



The following document should be read in conjunction with the Academic Misconduct Policy:

### Reporting and investigation

Heads of School/Department will appoint Academic Misconduct Officers to undertake investigations into allegations of academic misconduct on behalf of the School/Department. Decision-making staff will be appropriately trained, enabling the consistent and fair application of these Regulations. Any reference to the Secretary to the Academic Misconduct Committee should be taken to refer to a **panel Secretary** on each campus who manages the procedure on behalf of the Academic Misconduct Committee. The procedure set out in relation to Academic Misconduct Committee hearings should be read in conjunction with guidance documentation relating to arrangements on **each campus**. Staff and students should ensure they understand the procedure relating to the relevant campus ([UK](#), [China](#), [Malaysia](#)) and liaise with the correct Secretary.

Note: Allegations that arise pertaining to assessments from previous academic years can be investigated retrospectively, provided that there is compelling evidence to instigate the investigation.

### Reporting a suspicion of academic misconduct

Where a member of staff suspects that academic misconduct has taken place, they will report the matter in writing to relevant Academic Misconduct Officer of the School/Department in which the work was undertaken, providing reasons and any relevant evidence.

In cases of suspected **misconduct in an examination**, when an invigilator identifies an issue, they will write a report and the examination script will be annotated to indicate the point at which the suspected misconduct was identified. This report will be forwarded to the Academic Misconduct Officer in which the work was undertaken.

In cases of **false authorship**, the reporting staff member is expected to outline their reasoning for suspecting that the student is not the author of the work submitted and provide any pertinent evidence. This may include (but is not limited to): inconsistency in writing style, language, and grammar; the assignment not properly addressing the question set; inappropriate referencing and bibliography. This may also involve inconsistency in grades/standard of work, and allegations from third parties.

Where a student has reason to **suspect a fellow student** of academic misconduct, they may report this, to the Academic Misconduct Officer for the School/Department in which the work was undertaken. Anonymity cannot be guaranteed as the accused student has a right of access to information pertaining to their personal data. If the reporting student does not give their consent for their identity to be revealed, no further action can be taken, unless additional and/or compelling evidence is identified by an academic member of staff. Reports which are motivated by malice will not be considered and will be addressed by the University's [Unacceptable Behaviour Policy](#) and/or [Code of Discipline for Students](#).

Where a **third party has reported a student** as having committed academic misconduct and the Academic Misconduct Officer believes there is compelling evidence to investigate further, the student will be made aware of all allegations made against them. Details of the case will not be shared with the reporting third party due General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).



Where the student suspected of misconduct is **registered in a different School** or Department, the relevant Academic Misconduct Officer will also be informed that an investigation is underway and of the outcome.

An Academic Misconduct Officer for the School/Department in which the work was undertaken is required to conduct an **investigation**.

## Investigation by an Academic Misconduct Officer

Please refer to the [procedure section](#) for details.

## Outcomes from a School investigation

### Decision of Academic Misconduct Officer

If the Academic Misconduct Officer is satisfied that academic misconduct has **not** taken place, no further action will be taken in relation to the case and no formal record of the issue will be kept. The student will be informed of this outcome in writing.

If the Academic Misconduct Officer is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that academic misconduct **has** occurred, one of the following courses of action will apply and the student will be notified of the outcome in writing.

### Courses of action:

#### 1. School Referral to Academic Misconduct Committee

Where the student:

- i) Has a finding of False Authorship or impersonation
- ii) Has falsified content or evidence provided as part of an Extenuating Circumstances claim
- iii) Has previously had two or more cases of academic misconduct recorded against them (not including findings of Poor Academic Practice) and where the subsequent offences occurred after the procedures for the first offence have been completed. If multiple instances are discovered and investigated at the same time or an instance occurs before the conclusion of the first academic misconduct meeting, this should be considered as one instance.
- vi) Where the Academic Misconduct Officer believes an appropriate penalty or outcome for the instance is not available to them under these Regulations
- vii) Is a Postgraduate Research student (unless the misconduct has taken place in a first year, taught module).

