

## PART A – REGULATIONS GOVERNING ACADEMIC OFFENCES

### A1 Academic Offences

1.1 Every student is entitled to receive, in a programme or course handbook, guidance on the relevant discipline conventions governing such matters as sound scholarship, originality of expression, citation, attribution, referencing, bibliography, acceptability of quotation, plagiarism, collusion and cheating in examinations.

1.2 The following are examples of academic offences in respect of assessment:

- (i) **Collusion:** A student colludes when they submit work for assessment done in collaboration with another person as entirely their own work, or collaborates with another student to complete work which is submitted as that other student's work. Collusion does not apply in the case of the submission of group projects, or assessments that are intended to be produced collaboratively.
- (ii) **Misleading material:** Inclusion of data which has been invented or obtained by unfair means or an academic offence; or re-submission in whole or in part, without proper acknowledgement, of any work by the student for which credit has already been claimed as part of the same or another award. It is also an academic offence to solicit via an illicit source - including the internet – and/or to use material which could provide an unfair advantage in respect of work to be submitted for assessment; an example of this would be offering to pay another person to provide material or otherwise to assist in producing work for assessment.
- (iii) **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the passing off of another person's thoughts, ideas, writings or images as one's own. A student commits plagiarism when they incorporate in their own work substantial unacknowledged portions of another person's material, or attempts to pass off such work as original through its inclusion. In this context, substantial means more than trivial or minimal.
- (iv) **Cheating:** Any irregular behaviour during examinations such as the unauthorised possession of notes; the copying of another candidate's work; the use of programmable calculators and other equipment when this has been forbidden; the unauthorised obtaining of examination papers.
- (v) **Misconduct in Research:** The fabrication or falsification of data; misrepresentation of data and/or interests and or involvement, or the failure to follow accepted procedures or to exercise due care in carrying out responsibilities for avoiding unreasonable risk or harm to research subjects or participants or the environment. This would also include improper handling of privileged or private information on individuals collected during the research.

The above list is not exhaustive.

1.3 The commission of an academic offence removes any right to reassessment conferred by Scheme and/or Award Regulations.

### Academic Offences and Extenuating Circumstances

1.4 Regulation A5.8.12 of the Undergraduate Regulations states: 'A claim for extenuating circumstances shall not be available to a student as a means to avoid an application of these Regulations to allegations of having committed an academic offence in

relation to assessment.' There is provision in these Regulations for the situation where an academic offence is alleged against a student who is claiming that their performance has been affected by extenuating circumstances.

## Procedure

- 1.5 Allegations of the commission of academic offences may be dealt with either by a summary procedure or by a full investigatory procedure.

## A2 University Academic Offences Committee

- 2.1 No person previously involved in either the allegation or its investigation shall take part in the proceedings of the University Academic Offences Committee when discussing the alleged academic offence or, if proved, the penalty to be applied. After a finding that a student has committed an academic offence the Committee shall consider the penalty to recommend to the appropriate Board of Examiners.
- 2.2 After a finding that a student has committed an academic offence, the University Academic Offences Committee shall recommend a penalty having taken into consideration all the evidence presented and the following:
- (i) **Premeditation:** A planned act shall normally be considered more serious than an impulsive action.
  - (ii) **Continuity:** The commission of an academic offence on more than one occasion may be dealt with more severely than a single act.
  - (iii) **Scale and Extent:** Extensive use of academic misconduct may be dealt with more severely than a lesser amount.
  - (iv) **Theft of Materials:** Where the academic offence involves the theft of another person's assessed work it may be dealt with more severely.
  - (v) **Other Students:** Where the academic offence adversely affects other students it may be dealt with more severely.
- 2.3 After consideration of (i) – (v) the University Academic Offences Committee shall make recommendations as it thinks fit to the appropriate Board of Examiners. The recommendations shall include whether or not to restore the right to reassessment as specified in Scheme and/or Award Regulations; and the imposition of one of the following penalties:
- (a) To take no further action.
  - (b) To warn the student against any future academic offence, but impose no other penalty.
  - (c) To record a mark of zero for the piece of assessed work or examination only.
  - (d) To record a mark of zero for every assessment item within the unit/module.
  - (e) To record a mark of zero for every assessment item within all units/modules taken during the semester concerned.

