

## Procedures for Assessment Offences and Research Misconduct

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 These procedures should be read alongside section AST10 of the Academic Regulations.
- 1.2 These procedures apply to everyone enrolled on a University of Plymouth award at undergraduate or postgraduate level (including those attending *ad hoc* or CPD courses whether or not these attract credit and recognised professional CPD hours). This includes students enrolled on University of Plymouth awards in partner institutions (detailed arrangements are normally specified as part of the partnership agreement).
- 1.3 The University reserves the right to apply these procedures in cases where an examination or academic offence, or Research Misconduct, is identified after a student has left the University (i.e. to individuals who are not currently enrolled). This may lead to a decision by the University to revoke the award made to the former student.
- 1.4 Depending on the nature of the offence, cases will be reviewed under the Academic Offences procedures, the Examination Offences procedures or the Student Research Misconduct procedures. Where there is doubt as to which procedure is appropriate, advice should be sought from the Academic Registry.
- 1.5 A student cannot have credit awarded for the module/CPD activity in question, or the relevant PGR outcome confirmed, until any allegation relating to an examination or academic offence or research misconduct is resolved.
- 1.6 Students and former students must note that conduct of a nature which would be inappropriate in some professions could require additional disciplinary action. Students whose programme leads to professional registration may be referred to the University's Fitness to Practise Panels and/or other appropriate professional bodies, and may be required to declare any assessment or research misconduct offence to the professional body upon registration.
- 1.7 Students who are alleged to have committed an examination or academic offence, or research misconduct, are strongly recommended to seek independent advice and support from the Student Union Advice Centre who can be contacted at [advice@SU.plymouth.ac.uk](mailto:advice@SU.plymouth.ac.uk). Students at partner institutions can seek help locally

from their Students Unions where such provision is available. If no provision is available locally, students at partner institutions can seek help and advice from University of Plymouth Students' Union.

- 1.8 Any dispute as to the interpretation of these procedures shall be referred to the Academic Registrar, whose decision in the matter shall be final.
- 1.9 Partner institutions based overseas should note that, while the principles set out in these procedures will be adhered to at all times, there may be some operational differences in the implementation of these procedures at partner institutions due to logistical constraints.

## **2. Assessment Offences Panels**

- 2.1 The University reserves the right to refer any case direct to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience or nominee to decide whether immediate suspension or referral to the Study and Wellbeing Review policy and procedure is required. The decision on whether to refer the case to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience or nominee will take into account matters including, but not limited to, the severity of the alleged offence or any potential risk to the student's health or welfare.
- 2.2 Each Faculty and Academic Partnerships will establish an Assessment Offences Panel.
- 2.3 The composition of the Assessment Offences Panel will be as follows:
  - Chair or Vice-Chair (normally a senior member of academic staff. For Partner Institution cases, the Chair should be a Partnership Manager or the Head of UK Partnerships).
  - Two academic members (normally drawn from a pool of 12 academic staff, nominated by the Dean of Faculty).
    - For postgraduate research student cases, the academic members of the Panel should have experience of postgraduate research supervision and examination. The Doctoral College may nominate these members.
    - For UK Partner Institution cases, the academic members of the Panel should normally be drawn from a Partner Institution(s) other than the Institution in which the student under investigation is studying). If a member of a Partner Institution is not available, the academic members of the Panel should be drawn from Academic Partnerships).
  - Faculty Registrar / a member of Academic Registry / Partnership Operations Manager or nominee (in attendance in an advisory capacity and to take notes, without voting rights).

The Panel will be considered quorate provided that one academic staff member is present, in addition to the Panel Chair and Faculty Registrar / a member of Academic Registry / Partnership Operations Manager or nominee.

All members of the Panel will have equal voting rights. A decision will be taken based on the majority vote wherever possible. When required, the Chair shall have the deciding vote.

Where necessary, the Chair of an Assessment Offences Panel may invite a subject specialist to advise the Panel. The nature of the discipline may mean that it is unavoidable that the adviser is from the same School as the student, but the adviser should not have taught the student. The adviser must not take part in the Panel's decision making.

- 2.4 A Panel member may not consider the case of a student from their own School, discipline area, or Partner Institution, or a student they know. Any conflict of interests should be declared to the Academic Registry.