The Academic Misconduct Officer will forward the decision letter and supporting evidence [see attached list of paperwork required from School] to the Secretary of the **Academic Misconduct Committee** ([academic-misconduct@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:academic-misconduct@nottingham.ac.uk)) for the case to be heard by a panel of the Academic Misconduct Committee. The referral to the Secretary must be made within two weeks of the student being notified of the final decision.

Where a case is reported to the Secretary of the Academic Misconduct Committee, the Academic Misconduct Officer will inform the relevant **Board of Examiners**. The Board of Examiners must defer consideration of the work in question until the Committee has



made a decision on the case. The results for modules unaffected by the suspected misconduct should be considered by the Board of Examiners and released to the student. In the case of research students, the Board of Examiners comprises the Internal and External Examiners, and the Joint Report Form should be deferred until the Academic Misconduct Committee has made its decision.

Where, as a result of the student's actions, it is considered that a **disciplinary offence** may have been committed (such as forgery, theft) and/or where the student's actions raise concerns about their fitness to practise, the Academic Misconduct Officer will refer the case to the Chair of the Academic Appeals and Misconduct Committee (via the Secretary to the AMC). The Chair of the Academic Appeals and Misconduct Committee will liaise with the University Assessor to determine whether the case should be considered under the [Code of Discipline for Students](#) or University [Fitness to Practise procedures](#), in addition to, or instead of, the Regulations on Academic Misconduct. Where more than one student is involved, all related cases will be referred. Once the Chair has decided on the appropriate course of action, the Secretary will write to the student and Academic Misconduct Officer giving further details.

Otherwise, the Academic Misconduct Officer will refer to penalties available to the School below.

## 2. School application of penalties

If the Academic Misconduct Officer is satisfied that the academic misconduct came about because of a lack of understanding of good academic practice or convention because the student has not been provided with the appropriate information and guidance on how to develop skills about such practice, the student will receive a written caution. This will be recorded on the student's record as a case of **Poor Academic Practice** and reported to the Secretary to the Academic Misconduct Committee when the student is notified of the decision. A penalty will not be imposed although the lower standard of the piece of work is likely to be reflected in the mark awarded. The School will provide the student with relevant guidance to enable the student to develop their understanding of good practice. Should a further allegation of academic misconduct occur subsequent to a finding of Poor Academic Practice, this will be investigated by an Academic Misconduct Officer as a first instance. A student can only have only one instance of Poor Academic Practice.

If the Academic Misconduct Officer is satisfied that the student had been provided with the appropriate information and guidance on how to develop skills about such practice and, in all the circumstances, could reasonably be expected to avoid the academic misconduct, a **penalty** will be imposed.

Where the misconduct relates to work undertaken in a taught module or as part of a taught programme of study, the Academic Misconduct Officer will impose a penalty. The matter will be recorded on the student's School record as a case of Academic Misconduct and reported to the Secretary to the Academic Misconduct Committee when the student is notified of the decision. If appropriate, the School will provide the student with relevant guidance to enable the student to develop his or her understanding of good practice. Any penalty that impacts the marks of the assessment will be applied in conjunction with any other penalty, academic misconduct penalties being applied in the first instance and prior to further penalties e.g., late submission or exceeding the word count). All penalties should be appropriate and proportionate, taking into account the nature of the misconduct, the evidence presented by the School and the student and the impact of the penalty. In addition to the penalties listed below the student may be



i) **A written warning.** (Where relevant, the lower standard of the piece of work is likely to be reflected in the mark awarded but no further penalty will be imposed).

ii) **A mark of zero for the specific material** which is the subject of the academic misconduct or where the material does not constitute a specific paragraph or section. The amount of material deemed to be academic misconduct is a matter of academic judgment and cannot be determined by a Turnitin report alone.

