

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT, INCLUDING UNFAIR PRACTICE, CHEATING AND PLAGIARISM: POLICY, PROCEDURES AND SANCTIONS

(Statement to be read and signed by all students during the first week after registration onto their course)

Students of the University will be offered forms of instruction throughout their studies in many aspects of academic best practice. However, in the interests of fairness and justice, and to protect the vast majority of students who adhere to codes of good academic conduct, there are clear regulations regarding academic misconduct.

References in these policy and procedure statements to "examination" refer to a formally invigilated written or oral test scheduled and supervised by the University Registry. These should be read in conjunction with the **Examination Rules for Candidates** (Section on Academic Rules and Regulations of the University *Handbook*) and in particular Article 14, **Cheating and Unfair Practice (Reproduced at the end of this document)**.

"Coursework" refers to all forms of work produced by students individually or in groups and submitted/presented to academic staff for formative or summative assessment, as outlined in approved Course Specifications. This may include in-class tests, essays, reports, term-papers, dissertations, theses, individual or group presentations, websites, material recorded using AV equipment or in other media.

1 POLICY

- 1.1 Except where otherwise clearly indicated, students shall be assessed on the basis of their own unassisted and unaided work.
- 1.2 In the interests of fairness and justice, students should be aware that it is University policy to compare all coursework (where feasible) against databanks of existing material, to check whether there is a degree of similarity that might arouse suspicions of academic misconduct as defined in 5 and 6 below
- 1.3 [see General Regulations for First Degrees, Regulation 11.2]
In any coursework submitted for assessment there must be disclosed full particulars:
 - (i) of all sources of information consulted (which must be distinguished as either primary or secondary); and
 - (ii) of all money paid in respect of its preparation;

In the research for and preparation of coursework a student must not receive any assistance other than

 - (i) the typing of the student's own manuscript
 - (ii) the obtaining of access to a source of information, including obtaining the opportunity to question a person orally or in writing.
- 1.4 Any student found in breach of the University's regulations relating to examinations and coursework will be deemed to be guilty of academic misconduct and will in most cases be subject to disciplinary proceedings. Academic misconduct includes cheating and plagiarism.
- 1.5 Plagiarism is defined as "presenting as one's own the thoughts or writings of others", and is a form of intellectual theft. It is a corrosive force in the life of any community devoted to scholarship that violates its integrity, jeopardises the quality of the education provided, and devalues the degrees it awards. Where a candidate is suspected of cheating or plagiarism that allegation must be reported to the Chairman of the Board of Examiners concerned. The procedures of investigation shall be that laid down under **Section 2** below.
- 1.6 The following are examples of academic misconduct, cheating, and plagiarism that would normally result in formal investigation of a candidate's performance. The list is not exhaustive and other instances may be considered by the University authorities at their discretion:
 - (i) Obtaining unauthorised access to assessment material;
 - (ii) Introduction of unauthorised material into the room used for an examination or in-class test;
 - (iii) Collusion or attempted collusion with other persons on assessments that are designed to be done by each student on his or her own;
 - (iv) Copying from another student, with or without that student's permission;

- (v) Disruptive behaviour during examinations or in-class tests;
- (vi) Impersonation;
- (vii) Submitting work written by someone else on behalf of the candidate submitting;
- (viii) Submitting another student's work, whether or not it has been previously submitted by that student;
- (ix) Submitting work that has been corrected/revised, without the approval of the Course Leader or University Regulations, by an individual with a higher level of English language proficiency;
- (x) Failure to reference or acknowledge sources adequately, in such a way that material authored by others appears to be the candidate's own work, in any portion (page, paragraph, sentence, phrase) of work submitted for assessment. Examples include:
 - o Presenting substantial extracts from books, articles, theses and other published or unpublished works, such as working papers, seminars and conference papers, internal reports, computer software, Internet materials, lecture notes or tapes, without clearly indicating their origin with quotation marks and references in footnotes or bibliography;
 - o using very close paraphrasing of sentences or whole paragraphs without due acknowledgement in the form of reference to the original work in the text or the footnote;
 - o quoting directly from a source and failing to insert quotation marks around the quoted passages. In such cases it is not adequate merely to acknowledge the source;
- (xi) The inclusion of offensive or obscene material in assessments submitted;
- (xii) The alteration or falsification of any results document, including experimental data, or certificates.

