

# Academic Misconduct Procedure

## Definitions

**Academic Misconduct** is defined as the abuse of recognised academic conventions in order to gain an unfair advantage. This definition covers both plagiarism (which itself includes collusion), and cheating.

**Plagiarism** is defined as the representation of the work of others as one's own. Recognition of other people's work is through the accepted conventions as detailed in the Harvard Referencing system, and students who fail to comply with this system will be considered under the regulations as having plagiarised material. For the purposes of the University's academic regulations it means the inclusion in work submitted for assessment of significant material taken from the work (whether published or unpublished) of others (including other students) without acknowledgement or reference within the text and/or in the list of references. Examples of plagiarism are given in the table below. The University also uses a Plagiarism Tariff Rating which categorises each proven offence in relation to a series of criteria relating to the severity, academic level and extent of plagiarism confirmed and ensures consistency across individual cases and academic years in terms of the penalties applied. The tariff calculator is available to students via 'Gateway'.

**Collusion** is defined as the passing off of another person's work, with the clear knowledge and assistance of that person, for the purposes of deceiving a third party. Examples of collusion are given in the table below.

**Cheating** is defined as any attempt, by whatever means, to secure an unfair advantage in assessment. Examples of cheating are given in the table below.

**The following provides an in-exhaustive list of activities that could be considered as constituting Academic Misconduct:**

Plagiarism	Collusion	Cheating
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Paraphrasing material and ideas from another source without acknowledging the author within the text and/or in the list of references.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Intentionally allowing your coursework to be copied by another student.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fraudulent seeking of extensions, extenuating circumstances, etc.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copying material, including text, maps, diagrams, photographs, for coursework from a book/other publication without acknowledging the source within the text and/or in the list of references.</li> <li>• Downloading from the web and not citing the origin of the material within the text and/or in the list of references.</li> <li>• Using verbatim the lecture notes from this or a previous institution for an essay without attribution within the text and/or in the list of references.</li> <li>• Using sources verbatim without acknowledging that the verbatim is a direct quote.</li> </ul> <p><b>The following examples also fall under the category of cheating and will be considered as such in addition to plagiarism:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using another's whole piece of work and presenting it as one's own.</li> <li>• Purchasing academic materials for submission as one's own.</li> <li>• Submitting jointly written coursework as one's own individual work.</li> <li>• Paying someone to write coursework for you (ghost writing).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing another student's coursework for them.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Re-submitting previous work when an original submission is expected.</li> <li>• Library misconduct, making it difficult for others to acquire the necessary texts.</li> <li>• Copying from a neighbour during an examination without them realising.</li> <li>• Taking unauthorised material into an examination.</li> <li>• Holding onto/mis-shelving key library texts.</li> <li>• Making-up references.</li> <li>• Inventing data or altering data to strengthen a case.</li> <li>• Gaining prior knowledge of an examination or test.</li> <li>• Lying about medical / other factors to achieve special considerations.</li> <li>• Intimidating other students into assisting or completing the work for you.</li> </ul>
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Proven cases of academic misconduct by students, in the form of either cheating, plagiarism or collusion, can lead to severe academic penalties, such as irredeemable failure in a module, and disciplinary penalties up to and including expulsion. Students found guilty of academic misconduct will have a record of the offence placed on their University files.

In all cases where an offence of academic misconduct is suspected, the student(s) concerned will be informed of the allegation and that steps will be taken to establish whether such suspicion is well founded. In cases of suspected academic misconduct academic staff reserve the right to conduct a *viva voce* with regard to coursework and dissertations.

For first year undergraduate and one-year programmes, module leaders will deal with issues of poor referencing verbally until the Christmas break, with students required to resubmit an assignment for a maximum mark equivalent to the pass mark for the level in question (i.e. 40%). After Christmas, such offences will be considered as plagiarism and will require submission to an Academic Misconduct Panel meeting.

### **The Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP)**

All offences of academic misconduct will be considered by an Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP) that will be convened as required to deal with suspected cases of Academic Misconduct as soon as practicable following the raising of concerns by a member of Staff. The membership of the AMP shall be:

- Chair: Chair of Academic Quality and Standards Committee (AQSC)
- Secretary: Member of Registry Staff
- A second or former member of AQSC

Until such time as an AMP has reached a conclusion, no mark or score can, or will, be awarded for the work concerned. In the event that an Examination Board is convened prior to a decision being made by the AMP, the Board's decisions in respect of the whole of the work of the student relating to the module in question will be deferred.