iii) **An overall percentage reduction** to the piece of work reflecting the percentage of the work, which is the subject of the academic misconduct, as determined by the Academic Misconduct Officer. This could also include a reduction in marks to a lower spot mark if the published marking criteria use spot marks. The amount of material deemed to be academic misconduct is a matter of academic judgment and cannot be determined by a Turnitin report alone.

iv) **A mark of zero for the entire piece of coursework** or assessment in which the academic misconduct has occurred. In the case of misconduct in examination a mark of zero will be recorded for the examination in question.

v) To be applied in relation to 'failure to disclose previous experience or qualifications that are a bar to enrolment on a module' only, a mark of **zero for the module** with the requirement for the student to take a **different module** as a reassessment (where a reassessment opportunity is permitted).

Or:

vi) If the misconduct does not relate to work undertaken in a taught module or as part of a taught programme of study, the case should be referred to the Academic Misconduct Committee (see above).

vii) Where an academic penalty is not appropriate (e.g., where a student has been found to have assisted another student to gain an unpermitted advantage, but the assisting student is not enrolled on the module in which the collusion has occurred), the Academic Misconduct Officer may request that the Chair of the Academic Appeals and Misconduct Committee uses summary jurisdiction to apply a fine up to a maximum of £250. The Secretary to the Committee will liaise with the Chair on the Academic Misconduct Officer's behalf. The Chair may approve the request or liaise with the University Assessor as outlined above if they believe it to be relevant to the case.

### **Student Self-Referral following a School Penalty**

Where a student is dissatisfied with a School's decision, they may be able to request a self-referral on the following grounds:

- A procedural irregularity occurred in the handling of the School's investigation which has a material impact on the outcome/decision making.
- A **compelling argument** that the decision and/or penalty was unreasonable and/ or disproportionate.

Self-referral requests made on the above grounds must be supported by evidence and a clear rationale for the grounds claimed. Please note that new evidence will not normally be considered within a self-referral request if it has not been submitted for consideration



during the School investigation stage of the procedure, without compelling reason as to why it was not submitted for consideration by the School.

In most circumstances a Self-Referral, where accepted, will be paper based without the student or School being required to attend a full Hearing. The evidence and the student's representations will be sent to three academic staff members of the Academic Misconduct Committee for consideration. Where a School's outcome is unclear as to the reasoning behind their decision, a School may be asked to provide a supplementary statement to the Committee to explain the rationale behind the penalty imposed. In **exceptional cases** where the student has had no opportunity to make appropriate representations or makes a compelling argument, a Self-Referral may proceed to a full AMC hearing. The Panel Secretary will determine which is the more appropriate approach, with the student being notified in writing. As a minimum, all of the following criteria should be met for a paper-based review:

1. The student has had an opportunity to make their representations.
2. In the case of collusion, the student has had sight of all relevant information and evidence, including the identities and submissions of other implicated parties.

Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome can request a review of the decision by the Director of Registry and Academic Affairs (or nominee).

The request must be made in writing, to the Secretary to the Academic Misconduct Committee ([academic-misconduct@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:academic-misconduct@nottingham.ac.uk)), within **5 working days** of the date of the outcome of the School investigation. This does not apply where the course of action decided by the School is to refer the case to the Academic Misconduct Committee.

The Secretary will request from the Academic Misconduct Officer the decision letter and supporting evidence as required.

Where a self-referral request is accepted for a full hearing e.g., for a finding of collusion, it may be necessary for the Committee to consider whether other students involved in the case need to be invited to the meeting.

Should a student wish to request any adjustments based on a disability which will enable them to access the procedure effectively, they should contact the [academic-misconduct@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:academic-misconduct@nottingham.ac.uk).

Claims that amount simply to an expression of dissatisfaction with the decision or penalty imposed will be rejected.

Students may request a review of the decision to reject their self-referral request by following the guidance found within the '**Next Steps**' section of the Procedure.

