



University of
St Andrews

Good academic practice

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UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS
POLICY ON GOOD ACADEMIC PRACTICE

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1. HIGH PRINCIPLES

1. The University of St Andrews expects, requires and promotes a culture of good academic practice.
2. All students are judged on their performance, and no student is allowed to gain an advantage unfairly over others.
3. The University recognises and embraces its duty to educate both staff and students in good academic practice.
4. The University protects the interests of those who engage in good academic practice.
5. The University recognises that not all poor practice is academic misconduct; the distinction between failure to observe good academic practice and academic misconduct is an academic judgement.
6. Academic misconduct is treated in a consistent manner across the University.
7. Students are treated as innocent until a case against them has been upheld.
8. The person raising an accusation of academic misconduct will not be responsible for determining whether the accusation is upheld.
9. In determining whether an accusation of academic misconduct is upheld, absence of intention to commit misconduct, extenuating circumstances or ignorance of the rules is not a valid defence. If a case of academic misconduct is upheld, a student will be found guilty regardless of any extenuating circumstances. Extenuating circumstances may however be taken into consideration when determining the sanction for an upheld case of academic misconduct.
10. The standard of proof that will normally apply in determining whether an accusation of academic misconduct is upheld is 'based on the balance of probabilities'.
11. Sanctions on those found guilty of academic misconduct will, as far as possible, reflect the severity of the offence that has been committed.
12. Any financial, personal or other consequences resulting from a sanction applied are wholly the responsibility of the student.
13. A student against whom an accusation of academic misconduct has been upheld has the right of appeal in accordance with the guidelines outlined in the *Appeals* section of this policy.
14. Data relating to academic misconduct cases is treated confidentially. Information on outcomes is communicated only on a need-to-know basis.

These high principles will guide the University in all cases of academic misconduct. The regulations do not attempt to define every possible case; in cases that are not explicitly enumerated, the above principles will be used to determine appropriate actions.

2. WHAT CONSTITUTES GOOD ACADEMIC PRACTICE?

All work submitted by undergraduate and postgraduate students is expected to represent good academic practice. As outlined by the University's Training in Good Academic Practice:

Good academic practice is about approaching and completing your academic work with integrity. Fundamental values of academic integrity include honesty, responsibility, fairness, justice, and (self) respect for your work, learning and ultimately your degree. These are the values promoted by the University of St Andrews, the academic community of which you are a member. As a member of this community you are accessing, sharing and discussing others' works, concepts and ideas, from which you will develop your own knowledge.

It is important that within this community all members are judged on their individual academic abilities, and that no student is allowed unfairly to take advantage over others, to affect the security and integrity of the assessment process, or to diminish the reliability and quality of a St Andrews degree. In short, it is important that no student participates in any form of academic misconduct but that, instead, they develop good academic practices which promote integrity, character and a work ethic worthy of the awarded degree. (University of St Andrews, 2018)

The University recognises 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. In particular, all newly matriculated students are required to engage in a course on good academic practice at the start of their studies to familiarise themselves with such practice. The University makes refresher training available to students at regular intervals throughout their studies.

2.1. Misconduct: academic and non-academic

The University distinguishes between non-academic matters (e.g., misconduct involving damage to the University's property or reputation) and academic matters (e.g. allegations of plagiarism). This policy deals with the latter – the encouragement and assurance of good academic practice. In some cases however, the boundary between academic and non-academic misconduct is unclear, for example, where a student fraudulently presents false information either verbally or in writing to the University in order to gain an academic allowance or advantage. This may include falsified medical documentation; an untrue explanation of circumstances affecting study; and false reasons for absence (e.g., on a self-certificate). Such cases may be dealt with under this policy or the non-academic misconduct policy. This is at the discretion of the Assistant Vice-Principal (Dean of Learning & Teaching)¹ as described in the *Processes* section of this document. In cases where there is concern that the submission of falsified documentation may constitute a criminal offence, the matter may be referred to the Police for consideration in addition to any University proceedings.

2.2. Academic misconduct

The examples of academic misconduct described here are not intended to be exhaustive. Students who are in any doubt about whether their conduct might constitute academic misconduct should either a) not engage in that activity or b) consult a member of the teaching staff such as their tutor, the module coordinator or the School's Academic Misconduct Officer (AMO) before engaging in the activity.

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, of work obtained from an essay bank or a web site, or of material from lectures and tutorials. 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 or the assembling of pieces of the work of others into a new whole.

Multiple submission is the act of submitting for assessment a piece of work already (or simultaneously) submitted for assessment in the same module, another module or in another context. Multiple submission includes the submission of work that has substantial overlap with parts of work submitted elsewhere; this includes experimental results, substantive parts of essays or reports etc.

¹ Henceforth referred to as *the Dean*. Responsibilities assigned to the Dean in this policy may be delegated in practice to the appropriate Associate Dean (Students).

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. Included in falsification is the deliberate omission of data where, for example, experimental results or known facts are omitted in order to support an otherwise unsupportable hypothesis.

False citation is the citing of a source for information, when the source does not contain that information or when the information cited was not gleaned from that source.

Academic misconduct in examinations or class tests includes the following prohibited activities:

- Taking electronic devices, software or materials into an examination venue (other than those specifically permitted), irrespective of whether or not any use of the item(s) was made.
- 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 an examination venue (including toilets etc), except where such items are left in an area designated by an invigilator, irrespective of whether or not any use was made of the item(s).
- Providing University staff with incorrect or misleading information related to the examination (prior to, at or after an examination).
- Unauthorised removal of an examination script, papers or blank examination stationery from the examination hall.
- Unauthorised exit from the examination hall during the period of an examination.
- Unauthorised acquisition of examination questions prior to an examination, whether or not the student is a candidate for that examination.
- Failure to follow the rules for an examination, in a way that might result in the gaining of an academic advantage.

Aiding and abetting is any form of assistance with another person's academic 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); having a third party take the place of a student, for example in an examination.

Coercion is where a student puts pressure on another student or member of staff to act in a particular way, or attempts to do so, with the intention of gaining an academic advantage.

Contract cheating is where a student commissions or seeks to commission another party (either paid or unpaid) to perform academic work on their behalf. The Quality Assurance Agency defines contract cheating as follows:

“Contract cheating' happens when a third party completes work for a student who then submits it to an education provider as their own, where such input is not permitted. It is distinct from collusion, as the student contracts the third party to provide the assessment, usually a company or individual using a website to promote themselves and receive orders. Such companies have become known as 'essay mills', even though they supply more than just essays. The common approach is for the work to be outsourced once again by the mills to individual writers.”

Regardless of whether a student is successful in commissioning the work, or eventually submits the commissioned work for assessment, the very act of seeking to commission work is considered contract cheating. Even asking a friend, family member, or another individual to complete any aspect of assessed work is considered as contract cheating as a student is contracting that work out to a

third party to complete it on their behalf. Students who are found to be offering essay-writing services will be dealt with under the non-academic misconduct policy.

There are students who, because of specific needs, can legitimately draw on proof reading services. This kind of external support is not precluded by the policy on Good Academic Practice. However, the failure to declare the use of electronic proof-reading, language correction and translation services might constitute academic misconduct. Please see the University's policy on [Language Correction](#) for further guidance on language correction and essay-writing services.

3. PROCESSES

3.1. Work under the scope of the Good Academic Practice Policy

Markers of work may raise the issue of poor academic practice with a student when this does not constitute academic misconduct. If a marker brings poor academic practice to the attention of a student, they should specify which aspects of the work are not good practice. Such informal discussions are not part of the process for dealing with allegations of academic misconduct and cannot form part of any such allegation. Poor academic practice is, however, likely to lead to a lower mark for a piece of work, whether or not that poor practice is the subject of an allegation of academic misconduct.

Work that is submitted for formative assessment as part of the educational process rather than as a required component of a module or degree programme, such as feedback on drafts, will not be penalised under the University's policy on Good Academic Practice even if it constitutes poor academic conduct. For example, a draft chapter required for progress review at PGR level, or a pass/fail report will be regarded as formal and may come under the Good Academic Practice policy, whereas an outline essay plan or rough chapter draft submitted for informal feedback will not. Where any doubt as to the status of such work is possible, tutors should make it clear at the start of the exercise.

3.2. Undergraduate (UG) and Taught Postgraduate (PGT) students – raising concerns

If anyone suspects academic misconduct in a piece of work, that person should inform the School's Academic Misconduct Officer (AMO)². At the point academic misconduct is suspected in a piece of work, assessment of that work should cease until investigation is complete³. It is acceptable to tell the student at this stage that their work is under investigation. Cases of suspected misconduct can be considered after a grade has been formally reported and communicated to the student. If no case of academic misconduct is found, the AMO also has the discretion to order a re-assessment of the piece of work if they are concerned that original marking was inadvertently biased by the original suspicion of misconduct. In most cases this re-mark will be completed by the second marker/moderator. For interdisciplinary modules the School that provides the module coordinator will also provide the AMO. The AMO will determine:

- 1) if there is a case to answer;
- 2) if so, whether the case can be dealt with by a written warning issued by the AMO, or;
- 3) if not, whether it should be referred to a School or University Board of Adjudication to determine whether misconduct has occurred.

² Schools may, with the knowledge of the Dean, delegate this responsibility to Departmental level Academic Misconduct Officers.

³ Where academic misconduct proceedings are still ongoing for a particular student at the time of module results reporting, a temporary 0Z result should be reported.

If the AMO herself/himself raises the allegation, the Director of Teaching or Head of School will fulfil the responsibilities of the AMO. The AMO or acting AMO must not have had prior involvement in any aspect of the process such as marking, invigilation, supervision, etc.

In judging whether or not there is a case to answer, the AMO may scrutinise all work for a module in which the allegation of misconduct has been raised, even if that work has already been marked and returned to the student.

If the AMO finds there is no case to answer, no further action is taken, and the allegation can form no part of any future investigation into academic misconduct.

If misconduct is suspected after a qualification is awarded, then the relevant AMO will be appointed by the Dean and will follow the procedures as outlined in section 3.6. of this document.

3.3. Postgraduate Research (PGR) students – raising concerns

Research work that has been submitted for examination or for purposes of progression (progress review, upgrade) may be the subject of an allegation of academic misconduct. Work submitted by research students for other purposes (e.g. draft chapters) cannot be dealt with under the formal procedures described in this document. Students should note that work submitted in the usual course of supervision might not be subject to the same rigorous checks for academic misconduct as work submitted for formal purposes.

In the case of work that has been submitted for compulsory assessment prior to final submission and examination of the thesis (e.g. progress review), at the point academic misconduct is suspected, assessment of that work should cease until investigation is complete. If no case of academic misconduct is found, the AMO also has the discretion to order a re-assessment of the piece of work if they are concerned that original process of assessment was inadvertently biased by suspicion of misconduct. Where academic misconduct is suspected by an Examining Committee in the process of examining a thesis, the examination must be suspended, and the AMO will investigate and decide if there is a case to answer. If the AMO herself/himself raises the allegation, or is involved with the case, then the Director of Postgraduate Research within the School will fulfil the responsibilities of the AMO. Following concerns raised by the examining committee, if it is decided there is no case of misconduct to hear, the Associate Provost Postgraduate (Taught/Research) has the discretion to decide whether a new examining committee should be formed if they are concerned that the student may be subject to inadvertent bias by the original suspicion of misconduct.

If a research student is suspected of academic misconduct in work relating to progression (upgrade or progress review), the person raising the allegation should alert the AMO, and the following procedure will be taken by the AMO:

The AMO will determine:

- 1) if there is a case to answer;
- 2) if so, whether the case can be dealt with by a written warning issued by the AMO, or;
- 3) if not, whether it should be referred to a School or University Board of Adjudication to determine whether misconduct has occurred.

If the AMO herself/himself raises the allegation, the Director of Postgraduate Studies (Research) or Head of School will fulfil the responsibilities of the AMO. The AMO or acting AMO must not have had prior involvement in any aspect of the process such as marking, invigilation, supervision, etc.

If the AMO finds there is no case to answer, no further action is taken, and the allegation can form no part of any future investigation into academic misconduct.

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 the earlier instance/s of misconduct. External Examiners should approach the examination as impartial judges of the quality of the work that has been submitted.

If the AMO judges that there is a case to answer, but the misconduct is considered very minor, then a written warning may be deemed appropriate (see *4. Sanctions, under PGR Sanctions*). If, however there is a case to answer and the suspected misconduct is deemed to be significant enough to proceed with further investigation then the Dean must be consulted. At this point the Dean will, in consultation with the Proctor as necessary, either confirm that the case is to be pursued under the Good Academic Practice policy, or alternatively that it should be pursued as a case of non-academic misconduct. Where concerns raised relate to research misconduct, the case may also be pursued under the auspices of the Research Misconduct Policy. Alternatively, if the case raised does not relate to concerns of academic misconduct, but rather research misconduct, then this will be pursued under the auspices of the Research Misconduct Policy. If the case is pursued under the Good Academic Practice policy **it must be considered by a University Board of Adjudication**. In cases where examiners' reports make reference to the alleged misconduct, these will be supplied to the Board.

If misconduct is suspected prior to the viva taking place then the viva is to be put on hold whilst the AMO investigates and decides if there is a case to answer. If academic misconduct is suspected during the viva, or shortly before the viva, the viva should still take place but the examiners should not report a decision until after the suspected misconduct has been investigated and the case concluded.

If misconduct is suspected after the award of the degree, then an investigating officer will be appointed by the Dean and will follow the procedures as outlined in section 3.6. of this document.

3.4. Escalation of cases of alleged misconduct

When a case of alleged misconduct is raised, the AMO will check with the Proctor's Office as to whether the student under investigation has a previous history of misconduct, and if so, the extent of this previous history. The AMO will then refer the case to be heard at the appropriate level. The AMO can also review [Good Academic Practice Case Studies](#) for further guidance on which cases should be heard at the appropriate Board.

NB. All cases of suspected contract cheating (including cases involving University examinations) must be heard at the University Board level, as it is considered an offence that even if committed without a history of previous academic misconduct must be able to attract the full range of sanctions available. Please also note that post-award, group misconduct, and suspected misconduct during an examination have additional guidance in Sections 3.6-3.8.

1. Previous History of Academic Misconduct – Key Considerations

As outlined in Section 2.2. of this policy, academic misconduct is varied in form and whilst a student may have a history of previous academic misconduct of a particular type (e.g. plagiarism), a further allegation of academic misconduct of another type (e.g. multiple submission) may arise. There are two views that can be taken on this under the auspices of this policy, and are subject to academic judgement:

- The first is that the student should have the new suspected misconduct of a differing type treated as a potential first offence. This may mean that whilst a student holds a written warning for a previous offence, or had that case heard at a School Board, as the case is a new form of suspected misconduct it should be addressed by issuing a new written warning or heard at the School Board level. This would be the most likely route of action if a student has one recorded offence of academic misconduct of one particular form, and a subsequent allegation is raised of

academic misconduct of a completely different form. This does not circumvent the AMO's right to escalate the case to higher levels of adjudication if they believe the instance of suspected misconduct to be serious enough.

- The second is that the student in question may have a substantial history of previous academic misconduct (e.g. two proven cases of differing misconduct treated as a first offence, or two cases of misconduct of the same type). For example, a student may have committed two instances of academic misconduct, and consequently received two opportunities to undertake the remedial training on good academic practice. Repeated suspected offences of any form of academic misconduct may therefore be viewed as a flagrant disregard for the standards of good academic practice, and it would be appropriate to refer any new allegations to be heard as a repeat offence.
- Whilst the AMO has the right to exercise their academic judgement when determining the level at which the case of suspected new misconduct should be heard, students who have been found guilty of misconduct on two or more occasions must be referred to a University Board.

The process from the raising of an allegation to a written warning or referral to a board must be completed within five working days unless there is a compelling reason why this is not possible.

2. Written Warnings

- If the student has no prior history of misconduct, a written warning may be appropriate. If there is a case to answer, and the AMO regards the nature of the misconduct to be such that a written warning is the appropriate sanction, the AMO may issue the written warning via MMS.
- Suspected first offences can be heard at either a School Board, or University Board level if the AMO believes the suspected misconduct is potentially egregious enough to warrant this. The AMO has the freedom to exercise their academic judgement as to the severity of the suspected misconduct, and the level at which a case should be heard.
- A written warning can only be issued once for a particular type of misconduct (e.g. plagiarism). The rationale for this is that whilst a student may have a previous history of misconduct under one form of misconduct (e.g. plagiarism), if they are found to have committed academic misconduct in another area (e.g., multiple submission), it may be appropriate to issue a written warning for this new offence. If, however the student is suspected of committing that type of misconduct again, then the matter must be referred to either a School or University Board.
- Equally, the AMO can take the view that a student with a history of repeated misconduct should have their case heard at a School or University Board, and that a written warning for committing a new form of suspected misconduct is not appropriate.
- If there is a case to answer, and the AMO regards the nature of the misconduct to be such that a written warning is the appropriate sanction, the AMO should issue the written warning via MMS. The student's name will be held on the Academic Misconduct Register. The student must retake the online Training in Good Academic Practice course within five working days of the date of the written warning. Support on good academic practice is available from CEED. If a written warning is issued, then no further action is taken beyond this point.

3. Boards of Adjudication

- If there is a case to answer, and the AMO does not consider that a written warning is the appropriate sanction, the AMO will refer the case either to a School or University Board to be heard.

- The AMO may use the Guidance for Staff section of this policy, and the range of sanctions available to the different Boards, to determine to which Board the case should be referred. Further to this, as outlined under *1. Previous History of Academic Misconduct – Key Considerations*, the AMO has the right to consider the extent to which previous history of misconduct will determine the level of Board at which the case will be heard.
- Further guidelines around which Board to refer a case to when a student has a previous history of academic misconduct of a particular type as outlined below:
 - a) *School Board*: If a student has a record of a previous first case of academic misconduct of a particular type (e.g. plagiarism) that was sanctioned with the use of a written warning, then the AMO is required to escalate the new allegation of the same type to a Board of Adjudication to be heard. In most cases this will be a School Board of Adjudication, but in cases where the suspected academic misconduct is egregious, the AMO can take the decision to escalate this to a University Board.
 - b) *University Board*: If the student has had a previous case of academic misconduct of any type upheld at either a School or University Board level, then the new allegation must be heard at a University Board.

3.5. Boards of Adjudication – constitution, organisation, and outcomes

1. *School Board of Adjudication – Constitution and Organisation*

The Board will be appointed by the Head of School or Director of Teaching. It will consist of a convener and at least one further member of academic staff. The convener must have previously participated in a School Board, and they must have attended a training session organised by the Proctor's Office. The student will be informed of the membership of the Board in the formal invitation to attend the Board, and in exceptional circumstances the student has the right to make a well justified and reasonable request for modified membership of the Board, within two working days of the invitation to attend the Board.

- The convener will arrange a hearing of the Board 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 outcome.
- These duties will involve setting a place and time for the hearing; formally inviting the student to attend using the template letters provided by the Proctor's Office; informing the student of his/her right to be accompanied; arranging for a member of professional services staff to act as clerk at the meeting; presiding at the meeting of the Board; communicating with the School(s) and the Dean; writing a final report of the result; and informing the student of the outcome and sanction, as well as providing details to the student of the right to appeal.
- If, during the course of the hearing, the School Board of Adjudication discovers evidence of additional misconduct over and above that drawn to the attention of the AMO, 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 **three** working days, and the Dean will convene a University Board.
- If a student with a pending misconduct case has a separate incident of misconduct reported before the outcome of an ongoing case is known, the subsequent case will be put on hold until the outcome of the previous case is known. The outcome of the ongoing case will not be taken into consideration when dealing with the subsequent case. The timeframes for the subsequent case will commence on the day of the communication of the outcome of the previous case to the student.

2. *University Board of Adjudication – Constitution and Organisation*

The Board will consist of three or more members nominated by the Dean or their delegate from experienced staff across the University. Each Board will include at least one male and at least one female staff member, and members drawn from two or more Faculties. The School responsible for the module in which the academic misconduct was allegedly perpetrated will not be represented on the Board. The University Board is selected and approved by the Proctor's Office. The student will be informed of the membership of the Board in the formal invitation to attend the Board, and in exceptional circumstances the student has the right to make a well justified and reasonable request for modified membership of the Board, within two working days of the invitation to attend the Board.

- One member will be appointed by the Dean or their delegate to serve as convener and will be responsible for arrangements relating to the consideration and conduct of the investigation, up to and including presenting a report of the outcome.
- These duties will involve: setting a date and time for the hearing; formally inviting the student to attend using the available template letter; arranging for a member of professional services staff to act as clerk at the meeting; presiding at the meeting of the Board; communicating with the School(s) and the Dean; writing a final report of the result; and informing the student of the outcome and sanction using the available template letter.
- The Proctor's Office will arrange the venue for the Hearing, provide template letters to the convener and provide contact details of the reporting AMO. The convener will contact the reporting AMO who will provide the convener with the following documentation which should be circulated to the other board members:
 - a) identities of the student(s) involved;
 - b) information about previous upheld cases of misconduct recorded on the academic misconduct register – nature of allegations, level that the case was heard at, and sanctions applied;
 - c) copy of the plagiarism detection software report (if applicable) and any supporting evidence provided by the AMO (this should also be sent to the student(s)).
- The Proctor's Office will also contact the AMO to confirm that the AMO will present the case on behalf of the School. If the AMO is unable to attend, they should arrange a deputy.

3. *Convening and Conducting a Board of Adjudication (applicable to both School and University Boards)*

The following outlines the normal procedure for the hearing. The convener, however, has discretion reasonably to vary these arrangements to suit the needs of individual cases, and in exceptional circumstances only, to direct that the hearing might be conducted remotely⁴.

- Boards must meet to consider the case within **fifteen** working days of the convener being appointed, unless there is a compelling reason why this is not possible.
- The student(s) concerned must be invited using the appropriate letter templates by email to attend the hearing with at least **five** working days' notice. Students have the right to defer the date of a board until after the examination period if the board is scheduled to occur in the week prior to, or during, the examination period. If a University closure, vacation or examination period begins within the five-day period of notification, the convener of the Board will endeavour to convene the Board before the closure, vacation or examination period, unless the student requests that the Board be deferred (e.g., after the respective vacation or examination period).

⁴ Policy amended to reflect the exceptional circumstances created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

- The student must also be informed in the summons that the meeting concerns suspected academic misconduct, the type of misconduct suspected, and the piece(s) of work in which it is suspected. The student must also receive all the evidence being considered by the Board when the summons letter is sent by email.
 - A student attending a Board of Adjudication has the right to be accompanied and represented by another member of the University. This representative must 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. The representative cannot have been previously involved in the case, for example, a) raising the allegation of academic misconduct, b) teaching in the module concerned, c) marking the piece of work. Individuals external to the University cannot attend.
 - If a student fails to attend without good cause, the 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. They may also be represented in their absence by a representative as defined above.
 - No audio or electronic recording of a Board of Adjudication will be permitted.
 - The AMO will normally present the case to the Board. The Board of Adjudication may also ask others 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 their own evidence.
 - The AMO, student(s) and any others who are not members of the Board of Adjudication will leave at this point while it considers the evidence and seeks to establish whether or not misconduct has taken place.
4. *Board Deliberation, Verdict, and Sanction Recommendations (applicable to both School and University Boards)*
- An allegation of academic misconduct may only be upheld if a strict majority of the board members support this decision.
 - If the Board finds there is insufficient evidence of academic misconduct, the case is dismissed and the Dean informed. The student should also be informed using the appropriate letter templates in writing by email within five working days of the hearing.
 - In line with High Principle No. 9, in determining whether an accusation of academic misconduct is upheld, absence of intention to commit misconduct, extenuating circumstances, or ignorance of the rules is not a valid defence. Boards cannot therefore take extenuating circumstances into account when determining whether or not the student has committed misconduct, no matter how compelling. Students are however invited to present any extenuating circumstances to the Board which may be taken into account if an accusation of misconduct is upheld, which in turn may be used to determine the nature of the sanction to be applied as outlined below. Students may not request that mitigating circumstances be taken into account retrospectively after a Board has taken place.
 - If the accusation of academic misconduct is upheld, extenuating circumstances may be taken into consideration when determining the sanction. This may mean that a Board, in deciding on a sanction, may consider the extenuating circumstances presented justifiably compelling, and therefore give a reduced sanction in light of these circumstances. Please see 4.3 of this policy for further information.

- If the Board of Adjudication upholds an allegation of misconduct, it must recommend a sanction to the Dean (see Section 4) and provide minutes of the hearing, using the *pro forma* provided. 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. The Dean will ordinarily accept the Board's recommendation but may propose an alternative sanction.
 - Once the Board of Adjudication has met it has **five** working 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 an email to be received by the student. When an email informs a student that the case against her/him has been upheld, the same email will give details of the appropriate appeals process.
5. *Communicating the Verdict and Outcome of the Board (applicable to both School and University Boards)*
- Once the Dean has approved a sanction, the student must receive emailed notification from the convener informing them of the outcome of the Board of Adjudication and its rationale, within **five** working days of the hearing.
 - The notification will also inform the student of the requirement to retake the Moodle course called *Training in Good Academic Practice*. This will be monitored by the Proctor's Office, and students must successfully complete this training within five working days of the date of the email informing the student of the outcome of the Board of Adjudication, which will then be noted on the Academic Misconduct Register. Failure to retake the *Training in Good Academic Practice* course may be taken into account should the student be investigated again for suspected academic misconduct. Students will also be offered support on good academic practice from CEED, and where required support from IEI and potentially Student Services. The notification of the outcome of the Board of Adjudication should be copied to the Director of Teaching relevant to the module involved, Adviser of Studies, Academic Misconduct Officer, Student Services, Module Results, Proctor's Office, and the Senate Office.
 - After any case has been upheld, the student's name or students' names will be placed on the Academic Misconduct Register.
 - Where the outcome of a Board of Adjudication affects a student's module grade, it is the School's responsibility to ensure that appropriate action is taken promptly, and the result correctly reported to the Dean (who will report to Registry as appropriate).

3.6. Procedure where academic misconduct is suspected post-award

Where academic misconduct is suspected after the award of the degree, the matter should be reported to the Dean. The Dean will then instruct either the AMO (for undergraduate and taught postgraduate awards) or an appointed investigating officer (for postgraduate research awards) who will consider the evidence and report to the Dean their findings, who may dismiss allegations as trivial or vexatious. If the Dean considers that there is a case to answer then they will appoint a University Board of Adjudication and procedures used will follow the appropriate conventions as outlined throughout section 3 of this document according to the level of award (e.g. UG & PGT, or PGR).

The graduate under investigation is to be afforded the same rights and accommodations as any currently matriculated student who is suspected of academic misconduct at the University as outlined in this document:

- This includes the right to be accompanied and represented by another member of the University at the Board. This representative must 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. The representative must not have previous involvement in the case, for example, a) raising the allegation of academic misconduct; b) teaching in the module concerned; c) marking the piece of work. Individuals external to the University cannot attend.

- If the graduate under investigation fails to attend without good cause, the Board of Adjudication may choose to proceed in the graduate's absence. If the graduate under investigation is unable to or chooses not to attend, then they may send a written statement. They may also be represented in their absence by a representative as defined above. No audio or electronic recording of a Board of Adjudication will be permitted.

Procedures for investigation post-award may function outwith the usual timescales outlined in this document as a result of the complexity of the investigation. Examples include but are not restricted to:

- The graduate under investigation is no longer resident in or local to St Andrews and must be provided with reasonable time to attend a scheduled Board in person;
- Significant time may have elapsed since the suspected misconduct and the raising of an allegation, and therefore a more complex investigation may need to take place;
- The evidence to be assessed by both the Board and the graduate under investigation may be of sufficient volume and complexity that greater time is to be afforded outwith the normal timescales for consideration.
- In such cases, the convener of the Board must make an assessment on the additional time required outwith the usual timescales for the organisation and conduct of a University Board of Adjudication and write to the Dean seeking their approval prior to contacting the graduate under investigation. It must be emphasised that any alteration to timescales is at the discretion of the AVP.
- If permission has been granted by the Dean, the convener will then write a summons letter to the graduate under investigation, outlining the reasons for the investigation, why the investigation will operate outside the usual timescales for a University Board of Adjudication, and an offering of at least three dates and times for the graduate to attend the Board.

All evidence under consideration by the Board must also be sent with the summons letter for the graduate under investigation to consider ahead of the Board. The graduate under investigation may appeal to the convener for an alternative date and time for the Board to meet, but this must be within 20 working days of the date of the summons letter, be for sufficient reasons (e.g. unavoidable work commitments or extenuating personal circumstances), and must be approved by the Dean.

In situations where the graduate under investigation cannot be contacted (e.g., the University does not hold up to date contact details and cannot obtain these through reasonable means) or the graduate does not respond to the convener's request for contact, then the issue will be referred to the Dean for further consideration. The University will undertake reasonable endeavours to make the graduate under investigation aware of the case raised against them, but ultimately in the absence of any contact with the graduate, the Dean can stipulate that the Board can proceed in the graduate's absence.

Once the Board has concluded its considerations, they will reach a decision subject to approval by the Proctor who acts as an independent third party and ensures that the appropriate actions are taken. This can include dismissal of the allegations, application of a sanction from the sanctions frameworks outlined in section 4 of this document, or if the misconduct is considered egregious, alteration or withdrawal of the degree award.

3.7. Special procedures to be adopted when dealing with group academic misconduct

The University will endeavour to deal with any cases of alleged group academic misconduct 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 Dean 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 interview (as above). In very exceptional circumstances, especially where long delays in the process might otherwise occur, the Dean may authorise 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.

In cases where a subset of students is identified to be entirely responsible for the misconduct (for example by admission of responsibility) then the process continues only for, and sanctions are applied only to, the responsible subset of the group.

In all academic misconduct cases involving more than two students, the convener will be guided by the Dean who will advise on the conduct of the hearing and ensure that proceedings are undertaken in a fair and orderly manner.

3.8. Procedural steps to be undertaken by the Invigilator in cases where the academic misconduct is *suspected* 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:

- speak to the student(s) concerned informing him/her of their suspicions and that he/she will be reported to the AMO for suspected academic misconduct;
- 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;
- 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 members of the University academic staff of the same gender as the student;
 - the two members of academic staff should be as specific as possible about what they wish to see, and a refusal by the student should be recorded along with a statement of the grounds for refusal;
- note the names and matriculation number of any student involved, 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 Examinations Officer. Within 24 hours of the examination the Chief Invigilator must submit a full report, signed and dated, to the University Examinations Officer to be forwarded to the AMO and copied to the 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;
- c) contain details of the use of any materials brought into the examination (whether inadvertently or deliberately) in contravention of the Good Academic Practice policy or Examination Rules for Candidates;
- 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.

If the suspected misconduct involves a student's exam script, the anonymised script(s) will be sent to the School in the standard way 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 marker will then be asked to review the mark based on the report submitted by the Chief Invigilator. The marker will report to the AMO on the extent to which any unauthorised 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 a marker, rather than an Invigilator, the marker should report in writing without delay to the AMO 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 AMO will receive all such reports and proceed according to the University's Good Academic Practice policy.

NB. Academic misconduct relating to an examination will normally be considered by a School Board of Adjudication.

4. SANCTIONS

Possible sanctions are outlined below. These are applicable both prior to, and after, the award of a qualification.

4.1. Sanctions for UG/PGT Students

Issuer	Available Sanctions Marks/grades referred to are on the Common Reporting Scale
Academic Misconduct Officer	<u>Relating to piece of assessment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written warning issued through MMS
School Board of Adjudication	<u>Relating to piece of assessment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written warning issued through MMS or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piece of assessment capped at 7 or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero for piece of assessment
University Board of Adjudication <i>University Boards are able to award a sanction to both a piece of assessment and the related module</i>	<u>Relating to piece of assessment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written warning issued through MMS or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Piece of assessment capped at 7 or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero for piece of assessment <u>Relating to module</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module capped at 7 or <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Zero for module with <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) the right to retake the module for credit only, (this sanction allows a student to retake a compulsory module), or b) the right to take an additional module for credit only, or c) no right to take an additional module (this sanction is applicable only to students in the Honours part of an undergraduate degree programme; its purpose is to prevent the student from completing an Honours degree) NB. The issuing of this penalty does not imply any variation of the normal limits on the duration of the degree programme <u>Relating to a degree</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In exceptional cases where sanctions related to a module are not applicable, University Boards of Adjudication may apply the above sanctions to another module. <u>Relating to continuation of studies</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Termination of Studies

4.2. Sanctions for PGR Students

Issuers	Sanction	Description
Sanctions available to AMO and University Board (Current students)	<p>1. Where minor concerns are outlined about the student's work that are not viewed as requiring a hearing at the University Board level, the AMO has the authority to issue a written warning outlining the concerns and what remedial work the student must complete to resolve these concerns. A University Board may also issue a written warning, if they deem the misconduct to be very minor and wish to recommend remedial work to the student.</p>	<p>This sanction would be used in very minor cases during the course of a student's studies (e.g., issues in progression review submissions).</p>
Sanctions available to University Board (Current students)	<p>1. Where there are serious concerns outlined about the student's work at a compulsory point of assessment (e.g., progress review), the AMO has the authority to refer this to a University Board, and if the case is upheld, the Board can choose one of the following, depending on the nature and extent of the misconduct:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student to undertake remedial work to resolve the issues in the thesis, after which they will be re-reviewed in line with the annual progress review policy. A written warning will also be issued. • Student re-registered to complete a lower award. A written warning will be issued. • Student has their studies terminated. <p>2. Thesis not accepted in its present form. Candidate must amend the parts affected by misconduct and resubmit the revised thesis within three months. New version provided to examiners for the examination process. Student must retake GAP and Research Integrity modules before being allowed to graduate.</p>	<p>This sanction would be used in serious cases during the course of a student's studies (e.g., issues in progression review submissions).</p> <p>This sanction would be used in relatively minor cases where the originality of the thesis largely remains (e.g., plagiarism in the literature review) and only after the thesis has been submitted.</p>

	<p>3. Thesis not accepted in its present form but the student given the opportunity to revise and resubmit the thesis within 6 months. Candidate must resubmit the thesis and pay a resubmission fee. Student must retake GAP and Research Integrity modules before being allowed to graduate. Academic misconduct noted on the student record.</p> <p>4. Thesis not accepted in its present form but the student given the opportunity to amend the affected portion only for resubmission for the degree of MPhil only. Candidate must pay a resubmission fee. Student must retake GAP and Research Integrity modules before being allowed to graduate. Academic misconduct noted on the student record. Student has no right to pursue additional degrees at St Andrews.</p> <p>5. Thesis rejected and no degree awarded. Academic misconduct noted on student record. Student has no right to pursue additional degrees at St Andrews.</p>	<p>The academic misconduct is such that the originality of the thesis is called in to question, but the examiners and/or University Board feel there is still enough original contribution to warrant a PhD upon revision and re-examination. Only available after the thesis has been submitted.</p> <p>To be applied in serious cases of academic misconduct where there is not enough original content to warrant a PhD. Only available after the thesis has been submitted.</p> <p>Originality of the thesis has been significantly and detrimentally compromised and undermined by the misconduct, and no remedial work will be able to resolve the concerns highlighted during the investigation and University Board.</p> <p>Reserved for cases of serious academic misconduct where there is not proof of enough original content to warrant any postgraduate research degree. Only available after the thesis has been submitted.</p>
<p>Sanctions available to University Board (former research students)</p>	<p>1. Written warning that degree may be withdrawn. Individual given three months to correctly reference or remove the affected content. Corrections approved by the original internal examiner (or investigating officer where the examiner is no longer a member of staff at the University). Degree not withdrawn if investigating</p>	<p>This sanction would be used in relatively minor cases which may likely be the result of poor academic practice, and where the originality of the thesis largely remains.</p>

	<p>officer is satisfied with the amended thesis. Research misconduct proceedings may be triggered.</p> <p>2. Written warning that degree may be withdrawn. Individual given 12 months to correct the affected content for review by the original internal examiner (or investigating officer where the examiner is no longer a member of staff at the University). Research misconduct proceedings may be triggered. Award of degree may be upheld or original degree may be revoked and a lesser degree awarded. Student record updated to reflect academic misconduct.</p> <p>3. Withdrawal of degree</p>	<p>The academic misconduct is such that the originality of the thesis is called in to question, but the examiners and/or University Board feel there may still be enough original contribution to warrant a postgraduate research award upon revision and re-examination.</p> <p>Reserved for cases of egregious academic misconduct where the originality of the thesis has been compromised.</p> <p>Originality of the thesis has been significantly and detrimentally compromised and undermined by the misconduct, and no remedial work will be able to resolve the concerns highlighted during the investigation and University Board.</p>
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4.3. Mitigation in sanction determination – extenuating circumstances

In line with High Principle No. 9, extenuating circumstances that the student considers to have affected them at the time they committed academic misconduct may be presented to the Board for the purpose of sanction mitigation. Students must provide evidence to support a claim of extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical evidence or support from Student Services), and unsubstantiated claims of extenuating circumstances will not be taken into account. If students under investigation require further time to produce evidence to substantiate their claims of extenuating circumstances, they can request time from the Board in order to do so. This is at the Board’s discretion, and the student must explain to the Board the exact reasons why there is a delay and why they require more time (e.g., they are awaiting an appointment to request this evidence from the doctor).

It must be emphasised that the presentation of extenuating circumstances does not guarantee mitigation when determining a sanction, and such mitigation is the exception rather than the rule. As stated in High Principle No. 9., in determining whether an accusation of academic misconduct is upheld, absence of intention to commit misconduct, extenuating circumstances or ignorance of the rules are not a valid defence. Whilst a student may present extenuating circumstances as a mitigating factor to the Board determining the sanction, the Board may subsequently decide that these extenuating circumstances are not sufficiently mitigating and proceed to impose the full sanction for the respective misconduct.

5. RECORDS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT SANCTIONS

The Proctor's Office will keep records of sanctions issued for academic misconduct. The main reasons for record keeping are to allow identification of repeat offenders and to allow the effectiveness of the University's procedures to be monitored. Records help the University identify long-term trends, for instance as part of academic monitoring. A record of past decisions helps Board members and the Dean to determine appropriate sanctions and so to ensure that similar offences attract similar sanctions from one School to another.

In addition, the University may provide information on academic misconduct to third parties, on request, when providing references for students. The University may also need to disclose information on academic misconduct where students are involved in joint/collaborative degree programmes or on study abroad/exchange programmes. Students will be explicitly informed when such information is disclosed. For UG/PGT students, the information provided will be sanctions that have been applied at module level only. Module-level sanctions are also recorded on the academic transcript. Information on sanctions above a written warning will be given and recorded for PGR students.

The information recorded will be:

- a) Student name;
- b) Matriculation number;
- c) UG, PGT, or PGR;
- d) Nature of the academic misconduct;
- e) First or repeat offence (and number of repeat offence);
- f) Individual or group case;
- g) Type of Board;
- h) Date of hearing;
- i) Sanction applied;
- j) Dean's approval;
- k) Date sanction has been applied.

This information and minutes of meetings of School/University Boards of Adjudication will be retained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

Access to the full record will be restricted to designated members of the Proctor's Office. Details of any previous case(s) of misconduct and sanctions applied will be made available to the AMO, Board and student and circulated to the panel with the paperwork. This information is not considered when deciding whether an allegation should be upheld, but may be considered in determining an appropriate sanction.

The Dean will produce an annual monitoring report for the Academic Monitoring Group, detailing the number of cases arising during the year, the Schools involved, a summary of misconduct types and a summary of outcomes. All monitoring will be anonymised and will not identify individual cases.

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 misconduct will remain on the central Register throughout that further programme.

6. ESCALATIONS AND APPEALS

6.1. Escalation to a higher Board

A student who receives a written warning from an Academic Misconduct Officer has the right to ask for their case to be brought instead to a School Board of Adjudication. Such a request should be made to the Academic Misconduct Officer within five working days of the written warning being issued. The student should be aware that while the School Board may decide that the allegation should not be upheld, it may also uphold the original decision, and may apply the full range of sanctions available to School Boards.

Similarly, a student who receives a sanction from a School Board of Adjudication has the right to ask for their case to be brought instead to a University Board. Such a request should be made to the convener of the School Board within five working days of the original decision being issued. The student should be aware that while the University Board may decide that the allegation should not be upheld, it may also uphold the original decision, and may apply the full range of sanctions available to University Boards.

Escalation to a higher Board is not an appeal, and is not governed by the University Appeals process. A student does not need to provide any rationale or evidence with an escalation request.

6.2. Appeals

Students have a right of appeal against any decisions made by Academic Misconduct Officers and School or University Boards of Adjudication as outlined in the following information. Appeals can only be made on the following grounds:

- In the case of appealing a sanction, but not the academic decision to uphold an allegation of academic misconduct (which is not permitted): extenuating personal circumstances materially affecting academic performance of which the University was not aware when the academic decision was taken, and which could not reasonably have been disclosed by the student (an explanation for earlier non-disclosure is always required);
- Defective or irregular procedure that has materially affected the academic decision of the relevant Board of Adjudication.

The student must write to the Dean with their grounds for appeal within five working days of the decision, and if the Dean believes there are valid grounds for appeal, then this will be referred through the relevant route of appeal.

Routes to appeal are determined on the basis of the issuing authority – these routes to appeal constitute a Stage 1 review:

- A decision/sanction issued by an Academic Misconduct Officer will be referred to a School Board if an appeal has grounds to be heard;
- A decision/sanction issued by a School Board will be referred to a University Board if an appeal has grounds to be heard;
- A decision/sanction issued by a University Board will be considered by the Court and Senate as a Stage 2 appeal (see below).

If a student remains dissatisfied with the outcome of a Stage 1 review, and should permissible grounds exist for the matter to be considered further then the student may have a further and final route of appeal through making a submission to the Court & Senate Office. Please see the Student Academic Appeals Policy (Stage 2 appeal (Senate level)) for more information.

References (using APA Style 6th Edition)

QAA. (2017). *Contracting to Cheat in Higher Education: How to Address Contract Cheating, the Use of Third-Party Services and Essay Mills*. Retrieved from https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/quality-code/contracting-to-cheat-in-higher-education.pdf?sfvrsn=f66af681_10

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