### **The Academic Misconduct Panel will:**

1. Receive all information relevant to the case in question in advance of the meeting.
2. Accept both written and verbal evidence directly from the student(s) and staff involved in the alleged offence.
3. Remain impartial at all times.
4. Reach an agreed decision in all cases.
5. Apply the University's regulations for Academic Misconduct consistently and in an appropriate manner, giving due regard to all evidence received.
6. Communicate its decisions, and penalties to be imposed, in writing to the individuals involved in each case.
7. Produce an annual report of its activities for presentation to the Academic Board.

### **The Process**

Following detection of a possible case of academic misconduct, an invigilator, examiner or tutor will produce a concise written report setting out the nature and extent of the alleged offence and the supporting evidence available. In the case of plagiarism or collusion, the examiner will also identify and provide evidence of the original source material and a complete originality report generated through *Turnitin* plagiarism detection software where appropriate. This report will be submitted, with supporting material (and original source material in the case of plagiarism), to the Academic Registrar (AR). (Note in relation to potential cases of plagiarism, the AMP will only consider allegations where the extent of potential plagiarism either exceeds 5% of the total submission or where the total is below 5% but where critical ideas have been plagiarised).

On receipt of an allegation of academic misconduct, the AR will write to the student(s) concerned explaining the allegation and providing a copy of the report from the invigilator, examiner or tutor, at least five working days in advance of an AMP meeting, in line with the precepts of natural justice. The AR will also confirm the date of the AMP meeting to consider the allegation and ensure the student is aware of their right to submit a written response and to attend the AMP in person, should they wish to do so.

The student may attend the AMP meeting in person providing they have notified the AR of this intention at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. The student may be accompanied by a friend, another student or a member of staff, but should again confirm this to the AR at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. The accompanying person is not entitled to speak on behalf of the student but may counsel the student during the interview.

The AMP will consider each individual case presented to it in turn, taking due account of the evidence provided and any representation made by, or on behalf of, the student(s) concerned. The AMP will reach an agreed decision in all cases, including the penalty to be imposed. The decision of the AMP, and penalty to be imposed, will be confirmed in writing to the student(s) involved by the AR. All decisions of the AMP will be subject to the normal University appeals procedures.

In determining the appropriate penalty, the AMP will take into account each individual circumstance, including any briefing material set by the staff concerned, the extent of the offence, and the level of the student academic career and any previous history of plagiarism /cheating by the individual concerned. Normally, the higher the academic level the more serious the penalty.

The AMP may impose one or other of the following penalties for proven cases of cheating, plagiarism or collusion:

Plagiarism and collusion:

- The re-presentation of the plagiarised work, correctly referenced, for a maximum mark of 40%.
- The award of zero for the assessment in question, with the opportunity to undertake a referred assessment at the next available opportunity for a maximum mark of 40%.
- The award of zero for the work in question and no opportunity for referral.
- The loss of Honours should the offence relate to a BSc Honours dissertation or agreed equivalent research-based project.
- The loss of MA/MBA/MSc award should the offence relate to a Master's dissertation or agreed equivalent research-based project.
- Permanent exclusion from the University on the grounds of serious and/or repeated Academic Misconduct.

Full details of the penalties to be applied in relation to the nature of the plagiarism offence are contained in the Plagiarism Tariff Calculator (Appendix One) which is also available via 'Gateway'.

Cheating:

- The failure of the module in question and a requirement to re-register in the following academic year and complete all module assessments.
- The failure of the academic year and a requirement to re-register for all modules in the following academic year.
- The loss of Honours should the offence relate to a BSc Honours dissertation or agreed equivalent research-based project.
- The loss of MA/MBA/MSc award should the offence relate to a Master's dissertation or agreed equivalent research-based project.
- Permanent exclusion from the University on the grounds of serious and/or repeated Academic Misconduct.

In all cases where academic misconduct is proven, a record of the offence will be placed on the student's file.

