any material and skills covered in class.

Assessment and Feedback

Students at WE Bridge Academy will be regularly assessed and receive regular feedback. Assessment can be:

- Summative (Assessment of Learning)
- This is an assessment of a student's learning over a course or unit of study. The student's knowledge and ability with reference to what they have studied is measured. Summative assessment can take the form of unit tests, end-of-course tests, progress tests, externally validated exams such as IELTS / IELTS pre-test. This will be used to determine if a student has achieved a specified learning outcome. Students will be given feedback on their results in any summative assessment.

Formative (Assessment for Learning)

- The teacher will use formative assessment to provide constructive feedback to the learner to improve learning and understanding. This will include information on:
 - What the learner has done / understood well
 - Areas that the learner needs to work on further
 - Practical advice and suggestions for the learner on how to progress further or address areas for development highlighted.

Learners should receive regular feedback on their written work. This can take the form of verbal feedback in class, brief written comments or more formal written feedback. Teachers should give formal written feedback on a student's written work at least twice a month, using the 'Homework correction & feedback sheet'. Teachers will take care to ensure that any written feedback is in language accessible to the learner.

Additional Student Support

In the event of a student failing to make expected progress, the academic staff will examine ways to support the students. These ways could include, for example, one-to-one support with appropriate staff, a change in class and / or level, extra contact hours and guidance on how to develop independently outside of the classroom.

Student Autonomy

WE Bridge Academy recognises that helping learners become independent is key to their academic success. To help students achieve this, learners will be given guidance on language learning strategies in the classroom. In addition, they will be given advice and guidance on developing their language skills outside of lessons during tutorials and in formal written feedback. They will also be given the opportunity to work independently using Moodle, our virtual learning environment.

Level Progression

In order to progress to the next level, students must successfully complete an exit test at the previous level. This is to ensure that students do not move into a new level without being adequately prepared. The pass mark required to proceed to the next level is 60%.

International Foundation Programme

Initial Assessment

All new students will be assessed on arrival to ascertain their current level of English. This information will be used to determine the appropriate level of English language support given to the students in their timetable.

Materials

Teachers will use the appropriate module handbooks for each module as a basis for IFP classes. Teachers are expected to use any additional material they feel necessary to help ensure students' understanding and to adapt any of the course material as required to ensure it is fully accessible to all students.

Types of Class Activities

Teachers should ensure that classes are a mixture of teacher input and student participation. Students should be introduced to new subject-appropriate concepts and be given the opportunity, through discussion, individual, pair and groupwork, to explore and develop their understanding of these concepts. Teacher must give students the opportunity to seek additional clarification and input if required.

Virtual learning Environment

WE Bridge Academy uses a virtual learning environment (Moodle) to support student learning. Teachers should use this to:

- record work completed in class
- set students homework
- set students assessment / practice activities
- upload extra materials for students
- set preparatory work for the next lesson

Students will have access to Moodle for each of their IFP modules.

Homework

Teachers are expected to set their students regular homework in order to help the students consolidate their learning outside of the class. WE Bridge Academy expects teachers to use their professional judgement and knowledge of their students to determine what homework to set. Any homework set should give the student the opportunity to further practice and apply any material and skills covered in class.

Assessment and Feedback

Students on the International Foundation Programme at WE Bridge Academy will be regularly assessed and receive regular feedback. Assessment can be:

- Summative (Assessment of Learning)

This is an assessment of a student's learning over a course of unit of study. The student's knowledge and ability with reference what they have studied is measured. Summative assessment can take the form of progress tests, final tests, progress test and assignments. These will be used to determine if a student has achieved a specified learning outcome. Student will be given feedback on their results in any summative assessment. Details of examinations and assessment are found in the section 'Examinations and Assessment' below.

- Formative (Assessment for Learning)

Formative feedback can include (but are not limited to) class tests and quizzes, analysing students' work, class polls and strategic questioning. The teacher will use formative assessment to provide constructive feedback to the learner to improve learning and understanding. This will include information on:

- What the learner has done / understood well
- Areas that the learner need to work on further
- Practical advice and suggestions for the learner on how to progress further or address areas for development highlighted.

Learners should receive regular feedback on their written work. This can take the form of verbal feedback in class, brief written comments or more formal written feedback. Teachers should give formal written feedback on a student's written work at least twice a month, using the 'Homework correction & feedback sheet'. Teachers will take care to ensure that any written feedback is in language accessible to the learner.

