

# UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

## ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY (STUDENTS)

### 1. AUDIENCE

This policy is for the attention of:-

All academic staff: in particular, Heads of Schools, Directors of Teaching, Postgraduate Convenors, Module Co-ordinators, Examination Officers.

SALTIRE.

All students.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all undergraduate, taught and research postgraduate students in the University.

### 3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy authors: Deans of Arts and Science.

Responsibility for the implementation of the policy lies with Heads of Schools and Deans.

### 4. RELATIONSHIP WITH EXISTING POLICIES

This policy supersedes the document dated 24 August 2009.

### 5. CONTACT DETAILS

For advice and support on any aspect of this policy please contact the Deans' Office.

# UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

## ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT (STUDENTS)

### **SUMMARY**

This paper presents a further redrafting of the policy on academic misconduct by both Undergraduate and Postgraduate students that was agreed by TLAC in September 2009.

This paper was submitted for consideration by TLAC on 16 December 2009 and was subsequently approved by Academic Council on 29 January 2010. The policy takes effect from the start of Semester 2, session 2009/10.

It incorporates the following amendments:-

- The paper introduces a new intermediate penalty between a written warning and grade zero.
- There is a clear outline of how the University deals with cases of group academic misconduct.
- Appendix II as approved by TLAC in March 2009 has now been incorporated into the document.
- The policy heading now makes it clear that the paper only relates to student and not staff academic misconduct.
- Paragraph 35 has been amended to clarify that the Investigating Officer is not a member of the School Board of Adjudication.
- A new Contents Page has been added and the form notifying the Deans' Office of any cases has now been removed and will be made available on the web.

A K TOBIN (Professor) Dean of Science  
R M DILLEY (Professor) Dean of Arts  
N A MILTON (Mrs) Deans' Policy Support Officer

21 January 2010

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**ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY (STUDENTS)**  
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## University of St Andrews

### ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY (STUDENTS)

#### SCOPE AND APPLICABILITY

1. Academic integrity is fundamental to the values promoted by the University. It is important that all students be judged on their ability, and that no student be allowed to gain an advantage unfairly over others, to affect the security and integrity of the assessment process, or to diminish the reliability and quality of a St Andrews degree.
2. **Academic misconduct** includes, *inter alia*, the presentation of material as one's own when it is not one's own; the presentation of material whose provenance is academically inappropriate; and academically inappropriate behaviour in an examination or class test. Any work that is submitted for feedback and evaluation (whether formative or summative, at any point in the programme of study) is liable to consideration under this Academic Misconduct policy. All work submitted by students is expected to represent good academic practice.
3. The University's policy detailed in this document covers the behaviour of both undergraduate and postgraduate students. The policies and practices described in this document do not cover misconduct by academic staff; other procedures exist to deal with these.
4. The University recognizes that it has an obligation to students to make clear to them what constitutes academic misconduct, and it takes steps to ensure that all newly matriculated students are aware of both the nature of academic misconduct and the policies the University has in regard to it. Responsibility for this must rest primarily with academic Schools, where not only general but discipline specific issues can be best dealt with, though core material relating to academic misconduct should be standardized across School Handbooks and other sources of information for students.

#### CATEGORIES OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

5. This policy document is concerned only with students' *actions* and not their *intentions*. It addresses, *inter alia*, the submission of coursework presented as the product of one's own investigation and scholarship when it is not; aiding and abetting, or offering to act as an accomplice to academic misconduct; and academically inappropriate behaviour in examinations and other assessed situations (e.g. class tests). The policy treats such behaviour as *actions* that undermine the integrity of academic judgments. Under the guidelines described here, there is no defence of "not intending to".

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6. What follows here describes various particular forms of academic misconduct. It is not intended to be exhaustive: other forms of academic misconduct not listed here will be treated as such by the University and the procedures described below followed with regard to them. Note also that whether the work is submitted for formative assessment (when it does not carry a mark) or for summative assessment (which is marked) is irrelevant.
7. Plagiarism is the act of taking another's ideas and representing them as one's own. This may involve the use, without proper acknowledgement, of published or unpublished work, of work done partly or wholly by another person, or of work obtained from an essay bank or a website. Plagiarism includes not just the actual copying of text *verbatim* (which may also be a breach of copyright) or close paraphrasing of text, but also the unacknowledged presentation of ideas garnered from other sources as if they were original to the author.
8. Multiple submission is the act of submitting for assessment a piece of coursework already (or simultaneously) submitted in another course, whether for academic credit or formative assessment; this includes what is sometimes known as autoplagiarism.
9. Falsification is the fabrication or alteration of data – for example, by changing data in order to confirm a hypothesis not supported by the actual data, or the invention or fabrication of the results of an experiment, which are then reported as genuine measurements.
10. False citation is the citing of a source for information, when the source does not contain that information.
11. Academic misconduct in examinations or class tests can include (but is not restricted to) the following prohibited activities:
  - \*Taking communications equipment into the examination.
  - Use of prohibited equipment, software or materials during the examination.
  - \*Taking information (including notes in any format, books, electronically stored data or illegitimately annotated copies of dictionaries, set texts, annotations made on or concealed on parts of a student's body, *etc*) into the examination.
  - Impersonation or attempted impersonation of a student (including, for

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\* Note that the act of **taking** unauthorized item(s) into an examination constitutes academic misconduct, irrespective of whether or not the candidate made use of the item(s) during the examination.

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example, failing to fill in attendance cards or cover sheets of scripts in a way that accurately identifies the author).

