

Student Academic Misconduct (Taught Programmes, Short- Cycle & MRes)

Procedure
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Policy Information

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Revision History

Version	Author(s)	Summary of Updates	Approval Date	Effective From Date
1.1, 1.2	Professor Odette Hutchinson, Jennie Hammond, Chloe Hastings, Dr Kieran Higgins	Language edits for clarity and consistency. Incorporation of procedures for academic misconduct in examinations. Further guidance on determining the severity of academic misconduct. Amendments to the procedures of School and Faculty Academic Misconduct Panels. Additional of penalty to cap component mark without capping the module mark.	June 2026	Sept 2026

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1. Aims, Purpose and Scope

This Procedure extends to all undergraduate, postgraduate taught and short-cycle students in instances where academic integrity falls below, or is suspected of falling below, the expected standards.

As a signatory to the [Quality Assurance Agency's Academic Integrity Charter](#), Ulster University seeks to empower all students to achieve academic excellence and expects that students will not in any way attempt to gain an unfair advantage in the process or outcome of assessment.

All students are expected to understand and appreciate the value of academic integrity and familiarise themselves with and meet the University's standards of academic integrity by acquiring the necessary knowledge of academic writing, citing, referencing, and the appropriate use and acknowledgement of Artificial Intelligence tools, where relevant.

Above all, students should understand the different forms of academic misconduct and their consequences. This Procedure derives its authority from the General Regulation: Student Academic Integrity.

This Procedure operates in conjunction with the University's Regulations for Undergraduate and Integrated Masters Programmes, Regulations for Postgraduate Taught Programmes and Regulations for Short-Cycle Qualifications, as applicable. Where any part of this Procedure conflicts with these Regulations, the Regulations will normally take precedence.

Where conflict or inconsistency arises between this Procedure and any other University policy, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Academic Quality and Student Experience) shall determine which policy takes precedence. The Pro-Vice-Chancellor shall also make the final determination on the interpretation of any provision of this Procedure where its meaning and application is unclear, having regard to the applicable Regulations and principles of fairness, consistency and proportionality.

The efficacy of this Procedure is monitored by the Academic Standards and Quality Enhancement Committee (ASQEC) which receives annual reports from each Faculty and the Doctoral College Board.

2. Definitions

Academic integrity includes, but is not limited to, committing to honesty, fairness, responsibility and respect in all scholarly work, producing one's own ideas, acknowledging the work of others through accurate citation and referencing, and resisting any temptation to gain an unfair advantage.

Academic misconduct occurs when a student does not adhere to the University's agreed standards of academic integrity. Academic misconduct can include, but is not limited to:

- i. **Plagiarism:** the act of taking or copying someone else's work and presenting it as if it were the student's own, either unintentionally or deliberately. Plagiarism occurs when items such as, but not limited to, ideas, texts, theories, data, artistic artefacts or other materials are presented without appropriate acknowledgement. Unintentional plagiarism may occur where a student's academic practice is poor, for example, by incorrect or incomplete referencing or citation or the improper use of directly quoted material.
- ii. **Self-plagiarism or Duplication:** the re-reuse of a student's own work without proper acknowledgement or permission.
- iii. **Inappropriate use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools:** using artificial intelligence tools in a way that is not authorised for the assessment or failing to acknowledge authorised use appropriately.
- iv. **Collusion:** the unauthorised collaboration of students on the preparation or production of assessment that should represent individual effort. Both a student who provides their work to another student, and a student who receives another student's work, may be found to have colluded. Academic judgement will apply as to whether the severity and culpability is the same or different for each of the parties.
- v. **Cheating:** where, in an examination or assessment setting, such as an exam, class test, OSCE, laboratory test, online or computer-based assessment or similar setting, a student is found to be in possession of, or has access to, any material or device which has not been approved for use in the assessment. This includes both where a student commits or attempts to commit alleged academic misconduct including but not limited to copying, impersonation, collusion or other acts that have the potential to disrupt, deceive or create unfair advantage in the assessment process. This includes unauthorised communication with others in an assessment setting. Unauthorised materials or devices may include, but are not limited to, notes, text or blank paper, mobile telephones, computers or tablets, earpieces, recording devices, smartwatches or other smart devices, including wearable technologies such as smart glasses, whether on the student's work surface, on their person or discovered elsewhere. It is the student's responsibility to know and understand what materials/devices are permitted as part of the assessment.
- vi. **Impersonation:** where an individual or individuals or an artificial intelligence agent or similar assumes the identity of a student during the assessment and assists with or completes the work on behalf of the student.
- vii. **Contract Cheating:** where a student engages with and contracts a third party, either paid or unpaid to complete all or part of an assessment on their behalf.
- viii. **Fabrication or falsification:** making up, altering or misrepresenting data, evidence, references or other information submitted for assessment.

For the purposes of the Student Academic Misconduct Procedure, definitions i-iii above are classified as plagiarism related academic misconduct, and definitions iv-viii are classified as non-plagiarism related academic misconduct. The classification of such academic misconduct will facilitate application of the appropriate action and/or penalty from the Actions and Penalties Framework (see Stage 3: Actions and Penalties for Academic Misconduct).

This list is not exhaustive. Where the above definitions do not strictly apply, but it is suspected that the student has gained or attempted to gain an unfair advantage or facilitated or attempted to facilitate another student to do so, in an assessment setting, this Procedure may be invoked.

Admissions misconduct discovered during the admissions process will normally be dealt with under the [Admissions Policy](#).

3. Policy Statement

3.1. The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

AI can be a useful teaching and learning tool. The use of AI in assessment does not automatically breach standards of academic integrity; however, before beginning any piece of assessed work, it is the student's responsibility to check with the Module Leader that the use of AI tools is authorised in relation to the specific assessment. Authorisation may differ across assignments, even within the same module, and will likely differ between modules and programmes.

Where the use of AI has been authorised by the Module Leader or Programme Director and is subsequently used by a student as part of an assessment, it must be acknowledged appropriately and in line with University guidance to ensure that any output is not misconstrued as the student's own work.

Where AI has not been authorised for use by the relevant Module Leader or Programme Director, or where a student uses AI but fails to acknowledge it appropriately, the submission of work containing copied or paraphrased AI-generated content may constitute academic misconduct. Submitting work that contains misleading or fabricated information, references or bibliographies may also be considered a breach of the University's standards of academic integrity.

These links provide further information on:

- [citing AI in the Ulster Harvard Referencing style for LHS](#) and
- [citing AI in the Ulster Harvard Referencing style for CEBE, AHSS and UUBS](#).
- Students using a referencing style that is not Harvard should contact the relevant [Library Subject Team](#).
- Affiliate and associate students should seek guidance from their institution.

3.2. Student Declaration of Academic Integrity

Upon submission of a piece of work, students must submit a declaration of academic integrity to confirm that the work is their own. Please see more information on [coursework submission and the declaration of academic integrity](#). The declaration must be used when assignments are submitted via the Virtual Learning Environment (Blackboard Ultra), or by other means.

The standard student declaration of academic integrity is as follows:

"I declare that this is all my own work. Any material I have referred to has been accurately referenced and any contribution of Artificial Intelligence technology has been fully acknowledged. I understand the importance of academic integrity and have read and understood the University's General Regulation: Student Academic Integrity and the Academic Misconduct Procedure. I understand that I must not upload my work before, during or after submission to any unapproved plagiarism detectors or answer sharing platforms, or equivalent, and that only University-approved platforms should be used."

3.3. Academic Misconduct and Fitness to Practise

Students who are registered or enrolled on professionally regulated programmes with a fitness to practise requirement must adhere to the standards and conduct expected by the relevant professional, statutory or regulatory body (PSRB).

Where a student is undertaking a programme of study that is regulated by a PSRB, allegations of academic misconduct will first be considered in accordance with this Procedure. Following the conclusion of the academic misconduct process, the University may consider whether the nature of the misconduct raises concerns relevant to fitness to practise.

Where fitness to practise concerns are identified, the matter may be referred to the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean of the Faculty for consideration under Ordinance XXXVII – Fitness to Practise, in accordance with the University's Fitness to Practise procedures.

In some circumstances, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor and Executive Dean may issue a precautionary suspension to a student while the Academic Misconduct Procedure is ongoing. Precautionary suspensions are interim measures and, in issuing a precautionary suspension, the University is not drawing any conclusion about the culpability of the student in relation to the alleged academic misconduct. Any referral to a PSRB in accordance with the fitness to practise Ordinance will follow the guidance of the specific PSRB.

Records will be retained in line with the University's Records Retention and Disposal Schedule.

3.4. Detecting Academic Misconduct

Although the detection of academic misconduct is not an exact science, there are several indicators that can raise suspicion during the assessment process. The indicators listed below are not definitive or exhaustive but may suggest that further exploration is required:

- The University's chosen plagiarism detection tool indicates similarity between submissions or unacknowledged or improperly acknowledged sources.
- The submission is significantly different in style, tone, format, and level of complexity to previous work submitted by the student.
- The submission is only tenuously linked to the assessment brief or does not follow specified requirements e.g., inappropriate headings or irrelevant sections or datasets.
- There are unexpected changes in font (colour, size, type), formatting (e.g., spacing), spelling, punctuation, syntax, tone or style of language used.
- Multiple referencing conventions are used and/or there are missing references, footnotes and/or endnotes.
- Unauthorised materials are found to have been brought into the place of assessment, such as notes, books or electronic devices.
- There is unauthorised communication between students or other parties during an assessment.

Ultimately, determining academic misconduct requires the application of academic judgement.

In cases of suspected academic misconduct in examinations, class tests or similar assessment settings, invigilators are responsible for identifying and reporting suspected misconduct to the relevant staff member immediately following the examination in accordance with this Procedure.

3.5. *Determining the Severity of Academic Misconduct*

Academic misconduct may vary in seriousness. The severity of academic misconduct is determined using academic judgement, considering the specific context of the assessment and the following criteria:

- A. **Unfair advantage:** would the misconduct, if undetected, enable a better outcome for the student who committed the misconduct when compared with a student who had not committed such misconduct?
- B. **Integrity of assessment:** can the validity of the assessment be assured, or would confidence in our degree-awarding powers be undermined?
- C. **Intent to deceive:** was the behaviour careless, opportunistic, or deliberate? In cases of suspected cheating, the nature of the conduct, the evidence presented and any explanation provided by the student when deciding if intent to deceive has been established.

The more serious and deliberate the attempt to gain an unfair advantage, and the more significant the impact on academic integrity, the more serious the academic misconduct is likely to be.

History of academic misconduct: Where a student has previously upheld incidents of academic misconduct, this may be considered when determining the appropriate severity and penalty, provided that the current allegation is first assessed on its own facts and evidence. The absence of prior misconduct may also be considered in mitigation when determining the appropriate penalty or sanction.

