



Senate Handbook

Academic Misconduct

This Handbook supplements Regulations governed by Senate.

It includes policies, procedures, advice and/or guidance that staff and students are expected to follow in the proper conduct of University business.

This Handbook governs all assessments completed after the implementation date.

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Major changes to this document since version 2.6 (September 2020):

- Inclusion of reference to undergraduate students
- Reference added to inclusion of Appendix C on research student penalties
- Wording changes to broaden scope of Handbook to include all research students' outputs.
- Wording changes to better reflect processes for research students
- Reference added to Research Integrity Policy
- Note added on intention to commit academic misconduct
- Note added on use of prior research
- Note added regarding advice on collaboration in research
- Section added on submission of theses for research students
- Section added on academic misconduct in research degrees
- Changes to Stage 1 investigation process for research students
- Changes to Stage 2 investigation process for research students
- Addition of Appendix C - Research Student Penalties

1 Introduction

This Handbook describes the University's definition of "academic misconduct" and its approved procedures for the management of allegations of academic misconduct. This Handbook applies to all students of the University, and where procedures differ between Taught and Research students these are clearly noted. Taught Students include those studying for a named taught award (both (Postgraduate and Undergraduate), those studying as part of an apprenticeship and those students studying for credit as short course or associate students (i.e. all students who may submit or undergo an assessment for the award of credit).

"Academic misconduct" is defined by the University as an attempt by a student to gain an unfair advantage over others in the assessment associated with a programme of study, either by cheating, by plagiarising (with or without intention to deceive), by theft of another's work, falsification or fabrication of data or using another person to produce or complete work for assessment with or without the intention to deceive. Section 2 provides a range of offences which fall under this definition. Details of the possible penalties applied to students found guilty of academic misconduct can be found in Appendix A (taught students) and Appendix C (research students).

This Handbook supplements Regulation 25 of the University's Regulations and outlines the details of the procedures that will be followed in the event of an allegation made against one or more student.

Throughout this Handbook, the term "academic conduct officer" is used to describe the role being undertaken by the Directors of Education and Directors of Research in the Schools. They may also appoint additional staff in the Schools to act on their behalf to review individual academic misconduct allegations.

The remit of an academic conduct officer (ACO) is to offer general advice to staff on academic misconduct matters and advice on specific cases of suspected academic misconduct. ACOs also act as the University's disciplinary officers and constitute the members of Academic Conduct Panels.

All students should make themselves familiar with Section 2-3 of this Handbook. Sections 6-10 will be helpful if an allegation of misconduct has been made against you. Guidance for staff is provided in Sections 4-5.

In addition to this Handbook, the University has a Research Integrity Policy, which can be found on the [intranet](#). For staff candidates working towards a research degree the Research integrity Policy may be invoked instead of the processes in this Academic Misconduct Handbook. Such a decision will be at the discretion of the investigators, taking into consideration factors such as the seniority of the staff candidate's position, the nature of the offence and its context (for example an alleged offence relating to work undertaken for delivery to an external partner/client or funding body would fall under the Research Integrity process, while for work relating only to their research degree, the alleged offence may be considered under academic misconduct process).

PART A WHAT IS ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT?

2 What is academic misconduct and why is it important?

Cranfield University awards academic qualifications to students on the basis of their achievements in accordance with the criteria laid down for particular assessments. Academic integrity is fundamental to the values promoted by the University, and assessments are designed so that you are assessed on your knowledge, skills and abilities. The University prides itself on, and works hard to ensure the academic integrity of all of its awards. Students are expected to take pride in their studies and uphold a high level of academic integrity throughout, including maintaining Research Integrity (which applies to both research and taught students).

The University has adopted Universities UK Concordat to Support Research Integrity, and upholds its principles which are:

- Upholding the highest standards of rigour and integrity in all aspects of research
- Ensuring that research is conducted according to appropriate ethical, legal and professional frameworks, obligations and standards
- Supporting a research environment that is underpinned by a culture of integrity and based on good governance, best practice, and support for the development of researchers
- Using transparent, timely, robust and fair processes to deal with allegations of research misconduct should they arise
- Working together to strengthen the integrity of research and to review progress regularly and openly

All researchers are responsible for understanding, implementing and maintaining the highest standard of rigour and integrity relevant to their work at all times.

It is imperative that all members of the University recognise the responsibilities that they share for developing and maintaining a culture in which sound research practices are adopted and inappropriate ones detected and dealt with. Every employee and student of Cranfield has a duty to inform the appropriate authorities if they know or suspects that there has been a breach of good conduct.

Students are referred to the [University's Research Integrity Policy](#), [the process for its implementing and monitoring](#) and to the University's [Ethics Code](#).

The University identifies a number of practices it considers to be breaches of academic misconduct, and these are outlined in the sections below. This list is not exhaustive, and academic judgement may be used to identify other instances of academic misconduct. It is important to note that these regulations concern all work submitted for assessment, including assignments, examinations, theses and progress review reports.

When investigating allegations of academic misconduct, any investigation (whether formal or informal) will be undertaken to determine if academic misconduct has occurred, regardless of whether this was intentional or unintentional on the part of the student: academic misconduct, even if committed unintentionally, negatively affects the integrity of research and the University's awards. Intention to commit academic misconduct (or a lack of intention) may, however, be considered by an investigator when determining the appropriate penalty to be applied.

The University, along with the rest of the UK higher education sector, takes a serious view of academic misconduct and you are expected to be aware of the categories of academic misconduct and how to avoid them.

2.1 Plagiarism: not acknowledging your sources

Plagiarism is the use, without acknowledgement, of the intellectual work of other people, and the act of representing the ideas or discoveries of others as your own in submitted assessments and publications. The University reviews the majority of assessments submitted by you, including research theses, using an external non-originality detection system (Turnitin UK). For research students plagiarism may also be detected drafts of reports, conference abstracts and papers by your module leader or supervisor and co-authors, by reviewers of abstracts and manuscripts submitted to conferences and journals, and by your examiners and progress review panel members.

The use of other people's research, written works, or phrasing without proper acknowledgement is considered to be plagiarism, whether or not you intended to deceive the markers, examiners or reviewers. You are strongly advised to avoid copying and/or "cutting and pasting" the work of others, unless you reference those sources properly.

The unattributed use of internet sources and documents is plagiarism. At all times you should ensure that you are using credible sources for your work and that you acknowledge them appropriately, taking particular care when using material sourced from the internet.

Plagiarism may also include circumstances where minor amendments are made to disguise the original source, or to pass off an idea as your own simply because you have changed the way that idea is expressed.

Note: A common excuse for plagiarism of this type is not having enough time to complete the work: tight deadlines will not be considered a reasonable defence against plagiarism.