- Providing University staff with incorrect or misleading information prior to, during, or after the examination.
- Unauthorized removal of an examination script or blank examination stationery from the examination hall except by a person with designated authority to do so.
- Any unsupervised absence from the examination hall during the period of an examination (note that student(s) who have left the examination hall without permission and/or without supervision will not normally be allowed back into the hall).
- Unauthorized and undeclared acquisition of examination questions prior to an examination, whether or not that examination is to be sat by the student concerned.
- Failure to follow the rules for an examination, in a way that might result in the gaining of an academic advantage.

12. Aiding and abetting: any form of involvement in another person's academic misconduct is in itself considered to be academic misconduct. Students proven to have aided or abetted any form of academic misconduct are subject to the same procedures and sanctions as the student who would benefit from the misconduct. This may involve, for example, collusion with another person (whether or not a student) during an examination; assisting any student in academic misconduct relating to an examination or class test; writing an essay for a student; providing one's own work that could be submitted for marking (either an entire piece of work or a part) or providing material gained from some other source. Giving material to another student that could be submitted for assessment will count as aiding and abetting, as will the **offer** to provide material whether or not it is accepted by another student (for example, advertising an essay-writing service). Note that this does not include circumstances in which one or more students take another student's work without consent. The theft of another student's work in furtherance of academic misconduct would be viewed as a very serious misconduct liable to the most severe sanctions under the non-academic as well as the academic disciplinary codes. Schools should take care to ensure that opportunities for the removal of other students' work are not presented by (for example) the use of open and public sites for depositing coursework.

13. Contract cheating: a form of 'aiding and abetting' where a student commissions or seeks to commission another party (either paid or unpaid) to complete an assignment on their behalf. This is viewed as extremely serious misconduct which is subject to a very severe sanction.

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14. Note that **clear guidance must be given by academic staff to students engaged in group work**, where there are legitimate instances of collaboration. Students will often collect data together and are actively encouraged to discuss their work with one another. There is a clear distinction to be made between **appropriate and inappropriate collaboration**. Material that is to be assessed (whether formatively or summatively) must be an accurate reflection of the work of the student whose name appears on the material. For example, scientific data might have been collected by more than one student, but the report of the experiment must be a particular student's own work; likewise, students can (and often should) discuss topics and rehearse among themselves various arguments and propositions, but any essay or dissertation finally submitted must be their own work.

### **DEALING WITH ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT IN UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES AND TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE MODULES**

15. **Academic misconduct relating to the coursework for a module where that item of coursework constitutes less than or equal to 50% of the overall module grade may be considered by a School Board of Adjudication (but may, if the gravity is sufficient, be referred to a University Board of Adjudication).**
16. **Academic misconduct relating to an examination, or in coursework that constitutes more than 50% of the overall module grade, will only ever be considered by a University Board of Adjudication.**
17. In all cases of alleged academic misconduct, students will be treated as innocent until a case against them has been upheld and investigation, adjudication and disciplinary action must be kept strictly separate. In all cases, those making the accusation will not take part in finally determining whether or not it is true; that is, they will not sit on a School or University Board of Adjudication.
18. **In all cases, School and University Boards of Adjudication will come to a decision based upon the evidence presented to them and taken on the basis of a balance of probabilities.**
19. Whenever a student is asked to attend any meeting investigating academic misconduct, or a hearing before a School or University Board of Adjudication, that student has the right to be accompanied and represented by another member of the University. This representative may be a person who is either presently matriculated as a student; or is an employee of the University Court of the University of St Andrews; or who is elected as a sabbatical officer of or an employee of the Students' Association of the University of St Andrews. Note that in exceptional circumstances, allegations may be considered by the University Board of Adjudication in the student's absence. Students who are unable to or choose not to attend may send a written statement. The student is entitled to know the nature of the allegation(s) (i.e. type of misconduct,

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piece of work and module concerned) and, where relevant, to receive a copy of the Turnitin report in advance of the meeting.

20. After either a School or University Board of Adjudication hearing, if a case has been upheld, the Board must recommend an appropriate sanction to the relevant Dean. (For this purpose the Dean of Arts will deal with cases arising in the Faculties of Arts and Divinity, and the Dean of Science will deal with cases arising in the Faculties of Science and Medicine.) The Dean will ordinarily accept the recommendation but may intervene if s/he considers the sanction to be inappropriate. Note (i) that the Deans of Arts and Science will consult in order to maintain parity across Faculties; and (ii) that communication with students about sanctions to be imposed should not take place until the sanction has been approved by the relevant Dean.
21. In all first cases where misconduct is upheld it is an absolute requirement that students be referred for a course in appropriate academic skills (offered by SALTIRE). Attendance at this course should take place as soon as possible, and it should be completed (as far as is practicable and at the discretion of the Director of Teaching) before the student can receive any subsequent form of assessment from the School in which the academic misconduct occurred. Failure to meet this requirement can result in the withdrawal of permission to proceed in the module. The Deans' Office and Director of Teaching must be informed by SALTIRE that the student has successfully completed the course. Successful completion of the SALTIRE course will be noted on the Register of Academic Misconduct, to be held in the Deans' Office.
22. The following stages (summarized schematically in Appendix I) are to be followed.

