

# Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy



## Summary Sheet:

<b>Purpose of Policy and to whom it applies (please specify cohorts):</b>	
The purpose of this policy is threefold:  1) To inform students of the expectations for and processes around academic integrity at the University of Northampton.  2) To support academic staff in promoting academic integrity among learners on taught and research programmes across the University of Northampton.  3) To outline, for other relevant stakeholders, the processes for promoting academic integrity across the University.  This policy applies to all staff, students and other stakeholders who are involved in promoting academic integrity across the University of Northampton and in Education with Others.	
<b>Owner and Department:</b>	
Head of Learning and Teaching Development: Policy and Practice, Institute of Learning and Teaching	
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<b>Dissemination and implementation plan:</b>	
Once approved by SEC, will go to Senate for approval. Dissemination via Deputy Deans, Faculty Managers and Embedded Quality Officers. Storage on Tundra, linked to from main University website and included as part of the annual summary of policy updates also provided online and shared via UNify.	
<b>Date of initial committee approval (state committee name):</b>	SEC, 12 <sup>th</sup> June 2019
<b>Date of Senate approval:</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> July 2019
<b>Date for implementation and cohorts to which it applies:</b>	September 2019 for all cohorts
<b>Proposed date of annual update:</b>	June/July 2020
<b>Date of last annual update:</b>	July 2018
<b>Proposed date of full review:</b>	June/July 2020
<b>Date of last full review:</b>	July 2019
<b>Version number and date:</b>	V1 .1

## Policy Document:

### 1. Introduction and background

- 1.1. The University of Northampton is committed to fostering a culture of academic integrity among staff and students as a way to promote academic standards and to enhance the student experience. To fulfil this commitment, the University takes a 'holistic approach' to promoting academic integrity: one that addresses the complexities around academic misconduct and that inspires good academic practice (cf. QAA, 2006; Academic Integrity Service, 2010).
- 1.2. In seeking to foster this culture of academic integrity, the University reserves the right to use any software tools it considers appropriate in order to investigate cases of suspected academic misconduct. Such processing is in line with all agreements between the University and our students and it is also in the University's legitimate interests to investigate activities that are contrary to good academic conduct.

### 2. Purpose and scope

- 2.1. The purpose of the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy is threefold.
  - 2.1.1. To inform students of the expectations and processes around academic integrity at the University of Northampton.
  - 2.1.2. To support all academic staff in promoting academic integrity among learners on taught and research programmes across the University.
  - 2.1.3. To outline, for other relevant staff and stakeholders, the processes for promoting academic integrity across the University.
- 2.2. The Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy establishes a minimum acceptable level of activity toward promoting learners' academic integrity and helps to ensure that students achieve [threshold academic standards](#).
- 2.3. Staff development opportunities and resources, such as *The Good Practice Handbook: Assessment, Feedback and Academic Integrity* are available to help staff explore particular relevant themes and practices and to share good practice with others.

### 3. Definitions

- 3.1. **Academic Integrity:** The Centre for Academic Integrity defines academic integrity as: 'a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility.' It is from these values that an academic community can flourish (CAI, 1999, p. 4).

**3.2. Academic Misconduct:** Academic misconduct includes behaviour such as cheating, collusion, duplication, fabrication (Perry, 2010) or the commissioning of work (whether or not for financial reward). It also includes plagiarism, which is defined as 'passing off someone else's work, whether intentionally or unintentionally, as your own for your own benefit' (Carroll, 2002, p. 9). A full list of terms and their definitions is contained in Section 6.

It should be noted that termination of studies is a possible outcome of this process.

## 4. Key Principles

McCabe and Pavela (2015) identify a set of principles for promoting academic integrity among students, which have been adapted as part of the framework for this policy.

- 4.1** Academic integrity is recognised and affirmed as a core institutional value.
- 4.2** Academic staff guide and mentor students' academic progress.
- 4.3** Students understand the potential of the Internet—and how that potential can be lost if online resources are used for fraud, theft and deception.
- 4.4** Students are encouraged to take responsibility for their academic integrity.
- 4.5** Expectations around academic integrity are clearly communicated to students on a regular basis.
- 4.6** There are opportunities to design assessment in fair and creative ways (i.e. to be 'more personal and more relevant', p. 14).
- 4.7** Academic staff and the institution reduce opportunities to engage in academic misconduct.
- 4.8** Academic staff and the institution respond to academic misconduct when it occurs.
- 4.9** All stakeholders help to define and support campus-wide academic integrity standards.

## Use of Editorial and Proof-Reading Services

- 4.10** Students who wish to obtain additional support in writing appropriate academic English are advised in the first place to seek additional support from either:
  - the [Learning Development team](#), who can assist with all matters associated with academic writing. In line with their stated policy, this team will use examples of student work in order to teach students how to improve the linguistic aspects of written

assignments.