2.2 Plagiarism: improper or incomplete referencing

Improper or incomplete referencing is plagiarism. If text is copied directly from another source, it should be placed in quotation marks or another suitable identifier. All other source material should be accompanied by clear references in the text where the material is utilised. The Library and your academic advisers can advise you on how to reference properly for your academic discipline.

2.3 Self-plagiarism/duplication

Self-plagiarism or duplication is the submission, in whole or in part, of your own work that has previously been submitted for a different assignment or research project (either at Cranfield or elsewhere) or published. Whilst it is acceptable for you to make brief reference to your own studies and findings, it is unacceptable to resubmit material that has already been assessed unless this has been expressly permitted.

All work submitted must be a student's own work, and have been produced specifically for the intended assessment. Where a student has completed prior research and submitted this for any other academic distinction this may be referenced as a source material, but not form part of that student's 'original contribution to knowledge' for their intended award. This applies whether the work has been submitted for an award at Cranfield or at another institution.

2.4 Intending to deceive the examiners

When considering cases of plagiarism, academic staff may receive evidence to prove that you have deliberately set out to pass someone else's work off as your own, including the use of essay-writing services. In such cases, where evidence of cheating and plagiarism is present, this may result in a more serious penalty.

2.5 Cheating under test conditions

Examples of cheating under test conditions include:

- a) having access or attempting to gain access, during a formal examination, to any unauthorised material, electronic device or calculator;
- b) copying from another examination candidate;
- c) aiding, or attempting to aid, another examination candidate;
- d) communicating, or attempting to communicate, with anyone other than an official invigilator during a formal examination; and
- e) allowing another person to impersonate you in a formal examination, progress review meeting or viva.

2.6 Falsification/Fabrication of experimental or other investigative results

This includes either changing data in order to support a hypothesis, or inventing data (e.g. experimental results, interview questions or answers, survey results), which are then reported as genuine observations or measurements.

2.7 Using another person to produce or complete an assessment (or completing an assessment on behalf of another student)

This involves any means where you submit work for assessment which has been produced – in part or in full - by someone else (e.g. another student, someone from outside the University, or internet “cheat sites” or “essay banks”).

It is considered reasonable for students to allow others to proof-read their work, but this should be limited to comments on style, spelling and grammar. Proof-readers should not be used to re-write or restructure your work. All work submitted for assessment by you must be written by you, and you should confirm this on submission.

Further guidance on what is and what is not acceptable help from others is available in section 3.5 of this Handbook and on the intranet.

Writing (in full or in part) an assignment, progress review report or section of a thesis on behalf of another student is also a form of academic misconduct, and if found guilty of impersonating another student you will be penalised for intending to deceive the examiners (if you are also completing the same assessment) or through the University’s disciplinary policy.

2.8 Theft of another student/researcher’s work

The theft of another student or researcher’s work is viewed as a very serious offence and any student found committing such an act of academic misconduct will be liable to the most severe penalties. In addition, if you are found to have put pressure on other students through harassment, slander or bullying, you will be subject to an additional disciplinary investigation.

2.9 Collusion

Collusion includes circumstances where two or more candidates work or plan jointly to cheat in any of the above ways. Collusion also involves working with others on tasks that should be carried out

on an individual basis. Unless advised otherwise, any work which is submitted for assessment must be produced by individual students. The penalties for collusion are the same as those for plagiarism.

Collusion may also occur between a student and persons who are not members of the University, particularly within a workplace (whether as part of a placement or a student's employer). Students must ensure that all work submitted is their own, and has been produced solely by them.

Note: There is a difference between collaboration and collusion. You should have been advised by academic staff when and how you may collaborate with other students (especially in group assignments or projects, where you will often work with others to collect data, prepare reports and presentations and discuss your work).

Collaboration with others is an important part of a research project. Your supervisor should advise what may or may not be acceptable in terms of collaboration, including explicit guidance on how to acknowledge the specific contributions of collaborators in the work reported thesis, of co-authors when submitting a thesis in the form of a series of papers and of papers included in a thesis submitted for the degree of PhD by portfolio of published works.

Generally, it is considered helpful and appropriate for students to collaborate, through discussing topics and rehearsing various arguments and propositions, but any formal assessment of you as an individual should normally be produced independently and submitted as your own work. If you are in doubt, ask for guidance.

PART B GUIDANCE AND ADVICE FOR STUDENTS

3 How to avoid academic misconduct

3.1 Support for students

The University is committed to providing you with information, advice and guidance for avoiding all forms of academic misconduct.

During induction, all students are provided with information on academic misconduct, and how to avoid it, as well as, for research students, training on Research Integrity and Ethics. This may take the form of a lecture in the induction week, or information in the student handbook, or on the course Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). Research students are required to complete this training prior to their initial (4 month) review.

Students are also advised to make use of the tutorial sessions available through the Library. These interactive tutorials include sections on referencing and avoiding plagiarism. If a student can not attend a tutorial for any reason, staff in the Library are always on hand to offer advice on proper referencing.

Students receive this Handbook at or before registration and are asked to confirm that they have received advice on academic misconduct and understand what constitutes an academic offence and have undertaken the Library's [online tutorial](#) on referencing and plagiarism.

Once you have completed Parts 1-4, use the Knowledge Check to test your understanding. This will be reported to Course Directors (or supervisors) within your School.

3.2 Submitting assessments (taught students)

Taught course students are expected to submit written assessments through a non-originality detection system called Turnitin UK, except where expressly advised otherwise by staff. Research students are expected to submit their theses and at least one other piece of work prior to this, to Turnitin UK in order to familiarise themselves with the system. The extent to which Turnitin UK should be used will vary from course to course, and staff will confirm how many pieces of work prior to the thesis students are expected to submit to Turnitin UK.

Note: In exceptional cases, for example if public access to a thesis is restricted, an assessment may be exempt from submission to Turnitin UK. Staff will instead check for occurrences of academic misconduct manually.

Multiple submissions of assessments and theses can be made to Turnitin UK. On each occasion students receive a report that provides an Overall Similarity Index (OSI) and shows where similarities to other texts appear in the written work; staff can log in to Turnitin to view the report once a student has made the final submission. Some staff may limit the number of submissions students can make per assessment.

Once the deadline for any assessment has passed (even if an extension to the submission deadline has been granted), Turnitin will treat any submission made after this date as the final submission. In such circumstances SAS Leads are able to assist students in generating OSI reports prior to students making a final submission to Turnitin.

You will usually be required to submit your work through the VLE; in most cases this involves a submission to Turnitin UK. Details should be in your course handbook or will be available from the course team.

