

# Assessment Misconduct Procedure

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1. Purpose and context

**1.1.1.** This document, formerly known as the Code of Practice for Plagiarism and Examination Offences, sets out the procedure for investigating and resolving suspected cases of assessment misconduct, including inappropriate use of generative artificial intelligence (generative AI).

**1.1.2.** For other student misconduct, the Student Disciplinary Procedure should instead be followed.

### 1.2. Scope

This procedure applies to all students registered on any of the ICR's taught courses and research degrees.

### 1.3. Roles and responsibilities

**1.3.1.** Where suspicions of assessment misconduct occur, these will usually be identified by examiners.

**1.3.2.** Such allegations will then be considered by the appropriate Deputy Dean or Course Director.

**1.3.3.** Sustained allegations will be escalated to the Academic Registrar, who may either take action (where the case is clear-cut) or may escalate the case further to the Academic Dean and/or a Hearing Committee.

**1.3.4.** The administration of formal investigations will be supported by a Case Handler, who will be a member of staff appointed by the Academic Registrar.

**1.3.5.** Alternative members of staff may be nominated by the Academic Registrar (or, in their absence, the Chief Research & Academic Officer) to take on any of the roles detailed in this procedure. This action

will typically be taken if those named have had any previous involvement in the matter, or could reasonably be perceived by the student to be biased, or are unavailable at the time of the investigation.

**1.3.6.** Consideration of the individuals who will undertake roles at each stage should be considered at the start of the process, to ensure appropriate members of staff will be available to cover later stages.

## 1.4. Definitions and glossary

**1.4.1.** Assessment misconduct is any action or attempted action that may result in a student obtaining an unfair academic advantage in relation to an assessment. This includes but is not limited to plagiarism, unauthorised collaboration and the possession of unauthorised materials during an assessment.

**1.4.2.** The following are examples of assessment misconduct, although this list is not exhaustive. In all cases, references to another person shall be deemed to include a digital tool such as generative AI unless the context clearly indicates otherwise.

- Plagiarism: direct copying of another person's work without proper acknowledgement; or claiming another person's ideas as the student's own.
- Conspiring to have work completed by another person.
- Helping another person to cheat, by offering work for them to use as their own.
- Colluding with others such that assessed work is the result of more than one person's work without properly acknowledging the contribution of others.
- Not disclosing third-party contributions to assessed work.
- Research misconduct in relation to original research-based assessment (taught course dissertation, research degree thesis): including plagiarism, fabrication of data, falsifying the results of laboratory, field work or other forms of data collection and analysis. See paragraph 3.4.
- Making false statements or presenting false evidence, in support of an application for extenuating circumstances, obtaining an assessment extension or in explanation of any form of absence or default.
- Impersonation of another during an examination or other assessment related event.
- Failure to observe the regulations or instructions for an examination.
- Conduct affecting the security of an examination, including breach of confidentiality e.g. prior disclosure of questions for an unseen examination.
- Possessing and/or using prohibited materials in an examination room.
- Conferring with others in an examination room.
- Leaving an examination room without permission or supervision and returning to the examination room.
- Removing a script or other examination stationery from an examination room.

## 2. General principles

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**2.1.** The ICR aims to process any case of suspected academic conduct within 90 calendar days from the date of the initial letter confirming the allegation to the student. There will occasionally be circumstances when, for good reasons, the ICR will need to extend the timeframe for this process, or part of the process, and in these circumstances the parties involved will be notified and kept updated as to the progress of the case.

**2.2.** At the earliest opportunity, students should be made aware of the sources of support available. These can be found in the relevant Student Handbooks, available on the intranet (for research degree students) or the virtual learning environment (for taught courses students).

**2.3.** All parties are expected to act reasonably and fairly towards each other, and to treat the processes themselves with respect. This applies in relation to all correspondence and when attending formal

hearings. Not adhering to this requirement may make the current allegation of misconduct more serious or it could be the subject of an additional allegation of misconduct.

**2.4.** Reasonable adjustments will be made to this procedure to enable students with disabilities to engage with equal opportunity.

**2.5.** Appropriate and proportionate written records will be kept by the Case Handler throughout the process and stored confidentially in accordance with the ICR's policies on record retention and data protection legislation.

**2.6.** During any investigation under this procedure, no person will be told any more about the allegation than is strictly necessary to obtain the information required and to enable the administration and decision-making process to take place.

**2.7.** The burden of proof rests with the ICR. It is the ICR's responsibility to prove that assessment misconduct occurred; it is not the student's responsibility to prove that it did not occur.

**2.8.** The standard of proof used to consider whether or not alleged misconduct is found to have been proven will be the civil standard, i.e. on the balance of probabilities.

