

## Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy and Procedure

### Introduction

Higher education providers have an obligation to ensure that the awards they make meet nationally agreed standards. The [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) requires providers to “operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment” in order to achieve this. This means that assessments must accurately reflect or test the extent to which students have achieved the learning outcomes of their programme. Lack of academic integrity on the behalf of students – or academic misconduct – threatens the ability of a provider to assure the standards of its qualifications; providers therefore have a responsibility to promote academic integrity and minimise academic misconduct as far as possible.

This Policy and Procedure sets out the School’s principles, policies and procedures relating to student Academic Misconduct in assessments. It has been developed in line with the [UK Quality Code for Higher Education](#) and in relation to the QAA’s [UK Quality Code for Higher Education Advice and Guidance – Assessments](#) and its advisory document, [Contracting to Cheat in Higher Education](#) (2017). It should be read in conjunction with the School’s Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy and Assessment and Classification Framework.

### Principles

The School is committed to fair examination and assessment practices; safeguarding the integrity of these is essential if the School is to discharge its responsibilities to our students and uphold its own reputation.

As is set out in the School’s Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategy, its [Assessment and Classification Framework](#), assessment at the School is designed to minimise opportunities for students to commit academic misconduct, including plagiarism, self-plagiarism and contract cheating. Wherever possible, an appropriate variety of assessment methods will be used, to minimise the availability of students to incorporate plagiarised work by another author, or previous work by the student. As set out in the [Examinations and Assessments Regulations and Procedures for Staff](#), invigilators will be trained appropriately, and clear examination room procedures will be in place.

The School also expects students to adhere to good academic practice and avoid poor academic practice or academic misconduct, and is committed to communicating clearly with students the expectations regarding academic integrity both through this Policy and Procedure – which will be available to students via the Student Handbook, website, and [Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures](#) – and through induction and ongoing training.

### What is good and poor academic practice and what is academic misconduct?

**Good academic practice** is the process of completing academic work independently, honestly and in an appropriate academic style, using good referencing and acknowledging all sources (including the use of artificial intelligence, AI). It allows for any reader of a student’s work to easily identify the student’s own thoughts and ideas on a subject and distinguish them from the thoughts and ideas of others. It allows for the

fair assessment of the extent of learning progression made by each individual, and entails respecting and acknowledging the work of others. Key areas of good academic practice are:

- *Referencing*: referencing anything that has come from an outside source, and backing up one's own viewpoints by citing reliable evidence. Referencing ensures that intellectual debts to authors are acknowledged, that facts or claims are clearly backed up by supporting evidence, and that readers can find sources that have been referred to easily and quickly.
- *Using high quality sources*: sources should be good quality, incorporating up-to-date research studies, journal articles, and writing by scholars in the relevant field. When sourcing materials, the following should be considered: (a) relevance; (b) how current/up-to-date the books or articles are; (c) whether the sources are academic/ reliable/ good quality; (d) who the writer is and whether there may be bias; (e) whether journal articles have been peer-reviewed.
- *Engaging with sources effectively*: sources should be engaged with in a purposeful and critical way, and should be challenged, interpreted, evaluated, or explained to the reader in terms of how they help to further a student's arguments.
- *Integrity and honesty*: unless stated in the assessment brief (i.e. group work) it is the student's own work that is being assessed, therefore work submitted must be the student's own without the undeclared use of AI, essay mills etc and be appropriately referenced. Any use of AI, where permitted by the assessment brief, should be declared in full following the AI declaration format, to allow a marker to evaluate and give feedback.

**Poor academic practice** is an inept or inadvertent breach of the conventions or regulations of good academic practice, committed through a defensible ignorance of those conventions or regulations, where no unfair advantage was sought, and where there is no discernible intention to deceive.

Defensible ignorance may be assumed in the early stages of a student's career.

Poor academic practice typically involves:

- Inadequate or incomplete referencing
- Omission of quotation marks
- And forms a small proportion of the overall submission.

**Academic misconduct** is any act, or attempted act leading to circumstances whereby a student might gain an unpermitted or unfair advantage in an assessment or in the determination of results, or might assist another student to gain an unfair advantage or to disadvantage other students or otherwise undermines the academic integrity or reputation of the School, its awards or processes.