3.3 Submitting Your Thesis (research students)

Research students are expected to submit their theses through a non-originality detection system called Turnitin UK, except where expressly advised otherwise by staff. Prior to thesis submission they should also submit at least one other piece of work through Turnitin UK in order to familiarise themselves with the system.

Note: In exceptional cases, for example if public access to a thesis is restricted, an assessment may be exempt from submission to Turnitin UK. Staff will instead check for occurrences of academic misconduct manually.

Multiple submissions of theses can be made to Turnitin UK. On each occasion the student receives a report that provides an Overall Similarity Index (OSI) and shows where similarities to other texts appear in the written work; staff can log in to Turnitin to view the report once a student has made the final submission.

3.4 Using Turnitin UK effectively

The IT Department issues good practice guides for students for using Turnitin UK.

Most assessments produce some level of similarity with other texts due to common words and phrases.

Academic staff check all reports to ascertain whether or not academic misconduct may have occurred. There is no threshold for investigation. Staff use the reports and the OSI scores to inform their academic judgement, but the OSI figure is never used on its own to prove that plagiarism has occurred. Turnitin UK reports are used as a tool to identify and investigate potential instances of plagiarism, but are not solely relied upon as evidence.

If work is referenced correctly, and large chunks of material from other sources have not been used to construct your assessment, then it is unlikely that an allegation of academic misconduct will be made.

3.5 Help with assessments

All assessments must be a student's own work (or in the case of a group project, that group members' own work). Students may not employ or engage someone else to complete any of their assessments (or any other assessment) on their behalf, even if their first language is not English.

Students may, however seek editorial help from other students, friends or academic advisers to review their work and provide advice and guidance on its improvement. This advice and guidance should be limited to advice on:

- spelling, punctuation, grammar and syntax;
- formatting the document for consistency (e.g. numbering of footnotes, headings, references, page numbers; consistent font and text sizes; use of passive or active tenses);
- pointing out where plagiarism might exist;
- improving the layout of the document (e.g. moving tables and illustrations).

Advice and guidance should not include making or suggesting changes on a student's behalf in any of the following areas:

- major structural changes to the work;
- changes to the text that amend or edit ideas, arguments or discussion points;
- removal of plagiarism, or the development of better academic referencing;
- translation of passages into English;
- correction of information or data;
- reductions to the length of the work to meet the prescribed form or word limit.

Students must ensure that any third-party proof-reading does not compromise their authorship of the work submitted, and, in particular, that the substance of the work remains their own. Only final versions of any work should be submitted for proof-reading. Students are responsible for the work which they submit, and the use of a third party will not be accepted in mitigation of any deficiencies or misconduct identified in the work.

The University does not prohibit the use of commercial proof-reading services; however students are advised to be particularly vigilant if engaging such services to ensure that the academic integrity of their work is maintained, in particular ensuring that any suggested edits made by a proof-reader fall only within the remit outlined above.

Where students do seek advice and support in the permissible areas outlined above, it is best practice to ask for such advice in notes or using "tracked changes" in documents. This will ensure that they retain responsibility for choosing what advice and guidance to accept and incorporate into their work.

Students should retain all versions of their work, and notes and advice provided to them. These can then be used to demonstrate that the work is their own in the event they are accused of academic misconduct.

3.6 Advice and support

Further advice and support within the University is available from:

- your academic advisers (including your Course Director or Supervisor);
- an Assistant Registrar;
- staff in the Library;
- the intranet.

PART C GUIDANCE FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

4 Supporting Students

4.1 General awareness raising and learning support

Course Directors (taught course students) and Supervisors (of research students) are expected to outline issues around academic misconduct (and particularly proper referencing and the risks of unintended plagiarism) and research misconduct to all students as part of their induction. This may be through a specific lecture, through detailed information in course handbooks or on course VLEs or through more targeted information.

Staff should draw attention to this Handbook, which contains information on University policies and procedures, and the likely penalties if a student commits academic misconduct.

Course Directors and Supervisors should also encourage their students to attend library presentations and tutorials on referencing and plagiarism. The Library runs interactive tutorials on referencing and avoiding plagiarism, which are available throughout the year and can be booked online. Staff in the Library are also able to offer advice on referencing to individual students on request. Guides for students on using Turnitin UK, produced by IT Services, are also available.

4.2 Student Responsibilities

As part of their online registration task, all students are asked to confirm, via the University's student portal (EVE), that they have received advice on plagiarism and understand what constitutes an academic offence, and that they have undertaken the online tutorial on plagiarism & referencing. This cannot be used as evidence that they understand plagiarism, but is a useful prompt to remind students of their responsibilities.

4.3 Supporting students who have committed academic misconduct

If a student is found guilty of academic misconduct through the appropriate procedures, the examiners will have received a recommendation from the person or persons who investigated the allegation. For taught course students, this is likely to be a reduced or zero mark for the work in question: for research students, it is likely to result in a fail or a revise and represent outcome. The examiners are required to comply with the recommendation, unless they receive evidence which can mitigate those circumstances.

Please support any student who is found guilty of an academic penalty in advising them of the implications for their continuing studies and their overall results. As a Course Director or Supervisor you should also discuss with them how to avoid repeating any future acts of academic misconduct.

5 Detection of academic misconduct

5.1 Turnitin UK and other methods of detecting academic misconduct

Taught course students are expected to submit written assessments to Turnitin UK. Research students are expected to submit their theses and at least one other piece of work prior to this, to Turnitin UK¹.

Students are allowed to make multiple submissions of each assessment to Turnitin UK (or of any piece of work for research students). Staff can restrict this functionality if they feel it to be appropriate for a particular assignment. Any questions concerning the set-up of Turnitin UK should be directed to IT Services.

Staff are encouraged to use the Overall Similarity Index (OSI) report as a comparative tool. For research students, supervisors should check the Turnitin report after submission of a student's thesis. The OSI in isolation is not an indicator of plagiarism, and must be supplemented by an academic assessment of the probable causes of a high similarity percentage. Turnitin UK is not a firm indicator of academic misconduct and academic misconduct officers and/or Academic Conduct Panels (ACPs) will not consider cases where Course Directors or Supervisors fail to provide a clear evidence base for the allegation.

If a student's assessment or research thesis is restricted for public access then checks for academic misconduct should be undertaken manually as it may not be appropriate to submit the assessment to Turnitin UK.

Academic misconduct (especially forms other than plagiarism) are of course uncovered through other means than Turnitin UK, and the same principle of academic judgement must be employed.

5.2 Academic misconduct during an examination

Any invigilator with concerns over the conduct of a student or students during an examination should note these in detail on the Invigilator report form. Registry staff should ensure that any such concerns are passed to the Module Leader, who will then follow stage 1 of the academic misconduct procedure.