### **3. Examination Offences**

- 3.1 Where a student is suspected of having committed an offence in a formal University examination, the invigilator will complete an Examination Offences Report Form.
- 3.2 Where a student is suspected of having committed an offence in an in-class test the invigilators will complete an Examination Offences Report Form, copying it to the Examinations Office and Faculty Office and, if appropriate, the Academic Partnerships Office, within 5 working days of the date of the test.
- 3.3 The alleged offence will be investigated by the Examinations Office in liaison with academic staff within the school. If the student is undertaking a taught module whilst enrolled on a research degree, the Doctoral College will be informed of the investigation.
- 3.4 If the Examinations Office completes its investigation and concludes that there is no evidence of an offence being committed, then all records of the allegation will be removed from the student's permanent record at the University and, if appropriate, the partner institution, and the student will be informed of this in writing.
- 3.5 If the Examinations Office completes its investigation and concludes that there is evidence of an offence having been committed, the Examinations Office will pass its findings and all supporting evidence to the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager.
- 3.6 The Examinations Office, in liaison with the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager, will establish if there have been any other substantiated academic or examination offences, or if any other work submitted by the student is currently under investigation. This information will not be disclosed to the Examinations Offences Panel until the student has been deemed to have committed an offence and the Panel is considering the penalty to be applied.
- 3.7 If the student accepts the allegation, all relevant documentation (including information about any other substantiated examination/academic offences) will be circulated by the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager to the members of the Panel

to determine the outcome. The case will not normally be considered at a formal meeting of the Panel. The Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager will be responsible for notifying the student (and the Doctoral College/partner institution, if appropriate) of the Panel's decision.

3.8 Where a student confirms in writing their intention to contest the allegation, the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager will write to the student, using their University email, to confirm:

- The time and the date of the Panel meeting, and confirmation that the student has already been sent all of the evidence to be considered by the Panel (as part of the letter described in 3.5 above). The meeting will normally take place on the main University of Plymouth campus in Plymouth. The date of the meeting will be no earlier than 5 working days from the date of the letter from the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager.
- That the student can appear in person.
- That the student may bring a person of their choosing who is a fellow student or member of staff from the University community to the meeting for support. (It is recommended that this is someone from the Students' Union Student Advice team).
- It is not permitted for a student to be accompanied by an individual external to the University unless one of the options available to the Panel is to exclude the student from professional registration permanently, without appeal.
- The accompanying person may assist the student during the course of the meeting by speaking and asking questions on the student's behalf. They may take a written record on the student's behalf. (The use of electronic audio recording equipment will not be allowed).
- Alternatively, the student may submit a statement for the Panel to consider if they do not wish to appear in person.
- That the student may call witnesses if they wish. The responsibility for arranging witnesses' attendance is the student's. Students will be required to confirm the identity of any witnesses they will be calling to the Examinations Office in advance of the Panel meeting.
- The identity of any witnesses who will be called by the University.
- The membership of the Panel.

3.9 The Panel will consider all of the evidence put before it and will ask questions of both the student and any witnesses relating to the alleged offence in order to establish the facts of the case. The student (or their representative) will have the opportunity to ask questions of any witnesses. If the student chooses not to appear before the Panel then their written statement will be considered by the Panel.

3.10 The Assessment Offences Panel will decide as follows:

3.10.1 That the allegation is not substantiated and that no further action is required; in this case, the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager, will ensure that all records relating to the allegation are removed from the student's permanent record at the University (and in the Doctoral College or partner institution if appropriate).

or

3.10.2 That the allegation is substantiated and that the appropriate penalty will be applied. At this stage, the Panel will be made aware of any previous substantiated offences committed by the student (reference paragraph 3.6 above).

On reaching a decision on which penalty to apply, the Panel will consider and record:

- The magnitude of the advantage gained by the offence, had it not been detected;
- The severity and extent of the offence;
- The student's academic stage, in relation to the University's expectations about knowledge of good academic practice, research integrity, and personal responsibility;
- The number of previous offences. Second and subsequent offences should incur a penalty of at least one step above that appropriate for a first offence of the same character;
- In the case of multiple offences in an assessment period, the opportunity for the student to learn from the detection of one offence before other assessments are taken.

The Panel may refer the case to the Code of Conduct or the Study and Wellbeing Review procedures as appropriate, following discussion with the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager.

