

# Academic offences regulations

## **12. Academic offences**

### **12.1 Academic offences principles**

**12.1.1** The Academic Offences regulations will be used to deal with any cases of academic misconduct including examination offences, plagiarism and other means of cheating to obtain an advantage.

**12.1.2** Offences relating to an invigilated examination, coursework or other assessment include:

- a. Research misconduct;
- b. purchasing and selling of work;
- c. fabrication of experimental results, research or other investigative work;
- d. failure to gain prior ethical approval;
- e. plagiarism;
- f. unauthorised access to an examination paper before an examination;
- g. forgery;
- h. removal of a question paper, answer script or other examination stationery from an examination venue or any other University premises;
- i. causing a disturbance during an examination;
- j. refusal to cooperate with an invigilator or to follow an invigilator's instructions;
- k. possession of unauthorised materials whilst under examination conditions, or leaving unauthorised material in an examination venue (including toilets);
- l. access to, possession of or use of unauthorised material on, a computer, mobile telephone, or other electronic device during an examination;
- m. communicating with another candidate while under examination conditions;
- n. copying, or attempting to copy, the work of another candidate;
- o. having writing on the body in an examination venue;
- p. impersonation of another student in an examination or assessment, or the employment of an impersonator in an examination or assessment;
- q. the fraudulent reporting of source material;
- r. the fraudulent reporting of experimental results, research or other investigative work;
- s. collusion in the preparation or production of submitted work, including supplying work to facilitate academic misconduct, unless such joint or group work is explicitly permitted;

- t. use, or attempted use, of ghost writing services for any part of an assessment;
- u. misuse of generative artificial intelligence tools in preparation or production of submitted work;
- v. submission of work, or sections of work, for assessment in more than one module or assessment (including work previously submitted for assessment at another institution);
- w. all other forms of cheating.

**12.1.3** Marking of work will not be suspended during any investigation or allegation of academic misconduct, although the result will be withheld until the investigation is complete.

**12.1.4** Students may present any extenuating circumstances to the Academic Offence Panel, although they may do this once only. Where an allegation of an Academic Offence is proven, applications for mitigation cannot be considered.

## **12.2 Plagiarism**

**12.2.1** The University defines plagiarism as the practice of taking someone else's work and/or ideas and passing it/them off as their own. It is also, where a student represents someone else's work as their own irrespective of whether this was intended. Close paraphrasing, without adequate attribution; copying from the work of another person, including another student; using the ideas of another person without proper acknowledgement, all constitute examples of plagiarism. In addition, where a student re-uses work, whether in part or in whole that they have previously submitted for graded assessment – at the University or another institution - without properly referencing themselves (known as 'self- plagiarism') shall also constitute plagiarism.

## **12.3 Poor academic practice**

**12.3.1** This can only be applied to students in their first year of study at the University. Where the Course Leader, or authorised nominee, determines that the first offence is due to poor academic practice\*, the following course of action shall apply:

\*poor academic practice - this is where a first academic offence has been committed due to lack of knowledge of academic writing. This is also to be used where plagiarism has been identified as resulting from a lack of understanding and poor academic practice.

- a. advise the student to obtain further support and guidance in referencing skills and;
- b. require the student to submit a corrected version of the element of assessment at the same attempt within five working days following the meeting;
- c. ensure that a letter will be retained on the student's file to this effect for the period of one year, or where it is longer, for the duration of that level of study.

**12.3.2** Poor Academic Practice cases will normally be concluded within **10 working days** of the receipt of the case and will be dealt with internally by the Course Leader, or authorised nominee within the School/College. Where a student commits a further offence this should be considered as a Minor Offence or a Major Offence depending on the level of severity.

## **12.4 Severity of academic offences**

**12.4.1** Academic offences shall be dealt with according to the severity of the offence as follows:

- a. **Minor offence** - includes first offence of plagiarism, or other minor offence resulting from negligence or intent, where a student attempted to acknowledge their sources and/or comply with the regulations for assessment, but a minor oversight or error has given cause for concern, and the student could benefit from further academic advice and referral for support.
- b. **Major offence** - includes subsequent minor offences of plagiarism, all examination offences and all other serious offences, all of which require referral to the University Registrar for further investigation by the Academic Offences Panel.