5.3 Academic misconduct in research degrees

Students studying for a research degree are expected to uphold academic and research integrity at all times during their studies, including in work submitted for progress reviews, to their supervisor for comment or for formal examination as part of their thesis. Academic misconduct can be detected and reported at any stage of a research student's study. For research students, academic misconduct may relate to all of a student's outputs, including reports, journal papers and conference abstracts and presentations, in addition to their thesis, and may also concern undertaking unethical research and failure to follow relevant University policies.

Upheld allegations of academic misconduct may be reported to third parties involved in a research student's study (such as funding bodies, industrial partners etc.) where the University is required to for contractual or other reasons.

Where academic misconduct is detected following submission of a research thesis the viva for that thesis should not be held until the investigation into the alleged academic misconduct is completed,

¹ Exceptions may apply when the thesis contains restricted or secret content, or where parts of the thesis are in a format which cannot be submitted to Turnitin UK.

including the student's right to request a review of a formal Stage 2 decision (Stage 3), which must be done within twenty working days of the Stage 2 decision.² This applies regardless of how and by whom the academic misconduct was detected.

Where academic misconduct is detected at a viva itself, the thesis examiners may make a recommendation on the outcome of the viva, subject to an Academic Misconduct investigation taking place. Where the outcome of an investigation would influence the examiners' final decision (i.e. key aspects of the thesis are alleged to contain academic misconduct, so that if they were discounted the outcome would differ), the independent viva Chair may choose to defer the outcome of the viva until after the allegation has been investigated.

The penalties that apply to research students are set out in Appendix C of this Handbook. For more serious offences relating to submission of a final thesis the thesis Examiners may be instructed to consider only the sections of the final submission which are not influenced by academic misconduct, and/or may be instructed to grant only a lower award, not a student's intended award.

5.4 Reporting alleged academic misconduct

Any person who suspects that an academic offence has occurred should pass the information to the Module Leader or Supervisor, who will complete a Stage 1 Academic Misconduct form (available on the intranet), (for taught course students the Module Leader should pass the form to the Course Director). The Course Director or Supervisor will then consider the case and confirm whether they agree that there is evidence to support the allegation of academic misconduct (Stage 1). They can at this stage seek advice from an Academic Conduct Officer (see Section 6).

Any alleged instances of Academic Misconduct involving RCUK funded research students should be reported to the relevant Research Council. Research student Supervisors should inform the SAS Lead when an allegation of misconduct is made against a Research student, who will ensure the allegation is reported to the Research Council if necessary. The outcome of any allegation/investigation should also be reported to the relevant Research council.

If the Course Director or Supervisor dismisses the allegation, they should notify the SAS lead and Student Casework Team, who will both keep a record.

To instigate a formal case against a student (Stage 2), the Course Director or Supervisor should notify the SAS Lead and send the completed Stage 1 Academic Misconduct Form with documentary evidence, to the Student Casework Team at academicmisconduct@cranfield.ac.uk.

The evidence will comprise:

- Turnitin UK report (if applicable);
- The marked assessment or thesis (annotated if applicable to indicate the relevant sections);
- additional source material (annotated to indicate relevant sections);
- any other useful information (e.g. emails from students, assessment criteria, information from markers and/or examiners).

The Course Director or Supervisor should ensure that the form contains a detailed case setting out the evidence for academic misconduct and that it clearly demonstrates that academic judgement has been employed.

² A viva may be held within 20 working days of the Stage 2 outcome where the student has informed the Student Casework Team that they do not intend to submit a request for a Stage 3 Review.

PART D INVESTIGATING ALLEGATIONS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

6 Stages of an investigation into an allegation of academic misconduct

All allegations of academic misconduct are managed in the following way:

STAGE 1 <i>informal investigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- preliminary enquiries made to verify the truth of any allegation- rapid resolution sought- outcomes are either dismissal of the allegation, a poor academic practice notice or a referral to a Stage 2 investigation, with supporting evidence
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Students have the right to submit evidence to a Stage 2 investigation.

STAGE 2 <i>formal investigation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- detailed enquiries and a full and documented investigation is undertaken to verify the truth of any allegation and determine any appropriate penalty or redress- outcomes may be dismissal of the allegation, or a formal recommendation to the examiners about the penalty to be applied (up to and including a zero mark of the piece of assessment and/or an overall fail result for the award)
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Students have the right to request a review of any decision made at Stage 2 under certain circumstances – see Stage 3.

STAGE 3 <i>review</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- students may request a review of the decision to the Academic Registrar against the outcome under certain circumstances- they can either dismiss the request (if it is not appropriate) or will refer the review to the appropriate authority- the review will either be dismissed by them, or a revised recommendation will be made to the examiners in the light of the request
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If at this stage a student believes that they have been treated unfairly, they can complain to a body outside of the University.

7 Student rights during the investigation

The following rights apply to all internal stages of an investigation (i.e. Stages 1, 2 and 3).

7.1 Transparency

During the course of any investigation, students will be informed and kept up to date of:

- the names of the people who have been appointed to investigate the allegation;
- the projected timescales for the completion of any investigation and, if there are unexpected delays or deferrals, any revised timescales;
- all evidence received or collected by the investigators;
- the final decision(s) of the investigators, in the form of a written report for a Stage 2 or Stage 3 investigation.

Students will also be entitled to receive on request copies of any evidence or key documents that influence the final decision of the investigators, and the right to rebut or dispute the honesty or accuracy of that evidence.

7.2 Right to a fair hearing

The University takes any investigation very seriously, and is committed to ensuring that it appoints investigators who are not prejudiced or biased against any person involved in the investigation.

If there are personal or educational circumstances, to the extent where the investigators may have made pre-informed decisions about the case, or where the investigator has been substantially involved in supporting the student throughout their studies, either the student or the investigator may raise these with the Director of Education or Director of Research (or if the investigator is one of these people, with the Head of School). They will then consider whether those circumstances represent a “conflict of interest” in the member of staff serving as an investigator, and will either appoint a different investigator(s) or explain why this is not appropriate or necessary.

7.3 Supporting the investigation

Students are required to meet reasonable requests of the investigators, including attending informal meetings with them and/or with others.

Students have the right to refuse to meet the investigators or provide evidence, but on the understanding that any right to request a review (Stage 3) of the final decision on the grounds of incomplete evidence may then be deemed invalid by the Academic Registrar.

Students have the right to be accompanied in any meeting they may have by any person they choose. This person shall be referred to as a “friend” in any meeting or formal report. If students wish to bring a friend to a meeting, they are required to notify the investigators in advance. The friend is entitled to discuss any matter with the student during the course of the meeting (including requesting a private discussion), but is not entitled to represent their views on their behalf.

