

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

(Including Cheating and Plagiarism)

(MOODLE test on this policy to be completed by all students during the induction period of the first term of study)

For students on the MBChB undergraduate medical programme refer to the MBChB Policy on Academic Misconduct, including unfair practice, cheating and plagiarism.

Investigations into academic misconduct by students in the University of Buckingham Medical School registered on the MB ChB programme will be conducted in line with the MB ChB Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures

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 must be 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**.

"Coursework" refers to all forms of work produced by students individually or in groups and submitted/presented to academic staff for summative assessment, as outlined in approved Module 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. For postgraduate students "thesis" or "supervised research" refers to all forms of work presented for summative assessment and consideration of a postgraduate award by research

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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 below.

Research students have the opportunity to submit their penultimate draft through Turnitin via their Supervisor. Once a student submits a thesis for assessment then a subsequent formal Turnitin report will be used to help identify potential instances of plagiarism or concerns over originality that would then need to be considered under this policy.

- 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, supervised research 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 may be considered a form of intellectual theft, e.g. copyright infringement.
- 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 Module 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 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 consistently 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 irrelevant offensive or obscene material in assessments submitted;
 - (xii) The alteration or falsification of any results document, including experimental data, or certificates.
 - (xiii) The use of Translation Websites and native language speakers in the preparation of assignments for Modern Foreign Language (MFL) courses

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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 the candidate wishes to challenge the charge of academic misconduct.
- 2.2 The candidate must be informed that s/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 Central Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) immediately following the examination together with any suspected unauthorised material either in person or in writing.

In cases brought to the invigilator's attention in the exam hall, and also those raised after the examination has taken place, the CAMO will follow the investigation procedure and issue appropriate sanctions as set out below:

At this stage CAMO must inform the student in writing, attaching a copy of the latest approved version of this document. The student will be informed that an investigation is taking place, and given an opportunity to offer any explanation or mitigation.

INVESTIGATION

- 2.41 The CAMO shall have responsibility for convening a panel as soon as is practical, wherever possible prior to the subsequent Board of Examiners. The panel is likely to be formed of the CAMO, the Programme Director or Head of Department and the relevant Module Leader. The candidate shall have the right to give an explanation and make representations to the panel.
- 2.42 Where the panel finds the case to be unsubstantiated, the candidate shall be notified without delay by the CAMO and all reference to the incident shall be expunged from the candidate's record.
- 2.43 Where, after examining the available evidence, the panel finds that the candidate is in breach of the regulations relating to academic misconduct, the CAMO shall write to the candidate on behalf of the panel as to the finding of the breach, and the recommended sanction (if appropriate). All supporting documentation is to be held on the student file.
- 2.44 If the candidate wishes to appeal s/he may submit an appeal in writing, within TWENTY-EIGHT days of the date of the CAMO's letter, to the CAMO for forwarding to the Dean of another School for consideration. The letter of appeal must state all of the grounds on which the appeal is based. If the candidate does not appeal, the CAMO shall execute the decision and report accordingly to the next Examinations Senate.
- 2.45 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 in making a decision on the appeal.
- 2.46 The decision of the Dean shall be final and shall be communicated by the Dean to the candidate, the panel, and to the next meeting of the Examinations Senate.
- 2.47 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
- 2.48 These procedures are without prejudice to the jurisdiction of the Visitor and of Council.

SANCTIONS (for Academic Misconduct in the Examination Hall)

If an allegation of academic misconduct is upheld, one or both of the following sanctions shall be applied:

- A. Award of zero for the entire module in which the offence occurred. There will be a resit opportunity it being understood that the maximum grade that can be awarded for the module overall will be the minimum pass mark. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*

- B. Award of zero for the entire module in which the offence occurred. There will be no resit opportunity. In this scenario a substitute re-sit module would not be permissible. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*
 - C. Failure of all modules taken in the Stage. Students may retake all modules in the Stage at the next available opportunity for a capped pass mark. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*
 - D. Lesser final award (e.g. Pass degree). *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*
 - E. Failure of the programme; expulsion from the university. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*
- 2.49 Any repeat upheld offences are likely to result in automatic expulsion.