- the English language tutors who offer [English language tutorials and workshops](#), as well as an [online programme on NILE](#)<sup>1</sup>.

Neither the Learning Development Team, nor the English language tutors offer a proof-reading service, as this is not an effective learning and teaching strategy.

- 4.11** Students who seek external support with proof-reading their work should recognise the potential risks associated with this activity, including the wrong use of technical terms or distortion of the original meaning of the student work. Under no circumstances should students allow proof-readers to directly edit their work: proof-readers should indicate where changes or corrections etc. need to be made but not make those changes or corrections.
- 4.12** Any use of external editorial or proof-reading services must not compromise a student's authorship of the submission as the University requires all submitted work to be that student's own work. The act of submitting work is considered by the University as a statement that the work submitted is a student's own and, as such, the student will be held responsible for the work submitted. The use of third-party services (whether paid for or not) will not be accepted in mitigation of any deficiencies identified in the work.
- 4.13** Students' using third-party proof-reading services, must include a statement to this effect on the submitted work.
- 4.14** Students who use third-party services for proof-reading and/or related services e.g. editorial advice and submit the work in which those third-party services have made direct editorial/textual changes to the work, are liable to be referred for academic misconduct<sup>2</sup>.

## 5. Key Responsibilities

- 5.1** Processes around academic integrity and academic misconduct must conform to the University Assessment Regulations for the appropriate academic year and must reflect the principles of academic integrity

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<sup>1</sup> The purpose of proof-reading is to ensure that the meaning is conveyed clearly and correctly in written English. Thus, proof-reading involves, for example, checking and correcting spelling, punctuation and grammar but not, for example, making editorial changes such as changes to structure or substantive content. It is not the responsibility of a proof-reader to check that the written English conveys the meaning intended by the writer: that would constitute editorial intervention.

<sup>2</sup> References to external and third-party support in sections 4.11 - 4.14 do not include supervisory support for the development of discipline-related writing skills as part of research degrees and taught-course dissertation/thesis and other principal modules. In addition, it is legitimate for a supervisor to correct substantive content, where expressed incorrectly, during the drafting stages of a dissertation or thesis. Students undertaking such types of writing are advised to discuss any proposed external third-party proof-reading or related support with their supervisors before proceeding.

outlined in Section 4 of this document.

- 5.2** Students must be given explicit guidance with regard to the current University Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy. This must be done at the programme- and module-level and must appear as part of the module information on the NILE sites within each programme. This guidance can be found on the [Academic Integrity](#) area of the ILT Website. Additional support is available online (see further **Section 7**).
- 5.3** If applicable, guidelines for professional standards (e.g. work placements), statements of ethical practice (e.g. dissertations) and/or professional codes of conduct (e.g. healthcare) in assessed work must be made explicit to students.
- 5.4** All students must be given guidance on academic misconduct prior to their first assignment in any module.
- 5.5** Each Faculty must appoint a minimum of six members of academic staff to serve as an Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) and at least one of these should have PGR experience and other specialisation in the investigation of contract-cheating.
- 5.6** Each Faculty must ensure that the appointed AIOs are equipped to be highly effective in their roles by ensuring AIOs:
- 5.6.1** engage in an appropriate level of staff development;
  - 5.6.2** receive an appropriate amount of time and other resource for the role; and
  - 5.6.3** have opportunities to engage in continuing development opportunities around supporting academic integrity.
- 5.7** Suspected cases of academic misconduct must be treated according to the **Suspected Academic Misconduct Procedure** in the order that follows. Where the student is undertaking a Postgraduate Research degree, the process detailed in **Appendix 1** will apply instead.

**Stage 1: Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) to make decision based on the evidence available or to escalate the suspected case directly to an Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP)**

- 5.7.1** On identifying a case of suspected academic misconduct the marking tutor should apply a ZZ grade to the item of assessment in NILE. No grade should be provided in Turnitin. The tutor must provide clear, written feedback to the student explaining clearly that a ZZ grade has been applied due to the marking tutor suspecting academic misconduct and informing the student that an email will be sent to them in due course outlining what will happen next to enable them to prepare for the Stage 1 interview. The student is entitled at all points during the process to access the assessment in question.

### 5.7.1.1 Standard text for including in NILE is as follows:

This assessment has been referred to an Academic Integrity Officer for further investigation on the basis of suspected academic misconduct. This means that the marking of your work will be delayed until this process has been completed. You will be contacted shortly with further information about the nature of this referral and what happens next. Further details on the nature of the referral will be provided at this time. For more details, please see the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy.

**5.7.2** The tutor refers the matter to the appropriate Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) by completing the Academic Misconduct Referral Form and submitting it to the Student Records team (SR). This referral should normally occur at the same time as the grades and feedback for the assignment are released to students (e.g. generally within 4 working weeks of the assignment due date). If submitted after this date, the AIO has the right to dismiss the case without further investigation.