3.11 The penalties that can be imposed are set out in the Academic Regulations. The penalty awarded by the Panel in accordance with the tariff shall be binding upon the Award Assessment Board.

3.12 A student on a programme leading to registration with a professional body is likely to be required to declare any substantiated offence with that professional body upon registration. The University may also inform the professional body.

3.13 Exceptionally, the Panel may conclude that an offence is so serious that it should be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience with the recommendation that the student is excluded from the University and/or partner institution. Where such a referral is made for a student on a University of Plymouth programme at a partner institution, the Principal of the partner institution (or equivalent) will also be consulted.

- 3.14 The Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager will be responsible for notifying the student (and the Doctoral College/partner institution, if appropriate) of the Panel's decision in writing within 5 working days of the date of the decision.
- 3.15 Substantiated offences will be reported to the Subject Assessment Panel/Award Assessment Board.
- 3.16 A student may appeal against the Panel decision, as set out in section AST11 of the academic regulations.

#### **4. Academic Offences Procedures**

- 4.1 Where a student is suspected of having committed an assessment offence during a taught module, the module leader will investigate the alleged offence in consultation with the Faculty Registrar/ Partnerships Operations Manager. If the student is registered for a research degree, the Faculty Registrar will inform the Doctoral College.
  - 4.1.1 If the Module Leader completes the investigation and concludes that there is no evidence of an offence being committed, then all records of the allegation will be removed from the student's permanent record.
  - 4.1.2 If the Module Leader completes the investigation and concludes that there is evidence to suggest of an academic offence being committed, the Faculty Registrar/ Partnerships Operations Manager will write to the student at their University email address. The letter will set out the allegation, provide a copy of the evidence that is to be considered and give the student the opportunity to accept or contest the allegation. The student should notify the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager in writing of their intention to accept or contest the alleged offence within 5 working days of the date of the email notifying them of the allegation.
- 4.2 Where a PGR student is expected of having committed an assessment offence during an assessed milestone (that is, Confirmation of Route or Project Approval), the relevant School PGR Coordinator will investigate the alleged offence in consultation with the student's Director of Studies and Doctoral College. The Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager will be informed.
  - 4.2.1 If the School PGR Coordinator completes the investigation and concludes that there is no evidence of an offence being committed, then all records of the allegation will be removed from the student's permanent record.
  - 4.2.2 If the School PGR Coordinator completes the investigation and concludes that there is evidence to suggest an academic offence was committed, the Doctoral College Manager will write to the student at their University email address. The letter will set out the allegation, provide a copy of the evidence that is to be considered and give the student the opportunity to accept or contest the allegation. The student should notify the Doctoral College Manager in writing of their intention to accept or contest the alleged offence within 5 working days of the date of the email notifying them of the allegation.

- 4.3 Where a PGR student is expected of having committed an assessment offence in the course of the examination of their thesis, the relevant Deputy Director of the Doctoral College will investigate the alleged offence. The relevant Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager will be informed.
- 4.3.1 If the Deputy Director of the Doctoral College completes the investigation and concludes that there is no evidence of an offence being committed, then all records of the allegation will be removed from the student's permanent record.
- 4.3.2 If the Deputy Director of the Doctoral College completes the investigation and concludes that there is evidence to suggest an academic offence was committed, the Doctoral College Manager will write to the student at their University email address. The letter will set out the allegation, provide a copy of the evidence that is to be considered and give the student the opportunity to accept or contest the allegation. The student should notify the Doctoral College Manager in writing of their intention to accept or contest the alleged offence within 5 working days of the date of the email notifying them of the allegation.
- 4.4 If the student accepts the allegation, all relevant documentation will be circulated by the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager/Doctoral College Manager to the members of the Panel to determine the outcome. The case will not normally be considered at a formal meeting of the Panel. The Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager/Doctoral College Manager will be responsible for notifying the student (and the Doctoral College/partner institution/Faculty, if appropriate) of the Panel's decision.
- 4.5 Where a student confirms in writing their intention to contest the allegation, the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager/Doctoral College Manager will write to the student to confirm:
- The time and the date of the Panel meeting and confirmation that the student has already been sent all of the evidence to be considered by the Panel (as part of the letter described in 4.1.2, 4.2.2 or 4.3.2 above). The meeting will normally take place on the main University of Plymouth campus in Plymouth. Students based at partner institutions overseas will be able to participate in the meeting via videoconference/Skype. The date of the meeting will be no earlier than 5 working days from the date of the letter from the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager/Doctoral College Manager, to allow the student time and opportunity to collate evidence, arrange for the attendance of witnesses, etc.
  - That the student can appear in person.
  - That the student may bring a person of their choosing who is a fellow student or member of staff from the University community to the meeting for support. (It is recommended that this is someone from the Students' Union Student Advice team).