The following are examples of academic misconduct:

- *Plagiarism*—presenting the work of another as one's own. This includes representing another person's work or ideas as one's own, for example by failing to follow convention in acknowledging sources, use of quotation marks, etc. It also includes the unauthorised use of one student's work by another student and the commissioning, purchase and submission of a piece of work, in part or whole, as the student's own ("contract cheating");
- Self-plagiarism – is the reuse of your own work that you have already submitted for assessment without appropriate acknowledgement. It can involve resubmitting an entire assignment, copying or

paraphrasing passages from your previous work, recycling previously collected data. This does not apply when resubmitting the same piece of work following failure in the module for reassessment.

- *Collusion*—aiding, or being aided by, one or more others in the preparation of an assessment for submission where the assessment brief or invigilation instructions do not expressly permit collaboration (note that legitimate input from tutors or approved readers or scribes is not considered to be collusion);
- *Fabrication*—presenting data or results that have been deliberately invented or falsified;
- *Impersonation*—the act of one person assuming the identity of another, with the intent to gain an unfair advantage for the person being impersonated;
- *Misrepresentation*—presenting a claim for extenuating circumstances or supporting evidence which is misleading, untrue or unfair;
- *Unauthorised possession or reference*—being in possession of any prohibited or unauthorised material or item within the examination room, consulting books or notes whilst temporarily outside the examination room, or gaining access to a copy of the assessment paper in advance of its authorised release;
- *Bribery/intimidation*—attempting to influence, by bribery or intimidation or other unfair means an official of the School, with the aim of affecting the student's results;
- *Breach of the rubrics of assessment*—disobeying beginning and end times of an examination, or improperly annotating open book material, or inappropriately using technology during an examination;
- *Breach of the School's [Research Ethics Policy](#)*.
- *Artificial Intelligence*: the use of artificial intelligence software (such as ChatGPT) to create a submission as if it were one's own is prohibited.
- Repeated instances of poor academic practices within one or more assessments
- Any Other Attempt to Deceive: any other attempt, successful or otherwise to secure an unfair advantage over other students or to disadvantage other students.

It should be noted that where a student has an acknowledged learning disability, a proof-reader may be used to ensure that the student's meaning is not misunderstood as a result of the quality and standard of writing.

Where permitted under the School's [Disability Policy](#) and its process for determining reasonable adjustments for examinations and assessments, a proof-reader may identify spelling and basic grammatical errors. Inaccuracies in academic content should not be corrected nor should the structure of the piece of work be changed.

### **Raising Concerns about Academic Integrity and Misconduct**

It shall be for the School to bring an allegation of academic integrity or misconduct and to prove the allegation on the balance of probabilities.

All School staff have a professional obligation to protect the integrity of the School and its examination and assessment processes and receive training via the School to uphold this obligation. It is the Registrar's responsibility, or their nominee's, to ensure that all members of the School are aware of their obligations under this policy.

Where a marker believes that poor academic practice has occurred then they may:

- Deduct no more than 10 marks from the assessment, and
- Ensure that feedback to the student on the assessment clearly highlights the issue (signposting additional guidance as required on good academic practice)
- Inform the Registrar, providing a copy of the assessment and any other evidence, who will keep a record of the poor academic practice.

Where a student disputes that poor academic practice has occurred, they may request the matter to be considered by the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Panel. A student must request this in writing to the Registrar no more than 15 working days after notification.

Where a marker is unsure whether poor academic practice has occurred, considers that a 10-mark deduction would be insufficient or suspects that academic misconduct has occurred then they must refer the matter to the Registrar who will convene an Academic Integrity and Misconduct Panel.

The Registrar (or their nominee) will notify the student of the Panel meeting within 10 working days of receiving the allegation, specifying the nature of the allegation and any evidence. The Academic Misconduct Panel Membership and Terms of Reference section (below) sets out the composition and remit of this Panel.

The student will be given 5 working days’ notification of the date of the Panel and must submit any written representation or evidence in response to the allegation in advance of the Panel meeting.

### **Academic Integrity and Misconduct Panel Meeting**

The student has the right to be accompanied by an observer, who may be an LIS student representative, a fellow student, or an aid who assists the student in any special needs or a member of staff. Legal representation would not normally be permitted. The observer may not address the panel or question witnesses during the hearing.

Where the student fails to attend the Panel meeting or has waived the right to attend the meeting, it will go ahead as planned without them.

The Panel will determine:

- That no misconduct or poor academic practice has occurred, and recommend that the case be dismissed and the student’s results be processed as normal; *or*
- No misconduct has been committed, but there has been poor academic practice, in which case the nature of the poor practice will be explained to the student, a note will be made on their student record, and a penalty imposed to mitigate any unfair advantage; *or*
- Misconduct has been committed, in which case any mitigating circumstances will be considered and the penalty determined.