**5.7.3** The referring tutor must include documentary evidence of the grounds for the allegation when making the referral. The report should include firm conclusions reached about the allegation and the manner by which these have been reached (e.g. viva voce, text-matching report, observation, previous academic work or similar, metadata and other linguistic/stylistics analysis). The AIO decision will normally be based on the evidence provided by the referring tutor – there is no general expectation for AIOs to find the relevant evidence for themselves.

Tutors should provide examples of work for all students involved in a suspected case of collusion.

**5.7.4** The exception to section 5.7.3 will probably be in respect of complex cases e.g. those involving suspected contract-cheating, commissioning, facilitation or ghost-writing, where a considerable body of evidence might be required, that itself requiring particular expertise to assemble.

In such cases the AIO is expected to review the evidence provided by the referring tutor and determine whether the referral should proceed to Stage 2 or be returned to the tutor for the provision of additional evidence.

**5.7.5** Where it is suspected that the misconduct involves another student registered at UoN, either the initial referring tutor or the AIO may refer and investigate that other student under the provisions of this policy.

**5.7.6** Where the referring tutor is of the opinion that there is academic misconduct but there is insufficient evidence to support the

referral (typically for cases of suspected contract-cheating or commissioning), the tutor can invite the student for a viva, on an exceptional basis. The purpose of this viva is to gather additional evidence to assist the tutor in determining whether there are sufficient grounds for the making of an academic misconduct referral in line with the requirements of this policy.

Guidance for students on how to prepare for this viva is [available online](#).

- 5.7.7** Examples of assignment features that may trigger an academic misconduct viva include, but are not limited to, the following:
- (a) Changes in writing style throughout the assignment;
  - (b) Inconsistent student 'voice' in comparison to previous work or other available evidence from the student;
  - (c) Document owned by someone other than the student (not conclusive in and of itself);
  - (d) Resources listed but not cited or cited, but not listed;
  - (e) References to published work that are incorrect i.e. the published work does not actually say what the assignment attributes to it; or
  - (f) An anomalously low originality score (e.g. a score of 'zero').
- 5.7.8** The following process must be followed when holding a section 5.7.6 viva:
- 5.7.8.1** The referring tutor<sup>3</sup> will invite the student to attend a viva which must be held as soon as possible after the issue has been identified, ideally within the 4 working-week marking period.
- 5.7.8.2** The invitation to the student must contain the following information:
- (a) the nature of the allegation, including the specific nature of the suspected misconduct; and
  - (b) guidance on how to prepare for the viva.
- If this information is not provided, the student is entitled to request this information from the referring tutor.
- 5.7.8.3** The student must be given a minimum of 3 working days in which to prepare for the viva from when all aspects of section 5.7.8.2 are met.
- 5.7.8.4** The viva will be undertaken by the referring tutor with the student present. The student is not entitled to bring anyone

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<sup>3</sup> This process will be managed by the referring tutor and not by Student Records as until the tutor determines that there is a case to answer, no 'official' record will be created.

else along to the viva.

**5.7.8.5** The student is expected to bring supporting evidence to the viva. This can include, but is not limited to: assignment drafts, research notes, work in progress from start to finish.

**5.7.8.6** The viva will review the student submission against the following pre-set criteria that will be circulated to the student as part of the invitation to attend the viva:

- (a) Can the student talk to the content?
- (b) Can the student remember the essence of the argument?
- (c) Can the student show how the argument develops?
- (d) Can the student discuss the work and the resources cited?
- (e) Can the student demonstrate that they authored the work? (e.g. by making requested changes - useful for computer coding or other practical assignments, or through production of draft work)

**5.7.8.7** The tutor will determine whether sufficient evidence has been generated by the viva to support a referral to an AIO.

**5.7.8.8** If there is no referral, the student submission is marked on the basis of academic worth only (i.e. marked on academic merits). The viva cannot be used to determine the mark awarded. If the tutor decides that there are sufficient grounds for an academic misconduct referral, the evidence generated as part of the viva will become part of the evidence base to be submitted by the referring tutor for consideration by the AIO as part of the referral.

Relevant evidence to support the referral includes, but is not limited to:

- a. The original student submission allowing access to the document metadata together with a screenshot of the metadata (but not a screenshot in isolation)
- b. The accompanying Turnitin report with tutor annotations showing where the issues lie
- c. Examples of other work by the same student (if available, to show their level of academic English or work that shows the 'known student voice')

**5.7.9** It is appropriate for concurrent referrals (i.e. those made within a few days of each other for different assessments) to be dealt with as one referral, by one AIO.

**5.7.10** On receiving a referral, the Student Records team will log details of the allegation and then pass the documents to the AIO. In the

case of an examination irregularity, the invigilator completes a report which is passed to the relevant Module Tutor who then refers the student in line with this policy. The invigilator's report will form part of the evidence considered by the AIO in determining an outcome on the case.