- It is not permitted for a student to be accompanied by an individual external to the University unless one of the options available to the Panel is to exclude the student from professional registration permanently, without appeal.
  - The accompanying person may assist the student during the course of the meeting by speaking and asking questions on the student's behalf. They may take a written record on the student's behalf. (The use of electronic audio recording equipment will not be allowed).
  - Alternatively, the student may submit a statement for the Panel to consider if they do not wish to appear in person.
  - That the student may call witnesses if they wish. The responsibility for arranging witnesses' attendance is the student's. Students will be required to confirm the identity of any witnesses they will be calling to the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager/Doctoral College Manager in advance of the Panel meeting.
  - The identity of any witnesses who will be called by the University.
  - The membership of the Panel.
- 4.6 The Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager/Doctoral College Manager, in liaison with academic staff, will establish if there have been any other substantiated offences, or if any other work submitted by the student is currently under investigation. This information will not be disclosed to the Panel until the student has been deemed to have committed an offence and the Panel is considering the penalty to be applied.
- 4.7 Written statements will be submitted to the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager by the student and any other relevant parties. These papers together with any additional information will be circulated to the Panel, and the student no later than 5 working days before the Panel meeting.
- 4.8 During the meeting, the student will have the opportunity to present their case. The student's representative may also speak on their behalf.
- 4.9 The Panel will consider all of the evidence put before it and will ask questions of both the student and any witnesses relating to the alleged offence in order to establish the facts of the case. The student (or their representative) will have the opportunity to ask questions of any witnesses. If the student chooses not to appear before the Panel then their written statement will be considered by the Panel.
- 4.10 The Module Leader, or PGR student's Director of Studies, should be available at the time of the Panel meeting, should the Panel require clarification on any points of fact.
- 4.11 The Panel will decide as follows:
- 4.11.1 That the allegation is not substantiated and that no further action is required; in this case, the Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations

Manager/Doctoral College Manager will ensure that all records relating to the allegation are removed from the student's record at the University (and in the Doctoral College or partner institution if appropriate).

or

4.11.2 That the allegation is substantiated and that the appropriate penalty will be applied. At this stage, the Panel will be made aware of any previous proven offences committed by the student.

On reaching a decision on which penalty to apply, the Panel will consider and record:

- The magnitude of the advantage gained by the offence, had it not been detected;
- The severity and extent of the offence;
- The student's academic stage, in relation to the University's expectations about knowledge of good academic practice, research integrity and personal responsibility;
- The number of previous offences. Second and subsequent offences should incur a penalty of at least one step above that appropriate for a first offence of the same character;
- In the case of multiple offences in an assessment period, the opportunity for the student to learn from the detection of one offence before other assessments are taken.

The Panel may refer the case to the Code of Conduct or the Study and Wellbeing Review procedures as appropriate, following discussion with the Faculty Registrar (or equivalent, for Partner Institutions) or Doctoral College Manager.

- 4.12 The penalties that can be imposed are set out in the Academic Regulations.
- 4.13 A student on a programme leading to registration with a professional body is likely to be required to declare any substantiated offence with that professional body upon registration. The University may also inform the professional body about the offence.
- 4.14 Exceptionally, the Panel may conclude that an offence is so serious that it should be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience (or Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research & Enterprise, in the case of a PGR student) with the recommendation that the student is excluded from the University and/or partner institution. Where such a referral is made for a student on a University of Plymouth programme at a partner institution, the Principal of the partner institution will also be consulted.
- 4.15 The Faculty Registrar/Partnerships Operations Manager/Doctoral College Manager will report the Panel's decision to the student, the School (and Faculty, the partner institution or Doctoral College, if appropriate) normally in writing within 5 working days of the date of the Panel's decision.

