UNIVERSITY OF SUSSEX

Division for the Student Experience

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

1. OVERVIEW AND PURPOSE

1.1 'Academic integrity' is constituted by a set of values which operate as the foundation of academic practice. These core values are honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. All instances of academic misconduct are a threat to the integrity and fairness of the assessment process and the value of the University's awards.

1.2 The University will ensure that the values that constitute academic integrity are promoted and that academic misconduct is avoided by educating members of the University's community in appropriate academic conduct.

1.3 The Academic Misconduct procedure will be applied to any student where concerns are raised that they have not followed the appropriate academic integrity requirements or standards, and are alleged to have engaged in academic misconduct. Consistent application of the Policy and procedures enables fairness and parity for past, current and future students.

1.4 As such, all cases of academic misconduct in assessment must be seriously considered and appropriate procedures followed. This Policy should be read in conjunction with the procedures and guidance.

2. SCOPE

2.1 This Policy applies to current students. Should an allegation be made against a former student, the decision about whether to pursue the allegation will be made by PVC (Education and Students) or nominee (refer clause 4.7).

2.2 For the purpose of this Policy, "student" applies to those who are registered for a taught award from the University of Sussex, and/ or registered for University of Sussex taught modules assessed for credit.[1]

2.3 Allegations of academic or research misconduct related to postgraduate researchers (PGRs) registered on research degrees should be addressed through the Procedure for the Investigation of Allegations of Misconduct in Research.

2.4 This Policy applies to any work undertaken by a student for which marks contributing to summative assessment are given, including assessments which are marked pass/fail.

[1] For collaborative provision, the applicable policies and procedures will be agreed at the point of validation, to ensure the minimum requirements of both institutions can be met. Where outbound Sussex students are studying at a host institution (for example, Study Abroad semester or year), the host institution's policy and procedures will apply.

2.5 For the purposes of this Policy, the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) is considered an academic unit of the University of Sussex, and the Policy applies in its entirety to all IDS students registered onto a taught course that leads to a University of Sussex award.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 All staff

3.1.1 All staff have a responsibility for reporting reasonable concerns related to academic misconduct in line with procedural guidance.

3.2 All Students

3.2.1 All students are required to uphold the University's standards of academic integrity and to comply with the University's Policy and related procedures and guidance on academic misconduct as published.

3.2.2 Students should familiarise themselves with the Faculty-approved assessment brief. Lack of familiarity with correct academic practice is not a defence in relation to breaches.

3.2.3 Students are responsible for the academic integrity of all work they submit for assessment, including group work. Students should familiarise themselves with the University's academic integrity requirements and specific requirements of each assessment brief.

3.3 Module Convenors

3.3.1 Module convenors must ensure that students are provided with information on the academic integrity requirements in assessments and resources available to support this. They are also required to include standardised wording provided by the Academic Misconduct Office in assessment briefs.

3.4 Academic Misconduct Investigating Officers

3.4.1 Academic Misconduct Investigating Officers (AMIO) must investigate all allegations of academic misconduct on modules owned by the Faculty/ School in accordance with the Policy and associated procedures and guidance.

3.4.2 The Associate Dean (or nominee) must appoint sufficient AMIOs for the Faculty ahead of each academic year.

3.5 The Academic Misconduct Office

3.5.1 The Academic Misconduct Office processes casework, including the scheduling of Panel meetings and dissemination of outcomes in accordance with this Policy and associated procedures and guidance.

3.5.2 The Academic Misconduct Office is empowered under clause 4.5.5 of this Policy to enact decisions where criteria expressed in the procedures have been met, without the need for Panel consideration.

3.6 The Academic Misconduct Panel

3.6.1 The Academic Misconduct Panel is responsible for the consideration of all referred cases, and confirmation of outcomes in accordance with its Terms of Reference.

4. POLICY

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 The University provides the overarching academic integrity approach, with clear and fair policies, procedures and guidance which can be understood and consistently implemented. It promotes the core values of academic integrity and allocates appropriate resources and

developmental opportunities for students and staff.

4.1.2 All allegations of academic misconduct will be investigated, in a fair and consistent way, and students will be given an opportunity to respond to the allegation.

4.1.3 Permissible penalties that can be applied are outlined in this Policy. Academic penalties applied to students will be ratified by Examination Boards for taught students. Students who are undertaking study on a programme with professional accreditation, or are themselves members of a professional body, may be subject to additional procedures (such as Suitability for Professional Practice, or reporting to a registering body) where academic misconduct is found to have taken place. The University Education Committee has oversight of academic integrity.

4.2 Definitions

4.2.1 Academic misconduct in relation to students' work is "any action by a student which gives or has the potential to give an unfair advantage in an examination or assessment, or might assist someone else to gain an unfair advantage, or any activity likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research" (Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE)). All instances of academic misconduct are failures to respect the integrity and fairness of the assessment process, regardless of whether they are intentional or unintentional. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, one or more of the examples outlined below.