**12.4.2** In the case of a proven academic offence with a penalty requiring the submission of assessment, the submission must take place at the earliest opportunity during the current academic year and/or by the deadline set by the School/College.

**12.4.3** Where a student does not submit as required by an academic offence penalty, a mark of 0 shall be given for the element(s) of assessment in which the offence occurred.

**12.4.4** All academic offences and outcomes must be reported to Academic Registry, where a record will be kept.

## **12.5 Minor offence**

**12.5.1** A student suspected of committing a minor academic offence shall be invited to attend an interview with the Head of Subject, or authorised nominee, and shall be given copies of all evidence submitted in support of the allegation.

**12.5.2** Notice of **five working days** will be given to the student of the interview date, time and venue.

**12.5.3** Students should contact the Head of Subject, or authorised nominee, within **five working days** of notification of the allegation to make alternative arrangements if they are unable to make the original proposed date. If the student is unable to attend the next arranged date, the interview will proceed in their absence.

**12.5.4** Where a student fails to attend or make alternative arrangements, the investigation will proceed in the absence of the student, and consideration will be given to the documentation available.

**12.5.5** A student may be accompanied to the interview by a friend or Students' Union representative. Under no circumstances may the student have legal representation or be represented by an external organisation.

**12.5.6** All minor offence interviews will be conducted within the School/College according to the standard procedures issued by Academic Registry.

**12.5.7** As part of an interview, if the case warrants it, a student may be tested on subject knowledge by an oral examination. The oral examination shall be conducted by two members of academic staff with knowledge of the subject who will submit a report to the Head of Subject.

**12.5.8** Where a **minor offence is proven**, the Head of Subject or authorised nominee, will ensure that one of the following penalties will be applied:

- a. where the Head of Subject or authorised nominee considers the offence to be poor academic practice, those related penalties will apply.

- b. failure (a mark of 0) in the element(s) of assessment in which the offence occurred, with the maximum mark of the next available attempt capped at the pass mark; and impose a formal reprimand to be retained on the student's file for the duration of the course of study. If the resubmitted work incurs further academic offence allegations, the case will be referred to a Major Academic Offences Panel.

**12.5.9** Where a **minor offence is upheld** on the resit of an assessment, and the penalty of failure of that assessment results in failure of the module, the next available attempt will be the first attempt at that assessment on the retake of the module, with that first attempt at the assessment capped at the pass mark.

**12.5.10** Where a Minor offence is upheld on the resit of an assessment on the retake of a module, and the penalty of failure of that assessment results in failure of the module, no further attempts at the module are available (see 8.11 above).

**12.5.11** All minor offence cases referred to the Head of Subject, or authorised nominee, will normally be concluded within **20 working days** of the receipt of the case and will be dealt with internally by the School/College.

**12.5.12** Where the Head of Subject, or authorised nominee, determines following the interview, that there is evidence of an academic offence in an assessment that cannot be dealt with as a minor offence, the Head of Subject, or authorised nominee, will refer the case as a major offence within **five working days** to the University Registrar or authorised designate, who shall be responsible for investigating the case.

## **12.6 Major offence**

**12.6.1** Invigilators, assessors or Module Leaders who suspect a student of committing an academic offence in an **examination** shall **immediately** inform the University Registrar, or their authorised nominee, who shall be responsible for investigating the allegation as a major offence.

**12.6.2** Where a member of staff suspects that a major offence has been committed as part of any **assessment**, the Module Leader or assessor shall **immediately** notify the Head of Subject or authorised nominee. This should be referred to the University Registrar or authorised designate where it is a major offence **within five working days**.

**12.6.3** A student accused of committing a major offence shall be invited to an Academic Offences Panel investigation by the University Registrar or authorised designate and shall be given copies of all evidence submitted in support of the allegation.

**12.6.4** An Academic Offences Panel shall be convened with responsibility for determining whether assessment related offences have been committed and will determine penalties, where applicable.

**12.6.5** Notice of a minimum of **five working days** will be given to the student of the Academic Offences Panel investigation date, time and venue.

**12.6.6** A student may be accompanied to the Academic Offences Panel investigation by a friend or Students' Union representative. Under no circumstances may the student have legal representation or be represented by an external organisation.