### **Documentation**

23. In the case of a piece of submitted work where the marker is not a member of academic staff of the University (for example, a postgraduate student, a contract researcher, a Visiting Lecturer, or a part-time/sessional tutor) or is a probationary lecturer, the allegation must be reported to an experienced member of academic staff, who will take responsibility for the rest of the process.
24. In the case of coursework of any kind, misconduct might be detected by any of several means, including the use of electronic software for the detection of plagiarism. Such detection software may be employed either on a sample basis or on a comprehensive basis.
25. In an examination, academic misconduct might be detected in several ways, including:
  - (i) Witnessing of the act by an Invigilator or another member of staff; or
  - (ii) Detection by an Examiner observing a similarity between script(s) and other material that cannot reasonably be attributed to coincidence; or

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- (iii) Through the report of another student or other individual.
26. In cases where the academic misconduct is detected during the examination or class test, the procedural steps to be undertaken by the Invigilator / Examiner are outlined in Appendix II.
27. Schools should restrict themselves to the scrutiny of work associated with the one module in which the case of academic misconduct has arisen. Although a case of misconduct may alert Schools to the possibility that the same student has committed academic misconduct before, coursework that has already been graded and returned in other modules should not be investigated at this stage. However, **all** coursework in the relevant module may be scrutinised as part of the investigation, even where coursework has already been graded and returned to the student, if the School deems this necessary.
28. **At this stage there is no requirement to inform the student(s) that an investigation into possible academic misconduct is underway, though in some cases students will inevitably know that an investigation has started (for example, through coursework not being returned, or through suspicion of academic misconduct during an examination). The preparation of documentation and the subsequent Panel of Enquiry must maintain confidentiality at all times.**

### **School Panel of Enquiry**

29. The marker/experienced staff member involved, or the Invigilator/Examiner, together with the Director of Teaching or Head of School will meet as a Panel of Enquiry to determine whether there is a *prima facie* case for adjudication as a case of academic misconduct.
30. The School Panel of Enquiry should have available any materials relating to the alleged misconduct (including, *inter alia*, letters notifying that an incident is suspected, coursework, examination papers and scripts, and any relevant material used in the course of the alleged misconduct). All those who observed the alleged misconduct may be asked to attend the School Panel of Enquiry meeting.
31. The interval between an allegation being made and the School Panel of Enquiry sitting should not normally exceed **five working days**.\*
32. Once it has been established that there is a case to answer, the Director of Teaching or Head of School must then consult the Deans' Office on whether or not a previous case of academic misconduct has been upheld against the student in question. If it has, the case automatically defaults to the University

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\* A working day is defined as normal office hours and excludes weekends and University recognized public holidays. Reading Week and University vacation periods are counted as working days.

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Board of Adjudication (see below). If the case is a first incident of misconduct a decision must be taken by the School Panel of Enquiry, in consultation with the Dean, as to whether it should be heard by a School or University Board of Adjudication.

- (i) The decision on whether to treat the case as a School or as a University process must be made in consultation with the Deans (to determine if the case is a first or repeat incident of misconduct). A first instance of academic misconduct can be dealt with by a School Board but subsequent instances of academic misconduct must be dealt with by a University Board. Note that a second incident of misconduct is defined as one that occurs after a first case has been upheld by either a School or University Board of Adjudication.
- (ii) In cases of a first instance of misconduct, where a School Panel of Enquiry is considering material 'retroactively' - i.e., where coursework for the same module previously not considered suspect has been brought into the investigation - all material considered should be treated collectively, as if it were a first offence (for example, material returned in February and retroactively discovered to be suspect does not justify an allegation of a second offence for suspect coursework submitted in March. Both allegations should be considered as part of the same 'parcel').
- (iii) If the allegation is made *before* the award of a certificate, diploma or degree it may be heard at a School or University Board of Adjudication, as appropriate. The case may be heard by a School Board of Adjudication if the academic misconduct relates to the coursework for a module, where that coursework constitutes 50% or less of the overall module grade. The School Panel of Enquiry may recommend to the Dean that a case which falls into this category should nevertheless be taken direct to a University Board of Adjudication if the seriousness of the case merits it. If the allegation relates to coursework that constitutes more than 50% of the module grade the case must be heard by a University Board of Adjudication. All allegations of misconduct in examinations must be heard by a University Board.
- (iv) If the allegation is made *after* the award of a certificate, diploma or degree has been awarded the work in question must be considered by a University Board of Adjudication. Allegations may be investigated up to one year after the conferment of an award. Schools will need to retain all pertinent assessment material for a period of two years following the Examinations Board meeting that considers classification or the award of a Postgraduate Degree or Diploma.

**33. If it is established that there is no case to answer, the matter must be considered ended. This decision exonerates any students under investigation and will have no bearing on any future investigations.**

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**Students aware that they have been under investigation must be informed immediately that no case against them will be presented.**

34. If it is established that there is a case to answer and once it has been determined which Board should consider the allegations, then the Board of Adjudication hearing should normally be held within **ten working days\*** of the decision having been made. **Subject to the approval of the Dean, this procedure can be delayed if it would be manifestly unfair not to do so.**

### **School Board of Adjudication**

35. A School Board of Adjudication will be appointed by the Head of School or his/her nominated deputy. It will consist of: a convener (e.g. Director of Teaching) and at least one additional member of academic staff. In addition, the Head of School will nominate an Investigating Officer (e.g. School Examinations Officer, Module Co-ordinator) who will have the responsibility for conducting an investigation and presenting evidence to the members of the School Board of Adjudication. The Investigating Officer will not be a member of the School Board of Adjudication and will be required to withdraw before the Board considers the evidence (see paragraph 37 below). Only academic staff (see paragraph 23) should serve on School Boards of Adjudication. There may be some (but not complete) overlap of membership between the School Board of Adjudication and the School Panel of Enquiry.
36. The convener will arrange a hearing of the School Board of Adjudication and will be responsible for all communications to the student and for reports to the relevant Dean. The student(s) concerned must be invited in writing and by email to attend the hearing with at least **five** working days' notice. They must be informed in advance that the meeting concerns suspected academic misconduct, the type of that misconduct and to which piece(s) of work it refers. The student should also receive a copy of the Turnitin report, where relevant.
37. A student attending a School Board of Adjudication has the right to be accompanied and represented by another member of the University. This representative may be a person who is either presently matriculated as a student; or is an employee of the University Court of the University of St Andrews; or who is elected as a sabbatical officer of or an employee of the Students' Association of the University of St Andrews. If a student fails to attend without good cause, the School Board of Adjudication may choose to proceed in the student's absence. Students who are unable to or choose not to attend may send a written statement.

