



BUCKINGHAMSHIRE
NEW UNIVERSITY

EST. 1891



Academic Integrity Policy

Incorporating procedures for investigating and
addressing academic misconduct

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We've designed this document to be easy to read. If you need it in a different format, please contact the Secretariat.

Introduction

1. At Buckinghamshire New University, we are committed to maintaining high standards of academic integrity. This means being honest in your work, respecting others' ideas, and following the rules that protect the value of your qualification.
2. As a signatory of the UK's [Academic Integrity Charter](#), we take academic misconduct seriously. Actions like cheating or plagiarism can damage the reputation of our awards and undermine the hard work of students who follow the rules.
3. We support academic integrity through clear guidance, education, and fair processes. You're expected to complete your work honestly and openly, and staff are expected to lead by example.
4. If concerns arise, we'll investigate them fairly. Minor issues can often be resolved quickly with feedback and support. More serious breaches will be handled formally, with appropriate consequences.

Purpose Statement

5. This policy explains how Buckinghamshire New University promotes academic integrity and deals with academic misconduct. It sets out clear definitions, roles, and steps for identifying and resolving concerns fairly.
6. We use a tiered approach to make sure responses match the seriousness of the issue. Academic staff can handle poor academic practice and minor misconduct locally, using feedback and support. More serious or repeated cases are referred for formal investigation.
7. The aim is to ensure that all cases are dealt with fairly, consistently, and transparently – so that students understand what's expected and what happens if those expectations aren't met.

Applicability and Scope

8. This policy applies to all students studying at Buckinghamshire New University. That includes anyone on a taught or research degree, apprenticeship programme, or studying through one of our partner institutions.
9. It also applies to academic staff – both at the University and our partners – who are responsible for promoting and maintaining academic integrity. Staff are expected to follow the same principles and help resolve concerns fairly.
10. Under this policy, academic staff can deal with poor academic practice and minor misconduct directly, using feedback and support. More serious cases must be referred for formal investigation, following the process outlined in this document.

Responsibilities

11. The University's Academic Registry is responsible for overseeing how academic misconduct is handled. They make sure the process is applied fairly and consistently, and they review it regularly. Small updates may be made to improve the process or

reflect changes in how the University is structured, with annual reports going to the Quality Assurance Committee.

12. Academic staff – like module tutors and programme leaders – play a key role in spotting and resolving concerns. Under the tiered model:
 - **Poor academic practice and minor misconduct** can be dealt with locally by academic staff, with support from Academic Integrity Leads and Associate Deans (Education) in each College.
 - **Major or gross misconduct** must be referred to the Academic Integrity Panel for formal investigation.
13. Associate Deans (Education) are responsible for promoting academic integrity within their College and helping staff apply this policy fairly and consistently.

Definitions

14. To make sure everyone understands what we mean by academic integrity and misconduct, we use the following definitions. These are based on national guidance from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA):
 - **Academic Integrity** means being honest, fair, and responsible in your academic work. It includes avoiding cheating and plagiarism, meeting academic standards, and showing care and rigour in your research and writing.
 - **Academic Misconduct** is any action that gives – or could give – you an unfair advantage in an assessment or exam, or that damages the trust and fairness of academic work. It also includes helping someone else gain an unfair advantage.
15. To make sure our response is fair and proportionate, misconduct is grouped into four levels:
 - **Poor Academic Practice** – These are honest mistakes, often made by students who are new to university-level work. They might include incorrect referencing or using tools without understanding the rules. These cases are usually resolved through feedback and support, without penalties.
 - **Minor Academic Misconduct** – These are low-level breaches that may involve some intent, like copying small sections of text or breaking minor exam rules. They can often be resolved locally, with support and documentation.
 - **Major Academic Misconduct** – These are serious breaches where there is clear intent to deceive, but without the deliberate planning or third-party commissioning that characterises gross misconduct. Examples include falsifying data, serious misuse of AI tools, or impersonation in group work. These cases require formal investigation.
 - **Gross Academic Misconduct** – These are the most serious cases, involving deliberate and planned actions that seriously undermine academic standards. Examples include paying someone to do your work or impersonating another student in an exam. These cases are referred to a Penalty Hearing and are likely to result in expulsion.

16. This tiered approach helps us respond fairly, based on how serious the issue is, while still supporting learning and development wherever possible.

PART A: POLICY

Promoting and Maintaining Academic Integrity

17. We believe academic integrity should be part of your everyday learning experience – not just something you hear about when things go wrong. We work with students and staff to build a shared understanding of why it matters and how to uphold it.
18. Here's how we support academic integrity:
 - **Education and Awareness:** You'll learn about academic integrity during induction and throughout your course – through assessment briefs, workshops, and programme materials. We'll help you understand the risks of misconduct and the benefits of doing things the right way.
 - **Staff Role Models:** Academic and professional staff are expected to lead by example – using proper referencing, following ethical research practices, and supporting students to do the same.
 - **Tools and Support:** We provide access to text-matching similarity detection software and offer training on how to use it properly. These tools are here to help you learn, not just to catch mistakes. However, we reserve the right to limit or withhold access where there is evidence of misuse or where pedagogical reasons justify a different approach.
 - **Assessment Design:** We design assessments that encourage original thinking, personal reflection, and real-world application – making it easier to show your own work and harder to copy someone else's.
 - **Monitoring and Improvement:** We regularly review trends in academic misconduct to improve teaching, assessment, and support.
19. As a student, you're expected to:
 - Submit work that reflects your own effort (unless group work is clearly required).
 - Use the correct referencing system to acknowledge all sources.
 - Avoid reusing work you've already submitted unless you've been given permission and reference it properly.
 - Make sure your data and information are accurate, ethically gathered, and clearly presented.
 - Follow all rules for exams and assessments, including any legal or professional requirements.
20. We'll guide you throughout your studies, but it's your responsibility to act with integrity and ask for help if you're unsure. For minor issues, staff may offer feedback and support to help you improve. Associate Deans (Education) are responsible for promoting integrity across their College and helping staff apply this policy fairly.
21. **Academic Misconduct and Academic Integrity:** While anonymous marking supports fairness in assessment, it can limit a tutor's ability to detect misconduct based on known academic patterns. Where serious concerns arise, staff may refer to previous

work or request a viva voce to help establish authorship. Anonymous marking should not prevent staff from investigating suspected misconduct or applying academic judgement appropriately.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