Additional Student Support

In the event of a student failing to make expected progress and thereby being in danger of not passing the programme, the academic staff will examine ways to support the students. These ways could include, for example, one-to-one support with appropriate staff, a change in class, extra contact hours and guidance on how to develop independently outside of the classroom.

Student Autonomy

We Bridge Academy recognises that helping learners become independent is key to their academic success. To help students achieve this, learners will be given guidance on learning strategies in the classroom. In addition, they will be given advice and guidance on developing their academic skills outside of lessons during tutorials and in formal written feedback. They will also be given the opportunity to work independently using Moodle, virtual learning environment.

Examinations and Assessment

Modules on the International Foundation Programme will be examined through a combination of assignments, presentations, portfolios and examinations. Full details of the assessment criteria can be found in: International Foundation Programme Syllabus.

Online and hybrid classes

WE Bridge Academy will sometimes deliver synchronous lessons online via the Zoom platform. These may be fully online classes or a blend of in person and online students (hybrid classes). Teachers delivering these lessons will ensure that they use a range of techniques and strategies to ensure that students remain engaged and fully benefit from the lessons. These include, but are not limited to:

- Using the chatbox function for answering, concept checking
- Breakout rooms for group / pairwork
- Screensharing and annotations
- Using classroom presentation tools where appropriate
- Pairing in person and online students through Zoom

Teachers should ensure that there is regular checking-in with students to ensure that they remain engaged throughout the lesson.

Academic Malpractice Procedure

WE Bridge Academy

- To identify and minimise the risk of student malpractice.
- To respond to any incident of alleged malpractice promptly and objectively.
- To standardise and record any investigation of malpractice to ensure openness and fairness.
- To impose appropriate penalties and/or sanctions on students where Incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice are proven.
- To protect the integrity of WE Bridge Academy, its validating partners and awarded qualifications

To achieve these aims, WE Bridge Academy will:

- seek to avoid potential malpractice by using the induction process and the student handbook to inform Students of WE Bridge Academy's policy on malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice
- ensure that all students receive appropriate guidance on good academic practice and avoiding malpractice from their tutors
- use plagiarism detection software for all assessed assignments and coursework.
- train students in the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources
- ask students to declare that their work is their own
- implement robust policies and procedures to reduce the risk of malpractice during examinations and assignments
- conduct an investigation in a form commensurate with the nature of the malpractice allegation.
- make the individual fully aware at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven
- give the individual the opportunity to respond to the allegations made
- inform the individual of the avenues for appealing against any judgment made
- document all stages of any investigation

Definition of Malpractice by Students

This list is not exhaustive and other instances of malpractice may be considered by WE Bridge Academy at its discretion and in collaboration with the Academy's validating partners:

- plagiarism of any nature
- duplication of a student's own work without acknowledgement (this doesn't apply to resubmissions as students can resubmit an improved version of the same assignment)
- collusion by working collaboratively with other students to produce work that is submitted as individual student's work
- copying (including the use of ICT to aid copying)
- deliberate destruction of another's work
- fabrication of results or evidence
- contract cheating
- false declaration of authenticity in relation to the contents of a portfolio or coursework

- impersonation by pretending to be someone else in order to produce the work for another or arranging for another to take one's place in an assessment/examination/test.

Definitions:

The list below is not exhaustive:

Cheating

Any student who in any Mode of Assessment, copies, steals or appropriates the work of other(s), or who introduces into the Examination Room, or includes in his/her work which is submitted for assessment, any materials or aids not explicitly permitted under the rubric of the Examination or the assessment; or who uses any other unfair method to gain advantage in an assessment. This interpretation shall apply to any work submitted as part of any of the required assessments for a programme in any year or cohort.

Plagiarism

The submission by the student or groups of students as their own work of a body of material or knowledge (written/visual/oral and/or materials or information from Internet sources or other sources/or of any other form of presentation or sourced materials) which is wholly or partly the work of another. This definition of plagiarism shall apply equally to the work of other current or previously registered students on Qualification Programmes, to the work of Ashridge Faculty or Associates, and to externally published sources or references irrespective of the mode or means of publication within or outside the public domain.

The Use of Un-attributable Sources or Un-attributable Academic Content

Submitting work for assessment, which is un-attributable in its sources or its origins, and which is an attempt to enhance the apparent performance of the student.