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38. Members of the Board may meet together immediately before the start of the hearing in order to make preparations, but they must avoid discussing the evidence until the student is present. The Investigating Officer will present evidence once the hearing has commenced. The student has the right to challenge any evidence presented and to present their own evidence. The School Board of Adjudication may also ask markers and tutors concerned to give evidence, and may seek advice from others within and outwith the University.
39. All who are not members of the School Board of Adjudication will withdraw while it considers the evidence and seeks to establish whether or not misconduct has taken place. If, as a result of the investigation or during the course of the hearing the School Board of Adjudication discovers evidence of additional misconduct over and above that determined at the Panel of Enquiry, or the original misconduct is found to be more serious than first thought, the School Board of Adjudication can at this point recommend that a hearing proceed to a University Board of Adjudication. In this event, the convener should contact the Dean within 3 working days.
40. If the School Board is not convinced that there is any evidence of academic misconduct, then the case must be dismissed and the Dean informed (see paragraph 33).
41. If the School Board of Adjudication does believe a case has been upheld, it must make a recommendation to the Dean regarding which sanction would be appropriate, as defined elsewhere in this document. The student must not be informed of the sanction, nor should the sanction be discussed with the student, until it has been approved by the Dean, who will ordinarily accept the recommendation but may intervene if s/he considers the sanction to be inappropriate.
42. The student must receive written and emailed instructions from the convener informing them of the outcome of the School Board of Adjudication process, within five working days of the hearing – that is whether they have been found guilty, or exonerated, or whether the case has been referred to a University Board of Adjudication. Note therefore that once the School Board of Adjudication has met it has five working days in which to consult the Dean (or their delegated authority) about any sanction to be imposed; for the sanction to be agreed; for any other recommendation to be agreed, and for a letter to be received by the student.
43. When a letter informs a student that the case against them has been upheld, the same letter should give details of the appropriate appeals process and of the requirement for the student to attend a course in appropriate academic skills (offered by SALTIRE) before they can receive any subsequent form of assessment in the School (as far as is practicable and at the discretion of the

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Director of Teaching). The convener should also alert SALTIRE to the fact, either by copying this letter to them or by passing on the student's name directly to SALTIRE. A right of appeal exists against the School Board's decision, on the grounds of bias and prejudice, procedural irregularity, or information not available at the time of the original decision. Appeals must be made by the student to the Senate Office within one calendar month of the receipt of the written outcome of the investigation. Appeals against the School Board of Adjudication's decision will be investigated under the terms of the *Code of Practice on Student Appeals, Complaints and Discipline*.

44. After any case has been upheld, the convener will submit to the Deans' Office within three working days a brief report of the case using an agreed *pro forma* (available on the web). This report will detail the names of any students involved, the nature of the misconduct and the sanction imposed. The students' names will be placed on the Register of Academic Misconduct, to be held in the Deans' Office.
45. The Deans' Office and Director of Teaching must be informed by SALTIRE that the student concerned has successfully completed the course in appropriate academic skills (SALTIRE). Successful completion of this course will be noted on the Register of Academic Misconduct.
46. Where the outcome of a School Board of Adjudication affects a student's module grade, or effectively results in withdrawal of Permission to Proceed in the module, it is the School's responsibility to ensure that appropriate action is taken promptly, and the result correctly reported to the Dean.

### **University Board of Adjudication**

47. A University Board of Adjudication, one of whose members acts as convener, will consist of three or more members nominated by the Deans of Arts and Science from experienced staff across the University. Each Board will include one male and one female staff member, and members drawn from two or more Faculties. The School in which the academic misconduct was allegedly perpetrated will not be represented on the Board.
48. One member will be appointed by the Dean to serve as convener and will be responsible for all the arrangements relating to the consideration and conduct of the investigation, up to and including presenting a report of the result. These duties will involve setting a place and time for the hearing; formally inviting the student to attend; informing the student of his/her right to be accompanied; presiding at the meeting of the Board; communicating with the School(s) and Dean; writing a final report of the result; and informing the student of the outcome and sanction, as well as giving details of the right to appeal
49. The convener must invite the student(s), in writing and by email, to attend the hearing with at least **five** working days' notice. They must be informed in

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advance that the meeting concerns academic misconduct, the type of that misconduct and to which piece(s) of work it refers. They should also receive a copy of the Turnitin report, where available.