**2.9.** In the case of the MSc in Oncology course, at the Course Director's discretion, details of upheld assessment misconduct allegations will be reported to the student's NHS Trust or other healthcare employer.

**2.10.** An allegation of misconduct may be investigated on one or more subsequent occasions if new evidence emerges that, for good reason, could not have been obtained at the time. However, consideration will be given to: the outcome that was initially obtained; the length of time that has elapsed and the impact of this on the investigation; the severity of the offence; the impact on the student; and whether the allegation, if found, would impact the student's fitness to practice.

**2.11.** There are circumstances where this procedure may be used to take action against a former student. Examples include an investigation that has already begun and where closing the case without conclusion would be inappropriate (such as because of the seriousness of the allegation), or where the ICR only becomes aware of an alleged offence once a student has left and to take no action would be disproportionate and/or harm the ICR's reputation.

**2.12.** This procedure is part of a wider framework that gives clear information to students about their expected standards of behaviour. Please read the Student Charter and the relevant student handbooks for more information, which can be found on the ICR website, intranet, and virtual learning environment.

## 3. Preliminary investigation

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**3.1.** At any time, Registry may be asked to pass assessed work through TurnItIn to check for simple provable copying of existing text. In some cases this may be routinely carried out for a particular assessment.

**3.2.** Use of generative AI detection tools will not be used at this stage, to avoid false positives.

**3.3.** Cases of suspected assessment misconduct should be reported in the first instance to the relevant Deputy Dean for research degrees or Course Director for taught courses.

**3.4.** In cases where research misconduct is suspected, the allegation should immediately be referred by the Deputy Dean or Course Director to the Named Person under the ICR's Procedure For Investigating Misconduct In Research, including the involvement if appropriate of the student's employer. These allegations are handled under that procedure, and for clinical research students that of the student's employing hospital if appropriate, from this point until the Investigation Panel produces its final report, whereupon Section 7 of this procedure should be followed.

**3.5.** Where plagiarism is detected or suspected, the Deputy Dean or Course Director will usually meet with the student and/or hold a viva to determine whether they consider that plagiarism may have taken place, rather than, for example, poor academic practice.

**3.6.** Where the Deputy Dean or Course Director continues to believe that plagiarism may have taken place, the process will then move forward to the initial investigation stage.

**3.7.** Even if no further action is taken, the student will be informed that concerns have been raised about their work.

## 4. Initial review

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- 4.1.** In cases other than those where research misconduct is suspected, the Deputy Dean or Course Director will request that the Academic Registrar conduct an investigation as they deem necessary in order to establish if there is a case to be answered.
- 4.2.** In making this case, the Deputy Dean or Course Director should include evidence to support their allegation. This may include indications of abrupt changes of writing style, mismatch with previous work, and/or fabricated references or citations.
- 4.3.** Authorship verification tools (e.g. GPTZero) may be used by the Academic Registrar at this stage for all or some of the assessed material. In the use of such tools, any personally identifiable information (such as student identifiers or patient data) will be removed.
- 4.4.** The student will be told in writing at the beginning of the process which offence(s) they are suspected of committing and why. The student will also be given any available supporting evidence and a copy of this procedure.
- 4.5.** The student will be given an initial opportunity to respond to the allegation(s) made against them. This may involve a meeting with the Academic Registrar to discuss the allegation.
- 4.6.** The Academic Registrar will decide whether the case should be accepted or dismissed and whether it can be resolved at that stage or requires formal investigation.
- 4.7.** If the case can be resolved at this stage, the Academic Registrar, with a member of academic staff, will decide on appropriate action. If the student admits a minor offence, they will agree a proportionate penalty as per the guidance in Annex 2.
- 4.8.** If the Academic Registrar deems that a full investigation is necessary, they will inform the Academic Dean, presenting the case with all the evidence received, and will nominate a member of staff to act as Case Handler.
- 4.9.** The student will be provided with a written outcome setting out the decision reached and/or explaining what will happen next. If the student is unsatisfied with the decision reached or penalty set at this stage, they may request a full investigation. A copy will be kept on the student's file.

