

## UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER

### PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH REPORTS OF ALLEGED OFFENCES IN CONNECTION WITH EXAMINATIONS AND OTHER FORMS OF ASSESSMENT AS AUTHORISED UNDER SECTION 35 OF THE REGULATIONS GOVERNING EXAMINATIONS IN PROGRAMMES OF STUDY AND ORDINANCE XLI: STUDENT DISCIPLINE

#### 1 OFFENCES IN WRITTEN EXAMINATIONS

Definition: For the purpose of these procedures written examinations are defined as a form of assessment which relies upon candidates producing, normally at the end of a module, written answers to seen or unseen questions as an approved part of formal examination requirements.

- 1.1 Where a candidate is suspected of infringing the regulations or rules for the conduct of examinations or of otherwise committing an offence during a written examination the senior invigilator shall at the end of the examination submit a written report on the circumstances, accompanied by any relevant supporting material and the candidate's examination script, to the Dean of the Faculty in which the candidate is registered.
- 1.2 The Dean may make such enquiries as may be considered necessary including interviewing the candidate. He or she shall consider the report in consultation with the member of staff responsible for the examination and determine if there is a prima facie case against the candidate and accordingly whether or not to instigate disciplinary proceedings. If the Dean decides not to instigate disciplinary proceedings he or she shall inform the candidate, and the member of staff responsible for the examination, accordingly and the matter shall be closed. The Board of Examiners shall then determine the candidate's results and progress in the normal way.
- 1.3 If the Dean decides to instigate disciplinary proceedings he or she shall refer the matter to the Provost and inform the Director of Corporate Planning and Governance and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning).
- 1.4 The Provost shall interview the candidate in accordance with Ordinance XLI.
- 1.5 If the Provost is prepared to deal with the matter on behalf of the Disciplinary Committee in accordance with Section 4.1 of Ordinance XLI he or she shall determine what penalties shall be imposed.
  - a) Where the Provost decides that the candidate has committed a misdemeanour but without intending to gain an unfair advantage the penalty for a first offence shall normally be a reprimand and a warning, and for a second offence a reprimand, a fine not exceeding the maximum amount as determined from year to year and a warning.

The Provost shall report his or her decision to the Director of Corporate Planning and Governance, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning), and the Dean of the Faculty. The candidate shall have the right of appeal as provided in Ordinance XLI.

- b) Where the Provost decides that the candidate has engaged or attempted to engage in conduct for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage the penalty shall comprise the following or any combination of same:

For a First Offence

- i) a reprimand;
- ii) a warning;
- iii) a fine not exceeding the maximum amount as determined from year to year;
- iv) a decision that the work undertaken for the examination concerned is disallowed; or
- v) a recommendation to the Board of Examiners that if it decides, on the basis of the candidate's overall performance, to permit the candidate to repeat the examination concerned, it should consider specifying that the reexamination should not take place until at least the corresponding examination period in the next academic session, and that the candidate should not be permitted to gain further credit towards a qualification in the meantime.

For a Second Offence

- i) a reprimand;
  - ii) a warning;
  - ii) a fine not exceeding the maximum amount as determined from year to year;
  - iii) a decision that the work in all examinations and assessments being, considered by the Board of Examiners concurrently with the examination concerned is disallowed; or
  - iv) a recommendation to the Board of Examiners that the candidate be required to withdraw from his or her course.
- c) The Provost shall report his or her decision to the Board of Examiners who shall determine the candidate's results and progress under d) below; the Provost's decision shall also be reported to the Director of Corporate Planning and Governance and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) for information.
- d) The candidate shall have the right of appeal as provided in Ordinance XLI; pending the expiry of the appeal period the Board of Examiners shall make two provisional decisions on the candidate's result and progress as follows:
- i) the first decision to apply if no appeal is made or if an appeal is made but not upheld;
  - ii) an alternative decision to apply if an appeal is upheld.

- e) The provisional decisions made at the Board of Examiners shall be minuted but the candidate's result shall be formally recorded pro tem as "decision deferred". The candidate shall be informed of his or her examination result and progress according to the following procedures:
- i) if the candidate does not appeal by the expiry date, the Board of Examiners' decision shall be communicated immediately to him or her by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning);
  - ii) if the candidate appeals and the appeal is not upheld, the Board of Examiners' decision shall be communicated to him or her by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) immediately the appeal has been concluded;
  - iii) if the candidate appeals and the appeal is upheld the Board of Examiners' decision shall be communicated immediately to him or her by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning).
- f) Where there is a significant lapse of time between the date of the Provost's decision and the meeting of the Board of Examiners the Course Committee may, in the light of the Provost's decision and any subsequent appeal, take such action as it considers necessary in advance of the Board of Examiners.
- g) Where the Provost is of the opinion that the gravity of the offence appears to warrant it he or she shall report the matter to the Disciplinary Committee for consideration in accordance with Section 4.4 of Ordinance XLI.