22. AI tools can be helpful in your studies, but it's important to use them responsibly. If you choose to use AI, you must follow the University's rules to make sure your work still reflects your own effort and understanding.
23. Here's what's expected of you:
 - Use AI tools ethically and be transparent about how you've used them.
 - Clearly state if any part of your work was created using AI, following the guidance for your course.
 - Don't use AI to write your entire assignment or to hide who created the work.
 - If you're unsure what's allowed, ask your tutor or Academic Integrity Lead for advice.
24. Misusing AI can count as academic misconduct. For example:
 - Submitting AI-generated work without saying it was created by AI.
 - Using AI to make up data or pretend you wrote something you didn't.
 - Trying to use AI to avoid plagiarism checks.
25. Depending on how serious the misuse is, it could be treated as minor, major, or gross misconduct. Serious cases may lead to formal investigation and could result in expulsion.
26. Staff are encouraged to design assessments that support genuine engagement and reduce the risk of inappropriate AI use. You'll also receive guidance to help you understand how to use AI tools properly and within the rules.¹

Breaches of Academic Integrity

27. If you don't follow the rules around academic integrity, it's called academic misconduct. This means doing something that gives you an unfair advantage in your assessments or damages the trust and fairness of academic work.
28. If someone raises a concern about your work, the University will investigate it carefully and fairly. If misconduct is confirmed, a penalty will be applied based on how serious the issue is.
29. Here are some examples of academic misconduct:
 - **Plagiarism:** Using someone else's words, ideas, or work without proper referencing – even if it's another student's work.

¹ See: <https://www.bucks.ac.uk/current-students/registry-helpdesk-and-academic-advice/artificial-intelligence-guidance-students>

- **Self-plagiarism:** Reusing work you've already submitted and received credit for, without permission or proper referencing.
 - **Collusion:** Working with others on individual assignments or sharing your work so someone else can use it dishonestly.
 - **Cheating:** Using materials or behaviours during an exam or assessment that aren't allowed.
 - **Fabrication:** Making up or changing data, sources, or results.
 - **Misrepresentation:** Giving false information to gain an academic advantage.
 - **Contract Cheating:** Submitting work that someone else – whether a friend, tutor, AI tool, or paid service – and presenting it as your own. This includes commissioning work from essay mills or freelancers.
 - **Commissioning:** This is a form of contract cheating where you pay or formally request someone else to produce work for you. It is treated as gross misconduct due to its deliberate and planned nature.
 - **Impersonation:** Taking an assessment for someone else or letting someone take it for you.
30. Misconduct can be intentional or accidental. Even if you didn't mean to break the rules, it will still be taken seriously – but your intent will be considered when deciding what happens next.
31. We understand that you might make mistakes, especially if you're new to university or returning to study after a break. If your mistake is due to a lack of experience or understanding, it may be treated as **poor academic practice** and resolved through feedback and support, without a penalty.
32. If misconduct is suspected, marking will be paused until the issue is resolved. If misconduct is confirmed after you've received an award, the University may revoke it.
33. If you have a declared disability (such as dyslexia or dyspraxia), this will be considered during the review, and you'll be referred to support services if needed.
34. **Important:** Illness or personal circumstances are not valid reasons for academic misconduct. If you're struggling to meet an assessment deadline, you should use the University's *Exceptional Circumstances Procedure* instead.

Categories of Academic Misconduct

35. To make sure our response is fair, we group academic misconduct into four categories. Each one reflects how serious the issue is and helps decide how it should be handled.

| Category | What it means | How it's handled |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Poor Academic Practice | This happens when your work doesn't meet academic standards because of a misunderstanding or lack of experience – not because you intended to break the rules. It's common if you're new to university or | Your tutor will give you feedback and support to help you improve. No penalty is applied. |

| | | |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| | unfamiliar with referencing. Examples include incorrect or incomplete citations or using basic AI tools without declaring them. | |
| Minor Academic Misconduct | This involves small breaches that may have been intentional, like copying short sections of text or breaking minor exam rules. It's often a first-time issue and may include using AI-generated summaries without saying so. | Your tutor or Academic Integrity Lead may deal with it locally. It will be documented, and you'll be offered guidance and support. |
| Major Academic Misconduct | This is more serious and involves clear intent to deceive. Examples include falsifying data, serious misuse of AI tools, or misrepresentation of authorship without evidence of commissioning or payment. | Your case will be referred to the University-wide Academic Integrity Panel for formal investigation. |
| Gross Academic Misconduct | This is the most serious type of misconduct. It involves deliberate and planned actions that seriously damage academic standards. Examples include paying someone to do your work, commissioning, impersonation, accessing exam materials in advance, or submitting work created by someone else. Repeated major offences may also be classified as gross misconduct. | Your case will go to a Penalty Hearing. Expulsion is likely because of the severity and the impact on reassessment timelines. |

36. Your case will be assessed using the University's Academic Misconduct Decision Matrix, which helps staff apply the right penalty based on the category. Staff should speak with the Associate Dean (Education) or Academic Integrity Lead in their College to make sure the process is fair and consistent.

Relationship with Other Procedures

37. Academic misconduct doesn't just affect your marks – it can also have consequences beyond your course, especially if you're on a professional programme or already working in a regulated role.
38. Here's how academic misconduct may link to other University procedures:
- **Fitness to Practise:** If you're studying on a course that leads to professional registration (like nursing, social work, or teaching), proven academic misconduct could raise concerns about your honesty or professional behaviour. In these cases, your situation may also be reviewed under our *Fitness to Practise procedures*. This could lead to a referral to your professional body. See Appendix B for more information.
 - **Student Complaints:** If you feel the University hasn't supported you properly or hasn't done enough to promote academic integrity, you can raise a concern through the *Student Complaints Procedure*. This is separate from any investigation into misconduct.