The Academic Integrity & Misconduct Panel reports to the Academic Council and shall report its decisions to the Board of Examiners for information and to be taken into account in determining the results of students.

## Penalties

The primary aim of any penalty imposed will be to protect the integrity of the School's reputation, assessment processes and awards.

The Panel will take the following into account in determining a penalty:

- Whether the student has committed misconduct or poor academic practice previously
- The amount of the student's assessed work that is affected
- The Level of the programme at which the student has committed misconduct or poor academic practice (Level 4,5,6, 7);
- The value of the assignment;
- Any additional characteristics (e.g., evidence of deliberate efforts to disguise misconduct).
- The degree of intention (i.e., premeditation, intention, recklessness, or negligence);
- The circumstances in which the misconduct took place and the scale of impact on the School's reputation;
- Any mitigating factors (e.g., admitting the offense at the earliest opportunity, which would normally reduce the severity of the penalty, or cooperation with the School's investigation);
- Any aggravating factors, that may cause the action to be considered more serious (e.g., pattern of misconduct, committing the act for financial gain, an attempt to conceal or dispose of evidence, intimidation, committing the act while under the influence of alcohol or drugs).

The following penalties are available to the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Panel:

- Training to address the form of misconduct or poor academic practice;
- Formal written warning on the student's record;
- Voiding the attempt for the assessment or the entire related module, with the right to take the assessment (s) as though for the first time;
- Requirement to resubmit a corrected version, capped at the pass mark for the assessment or module;
- Mark reduction of the assessment in question;
- Award of zero for the assessment in question and any resit to be capped at the pass mark for the assessment;
- Capping the overall module mark at the pass mark
- Award of zero for the module in question and any resits to be capped at the pass mark for the assessment(s)
- Where the module is non-core, assigning no marks to the relevant module as a whole, without the right to retake the module, but with the right to take an alternative elective module for a capped mark;
- Termination of the student's registration, with readmission to the School at the discretion of the Chief Executive based on consideration of the student's case for readmission. This penalty is reserved for a serious third offence ("three strikes and you're out"), or extremely serious and aggravated cases.

Where a case of academic misconduct gives rise to concern about the integrity of the assessment of a student's previous module(s), the module(s) may be reviewed to ascertain if misconduct was conducted

before. Where poor academic practice or misconduct is found to have occurred in a previous module then any of the above penalties may be imposed. Where a penalty affects any result already made then the Board of Examiners may amend that result including a change in a degree classification or award.

## **Appeal**

A student may appeal against the decision of the Academic integrity & Misconduct Panel to the Academic Appeals Board, via the [Academic Appeals Procedure](#).

## **Conferment**

A student may not graduate until the investigation into any alleged academic misconduct on their part has been completed.

## **Student training in good academic practice**

Students will receive an induction into good academic practice at induction week, with refresher training prior to formal assessments. This training will be led by the Director of Teaching and Learning or their nominee. Good academic practice skills will be embedded in the ongoing delivery of the curriculum; students will be supported in developing skills in studying, academic writing, the use of academic sources, paraphrasing and research.

## **Student support**

Students will be supported through their academic studies by their academic tutor and dedicated welfare advisor, and the supportive Academic Progress and Attendance Policy, as well as via a number of support services offered by the Student Support Department. This support will be clearly communicated to students at induction and in School publications as well as reinforced by internal communications exercises and by academic and non-academic was staff.

## **Monitoring, evaluation and review**

The Registrar shall maintain a detailed record of Academic Misconduct cases and present an annual report to the Academic Council summarising the cases, outcomes, penalties and identifying any trends and providing any recommendations where appropriate.

The Academic Council will review all cases and resulting action relating to Academic Misconduct annually, and authorise any changes to either assessment processes, or the Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure.

## Academic Misconduct Panel: Membership and Terms of Reference

There shall be an Academic Misconduct Panel.

### 1. Membership

The Panel shall comprise a minimum of:

- Registrar, or their nominee (chair);
- an academic member of staff who normally does not teach on the module to which the alleged offence relates.
- The module leader (or nominee) from the module to which the alleged offence relates.

### 2. Quorum

The Panel shall be quorate if at least two members are present, one of which must be the Chair.

### 3. Secretary

The Panel will be serviced by a secretary from the Registry.