- 5.7.11** Where the AIO considers that there is sufficient evidence available to support the allegation, s/he will provide details of the interview arrangements to the relevant Student Records team who will invite the student to attend the interview and ensure that the student has access to the evidence and understands the basis for the referral. The student will have an opportunity to discuss and respond to the evidence.

The student will be given advance notice (normally a minimum of five working days from date on email/letter) and will be notified of the right to bring a friend or relative for support (see Appendix 2). All communications will typically be by email, using the email address provided by the student to the University.

Responsibility for ensuring that the University has an accurate email address for the student, sits with the student.

If the student is unable to attend the interview s/he can provide a written submission in response to the referral and associated evidence. Normally, this interview will take place in person although it is accepted that this may not always be logistically possible (e.g. for students at partner institutions). In these cases, appropriate webinar technology may be used instead.

[Guidance for students in how to prepare for this interview is available online.](#)

- 5.7.12** The AIO may be accompanied by another member of staff at the interview with the student, if this is appropriate and if the student is advised accordingly.
- 5.7.13** Students are expected to bring all relevant evidence to support their authorship of the assessment in question with them to the interview.
- 5.7.14** Following the interview, the AIO will decide that:
- there is no validity to the allegation;
  - a minor offence has taken place and a penalty will be applied in accordance with the university tariff for minor cases;
  - the case should be referred to Stage 2, because either a serious offence or a minor offence with a record of previous academic misconduct, or the case has complicating factors;

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- The case must be referred to Stage 2 because of suspected contract-cheating or commissioning

**5.7.15** If a student has a record of previous misconduct, this will not be made available to the AIO until after a decision in the particular instance has been made. The relevance of any previous misconduct will only be taken into account when determining the severity of any penalty to be applied in the particular case. There is an expectation that the penalty for second and subsequent findings of misconduct will increase unless there is a clear reason not to do so.

**5.7.16** If the event of non-attendance by the student, the AIO can make a decision on the evidence presented.

**5.7.17** In determining the validity of the allegation, the AIO will exercise a judgment on the balance of probability (see definitions in Section 6). Extenuating circumstances will not be considered in determining culpability, but may be considered in determining the penalty imposed.

**5.7.18** Having made a decision, the AIO will pass the outcome to the Student Records team, who will log the outcome, communicate with the student (via email) and place the paperwork (referral form and evidence) on the student's file. A copy of the outcome email should be sent to the referring tutor who will update NILE with the final grade awarded.

**5.7.19** Appeals against an AIO decision must be made using the Academic Misconduct Appeal Form and submitted to the Academic Registrar (or nominated deputy) within five working days of the AIO outcome.

There are only 2 possible grounds for appeal:

- (a) the decision arrived at by the AIO is wrong in fact (i.e. academic misconduct has not occurred);
- (b) the requirements of the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy have not been followed.

In both cases, students choosing to appeal the AIO decision must provide evidence to support the appeal. This evidence must be provided at the same time as the appeal is submitted. Appellants will not be permitted to introduce new evidence during any appeal hearing.

**5.7.20** Appeals will be considered by the Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Team to determine if the appeal criteria have been met.

Appeals can be rejected if they do not meet either of the grounds listed in section 5.7.19. In these cases, the University will clearly indicate the basis for the refusal of the appeal. The student will

be provided with a Completion of Procedures email.

- 5.7.21** If a student has an outstanding resit opportunity, this should be taken regardless of any decision to appeal the AIO decision. The consequences of not completing the resit should be made clear to the student. Students are normally entitled to 4 working weeks between receiving an academic misconduct outcome from the AIO (including a referral to Panel) and the submission date for the resit assessment to allow sufficient time to complete the assessment and obtain academic skills support. Provision of feedback and standard resit dates for other members of the student cohort are unaffected by this clause.

Where a formal warning has been given, students are normally entitled to 4 working weeks between receiving the grade for the marked work and the submission date for the resit assessment to allow sufficient time to complete the assessment and obtain academic skills support.

- 5.7.22** Appeals against an AIO decision will be heard by a panel of senior AIOs. In reviewing the Stage 1 AIO's decision, the AIO Panel has the authority to increase or decrease the penalty.

### **Stage 1b: Appeal from the Stage 1 AIO Decision**

- 5.7.23** The Stage 1b AIO Panel will comprise 2 senior AIOs, one of whom will be the nominated chair. If necessary, a third AIO can be asked to participate. This will typically be in cases where the first 2 AIOs cannot reach an agreement.

- 5.7.24** The panel will normally meet virtually, with the ability to hold a face-to-face hearing if required. Students will not normally have the right to attend these hearings.

- 5.7.25** Appeals must be made in line with the process outlined in sections 5.7.19 - 5.7.22 and using the University-approved appeal form.

- 5.7.26** The expectation is that these cases will be determined within a week of the panel receiving the documentation from the Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Team.