## **2 OFFENCES OTHER THAN PLAGIARISM IN COURSEWORK**

Definition: For the purpose of these procedures forms of assessment other than written examinations shall be termed coursework and shall include practical work, essays, projects, dissertations, exercises, seminar papers, oral presentations, reports, class tests, artefacts, designs etc.

- 2.1 Where a tutor, supervisor or other member of staff suspects that a candidate has committed an offence such as engaging another person to undertake the assessment or fabrication of results he or she shall submit a written report accompanied by any relevant supporting material and the candidate's coursework to the Course/Subject Director for the course on which the candidate is registered.
- 2.2 The Course/Subject Director may make such enquiries as may be considered necessary including interviewing the candidate. He or she shall consider the report in consultation with the member of staff responsible for the coursework and determine if there is a prima facie case that the candidate has engaged, or attempted to engage, in conduct for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage. On the basis of this decision the Course/Subject Director shall determine in consultation with the Dean whether or not to instigate disciplinary proceedings.
- 2.3 If the Course/Subject Director decides not to instigate disciplinary proceedings he or she shall inform the candidate, the member of staff responsible for the coursework, and the Dean, accordingly. The member of staff shall determine what credit, if any, the candidate should

receive for the coursework. The Course/Subject Director shall report the matter to the Course Committee and, in due course, to the Board of Examiners.

- 2.4 If the Course/Subject Director decides to instigate disciplinary proceedings he or she shall submit a written report to the Dean, who shall refer the matter to the Provost and inform the Director of Corporate Planning and Governance and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning).
- 2.5 The Provost shall interview the candidate in accordance with Ordinance XLI.
- 2.6 If the Provost is prepared to deal with the matter on behalf of the Disciplinary Committee in accordance with Section 4.1 of Ordinance XLI he or she shall determine what penalties shall be imposed. The penalty shall comprise the following or any combination of same:

For a First Offence

- a) a reprimand;
- b) a warning;
- c) a fine not exceeding the maximum amount as determined from year to year;
- d) a decision that the coursework concerned is disallowed; or
- e) a recommendation to the Board of Examiners that if it decides, on the basis of the candidate's overall performance, to permit the candidate to repeat the coursework concerned, it should consider specifying that the re-submission should not take place until at least the corresponding period in the next academic session and that the candidate should not be permitted to gain further credit towards a qualification in the meantime.

For a Second Offence

- a) a reprimand;
  - b) a warning;
  - c) a fine not exceeding the maximum amount as determined from year to year;
  - d) a decision that the work in all examinations and assessments being considered by the Board of Examiners concurrently with the coursework concerned is disallowed; or
  - e) a recommendation to the Board of Examiners that the candidate be required to withdraw from his or her course.
- 2.7 The Provost shall report his or her decision to the Board of Examiners who shall determine the candidate's results and progress under 2.8 below; the Provost's decision shall also be reported to the Director of Corporate Planning and Governance and the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) for information.

- 2.8 The candidate shall have the right of appeal as provided in the Ordinance XLI; pending the expiry of the appeal period the Board of Examiners shall make two provisional decisions on the candidate's result and progress as follows:
- a) the first decision to apply if no appeal is made or if an appeal is made but not upheld;
  - b) an alternative decision to apply if an appeal is upheld.
- 2.9 The provisional decisions made at the Board of Examiners shall be minuted but the candidate's result shall be formally recorded pro tem as "decision deferred". The candidate shall be informed of his or her examination result and progress according to the following procedures:
- a) if the candidate does not appeal by the expiry date, the Board of Examiners' decision shall be communicated immediately to him or her by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning);
  - b) if the candidate appeals and the appeal is not upheld the Board of Examiners' decision shall be communicated to him or her by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning) immediately the appeal has been concluded;
  - c) if the candidate appeals and the appeal is upheld the Board of Examiners' decision shall be communicated immediately to him or her by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Teaching and Learning).
- 2.10 Where there is a significant lapse of time between the date of the Provost's decision and the meeting of the Board of Examiners the Course Committee may, in the light of the Provost's decision and any subsequent appeal, take such action as it considers necessary in advance of the Board of Examiners.
- 2.11 Where the Provost is of the opinion that the gravity of the offence appears to warrant it he or she shall report the matter to the Disciplinary Committee for consideration in accordance with Section 4.4 of Ordinance XLI.

**NOTE:** For the purpose of these procedures offences which were committed at any time during a candidate's previous or current period of registration shall be regarded as previous offences.