First time academic misconduct occurs is not automatically minor: the severity will depend on the allegation, the evidence, the seriousness of any unfair advantage, the impact on assessment integrity, and whether intent to deceive is established. Subsequent misconduct of any kind will normally increase the severity of classification, subject to consideration of the circumstances of the case (see Stage 3: Actions and Penalties for Academic Misconduct).

The table below explores determining the severity of academic misconduct in further depth.

Severity	Unfair Advantage	Integrity of Assessment	Intent to Deceive	Examples
Minor	Little or no meaningful benefit obtained over other students. Any effect on marks or outcomes would be negligible or at best marginal.	Integrity largely intact; the misconduct does not call into question the validity of the assessment result.	Limited or no evidence of intent to deceive; behaviour arises mainly from poor academic practice or misunderstanding.	Inadequate referencing due to poor understanding; minor similarities on individual submissions from a group task; limited duplication of a student's own work across assignments.
Moderate	Some benefit obtained that could reasonably influence the student's mark and/or progression.	Integrity partially undermined; aspects of the assessment outcome are less reliable, but overall validity can still be assured.	Some evidence of intent to deceive; typically, opportunistic behaviour where the student was aware the activity was not allowed.	Copying analysis from a journal article; resubmitting a piece of work previously submitted for credit elsewhere without proper permission or acknowledgement.
Major	An intentional attempt to gain clear and substantial advantage with the potential to influence assessment outcomes.	Integrity seriously compromised; the validity of results cannot be assured, risking confidence in our degree-awarding powers.	Strong evidence of intent to commit the alleged academic misconduct; the behaviour is systematic, repeated, or required pre-planning, or is objectively likely to have the aim of securing significant advantage.	Purchasing completed assignments for submission; falsifying or fabricating data; using unauthorised materials in an examination; impersonating another student in an examination.

3.6. Dealing with Suspected Academic Misconduct

This Procedure covers all instances of suspected academic misconduct, though certain types of misconduct will generate a higher level from the outset. Where a student is undertaking a module outside of their home School/Department, the School/Department which has ownership of the module in which the alleged misconduct took place will retain oversight of this Procedure, with appropriate involvement of the student's home School/Department.

Staff members handling cases of suspected academic misconduct must always act impartially and without bias, applying the procedure thoroughly and consistently to every student.

3.6.1. Stage 1: Initial Review

Where a member of staff, or any other person undertaking assessment activities on behalf of the University, suspects that academic misconduct may have occurred in relation to an assessment that is not an examination or class test or similar, they should gather relevant supporting material, including, where appropriate:

- Arranging for the piece of work to be submitted to the University's chosen plagiarism detection system to determine the extent of the alleged academic misconduct. The system may be used to inform recommendations in relation to the severity, however, any similarity report should be considered alongside a thorough analysis of the piece of work rather than as a standalone indicator of potential academic misconduct.
- Consulting other staff members and/or texts, to establish whether alleged academic misconduct is likely to have occurred.
- Arranging for the piece of work to be reviewed by appropriate colleagues.

Having considered the above, if a member of staff suspects that academic misconduct has occurred, the work should not be marked and the member of staff should, in consultation with the Module Leader, refer the matter to the School Academic Misconduct Panel with a recommendation as to the type of academic misconduct that is suspected and the severity (Minor, Moderate, or Major). Any such recommendation will be made at the discretion of the identifying or relevant staff member, based on their academic judgement, for consideration by the School Academic Misconduct Panel.

For academic misconduct where there is implied intent to deceive, such as collusion and fabrication, the severity will normally be established as Moderate or Major. There may be exceptions to this, for example, where a student has committed unintentional collusion which the Panel agree warrants a minor severity.

For academic misconduct with clear intent to deceive, such as cheating, impersonation and contract cheating, the severity will normally be established as Major, especially if the misconduct has significant potential for unfair advantage. These cases will normally be referred to Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel through the School Academic Misconduct Panel.

The School Academic Misconduct Panel will consider the recommendation and will make a final outcome on the type of academic misconduct and severity when further investigation has been carried out.

At this stage of the process, the staff member raising the allegation should not consult the University Academic Misconduct Register, as the initial recommendation as to the severity must not take any previous misconduct into account. Any previous misconduct will be fully considered later by the School Academic Misconduct Panel as part of their investigation.

Where an invigilator suspects that academic misconduct has occurred in an examination administered by Student Operations, the invigilator will refer the matter to their designated contact in Student Operations, who will refer the matter onwards via the relevant Learning, Teaching & Quality Director.

If an invigilator suspects that academic misconduct has occurred in a class test or similar assessment administered by the School or Department, the invigilator will, in consultation with the Module Leader and the relevant Learning, Teaching & Quality Director refer the matter to the School Academic Misconduct Panel for consideration.

In instances where a suspicion of academic misconduct is raised through a channel other than by a marker (for example, a report made directly to the Student Academic Affairs Team or a report made by an invigilator), the information will normally be passed to the Learning, Teaching & Quality Director for initial review. Anonymous reports of academic misconduct against a student will not normally be accepted, and details of where a report originated may be shared with the student. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

For cases being considered under this Procedure, the release of any marks related to the work under investigation should be withheld pending the outcome of the investigation, and it is accepted that the return of feedback may exceed the 20-working day window.