- (f) To record a mark of zero for every assessment item within all units/modules during the academic level concerned.
- (g) Record a mark of zero for every assessment item within all units/modules during the academic level concerned. Allow neither re-enrolment nor reassessment.
- (h) For undergraduate students, to allow an original pass-mark given for the piece of assessed work or examination (the 'merit mark') to stand, and to reduce by a single class the final award to be conferred at the conclusion of the programme of study. As examples of this penalty, a student whose initial calculation indicates an upper second class honours degree should instead have conferred on them a lower second class honours degree; or a student whose initial calculation indicates a third class honours degree should instead have conferred on them an unclassified degree. Where a student is permitted a reassessment opportunity, the capped module mark from the reassessment shall be used for the initial calculation, and the resulting award reduced by a single class as above. Such reductions shall not result in an award below an unclassified degree. A student's entitlement to intermediate awards on the basis of credit accumulated prior to the level at which the offence was committed shall not be adversely affected.

In addition, a student found to have committed an academic offence may also be subject to action under the University's Student Conduct and Disciplinary Regulations.

### **A3 Appeals Against a Decision of the Academic Offences Committee**

- 3.1 The only grounds on which a student may appeal against a decision of the University Academic Offences Committee that they have committed an academic offence or the penalty imposed by a Board of Examiners are those grounds specified in Section B2.

## **ACADEMIC OFFENCES: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

### **1 Academic Offences in Relation to Assessment**

- 1.1 This section applies to the commission by students of academic offences in respect of assessments for a University award. The commission of an academic offence removes the right to re-assessment after initial failure and may result in failure of an award.
- 1.2 Examples of academic offences are cited at A1.2 of the University General Regulations.

### **2 Procedure**

- 2.1 Allegations of the commission of academic offences may be dealt with either by a summary procedure or by a full investigatory procedure.
- 2.2 Where appropriate, allegations of misconduct in research shall be dealt with under the UK Research Integrity Office procedure for the investigation of misconduct in research, and not under the University Academic Offences Regulations.

## 2.1 Summary Procedure

- 2.1.1 The summary procedure is available in cases where an allegation of an academic offence has been made against a student at Level One or Level Two of an undergraduate (including Foundation degree and Higher National) programme, except where the allegation relates in any way to misconduct in an examination, or to the use of material from an illicit source (such as a customised 'ghost-writing' service), or where a previous allegation against the student has been upheld.
- 2.1.2 Where a member of the academic staff suspects a student to whom the summary procedure is available of having committed an academic offence, then the Head of School <sup>1</sup>(or equivalent) shall be promptly notified of this and provided with evidence of the grounds on which the suspicion is held.
- 2.1.3 Where the Head of School (or equivalent) considers that there are grounds for pursuing an alleged academic offence, then they shall write to the student advising them of the right to have the matter dealt with under the summary or the full investigatory procedure and inviting the student to an interview under the summary procedure.
- 2.1.4 If the student chooses to attend an interview<sup>2</sup> with the Head of School (or equivalent), then the Head of School shall explain the basis of the allegation to the student.
- 2.1.5 If the student provides a satisfactory explanation of the allegation, then the Head of School (or equivalent) shall dismiss the allegation.
- 2.1.6 If the student admits the allegation, then the Head of School (or equivalent) may dispose of the matter by imposing a maximum penalty of awarding a fail mark of zero per cent for the submitted work which will subsequently be presented at the Board of Examiners. In determining eligibility to reassessment opportunities, the relevant piece of work will not be excluded from the Board of Examiners' deliberations. Any subsequent approved reassessment entitlement will be undertaken at the next available opportunity as deemed by the Board of Examiners.
- 2.1.7 If the student neither admits the allegation nor offers a satisfactory explanation, then the matter will be dealt with under the full investigatory procedure.
- 2.1.8 At partner institutions, the summary procedure shall be conducted by the senior academic staff member with responsibility for higher education.

## 2.2 Full Investigatory Procedure

- 2.2.1 It is a principle of the full investigatory procedure that a member of staff involved in one of its stages is disqualified from participation in a later stage.
- 2.2.2 Where an academic offence has been alleged and the summary procedure is not available to a student or the student elects to have the matter dealt with by a full investigatory investigation, then the following procedure shall apply:
- (i) **Coursework** Where a member of staff suspects that an academic offence has been committed in relation to coursework, they shall immediately inform the relevant Head of School (or equivalent) and present the relevant evidence.