50. A student attending a University Board of Adjudication has the right to be accompanied and represented by another member of the University. This representative may be a person who is either presently matriculated as a student; or is an employee of the University Court of the University of St Andrews; or who is elected as a sabbatical officer of or an employee of the Students' Association of the University of St Andrews. If a student fails to attend without good cause, the University Board of Adjudication may choose to proceed in the student's absence. Students who are unable to or choose not to attend may send a written statement.
51. Members of the University Board of Adjudication may meet together immediately before the start of the hearing in order to make preparations, but they must avoid discussing the evidence until the student is present. The convener will ask the colleague who conducted the main investigation on behalf of the School's Panel of Enquiry (e.g. an experienced marker, the examiner or invigilator) or their representative to present evidence. The University Board of Adjudication may also ask other markers and tutors concerned to give evidence, and may seek advice from others within and outwith the University. The student has the right to challenge any evidence presented and to present evidence.
52. In cases where the University Board of Adjudication is asked to consider a second incidence of misconduct, the Board may request, and a School may recommend, retroactive investigation of a student's work carried out within that School at any stage of her/his University career. Such investigations will be carried out by a School Panel of Enquiry. If more allegations of academic misconduct emerge from these investigations, the Board will be entitled to consider the allegations separately, and to recommend sanctions that take account of the severity of each incident of misconduct if the case(s) against the student is upheld. The Board will have the power to overturn and to alter grades previously reported as final to the Dean, and the Dean may approve such sanctions.
53. All who are not members of the University Board of Adjudication will withdraw while it seeks to establish whether or not misconduct has taken place. If the University Board of Adjudication is not convinced that there was any evidence of academic misconduct, then the case must be dismissed. If the University Board of Adjudication does believe a case has been upheld, it must make a recommendation to the Dean regarding which sanction would be appropriate, as defined elsewhere in this document. The student must not be informed of the sanction until it has been approved by the Dean, who will ordinarily accept the recommendation but may intervene if s/he considers the sanction to be inappropriate.

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54. The student must receive written and emailed instructions from the convener informing them of the outcome of the University Board of Adjudication process, within **five** working days of the hearing– that is, whether they have been found guilty, or exonerated. Note therefore that once the University Board of Adjudication has met it has five days in which to consult the Dean about any sanction to be imposed; for the sanction to be agreed; for any other recommendation to be agreed; and for a letter to be received by the student.
55. When a letter informs a student that a case against them has been upheld, the same letter should give details of the appropriate appeals process and (for a first incidence of misconduct) of the requirement for the student to attend a course in appropriate academic skills (offered by SALTIRE) before they can receive any subsequent form of assessment in the School (as far as is practicable and at the discretion of the Director of Teaching). The convener should also alert SALTIRE to the fact, either by copying this letter to them or by passing on the student’s name directly to SALTIRE. A right of appeal exists against the University Board of Adjudication’s decision, on the grounds of bias and prejudice, procedural irregularity, or information not available at the time of the original decision. Appeals must be made by the student(s) to the Senate Office within one calendar month of the receipt of the written outcome of the investigation. Appeals against the University Board of Adjudication’s decision will be investigated under the terms of the *Code of Practice on Student Appeals, Complaints and Discipline*.
56. After any case has been upheld, the convener will submit to the Deans’ Office within three working days a brief report of the case using the *pro forma* now available on the web. This report will detail the names of any students involved, the nature of the misconduct and the sanction imposed. The students’ names will be placed on the Register of Academic Misconduct, to be held in the Deans’ Office.

## **SPECIAL PROCEDURES TO BE ADOPTED WHEN DEALING WITH GROUP ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

57. The University will endeavour to deal with any cases of academic misconduct involving two or more students (i.e. a ‘group’) in the same way as it would deal with any other incident of academic misconduct. However, there may be occasions when it is necessary to adopt a special procedure, for example, when large numbers of students are involved in a particular case. These special procedures will be employed at the discretion of the relevant Dean(s) and will involve any or all of the following: extension of the timescales at any stage of the process; group interviews, followed by the option of interviewing individual students (if either the Board or student requests it, and subject to the Dean’s approval); submission of written statements by the students, (instead of personal hearings); presentation of the evidence to the group collectively; time-limited hearings, with the opportunity for a follow-up

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interview (as above). In very exceptional circumstances, especially where long delays in the process might otherwise occur, the Dean may authorize the use of more than one University Board to hear the cases. In this event, minutes will be taken at each Board hearing and the Boards will meet to agree outcomes once all of the interviews have been held.

58. In cases where a sub-set of students is identified to be entirely responsible for the misconduct (for example by admission of responsibility) then the process continues only for, and penalties are applied only to the responsible subset of the group.
59. In all academic misconduct cases involving two or more students, the convener will be guided by the relevant Dean(s) who will advise on the conduct of the hearing and ensure that proceedings are undertaken in a fair and orderly manner.

## **SANCTIONS FOR ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT: UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES**

60. **Only the following sanctions can be imposed for Undergraduate students:** normally, (i), (ii) and (iii) are available to a School Board of Adjudication, which should only in exceptional cases recommend (iv) and never (v). University Boards can impose any of the sanctions.
  - i. Written warning  
*This might be applied by a School Board of Adjudication, for example, in cases where the misconduct had very little material impact on the overall quality of the work submitted (e.g. very minor amount of plagiarized and/or closely paraphrased material); where there were significant extenuating circumstances; where the work was for formative, rather than summative assessment). It might be applied by a University Board where the case was found to be less serious than had first been thought.*
  - ii. That the student be awarded a grade or mark capped at the equivalent of grade 6.9 for the piece of work.  
*This is an intermediate penalty between item (i) above for “very little material impact on the overall quality of the work submitted” and item (iii) for “work that contains significant amounts of plagiarized or closely paraphrased material” It is an appropriate penalty for work, for example, that contains a relatively small amount of plagiarized and/or closely paraphrased material and where the source of that material has at least been referred to in the work.*
  - iii. That the student be awarded a mark of zero for the piece of work in which academic misconduct was found.  
*This is the standard sanction for work that contains plagiarized or closely paraphrased material. Zero will be factored into the calculation of the*