- 4.16 A student may appeal against the Panel decision, as set out in section AST11 of the Academic Regulations.

## **5. Research Misconduct Procedures**

- 5.1 Where a student is suspected of having committed research misconduct, as identified in AST10.3 of the regulations – but not in relation to examinations (see Section 3 above), assessed milestones or the examination of the thesis (see Section 4 above), the Director of the Doctoral College or equivalent, or nominee, will investigate the alleged misconduct in consultation with relevant members of staff.
- 5.2 If the Director of the Doctoral College or equivalent, or nominee, completes the investigation and concludes that there is no evidence of research misconduct being committed, then all records of the allegation will be removed from the student's permanent record.
- 5.3 If the Director of the Doctoral College or equivalent, or nominee, completes the investigation and concludes that there is evidence to suggest research misconduct has been committed, the University will write to the student at their University email address. The letter will set out the allegation, provide a copy of the evidence that is to be considered and give the student the opportunity to accept or contest the allegation. The student should notify the Doctoral College Manager in writing of their intention to accept or contest the alleged research misconduct within 5 working days of the date of the email notifying them of the allegation.
- 5.4 If the student accepts the allegation, all relevant documentation (including information about any other substantiated examination/academic offences or research misconduct) will be circulated to the members of the Panel to determine the outcome. The Doctoral College Manager will be responsible for notifying the student (and the Faculty, if appropriate) of the Panel's decision.
- 5.5 Where a student confirms in writing their intention to contest the allegation, the student will be informed *via* their University email of:
- The time and the date of the Panel meeting and confirmation that the student has already been sent all of the evidence to be considered by the Panel (as part of the letter described in 5.3 above). The meeting will normally take place on the main University of Plymouth campus in Plymouth. Students based overseas will be able to participate in the meeting via videoconference/Skype. The date of the meeting will be no earlier than 5 working days from the date of notification of the Panel.
- That the student can appear in person.
  - That the student may bring a person of their choosing who is a fellow student or member of staff from the University community to the meeting for support. (It is recommended that this is someone from the Students' Union Student Advice team).
  - It is not permitted for a student to be accompanied by an individual external to the University unless one of the options available to the Panel is to exclude the student from professional registration permanently, without appeal.

- The accompanying person may assist the student during the course of the meeting by speaking and asking questions on the student's behalf. They may take a written record on the student's behalf. (The use of electronic audio recording equipment will not be allowed).
  - Alternatively, the student may submit a statement for the Panel to consider if they do not wish to appear in person.
  - That the student may call witnesses if they wish. The responsibility for arranging witnesses' attendance is the student's. Students will be required to confirm the identity of any witnesses they will be calling to the Doctoral College Manager in advance of the Panel meeting.
  - The identity of any witnesses who will be called by the University.
  - The membership of the Panel.
- 5.6 It will be established through liaison with academic staff, if there have been any other substantiated offences or research misconduct, or if any other work submitted by the student is currently under investigation. This information will not be disclosed to the Panel until the student has been deemed to have committed an offence and the Panel is considering the penalty to be applied.
- 5.7 Written statements will be submitted to the Doctoral College Manager by the student and any other relevant parties. These papers together with any additional information will be circulated to the Panel, and the student no later than 5 working days before the Panel meeting.
- 5.8 During the meeting, the student will have the opportunity to present their case. The student's representative may also speak on their behalf.
- 5.9 The Panel will consider all of the evidence put before it and will ask questions of both the student and any witnesses relating to the alleged research misconduct in order to establish the facts of the case. The student (or their representative) will have the opportunity to ask questions of any witnesses. If the student chooses not to appear before the Panel then their written statement will be considered by the Panel.
- 5.10 The student's Director of Studies should be available at the time of the Panel meeting, should the Panel require clarification on any points of fact.
- 5.11 The Panel will decide as follows:
- 5.11.1 That the allegation is not substantiated and that no further action is required; in this case, the Doctoral College Manager will ensure that all records relating to the allegation are removed from the student's record at the University.
- or

5.11.2 That the allegation is substantiated and that the appropriate penalty will be applied. At this stage, the Panel will be made aware of any previous proven examination or academic offences or research misconduct committed by the student.