Falsification of work submitted for assessment

Falsifying data or other forms of evidence that is contained in work submitted for assessment, and which is an attempt to enhance the apparent performance of the student(s) in the assessment of that work.

The presentation of data in assessment, based on work purported to have been carried out by the student, but which has been invented, altered, copied or obtained by unfair means.

Copying

Deliberate copying of the work of another current or previous student(s) and submitting it for assessment as if it were the original work of the student who has engaged in the copying.

Collusion

Assisting other student(s) to gain an advantage in assessment by unfair means or receiving such assistance from other student(s). Collusion may be deemed to have occurred when two or more students submit work, which is so alike in content, wording, structure, discursive arguments, sources, data of any form or conclusions presented, that the similarity goes beyond what might be reasonably interpreted as mere coincidence. Being party to an arrangement intending to break or avoid the *Ashridge Academic Regulations* or stated requirements of any assessment also constitutes collusion.

Assessment Fraud

Being party to an arrangement whereby a person other than the student would fraudulently represent them in the assessment or any other fraudulent form of misrepresentation. Making false declarations in order to receive special consideration by Assessment Boards. This includes the fraudulent presentation of Extenuating Circumstances that is designed to gain unfair advantage, providing fraudulent evidence associated with requests for Extensions to Applicable Deadlines, and other requests associated with assessment.

Misrepresentation

The presentation by the student(s) as their own work of a body of material (written, visual or oral) which is wholly or partially the work of another, either in concept or expression, or which is a direct copy.

Group Work

The presentation of group work as being the work of a single student or vice versa.

Reporting suspected academic malpractice:

- Anybody who identifies or is made aware of suspected or alleged cases of malpractice at any time must immediately notify the Academic Centre Manager. In doing so they should put the allegation in writing to WE Bridge Academy, Floor 10 South Gate House, Wood Street, Cardiff CF10 1EW

This allegation should include:

- The learner's name and registration number
- The name and job role of any staff members involved in the alleged incident
- Details of the course/qualification affected
- Nature of the suspected or alleged malpractice and associated details

Investigating reports of suspected academic malpractice

Once an allegation of academic malpractice has been made, The Academic Centre Manager will appoint an investigating officer who has no personal interest in the outcome of the investigation to

conduct the initial investigation. The Academy will acknowledge receipt, as appropriate, to any person reporting an allegation within 3 working days.

Investigation timelines and summary process

The Academy will aim to action and resolve all stages of the investigation within 10 working days of receipt of the allegation.

The fundamental principle of all investigations is to conduct them in a fair, reasonable and legal manner, ensuring that all relevant evidence is considered without bias. In doing so investigations will be based around the following objectives:

- To establish the facts relating to allegations in order to determine whether any irregularities have occurred.
- To identify the cause of the irregularities and those involved
- To establish the scale of the irregularities
- To evaluate any action already taken
- To determine whether remedial action is required to reduce the risk to current registered learners and to preserve the integrity of the Academy and the qualification/s
- To identify any adverse patterns or trends.

The investigation may involve a request for further information from relevant parties and/or interviews with personnel involved in the investigation. Therefore, we will:

- Ensure all material collected as part of an investigation will be kept secure
- If an investigation leads to invalidation of certificates, criminal or civil prosecution, all records and original documentation relating to the case will be retained until the case and any appeals have been heard and for five years thereafter
- Expect all parties, who are either directly or indirectly involved in the investigation to fully co-operate with us
- Either at notification of a suspected or actual case of malpractice and/or at any time during the investigation, we reserve the right to withhold a learner's, and/or cohorts, results or certificates
- Where a member of the Academy's staff or associate is under investigation, we may suspend them or move them to other duties until the investigation is complete
- Throughout the investigation, our Academic Centre Manager will be responsible for overseeing the work of the investigation officer to ensure that due process is being followed, appropriate evidence has been gathered, reviewed, and for liaising with and keeping informed relevant external parties
- Where more than one student is involved in a case of academic malpractice, each student shall be treated in the same way. Where appropriate, the Investigating Officer may use a joint process for more than one student, such as a joint meeting.

Investigation report

After an investigation, the Academic Centre Manager will produce a report for all parties. The Academy will make the report available to the parties concerned and to the regulatory authorities and other external agencies, as required.

If it was an independent/third party that notified us of the suspected or alleged case of malpractice, the Academy will also inform them of the outcome – normally within 10 working days of making our decision - in doing so we may withhold some details if to disclose such information would breach a duty of confidentiality or any other legal duty.