- **Reporting to Employers or Professional Bodies:** In some cases, we may need to inform your employer or professional body if misconduct is proven. This will only happen when appropriate and in line with data protection laws. You'll always be told in advance if this is going to happen. (See Appendix B for more details.)
39. All decisions and referrals are managed by the Academic Registry, working with your College's Associate Dean (Education) or for partner students the relevant lead in the External Collaborations Directorate.

Standards of Proof and Academic Judgement

40. When we investigate academic misconduct, we use the **balance of probabilities**. This means we ask: *Is it more likely than not that misconduct happened, based on the evidence available?* The responsibility to prove this lies with the University – not with you.
41. In making decisions, staff and panels will look at both the facts and what's called **academic judgement**. Academic judgement is expert evaluation of your work, and it's used to help decide things like:
- Whether the style or quality of your submission is noticeably different from your previous work.
 - Whether ideas or content seem copied from another source.
 - How serious any plagiarism is?
 - Whether your notes, drafts, or other materials support your authorship.
 - What text-matching / similarity detection reports show – remember, a high or low similarity score doesn't automatically mean misconduct has or hasn't happened.
42. Academic judgement must be fair and based on evidence. Staff involved in decision-making receive training to make sure the process is consistent across all Colleges and the External Collaborations Directorate. We are committed to providing regular training and updates for staff on recognising and addressing emerging forms of academic misconduct, including the use of AI and contract cheating.

Fairness in the Process

43. If you're involved in an academic misconduct investigation, you have the right to be treated fairly, respectfully, and with transparency. The University follows national good practice guidelines to make sure the process is clear and consistent.
44. Here's what you can expect:
- **Confidentiality:** Your case will be handled privately to protect everyone involved.
 - **Clear Communication:** You'll be told in writing what the concern is, what evidence supports it, and how you can respond. You'll get at least five working days' notice before any meeting.
 - **Disability:** If you are registered with the Disability Service or have disclosed a disability, this will be considered and reasonable adjustments will be made, using information already held by the University.

- **Right to Respond:** If new concerns come up during the investigation, you'll be given another chance to respond.
 - **Support and Representation:** You can bring someone with you to meetings – like a Students' Union adviser or a friend. In viva voce exams, your supporter can attend but won't be able to speak.
 - **Fair Treatment in Group Cases:** If more than one student is involved, your case will be considered individually, and you'll have access to support.
 - **Timely Resolution:** We aim to resolve cases as quickly as possible, following published timelines.
 - **Impartial Decision-Making:** Formal decisions and appeals will be made by people who haven't been involved in your case before. The person who first raised the concern may be involved in the early stages, but not in the final decision.
 - **Training and Consistency:** Staff involved in decision-making are trained to apply the policy fairly across all Colleges and partner institutions. All staff will receive general training and guidance on academic integrity.
 - **Written Outcomes and Right to Appeal:** You'll receive a written explanation of the decision and any penalty applied. You'll also be told how to appeal if you disagree with the outcome.
45. These principles are in place to make sure you're treated fairly, no matter which course you're on or where you're studying.

PART B: PROCEDURE FOR INVESTIGATING ALLEGATIONS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Making an Allegation

46. Concerns about academic misconduct can be raised by:
 - A member of staff (usually your module tutor)
 - An exam invigilator
 - Another student
 - Someone external (like an employer, external examiner, or a whistleblower)
47. The person who raises the concern is called the **identifier**. If the concern comes from outside the University or another student, your Programme Leader (or someone they choose) will take on that role.
48. If the concern is about **poor academic practice** or **minor misconduct**, it may be resolved locally – meaning your tutor or Academic Integrity Lead will meet with you to discuss it and offer support. This helps resolve things quickly and fairly.
49. If the concern is more serious – like **major** or **gross misconduct** – or if you disagree with the allegation, the case will be referred to the Academic Registry for formal investigation.
50. Sometimes, the type of misconduct recorded at first (for example, plagiarism or cheating) might change after further review. If that happens, the record will be updated to reflect the correct type, and you'll be given a chance to respond to the revised allegation. The Academic Registry keeps track of these changes to make sure everything is documented properly.

Initial Considerations and Preliminary Investigation

51. If someone raises a concern about your work, the first step is usually a conversation – not a formal hearing. The staff member who identified the issue (often your tutor) will arrange a meeting with you to talk about what's happened and give you a chance to respond.
52. This meeting can be in person or online and should take place in a private, respectful setting – normally within five working days of the concern being raised. Before the meeting, you'll receive a written explanation of the issue and any evidence that supports it.
53. This is an informal meeting to discuss the concern and give you a chance to respond. If you have any questions or need support, you can contact the Students' Union Advice Centre or other University support services before or after the meeting.
54. If you don't attend the meeting, the staff member will decide how to move forward. You'll still have other chances to respond later in the process.
55. **Use of Viva Voce:** In some cases – especially if there's doubt about whether you wrote the work yourself – you may be asked to take part in a viva voce (oral exam). This is a short, supportive conversation where you'll be asked to explain your work and

show your understanding. It's not a disciplinary hearing. (See Appendix A for more details.)

Deciding What Happens Next

56. After the meeting (or viva), the staff member in discussion with the Associate Dean (Education) or their nominee will decide how to classify the concern:
- **Poor Academic Practice:** If the issue appears to be the result of a genuine misunderstanding or lack of experience, your work will be marked as normal, and you'll get feedback and support. The case will be recorded but no penalty will be applied.
 - **Minor Academic Misconduct:** If there was some intent or impact (like plagiarism or collusion), and it's your first time, the issue may be resolved locally. It will be documented, and you'll be signposted to support services.
 - **Major or Gross Academic Misconduct:** If the concern involves deliberate deception (like impersonation, contract cheating / commissioning, or serious misuse of AI), the case will be escalated to the formal stage. Commissioning and contract cheating are treated as gross misconduct.
57. If your case is escalated, you'll be told in writing and directed to support services like the Students' Union Advice Centre. The staff member will complete the relevant form and submit all documents to Academic Registry. Any references to other students will be redacted to protect privacy.
58. This process helps make sure that concerns are handled fairly – giving you support when you need it, and ensuring serious issues are investigated properly.