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*module grade; normal School procedures will apply when all elements of the module have to be passed to achieve an overall pass in the module. The expectation is that students will have the normal right to re-assessment, in the event that they fail the module (except of course where the work in question was already part of a re-assessment, in which case a definitive fail grade would be appropriate).*

- iv. The student be awarded a grade of zero for the module -  
*These sanctions apply to misconduct of a more serious nature than in the previous categories. Examples might include: extensive plagiarism in a piece of work; copying work from another student; more than one incidence of misconduct in the same module; fabricating data; commissioning or seeking to commission work; stealing work from another student. This list is not exhaustive.*
    - (a) With the right to reassessment in the affected module.  
*When the misconduct is such that it does not give the student an advantage in reassessment of the same module.*
    - (b) Without the right to reassessment in the affected module, but with permission to take an alternative module.  
*When the misconduct is such that it gives advantage in the reassessment of the same module.*
    - (c) Without the right to reassessment in the affected module and without the right to take a replacement module. The student will normally be debarred from achieving an Honours degree.  
*When the misconduct is of sufficient severity – either in terms of the extent or quantity (e.g. extensive copying, more than one incidence of misconduct in the same module) or where there is a clear violation of academic integrity (e.g. fraudulent representation of data; stealing work; commissioning work). Note that this sanction purposely restricts progression and normally bars the possibility of an Honours degree being awarded.*
  - v. Discontinuation of Studies – expulsion from the University with no certificate, diploma or degree awarded.  
*Considered for a second incident of misconduct after a case of academic misconduct has been proved in a previous diet; or for any case of such gravity that the student should not progress further.*
61. Any financial or other consequences resulting from a sanction for academic misconduct are wholly the responsibility of the student.
62. It is important for Boards to note that the effect of a particular sanction might differ depending on a student's circumstances – it could, for example, lower one student beneath a degree classification threshold while having no such effect on another guilty of the same offence. **Such considerations must not**

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**be taken into account in determining sanctions.** The consequences of the sanction are in effect the responsibility of the student, not the Board of Adjudication.

## **SANCTIONS FOR ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT: TAUGHT POSTGRADUATE MODULES**

63. **Only the following sanctions can be imposed for Taught Postgraduate students.** Normally, (i) (ii) and (iii) are available to a School Board of Adjudication, which should only in exceptional cases recommend (iv) and never (v). University Boards can impose any of the sanctions.
- i. Written warning  
*This might be applied by a School Board of Adjudication in cases where the misconduct had very little material impact on the overall quality of the work submitted. It might be applied by a University Board of Adjudication where the case was found to be less serious than had first been thought.*
  - ii. That the student be awarded a mark of zero for the piece of work in which academic misconduct was found.  
*Zero will be factored into the calculation of the module grade; normal School procedures will apply when all elements of the module have to be passed to achieve an overall pass in the module. Note that this may have the effect of barring access to a Masters Degree.*
  - iii. The grade for the module be capped at 7.  
*The grade will be factored into the calculation of the module grades for the programme. Normal procedures will apply regarding the right of progression through the programme. Note that this may have the effect of barring access to a Masters Degree or Postgraduate Diploma*
  - iv. The student be awarded a grade of zero for the module.  
*Note that this will have the effect of barring access to a Masters Degree and Postgraduate Diploma.*
  - v. Discontinuation of Studies - expulsion from the University with no certificate, diploma or degree awarded.  
*May be considered for a second incident of misconduct after a case of academic misconduct has been upheld in a previous diet; or for any case of such gravity that the student should not progress further.*
64. Sanctions for Taught Postgraduates are potentially harsher than for Undergraduates, both because of the increased level of responsibility to be expected of the student, and because of the condensed structure of the Degree programme.
65. It is important to note that the effect of a particular sanction might differ depending on a student's circumstances. **Such considerations must not be taken into account in determining sanctions.** The consequences of the

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sanction are in effect the responsibility of the student, not the Board of Adjudication.

## **PROCEDURES AND SANCTIONS FOR CASES INVOLVING POSTGRADUATE MASTERS DISSERTATIONS OR PROJECTS**

66. Any work that is submitted for feedback or evaluation (whether formative or summative, at any point during the degree programme) is liable to consideration under the academic misconduct policy. All work submitted by postgraduate students is expected to represent good academic practice.
67. If, following completion of coursework requirements, a taught postgraduate student has been permitted to proceed to a postgraduate Masters dissertation or project and if the student is suspected of academic misconduct with respect to the dissertation or project work, then the case **must** be considered by a University Board of Adjudication. The same procedures for conducting a School Panel of Enquiry and a University Board of Adjudication should be followed as described above for undergraduate programmes (except with respect to sanctions for proven academic misconduct).
68. In the case of academic misconduct in the dissertation or project, the University Board of Adjudication may apply one of the following sanctions, subject to approval by the appropriate Dean:
- i. A warning (for example, if the misconduct is a first offence and relates to a minor infringement in work submitted prior to final submission of the dissertation or project).
  - ii. The student's grade for the dissertation or project will be capped at a maximum of 7. *Note that this will have the effect of barring access to a Masters Degree*
  - iii. Termination of studies with no right to complete the Masters programme.
69. In the case of outcome (i), students will be required to undertake a course on academic writing offered by SALTIRE. This must take place before any further work is submitted by the student. The Deans' Office and School (postgraduate convener) must be informed by SALTIRE that the student has successfully completed the course, and this will be recorded on the Register of Academic Misconduct.
70. Any financial or other consequences resulting from a sanction applied to a module grade, suspension of studies and suspension of student status are wholly the responsibility of the student. The postgraduate convener must ensure that the appropriate sanction is applied and communicated to the Deans' Office.