### **Stage 2: AMP to adjudicate a case that has been escalated by the AIO due to the nature of the suspected offence**

- 5.7.27** All cases referred to Stage 2 will be triaged by the Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals Team to ensure the referral warrants a Stage 2 hearing.

- 5.7.28** Cases that are not considered to warrant a Stage 2 hearing (i.e. imposition of a module level penalty or termination of studies) or where penalties are still available at assignment (as opposed to

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module) level, will be returned to the original AIO to determine an outcome in line with Stage 1 or to provide further evidence to warrant a Stage 2 hearing.

**5.7.29** Cases that are heard by an Academic Misconduct Panel, will comprise:

- (a) an experienced AIO as Chair;
- (b) at least two other AIOs who have had no previous involvement with the cases examined and are not involved with the student's programme of study;
- (c) an Officer appointed by the Academic Registrar

**5.7.30** In all cases, the Officer to the Panel or the Panel Chair reserve(s) the right to call or contact the Stage 1 AIO (or nominee) to the Stage 2 Panel hearing to present the case and any associated evidence or provide any necessary clarification.

**5.7.31** In all cases, the student will be invited to attend the panel hearing. The student will be given advance notice, will be provided with the documentation that the panel will consider and will be entitled to bring a friend or relative for support. Legal representation is not permitted (see further, Appendix 2).

If the student cannot attend the hearing then s/he is entitled to make a written submission outlining their position.

**5.7.32** After hearing the case and considering all the evidence, the panel will decide that:

- there is no validity to the allegation; or
- a minor offence has taken place and a penalty will be applied in accordance with the university tariff for minor cases; or
- serious academic misconduct has occurred.

**5.7.32.1** It is expected that findings of contract-cheating or commissioning will normally result in the application of a module level penalty or termination of study.

**5.7.33** In determining the validity of the allegation, the panel will exercise a judgment on the balance of probability. Extenuating circumstances will not be considered in determining culpability but may be considered in determining the penalty imposed.

**5.7.34** Where serious academic misconduct has occurred, the panel must determine the penalty in accordance with the university tariff for serious offences. The panel may, at this stage, take account of any previous offences. In line with section 5.7.15, there is an expectation that the penalty applied will be an increase on any previous penalties, unless there is a clear reason for this not to be the case.

- 5.7.35** If the panel determines that programme termination should be applied, it must make a suitable recommendation for consideration by the Academic Registrar (or nominee).
- 5.7.36** The Officer (or nominee) will advise the student of the panel's decision in writing within five working days. This email should also be forwarded to the referring tutor who is required to update NILE with the final grade outcome.
- 5.7.37** If the AMP hearing is held to consider an appeal against a AIO decision, there is no internal appeal against the decision of the Academic Misconduct Panel: the panel's decision marks the end of the University's process in relation to Academic Misconduct.
- 5.7.38** The written outcome will include a 'Completion of Procedure' letter (sent via email), which details the appellant's right to apply for a review to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

**Stage 3: Appealing an AMP's decision (This stage is only available when the original case was escalated to the AMP by the AIO, rather than dealt with by the AIO in the first instance.)**

- 5.7.39** If the AMP hearing is held because of a direct referral by a AIO (i.e. the AIO considers that a serious offence has occurred, or the case has complicating factors) then an appeal against an outcome may be made to the Academic Registrar (or nominee). This appeal must be made using the Academic Misconduct Appeal Form and must be received within five working days of the notification of the AMP outcome.
- 5.7.40** Students choosing to appeal the AIO decision must provide evidence to support the appeal. This evidence must be provided at the same time as the appeal is submitted. Appellants will not be permitted to introduce new evidence during any appeal hearing.
- 5.7.41** The Academic Registrar (or nominee) will determine whether the appeal presents credible grounds for the case to be reopened based on the criteria in section 5.7.19.
- 5.7.42** If, in the opinion of the Academic Registrar (or nominee) the appeal has no merit, then the outcome will be confirmed as in section 5.7.20. (above).
- 5.7.43** Where an appeal includes credible evidence which the Academic Registrar determines should be reconsidered, the case will be returned for consideration by the next AMP hearing and the full Stage 2 process (above) will be repeated.
- 5.7.44** Where an AMP is reviewing a decision made by a previous panel, the second panel has the authority to increase or decrease the

penalty previously imposed.

## Tariff

**5.7.45** Table 2 shows the possible penalties for Academic Misconduct and by whom these penalties can be applied. Any of these penalties can be applied as this is not a cumulative scale; however there is an expectation that the penalty will increase in severity for subsequent acts of misconduct. Ultimately, the decision as to the severity of the penalty is the responsibility of the University to determine.