## 5. Full investigation

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- 5.1.** The Academic Dean will contact the student in writing confirming the particulars of the allegation as well as the purpose and scope of the investigation and the possible outcomes. They may request a meeting with the student and may talk to staff or other students and consider documents and other evidence. The student will be provided with the contact details of the Case Handler who they can contact with any queries about the progress of the case.
- 5.2.** If the student does not respond within one month the case will be dealt with in their absence by the Academic Dean.
- 5.3.** The Academic Dean will produce a report based on their investigations which outlines the process followed, the information gathered, and their conclusions.
- 5.4.** The Academic Dean may make a decision including if necessary the appropriate penalty (as per the guidance in Section 10) or may refer their report to a Hearing Committee for a decision to be agreed.
- 5.5.** The student will receive written confirmation of the outcome setting out the decision reached, penalty set and/or explaining what will happen next. This will include copies of the information obtained during the investigation, a copy of the investigation report and information about the next steps in the process. The copy will be kept on the student's file.
- 5.6.** If the Academic Dean has reached a decision at this stage and the student is unsatisfied with the decision reached or penalty set, they may request a Review of the decision as per Section 8.

## **6. Establishment of a Hearing Committee in respect of all assessment misconduct offences except those where research misconduct is suspected and has not yet been investigated**

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**6.1.** The Hearing Committee will be established by the Academic Dean. The Committee will consist of three members of Senior Faculty and a student representative as nominated by the student president where possible. The Committee members should not have any direct links with the student. One Committee member will be nominated as the Chair, who will have a second, casting vote, in the event of an equal split. The Case Handler will act as the Committee Secretary. The secretary shall be responsible for providing advice to the committee and keeping the minutes of the proceedings but shall not otherwise participate in the making of decisions by the committee.

**6.2.** All meetings must be minuted and a report produced at the end which should provide sufficient detail in case of an appeal. This should be an impartial record and should be jointly approved by the Hearing Committee and the student.

**6.3.** Notice of the date, time and venue of the Hearing Committee should be provided at least 10 days before the meeting, along with details of the allegation being investigated, any evidence obtained in relation to the allegation and any written statement provided by the student.

**6.4.** The student may be accompanied to the hearing by an ICR colleague or student representative. In such cases the student must inform the Committee Secretary no fewer than 7 days before the Hearing Committee date, providing the name and contact details of the accompanying individual.

**6.5.** If the student fails to attend the Hearing Committee meeting and the steps above have been followed the meeting will go ahead in their absence.

**6.6.** The allegation being investigated will be presented at the start of the meeting by the Academic Registrar. The student will then have an opportunity to respond. Either side may call witnesses but this must be agreed in advance of the meeting. A witness who is a student may be accompanied by an ICR colleague or student representative while giving evidence.

**6.7.** Once the Committee is satisfied that sufficient evidence has been presented and the student has been given fair and reasonable opportunity to respond, the Committee shall consider its decision in private both as to whether the allegation has been proven and, if proven, the penalty or penalties to be imposed. The student will not be permitted to attend this part of the meeting.

**6.8.** If at any point during the Hearing Committee meeting the student admits to the offence the hearing will be stopped. The student will have 3 working days to submit a statement in mitigation or explanation. The Hearing Committee will then make a decision on the action to be taken.

**6.9.** If the Hearing Committee agrees that the allegation has been proven, example penalties are outlined in Section 10.

**6.10.** In exceptional circumstances where it is considered that the offence was a genuine mistake, such that any reasonable person might have made in the circumstances, no action will be taken; the student will receive a written warning and will be reminded of the importance of the examination regulations. The letter will be kept on the student file.

**6.11.** If the Hearing Committee rejects the allegation in its entirety, no record will be stored on the student's file. A formal letter to this effect will be sent to the student and held separately by the Academic Registrar.

**6.12.** The findings of the Hearing Committee should be sent to the student in writing within 5 working days of the Hearing Committee date. The Academic Dean will also be informed of the outcome.

## 7. Establishment of a Hearing Committee in respect of an assessment offence where research misconduct has been investigated

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**7.1.** When an Investigation Panel has been convened under the ICR's Procedure For Investigating Misconduct In Research, in relation to an allegation in respect of an original research-based dissertation, its final report under shall be referred to a Hearing Committee if it concludes that an allegation of research misconduct has been upheld in whole or in part. The Investigation Panel may also refer the relevant aspects of the case to the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

**7.2.** Where the Named Person, Screening Panel or Investigation Panel upholds no part of an allegation, this will be recorded by the Academic Registrar and no further action will be taken. No records will be stored on the student's file. A formal letter to this effect will be sent to the student and held separate to the student file by the Academic Registrar.

**7.3.** Where the Investigation Panel has concluded that an allegation has been upheld in whole or in part, then the assessment misconduct process should be initiated from Section 6 of this Code noting that:

**7.3.1.** The Hearing Committee does not have the power to question or overturn the Investigation Panel's final report. Its sole function is to determine the penalty.

**7.3.2.** The Investigation Panel's final report will be presented to the Hearing Committee by the Academic Registrar or named alternative.