**12.6.7** As part of an investigation, a student may be tested on subject knowledge by an oral examination. In such cases, the oral examination shall be conducted by a minimum of two academic staff, with knowledge of the subject, who shall submit a report to the Academic Offences Panel.

**12.6.8** Students should contact the University Registrar or authorised designate **within five working days** of notification of the allegation to make alternative arrangements if they are unable to make the original proposed date. If the student is unable to attend the next arranged date, the Academic Offences Panel will proceed in their absence.

**12.6.9** The Academic Offences Panel investigation should proceed where a student fails to attend or make alternative arrangements, and the Panel will consider the case in the absence of the student and make a decision on the documentation available.

**12.6.10** On completion of the Academic Offences Panel investigation, the University Registrar or authorised designate shall notify the student of the outcome of the case.

**12.6.11** The Academic Offences Panel shall comprise:

- a. a member of academic staff who is a trained Chair, appointed by the authority of the Vice-Chancellor and President. If for any reason the Chair is unable to act, the Vice-Chancellor and President or authorised nominee shall appoint an alternative Chair;
- b. a member of academic staff from the same School/College to that of the student;
- c. a member of academic staff from a different School/College to that of the student;
- d. in attendance, an authorised nominee from Academic Registry to act as Secretary to the Panel.

**12.6.12** The Academic Offences Panel shall have the authority to act in cases where a student admits or does not deny an offence.

**12.6.13** The Secretary is responsible for advising the Academic Offences Panel on the Academic Regulations. In the event of the Panel being divided over a decision to be taken, the Chair shall have a second and casting vote to determine the decision.

**12.6.14** If it is determined that a major offence has been committed, the student's file/record will be made available to the Panel at this stage along with the student's transcript. In arriving at a decision on penalties to be applied, the Panel will take account of any previous offences on record and shall impose the penalties on an individual basis; in cases involving a group of students, each individual will be considered separately.

**12.6.15** If during the course of the Academic Offences Panel investigation, evidence of further academic offences is revealed, the penalties will also apply to those modules affected.

**12.6.16** In deciding the appropriate formal penalty, the Academic Offences Panel will consider the following criteria, as supported by the necessary evidence:

- a. Premeditation in order to gain an unfair advantage.
- b. Intention in order to gain an unfair advantage.
- c. Acting for financial gain.

- d. Abusing a position of trust.
- e. Previously proven allegations.

**12.6.17** Where a **major offence** is proven, the Academic Offences Panel shall impose a formal reprimand to be retained on the student's file for the duration of the course of study and one of the following penalties for each module for which an academic offence is found to have been committed:

- a. where the Panel considered the offence to be a minor offence or poor academic practice, those related penalties will apply.
- b. failure (a mark of 0) in the element(s) of assessment in which the offence occurred, with the maximum mark of the next available attempt, capped at the pass mark;
- c. failure (a mark of 0) in the module of which the assessment forms a part, with the maximum module mark on any resit of the module capped at the pass mark; If the assessment is a resit attempt, the student will be required to retake the module, and the module will be capped at the pass mark.
- d. discontinuation of studies at the University.

**12.6.18** Where a Major offence is upheld on the resit of an assessment, and the penalty of failure of those assessment(s) results in failure of the module, the next available attempt(s) will be the first attempt(s) at those assessment(s) on the retake of the module, with those first attempt(s) capped at the pass mark.

**12.6.19** Where a Major offence is upheld on the resit of an assessment on the retake of the module, and the penalty of failure of those assessment(s) results in failure of the module, no further attempts at the module are available (see 8.11 above).

**12.6.20** In cases where the Panel concludes the student has breached other regulations or policies, such as the Student Code of Conduct, in addition to academic misconduct, it may be appropriate to also refer the matter under the Student Disciplinary Procedures or the Fitness to Practise Procedures. This will normally result in consideration of penalties only.

**12.6.21** The outcome of all cases shall be confirmed to the student in writing, copying in the Head/Dean or School/College, Head of Subject and Head of Academic Administration.

**12.6.22** All major offence cases will normally be concluded within 20 working days of the receipt of the case referral from the School/College, and will be dealt with by the University Registrar or authorised designate. The total time to conclude a major offence case is **normally 25 working days**.

## **12.7 Appeals**

**12.7.1** A student may appeal in accordance with the Appeal Regulations (see Section 14: Appeal Regulations).

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