### **The Academic Misconduct Committee**

The procedure relating to the Academic Misconduct Committee is managed by the **panel Secretary** on behalf of the Academic Misconduct Committee on each campus. Staff and students should ensure they understand the full detail of the procedure relating to the relevant campus ([UK](#), [China](#), [Malaysia](#)) and liaise with the correct Secretary. The full detail of the procedure should be read in conjunction with the below summary.



## **Summary of Academic Misconduct Committee procedures**

Following a School Referral to AMC, ordinarily, cases will be heard by a **panel** on behalf of the Academic Misconduct Committee in the form of a formal hearing. This can be in person or online. The panel will comprise three members, two of whom will be academic staff members of the Academic Misconduct Committee. One of the academic staff members will act as Chair. The third member will be a trained student representative or, where no student representative is available, a third academic staff member of the Academic Misconduct Committee. The student whose case is being heard may insist that the panel does or does not include a student representative.

### **i) Paper-based review**

In some circumstances, the case may be considered without need for a formal hearing or for the student or School to be in attendance. In this instance, the evidence and student representations considered by the School are sent to three academic staff members of the Academic Misconduct Committee. Students can request this, following instructions in their School outcome letter.

The Panel Secretary determines the more appropriate approach, even if not requested by the student. As a minimum, all of the following criteria should be met:

1. The student does not dispute the School's finding of academic misconduct. The student may, however, dispute the penalty imposed.
2. The facts of the case are not in dispute and there is no additional evidence to present (other than that already presented at the School meeting)

Students will be informed of the outcome in writing. Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome can request a review of the decision by the Director of Registry and Academic Affairs (or nominee). Students cannot appeal the finding of academic misconduct but may appeal against the penalty only on the grounds that a different penalty be imposed. Claims that amount simply to an expression of dissatisfaction with the penalty imposed will not be considered.

### **ii) Academic Misconduct Committee hearing**

If the case is not to be heard by a paper-based panel, the School or Department representative and the student will be notified of the date of the next available AMC hearing. For cases of suspected collusion, joint or group allegations may be considered at a single meeting with all students in attendance. The School or Department representative(s) are required to attend to present their case. If the student is unable to attend for good reason, they may elect to have an SU Education Adviser attend on their behalf. Only SU Education Advisers may attend in lieu of the student. Students may not have an SU Education Adviser attend on their behalf for group investigative meetings. Otherwise, the hearing will take place in the student's absence and the Chair will have a duty to ensure that the members of the panel are fully aware of all the facts including the points made in the student's statement.

The hearing documentation will be circulated in advance of the hearing and will include the original Academic Misconduct Officer's decision letter and supporting evidence. The student will be invited to submit an additional written statement for inclusion in the documentation.

Panel members, the student and the School or Department representative will all have access to the same documentary and verbal evidence. An exceptional arrangement may be made at the discretion of the Chair, if a student wishes to request that additional





evidence be made available to the panel only (e.g., properly certified medical evidence that the student felt unable to share with the School or Department).

If the student has a previous case of Academic Misconduct on their record, the panel will only be told of this after a verdict is reached but before a penalty is decided upon (if appropriate). The only exception to this will be if, in making his or her case to the panel, the student chooses to disclose a previous instance or makes false representation about previous instances of academic misconduct in which case the School may correct matters of fact.

The School or Department and the student may invite **witnesses** to attend.

The student is entitled to bring a supporter to the hearing. The supporter must be either; an Education Adviser or other representative from the SU (or equivalent at UNNC/UMNC), a fellow student, a member of staff, or a Union representative (e.g., BMA, RCN). The supporter may take notes on the student's behalf, make representations on the student's behalf, and ask questions, but may not answer questions on the student's behalf. The student may be asked to choose a different supporter if, for example, it is perceived that the chosen supporter may cause a conflict of interest or if their presence may prejudice the meeting. The supporter cannot attend the meeting in the student's absence (with the exception of the SU Education Adviser, as outlined above).

The names and roles of those attending, whether as supporter or witness, must be **notified** to the Secretary at least three working days in advance of the hearing.