1.7 For the purpose of the procedures outlined below "a Dean" refers to any Dean who is not the Chairman of the Board of Examiners involved.

2 PROCEDURES for dealing with ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT in the Examination Hall

- 2.1. Where a candidate is suspected of cheating or other academic misconduct the invigilator should quietly inform the candidate that this is suspected. Where it is necessary to engage in a dialogue with the candidate, the invigilator should ask the candidate:
 - (i) to leave the room to explain the incident to the invigilator(s); and
 - (ii) whether he/she wishes to challenge the charge of academic misconduct.
- 2.2 The candidate must be informed that he is allowed to continue the examination, and if appropriate be given additional time to compensate for the time lost as a result of the initial enquiry.
- 2.3. If the use of unauthorised material is suspected, this should be removed and shown to another invigilator. Where there is some doubt about the validity of the material, it should be endorsed by two invigilators and returned to the candidate. The material may continue to be used provided that it is submitted without further amendment by the candidate with the candidate's script. Failure to conform to this will automatically disqualify the script.
- 2.4. A **written report** of the incident should be prepared by the invigilator(s) and submitted to the Chairman of the Board of Examiners immediately following the examination together with any suspected unauthorised material either in person or in writing.

3 PROCEDURES for dealing with ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT in Coursework

- 3.1 On suspicion of academic misconduct in a piece of coursework, whether through notification from the University's detection software or by any other means, the Course Leader will inform the student in writing, attaching a copy of the current version of this document, as well as establish the following points,¹ communicating them as soon as convenient in the form of a written report to the Chairman of the Board of Examiners that examines the course in question, together with copies of the student's work and (wherever possible) the sources which it is alleged to plagiarise or otherwise imitate in breach of the above Policy:

A the extent of the alleged academic misconduct, e.g.

- (i) the amount of text plagiarized
- (ii) the closeness to the original text
- (iii) the nature of the material copied, whether purely descriptive or including results, etc).
- (iv) the weighting of the coursework element in which academic misconduct is alleged, in terms of the overall course assessment.

B student motivation

Due consideration should be given to the following factors, while recognising that they are not necessarily all entirely distinct:

- (i) whether the student admits or denies the allegation,
- (ii) the stage of the student in their programme,
- (iii) the number of previous offences,
- (iv) the learning background of the student
- (v) the extent of the student's knowledge of the concept of academic misconduct e.g. does the student's Department have on file their signed copy of the University policy, procedures and sanctions relating to Academic Misconduct?