The Formal Stage

59. If your case is referred to the formal stage – usually because it involves major or gross academic misconduct – the Academic Registry will take over and manage the investigation.

What Happens First

60. Once your tutor or Academic Integrity Lead submits the allegation and supporting documents, Academic Registry will:
- Check that the concern is clearly explained and properly categorised.
 - Make sure there's enough evidence to support the allegation.
 - Return the documents for revision if anything is missing or unclear. These should be corrected and sent back within three working days.

Your Response

61. You'll receive all the documents related to the case and be invited to submit a written response within five working days. If the type of misconduct is changed after you respond (e.g., from plagiarism to contract cheating), you'll be given another five working days to reply to the updated allegation.

62. You are encouraged to seek advice from the Students' Union Advice Centre or other University support services (such as the Wellbeing Team, Disability Service, or your Personal Tutor) if you need help understanding the process or preparing your response. If you are studying at a partner institution, you should instead access support services provided by your own institution. Please check with your local student services team or your programme handbook for details of available support.

Who Reviews Your Case?

63. Your case will be reviewed by the **Academic Integrity Panel**, which includes:
- A senior academic manager appointed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
 - Academic Integrity Leads from each College
 - A representative from Learning Enhancement and Academic Practice (LEAP)
 - One Students' Union Sabbatical Officer, normally a Vice-President: Education & Welfare
 - A secretary from Academic Registry (who supports the process but doesn't make decisions)
64. The panel meets regularly throughout the year, and urgent cases – like those affecting final-year students – can be prioritised. The Chair may nominate a deputy chair from the staff membership to ensure consistency and continuity of decision-making.

What the Panel Does

65. The Panel will:
- Review all documents and your response
 - Consider any relevant personal circumstances (like a declared disability)
 - Decide whether misconduct is proven, based on the balance of probabilities
 - Categorise the misconduct using the University's decision-making matrix
 - Apply a penalty if misconduct is confirmed
66. If the panel believes the case involves **gross misconduct**, it will refer you to a **Penalty Hearing**, which may result in expulsion.
67. The panel can also:
- Downgrade the category (e.g., from major to minor) if the evidence supports it
 - Ask for more evidence from you or your tutor
 - Dismiss the case if the evidence doesn't support the allegation
68. If misconduct is confirmed, the panel will also check whether you've had any previous proven cases, which may affect the penalty.

Getting the Outcome

69. You'll receive the panel's decision in writing within ten working days of the meeting. This will include:

- The decision and reasons
- Any penalty applied
- Information about your right to appeal

Penalty Hearing Referral

70. The Academic Integrity Panel is responsible for investigating and categorising all major and gross misconduct cases. If the Panel determines that gross misconduct has occurred and expulsion is a realistic outcome, the case is referred to a **Penalty Hearing**.
71. You will only be referred to a Penalty Hearing if the panel believes expulsion is a realistic and proportionate outcome. This step is not taken lightly, as it can delay your reassessment or progression.
72. You are required to attend the Penalty Hearing if you are referred. If you do not attend without a valid reason, this may be considered an aggravating factor and could affect the severity of any penalty. If necessary, the Panel will proceed in your absence, and a lack of engagement may be seen as disregarding the seriousness of the misconduct.
73. At the hearing, you will have the opportunity to speak and respond directly to the panel's questions.
74. If expulsion is not considered likely, the panel will apply the appropriate penalty directly, so your case can be resolved directly without unnecessary delay.
75. You are entitled to bring a supporter to the Penalty Hearing. Please refer to Appendix C for more information.

Penalties for Proven Academic Misconduct

76. If academic misconduct is proven, the University will apply a penalty that matches the seriousness of the case. We use two tools to guide this: the Academic Misconduct Decision Matrix and the Penalty Matrix (See Appendix F). These help ensure that penalties are fair, consistent, and proportionate across all Colleges and partner institutions.

What Influences the Penalty?

77. The penalty you receive will depend on:
 - The category of misconduct (minor, major, or gross)
 - Whether you intended to gain an unfair advantage
 - How serious the misconduct was and the impact it had
 - Your level of study and where you are in your academic journey
 - Whether you've had any previous proven cases of misconduct

Types of Penalty

78. Penalties range from feedback and support to expulsion. Here's how they work:

- **Penalty 0:** You'll receive feedback and academic support. Your marks won't be affected.
- **Penalties 1–4:** You'll get a mark of 0% for the assessment, but you'll be allowed to resubmit. Your reassessment mark will be capped or reduced.
- **Penalty 5:** You'll fail the module and won't be allowed to resit. This will delay your progression and – depending on your other results – may mean you cannot progress at all.
- **Penalty 6:** You'll be expelled from the University and may receive an exit award or no award at all.

Classification Impact

79. If misconduct is proven at Level 6 (undergraduate final year) or postgraduate level, and it affects your final award, your degree classification will usually be reduced by one level (for example, from First Class to 2.1). This applies to major or gross misconduct involving summative work.

Progression and Award Considerations

80. The panel doesn't decide whether you can progress or graduate. That's up to the **Board of Examiners**, who will apply the penalty to your academic record.

- If you need to repeat an assessment (reassessment), the Board will decide whether you're eligible based on your credit profile.
- If you're not allowed to repeat an assessment, the Board will instead decide whether you can repeat the module in the next year (resit).
- You can't pass or be compensated for a module affected by misconduct until any reassessment is completed.