3.6.2. Stage 2: Consideration by the Appropriate Panel

3.6.2.1 School Academic Misconduct Panel

Upon receipt of a referral of suspected academic misconduct, a School Academic Misconduct Panel should be convened, comprised of at least two members of academic staff from those deemed eligible by the Head of School or Department. This may include Deputy Heads of School or Department, Learning, Teaching & Quality Directors, Programme Directors, Module Leaders or other substantive academic staff.

Determination of a case to answer

The School Academic Misconduct Panel will determine if there is a case to answer by considering the relevant piece of work and consulting the University Academic Misconduct Register to establish whether the student has committed any form of academic misconduct previously. The School Academic Misconduct Panel may also wish to review the student's previous work to establish whether instances of undetected academic misconduct may have taken place.

Determination as to whether there is a case to answer should take place in a timely manner and may take place via correspondence or equivalent means, without the requirement for the School Academic Misconduct Panel to a, at the discretion of the Chair. If it is determined there is no case to answer, the School Academic Misconduct Panel should refer the piece of work back to the programme team to be marked accordingly.

If it is determined there is a case to answer, and the severity is determined to be Major, the School Academic Misconduct Panel will refer the matter directly to the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel without further investigation and without meeting with the student.

When there is a case to answer

If it is determined there is a case to answer and the severity is determined to be Minor or Moderate, the student should be invited to meet with at least two members of the School Academic Misconduct Panel to discuss the piece of work.

Where the suspected academic misconduct is the first time **and** it is clear from the outset that it is a case of poor academic practice rather than academic misconduct, **and the Panel agree a meeting is not necessary**, the School Academic Misconduct Panel may wish to proceed without meeting with the student, referring the piece of work back to the programme team to be marked accordingly and with a recommendation for actions A and B of the Actions and Penalty Framework (see Stage 3: Actions and Penalties for Academic Misconduct) to be applied.

Prior to the School Academic Misconduct Panel meeting, the student will be informed in writing that they are suspected of committing Minor or Moderate academic misconduct. The student will be informed of the nature of the alleged misconduct and the module, part of a module or piece of work concerned, and will be provided with a copy of this Procedure and a copy of any documentary evidence of the case against them.

The School Academic Misconduct Panel may wish to consider, as part of their discussions the student's understanding of the Declaration of Academic Integrity, their preparation for the assessment, and the student's knowledge and understanding of the assessed work. The School Academic Misconduct Panel is empowered to collect evidence, examine witnesses including the student, and make other relevant enquiries as deemed necessary.

Where witnesses are called, including the student, they may be subject to examination, cross-examination and re-examination by the parties.

At least five working days' notice of the meeting should normally be provided to the student, although this timeframe may be accelerated with agreement from both parties, e.g., during the assessment period where it is in the student's best interests for the matter to be resolved more quickly. Meetings rescheduled at the request of the School Academic Misconduct Panel and or the student do not require a second period of five working days' notice.

Reasonable adjustments should be made, if required, to enable the student to participate fully in the meeting. The student may be accompanied to this meeting by a member of the University community, including a [Students' Union Officer](#) or an Adviser from the [UUSU Advice Bureau](#). A record of this meeting should be retained. Failure by the student to attend a meeting without prior agreement of the School Academic Misconduct Panel will normally result in the School Academic Misconduct Panel considering the case in the absence of the student, and this should be made clear to the student in advance.

Following their investigation, the School Academic Misconduct Panel will decide whether academic misconduct has been committed and will confirm the severity. If the severity is Minor or Moderate, the School Academic Misconduct Panel will determine the outcome and apply the appropriate action or penalty from options A-F of the Actions and Penalties Framework (see Stage 3: Actions and Penalties for Academic Misconduct), based on the severity and any record of previous misconduct of any type.

The School Academic Misconduct Panel must normally communicate its findings, including any outcome to refer to the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel, in writing to the student within ten working days of the Panel meeting. This communication will be sent to the student's University email address and will detail the Panel's outcome, with reasons, in respect of the allegations and advise the student of their right of appeal, including the appeal deadline, which is to be ten working days after the date of outcome letter.

Appeals against an outcome of the School Academic Misconduct Panel

A student may appeal the outcome of the School Academic Misconduct Panel within ten working days of the outcome being issued. Advice, support and representation is available from the [UUSU Advice Bureau](#).

The referral of a case to the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel cannot be appealed. The grounds for appeal are:

- i. new evidence is available which could not have been made available to the School Academic Misconduct Panel, and/or
- ii. there has been a procedural irregularity in the consideration of the case by the School Academic Misconduct Panel.

Appeals against the outcome of the School Academic Misconduct Panel which are on-time and demonstrate grounds for appeal will be considered by the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel. Students have one route of appeal. When an appeal against the School Academic Misconduct Panel has been considered by the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel, there will be no further right of appeal. Appeals which do not demonstrate new evidence and/or evidence of a procedural irregularity, and late appeals, will normally be rejected with no further right of appeal. Having exhausted the internal process, students should be signposted to the [Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman](#), where they may lodge a complaint on the grounds of maladministration.

3.6.2.2 Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel

The Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel will consider cases referred by the School Academic Misconduct Panel where the severity has been established as Major, as well as appeals against outcomes of the School Academic Misconduct Panel.

The Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel will normally be chaired by the Executive Dean or the Associate Dean (AQSE) (or their nominee) and consist of at least one other member of academic staff from outside School or Department from which the referral or appeal originated.

Consideration of Referrals from the School Academic Misconduct Panel

In cases of suspected Major academic misconduct, the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel will determine if there is a case to answer. Determination of a case to answer should take place in a timely manner and may take place via correspondence or equivalent means, without the requirement for the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel to meet, at the discretion of the Chair.