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PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH SUSPECTED ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT IN COURSEWORK OR THESIS

INITIAL INQUIRY

3.1 Where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion of poor academic practice or academic misconduct in a piece of coursework or thesis, whether through notification from the University's detection software or by any other means, the Marking Team (or Supervisor in the case of postgraduate research) will pass the student's work, originality report and any other relevant information to the School Academic Misconduct Officer (SAMO) to conduct an initial inquiry. The SAMO is required to conduct the initial inquiry, and either close the case or recommend a full investigation takes place, within two term weeks. Any delays in the investigative procedure will be communicated to the student. If the SAMO is also a member of the Marking Team, the student's work will be passed to a different SAMO. A profile of the case including the following considerations will be prepared by the SAMO using the approved institutional model.

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

- (i) the amount of text allegedly plagiarised
- (ii) the closeness to the original text
- (iii) the nature of the material allegedly plagiarised, 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) the stage of the student in their programme,
- (ii) the number of previous offences (if any),
- (iii) the extent of the student's knowledge of the concept of academic misconduct e.g. does the student's Department have on file a copy of the University policy, procedures and sanctions relating to Academic Misconduct, signed by the student and/or has the student completed the MOODLE test on Academic Misconduct (and if so, what score was recorded)?

3.2 Should the results of the above profiling exercise suggest that no serious offence has been committed, the SAMO will recommend to the Chairman of the Exam Board one of the following courses of action:

- a) Where it is deemed no academic misconduct is present, and all material has been properly presented no further action will be taken. Work will be marked as normal.

- b) For minor irregularities in presentation of material (e.g inconsistent referencing, inadequate/excessive paraphrasing, incorrect application of scholarly style), a judgement of Poor Academic Practice will apply. Work will be marked in the light of this judgement, and the student will have an explanatory discussion with their Personal Tutor. It would normally not be appropriate to consider a case as Poor Academic Practice where the student has previously received a judgement of Poor Academic Practice or Academic Misconduct and could therefore be expected to have familiarised themselves with appropriate academic practice.

Where a judgement of Poor Academic Practice is made on a thesis, the work will be assessed in the light of this judgement by requiring that appropriate remedial action is taken before the award is recommended and publication of the thesis occurs.

- c) Where the SAMO concludes that academic misconduct may have been committed, he/she shall call for a Full Investigation.
- 3.3 At the end of each assessment period, a record of all cases dealt with under 3.2a and 3.2b above, and their outcomes, signed by the Chair of the Board of Examiners will be submitted by the SAMO to the central 'Academic Misconduct Officer'.

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PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH SUSPECTED ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT IN COURSEWORK OR THESIS

FULL INVESTIGATION

- 4.1 At this stage (3.2c above) the School Academic Misconduct Officer (SAMO) must inform the student in writing, attaching a copy of the latest approved version of this document. The student will be informed that an investigation is taking place, and given an opportunity to offer any explanation or mitigation. The results of this enquiry must be passed to the person conducting the investigation (see below) along with the case profile and materials outlined in 3.1 A and B above.
- 4.2 The Chair of the Board of Examiners shall have responsibility for conducting the full investigation in consultation with the SAMO and other relevant parties as required. The investigation will be concluded, and the result reported to the student, within a period of two term weeks of the case being referred for full investigation. Any delays in the investigative procedure will be communicated to the student. Where the Chair of the Board of Examiners is also a member of the Marking Team and/or the Module Leader for the module concerned, the person responsible for conducting the Full Investigation shall be the Chair of the Board of Examiners from another School of Study.
- 4.3 Where the SAMO 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, they 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 panel 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 academic misconduct and application of sanctions as outlined below. A written record of the outcome of the *viva*/comprehension test will be prepared by the SAMO and submitted to the Chairman of the Board of Examiners.
- 4.4 After examining the available evidence, the Chairman of the Board of Examiners, in consultation with the SAMO, will report accordingly to the candidate as to the finding of the Full Investigation, and the sanction (if any) that has been applied under Section 5 of this procedure.

