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.

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 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 suspected of being in breach of the University’s regulations relating to examinations,
supervised research and coursework will be investigated under this policy, and may 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:
   - 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;
   - 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;
   - 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

1.7 A student who is determined to have reused previous coursework without appropriate acknowledgement, either in part or whole, for which they have gained credit, is unlikely to be given credit a second time.

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 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 confiscated and retained for use in the subsequent misconduct investigation.
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.

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 set out below:

At this stage the 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 either in person or in writing. If the candidate makes representations in person, s/he may be accompanied by a friend.

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. The CAMO shall report the decision to the next Examinations Senate.

**SANCTIONS (for Academic Misconduct in the Examination Hall)**

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:

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.*

2.5 Any repeat upheld offences are likely to result in automatic expulsion.
3 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 escalate to a full investigation, 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 Following the above profiling exercise, the SAMO will execute 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 appropriate remedial action be 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 escalate the case to a full investigation.
4 PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH SUSPECTED ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT IN COURSEWORK OR THESIS

FULL INVESTIGATION

4.1 At this stage (3.2c above) the 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, either in person or writing.

4.2 The SAMO shall conduct the full investigation in consultation with 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.

4.3 Where the SAMO has reason to suspect that a piece of work submitted by a student was wholly or in part prepared, researched, or written by someone other than the student who submitted it, and this has not been disclosed by the student, they may 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 SAMO. The burden of proof in such a viva or test will be upon the student to demonstrate to the panel’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 panel and added to the evidence.

4.4 After examining the available evidence the SAMO will make a recommendation, then share the case with a second SAMO to confirm this recommendation. In the event that the second SAMO does not support the recommendation, the case will be passed to a third SAMO, and the majority decision will be accepted. The investigating 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 A record of all cases and their outcomes will be submitted by the SAMO to the CAMO to add to the central database, and for collecting management information on academic misconduct for subsequent analysis. Cases in which no academic misconduct was found will be anonymized.
5 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 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 marked in the light of this judgement, requiring appropriate remedial action be 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 individual plagiarised coursework piece(s) 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 requirement to retake all elements of the module, 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. 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.

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.

6 APPEALS

6.1 Appeals will be considered where a sanction has been applied for misconduct occurring in coursework, a thesis, or in the examination hall.

6.2 Appeals may be made on one or both of the following grounds:
   a) Procedural irregularity in the conduct of the Academic Misconduct Procedure
   b) New evidence is made available with a valid reason as to why it was not disclosed at the time of investigation

6.3 If the candidate wishes to appeal, s/he may submit an appeal, by written reply, within 5 days of the date of presumed receipt of the formal notification of the sanction. The appeal must state all of the grounds upon which the appeal is based.

6.4 The appeal paperwork will be considered by a Review Panel consisting of an Independent Dean from another School and an Academic Services Representative. The function of the Review Panel is to review the decision in a timely manner and, in the interest of fairness to the student, to ensure that appropriate procedures have been followed. The student should expect an outcome two weeks after they submitted the appeal. Any delays in the procedure will be communicated to the student. The Panel 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.

6.5 The candidate may 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.

6.6 If the decision of the Panel supports the original decision, then no further approval is required and the decision is considered final. The outcome will be communicated to the student (and the student’s Head of Department or Programme Director) by the Independent Dean.

6.7 If the decision of the Panel is to uphold the appeal (and thereby overturns the original decision) then the paperwork must be forwarded to the Chairman of Examination Senate or nominee for a final decision. The outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the student (and the student’s Head of Department or Programme Director) by the Chairman of Examination Senate or nominee.

6.8 Copies of the correspondence must be forwarded immediately to Registry once proceedings have concluded for the purposes of maintaining the student record.

6.9 If the appeal is not upheld, the Registry Officer will issue a Completion of Procedures letter automatically when the student’s case has exhausted the University’s procedures. The letter will summarise the outcome of the appeal and inform the student of his/her right to request a review of their case by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. The letter will be issued within 28 days of procedures being completed.

6.10 The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student appeals and complaints once all internal procedures have been completed. The University is a member of this scheme. If you are unhappy with the outcome you may be able to ask the OIA to review your appeal. You can find more information about making a complaint to the OIA, what it can and can’t look at and what it can do to put things right here: https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students.

6.11 Advice concerning the application of the above procedures either during or after their application may be sought from Registry.