### **3 OFFENCES OF PLAGIARISM IN COURSEWORK**

- 3.1 Where a tutor, supervisor or other member of staff suspects that a piece of coursework contains plagiarised material, the piece of work may be submitted to the Turnitin detection system, or other detection system as appropriate if it has not already been screened as part of the submission process. The member of staff should also consult texts and other members of staff in order to ascertain if plagiarised material is present. Staff may also wish to examine the candidate orally on the content of the coursework or ask the student to attend an interview to discuss the piece of work. A record of the meeting should be kept. Failure, on the

candidate's part, to attend for interview cannot be taken as conclusive proof of plagiarism. Academic judgement should be exercised in order to determine if plagiarism of a very minor nature may be attributed to incorrect referencing techniques and should be penalised as such, rather than as plagiarism.

- 3.2 Where a member of staff is satisfied that there is plagiarised material in a candidate's work, he/she should bring this to the attention of the module co-ordinator who should forward a written report to the Course/Subject Director.
- 3.3 The Course/Subject Director may make such further enquiries as may be necessary. The Course/Subject Director should consult with the module co-ordinator and member of staff and, if they agree that plagiarism has taken place, the candidate should be penalised in accordance with the Framework of Penalties for Plagiarism Offences in Taught Programmes at Appendix 1. The candidate should be informed accordingly. A record of the offence should be placed on the Student Record System and on the student's paper file (pro forma at Appendix 2).
- 3.4 The candidate has the right of appeal in accordance with the Regulations Governing Examinations in Programmes of Study on the grounds of procedural irregularity following the meeting of the Board of Examiners, or the Ordinance on Student Discipline as appropriate.
- 3.5 Collusion, where a student has supplied material to another student, is plagiarism on the part of the recipient, but not on the part of the supplier, who should be dealt with in accordance with section 2.
- 3.6 Where a student is considered to have copied another student's work in an examination, this form of plagiarism is dealt with under section 1.

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## FRAMEWORK OF PENALTIES FOR PLAGIARISM OFFENCES IN TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

APPENDIX 1

1 <sup>ST</sup> OFFENCE	2 <sup>ND</sup> OFFENCE	3 <sup>RD</sup> OFFENCE	4 <sup>TH</sup> OFFENCE	PLAGIARISM DETECTED SUBSEQUENT TO GRADUATION
<p>Reduction in marks based on exclusion of plagiarised work.</p> <p>Formative interview with module co-ordinator and/or tutor.</p> <p><u>Where 1<sup>st</sup> offence is in Master's Dissertation:</u></p> <p>Mark of zero. Re-submit. Interview with Head of School and/or Course Director and/or supervisor.</p>	<p>Mark of zero for assignment containing plagiarism.</p> <p>Interview with Head of School and/or Course/Subject Director and/or tutor.</p> <p>Formal letter placed on student file.</p>	<p>Mark of zero for assignment containing plagiarism and maximum mark of 40% (UG) or 50% (PG) for coursework element.</p> <p>Case referred to Dean with recommendation of reprimand and fine not exceeding the maximum amount permitted under the Ordinance on Student Discipline at the time of application of penalty.</p> <p>Formal letter placed on student file.</p>	<p>Mark of zero for module.</p> <p>Case referred to University Disciplinary Committee with recommendation of suspension (1 semester or 1 year as advised by Faculty) or discontinue studies at the University.</p> <p>Outcome placed on student file.</p>	<p>The award may be revoked.</p>

### NOTES:

- (a) After a student has received formative advice offences are cumulative and carry over from year to year. Offences are not carried over from undergraduate study to postgraduate study.
- (b) Penalty of mark of zero not implemented until formative advice has been given to a student. It may therefore be appropriate, depending on the proximity of assignment deadlines, to count two or three occasions of plagiarism as one offence.
- (c) A student who does not attend for interview (1<sup>st</sup> offence) will be deemed to have received formative advice for the purpose of applying penalties.
- (d) When formative advice is given to a student, or an interview held, a note should be placed on the student's file. If the student does not attend for interview, this should also be noted on the student's file.
- (e) When a student fails in assessment following the application of a penalty, the normal consequences of failure as set out in course/award regulations apply.
- (f) In addition to the academic and disciplinary penalties which apply under the Framework, some students may also be subject to the codes of ethics/behaviour of certain professions and the Ordinance on Fitness for Practice may also apply.

**UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER  
RECORD OF PLAGIARISM OFFENCE**

**Student's Name:**

**Student's ID Number:**

**Module Code, CRN and Title:**

**Module Co-ordinator:**

**Tutor:**

**Date assignment submitted:**

**Date plagiarism detected:**

**Is this the student's first offence?** YES/NO

*(All offences prior to first formative advice are considered as a first offence. In the case of a number of offences prior to advice, this may be noted below but has to be considered a first offence.)*

If no, please state number of previous offences:

**Date of interview:**

**Interviewer(s):**

**Comments:**

**Penalty imposed** *(refer to Framework of Penalties for Plagiarism Offences, taking account of date of first formative advice):*

**Form completed by:**

**Date:**

This form should be retained in the student's file and the information should be recorded on the plagiarism register