The Appeal Stage

81. If you don't agree with the outcome of an academic misconduct investigation and think a mistake has been made, you have the right to appeal. You can challenge either:

- The decision that misconduct occurred
- The penalty that was applied

82. You can appeal the decision of the Academic Integrity Panel after you receive the outcome letter. If your case is referred to a Penalty Hearing, you may submit additional evidence or explanation at the hearing, but the appeal process follows the outcome of the hearing.

83. To appeal, you'll need to complete the **Academic Misconduct Appeal Form** and email it to conduct@bucks.ac.uk within 10 working days of receiving your outcome letter.

84. If you are considering an appeal, you are encouraged to seek advice from the Students' Union Advice Centre or other University support services. If you are studying at a partner institution, you may also have access to local support services—please refer to your course handbook or local student services for more information.

Valid Grounds for Appeal

85. Your appeal must be based on one or more of the following reasons:
- The formal process wasn't followed properly
 - The decision was unreasonable based on the evidence
 - You have new evidence that couldn't reasonably have been provided earlier
 - There was bias or a reasonable perception of bias
 - The penalty was too harsh or not allowed under the policy
86. **Important:** You cannot appeal against academic judgement. This means you cannot challenge decisions based on expert evaluation of your work – such as how your writing was assessed or whether your ideas were considered original.

What Happens Next

87. Academic Registry will first check that:
- Your appeal was submitted on time
 - You've provided valid grounds
88. If your appeal doesn't meet these criteria, it will be rejected at this stage, and you'll be told why.
89. If your appeal is accepted, it will be reviewed by a senior member of staff who hasn't been involved in your case. They'll decide whether the original decision should stand or be reconsidered.

Outcome of Your Appeal

90. If your appeal is upheld, your case will go back to the Academic Integrity Panel for review, along with the reviewer's comments and any recommendations.
91. If your appeal is rejected, you'll receive a **Completion of Procedures (CoP)** letter. This confirms that the University's internal process is finished and explains your next steps, including how to request an independent review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

Independent External Review (OIA)

92. If you've completed the University's internal appeal process and still feel the outcome was unfair, you can ask for an independent review by the **Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)**.
93. This option becomes available once you receive your Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter, which confirms that the University's process has finished.

Making a Complaint to the OIA

94. You must submit your complaint to the OIA within **12 months** of the date on your CoP letter.
95. The OIA won't re-investigate your case or re-mark your work. Instead, they'll look at whether the University followed its procedures properly and whether the outcome was reasonable based on the evidence.

Support and Guidance

96. You're encouraged to get advice before submitting a complaint to the OIA. The **Students' Union Advice Centre** and other support services can help you understand the process and prepare your submission.
97. Your CoP letter will include information on how to contact the OIA and what to expect from the review.

Appendices

Appendix A: Viva Voce Oral Examinations

What is a Viva?

A viva voce is a short oral examination used to help confirm whether you wrote the work you submitted. It's not a disciplinary hearing – it's a supportive academic conversation where you'll be asked to explain your work and show your understanding.

When Might You Be Asked to Attend a Viva?

You may be invited to a viva if:

- There's a concern that someone else may have written your work (e.g. contract cheating or commissioning).
- Your submission seems very different from your usual academic style or ability.
- There isn't enough written evidence to confirm authorship.

Preparing for a Viva

You'll be given at least **10 working days' notice** before the viva takes place. The notice will explain:

- Why you've been invited
- What to expect during the viva
- How to prepare (e.g. bring drafts, notes, or research materials)

Staff will aim to create a respectful and non-confrontational environment.

How the Viva Works

- **Duration:** Up to 45 minutes
- **Location:** A quiet, private space (or online if needed)
- **Panel:** Two academic staff, including one subject specialist (usually the person who raised the concern)
- **Support:** You can bring a supporter (like a fellow student, Students' Union rep, or someone you trust) but they won't be able to speak during the viva

What You Might Be Asked

Questions will be open and focused on your academic engagement. For example:

- What research did you do for this assignment?
- Can you explain your argument or structure?
- How did you approach the topic?
- What sources did you use and why?
- Can you walk us through your draft process?

The tone will be exploratory – not accusatory. You're not expected to defend yourself, just to show your understanding of the work.

After the Viva

A record of the discussion will be kept. Based on the conversation, the staff member will decide whether the concern is resolved or needs to be escalated to a formal investigation. If it's escalated, the viva record will be included in the case file.

Appendix B: Reporting to Professional Bodies and Employers

Why This Matters

If you're studying on a course that leads to professional registration – or working in a regulated profession – academic misconduct can have consequences beyond your marks. In some cases, the University may need to report proven misconduct to your employer or professional body.

This is about protecting professional standards and making sure everyone who graduates is ready to practise safely and ethically.

When Reporting Might Happen?

Reporting may be necessary if:

- You're on a course that leads to professional registration (e.g., nursing, social work, teaching).
- You're already professionally registered.
- You're employed as part of your studies (e.g., apprenticeships).

Only **proven** cases of misconduct are reportable. You'll always be told in writing before any external notification is made.

What the University Will Do

- All reporting will follow data protection rules.
- Decisions will be documented and justified.
- Academic Registry will coordinate the process with your College.
- You'll be informed before anything is shared externally.

What Your College Will Do

If your course is professionally accredited or involves employer sponsorship, your College will make sure you understand:

- How misconduct could affect your professional registration or job.
- What types of misconduct are considered serious by professional bodies (e.g., falsifying data, impersonation, commissioning).
- Where to find support and guidance, including this policy.

Who Decides Whether to Report?

The decision to report misconduct will be made by:

- The Associate Dean (Education), Dean, or Chair of the Fitness to Practise Panel
- In consultation with Academic Registry

All decisions will be clearly documented, including the reason for reporting and the evidence used.