The AMP will produce an annual report of its activities, including the numbers and outline details of cases considered, the numbers of students involved including their academic level, and the penalties imposed. This report will be presented to the Academic Board in December each year and will be placed, subject to Academic Board approval, on the RAU intranet for information. This report will also be made available electronically, should this be requested under the Freedom of Information Act, by any appropriate external agency.

### **Appeals against disciplinary decisions**

A student may appeal against the outcome of a disciplinary decision, whether the original offence related to academic or non-academic misconduct. In order for the University to consider any appeal against a disciplinary decision, the student should write directly to the Director of Student Experience and must be able to demonstrate one or more of the following:

- That there was a procedural irregularity within the original misconduct process.
- That the penalty imposed by the University was unreasonable or unfair.
- That new evidence has become available that was not available at the time the original offence of misconduct was considered.

The grounds for the appeal will be considered by a senior representative of the University who has not previously been involved with the matter. Where grounds for appeal can be established, an Appeal Panel will be constituted. The Appeal Panel will be chaired by a member of the University's Senior Management and include two other senior members of academic staff who have not previously been involved with the matter.

The Appeal Panel will have access to all documentation concerning the case and to any written submissions the student or any other party wishes the Panel to consider. The Panel may instigate such additional enquiries as it considers appropriate.

The Appeal Panel may:

- Uphold the original decision.
- Set aside the decision and require that the matter is investigated afresh.
- In the event that new evidence has been made available, set aside the decision or revise the penalty imposed or require that the matter be considered afresh.

The Appeals Form can be found [here](#).

The Appeal Panel's decision will be communicated in writing to the student, together with the Panel's reasons. The student will be informed in writing that this is the final stage of the disciplinary procedure by means of a Completion of Procedures Letter. If the student believes there remains cause for complaint about the application of the disciplinary procedure or its outcome the student may raise the matter with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures Letter. <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>.

**APPENDIX 1: TARIFF AND PENALTIES**  
**Academic Misconduct Penalty Tables**

<b>plagiarismadvice.org</b>		
<b>Assign points based on the following criteria</b>		
HISTORY	1st Time	100 points
	2nd Time	150 points
	3rd/+ Time	200 points
VALUE OF ASSIGNMENT	Standard weighting	30 points
	Large project (e.g. final year dissertation)	60 points
LEVEL / STAGE	Level 1	70 points
	Level 2	115 points
	Level 3/Postgraduate	140 points
AMOUNT/EXTENT	Below 5% <i>AND</i> less than two sentences	80 points
	As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised	105 points
	Between 5% and 20% <i>OR</i> more than two sentences but not more than two paragraphs	105 points
	As above but with critical aspects plagiarised	130 points
	Between 20% and 50% <i>OR</i> more than two paragraphs but not more than five paragraphs	130 points
	As above but with critical aspects plagiarised	160 points
	Above 50% <i>OR</i> more than five paragraphs	160 points
	Submission purchased from essay mill or ghost-writing service	225 points
ADDITIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	Evidence of deliberate attempt to disguise plagiarism by changing words, sentences or references to avoid detection	70 points

PENALTIES (Summative Work)	
Award penalties based on the points	
In all cases a formal warning is given and a record made contributing to the student's previous history	
Points	Available Penalties
280-329	No further action beyond formal warning
330-379	Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required, with no penalty on mark
380-479	Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required but mark capped or reduced
480-524	Assignment awarded 0% - no opportunity to resubmit
525-559	Module awarded 0% - re-sit required, but mark capped or reduced <i>OR</i> Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, but credit still awarded <i>OR</i> Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, and credit lost Award classification reduced
560+	Award classification reduced <i>OR</i> Qualification reduced (e.g. Honours -> no Honours) <i>OR</i> Expelled from institution but credits retained
PENALTIES (Formative Work) or for undergraduate work submitted in Semester 1 , Level 1	
Award penalties based on the points	
Points	Available penalties
280-379	Informal warning
380+	Formal warning, with record made contributing to the student's previous history

# Academic Misconduct Procedure

Managed by: Academic Registrar

Approved by: Academic Board

Department: Registry

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## Version Control

<b>Version number</b>	<b>Purpose/change</b>	<b>Name and job title</b>	<b>Date (DD/MM/YYYY)</b>
1.0	To update the existing Academic Misconduct Policy to include a revised penalty tariff and a revised Panel membership	Anne Granger Academic Registrar	10 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2018