**Table 2: Tariff for Academic Misconduct**

	<b>Penalties</b>	<b>Decision Maker</b>
Penalty at assignment level:	Formal warning <sup>4</sup>	AIO
	Grade for assignment reduced to bare pass	AIO
	Grade for assignment reduced to fail (F+, F, F-, AG*).	AIO
Penalty at module level:	Final written warning <sup>5</sup>	AMP
	Grade for assignment reduced to fail (F+, F, F-, AG*). Resit rights removed.	AMP
	Grade for module reduced to fail (F+, F, F-)	AMP
	Grade for module reduced to AG*.	AMP
	Grade for module reduced to AG <sup>6</sup> repeat module grade capped at bare pass	AMP
	Grade for module reduced to AG <sup>2</sup> . Right to repeat module withdrawn.	AMP
	Grade for module reduced to AG <sup>2</sup> . Right to repeat equivalent credits withdrawn.	AMP
	Termination of studies	AMP

<sup>4</sup> This penalty will normally be reserved for a first referral where there is evidence of more than unintentional poor scholarship but not enough for a capped bare-pass or harsher penalty.

<sup>5</sup> See further, sections 5.7.47 to 5.7.48.

<sup>6</sup> AG stands for a G grade awarded on the basis of academic misconduct. It was introduced in 2016 following agreed institutional processes to clarify the circumstances under which a G grade is awarded.

**5.7.46** When determining the appropriate penalty for the misconduct, the following factors should be taken into account:

- extent and seriousness of the misconduct
- stage of student study (e.g. term 1, year 1 as compared to final year dissertation)
- is it poor academic practice or intentional misconduct?
- a student's previous history of misconduct
- is it a concurrent referral with no time for the student to have benefited from developmental opportunities
- the credit rating of the work

This is not a definitive list. The precise penalty will be determined based on all the circumstances of the case.

However, in the light of sections 5.7.15 and 5.7.34, second and subsequent penalties will normally increase in severity unless there is a clear and justifiable reason for this not to be the case.

**5.7.47** The Final Written Warning must be attached to any of the module level penalties awarded by the AMP in line with the tariff (Table 2). This includes:

**5.7.47.1** cases where a student has had multiple previous findings of academic misconduct and has had time to engage with additional support e.g. from Learning Development, but where there is no evidence of improvement to their academic practice

**5.7.47.2** where a student has been referred for ghost-writing or otherwise facilitating academic misconduct but has not actually submitted any work for summative credit. In these cases, the warning will be given in isolation from any other penalty.

**5.7.47.3** where a student is found to have engaged in contract-cheating or commissioning.

**5.7.48** The final written warning will state that 'Any further findings of academic misconduct, for any reason, are liable to result in termination of studies.'

### Records

**5.7.49** A copy of the records of all academic misconduct cases will be placed on the relevant student file. Where a case is dismissed, all documentation will be removed and shredded.

**5.7.50** The University will hold an electronic record of all allegations of academic misconduct. These data will inform the review processes.

### Academic Misconduct and Assessment Boards

- 5.7.51** Except for noting the outcomes of this policy and procedure, Assessment Boards shall take no account of allegations of academic misconduct. The Boards will apply any penalty determined through this procedure. The Boards have no authority to vary the penalty<sup>7</sup>.
- 5.7.52** Where the penalty allows resubmission or reassessment, the work required will to be determined by the Board in the usual way.
- 5.7.53** Assessment Boards will be notified of every case where a decision on an academic misconduct allegation is pending, and will not confirm an outcome for the relevant assessment until the decision is known. The element of assessment will be clearly identified and a 'deferred decision' will be recorded.

## 6 Glossary

Please note: Additional definitions and examples of each of the following can be accessed through a standard online search.

- 6.1 Balance of Probabilities:** This means that on the weight of the evidence presented, the student was more likely than not, to have committed academic misconduct.
- 6.2 Cheating** refers to the obtaining, attempt to obtain or the provision of assistance to another to obtain credit for academic work by dishonesty or deception. It includes, but is not limited to, attempts to improve evaluation of performance. It may also include: lying, copying the work of a peer, discussion about a question or answer during a test or examination, accessing notes, 'cheat sheets' or other information devices prohibited by the test or examination conditions.
- 6.3 Collusion** is 'the act of collaborating with someone else on an assessment exercise which is intended to be wholly your own work, or the act of assisting someone else to commit plagiarism' (Maguire, 2003). It should be noted that this can occur in both face-to-face and online contexts. Also, see the definition of 'facilitation' below.
- 6.4 Contract-cheating** is where a student contracts out their academic assessment to writers (sometimes called 'ghost writers') and purchases back the finished work in order to submit it as their own, in whole or in part, as an item of assessment. Transactions typically occur over the internet. This is often known as 'commissioning'.
- 6.5 Commissioning** – see definition of contract-cheating above. However, commissioning does not necessarily involve a financial or non-financial

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<sup>7</sup> It should be noted that this requirement does **not** over-ride Academic regulation 3.7.8. In other words, a student whose assessment grade is adjusted as a result of an academic integrity process will still be entitled to be awarded the higher grade for that assessment component where this is relevant.

reward.