If it is determined that there is no case to answer, the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel should refer the piece of work back to the programme team to be marked accordingly.

If it is determined there is a case to answer, but the severity of the suspected academic misconduct is determined to be Minor or Moderate by the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel, the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel should refer the matter back to the School Academic Misconduct Panel to be dealt with accordingly.

If it is determined there is a case to answer, and the severity of the suspected academic misconduct remains Major, the student will be invited to meet with the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel.

Prior to the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel meeting, the student will be informed in writing that they are suspected of committing Major academic misconduct. The student will be informed of the nature of the alleged misconduct and the module, part of a module or piece of work concerned, and will be provided with a copy of this Procedure and a copy of any documentary evidence of the case against them.

The Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel may wish to consider, as part of their discussions the student's understanding of the Declaration of Academic Integrity, their preparation for the assessment, and the student's knowledge and understanding of the assessed work. The Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel is empowered to collect evidence, examine witnesses including the student and members of the School Academic Misconduct Panel, and make other relevant enquiries as deemed necessary. Where witnesses are called, including the student, they may be subject to examination, cross-examination and re-examination by the parties.

At least five working days' notice of the meeting should normally be provided to the student, although this timeframe may be accelerated with agreement from both parties, e.g., during the assessment period where it is in the student's best interests for the matter to be resolved more quickly. Meetings rescheduled at the request of the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel and or the student do not require a second period of five working days' notice.

Reasonable adjustments should be made, if required, to enable the student to participate fully in the meeting. The student may be accompanied to this meeting by a member of the

University community, including a [Students' Union Officer](#) or an Adviser from the [UUSU Advice Bureau](#). A record of this meeting should be retained. Failure by the student to attend a meeting without prior agreement of the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel will normally result in the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel considering the case in the absence of the student, and this should be made clear to the student in advance.

Following their investigation, the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel will decide whether academic misconduct has been committed and will confirm the severity. The Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel has the authority to recommend any penalty, within the Actions and Penalties Framework outlined in Stage 3: Actions and Penalties for Academic Misconduct, that they believe is fair, reasonable and proportionate.

The Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel must normally communicate its findings in writing to the student within ten working days of the Panel meeting. This communication will be sent to the student's University email address and will detail the Panel's outcome, with reasons, in respect of the allegations and advise the student of their right of appeal, including the appeal deadline, which is to be ten working days after the date of outcome letter.

Consideration of Appeals Against an Outcome of the School Academic Misconduct Panel

If the appeal has been received within 10 working days, and the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel determines, by correspondence or by meeting, that the grounds for an appeal have been demonstrated, the student will be invited to meet with the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel. If grounds for appeal have not been demonstrated the appeal will not be considered. There is no further right of consideration or appeal following this outcome. A student may make a complaint to the [Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman](#) within six months of the date of this outcome, should they believe maladministration has occurred.

At least five working days' notice of the meeting should normally be provided to the student, although this timeframe may be accelerated with agreement from both parties, e.g., during the assessment period where it is in the student's best interests for the matter to be resolved more quickly. Meetings rescheduled at the request of the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel and or the student do not require a second period of five working days' notice.

Reasonable adjustments should be made, if required, to enable the student to participate fully in the meeting. The student may be accompanied to this meeting by a member of the University community, including a [Students' Union Officer](#) or an Adviser from the [UUSU Advice Bureau](#). A record of this meeting should be retained. Failure by the student to attend a meeting without prior agreement of the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel will normally result in the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel considering the case in the absence of the student, and this should be made clear to the student in advance.

For appeals against an outcome of the School Academic Misconduct Panel, following the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel meeting, the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel may decide to uphold the appeal in full or in part, or to reject the appeal and confirm the outcome of the School Academic Misconduct Panel. The Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel cannot impose a penalty which is more severe than the original penalty.

Appeals against an outcome of the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel

A student may appeal the outcome of the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel within ten working days of the outcome being issued. Advice, support and representation is available from the [UUSU Advice Bureau](#).

The grounds for appeal are:

- i. new evidence is available which could not have been made available to the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel, and/or
- ii. there has been a procedural irregularity in the consideration of the case by the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel.

Appeals against the outcome of the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel which are on-time and demonstrate grounds for appeal will be considered by the University Academic Misconduct Panel. Students have one route of appeal. When an appeal against the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel has been considered by the University Academic Misconduct Panel, there will be no further right of appeal. Appeals which do not demonstrate new evidence and/or evidence of a procedural irregularity, and late appeals, will normally be rejected with no further right of appeal. Having exhausted the internal process, students should be signposted to the [Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman](#), where they may lodge a complaint on the grounds of maladministration.

3.5.2.3 University Academic Misconduct Panel

The University Academic Misconduct Panel will only consider appeals against the outcome of the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel.

The University Academic Misconduct Panel will be chaired by an Executive Dean or Pro Vice-Chancellor (or their nominee), who was not previously involved in consideration of the case. The University Academic Misconduct Panel will consist of at least two additional, appropriately senior academic staff not previously involved in consideration of the case. Academic staff who have been designated as University Conduct Officers (UCOs) will normally meet the definition of 'appropriately senior' by default, but participation in the University Academic Misconduct Panel is not limited to UCOs. All Panel members must be based outside of the Faculty from which the appeal originated.