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## PROCEDURES AND SANCTIONS IN CASES INVOLVING DOCTORAL RESEARCH STUDENTS

71. Any work that is submitted for feedback or evaluation (whether formative or summative, at any point during the degree programme) is liable to consideration under the academic misconduct policy. All work submitted by research students is expected to represent good academic practice for instance in regard to accurate reporting of data and of sources, and to independent composition.
72. If a doctoral research student is suspected of academic misconduct, then the case **must** be considered by a University Board of Adjudication.
73. Where there is suspected academic misconduct prior to submission of the thesis, the case must be considered by a University Board of Adjudication. The same procedures for conducting a School Panel of Enquiry and a University Board of Adjudication should be followed as described above for undergraduate programmes (except with respect to sanctions for proven academic misconduct), including consultation with the Deans' Office to determine whether or not the student is on the academic misconduct register. In the event that the case is upheld, the University Board of Adjudication must apply one of the following sanctions, subject to approval by the appropriate Dean:
  - i. A written warning.
  - ii. A suspension of studies and of student status for up to one year.
  - iii. Termination of studies with no right to complete the doctoral programme.
74. In addition, the misconduct will be recorded on the Academic Misconduct Register held by the Deans' Office.
75. Where academic misconduct is suspected by an Examining Committee in the process of examining a thesis, then the Examining Committee will act as the Panel of Enquiry. If the Examining Committee judges that there is a case to answer, then the Deans' Office must be consulted and the case **must** be considered by a University Board of Adjudication. The University Board of Adjudication will have access to the Academic Misconduct Register with regard to information about any previous instances of misconduct, and to the report of the Examining Committee with regard to the nature and seriousness of the suspected misconduct. After due process (as described above for undergraduate cases), the University Board of Adjudication will reach one of the following decisions:
  - i. The case of academic misconduct is not upheld, in which case the student may request examination by a new Examining Committee.

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- ii. Academic misconduct is upheld, and the student is given a reprimand with permission to re-submit the thesis after amendment (only in relation to the offence) to the same Examining Committee for the same degree (no sooner than six months and no longer than twelve months from the time of notification of the adjudication).
  - iii. Academic misconduct is upheld, and the student is given a reprimand with permission to re-submit the thesis after amendment (only in relation to the offence) to the same Examining Committee for a lesser degree (no sooner than six months and no longer than twelve months from the time of notification of the adjudication).
  - iv. Academic misconduct is upheld, and the student's studies are terminated with no award of a degree and no referral back to an Examining Committee.
76. In all proven cases of academic misconduct other than those resulting in termination of studies, the student will be required to undertake a course on academic writing offered by SALTIRE. This must take place before any further work is submitted by the student. The Deans' Office and Postgraduate Convener must be informed by SALTIRE that the student has successfully completed the course, and this will be recorded on the Register of Academic Misconduct, held in the Deans' Office.
77. If academic misconduct has been upheld in the case of a research student prior to final submission of the thesis, but the student has been permitted to submit a thesis, then the External Examiner(s) for the thesis should not be informed of any earlier instances of misconduct. External Examiners should approach the examination as impartial judges of the quality of the work that has been submitted. This is in keeping with the current nature of the supervisor's report, which only highlights extenuating circumstances.
78. Where academic misconduct is suspected after the award of the degree, the matter should be reported to the Provost, who will convene a committee with the Deans of Arts and Science that will serve as the University Panel of Enquiry. The University Panel of Enquiry will consider the evidence and may dismiss allegations as trivial or vexation. If the Deans consider that there is a case to answer then they will appoint a University Board of Adjudication (as described above for undergraduates). The University Board will reach one of the following decisions (subject to approval by the Provost and Deans):
- i. The case of academic misconduct is not upheld, in which case the student may request examination by a new Examining Committee.
  - ii. The case of academic misconduct is not upheld and no further action is taken.

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- iii. Academic misconduct is upheld and the candidate is required to resubmit the thesis after amendment (only in relation to the offence), with a clear statement in the front of the thesis to explain the amendments. The student maintains the degree awarded but their name is added to the academic misconduct register.
  - iv. Academic misconduct is upheld and the PhD is withdrawn with no right for re-examination.
79. Any financial or other consequences resulting from a suspension of studies and student status are wholly the responsibility of the student.

## **APPEALS**

80. Appeals against any decisions made by School or University Boards of Adjudication must be submitted to the Senate Office and will be considered by a University Appeals Committee in accordance with the current *Code of Practice on Student Appeals, Complaints and Discipline*.

## **RECORD KEEPING AND ANONYMITY**

81. The Deans' Office must keep records of investigations into academic misconduct. The main reasons for record keeping are to allow identification of repeat offenders and to allow the efficiency of the University's procedures to be monitored. Records help the University identify long term trends, for instance as part of academic audit. A record of past decisions helps Board members and Deans to determine appropriate sanctions and so to ensure that similar offences attract similar sanctions from one School to another.
82. The University is aware of its responsibilities under the Data Protection Act and also of the principles enshrined in its Student Confidentiality policy.
83. Records of convictions for academic misconduct will be kept as a password-protected "Register" by the Deans' Office on the basis of reports of substantiated investigations submitted by the conveners of School and University Boards of Adjudication. This record will include the following information:
- Student Name; Student ID; School; Module(s) concerned; Offence; Date of consideration; Members of Board of Adjudication; Outcome.*
84. Only the Deans' Office will have access to the full record. Its main use will be to assist in identifying repeat offenders. Names will remain on the Register for at least three years after graduation. This information will be made available on request to staff who are asked to provide references for students.