During the course of any investigation, students have the right to ask for a reasonable deferral of any meeting with the investigator, or any deadline of request for information, but only on the grounds that they need further time to prepare for the requested meeting or information. The investigators reserve the right to continue their investigations in the meantime, and to reach a decision if they deem the deferrals to be unreasonable.

During any meeting or interview, the student or friend is entitled to ask for copies of any evidence discussed with them, and for a short break either to discuss any points being raised in order to collect or discuss thoughts in private.

8 Stage 1 – Informal investigation

An informal investigation arises from a member of staff or student making an allegation of academic misconduct. These are submitted to the Course Director (for taught course students) or the Supervisor (for research students), or to an academic conduct officer, who normally will refer the allegation to the Course Director or Supervisor.

At the commencement of a Stage 1 investigation any alleged instances of academic misconduct involving RCUK funded research students should be reported to RCUK through the casework team at the point of instigating a Stage 1 investigation.

The initial informal investigation is intended to establish whether there is a prima facie case to answer. It should be conducted swiftly. The evidence may often include a Turnitin UK report, with an assessment of the reasons behind a high OSI score.

The Course Director or Supervisor may or may not talk to the student(s) about the allegation, and may talk to other staff, including module leaders, progress review panel members, examiners, course administrators and examination invigilators, or to other students, depending on the nature of the allegation.

Where a Course Director or Supervisor believes that the student is guilty of poor academic practice (see Appendix B) rather than academic misconduct, they may at this stage issue a poor academic practice notice. This can only be done providing the case meets the criteria set out in Appendix B. If this is the case, the Course Director or Supervisor will discuss the matter with the student and complete the form available on the intranet, to be forwarded to the correct SAS Lead.

For taught students, If a Course Director believes that there is a prima facie academic misconduct case to answer, they will instigate a formal case against a student (Stage 2). For research students, the Supervisor will pass the case and any evidence they have gathered to the student's Review Panel Chair, who will independently assess whether the case should be escalated to a formal Stage 2 investigation.

Once a decision has been made to escalate an allegation to Stage 2 the Course Director or Review Panel Chair should send the completed Stage 1 Academic Misconduct Form with documentary evidence, to the Student Casework Team at academicmisconduct@cranfield.ac.uk, who will record the case details and pass the case on to a Registry Manager, who will arrange for the allegation to be formally investigated.

Otherwise, they will dismiss the allegation, inform the SAS Lead and Student Casework team and notify the Director of Education or Director of Research. The student(s) should be advised that the allegation has been dismissed, if previously made aware of the informal investigation. In exceptional circumstances, the Director of Education or Director of Research may refer a case for a Stage 2 investigation irrespective of the outcome of the informal investigation.

If the outcome of the Stage 1 investigation is the recommendation for a formal Stage 2 investigation to take place, the student(s) will be advised to co-operate fully in that process and await its outcomes.

9 Stage 2 – Formal investigation

If an allegation is escalated to a formal investigation (Stage 2), the Course Director or Supervisor will submit the completed Stage 1 Academic Misconduct Form to the Student Casework Team at academicmisconduct@cranfield.ac.uk, which outlines in full the evidence being submitted to support the allegation. Any investigation at this stage will be documented fully.

If the student(s) has any concerns that the Director of Education or Director of Research is too familiar with the case to undertake the investigation, this should be raised as soon as possible with the Head of School, who will consider whether an alternative investigator should be appointed.

When sending forward the case for investigation, the Student Casework team will inform the investigator whether the student has a Learning Support Agreement in place. Investigators should then make reasonable adjustments where appropriate (in consultation with Learning Support Officer if required), to accommodate these needs (e.g. meet in a ground floor room if student has mobility issues, emails sent during working hours to allow the student the opportunity to access support where required etc.).

After an initial assessment, the Director of Education or Director of Research will decide whether to review the allegation in person, or, more usually, to refer the allegation to the student Casework Team to appoint a trained academic conduct officer (ACO), or an Academic Conduct Panel, made up of at least three Academic Conduct Officers (ACOs). Cases are referred to a Panel if they are particularly complex. Academic Conduct Panels usually take place monthly.

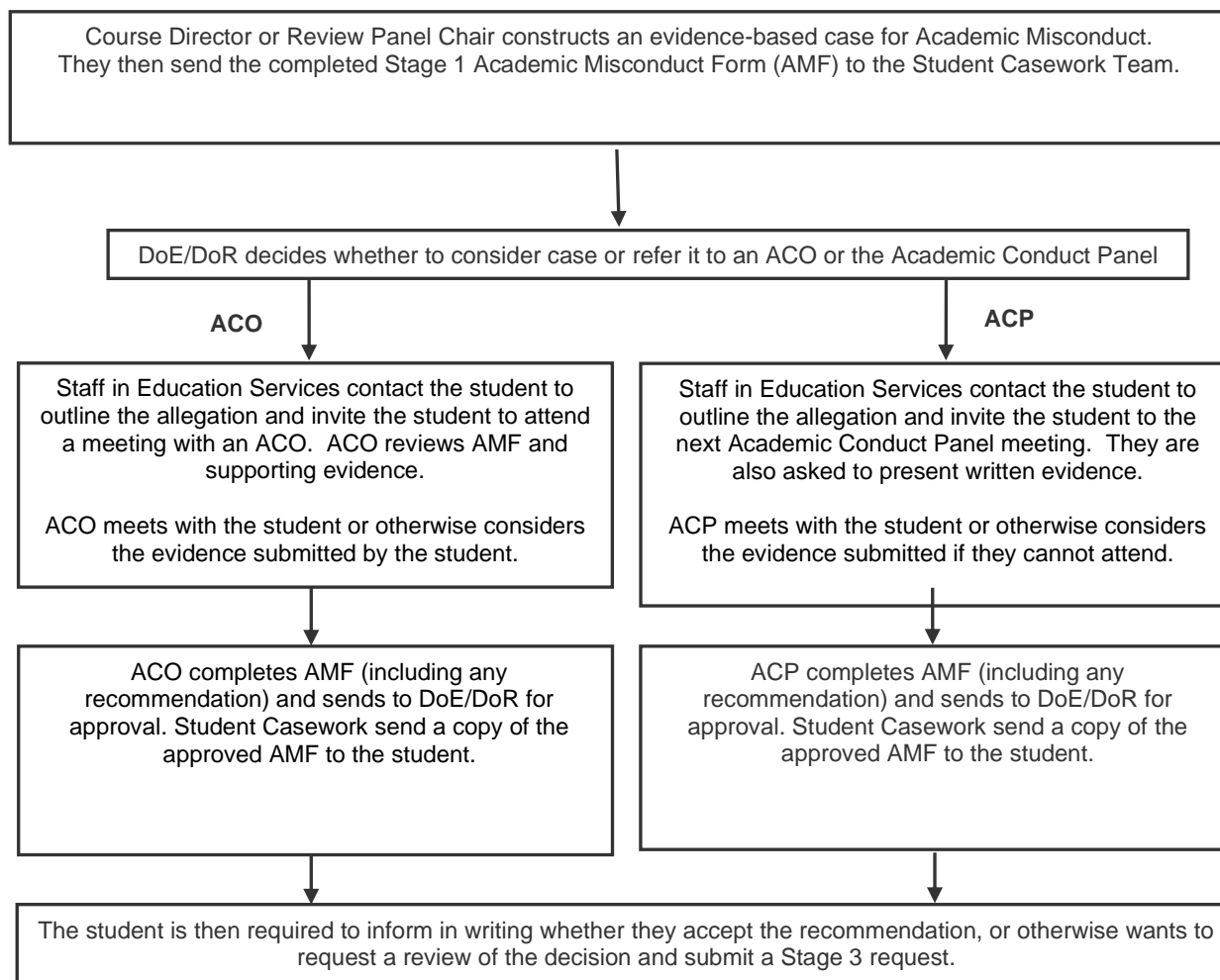
It is highly likely in a formal investigation that the student(s) will be required to have a formal and structured meeting with the ACO or with the Academic Conduct Panel, at which notes are likely to be taken. The student(s) may bring a friend to this meeting and make their own notes. The student(s) may also ask to see the notes made by the ACO or Academic Conduct Panel, to check them for accuracy.