### 4. Frequency

The Panel shall meet as required.

### 5. Terms of Reference

The Academic Integrity & Misconduct Panel shall be responsible to the Academic Council for:

- a. investigating and hearing cases of alleged academic integrity & misconduct;
- b. determining whether the case is proven or not;
- c. where the case is proven, determining the seriousness of the offence, taking into account any evidence in mitigation, and assigning a penalty in accordance with the regulations;
- d. reporting its findings to the student and to the relevant board of examiners.

### 6. Authority

The Academic Misconduct Panel reports to the Academic Council.

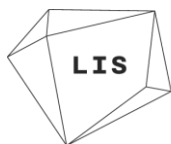
The Panel shall report its decisions to the Board of Examiners for information and to be taken into account in determining the results of students.

The Registrar shall maintain a record of misconduct cases and present an annual report to the Academic Council summarising the cases, outcomes, penalties and identifying any trends and providing any recommendations where appropriate.

### 7. Voting

It is expected that decisions of the Panel will be reached by consensus and after due deliberation.

However, if a resolution cannot be achieved by consensus a decision shall be made on the basis of a majority of those attending and voting at a quorate meeting. In the event of an equality of votes being cast, the Chair shall have a casting vote.

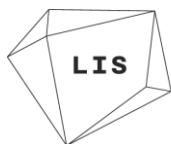


## Version Control

<b>Name of policy/procedure:</b>	<b>Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure</b>
<b>Document owner:</b>	<b>A Redford, Head of Quality</b>
<b>Date Originally Created:</b>	<b>01/2019</b>
<b>Related documents:</b> (eg associated forms, underpinning processes, related policies or overarching policies)	<b>Academic Appeals Procedure</b> <b>Assessment and Classification Framework</b>

Version Control				
Version	Author	Date	Brief summary of changes	Effective
1	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	13/01/2019	Original draft	
2	Prof. Carl Gombrich (Director of Teaching and Learning)	10/03/2019	Max 2-week window for feedback; greater flexibility for students to fail one or two modules (so that they take risks); ensuring that first year is weighted toward final degree mark; changing of penalties for late work; greater tolerances on word-limit excess to account for tolerances of software packages; clarification of role of Registrar; "three strikes and you're out" on academic misconduct	
3	Prof. Chris Maguire (Registrar)	20/06/2019	Clarification of language. Inclusion of CertHE and DipHE. Clarification of position on reasonable adjustments. Single moderator for each assessment or module. Simplification of Reasonable Adjustments Panel meeting (no need for student to attend in person). "Malpractice" changed to "Misconduct" for clarity reasons.	
4	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	23/06/2019	Inclusion of AMBeR Tariff in Academic Misconduct Policy. Included Invigilation Guidelines. Removal of criteria for External Examiners and tenure, etc. Given this will be determined by the OU. Bringing of extenuating circumstances procedure in line with standard university procedures (movement away from flexible assessment). Included contents page for clarity and greater ease of navigation by staff and students, and separated additional regulations and procedures into those for students and those for staff	
5	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	24/06/2019	Revision of Extenuating Circumstances process to align with Academic Appeals Procedure. Added section on release of results. Alteration of reasonable adjustments section to align with Disability Policy and to clarify link to Academic Appeals Procedure.	
6	Prof. Chris Maguire (Registrar)	28/06/2019	Updated notes on invigilators	
7	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	15/08/2019	Separated out Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure into separate document	
8	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	04/11/2019	Minor wording changes ; definition of good academic practice	





9	Academic Council	18/12/2019	Requires update as part of update of all general academic regulations in light of decision to pursue NAPs	
10	Hannah Kohler (Director of Admissions and Student Support)	12/02/2020	Minor typos corrected, no major changes	
11	Academic Council	16/03/2020	Approved	2021-2022
12	Regulatory Working Group	Nov 2021	Inclusion of reference to level 7 and AMber tariff points for level 7	
13	A Redford Head of Quality	RWG, chair's action. 08/09/2022	Inclusion of self-plagiarism definition	2022-2023 onwards
14	A Redford, Head of Quality	PRC, chair's action 22/03/2023	Inclusion of reference to ChatGPT and AI in examples of misconduct	2022-2023, term 3 onwards
15	A Redford, Head of Quality	PRC: 17/05/2023	Removal of initial meeting. Removal of Ambr tariff Reordering of content Inclusion of Panel terms of reference Inclusion of PAP examples	2023-2024 onwards