Reporting Scenarios

If You're Studying for Professional Recognition

| Misconduct Level | Reporting Action |
|------------------------|--|
| Poor Academic Practice | Not reported |
| Minor Misconduct | Not reported unless repeated; you'll receive a warning |
| Major Misconduct | Likely referred to Fitness to Practise; warning if not |
| Gross Misconduct | Automatically referred to Fitness to Practise |

If You're Already Professionally Registered

| Misconduct Level | Reporting Action |
|------------------------|--|
| Poor Academic Practice | Not reported |
| Minor Misconduct | Written warning; employer may be notified |
| Major Misconduct | Employer notified; PSRB informed if repeated |
| Gross Misconduct | Employer and PSRB notified |

Note: If you are already professionally registered, you may be required by your regulator to self-refer if academic misconduct is proven. Please check the guidance from your professional body or seek advice from your College.

What You'll Be Told

If misconduct is proven and reporting is required, you'll be informed in writing. This will include:

- Confirmation that misconduct was proven
- Whether reporting will happen
- Your right to appeal the decision

How Long Reporting Can Continue

- **To employers:** Reporting ends when you finish your programme, unless required by law or contract.
- **To professional bodies (PSRBs):** Reporting may continue after graduation, depending on the body's rules – especially if misconduct affects your fitness to practise.

Academic Registry will make sure any reporting is:

- Clearly documented
- Justified based on professional standards
- Communicated to you in advance

Appendix C: Penalty Hearing Process

What Is a Penalty Hearing?

A **Penalty Hearing** is held when you've been found to have committed **Gross Academic Misconduct** – the most serious type of breach. The purpose of the hearing is to decide what penalty is appropriate, which will include expulsion from the University.

This is not a re-investigation of your case. The hearing focuses only on the penalty, based on the evidence already reviewed.

Who Will Be at the Hearing?

The panel will include:

- A senior member of the University Strategy Group (Chair) or nominee
- A Students' Union sabbatical officer or nominee
- Two academic staff members who haven't been involved in your case
- A representative from the Academic Integrity Panel (usually the Chair) to answer questions
- A secretary from Academic Registry (who supports the process but doesn't make decisions)

Panel members must not have had any prior involvement in your case or close contact with you (e.g. as a personal tutor).

What You'll Receive Before the Hearing

You'll be given at least **10 working days' notice**. The date and time will be set by the University to ensure the availability of the panel members.²

The notification will include:

- The date, time, and location of the hearing
- The names of panel members and your right to challenge the panel's composition
- The purpose of the hearing
- Your right to bring a supporter to the hearing (such as a Students' Union adviser, or fellow student. They can offer moral support but cannot speak on your behalf.³
- Your right to submit additional documents
- A copy of the Academic Integrity Policy and relevant guidance

You are **required** to attend and are expected to prioritise your availability. If you can't make it, the hearing will be rescheduled once. If you miss it again without a valid reason (e.g.

² Hearings will only be rescheduled for genuine, evidenced reasons such as disability, caring responsibilities, or religious observance. Routine work or personal commitments are not normally grounds for rescheduling. Hearings must proceed promptly to avoid unnecessary delay.

³ Legal representation is not permitted, except where required by professional body regulations or employment law. If you believe you require legal representation, this must be discussed with Academic Registry in advance; otherwise, your legal representative will not be admitted.

illness or emergency), the hearing will go ahead without you, and your absence may be considered as disregard for the severity of the misconduct.

What Happens During the Hearing

- The panel meets privately first to review the documents and plan questions.
- You and your supporter join the meeting. The Chair will explain the process.
- You may give an opening statement (optional).
- The panel will ask questions about the case and may speak with the Academic Integrity Panel representative.
- You may give a closing statement (optional).
- The Chair will explain what happens next.
- You and your supporter leave, and the panel meets privately to make a decision.

You can speak privately with your supporter during the hearing if needed.

How the Decision Is Made

The panel will consider:

- Any mitigating or aggravating factors
- Professional requirements (if relevant to your course)
- Contextual information (e.g. disability, cultural background)

The decision must be:

- Based on evidence
- Proportionate to the seriousness of the misconduct
- Clearly documented

If the panel recommends expulsion and the Chair is not a member of the University Strategy Group, the decision must be ratified by someone who is.

After the Hearing

You'll receive the outcome in writing within **5 working days**. This will include:

- The final decision
- Any penalty applied
- The reasons for the decision
- Information about your right to appeal

Appendix D: Exceptional Arrangements

Why These Arrangements Exist

Sometimes, the University may face a sudden increase in academic misconduct cases – for example, if lots of concerns are raised from the same module or partner institution. When this happens, we may temporarily adjust how cases are handled to make sure things are resolved fairly and on time.

These arrangements are only used when necessary and are designed to protect your right to a timely and proportionate outcome.

When Exceptional Arrangements Are Activated

Exceptional arrangements may be used if:

- A high number of cases could delay your results or progression.
- The usual panel schedule can't keep up with demand.

The Chair of the Academic Integrity Panel must approve these arrangements and will:

- Notify the Registrar
- Define how long the arrangements will last (normally no more than six months)

Temporary Case Review

During this period, trained panel members may review cases individually instead of waiting for a full panel meeting.

If your case is reviewed this way:

- The reviewer will still use the University's decision and penalty matrices.
- They'll document their decision and explain the reasoning.
- If your case is complex or borderline, it will be referred to the full panel or the Chair.

Oversight and Quality Assurance

Even under exceptional arrangements, all decisions must:

- Be reported to Academic Registry
- Be available for audit and review
- Follow the same standards as usual

Reclassification of Cases

To avoid unnecessary escalation, the Chair (or someone they delegate) may reclassify a case from gross misconduct to major misconduct – but only if it's appropriate and fair. This decision must be:

- Justified in writing
- Based on the principles of fairness and proportionality

Ending the Arrangements

Exceptional arrangements automatically end after the agreed period unless formally extended. Once they expire, the University returns to its standard procedures.