At the meeting, the ACO or Academic Conduct Panel will discuss the allegation with the student(s) before inviting them to make any further comments. This is an opportunity to admit or refute the allegation and to offer any explanations. Please note that the ACO or Academic Conduct Panel cannot take personal mitigating circumstances into account when making recommendations. However, it would be sensible for the student(s) to raise any relevant exceptional circumstances at the meeting so that the ACO or Academic Conduct Panel can ask the examiners to obtain evidence from the student(s) and subsequently take these into consideration when making decisions.

The ACO or the Academic Conduct Panel is entitled to ask for other evidence from the student(s), including access to emails, or documents on personal filestores if they wish to determine the truth in any allegation. They may also meet with other members of the University, or ask for evidence from others and the student(s) will be advised of this additional evidence and activities by them.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the ACO or Academic Conduct Panel will either recommend that the Director of Education or Research dismiss the allegation, or that they uphold it and recommend the penalty to be applied. Where the Director of Education or Research makes a decision to impose a different penalty to that recommended by the ACO/ACP they must provide a rationale for doing so. A written confirmation of this decision, along with a clear explanation of the misconduct and guidance for future avoidance will also be provided to the student(s) at the end of the process, to outline and explain any decisions made.

The student(s) will be asked whether they accept the decision, or whether they wish to request a review of it, on the grounds that they believe it is unfair³. If the student(s) do not respond within twenty working days it will be assumed that they have accepted the outcome (and any resulting penalty) and they will not be entitled to request a review of the decision.



If the student is found guilty of academic misconduct, and accepts the decision of the ACO or Panel, they should discuss the outcome with their Course Director or Supervisor to see how it impacts on the remainder of their studies. For example, they may advise that the student will need to pass the remaining elements of their course, or that the examiners will consider whether the student is allowed to resit the piece of work associated with the academic misconduct.

Appendices A and C provide the range of penalties that the ACO or Panel will apply for taught and research students respectively.

For Taught students, the outcome of any upheld Stage 2 investigation will be passed to the Board of Examiners to be taken into account in consideration of the student's final award.

For Research students, the outcome of any upheld Stage 2 investigation will only be reported to the Examiners in cases outlined in Appendix C

Appendix D outlines what adjustments to the above process will take place if the student is based outside of the UK.

³ Students may only request a review of a decision they believe is unfair, not if they believe the penalty applied is unfair.

10 Stage 3 – Review

The University takes allegations and their investigations extremely seriously, and acts in an appropriate manner to ensure that fairness for all parties is maintained throughout. It will likely assert that decisions arising from an investigation have been the result of a fair and thorough investigation, and are based on evidence provided by the parties concerned.

Students have the right to request a review of any decision arising from a Stage 2 investigation, but only under specific circumstances. These are:

- A. that the decision of the academic conduct officer or Academic Conduct Panel was based on incomplete or inaccurate evidence, to the extent where it is reasonable to conclude that the decision may have been different;
- B. that the academic conduct officer or Academic Conduct Panel were prejudiced or biased against the student, including any undisclosed conflicts of interest.

Students may not request a review because they do not like the outcome, or because they believe the penalty is unfair or disproportionate to the offence. (Students retain, however, the right to complain about the University to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education – see section 11 – External Complaint).

Any request must:

- (a) be submitted in writing within the twenty working day deadline stated in the letter or report confirming the outcome of the Stage 2 investigation;
- (b) state clearly which of the grounds A and/or B above are relevant to the request;
- (c) provide a clear statement of the background for the review request, and evidence to support this statement;
- (d) outline a preferred outcome or solution for any investigator to consider.

Please note that any request may be dismissed summarily by the Academic Registrar if:

- (a) the student has not provided sufficient evidence to support the stated grounds of review; or
- (b) it does not conform to the permitted grounds of review; or
- (c) it is submitted out of time.

They can only do this after consulting the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) or Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research) on the circumstances, and only with their agreement. The Academic Registrar will confirm with you in writing if your request is dismissed.

Whether the review request is accepted or dismissed, this will be confirmed to the student in writing or by email.

If the Stage 2 investigation was conducted by a single academic conduct officer, the review will be considered by an Academic Conduct Panel. If the Stage 2 investigation was conducted by an Academic Conduct Panel, the review will be considered by the Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Education) or Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Research).

If a student has any concerns that any member of the Academic Conduct Panel is too familiar with the case to undertake the investigation, this should be raised as soon as possible with the Head of Registry Services, who will consider whether an alternative investigator should be appointed. If a student remains unsatisfied they should contact the Academic Registrar, through academicmisconduct@cranfield.ac.uk.

The Academic Conduct Panel or the relevant Pro-Vice-Chancellor will review the initial investigation, taking into account any further evidence or commentary. On completion of the Stage 3 review investigation, the student will be provided with a report, including a decision and the reasons for it. The Academic Conduct Panel or the Pro-Vice-Chancellor may decide:

- (a) to dismiss the review; or
- (b) to fully or partially uphold the review and recommend an alternative decision and penalty.