**7.3.3.** The penalties available to the Committee are those relevant to research degrees and research based dissertations.

**7.3.4.** The right of appeal remains the same as outlined under Section 8 of this Code.

## 8. Further review and final redress

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**8.1.** Where the student wishes to appeal the findings of the decision of the Academic Dean or Hearing Committee, they may submit a Review Form within 14 calendar days of receipt of written notification of the outcome of the formal complaint procedure to request that the decision is referred to the Final Review Procedure for Non-Academic Decisions and Academic Appeals. The student should explain why they feel dissatisfied with the outcome and what remedy they seek.

**8.2.** If the student does not wish to appeal the findings, they may request a Completion of Procedures letter. The letter must explain that the student has not completed the ICR's internal processes. (See OIA guidance on issuing Completion of Procedures letters.)

**8.3.** If the conclusion of the Review Procedure is to refer the case back to the Hearing Committee for reconsideration, this should be concluded as soon as possible and, where possible, within the original timeframe of 90 calendar days.

**8.4.** The decision of the Hearing Committee upon reconsideration of the case will be final and a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued, which will include:

**8.4.1.** the date of the end of the ICR's internal complaints procedure; a summary of the issues considered under the complaints procedure;

**8.4.2.** advice on the right of the Complainant to submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), within 12 months of the date on the letter.

**8.5.** The OIA provides an independent scheme for the review of student complaints about a final decision of a higher education institution's disciplinary or appeal bodies. Full details of the OIA scheme are available from the Registry or on the OIA website: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/how-to-complain-to-us/>.



## 9. Mechanisms for implementation

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This document will be made available on Nexus, Canvas and the ICR's external website. Students will be referred to it by Registry staff or members of academic staff as needed.

## 10. Appendix: Penalties

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Sanctions range from warnings to exclusion. Factors include:

- Intent
- Extent of misconduct
- Past history

For very minor offences outside of examinations, it may be appropriate to issue a written or verbal warning rather than the penalties outlined below. The Academic Dean (or Academic Registrar at initial investigation) will decide whether the warning is recorded on the student file or not.

Misconduct involving the use of generative AI will be judged by the same principles as other types of misconduct. Relevant factors include whether the tool was used without disclosure, whether it replaced a core academic task (e.g. writing, analysis), and whether its use appears intentional or negligent. The severity of penalty will depend on the extent to which the work submitted does not reflect the student's own thinking, judgment, or authorship.

**Table 1: Example research degree penalties**

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Example circumstance	Penalty
Where there is evidence of minimal or moderate: plagiarism, collusion, or inappropriate use of generative AI (e.g. use of AI to summarise background content without disclosure, or light editing of AI-generated text).	The candidate will be required to re-write the section(s) affected, including properly acknowledging all sources, within a specified time period.
Where there is evidence of substantial: plagiarism, collusion, or AI authorship (e.g. AI-generated thesis sections or analysis, submitted verbatim and presented as the student's own work).	No re-write of other sections of the thesis will be allowed other than minor (or other examiner required) corrections.  A candidate will be excluded from the ICR and from any future examinations/assessments and awards at the ICR.

**Table 2: Example taught course penalties**

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Example circumstance	Penalty
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Typically applied in first cases of examination malpractice, where most of an assignment is the student's own work, but there is some unattributed use of another person's work, or there is undisclosed use of AI tools for writing support, paraphrasing or translation.

Typically applied in cases where:

1. there is substantial plagiarism, collusion, or AI use, replacing student authorship in more than half the work; or
2. there is less significant unpermitted plagiarism, collusion or AI use but the student has previously committed an assessment misconduct offence.

Typically applied in cases where:

1. the student has engaged another person or generative AI tool to complete the majority of the assignment, with minimal input from the student; or
2. the student has committed repeated serious assessment misconduct offences.

The student receives a zero mark for the work submitted but retains the right to resubmit the work with a mark limited to a bare pass.

Further education about appropriate ways to cite and use sources, and/or AI use, will be provided.

The student receives a mark of zero for the module in which the offence occurs but retains the right to resubmit all elements with the overall module mark limited to a bare pass.

Further education about appropriate ways to cite and use sources will be provided.

The student's registration is terminated, and they are prohibited from registering on other ICR degree programmes.

Where the student has accumulated credits prior to the offence, they may still receive an award in respect of these, unless it is found that the relevant assessment was also subject to malpractice.

## 11. Related documents

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- [Guidance on plagiarism and the use of generative AI](#)
- [Student Disciplinary Procedure](#)
- [Final Review Procedure for Non-Academic Decisions and Academic Appeals](#)
- [Student Charter](#)
- [Procedure For Investigating Misconduct In Research](#)