Appendix E: Examples of Academic Misconduct

To help you understand what counts as academic misconduct, here are examples grouped by how serious they are – from less severe to the most serious. These examples are not exhaustive, but they give you a clear idea of what to avoid.

| Type | Definition | Examples | Evidence we usually look for |
|------------------------|--|---|---|
| Plagiarism | Using someone else's words, ideas, or data without proper referencing – even if you didn't mean to. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copying from a website without citing it • Submitting another student's work as your own • Using published data without attribution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnitin Similarity Reports showing matches with published or online sources • Comparison with original materials (books, websites, articles) • Missing or inconsistent referencing |
| Self-plagiarism | Reusing work you've already submitted and received credit for, without permission or proper referencing. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitting the same essay for two modules • Reusing a lab report or dissertation content | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnitin Similarity Reports showing overlap with your previous submissions • Module records showing earlier submission of the same or similar work • File metadata showing earlier creation dates |
| Collusion | Working with others on individual assignments or sharing your work so someone else can use it dishonestly. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submitting similar assignments with a friend • Sharing essays or collaborating on a take-home exam | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similarity between your work and another student's • Communication records (e.g., messages or emails) suggesting collaboration • Statements from other students involved |

| Type | Definition | Examples | Evidence we usually look for |
|--|---|--|---|
| Cheating | Using unauthorised materials or behaviours during an exam or assessment to gain an unfair advantage. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bringing notes into an exam • Using a phone during an exam • Accessing online resources during a test | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invigilator reports describing suspicious behaviour • Confiscated notes or unauthorised devices • Unusual patterns in your answers or timing logs (for digital assessment) |
| Fabrication | Making up or altering data, sources, or results in your academic work. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inventing fake data or survey results • Falsifying citations or references • Making up quotes or interview content | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistencies in your data or results • Lack of supporting documentation (e.g., raw data, transcripts) • Failed attempts to verify sources or participants |
| Misrepresentation | Giving false information to gain academic advantage. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Falsely claiming extenuating or mitigating circumstances • Misrepresenting your contribution to group work • Providing fake documentation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflicting information from official records • Invalid or altered documents • Statements from staff or group members |
| Contract Cheating (including Commissioning) | Getting someone else to do your work and submitting it as your own. This includes using AI deceptively or paying or formally hiring someone (like a friend, tutor, essay mill, freelancer or ghostwriter) to write your assignment for you. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Buying an essay online • Asking a friend or tutor or hiring a freelancer to write your assignment • Submitting work generated by AI without engaging with it • Using AI to bypass authorship responsibilities or plagiarism detection | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work that doesn't match your usual style or ability • Turnitin Similarity Reports showing unusual patterns or external sources • Viva voce interviews where you're unable to explain or discuss your work |

| Type | Definition | Examples | Evidence we usually look for |
|----------------------|---|---|--|
| | | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Metadata showing different authorship or file origins • Communication with third parties (e.g., emails, chat logs) • Work submitted by multiple students from the same source • Reports from external services or whistleblowers • Payment records or receipts |
| Impersonation | Taking an assessment for someone else or letting someone take it for you. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sitting an exam on behalf of another student • Logging into a virtual test using someone else's identity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invigilator reports identifying mismatched identity • Login records showing unusual access patterns • ID mismatches or suspicious behaviour during in-person assessments |

Investigating Collusion

When we suspect collusion – where students have worked together on an assignment that should have been completed individually – we will carry out a fair, confidential, and individualised investigation.

Investigation Stage:

- **Individual Interviews:** Each student involved will be interviewed individually during the investigation stage to ensure fairness, confidentiality, and the opportunity to respond freely.
- **Access to Evidence:** Students will be given access to relevant materials, including the work and statements of other involved students, where appropriate. This supports transparency and informed responses.
- **Confidentiality:** All students involved must treat shared information confidentially and avoid discussing the case with others.

- **Support:** Students may bring a supporter to any meeting, such as a Students' Union adviser or a trusted person. The supporter may not speak on the student's behalf but can provide moral support.

Academic Integrity Panel

If the case is escalated to the Academic Integrity Panel:

- **No Student Attendance:** Students do not attend the Academic Integrity Panel.
- **Panel Consistency:** The same panel will consider all related cases to ensure consistency of approach.
- **Individual Consideration:** Each student's case will be assessed individually, based on the balance of probabilities and the evidence specific to them.
- **No Presumptions:** A finding in one student's case will not determine the outcome for another. Each decision will be reached independently.
- **Referral to Penalty Hearing:** If the panel believes expulsion is a realistic and proportionate outcome, the case will be referred to a Penalty Hearing.

Penalty Hearing (if applicable)

- **Student Attendance Required:** Students attend the Penalty Hearing and may bring a supporter (non-legal).
- **Joint Hearing Option:** A joint hearing may be held for all students involved, provided each student has the opportunity to:
 - Hear and respond to the evidence presented by others.
 - Speak privately to the panel to raise confidential or mitigating issues.
- **Consistent Panel:** The same panel will consider all cases to ensure consistency.
- **Individual Penalties:** Penalties will be decided individually, taking into account each student's circumstances, level of study, and any previous misconduct.

This approach ensures that collusion cases are handled fairly, consistently, and in line with national good practice.

Reclassification of Misconduct Type

Sometimes, the type of misconduct may be updated during the investigation. For example, a case originally recorded as plagiarism might later be classified as contract cheating. If this happens, you'll be told and given a chance to respond before any penalty is applied. This helps keep the process fair and transparent.

Appendix F: Decision and Penalty Matrices

To make sure academic misconduct is handled fairly and consistently, the University uses two tools:

- The **Decision Matrix** – to decide how serious the misconduct is
- The **Penalty Matrix** – to apply the right consequence

These help staff respond proportionately, based on what happened and how it affects your academic progress.