- 4.5 At the end of each assessment period, a record of all cases dealt by Full Investigation and their outcomes, signed by the Chair of the Board of Examiners will be submitted by the SAMO to the central 'Academic Misconduct Officer' for collecting management information on academic misconduct for subsequent analysis.

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OUTCOMES OF FULL INVESTIGATION into suspected Academic Misconduct in Coursework or Thesis

- 5.1 Where it is deemed no academic misconduct is present, and all material has been properly presented, no further action will be taken. Work will be marked as normal.
- 5.2 For minor irregularities in presentation of material (e.g. inconsistent referencing, inadequate/excessive paraphrasing, incorrect application of scholarly style), a judgement of Poor Academic Practice will apply. Work will be marked in the light of this judgement, and the student will have an explanatory discussion with their Personal Tutor. It would not be appropriate to consider a case as Poor Academic Practice where the student has previously received a judgement of Poor Academic Practice or Academic Misconduct and could therefore be expected to have familiarised themselves with appropriate academic practice.

Where a judgement of Poor Academic Practice is made on a thesis, the work will be marked in the light of this judgement by requiring that appropriate remedial action is taken before the award is recommended and publication of the thesis occurs.

- 5.3 Where it is deemed that there has been a breach of the above policy, a judgement of Academic Misconduct will apply. The student will be sanctioned in line with the following tariff of penalties, according to the extent, gravity and nature of the case, and in line with such precedents as may be established from case history as recorded by the University and, as required, with reference to practice elsewhere in the sector:

SANCTIONS (for Academic Misconduct in Coursework)

- A. 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.*
- B. 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 the element(s) of 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.*
- C. Award of zero for the coursework element of the module. There will be no resubmission opportunity. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*
- D. Award of zero for the entire module. There will be a retake opportunity, it being understood that the maximum grade that can be awarded for the module will be the minimum pass mark. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*
- E. Award of zero for the entire module. There will be no retake opportunity. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*
- F. Failure of all modules taken in the Stage. Students may retake all modules in the Stage at the next available opportunity for a capped pass mark. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*
- G. Lesser final award (e.g. Pass degree). *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*
- H. Failure of the programme; expulsion from the university. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*

SANCTIONS (for Academic Misconduct in a thesis)

- A. That the thesis be revised and re-submitted for the degree for which it was submitted. At Masters level the revised thesis would be restricted to a capped passed mark. An oral examination would normally be held. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*
- B. Lesser final award. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*
- C. Failure of the programme; expulsion from the university. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*

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APPEALS

- 6.1 Appeals will only be considered where a judgement of Academic Misconduct has been given following the process of Full Investigation.
- 6.2 If the candidate wishes to appeal s/he may submit an appeal, in writing within twenty eight days of the date of presumed receipt of the formal communication referred to in 4.4. The letter of appeal must state all of the grounds upon which the appeal is based.
- 6.3 If the candidate appeals, their appeal shall be forwarded to the Dean of another School, who has played no former part in the process. The case will be considered, and the result communicated to the appellant, within two term weeks of the appeal being forwarded to the Dean. Any delays in the investigative procedure will be communicated to the student. 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 SAMO and other relevant parties in making a decision on the appeal.
- 6.4 The candidate will be given an opportunity to make representations at any stage of the appeal process either in person or in writing. If the candidate makes representations in person, s/he may be accompanied by a friend.
- 6.5 The decision of the Dean shall be final and shall be communicated to all the relevant parties and to the next meeting of Examinations Senate.
- 6.6 Advice concerning the application of the above procedures either during or after their application may be sought from the Registrar.