4.2.2 Collusion

Collusion refers to the submission of substantially similar work produced in collaboration between two or more students, without approval.

An act of collusion includes those who actively assist others or allow others to access their work prior to submission for assessment. In addition, any student is guilty of collusion if they access and copy any part of the work of another, regardless of whether permission was given.

4.2.3 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the use of others' ideas, intellectual property or work (written or otherwise), without acknowledgement or permission. To copy sentences or phrases without proper acknowledgement of the source, is plagiarism. Plagiarism can also include paraphrasing someone else's work without citing the original source.

The act of presenting work that has been previously submitted for a different assessment, except where the nature of the assessment makes this permissible, is treated as 'overlapping material', please see Marking, Moderation and Feedback [link to follow].

4.2.4 Personation

Personation is the submission of work presented as a student's own, which may be the preparation of the work, part of the work, or providing substantial assistance in completion of the work. This includes but is not limited to purchasing or commissioning of work, such as essays from essay banks or tutors, commissioning someone else to write an assessment or sit an exam, and/ or breaches of the University's guidance on proofreading. A fee does not have to be paid for personation to have taken place.

4.2.5 Unauthorised or inappropriate use of digital technologies, including artificial intelligence

Misuse of digital technologies includes artificial intelligence. Examples include:

- using AI or other digital tools, such as translation tools in an assessment where their use has been prohibited
- submitting AI-generated work, where this is permitted, without required acknowledgment

4.2.6 Breach of in-person examination or test room protocols

Breach of in-person examination or test room protocols is having unauthorised materials (including books, or notes on paper, or writing on the body), unauthorised calculators, mobile 'phones, internet enabled devices and other prohibited electronic devices. Having these items on the student's person after the start of the exam or test is a breach of protocols, regardless of whether or not they are accessed or are relevant to the assessment.

Breach of in-person examination or test room protocols also includes improper communication during the assessment or copying the work of another student.

4.2.7 Fabrication

Fabrication is the creation of false data, evidence, quotations, citations or other information in any assessed work. Fabrication may be the result of making up observations in practical, placement or project work, not accurately recording the outcome of a lab experiment, or using fabricated results or sources. Fabrication may also include the inappropriate manipulation and/or selection of data, imagery and/or research consent.

4.2.8 Breach of Research Ethics

Breach of research ethics on taught modules includes any breach of the University of Sussex Research Ethics Policy or Code of Practice for Research, and may include one or more of the following:

- failure to gain ethical approval;
- carrying out research without appropriate permission;
- breach of confidentiality or improper handling of privileged or private information on individuals gathered during data collection;
- breaches of data protection legislation;
- coercion or bribery of project participants.

Students conducting research or research-related activities as described in the University of Sussex Research Ethics Policy must gain ethical approval before carrying out the activity; this includes before contacting potential participants and/or advertising the study. Students are responsible for complying with the requirements set out as part of the approval process.

4.2.9 The above list is not exhaustive. Academic misconduct may include other serious breaches which undermine the integrity of assessments such as obtaining and/or sharing an assessment task or model answers in advance, or attempting to bribe, coerce or otherwise influence a member of staff to be assessed more favourably than the work merits. An assessment may contain more than one example of academic misconduct (for example, plagiarism and personation).

4.3 General Principles

4.3.1 All work submitted for assessment should be written or presented by the student in English, unless otherwise specified by the assessment brief.

4.3.2 In all assessed work, students must make a clear distinction between their own ideas and those drawn from other sources. Any act which misleads markers regarding the development or authorship of work, including failure to properly reference and cite sources (direct quotations, secondary citations, and paraphrasing), constitutes academic misconduct. Likewise, students are responsible for verifying the accuracy of their work, including an accurate reference list.

4.3.3 Unless explicitly allowed in the module documentation or specified in the assessment brief,

students must work alone on preparing their assessment.

4.3.4 The development of academic skills is an important part of learning. Students are expected to engage with training, guidance and other information made available to them so that they may develop skills and knowledge of good academic practice.

4.3.5 The issue of intent or exceptional circumstances is excluded from determining whether misconduct had occurred or not, as consideration should focus on potential for unfair advantage.

4.3.6 All allegations will be considered in accordance with the Policy and associated procedures and guidance and based on the presented evidence. Where a judgement is required, an outcome will be determined on the balance of probability

4.4 Levels of academic misconduct

4.4.1 Academic misconduct is categorised by levels of severity, depending on scope of the breach, any previous cases, and impact on the assessment; specifically, whether the breach fundamentally undermines the integrity of the work, confers an unfair advantage or otherwise presents a risk to the institution.