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85. The Deans' Office will produce annual monitoring reports for Deans, the TLAC and the Academic Audit Assurance Group. These reports will provide information on how many cases have been dealt with during the year, the Schools involved, a summary of offences and a summary of outcomes. All monitoring will be anonymized and will not identify individual cases.
86. In cases that result in the exoneration of a student accused of academic misconduct, no record will be kept of the accusation.
87. **In cases of students on the Register who remain at or return to the institution to undertake a further programme of study, their records of offences will continue to exist on the central Register throughout that further programme.**

## APPENDIX I

The following is a simple schematic timeline of the expected course of events following an allegation of academic misconduct being made. The steps of the process referred to here are sequential and are 'working days' as defined in the footnote on pages 9 and 11.

<p><b>ALLEGATION OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT MADE</b></p> <p><b>Within the next 5 working days: Panel of Enquiry meets.</b> Makes a decision – EITHER no case to answer OR School or University Board of Adjudication. If the decision is made to take the case to either School or University Board of Adjudication then:</p> <p><b>Within the next 10 working days the School or University Board must normally meet.</b> Student(s) must be informed in writing with at least 5 working days' notice of the date of the Board meeting. <b>This procedure can be delayed if it would be manifestly unfair not to do so.</b></p>	
<p><b>School Board of Adjudication EITHER:</b> Dismiss case OR: Agree Sanction in Consultation with Dean. Conclude Sanction OR: Pass the case to University Board of Adjudication; process begins again as after Panel of Enquiry</p>	<p><b>University Board of Adjudication EITHER:</b> Dismiss case OR: Agree Sanction in Consultation with Dean. Conclude Sanction</p>
<p><b>Within the next 3 working days:</b> The student and Deans' Office informed in writing of the outcome by the Convener of the Board, after due consultation with the appropriate Dean regarding any sanction. Where appropriate, student informed of requirement to attend a course in appropriate academic skills (offered by SALTIRE): this letter must be copied to SALTIRE.</p> <p><b>Within the next calendar month:</b> Student(s) can appeal; see <i>Code of Practice on Student Appeals, Complaints and Discipline</i>.</p>	

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## APPENDIX II

### **Procedural steps to be undertaken by the Invigilator in cases where the academic misconduct is detected during an examination or class test**

If an Invigilator has reason to suspect one or more students of academic misconduct they should call on a second Invigilator (if available) to observe the student(s) before intervening. Where the apparent misconduct is so blatant as to be potentially disruptive to other students (e.g. the open use of notes or other items), the Chief Invigilator should intervene immediately to remove the prohibited items. In cases where intervening would be potentially more disruptive, the Chief Invigilator should wait until the end of the examination before taking action. Regardless of when the first action is taken, at the end of the examination the Chief Invigilator, together with at least one observer, should:

- (a) speak to the student(s) concerned informing him/her of their suspicions and that he/she will be reported to the Head of School for suspected academic misconduct;
- (b) remove and retain any prohibited items, if possible, issuing a receipt if necessary (e.g. if equipment is involved), and in the case of a refusal by the student(s) to hand over such items, formally record the refusal and any grounds given;
- (c) in cases where it is believed that relevant materials are written upon or concealed upon parts of a student's body, undertake the following procedure:
  - immediately notify the University Examinations Officer;
  - take the student to a private place to meet with two senior members of the University staff of the same gender as the student,
  - the two senior members of staff should be as specific as possible about what they wish to see, and a refusal by the student should be formally recorded along with a statement of the grounds for refusal;
- (d) note the student(s)' name, matriculation number, the module, time and location of the incident. A brief summary of the incident will be submitted to the University Examinations Officer through an Examination Irregularity Report.

Where time permits, the Chief Invigilator should seek advice on the action to be taken by contacting the University's Examinations Officer.

Within 24 hours of the examination the Chief Invigilator must submit a formal report, signed and dated, to the University Examinations Officer to be forwarded to the Head of School and copied to the appropriate Dean. The report should outline the circumstances of the incident and must:

- (a) where possible, identify all students involved and the degree of alleged involvement of each;
- (b) describe and, if possible, provide all the evidence on which the suspicion is based,;

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- (c) contain details of the use of any materials brought into the examination; (whether inadvertently or deliberately); in contravention of the *Academic Misconduct Policy, Examination Rules for Candidates or Policy on the Use of Dictionaries in Examinations*
- (d) provide written statements from the other staff observers of the incident and the names of any students or others who may corroborate the suspicions.

The anonymized script(s) will be sent to the School by the School Representative to be internally marked as normal, with no information about the possible academic misconduct - marking should proceed at this point without bias or prejudice. Once a mark has been given, the Examiner will then be asked to review the mark based on the report submitted by the Chief Invigilator. The Examiner will report to the Head of School on the extent to which any unauthorized material was relevant to the examination and whether it appears to have been used by the student(s).

In cases where a suspicion of academic misconduct arises in the first instance from an Examiner, rather than an Invigilator, the Examiner should report in writing without delay to the Head of School the following: the nature of the suspicion, the matriculation numbers of all students suspected of being involved, the evidence upon which the suspicion is based, and any corroborating evidence. Once anonymity has been broken after the examination process is complete, cases can be pursued or not, as appropriate. The Head of School will receive all such reports and proceed according to the University's Academic Misconduct Policy. **Academic misconduct relating to an examination must be considered by a University Board of Adjudication.**

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