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<sup>1</sup> Head of School also refers to Deputy Head of School

<sup>2</sup> See also Section M – Audio Recordings of Meeting

Where it is suspected that a student has made use of material from an illicit source (such as customised 'ghost-writing' service), the evidence may include examples of other work previously produced by the student and any related comparative analysis.

- (ii) **Examinations** When an invigilator believes a candidate has committed an academic offence in an examination they shall confiscate the candidate's examination answer book and endorse it appropriately, and shall confiscate any other relevant evidence. The candidate shall be allowed to proceed with the examination, having been issued with a new examination answer book, unless the student continues with the conduct which raised the suspicion of the academic offence. On conclusion of the examination the invigilator shall submit an incident report to Registry (Student Administration). A spreadsheet of all reported incidents will be forwarded to the relevant Colleges.

### 3 Investigatory Interview

3.1 Where an academic offence is alleged, with sufficient supporting evidence, the Head of School (or equivalent) or nominee shall arrange for the student to be interviewed promptly by an appropriate member of staff.

3.2 The interview shall be arranged as quickly as possible. The interview shall be conducted by one member of staff, accompanied by one further staff member whose sole role is to take minutes of the interview. Neither member of staff shall be the member of staff making the allegation. The student, at their discretion, may be accompanied by a friend who shall be a member of staff or student of the University or an officer of the Students' Union.

3.3 The allegation will be explained in full and the student will be allowed to give their account, and to provide any defence.<sup>3</sup>

3.4 (i) Where appropriate, the interviewer may adjourn the interview to allow further enquiries to be made, such as where the student has introduced information, relating to a defence or explanation that needs to be substantiated.

(ii) Where the allegation is one of using misleading material from an illicit source (such as a customised 'ghost-writing' service), the student may be invited to attend a *viva-voce* examination to answer questions about the work or the techniques used and to demonstrate their authorship of the relevant work. In such an event, the examiner will be a specialist in the relevant subject/discipline from within the student's School (who has had no prior involvement in the matter), nominated by the Head of School. The nature of the viva is to investigate whether the work has been produced from the student's own efforts and it should be conducted in this manner. It should not be an examination of the work as would be necessary for the awarding of a grade. A note-taker will also be present; and the student may be accompanied as set out in section 3.2 above. A student's companion will not be allowed to make any material contribution to the dialogue between the examiner and the student (in the event of any dispute about this aspect, the decision of the examiner shall be final).

(iii) The outcomes of the further enquiries and/or examination shall be communicated to the student and the interview shall then be resumed as soon as possible.

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<sup>3</sup> See also Section M – Audio Recordings of Meetings

- 3.5 The minutes of the interview shall be prepared promptly following the interview and submitted to the Head of School (or equivalent) or nominee and the student. Where the Head of School (or equivalent) or nominee considers that no *prima facie* case has been established no further action shall be taken and they shall notify the student accordingly.
- 3.6 A copy of the minutes shall be provided to the student. The student, on the receipt of the minutes of the investigatory interview, shall be allowed to submit any further defence or explanation to the Chair of the University Academic Offences Committee.
- 3.7 Where there appears to be a *prima facie* case of the commission of an academic offence the Head of School (or equivalent) or nominee shall, without undue delay, forward all papers to the Chair of the University Academic Offences Committee who shall be responsible for briefing the Committee, and providing members with the minutes of the investigatory interview(s) and any other relevant materials. Where such a *prima facie* case has been established the student shall be notified in writing by the Head of School (or equivalent) or nominee.
- 3.8 If, after being given reasonable notice and opportunity to attend an investigatory interview, the student does not attend, the Head of School (or equivalent) or nominee shall determine whether a *prima facie* case exists based on the evidence available. The Head of School (or equivalent) shall then apply sections 3.4 or 3.7 above, as appropriate.
- 3.9 If a *prima facie* case has been forwarded the allegation and the evidence shall be placed before the University Academic Offences Committee, who shall determine whether the alleged academic offence has been committed.

#### **4 University Academic Offences Committee**

Regulations pertaining to the Academic Offences Committee are cited at A2 of the University General Regulations.