Students whose appeals are being considered by the University Academic Misconduct Panel should be invited to meet with at least two members of the University Academic Misconduct Panel. At least five working days' notice of the meeting should normally be provided to the student, although this timeframe can be accelerated with agreement from both parties, e.g., during the assessment period where it is in the student's best interests for the matter to be resolved more quickly. Meetings rescheduled at the request of the Panel and or student do not require a second period of five working days' notice.

Reasonable adjustments should be made if required, to enable the student to participate fully in the meeting. The student can be accompanied to this meeting by a member of the University community, including a [Students' Union Officer](#) or an Adviser from the [UUSU Advice Bureau](#). A record of this meeting should be retained. Failure by the student to attend a meeting without prior agreement of the Panel will normally result in the Panel considering the case in the absence of the student.

The University Academic Misconduct Panel is empowered to collect evidence, examine witnesses including the student, members of the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel and other staff, and make other relevant enquiries as deemed necessary. Where witnesses are called, including the student, they may be subject to examination, cross-examination and re-examination by the parties.

The University Academic Misconduct Panel may decide to uphold an appeal in full or in part, or to reject the appeal and confirm the outcome of the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel. The University Academic Misconduct Panel cannot impose a penalty which is more severe than the original penalty.

The University Academic Misconduct Panel must normally communicate its findings in writing to the student within ten working days of the University Academic Misconduct Panel meeting. This communication will be sent to the student's University email address and will detail the University Academic Misconduct Panel's outcome, with reasons, in respect of the allegations.

There is no further right of appeal following the outcome of the University Academic Misconduct Panel. A student may make a complaint to the [Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman](#) within six months of the date of the outcome of the University Academic Misconduct Panel, should they believe maladministration has occurred.

3.6.3. Stage 3: Actions and Penalties for Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct Panels have a range of Actions and Penalties available to them to address cases of academic misconduct. Penalties for academic misconduct are graduated depending on the severity and repeated misconduct. All penalties imposed under this Procedure are subject to, and do not override, the applicable Study Regulations. In the event of a conflict between the penalties outlined herein and the Study Regulations, the Study Regulations will normally take precedence.

Penalties should not be actioned until the window for appeals has closed and/or any appeal has been considered by the relevant Panel. Where academic misconduct proceedings have not concluded in advance of the relevant Board of Examiners meeting, the module will normally be categorised using a holding code i.e., D7.

3.6.3.1 Actions and Penalties Framework

A – The student will be signposted to academic writing and referencing support.

B – The student will receive a written warning, which will remain on their file until graduation. This will be accompanied by the Student Academic Integrity Agreement which must be reviewed and signed by the student, signposting to appropriate support.

C – The misconduct related material should be disregarded from the student's work, and a mark awarded based on the quality of the remaining material. The full range of marks should be used, with no cap, marking the remaining work on its merits. The student may still fail the piece of work on the basis of the quality of the work remaining. Where a resit is permitted, the resit will be capped due to failure.

D – The misconduct related material should be disregarded from the student's work, and a mark awarded based on the quality of the remaining material. The component will be capped at a maximum of the pass mark, though the student may still fail the piece of work on the basis of the quality of the work remaining.

E – The student will be awarded a mark of zero for the component. The overall module may still achieve a mark equal to or greater than the pass mark, should the appropriate Regulations permit this. Whether students will be permitted to resit the module or make use of condonement will be considered by the relevant Board of Examiners, in line with the appropriate Regulations. In circumstances where a student is permitted to resit the work will be capped due to failure.

F – The student will be awarded a mark of zero for the component. The overall module mark, if passed, will be capped at the pass mark of 40% for undergraduate and 50% for postgraduate. Whether students will be permitted to resit the module or make use of condonement will be considered by the relevant Board of Examiners, in line with the appropriate Regulations. In circumstances where a student is permitted to resit the work will be capped due to failure.

G – Recommendation to the relevant Senior Officer that the student is suspended from their programme of study or expelled from the University. The relevant Senior Officer will not consider the recommendation until the appeal window has closed or, where an appeal has been submitted, until that appeal outcome has been determined by the relevant Panel. This does not prevent the Senior Officer from imposing a precautionary suspension where the circumstances require it.

Where Penalty G is imposed, the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel will normally write to the student's University email address within ten working days to notify them of the recommendation to be made to the Senior Officer and their right to appeal within ten working days.

The Chair of the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel will complete the Recommendation for Suspension or Expulsion referral form and return this to the Student Academic Affairs Team (SAAT).

At the end of the appeal period, or following any unsuccessful appeal to University Academic Misconduct Panel, SAAT will forward the referral to the Senior Officer (normally the Vice-Chancellor or their nominee). The Senior Officer will consider the recommendation and issue an outcome letter to the student and to SAAT. If the Senior Officer accepts the recommendation, the suspension/expulsion will be actioned. SAAT will inform the relevant parties, including the student's School and Faculty, Associate Dean (AQSE), Estates Customer Services Manager, Student Visa & Immigration Support Service and Residential Life. In cases of expulsion, SAAT will inform the Office of the University Secretary to ensure the Expelled Students' Register is updated.

The table below provides guidance on determining the relevant Action and Penalty in relation to the severity and history of academic misconduct.