- 6.6 Duplication** refers to the submission of the same material more than once for the purposes of obtaining academic credit. While not strictly amounting to plagiarism (see definition below) it is still considered as serious academic misconduct.
- 6.7 Extenuating Circumstances** are circumstances that pertain to the timeframe for the preparation and submission of the referred assignment (for more information, refer to the [Mitigating Circumstances Policy](#)).

Appropriate independent documented evidence must be provided, along with an explanation of why the matter was not raised earlier under the Mitigating Circumstances Policy. If the same grounds were submitted in an application for mitigating circumstances then these will not normally be eligible for consideration under this policy.

- 6.8 Fabrication** refers specifically to the falsification of data, information or citations in an academic exercise, typically an assessment. This includes false excuses for missing deadlines, false claims to have submitted work and the falsification or breaching of agreed ethical requirements. It may be specifically referred to as falsification.
- 6.9 Facilitation** is defined as one student taking any action to enable or assist another student to commit academic misconduct. It is a form of collusion and can include, for example, commissioning a ghost-writer on behalf of another student or acting as an agent or intermediary for a ghost-writer or assignment-writing business ('essay-mill'). Facilitation can be undertaken as a favour and doesn't necessarily have to be for money or other reward.
- 6.10 Ghost-writing** is defined as one student undertaking any assessment activity on behalf of another student. This can include, for example, writing all or part of an assignment, analysis of results, lab or field work, practical or placement elements. The work doesn't necessarily have to be undertaken for money or other reward.
- 6.11 Plagiarism** refers to the passing off of another's ideas or work as one's own, without acknowledging and appropriately referencing the true source.
- 6.12 Replication** is the same as duplication – the resubmission of the whole or parts of a piece of work in order to obtain academic credit a second time for the same piece of work.
- 6.13 Self-plagiarism** is a term sometimes used to indicate duplication or replication. It is possible to self-plagiarise when you submit the work that has already been submitted for academic credit in one module, for academic credit in another module, even when a module is being repeated.

## 7. Links to related UN Policies/Guidance/Regulations

- 7.1 [Assessment & Feedback Portal](#)
- 7.2 [Academic Integrity Web Area](#)
- 7.3 [Skills Hub](#)
- 7.4 [UNPAC 2017 \(University of Northampton Plagiarism Avoidance Course 2017\)](#) – a student self-study module
- 7.5 [Academic Misconduct Referral Form](#)
- 7.6 [Academic Misconduct Appeal Form](#)
- 7.7 [Guidance to students on how to prepare for an academic misconduct interview, appeal or viva](#)

## 8. Links and references to related external documents

Academic Integrity Service (2010). Supporting academic integrity: Approaches and resources for higher education. York: HEA. Available online at:

[http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/academicintegrity/SupportingAcademicIntegrity\\_v2.pdf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/academicintegrity/SupportingAcademicIntegrity_v2.pdf) [accessed on 14/05/14].

Carroll, J. (2002). A Handbook for Deterring Plagiarism in Higher Education. Oxford: Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development.

Center for Academic Integrity (1999). The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity. Des Plaines: CAI. Available online at: <http://www.academicintegrity.org/ica/assets/FVProject.pdf> [accessed on 17/05/14].

Maguire C (2003) *Guidance for BVC providers: a common approach to plagiarism and collusion*. London: Bar Council.

McCabe, D. L. and Pavela, G. (2015) Ten Principles of Academic Integrity for Faculty [online]. Available from: [http://www.integrityseminar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Ten-Principles-of-Academic-Integrity-for-Faculty\\_0.pdf](http://www.integrityseminar.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Ten-Principles-of-Academic-Integrity-for-Faculty_0.pdf) [Accessed 08/06/15].

Perry, B. (2010). Exploring academic misconduct: Some insights into student behaviour. *Active Learning in Higher Education*. 11(2), 97-108.

QAA (2006). Code of practice for the assurance of academic quality and standards in higher education, Section 6: Assessment of students. Gloucester: QAA.

## Appendix 1 Academic Misconduct Process for Postgraduate Research Students

### 1. Guidance on referring suspected cases of academic misconduct

In relation to a postgraduate research student undertaking a PhD or MPhil, or Professional Research thesis, suspected academic misconduct may be referred:

- i) by the supervisory team;
  - When a student's skills in relation to academic integrity do not develop appropriately, and/or the student does not take appropriate action to remedy previous instances of academic misconduct,
  - When misconduct is suspected in a piece of work or a report specifically requested by a supervisor or sponsor,
  - When misconduct is suspected in the documents submitted for assessment at the registration or transfer stages;
- ii) by the Research Degrees Board when misconduct is suspected in the documents submitted for assessment at the registration or transfer stages; or
- iii) by examiners when examining the thesis submitted for examination.

