

Procedure for considering personation cases

Extract from the Examination and Assessment Regulations 2024/25, Section 2, Academic Misconduct

See: [Regulations for examinations and assessment : Academic standards : Academic Quality and Partnerships : University of Sussex](#)

Types of academic misconduct

7-8. Personation

'Personation in written submissions is where someone or software (unless explicitly permitted in the assessment guidance from the module convenor) other than the student prepares the work, part of the work, or provides substantial assistance with work submitted for assessment. This includes but is not limited to: AI generated text or responses; purchasing essays from essay banks; commissioning someone else to write an assessment; writing an assessment for someone else (including where no benefit is gained by the student producing the assessment); using a proofreader where this is not allowed; using substantive changes proposed by a proofreader or third party (person or electronic service) that do not adhere to the University guidance on proofreading; work that has been written in a language other than the language required for assessment and translated (for language based assessments only); work including sections that have been translated without acknowledgement. Personation in examinations held on campus includes asking someone else to sit an examination. Students who attend an examination without their student ID-card or other acceptable form of photo-ID will not have their examination script marked until their identity has been confirmed.

Cases of personation will usually be considered to be major misconduct, with the exception of proofreading and translation transgressions where they are limited in their extent and may be considered to be minor misconduct.'

61. Procedure for cases of personation to be considered

'A suspected case of personation may be investigated by a School team, based on a paper based review of the students other written assessments (submissions and exams) to date in the stage of study. The School team should normally include the Head of School, the Course Convenor and must include the Investigating Officer. The School team would review the assessments and consider issues such as consistency of style, formatting, use of language/grammar as well as the student's academic performance in assessment. The School team may refer a case for consideration by the Panel or confirm a 'no case'. Where the case is referred to the Panel, the student will be invited to attend the Panel to discuss the findings of the School team and to provide information on how the assessment was completed. An oral exam (viva voce) on the student's knowledge of the assessment or the discipline will not be conducted at the Panel, however, questions can be asked about how the assessment was prepared and why material was included or not included. The Investigating Officer can meet with the student before the Panel to discuss the concerns raised in broad terms.'

Raising a concern of personation

1. A case of personation can be raised by:
 - (i) a staff member following a concern raised as part of the marking process (based on the assessment being beyond the assessment task set, the assessment being very good but not specifically following the assessment task, an eclectic/overly broad bibliography etc).
 - (ii) a staff member based on information from a student or member of staff;
 - (iii) the exam board (MAB or PAB) based on a concern that the mark for an assessment was significantly higher than the student's other marks and/or the marks of the cohort.

A case cannot be considered where progression/award has already been confirmed by the PAB.

2. Standard 'Notice of Advice' to be sent by School to inform student that a concern regarding personation is being considered.
3. Investigating Officer to ensure the Academic Misconduct Cover Sheet is completed.
4. Investigating Officer to arrange provision of supporting information, and may choose to arrange a School team meeting as set out in **Appendix 1(ii)**.
A school meeting is not a mandatory part of the procedure, but may be held to support decision making. This sense check is often very helpful, as personation usually requires the compilation of indicators rather than conclusive evidence. The meeting is between the IO, and in most cases, most usefully includes the marker/ module convenor to check understanding of the case and concerns. The inclusion of HoS is not mandatory.

At the School team meeting

5. School team reviews cases referred, as a paper based exercise without discussion or consultation with the student. All the student's other written assessments on the module concerned and other modules (submissions, exam scripts and formative assessments) in the stage of study may be considered as part of the review. The School team should normally include the Head of School, Course Convenor and Module Convenor and must include the Investigating Officer.
6. The Investigating Officer completes a standard form to confirm the School team decision (**see Appendix 1**). The School team decision can be informed by consistency of style, formatting, use of language/grammar, change in level or general academic performance in the assessment. Evidence of a change in any of these can enable a case to be taken to Panel.

School team decision

7. Where the School team confirms that personation is not likely to have occurred, the Investigating Officer will confirm the case as a 'no case'. The CAO will send the standard School Letter ('Investigation of Academic Misconduct') to the student to inform them that a case was considered, that it had been agreed that it was a 'no case' and that nothing would be recorded on their record. (It is standard practice to inform students where a concern regarding misconduct is considered. The mark may or may not have already been published.)
8. Where the School team confirms that personation is likely to have occurred, the Investigating Officer will make a preliminary decision of Major or Minor. The Misconduct

Panel Secretary will inform the student that a concern of personation is under consideration and invite them to a Panel.

In advance of the Panel

9. The Investigating Officer may contact the student in advance of the Panel to discuss the concerns broadly and explain what will happen at the Panel.
10. The student will be invited to review the Evidence File, in advance of the Panel, in accordance with standard practice.

At the Panel

11. The Panel will meet to discuss the personation concerns raised. The Course Convenor may accompany the Module Convenor who would normally attend the Panel to present the case. They would respond to questions from the Panel regarding the findings of the investigation and to any subject based queries.
12. Questions put to the student would be designed to establish the authenticity and authorship of the assessment. They would focus on the assessment organisation and preparation, research conducted and editing undertaken. The Panel Chair will ensure that questions are appropriate and encourage discussion regarding the authorship of the assessment. The questioning must not become a VIVA, as a verbal test of the learning outcomes that the assessment task was designed to test.
13. Panel members will discuss the misconduct concerns raised and agree an outcome and a penalty. Panel meetings may proceed in the absence of the student, unless the Panel Chair decides the student's presence is key to reaching a conclusion (this is standard practice for a Panel).

Appendix 1: form for personation cases:

Please append to the completed Academic Misconduct Cover Sheet

Candidate number	
Candidate name	
Module code	
Module title	
Assessment mode	

(i) Rationale for raising a concern for School team meeting to consider

School Investigating Officer to summarise why a concern was raised about the above student's assessment.

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(ii) Supporting material to be provided for the School team meeting to include (as appropriate):

- Copy of student assessment in question
- Copy of assessment task e.g. list of essay titles
- Copies of students assessments on this and other modules that have been submitted during the academic year (written summative and formative submissions and exam scripts)
- student array and marks achieved to date on all module assessment components
- student mean mark for stage (if available)
- cohort mean mark for module and/or assessment component for the current year and previous 3 years
- student attendance on module and overall
- copy of reading list for the module and whether it is held in the Library
- Comment from Module Convenor about student engagement in seminars/practical teaching sessions, where appropriate

(iii) School team decision and rationale: to be completed by School Investigating Officer

The School team met on (date)

The following were present at the School team meeting (list those present):

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The School team decision can be informed by the following:

School to review	comment
consistency of style	
consistency of formatting	
consistency of use of language/grammar	
Feedback on student's academic performance in the assessment, based on assessment task and marking criteria.	

Decision (to also be recorded on the Academic Misconduct Cover Sheet)

Delete as appropriate:

- (a) The School team decided that personation was unlikely to have occurred ('no case' letter will be sent to student).
- (b) The School team decided that personation was likely to have occurred (case will be referred to Panel).

Rationale for decision (no need to also record on the Academic Misconduct Cover Sheet)

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School Investigating Officer:

Print name: Signature: Date: