

**ACADEMIC AWARD REGULATIONS
Procedure for Dealing with Breaches of Assessment Regulations –
Academic Misconduct**

Name of regulation :	Procedure for Dealing with Breaches of Assessment Regulations – Academic Misconduct
Purpose of regulation :	To define academic misconduct and to determine procedures for the investigation of academic misconduct at Staffordshire University
Approval for this regulation given by :	Academic Board
Responsibility for its update :	Dean of Students and Academic Registrar
Regulation applies to :	To all students registered on Staffordshire University awards
Date of Approval :	30 June 2010
Proposed Date of Review :	May 2011

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Assessment, in any form, is the means by which the University tests whether a student has achieved the objectives of a programme of study and the standards of an award. It is fundamentally important that students are assessed fairly and on equal terms with each other for the same award. Any attempt by a student to gain unfair advantage over another student in the completion of assessment, or to assist someone else to gain an unfair advantage, is cheating.

- 1.2 The University has a public duty to ensure that the highest academic standards are maintained in the conduct of assessment and the proper discharge of this duty is essential to safeguard both the legitimate interests of its students and the University's reputation. Alleged academic misconduct which threatens the integrity of the University's assessment procedures and the maintenance of its academic standards, is viewed as a serious offence and will be thoroughly investigated.
- 1.3 Certain Professional bodies place upon students, registered for a programme to which they give professional recognition, an obligation to adhere to principles or standards of professional conduct. Failure to meet these standards may lead to a student not gaining professional recognition, irrespective of the standard of his/her academic performance.
- 1.4 The University reserves the right to use appropriate software to detect academic misconduct (plagiarism).
- 1.4 Should you be registered on an award within the Faculty of Health or other Faculty where there are Fitness to Practice requirements, any incident relating to academic misconduct may be referred to the Fitness to Practice Procedure for consideration by the Committee. Information on the Fitness to Practice Procedure is contained within award specific documentation

2. Definition

Academic misconduct may be defined as any attempt by a student to gain an unfair advantage in any assessment.

It may be demonstrated by one of the following:

1. AIDING AND ABETTING a student in any form of dishonest practice.
2. BRIBERY – paying or offering inducements to another person to obtain an advance copy of an unseen examination or test paper or to obtain a copy of a coursework assignment in advance of its distribution to the students concerned.
3. COLLUSION – where two or more students collaborate to produce a piece of work which is then submitted as though it was an individual student's own work. Where students in a class are instructed or encouraged to work together in the pursuit of an assignment, such a group activity is regarded as approved collaboration. Where there is a requirement for the submitted work to be solely that of the individual, collaboration is not permitted. Students who improperly work collectively in these circumstances will be regarded as being guilty of collusion.

4. COMMISSIONING another person to complete an assignment which is then submitted as your own work or making your work available for commissioning, whether for monetary or other gain or not.
5. COMPUTER FRAUD – the use of the material of another person stored on a hard or floppy disk as if it were your own
6. DUPLICATION – the inclusion of coursework of any material which is identical or similar to material which has already been submitted for any other assessment within the University or elsewhere eg submitting the same piece of coursework for two different modules.
7. FALSE DECLARATIONS in order to receive special consideration by Examination Boards.
8. FALSIFICATION OF DATA – the presentation of data in projects, laboratory reports etc. based on work purported to have been carried out by the students which have been invented by the student or altered or copied or obtained by other unfair means.
9. MISCONDUCT IN EXAMINATIONS OR TESTS such as:
 - taking crib notes or other unauthorised material concealed in any manner into an examination or test
 - taking into an examination or test an unauthorised computer disk containing pre-coded data
 - the use of an unauthorised dictionary
 - the use of unauthorised material stored in the memory of a pre-programmable calculator, watch, organiser, mobile telephone, or pager
 - obtaining an advance copy of an 'unseen' written examination or test paper
 - communicating or trying to communicate in any way with another student during an examination or test
 - copying or attempting to copy from another student sitting the same examination or test
 - being party to impersonation where another person sits an examination or test in the place of the actual student or a student is knowingly impersonated by another
 - leaving the examination or test venue to refer to concealed notes
 - taking rough notes, stationery, scripts or examination or test papers which indicate that they are not to be removed, from the examination or test venue.
 - reproduction of lecture notes or alternative sources which is unacknowledged, word for word and shows no understanding of the examination/test question.

10. PARAPHRASING - the changing or rearranging the order of sentences, with or without references at the end of the work.
11. PLAGIARISM may be defined as the representation of another person's work, without acknowledgement of the source, as the student's own for the purposes of satisfying formal assessment requirements. Examples of plagiarism are:
 - (i) the use in a student's own work of more than a single phrase from another person's work without the use of quotation marks and acknowledgement of the source;
 - (ii) the summarising of another person's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without acknowledgement;
 - (iii) the use of ideas or intellectual data of another person without acknowledgement of the source, or the submission or presentation of work as if it were the student's own, which are substantially the ideas or intellectual data of another person;
 - (iv) copying the work of another person;
 - (v) the submission of work, as if it were the student's own, which has been obtained from the internet or any other form of information technology;
 - (vi) the submission of coursework making significant use of unattributed digital images such as graphs, tables, photographs, etc. taken from books/articles, the internet or from the work of another person;
 - (vii) the submission of a piece of work which has previously been assessed for a different award or module or at a different institution as if it were new work;
 - (viii) a student who allows or is involved in allowing, either knowingly or unknowingly, another student to copy another's work including physical or digital images would be deemed to be guilty of plagiarism.

THE ABOVE LIST IS NOT EXHAUSTIVE AND SHOULD NOT BE INTERPRETED AS SUCH BY STUDENTS.

11.1 Plagiarism within a distributed learning environment will be dealt with in the same way as for more traditional learning methods.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1.1 Faculties should take responsibility for ensuring that all students registered on awards in their Faculty/School are made aware of these regulations and the definitions contained therein. All Award Handbooks should include clear advice to students on this matter and cross-referenced to these Regulations.
- 3.1.2 Students should also be made aware of the seriousness with which proven cases of academic misconduct will be dealt and the likely penalties which Examination Boards may impose. Students who are unclear about any of the above definitions should seek advice from their tutor or from the Students' Union Advice Centres.
- 3.1.3 A lack of awareness or understanding, of these regulations will not constitute grounds for a case of academic misconduct to be dismissed by an Assessment Disciplinary Committee.

4 Procedures For Dealing with Suspected Cases of Academic Misconduct

Where an examiner suspects that there has been any form of academic misconduct the following procedures should be followed:

4.1 COURSEWORK

- 4.1.1 Where a tutor suspects that plagiarism or other form of academic misconduct in relation to coursework has been committed he/she together with another member of academic staff approved by the Faculty/School Dean responsible for the subject area in which the module is located should analyse the work in question in order to assess the extent and nature of the offence. This initial investigation may involve requiring the student to attend a viva voce or preliminary hearing to verify the tutor's suspicions without prejudice. The student will be given at least 24 hours written notice of the Faculty/School's intention to hold a viva voce or preliminary hearing. A written report outlining the nature of the case and the outcome of the investigation should be produced and a copy provided for the Faculty/School Dean or nominee in which the student's award is based and, if appropriate, the Faculty/School within which the module is based.

If, following the viva voce or preliminary hearing, the Dean of Faculty/School or nominee believes that academic misconduct has been committed, the student will be invited to discuss the allegation in the normal way (see 4.1.4 below).

- 4.1.2 The work in question should be marked as though plagiarism or other form of academic misconduct is not suspected, but the Examination Board should not consider the candidate's marks until it has been adjudged whether or not an offence has been committed.

- 4.1.3 Where the work in question has clearly been taken entirely from published source, for example, where the tutor can supply a copy of the relevant text or media, the work need not be marked. Reference should be made to the source in the written report.
- 4.1.4 Where plagiarism or other form of academic misconduct is suspected, the student concerned should be informed, in writing, by the Faculty/School Dean (or nominee) which owns the module. A copy of these regulations should be included with the letter. The student shall be invited to attend an interview.
- 4.1.5 If the first invitation to attend an interview is not responded to, a second invitation will be sent. If you fail to respond on the second occasion, the matter will be forwarded to the next Assessment Board with a recommendation that a zero mark is given for that assessment. The Award Board will then determine the overall penalty and inform you, in writing, of its decision.
- 4.1.6 The Faculty/School Dean (or nominee) and the internal examiner/tutor shall interview the student who has the right to be accompanied by a fellow student or a representative from the Students' Union. If the student acknowledges that he/she is guilty of plagiarism or other form of academic misconduct as outlined in the report of the investigation, he/she will be asked to sign the report immediately, or return it signed within 24 hours of receipt of the report (excluding weekends and statutory bank holidays) which shall then be sent to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar. The Chair of the relevant Examination Board shall also receive a copy where he/she is not the Faculty/School Dean or nominee.
The student will be asked to bring evidence of any extenuating circumstances either to the interview meeting or within 24 hours of the meeting taking place.
- 4.1.7 The Faculty/School Dean (or nominee) shall advise the student to produce a written statement addressed to the Chair of the Examination Board outlining any relevant factors that the Board should take into account when considering the case concerned.
- 4.1.8 If the student does not acknowledge that he/she was guilty of academic misconduct as it is stated in the written report, the Faculty/School Dean (or nominee) shall send the report unsigned by the student, to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar who shall convene a meeting of the Assessment Disciplinary Committee.
- 4.1.9 If you subsequently decide, on reflection, that you wish to sign the report admitting academic misconduct, you must send a signed copy of the report to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar who will then inform your Faculty/School and cancel the Assessment Disciplinary Committee.

4.2 Examinations or Tests

- 4.2.1 Any candidate suspected of contravening the examination regulations in a formal written examinations, open book examination or class test must be approached at the time by two invigilators, whenever possible, and any unauthorised materials confiscated. The candidate's examination answer book should be endorsed at that point with the exact time, date and signature(s) of the invigilator(s).
- 4.2.2 Except where the candidate is causing a disturbance likely to affect other candidates, the suspected candidate should be permitted to complete the examination.
- 4.2.3 Before leaving the examination room, the candidate should be informed that the incident will be reported to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar. The candidate should also be instructed to attend any remaining examinations as normal.
- 4.2.4 A full report of the incident must be written immediately after the examination by the invigilator(s) and submitted to the Examinations Section in the Information Centre at the appropriate site of the University.
- 4.2.5 Upon receipt of such a report the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar will inform the appropriate Faculty/School Dean or nominee.
- 4.2.6 The Faculty/School Dean (or nominee) in which the student's award is based shall invite the student, in writing, to attend an interview within five working days of the alleged incident. A copy of these regulations shall also be included.
- 4.2.7 If the first invitation to attend an interview is not responded to, a second invitation will be sent. If you fail to respond on the second occasion, the matter will be forwarded to the next Assessment Board with a recommendation that a zero mark is given for that assessment. The Award Board will then determine the overall penalty and inform you, in writing, of its decision.
- 4.2.8 The Faculty/School Dean (or nominee) and the invigilator(s) who originally approached the candidate during the examination shall interview the student. If the student acknowledges the academic misconduct as detailed in the written report prepared by the invigilator(s) he/she shall sign the report which shall then be sent to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar. The Chair of the Examination Board shall also receive a copy where he/she is not the Faculty/School Dean or nominee.
- 4.2.9 If the student is registered on an award delivered by the Faculty of

Health or by another Faculty for which Fitness to Practise is a requirement, s/he may also be referred to the Fitness to Practise Procedure.

4.2.10 The Faculty/School Dean (or nominee) shall advise the student to produce a written statement addressed to the Chair of the Examination Board outlining any relevant facts that he/she would like the Examination Board to take into account when considering the case concerned.

4.2.11 If the student does not acknowledge that academic misconduct occurred as indicated in the written report, the Faculty/School Dean (or nominee) shall send the report, unsigned by the student, to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar who shall convene a meeting of the Assessment Disciplinary Committee.

5 The Assessment Disciplinary Committee

5.1 The Dean of Students and Academic Registrar (or nominee) shall inform the student, in writing, of the date and time of the Assessment Examination Disciplinary Committee and shall invite the student to attend. The student may be accompanied by a fellow student or a representative from the Students' Union.

5.1.1 The student may if he/she wishes, prepare a statement regarding the alleged offence. Any such statement should be sent to the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar at least one working day before the meeting of the Assessment Disciplinary Committee.

5.2 The membership of the Assessment Disciplinary Committee shall normally be:

Chair - Dean or Faculty Director or nominee of Faculty/School in which the student's award is based (who did not carry out the initial investigation);

The Dean of Students and Academic Registrar (or nominee);

One other Faculty/School Dean or a Faculty Director or Programme Area Manager (not directly responsible for the Assessment concerned);

One other member of academic staff (not directly involved in the award concerned);

President of the Students' Union (or nominee);

Secretary (nominated by the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar)

- 5.3 The papers for the Committee will normally include:
- (i) the report of the internal examiner and other member of academic staff on the extent and nature of the offence;
 - (ii) any statement from the student;
 - (iii) any confiscated materials;
 - (iv) any relevant text, source material or media;
 - (v) regulations for the particular award relating to the assessment;
 - (vi) regulations of any external validating body appropriate to the award;
 - (vii) a copy of these procedures.
- 5.3.1 Papers received will remain confidential to the Committee except where it might be appropriate to refer papers and the findings of the Committee to the relevant Examination Board.
- 5.4 The Committee will invite the student concerned and at least one of the members of academic staff responsible for writing the report on the case to give evidence. Any other person considered relevant to the case may also be invited to speak.
- 5.5 Minutes of the meeting will be kept and will be circulated to members only.
- 5.6 The finding of the Committee will be either that:
- (i) Academic misconduct did not occur
 - or
 - (ii) Academic misconduct did occur
- 5.7 The Committee should then assess the extensiveness of the academic misconduct and make any comments to the Examination Board as deemed appropriate.
- 5.8 If the Committee finds that academic misconduct occurred the Secretary will inform the Chair of the relevant Examination Board of this decision and shall supply a statement of the Committee's assessment of the severity of the offence.
- 5.9 The Dean of Students and Academic Registrar shall inform the student, in writing, of the findings of the Assessment Disciplinary Committee.
- 5.10 The Secretary of the Assessment Board shall inform the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar of the assessment decision who shall then submit a written report of the case to Academic Board on an annual basis.

6 Action of the Examination Board

- 6.1 The decision of the Assessment Disciplinary Committee is final and the Examination Board cannot re-examine the facts of the case.
- 6.2 The Examination Board shall make its assessment decision in accordance with the regulations of any external validating body and/or the University. Where the student has admitted the offence or where it has been proven, the Examination Board shall take action in accordance with 6.3.1 or 6.3.2 below.
- 6.3 The Examination Board shall treat all cases seriously.
- 6.3.1 Undergraduate Awards

For a first case of proven academic misconduct, normally a Grade Point 0 will be given for that element of the module. You will be allowed to be reassessed in that element (provided you have a referral opportunity remaining) for a maximum Grade Point of 4R for that element.

For a second case of proven academic misconduct, whether in the same academic year or previous academic year, a Grade Point 0 will be given for the whole module. Provided you have a referral opportunity remaining at the discretion of the Award Board, you will be allowed to be reassessed in all elements of the module for a maximum Grade Point of 4R for that module.

If you are a final year student, the Award Board must also give consideration to the maximum degree or other classification you may obtain subsequently.