The decision of the University at that point would be considered final.

11 External complaint

At the completion of Stage 3, the University will consider any decision it has made to be final and complete, with no further right of appeal. This is equally true if any request for a review that a student has made is dismissed summarily, or if the student has no grounds for review.

If a student, however, remains dissatisfied with the outcome or with how the University has managed the allegation and its subsequent investigations, they have the right to submit a complaint against the University to the external regulator for the UK higher education sector, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA).

More information about the OIA can be found at www.oiahe.org.uk

In order for the student to use the OIA, the University must agree that they have exhausted the internal procedures. This is managed by the Academic Registrar issuing a “completion of procedures letter” to the student.

A student may also request from the Academic Registrar a “completion of procedures letter” at any point in the process if they do not believe the University is capable of following its own procedures fairly, and they do not wish to engage further with the University on this matter.

Please note that the OIA will not consider any complaint from a student unless a “completion of procedures letter” has been provided.

Any complaint to the OIA must be registered within twelve months of the University issuing a “completion of procedures letter”.

Appendix A: Penalties applied following an upheld allegation of academic misconduct - Taught students

The following penalties are appropriate for taught course students.

If a student is sponsored by the Defence Academy (Ministry of Defence, UK), the University will share personal data, academic progress data, and data relating to any instances of misconduct with the Defence Academy. This may result in independent action taken by them towards the student.

The below categories of academic misconduct give penalties for first and subsequent offences; this refers to first and second offences of academic misconduct. Unless otherwise stated below a student will be considered to have committed a second offence of academic misconduct having previously been found guilty of a first offence, regardless of the categories of either offence, and shall be penalised accordingly.

The person(s) responsible for recommending a penalty to a board of examiners may use their academic judgement in selecting the most appropriate penalty within the bounds of those specified below. If an offence of academic misconduct is confirmed the student must receive one of the penalties given below.

A Board of Examiners may disregard a penalty recommended to them where the penalty will benefit a student (i.e. where a student fails a piece of work, but the recommended penalty is a revise and represent capped at 50%, the original fail would still stand).

Where the penalty given to a student is an opportunity to re-sit or to revise and represent an assessment (in whole or in part) they may only do so providing the assessment in question is their first attempt (or considered as their first attempt). Students cannot due to academic misconduct re-sit or revise and resubmit an assessment they have previously failed at the first attempt. In such instances (where the offence was deemed severe enough to warrant more than a warning) students should be given zero for that assessment. Students who are required to re-sit or revise and represent an assessment will be considered to have failed to meet the minimum mark (and failed to achieve the associated learning credits) at their first attempt.

For modules with more than one independent taught assessment the offences and penalties relate to the assignment/examination/group project in question, not the module as a whole. Where academic misconduct takes place in an element of a multipart assessment the penalty will be applied to that element. The categories of modules with more than one taught assessment, and the implications of failures in each case can be found in the Senate Handbook: Assessment Rules. Academic Conduct Officers/Panels should ensure they are aware of these implications if a suspected assignment is part of such a module.

Plagiarism (not acknowledging sources, improper or incomplete referencing and self plagiarism/duplication)

and/or

Collusion⁴

The table overleaf indicates the categories and available penalties for plagiarism and collusion. The proportion of the assessed work which has been affected by plagiarism and/or collusion categorises

⁴ The percentages in column 2 of the table refer to the percentage of the submitted work rather than relating to the Overall Similarity Index. The percentage of the submitted work considered affected may change as a result of the investigation into an allegation of academic misconduct.

the appropriate penalty, not the Overall Similarity Index score. The percentage of the submitted work considered affected will be decided by the investigators as a result of the investigation into an allegation of academic misconduct, with a corresponding penalty applied.

When applying penalties for plagiarism and collusion ACOs, ACPs or PVCs may, at their discretion, afford students who have previously been found guilty of a first offence of high or medium level plagiarism or collusion a further first offence if they are subsequently found guilty of low level plagiarism.

LOW LEVEL	<10% of examination/assignment affected	<p>In the case of a first offence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) verbal or written warning or b) a mark of zero, with examination/assignment re-sit opportunity, capped at 50% or c) a mark of zero, with revise and represent opportunity, capped at 50% <p>For a second or further offence:⁵</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a mark of zero, with examination/assignment re-sit opportunity, capped at 50% or 2. a mark of zero, with revise and represent opportunity, capped at 50%
MEDIUM LEVEL	10-33% of examination/assignment affected	<p>In the case of a first offence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a mark of zero, with examination/assignment re-sit opportunity, capped at 50% or b) a mark of zero, with revise and represent opportunity, capped at 50% <p>For a second or further offence:³</p> <p>a mark of zero, with no automatic entitlement to a re-sit opportunity (i.e., the board of examiners will consider the student's overall mark portfolio before a re-sit opportunity is permitted, and will have the right to fail the student outright for their award)</p>
HIGH LEVEL	>33% of examination/assignment affected	<p>In the case of a first offence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a mark of zero, with no automatic entitlement to a re-sit opportunity (i.e., the board of examiners will consider the student's overall mark portfolio before a re-sit opportunity is permitted, and will have the right to fail the student outright for their award) <p>For a second or further offence:³</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) a recommendation of termination of registration on the grounds of lack of due diligence in their studies

Please note that plagiarism and collusion may also be interpreted by an academic conduct officer or panel as one of the other forms of academic misconduct listed below. In such cases, the alternative penalty may be applied (see below).

⁵ The timing of any second offence should be taken into consideration: if the identification of the first offence was confirmed to the student after the occurrence of the second offence, this may result in a "first offence" penalty being applied for a second time.

Intending to deceive the examiners

and/or

Cheating under test conditions

In the case of a first offence:

- a) verbal or written warning **or**
- b) a mark of zero, with examination/assignment re-sit opportunity, capped at 50% **or**
- c) a mark of zero, with revise and represent opportunity, capped at 50%

For a second or further offence:³

- a) a mark of zero, with no automatic entitlement to a re-sit opportunity (i.e., the board of examiners will consider the student's overall mark portfolio before a re-sit opportunity is permitted, and will have the right to fail the student outright)

Falsification/Fabrication of experimental or other investigative results

and/or

Using another person to produce or complete an assessment

and/or

Theft of another student's work

In the case of a first offence:

- a) a mark of zero, with no automatic entitlement to a re-sit opportunity (i.e., the board of examiners will consider the student's overall mark portfolio before a re-sit opportunity is permitted, and will have the right to fail the student outright)

For a second or further offence:³

- a) a recommendation of termination of registration on the grounds of lack of due diligence in their studies

Appendix B: Poor Academic Practice

Poor academic practice differs from the more serious category of Academic Misconduct in that the student is deemed to have misunderstood academic practice rather than having acted deliberately to commit misconduct, which has led them to commit a minor academic offence.