On reaching a decision on which penalty to apply, the Panel will consider and record:

- The magnitude of the advantage gained by the research misconduct, had it not been detected;
- The severity and extent of the research misconduct;
- The student's academic stage, in relation to the University's expectations about knowledge of good academic practice and personal responsibility;
- The number of previous offences. Second and subsequent offences should incur a penalty of at least one step above that appropriate for a first offence of the same character;
- In the case of multiple occasions of research misconduct, the opportunity for the student to learn from the detection of one offence before detection of the others.

The Panel may refer the case to the Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures, or the Study and Wellbeing Review procedures, as appropriate, following discussion with the Doctoral College Manager.

- 5.12 The penalties that can be imposed are set out in the Academic Regulations.
- 5.13 A student on a programme leading to registration with a professional body is likely to be required to declare any substantiated offence with that professional body upon registration. The University may also inform the professional body about the offence.
- 5.14 Exceptionally, the Panel may conclude that an offence is so serious that it should be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research & Enterprise, with the recommendation that the student is excluded from the University.
- 5.15 The Doctoral College Manager will report the Panel's decision to the student, the School in writing within 5 working days of the date of the Panel's decision.
- 5.16 A student may appeal against the Panel decision, as set out in section AST11 of the Academic Regulations.

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<b>Summary of any amendments:</b>		
<b>Document objectives:</b> To describe the University's procedures for dealing with assessment offences and PGR student Research Misconduct.		

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<b>Contact for review:</b>	<b>Job title:</b> Head of Student Administration

<b>Version</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Author(s)</b>	<b>Replaces</b>	<b>Comment</b>
2.0	April 2014	P Wilde	V1.0 Draft	Revised draft following further comments
2.0	May 2014	P Wilde / K Ellis	V2.0 Draft	Revised draft following meeting of ARSC Task & Finish Group, 07-05-2014
4.0	June 2014	K Ellis	V2.0 Draft	Revised draft following TLQC 09-06-2014
5.0	July 2014	K Ellis	V4.0 Draft	Revised draft to incorporate AP
2015-16 v1.0	September 2015	K Ellis	V5.0 above	
2015-16 v2.0	January 2016	K Ellis	2015-16 v1.0 above	Revised following external examiners' reports cf. AB 16-12-2015 .
2015-16 v2.0	April 2016	K Ellis	2015-16 v2.0 above	Revised to note whether a student is permitted to bring a legal representative to a formal hearing.
2016-17 v1.0	September 2016	K Ellis	2015-16 v2.0 above	Regulations and procedures disaggregated following review of academic regulations.
2016-17 v2.0	September 2016	K Ellis	2016-17 v1.0 above	Updated link in 1.1. Job Title change for AP.
2016-17 v3.0	March 2017	K Ellis	2016-17 v2.0 above	broken links fixed
2017-18	September 2017	K Ellis	2016-17 v3.0 above	Changes in nomenclature re: Doctoral College & Academic Registry
2018-19 v1.0	September 2018	K Ellis	2017-18 above	Specific criteria to inform the Panel on agreeing upon penalty.
2018-19	January 2019	P Wilde	2018-19 v1.0 above	Following recommendations by Task and Finish Group
2019-20	September 2019	K Ellis	2018-19 v2.0	Addition of PGR student Research Misconduct
2019-20	October 2019	S Burr	2019-20 v1.0 above	Changes to ensure alignment with current practice informed by recent

				cases, and AST10, plus addition of ghost writing
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## Annex 1 Guidance to support Examination and Academic Offences Panels

### Scoring Grid

#### To be completed by the Chair, confirming the decision of the whole Panel

Student Name:		Programme:	
Student Number:		Date:	
Module Code:		Module Leader	
Chair:		FR/AFR:	
Panel Members:			

Alleged offence (tick each that applies)			
Plagiarism	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fabrication	<input type="checkbox"/>
Collusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	False declaration(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contract cheating	<input type="checkbox"/>	Persuading others	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-plagiarism	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>
			Examination offence (describe):
			Other (describe):

Factors considered in determining penalty				
Criterion	Relevance (1=low, 3 = high)			
	0	1	2	3
The magnitude of the advantage gained by the offence, had it not been detected <sup>1</sup>				
The severity and extent of the offence <sup>2</sup>				
The student's academic stage, in relation to the University's expectations about knowledge of good academic practice and personal responsibility				
The number of previous offences (second and subsequent offences should incur a penalty of at least one step above that appropriate for a first offence of the same character)				

<sup>1</sup> **The magnitude of the advantage gained by the offence, had it not been detected:** this is the size of the advantage, best measured in credits. For example if a student committed an offence in a 40 credit final stage dissertation, as compared to an assignment worth 10% of a 20 credit stage 1 module. This might also be measured as a grade – e.g. that the offence, if undetected, would have raised the mark by x%.