4 SUBSEQUENT INVESTIGATION

- 4.1 The following procedures shall apply equally for investigations into allegations of academic misconduct in respect of both Examinations and Coursework.
- 4.2 The Chairman of the Board of Examiners shall have responsibility for conducting the initial enquiry in consultation with the Course Leader or Head of Department. The candidate shall have the right to give an explanation and make representations to the Chairman of the Board of Examiners.
- 4.3 Where the Chairman of the Board of Examiners finds the case to be unsubstantiated the candidate shall be notified without delay and all reference to the incident shall be expunged from the candidate's record.
- 4.4 Where the Course Leader has reason to suspect that a piece of work submitted by a student was wholly or in part prepared or researched or written by someone other than the student who submitted it, and this has not been disclosed by the student, the Course Leader may, on consultation with the Chairman of the Board of Examiners, call for the student to defend the work in a *viva* or a written comprehension test. The *viva*/comprehension test will be conducted as soon as is reasonably practical by a committee of examiners selected by the Board of Examiners or its Chair. The burden of proof in such a *viva* or test will be upon the student to demonstrate to the examination committee's satisfaction his/her full comprehension of the work s/he has submitted. It is the student's responsibility to appear for the *viva*/comprehension test. Failure to appear without satisfactory explanation will result in an immediate failure of that test, with a resulting presumption that the student is in breach of the regulations relating to unfair practice and application of sanctions as outlined below. A written report on the outcome of the *viva*/comprehension test will be submitted to the Chairman of the Board of Examiners.
- 4.5 Where, after examining the available evidence, the Chairman of the Board of Examiners finds that the candidate is in breach of the regulations relating to academic misconduct the Chairman of the Board of Examiners shall, having consulted the Course Leader and/or Head of Department and Registry Officer, report accordingly to the candidate as to the finding of the breach, and the recommended sanction (if appropriate).
- 4.6 If the candidate wishes to appeal s/he may submit an appeal, in writing within TWENTY EIGHT days of the date of the Chairman of the Board of Examiners's letter, to the Chairman of the Board of Examiners for forwarding to a Dean for consideration. The letter of appeal must state all of the grounds upon which the appeal is based. If the candidate does not appeal, the Chairman of the Board of Examiners shall execute the decision and report accordingly to the next Examinations Senate
- 4.7 If the candidate does appeal, the Dean charged with handling the appeal will inform the candidate of the date upon which any appeal is due to be considered. The Dean shall have access to all materials from the case and be able to question the Course Leader and/or marking team in making a decision on the appeal.
- 4.8 The decision of the Dean shall be final and shall be communicated to the candidate, the Chairman of the Board of Examiners, the Course Leader and/or Head of Department, and to the next meeting of Examinations Senate.
- 4.9 The candidate will be given an opportunity to make representations at each stage of the process either in person or in writing. If the candidate makes representations in person, s/he may be accompanied by a friend.
- 4.10 These procedures are without prejudice to the jurisdiction of the Visitor and of Council.

5 SANCTIONS

For Academic misconduct in Coursework

Any student found, following due process of investigation, to be in breach of the foregoing Policy, will be sanctioned in line with the following tariff or series of penalties, according to the gravity of the case, and in line with such precedents as may be established from case history within the University, as recorded by Examinations Senate, and, as required, with reference to practice elsewhere in the sector:

- 5.1 For a first minor offence: The student will have an explanatory discussion with the personal tutor. A record will be entered on the student's file.
- 5.2 For infringements of this policy not considered minor, but not so serious as to warrant a greater penalty and further investigation: Marks will be deducted for inadequate referencing. The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.

The following sanctions will normally be employed for second offences, or serious single offences occurring in Coursework:

- 5.3 The material deemed to have been plagiarised will be disregarded, and a grade will be awarded on the remainder of the work. The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.
- 5.4 The items in which plagiarised work was discovered will be required to be resubmitted, it being understood that the maximum grade that can be awarded for work so resubmitted will be the minimum pass mark. The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.
- 5.5 Award of zero for the coursework element of the course. The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.
- 5.6 Award of zero for the entire course. The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.

Section on Academic Rules and Regulations reproduced from the University *Handbook* Article 14:

14. *Cheating and Unfair Practice*

In an examination conducted by or on behalf of the University, a candidate shall not

- 14.1 *cheat nor attempt to cheat.*
- 14.2 *Without detracting from the generality of 14.1, a candidate who at any time in the course of such an examination has in his possession material, which is not authorised by or on behalf of the University for use by him in that examination, shall be deemed to be in breach of Rule 14.1, save in the case of a candidate who proves that he never intended to use the relevant material for cheating.*
- 14.3 *In addition to or in substitution for any other penalty applicable to a breach of the University's statutes, regulations or rules, a candidate's breach of Rule 14.1 shall cause every script submitted by him in the Diet, of which the relevant examination forms the whole or a part, to be disregarded by the examiners and shall render him liable to be expelled from the University.*
- 14.4 *A candidate shall not bring, nor cause to be brought, into a room in which an examination is to be, or is being conducted, material which has not been authorised.*
- 14.5 *The terms of Rules 14.1, 14.2, 14.3 and 14.4 shall not give rise to any implication, which would not otherwise occur, nor inhibit the finding of any implication, which would otherwise be found, in other provisions of the University's Statutes, Regulations and Rules.*