- Level 1 - limited
- Level 2 - significant
- Level 3 – severe

4.4.2 Examples of limited, significant and severe breaches can be found within accompanying guidance.

4.5 Procedure for determining a case of academic misconduct

4.5.1 The investigation procedure and route to determine academic misconduct are detailed within associated procedures and guidance.

4.5.2 Where there is no case to answer, the allegation will be dismissed, and no note will be made on the student's permanent record.

4.5.3 A First Case of academic misconduct will receive a fixed outcome, and the case will not be considered by the Academic Misconduct Panel, unless the student disputes the allegation.

4.5.4 In some circumstances, a First Case may be deemed severe (level 3) and referred to the Academic Misconduct Panel.

4.5.5 In some circumstances an allegation may be processed without the need to refer the case to Panel. In these circumstances, where the criteria expressed in the procedures has been met, the student will not be invited to a Panel meeting. The standard appeals procedure will apply.

4.5.6 The Terms of Reference and Membership for the Academic Misconduct Panel are found in Appendix 1.

4.6 Indicative Penalties

4.6.1 The Academic Misconduct Panel has the discretion to issue one of the following or a combination of the following penalties, depending on the level of the breach and any previous or concurrent offences.

4.6.2 More than one offence at any level will usually escalate the offence to the next level of severity. Exceptionally, a case of academic misconduct may have occurred, and no penalty

be issued.

4.6.3 Penalties may be used singularly or in combination. Guidance on the application of penalties will be provided to Panels.

Level	**Description**	**Indicative penalty if no previous cases**	**Indicative penalty if previous case/s** (expectation that each subsequent case will escalate penalty)
First Case procedure	A first incident of level 1 or level 2 academic misconduct will receive a fixed outcome and referral to the Academic Practice Workshop where there have been no previous instances of academic misconduct. *A level 3 breach may be referred to Panel if there is an elevated institutional risk to quality, standards or reputation.*	Reduce assessment mark to 0 and require a sit with 10 percentage point penalty	-
1	Limited amount of academic misconduct within the assessment.	Reduce assessment mark by 10 percentage points	Reduce assessment mark to 0, OR Reduce module mark to 0
2	Significant amount of academic misconduct within the assessment.	Reduce assessment mark to 0	Reduce assessment mark to 0, OR Reduce module mark to 0, OR Reduce classification by one band, OR Reduce module mark to 0 and disallow resit, OR Expulsion from the University for a period of at least 3 years
3	Severe academic misconduct	Reduce module mark to 0, OR Reduce classification by one band, OR Reduce module mark to 0 and disallow resit, OR Expulsion from the University for a minimum of 3 years	Reduce module mark to 0, OR Reduce classification by one band, OR Reduce module mark to 0 and disallow resit, OR Expulsion from the University for a minimum of 3 years

4.7 Academic Misconduct allegations after an award has been made

4.7.1 Should an allegation be made against a former student, the decision to pursue the matter will rest with the PVC (Education and Students), or nominee.

4.8 Appeals

4.8.1 Students have the right of appeal against academic misconduct decisions, where the criteria are met. Please refer to the appeals criteria, regulation and procedure.

Review / Contacts / References

Policy title:	Academic Misconduct Policy
Date approved:	July 2025
Approving body:	Senate
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Revision history:	N/A – first iteration of new policy
Next review date:	2027-28
Related internal policies, procedures, guidance:	• Supporting procedures and guidance • Proofreading Protocols • Marking, Moderation and Feedback Procedures • Procedure for the investigation of allegations of misconduct in research • Student facing information
Division:	Division of Student Experience
Policy owner:	Director for the Student Experience
Lead contact/author:	Deputy Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) Academic Regulations Manager

Appendix 1

Academic Misconduct Panel Terms of Reference and Composition

The Academic Misconduct Panel is an independent body comprised of a pool of expert senior academic and professional services staff. Panel Chairs and members are approved by the University Education Committee, usually for a term of three years.

The Academic Misconduct Panel Chair and members will have no current significant academic or personal connection with the student (or students) considered by the Panel.

Terms of Reference

1. To consider all cases of academic misconduct in accordance with the scope of the Policy and associated procedures and guidance, with the exception of First Cases, unless a First Case is referred to the Panel.
2. To delegate cases of academic misconduct which do not required referral to Panel to the Academic Misconduct Office.
3. To determine whether, on the balance of probability, academic misconduct has occurred.
4. To use academic judgement to apply appropriate penalties, in accordance with the regulations, to ensure that the academic standards of the award are maintained.
5. To report annually to the University Education Committee.

Composition and quoracy

Membership of the Academic Misconduct Panel will include a Chair, and approved members who may include designated officers of the Students' Union.

Minimum membership for quoracy shall be the Chair and at least two members. Members of the Academic Misconduct Panel are appointed by the University Education Committee for a period of three years.

Information on the conduct of the Panel meeting, and role descriptors, can be found in the associated procedures and guidance.