Academic Misconduct Decision Matrix

This matrix helps staff decide how to classify your case. It considers:

- Whether the misconduct was intentional
- What type of misconduct occurred and if it was a first occasion or a repeat offence
- Who can make the decision
- Whether the case needs to go to a panel
- Whether it needs to be reported to a professional body
- What penalties may apply

| Misconduct Level | Intent | Examples | Who Decides | Academic Integrity Panel Referral | PSRB / Employer Referral | Penalties |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|---|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| Poor Academic Practice | Unintentional | Inadequate referencing, undeclared use of basic AI tools, exam rule confusion | Tutor or Programme Leader | No | No | Penalty 0 |
| Minor Academic Misconduct | Possibly intentional | Plagiarism, collusion, undeclared AI use, minor exam breaches | Academic Integrity Lead | No | Only if repeated | Penalty 1-2 |
| Major Academic Misconduct | Intentional | Falsification, serious AI misuse, misrepresentation, repeated instances of minor misconduct | Academic Integrity Panel | Yes | Yes (if professional course) | Penalty 3-5 |

| Misconduct Level | Intent | Examples | Who Decides | Academic Integrity Panel Referral | PSRB / Employer Referral | Penalties |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|
| Gross Academic Misconduct | Clear intent to deceive | Contract cheating (including commissioning), impersonation, bribery, accessing exam papers early, repeated instances of major misconduct | Academic Integrity Panel + Penalty Hearing | Yes | Yes (automatic) | Penalty 6 |

Academic Misconduct Penalty Matrix

This matrix shows what penalties may be applied once misconduct is confirmed. It considers how the penalty affects your marks, module, progression, and final award.

Note: Penalties that result in a capped or reduced mark may affect your overall average and, in some cases, your final award classification.

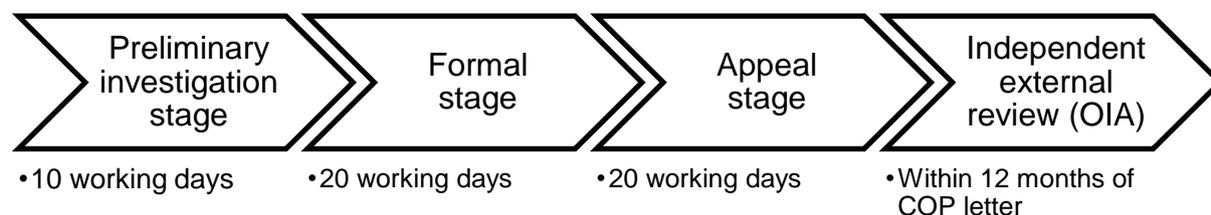
| Penalty | Description | Mark Awarded | Reassessment Allowed? | Capping (Reassessment) | Module Impact | Progression Impact | Award Classification Impact ⁴ |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--|--------------------|--|
| Penalty 0 | Feedback and support | Full mark | Yes (if needed) | Not applicable | No impact | None | None |
| Penalty 1 | Formal warning + support referral | 0% (assessment) | Yes | Capped at pass mark | Module passed if reassessment successful | Minimal | Minimal |

⁴ If your classification is already at the lowest level (Third Class or Pass), a penalty may result in no award being given, or in the award of a lower exit qualification (e.g., Ordinary Degree, Diploma of Higher Education), depending on University regulations.

| Penalty | Description | Mark Awarded | Reassessment Allowed? | Capping (Reassessment) | Module Impact | Progression Impact | Award Classification Impact⁴ |
|------------------|--|---------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|---------------------------|--|
| Penalty 2 | 0% + capped resit with 10% reduction | 0% (assessment) | Yes | Capped at 10% below pass | Module passed if reassessment successful | Minimal | Minimal |
| Penalty 3 | 0% + capped resit with 20% reduction | 0% (assessment) | Yes | Capped at 20% below pass | Module passed if reassessment successful | May affect average | Classification downgraded by one level |
| Penalty 4 | 0% + capped resit with 30% reduction | 0% (assessment) | Yes | Capped at 30% below pass | Module passed if reassessment successful | May affect average | Classification downgraded by one level |
| Penalty 5 | Module failed, no reassessment allowed | 0% (module) | No | N/A. Entire module failed | No credit awarded | Repeat year required | Classification downgraded by one level |
| Penalty 6 | Expulsion + exit award or no award | 0% for module | No | N/A. Entire module failed | Exit award or no award | Removed from programme | Not applicable (expulsion) |

Appendix G: Process Overview and Timescales

To help you understand what to expect, here's a summary of how long each stage of the academic misconduct process usually takes. These timescales are designed to make sure your case is handled fairly and without unnecessary delay. They may vary depending on how complex your case is, but Academic Registry monitors them closely.



Misconduct Timescales Summary

| Stage | Action | Who's Responsible | Expected Timescale |
|----------------------------------|---|---------------------------|--|
| Preliminary Investigation | Initial concern identified | Tutor / Identifier | Within 5 working days |
| | Initial meeting with you | Tutor / Identifier | As soon as reasonably possible |
| | Decision on next steps | Tutor / Identifier | Within 5 working days of meeting |
| | Viva Voce (if needed) | Tutor / Identifier | Minimum 10 working days' notice |
| | Submission of allegation form | Tutor / Identifier | Within 5 working days of decision |
| Formal Stage | Review of submitted documents | Academic Registry | Within 2 working days |
| | Your written response to the allegation | You | Within 5 working days of receiving documents |
| | Panel review of your case | Academic Integrity Panel | Normally within 5 working days |
| | Outcome Notification | Academic Registry | Within 10 working days of panel meeting |
| | Request for additional evidence (if needed) | You or Identifier / Tutor | Within 5 working days |
| | Penalty Hearing notice (if applicable) | Academic Registry | Minimum 10 working days' notice |
| | Penalty Hearing outcome | Academic Registry | Within 5 working days of the hearing |

| | | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| Appeal Stage | Submit appeal form | You | Within 10 working days of outcome |
| | Appeal review and decision | Reviewer via Academic Registry | Normally within 10 working days |
| External Review (OIA) | Submit complaint to OIA | You | Within 12 months of Completion of Procedures letter |

These timescales are here to support transparency and help you plan. If you're ever unsure about where your case is in the process, you can contact **Academic Registry** or the **Students' Union Advice Centre** for guidance.