Examples of Poor Academic Practice are where the student demonstrates a lack of understanding of academic practice and where the offence is unintentional, such as:

- Material or copied text expressing ideas or concepts taken from the work of others, in the student's own words but without appropriate citation.
- Material or copied text which is referenced in the bibliography but is not properly cited.
- Mild collusion between students as evidenced by structure, source or use of the same original texts; this includes cases where the written work is original throughout.
- Plagiarism caused by poor referencing.

Students may only receive one poor academic practice warning for the same offence (except in cases where a student submits a second piece of work prior to the notification of poor academic practice in an earlier piece of work).

During the course of a Stage 1 informal investigation, a Course Director or Supervisor may determine that any alleged offence constitutes poor academic practice, providing it falls within the criteria given above. If this is the case, the Course Director or Supervisor will discuss the matter with the student and complete the form available on the intranet, to be forwarded to the correct SAS Lead.

In all cases of poor academic practice, a student will receive a written warning that is held on their student record. Students will be made aware that any further instances of poor academic practice will be deemed to amount to academic misconduct and penalised as per the penalties listed in the Academic Misconduct Handbook. Students will also be given feedback on how to avoid poor academic practice in future work, and be required to complete an on-line learning module.

In addition to the written warning students may be asked to resubmit the piece of work with any relevant corrections. The original mark will remain, and it would not be classed as a further assessment attempt.

To ensure the process operates effectively and consistently, Education Services will track cases of poor academic practice as reported by academics centrally so that course teams/investigators have the information they need to manage each case and to be aware of any previous warnings.

Appendix C: Penalties applied following an upheld allegation of academic misconduct - Research students

The below table details the penalties that may be applied following an upheld allegation of academic misconduct against a research student at any stage if their research, and are applicable for any work produced.

If a student is sponsored by a partner organisation or outside funding body, the University may be required share personal data, academic progress data, and data relating to any instances of misconduct with the partner. This may result in independent action taken by them towards the student.

The person(s) responsible for recommending a penalty may use their academic judgement in selecting the most appropriate penalty within the bounds of those specified below. If an offence of academic misconduct is confirmed the student must receive one of the penalties given below. More than one penalty may be applied.

A recommended penalty may be disregarded where the penalty will benefit a student (i.e. where a student fails their award, but the recommended penalty is a revise and represent opportunity, the original fail would still stand).

Where the penalty given to a student is an opportunity to re-sit or to revise and resubmit they may only do so providing they have not already been granted a revise and represent opportunity for that piece of work (for any reason).

The below table details where a penalty is:



recommended



potentially appropriate



potentially appropriate in exceptional circumstances



not appropriate

Misconduct	Penalty	Poor Academic Practice warning: Deputy Director of Research	Ethics / Academic Misconduct Training	Revise and resubmit for further examination within a specified period. (Including or excluding the problematic sections)	Formal warning letter from the Pro-Vice Chancellor: Research	Transfer Registration to a lower award	Examiners instructed to consider only the non-problematic sections of the final submission. May grant the degree for which the thesis has been submitted	Examiners instructed to consider only the non-problematic sections of the final submission. May grant a lower award only.	Termination of registration	Rescind Award
Self-plagiarism/ duplication (minor, 1 st offence)										
Plagiarism: improper or incomplete referencing (minor, 1 st offence)										
Plagiarism: not acknowledging your sources (minor, 1 st offence)										
Failure to apply for Ethical approval										
Plagiarism (2 nd offence or major)										
Using another person to produce the work/defend the thesis at viva										
Falsification/Fabrication of experimental or other investigative results										
Theft of another student's work										
Undertaking unethical research										
Academic Misconduct detected following a Revise and Represent outcome.										
Academic Misconduct detected post-award										

Appendix D: Arrangements for students based outside of the UK

The University has a number of academic partnerships that result in students being based outside the UK. This appendix sets out the process for considering cases of academic misconduct in these circumstances.

Course Directors or Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that academic partnership students are provided with equivalent levels of support and information on the University's regulations on academic misconduct as those based on the University's campuses.

The Course Director or Supervisor will inform Education Services of potential cases of academic misconduct who will refer the case to the Director of Education or Director of Research. They will initially consider cases of academic misconduct and decide if the case should be referred to an academic conduct officer or Academic Conduct Panel (ACP) or if they can deal with the case themselves. Where the Director of Education or Director of Research feels that the case should be referred to an ACP, the student should be informed of this in writing. For cases that the DoE or DoR decides can be dealt with by a single academic conduct officer (ACO), the ACO will aim to meet with the student in person; however this will not always be logistically possible. In such instances the ACO will organise to speak to the student via telephone or online, or alternatively they will ask the student to submit a written response to the allegation and will ensure that the student has access to this Handbook and to appropriate support services. If the student is unable to discuss the allegation with the ACO it is important that a written response is submitted, as this will be the only opportunity to put forward the student's side of the case.

Once the ACO has considered the case they will inform the student (in writing) of the recommendation. The student will be required to confirm whether they accept or contests the ACO's recommendation. Failure to return the form by the stated deadline (twenty working days) will be interpreted by the University as acceptance of the recommendation.

If the Director of Education or Director of Research refers the case to the ACP in the first instance, or if the student contests the ACO's recommendation, The Academic Registrar (or a member of their staff) will contact the student to make arrangements for the panel meeting. The meeting will take place via telephone or online and the student will be accompanied by at least one senior representative from the partner institution. The role of staff from partner institutions is to act as an observer, to offer technical support with web facilities, and to provide input to the meeting if the student wishes them to (in the same way that a student based on campus might ask a module leader or Course Director to attend a meeting with them). In accordance with the University's procedures, a single person chosen by the student may also accompany the student to the panel meeting, in the role of a 'friend' as described above in section 7.3, provided that the Academic Registrar is notified in advance.

The student's availability and differences in time zones will be taken into account when organising panel meetings, however it may be necessary for the panel to request that a written response be submitted if it is not possible to agree a mutual date. The Academic Registrar will be responsible for informing the student and the academic partner of the recommendation that the panel will make to the Board of Examiners. The Academic Registrar will also provide the student with the external appeals procedure of the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

Owner	Academic Registrar
Department	Education Services
Implementation date	September 2021
Approval by and date	Academic Registrar, September 2021
Version number and date of last review	Version 2.7; September 2021
Next review by	July 2023