Panel	Type of Academic Misconduct	Severity	Occurrence	Actions & Penalties
School Academic Misconduct Panel	Plagiarism-related	Minor	First misconduct	A and/or B.
			Second misconduct	C or D
			Third or subsequent	Any penalty from D-F
		Moderate	First misconduct	A, B and any penalty from C-E
			Second misconduct	Any penalty from C-F.
			Third or subsequent	No penalty imposed, referral to Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel for investigation as a Major severity.
	Non-plagiarism-related	Moderate	First misconduct	Any penalty from D-F
			Second misconduct	No penalty imposed, referral to Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel for investigation as a Major severity.
Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel	Plagiarism-related	Major	First, second or subsequent	Any penalty from C-F or G.
	Non-plagiarism-related			

Academic misconduct is cumulative regardless of the type of misconduct – for example, a first misconduct of collusion following a first misconduct of plagiarism will be considered a second academic misconduct.

All academic misconduct, including first misconduct, will be recorded on the University Academic Misconduct Register by the designated recorder within the School or Faculty within ten working days of an outcome being determined.

Details of an academic misconduct will be held on a student's record in line with the University's record retention schedule. If a student withdraws from one programme and enrolls on another programme at the same level during the period in which the records are retained, any academic misconduct will be counted cumulatively. However, whilst academic misconduct from undergraduate study may be supplied as part of a reference to inform a postgraduate admission outcome during the period in which the records are retained, these will not be considered cumulatively if dealing with suspected academic misconduct following enrolment on a postgraduate programme. Any record of academic misconduct identified whilst studying on an affiliate programme will not be considered if dealing with suspected academic misconduct following enrolment as a student of Ulster University.

Students should be informed of the outcome and any penalty in line with the Actions and Penalties Framework within ten working days of the outcome being made. This communication will normally be sent to the student's University email address and will detail the Panel's outcome, with reasons, in respect of the allegations, advise the student of their appeal rights, including the appeal deadline. Or, in outcomes from the University Academic Misconduct Panel, advise the student of their right to make a complaint of maladministration to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman within six months. The School or Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel should implement the appropriate penalty when the University window for appeals has closed and/or any appeal has been considered by the relevant Panel.

Penalties recorded against a student take primacy over approved absence, temporary deregistration or outcomes of the Extenuating Circumstances process. Schools and Boards of Examiners should make appropriate arrangements to ensure that details of any Penalties imposed on a student are retained and reviewed prior to reengagement with assessment following any approved absence, temporary deregistration or outcomes of the Extenuating Circumstances process.

Where a student fails an assessment following the application of a penalty, the normal consequences of failure apply, as set out in the Regulations for Undergraduate and Integrated Master's Programmes, the Regulations for Postgraduate Programmes and the Regulations for Short Cycle Programmes, in addition to any further penalty imposed by an Academic Misconduct Panel.

3.7 University Academic Misconduct Register

The University Academic Misconduct Register is used for the monitoring of academic misconduct in the University and contributes to the analysis made by Faculties and the Doctoral College Board for annual reports to the Learning and Teaching Committee.

All misconduct, including first misconduct, must be recorded on the University Academic Misconduct Register by the designated member of staff within the School or Department within ten working days of an outcome being determined. Academic misconduct is cumulative regardless of type of misconduct – for example, a first misconduct of collusion following a first misconduct of plagiarism will be considered a second academic misconduct.

If a student subsequently submits an appeal against the Panel outcome and that appeal is upheld in full or in part, the University Academic Misconduct Register must be amended within ten working days of the appeal outcome.

The University Academic Misconduct Register is accessible via the Banner Student Records System.

University Academic Misconduct Register Coding

Code	Type of Misconduct	Misconduct Family
PL1	PLAGIARISM; First Misconduct	Plagiarism Related
PL2	PLAGIARISM; Second Misconduct	
PL3	PLAGIARISM; Third Misconduct	
PL4	PLAGIARISM; Fourth or subsequent Misconduct	
SP1	SELF-PLAGIARISM; First Misconduct	
SP2	SELF-PLAGIARISM; Second Misconduct	
SP3	SELF-PLAGIARISM; Third Misconduct	
SP4	SELF-PLAGIARISM; Fourth or subsequent Misconduct	
AI1	INAPPROPRIATE AI USE; First Misconduct	
AI2	INAPPROPRIATE AI USE; Second Misconduct	
AI3	INAPPROPRIATE AI USE; Third Misconduct	
AI4	INAPPROPRIATE AI USE; Fourth or subsequent Misconduct	
CL1	COLLUSION; First Misconduct	Non-Plagiarism Related
CL2	COLLUSION; Second Misconduct	
CL3	COLLUSION; Third Misconduct	
CL4	COLLUSION; Fourth or subsequent Misconduct	
CH1	CHEATING; First Misconduct	
CH2	CHEATING; Second Misconduct	
CH3	CHEATING; Third Misconduct	
CH4	CHEATING; Fourth or subsequent Misconduct	
IM1	IMPERSONATION; First Misconduct	
IM2	IMPERSONATION; Second Misconduct	
IM3	IMPERSONATION; Third Misconduct	
IM4	IMPERSONATION; Third Misconduct	
FB1	FABRICATION OR FALSIFICATION; First Misconduct	

Code	Type of Misconduct	Misconduct Family
FB2	FABRICATION OR FALSIFICATION; Second Misconduct	
FB3	FABRICATION OR FALSIFICATION; Third Misconduct	
FB4	FABRICATION OR FALSIFICATION;	
CC1	CONTRACT CHEATING; First Misconduct	
CC2	CONTRACT CHEATING; Second Misconduct	
CC3	CONTRACT CHEATING; Third Misconduct	
CC4	CONTRACT CHEATING; Fourth or subsequent Misconduct	

4. Communication, Implementation & Training

Further guidance and templates for staff and students are available on the [Academic Integrity SharePoint site](#).