### 2. Suspected Academic Misconduct Procedure – Stage 1

**2.1** Upon suspecting academic misconduct in relation to a postgraduate research student undertaking a PhD or MPhil, or Professional Research thesis:

- i) a **supervisor** must provide clear, written feedback to the student explaining why the matter has been referred and informing the student that an email will be sent to them in due course outlining what will happen next. The supervisor refers the matter to the appropriate Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) by completing the Academic Misconduct Referral Form and submitting it to the Graduate School. The Graduate School will log the referral and pass it to the AIO;
- ii) a **Research Degrees Board (RDB) member** must first consult the RDB chair who may consult other members and/or the supervisory team in order to decide whether to refer the case. In the case of a referral, the Chair or a nominated member shall provide clear, written feedback to the student explaining why the matter has been referred and informing them that an email will be sent to them in due course outlining what will happen next. The RDB Chair or nominee refers the matter to the appropriate Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) by completing the Academic Misconduct Referral Form and submitting it to the Graduate School. The Graduate School will log the referral and pass it to the AIO;

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- iii) an **examiner** must provide clear, written feedback to the Graduate School explaining why the matter should be referred to an Academic Integrity Officer (AIO). The Graduate School must inform the student of the referral and the reasons for it in an email, also outlining what will happen next. The examiner refers the matter to the appropriate Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) by completing the Academic Misconduct Referral Form and submitting it to the Graduate School. The Graduate School will make the other examiner(s) aware of the referral and the examination process may not continue until the outcome of the referral is known. The Graduate School will log the referral and pass it to the AIO.

**2.2** Suspected academic misconduct in relation to facilitated Level 8 modules shall follow the same procedure as for taught modules.

**2.3** Where, in the Academic Misconduct Procedure in the main policy document, it refers to the Student Records team, for Postgraduate Research Students the Graduate School shall act as the Student Records team. For facilitated Level 8 modules, the Graduate School shall communicate with the Student Records team responsible for assessment administration.

**2.4** If, at Stage 2 of the Procedure, the panel determines that programme termination should be applied, it is the Research Degrees Committee to which it should make a recommendation rather than the Academic Registrar as stated in section 5.7.35.

### 3. Tariff

In addition to Table 2 in the Procedure, the following table shows the possible penalties for Academic Misconduct in relation to a postgraduate research student undertaking a PhD or MPhil or Professional Research thesis and by whom these penalties can be applied.

	<b>Penalties</b>	<b>Decision maker</b>
Postgraduate research - prior to thesis submission	Allowed to continue/progress and require remedy of misconduct as part of supervisory process	AIO
	If at APG or transfer, remedy misconduct before registration or transfer application can be submitted to the RDB	AMP
	Termination of studies	AMP
Postgraduate research - post-thesis submission	Hold viva and include remedy of misconduct as part of post-viva amendments	AMP
	Remedy misconduct before proceeding to viva	AMP
	Hold viva and refer thesis including remedy of misconduct	AMP
	Refer thesis without viva. Remedied thesis to go to viva as resubmission (i.e. no further attempt allowed)	AMP
	Termination of studies	AMP

## **Appendix 2**

### **Guidance on accompanying 'friend'**

The University of Northampton recognises that providing support and advice to persons as part of this Policy should extend to enabling them to be accompanied at any formal meeting or hearing.

#### ***Legal Representation***

Because the proceedings of appeal and complaint hearings are part of University's internal arrangements, formal legal representation is not normally either helpful or appropriate: legal representation is therefore likely to be the exception, rather than the norm. A complainant or appellant who intends to be accompanied at a meeting or hearing by a legal representative, or another person acting in a professional capacity, must contact the University to request this at least 5 working days prior to the hearing and set out the reasons for making this request. Any such request will be considered by the Academic Registrar (or nominee) and a decision made. The decision, and reasons for it, will be relayed to the student. Where a legal representative is to be present the University may consider whether to include its own legal representation. In such circumstances it may become necessary to postpone the meeting to a later date.

#### ***Role of the 'Friend'***

The University normally restricts the role of friend to that of support and advice. The friend will not normally be allowed to present the student's case on his/her behalf, nor respond directly to questions. At the discretion of the investigator or the Chair of the Hearing, the friend may present a brief supporting statement. Where a student wishes his/her friend to take a more active role this should be requested to the Chair of the Hearing in advance (with reasons). The Chair will decide whether or not to accept the request.

The appellant or complainant has the right to confer with their friend during the course of the hearing or meeting, for example, before responding to any question from the panel or the investigator.

The appellant or complainant may not be represented in their absence by a third party: in such cases the panel will normally consider the case in their absence. Where, through reasons of disability, the appellant or complainant is unable to represent themselves, appropriate adjustments will be made and these arrangements will be subject to approval by the Academic Registrar.