A panel of the Academic Misconduct Committee acts with the full delegated authority of Quality and Standards Committee. In addition to the penalties listed below the student may be required to undertake appropriate remedial tuition. It has the power to:

- a) **require** members of the staff of the University to make written submissions, attend, give evidence, and answer questions
- b) **apply a penalty** if it is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that academic misconduct has taken place.

Once the panel has made its decision the student and School or Department will be notified of the **outcome in writing**, normally within five working days. Where this is not possible, students will be notified of an alternative timeframe in which they can expect to receive the outcome.

If the panel identifies any **shortcomings** in the School or Department procedure, details of these will be recorded by the Secretary who will report them to the School or Department.

### **Penalties available to the Academic Misconduct Committee**

A panel of the Academic Misconduct Committee has the **power** to apply **one or more** of the following penalties/actions:

- a) any of the penalties/actions listed as available to the Academic Misconduct Officer
- b) award a mark of zero for the entire module in which the academic misconduct has occurred
- c) award a **mark of zero for all the assessments in the semester** (even where this will lead to, for example, a reduction in degree class or the award of a lower qualification). In the case of year-long modules, this penalty may affect both semesters



d) award a **mark of zero for the whole year** (even where this will lead to, for example, a reduction in degree class or the award of a lower qualification)

e) require the student to **take reassessments** (as a result of being awarded zero marks) in the following session before being allowed to progress or complete their course.

g) in the case of PhD students, confirm the student's probationary status and require the student to undertake another **annual (confirmation) review** in line with the Quality Manual guidance

h) require a research student to **resubmit** a thesis with or without a viva

i) require a research student to **register** for a period of supervision before being allowed to resubmit a thesis

j) **suspend or terminate** the student's course

k) **withdraw the award** of a degree or other qualification from a former student of the University

Any of the penalties/actions may also be applied to a student found to have committed academic misconduct during a **reassessment**. Where the penalty would lead to the termination of the student's course through the automatic application of University regulations (i.e., because the student has exhausted their reassessment opportunities), the Committee may exercise its discretion and decide to grant the student one further reassessment opportunity notwithstanding regulations.

## Next steps

Students who consider that the University has failed to carry out its duty to act fairly in the application of the Regulations on Academic Misconduct should submit a Review Request form to [academic-misconduct@nottingham.ac.uk](mailto:academic-misconduct@nottingham.ac.uk) to **request a review** of their case by the Director of Registry and Academic Affairs (or nominee). Dissatisfaction with the outcome alone does not constitute grounds for requesting a review. In order for a review request to be considered the student must establish the following grounds:

- A procedural irregularity occurred in the handling of your case of academic misconduct
- A compelling argument that the decision and/or penalty was unreasonable and/or disproportionate, including the decision not to accept a request for a Self-Referral.

Such requests should be made within **one month** of the student being notified of the decision of the Committee or Complaints and Conduct Team. Where necessary, the Director, or delegate acting on the Director's behalf, may liaise with the Chair of the Academic Appeals and Misconduct Committee in conducting the review and in determining an appropriate outcome.

The review stage will not usually consider the issues afresh or involve further investigation. The reviewer can:

- Reject the claim and issue the student with a Completion of Procedures letter
- Uphold the claim and refer to the Chair of the Academic Appeals and Misconduct Committee. The Chair may substitute a decision on behalf of the University.





### **Completion of Procedures**

As required by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), if the University is unable to resolve the case to the student's satisfaction, and there are no further steps available to the student, they will be issued with a formal "Completion of Procedures" letter within 28 days of the outcome being determined. This provides formal confirmation that the student has exhausted the internal procedure and is required for their case to be considered by the OIA.

### **Office of the Independent Adjudicator**

Once the internal procedures of the academic misconduct policy have been completed, if the student is still not satisfied with the outcome, they may take their case to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The OIA operates externally to the University. It will not normally look at a case unless and until all relevant internal procedures have been exhausted. Further information is available from the [OIA website](#).