For a third case of proven academic misconduct, whether in the same academic year or previous academic year, a Grade Point 0 will be given for the whole module and you will fail the award with no opportunity to be reassessed in that award or to take a replacement module. You will also not be allowed to enrol on any other award of this University.

6.3.2 Postgraduate Awards

For a first case of proven academic misconduct, a Grade Point 0 will be given for that element of the module. You may, at the discretion of the Award Board, be allowed to be reassessed in that element (provided you have a referral opportunity remaining) for a maximum Grade Point of 7R for that element.

For a second case of proven academic misconduct whether in the same academic year or previous academic year, normally, a Grade Point 0 will be given for the whole module. You will not be allowed to be reassessed or take a replacement module and will fail the award.

If you are a final year student, the Award Board must also give consideration to the maximum classification you may obtain subsequently.

The Award Board must also give consideration to whether or not you should be awarded an intermediate qualification, taking into account the extent of the plagiarism.

- 6.4 Where evidence becomes available subsequent to the recommendation of the Examination Board, it will be possible for the matter to be re-opened and, if appropriate, a recommendation made to Academic Board that the award be withdrawn.
- 6.5 In cases where academic misconduct has been suspected but not proven an Examination Board must not discuss suspicions or allegations.
- 6.6 We take our responsibilities to disabled students seriously. If you need us to make adjustments in order that you can attend a hearing, please let us know in advance and we will aim to meet your individual needs. This could mean us relocating the hearing to a more accessible venue and/or making arrangements for a communicator or advocate to be present at the hearing. To enable us to do this, please contact Francesca Francis, Dean of Students and Academic Registrar on 01782 294960, within 7 days of the hearing.
- 6.7 Students on Distance Learning awards and those studying at Partner Colleges in the UK and overseas
 - (i) It is recognised that attendance at a hearing or interview in the University might be problematic for students on distance learning awards or studying at Partner Colleges in the UK or overseas.
 - (ii) Such students will therefore be given the opportunity to:
 - attend a hearing or interview in the University OR
 - attend a hearing or interview in one of the University's Partners Colleges with the permission of that Partner College. Video conferencing of such a hearing or interview will be considered where appropriate OR
 - respond by correspondence to an identified member of staff in the University in accordance with the particular stage of the regulation in question. It is expected that this will be the norm.
 - (iii) In all such cases, the timescales for replying to students and requiring replies from students will need to be adjusted. However, both the student and the University will be expected to fulfil their respective responsibilities within a reasonable timeframe.

7 Appeal

- 7.1 The student shall have the right to appeal the penalty applied by the Examination Board in respect of a proven case of academic misconduct. The appeal will be considered in accordance with the Procedure for Review of an Examination board Decision.
- 7.2 The ONLY grounds for appealing against the penalty applied by the Examination Board for a proven case of academic misconduct are:
 - (i) Procedural error or irregularity
 - (ii) New evidence which could not have been disclosed at an earlier stage in the process.
- 7.3 The appeal must be sent, in writing, to the Dean of Students and Academic registrar within 15 working days of the Examination Board decision.
- 7.4 The Dean of Students or nominee shall acknowledge your appeal within 5 working days of receipt.
- 7.5 The Dean of Students and Academic Registrar shall make an assessment of your appeal. If in the view of the Dean of Students and Academic Registrar your appeal does not satisfy any of the approved grounds, you will be notified, in writing, stating the reasons why. The letter will also confirm that the Procedure for Dealing with Breaches of Assessment Regulations: Academic Misconduct is concluded.
- 7.6 Should the Dean of Students consider that the student has established grounds as laid down in 7.2 the appeal will be forwarded for consideration in accordance with the Procedure for Review of an Examination Board Decision.

Staffordshire University's commitment to equality and diversity means that this policy has been screened in relation to the use of gender-neutral language, jargon-free plain English, recognition of the needs of disabled people, promotion of the positive duty in relation to race and disability and avoidance of stereotypes. This document is available in alternative formats on request. If you think we can improve the fairness

of this policy, please contact the individual who has responsibility for its update.