If it is an internal investigation against a member of Academy staff, the report will be shared with the relevant internal managers and HR consultant. Any decision to begin disciplinary procedures will be made in line with the Academy's disciplinary procedures.

Investigation outcomes

If the investigation confirms that malpractice has taken place, we will consider what action to take in order to:

- Minimise the risk to the integrity of certification now and in the future
- Maintain public confidence in the delivery and awarding of qualifications
- Discourage others from carrying out similar instances of malpractice
- Ensure there has been no gain from compromising our standards.

The action we take may include:

- Imposing actions in order to address the instance of malpractice and to prevent it from reoccurring
- In cases where certificates are deemed to be invalid, inform the Awarding Organisation concerned and the regulatory authorities why they are invalid and any action to be taken for reassessment and/or for the withdrawal of the certificates. We will also let the affected learners know the action we are taking and that their original certificates are invalid and ask, where possible, to return the invalid certificates to the Academy
- Informing relevant third parties of our findings in case they need to take relevant action in relation to the centre
- In addition to the above, the Academic Centre Manager will record any recommendations from the investigation and report these to the CEO to help prevent the same instance of malpractice from reoccurring

Appeals

The student is entitled to appeal against any decision made by the Academic Centre Manager regarding allegations of academic malpractice. The appeal must be made in writing to the Chief Operating Officer within 5 days of receipt of the decision.

Such an appeal may only be made on the following grounds:

- That there is new and relevant evidence which the student was for exceptional reasons unable to present to the Investigating officer. This may include evidence in mitigation

- That the procedures in this Section were not complied with in such a way that it might cause reasonable doubt as to whether the result would have been different had they been complied with
- That there is documented evidence of prejudice or bias on the part of the investigating officer
- That the penalty imposed exceeds the penalties listed in Academic Policy.

Sanctions for cases of academic malpractice

Minor Academic Malpractice

Academic Malpractice will be considered minor if:

- It is the student's first offence and
- where it appears that the student has failed to understand the regulations and has offended unintentionally or in error.

If following an investigation the academic malpractice is deemed minor, the following procedure will be followed:

- The student will be given additional guidance regarding the specific nature of the malpractice to reduce the likelihood of it occurring again.
- The student will be informed that there will be a reduction of the mark for the assessment concerned commensurate with the advantage gained through the act of malpractice.

Serious or Repeated Academic Misconduct

Serious Academic Misconduct includes all cases where Academic Misconduct was intentional and/or deliberate. It also includes any repeated suspected offences. In the case of serious or repeated academic malpractice being proved, the following sanctions will be applied:

- A mark of 0% will be given to any assessment to which the academic malpractice relates.
- The student will be required to re-attempt the assessment. The student's maximum mark for the assessment will capped at the basic pass mark.
- If the malpractice identified relates to several assessments, the student will be required to complete the module again.
- An academic warning will be issued to any student committing academic malpractice. Receiving two academic warning relating to academic malpractice will lead to the student being expelled from their programme.

Notifying relevant parties

Where applicable, the Academic Centre Manager will inform the appropriate regulatory authorities if the Academy believes there has been an incident of malpractice, which could either invalidate the award of a qualification, or if it could affect another awarding organisation.

Where the allegation may affect another awarding organisation and their provision, we will also inform them in accordance with the regulatory requirements and obligations imposed by the regulator.

Student progression

WE Bridge Academy strives to support students beyond the time they are enrolled at the school. This applies especially with regards to academic progression after the successful completion of a course of study at WE Bridge Academy. While the majority of our students come through ETOs, who help them with university progression, there are some students who come independently and require more support and guidance when it comes to their academic progression. The academic team at WE Bridge Academy will support these students with their academic progressions by:

- Liaising with established contacts in the admissions department at partner universities with regards to:
 - Types of courses on offer
 - Entry requirements for courses
 - Application processes
- Identifying and contacting relevant personnel in the admissions department at non-partner universities with regards to:
 - Progression opportunities from our programmes
 - Types of courses on offer
 - Entry requirements for courses
 - Application processes
- Helping student with aspects of the university applications, whether through direct application or through UCAS.
- Helping students find suitable courses / universities that best meet the students' educational needs.
- Obtaining conditional offers from universities before a student enrolls to ensure a clear progression route for the student.

The academic team will also offer the above support and guidance to students who come to the academy via an ETO if they require it.