<sup>2</sup> **The severity and extent of the offence:** This allows the panel to take into account

- i) the severity of the offence: for example, where commissioning an essay might be at the most severe end and letting fellow student copy a calculation might be at the lowest.
- ii) the extent of the offence: the amount of the work affected - which would differentiate between plagiarism of a few lines in a dissertation, and a whole chapter/the whole piece of work.

In the case of multiple offences in an assessment period, the opportunity for the student to learn from the detection of one offence before other assessments are submitted				
<b>Penalty (tick which applies): where the Panel is recommending a higher penalty than that suggested by the indicative score, the notes of the Panel meeting must clearly show the context and rationale for that penalty.</b>				
<b>Indicative score</b>				
0	The allegation is not substantiated and no further action is required.			
0 - 4	The offence be recorded on the student's permanent record but there will be no change to the mark that the student has been awarded. The offence may be taken into account by future Panels when determining the penalty for any subsequent offences.			
5-6	The mark for the component be capped (at 40% for modules at Levels 4-6 and 50% for modules at Level 7). This penalty can only be awarded if the standard of the work is deemed to be worthy of the capped mark when the material which is the subject of the offence is discounted. Further attempts at the module will also be capped at 40%/50%.			
7-8	A mark of zero will be recorded for the component.			
9-10	A mark of zero will be recorded for the element.			
11-12	A mark of zero will be recorded for the module.			
13-14	<p>The final aggregate mark for the programme will be reduced by 10%.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The student is required to resubmit the assessment or repeat the module, with the award of credit only, with zero marks on successful completion.</p>			
14	A mark of zero be recorded for the module of which the assessment formed a part, the student is barred from taking the module again and must withdraw from the programme.			
15	Referral to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education and Student Experience with the recommendation that the student is excluded from the University and/or partner institution.			

## **Annex 2 Guidance to support the investigation of ghost writing**

### **1.1 Contract cheating (also known as ghost writing)**

Contract cheating refers to situations in which a student has commissioned or otherwise obtained a piece of work from a third party, such as an essay mill, and submits it for assessment as their own work. This guidance describes how to gather evidence to submit to the formal academic offences investigation, if contract cheating is suspected and conclusive documentary or other evidence is not available. A number of factors might contribute to a suspicion of contract cheating, including:

- (a) A level and style of English significantly better and/or different to previous work or contributions in class
- (b) The style of the work changes throughout the assessment
- (c) Differences in font/formatting in parts of the assessment
- (d) Misuse/change of personal pronouns
- (e) Out of date/unusual references/bibliography

### **1.2 Procedure for investigating contract cheating**

- (a) The marker should compare the assessment to one or two of the student's other assessments, if possible
- (b) The marker should discuss their findings with the module leader or another academic to see whether their concerns are shared
- (c) If the concerns are shared a meeting should be arranged involving:
  - The academic raising the concerns
  - The student (who may be accompanied by a friend if they wish)
  - The Faculty Registrar or nominee, to take notes of the meeting
- (d) The student should be asked to bring their notes used in the preparation of the assessment, any draft versions of the assessment and any readings they have used so that they can demonstrate how they worked on the assessment
- (e) The meeting will be held informally and will not be adversarial. It is an information gathering exercise.
- (f) In the meeting the student can be asked questions about:
  - What made them choose the topic
  - The content of the work (questions should be of an appropriate level to the module concerned)
  - What sources were used
  - Whether they had discussed their work or shared it with other people beforehand
  - Whether their approach to this assessment had been different to their usual approach
  - Any other relevant questions
- (g) Following the meeting, if the marker feels that there are grounds to suspect contract cheating, the module leader should be informed and the findings and notes of the meeting should be passed to the Faculty Registrar to instigate the Academic Offences procedure.