Support for students on academic integrity is available from the [Student Success Centre](#) and the [Library](#).

Support for staff on promoting academic integrity with students is available from the relevant [Learning Enhancement Faculty Team](#).

Annual briefings on Academic Misconduct for staff will held in Semester 1. Bespoke training and advice on individual cases of alleged academic misconduct is available on request to Schools and Departments from the [Student Academic Affairs Team](#).

5. Complaints Procedure

Members of the University community wishing to raise an issue about this policy are encouraged to do so informally in the first instance through contacting the Learning Enhancement Directorate. Should that not resolve the issue, students may make use of the [Ulster University Student Complaints Procedure](#). Staff members may do so through first through their line manager, and then through the relevant grievance procedure.

6. Relevant Legislation

This Procedure complies with [The Education \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1998](#) and [Northern Ireland Act 1998](#) with regards to Higher Education in Northern Ireland.

7. Related Policy Documents

For more information on Academic Integrity at Ulster University, see [Academic Integrity and Plagiarism](#).

8. Contact Details

This Procedure will be reviewed informally annually and formally every five years. If this Procedure is not working for you and you have suggested amendments and or clarifications, please contact saat@ulster.ac.uk.

Appendix 1: Summarised Procedure

This table summarises the procedure for staff. It should be read alongside the full Procedure and the Actions and Penalties Framework. Steps 3a and 3b describe alternative routes.

Step	Action	Outcome or Next Step
1. Initial review	Gather and review evidence through the appropriate reporting route. Assess the current allegation without consulting the Academic Misconduct Register.	Concern resolved: normal marking. Concern remains: refer to the School Academic Misconduct Panel with the recommended type and severity. Do not mark the work; withhold related marks pending the outcome.
2. School Academic Misconduct Panel review	Review the evidence and consult the Academic Misconduct Register. Decide whether there is a case to answer and the suspected severity.	No case to answer: normal marking. Minor or Moderate: School Academic Misconduct Panel, step 3a. Major: refer directly to the Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel, step 3b, without further School investigation or a meeting with the student.
3a. School Academic Misconduct Panel investigation.	Normally meet with the student and investigate. Determine whether misconduct occurred and confirm its severity.	No misconduct: normal marking. Minor or Moderate: determine the appropriate action or penalty under the Framework, taking account of previous misconduct. Major: refer to the Faculty Panel.
3b. Faculty Academic Misconduct Panel investigation.	Review the referral. Where a Major case remains to answer, meet with the student and investigate.	No case or no misconduct: normal marking. Minor or Moderate after review: return to the School Academic Misconduct Panel. Major: determine the appropriate outcome under the Framework.
4. Communicate and record	Write to the student with the outcome, reasons and applicable appeal rights, normally within ten working days of the Panel meeting.	Update Academic Misconduct Register within ten working days of the outcome being determined. Keep penalties on hold until the appeal window closes or any appeal is decided.
5. Appeal	The student may appeal within ten working days of the outcome letter on grounds of previously unavailable new evidence and/or procedural irregularity. Late appeals or appeals without grounds will normally be rejected.	Original School decision: appeal to the Faculty Panel. Original Faculty decision: appeal to the University Panel. There is one internal route of appeal. A School referral to Faculty cannot be appealed.
6. Appeal outcome	The appeal Panel may uphold the appeal fully or partly, or reject it and confirm the original outcome. It cannot impose a penalty more severe than the original penalty imposed.	Communicate the decision and reasons, normally within ten working days. Amend the Register within ten working days if the appeal is upheld fully or partly. There is no further internal appeal.
7. Implement the outcome	After the appeal window closes or any appeal is decided, implement the confirmed outcome in accordance with the applicable Study Regulations.	For suspension or expulsion recommendations, the Student Academic Affairs Team forwards the referral to the relevant Senior Officer for decision. Once the internal process is exhausted, provide information about complaints of maladministration to the Northern Ireland Public Services Ombudsman.

Appendix 2: Consultation Log

Date of Consultation	Type of Consultation	Summary of Feedback	Suggested Amendments	Action/Response
February – June 2025	Academic Integrity Working Group 2025 (includes academic colleagues, UUSU, Library, QAHE, CQE, CCEA, Legal Services, Student Success Centre & Student Ops)	Suggestions made on shared working document	Suggestions made on shared working document	Suggested changes discussed and agreed
March – June 2025	Policy, Regulations, Penalty Framework & Plagiarism Register sub-group (includes academic colleagues, CCEA, CQE & Student Ops)	Suggestions made on shared working document	Suggestions made on shared working document	Suggested changes discussed and agreed
July – August 2025	Staff & student awareness-raising sub-group (includes academic colleagues, CDLE, UUSU, CCEA, CQE, CPPE)	Suggestions made on shared working document	Suggestions made on shared working document	Changes discussed and implemented
December 2025	Student Operations	Discussion re cheating in examinations. Request that this is dealt with under this Procedure.	Consideration given to taking forward cheating in examination cases under this Procedure.	On hold pending further consultation with Student Ops, ADs & EDs.
January 2026	Associate Dean (CEBE)	Various suggestions		Suggestions noted for upcoming review.

Date of Consultation	Type of Consultation	Summary of Feedback	Suggested Amendments	Action/Response
February 2026	Student Ops	Consultation re cheating in examinations.		
February 2026	Public consultation	None provided	NA	NA
April-June 2026	Associate Deans	Various suggestions		Changes made accordingly