

Student Academic Misconduct Code of Practice

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1. Preface for Students

- 1.1 This Code of Practice has been produced for both students and staff, including Academic Conduct Officers and overseas link tutors. It sets out the University's approach to academic misconduct and to provide detailed descriptions of processes and roles of people involved in these processes. Therefore not all sections will be equally relevant for students but please refer in particular to the following sections:
- Section 4 – Good Academic Practice
 - Section 5 – What is Academic Misconduct
 - Section 7 – Proofreading
 - Section 14 - Penalties for Academic Misconduct.
- 1.2 At Keele, we treat academic misconduct very seriously and if proven, penalties can range from formal warnings to permanent exclusion from the University for the most serious or repeat offences. It is therefore very important that you understand how to prepare for and take assessments honestly. In order to assist you with this there are various resources and help available both in Schools (see School handbooks) and also centrally as follows:
- <https://www.keele.ac.uk/studentacademicconduct/>
 - <https://keelesu.com/advice/academic/plagiarism/>
- 1.3 If you have any questions or need advice about the academic misconduct process, you can contact the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct team (Email: misconduct@keele.ac.uk, Tel 01782 734004) or Advice & Support at Keele (ASK) in the Students' Union. (Email: su.ask@keele.ac.uk, Tel 01782 734800).

2. Introduction

- 2.1 Students must produce work for assessment on time, honestly and without attempting to gain an unfair advantage. All the work that they submit must be their own work, and any other person's work or ideas must be appropriately acknowledged. Even when this is not required, it is assumed that all work a student submits meets these requirements.
- 2.2 The University treats academic misconduct very seriously and penalties will be given if academic misconduct is proven (more details about this can be found in section 14). Students can be excluded from the University for very serious or repeat offences.
- 2.3 This Code of Practice outlines the University's approach to suspected academic misconduct in an assessment, and the penalties that can be given for proven cases. Students should be aware that a record of academic misconduct may have significant academic and professional implications (see section 15.4).
- 2.4 The University will provide information on academic misconduct, both centrally and in Schools/Research Institutes. Students must be aware of what academic misconduct is and how it can be avoided (<https://www.keele.ac.uk/studentacademicconduct>).
- 2.5 The University can submit any assessment to text/patent matching software in order to identify non-original text. The marker can then check to see if the work has been properly referenced.

3. Scope

- 3.1 This code applies to all work submitted by current students to the University, including students studying at partner institutions. Former students will be treated in the spirit of this code unless the regulation in place at the time of their registration does not allow this.
- 3.2 This code also applies to draft work submitted to tutors for comment (e.g. draft chapters of dissertations) where the tutor suspects that the student has commissioned work (see section 6) or has falsified any data.
- 3.3 This code applies to all modules a student is taking at the University and not just modules being taken as part of their principal programme.
- 3.4 In cases of suspected or proven academic misconduct, the University can investigate previously marked work.
- 3.5 Students studying on programmes that are subject to Regulation B5, *Fitness to Practise*, (<https://www.keele.ac.uk/regulations/regulationb5/>) who breach the academic misconduct procedure will be referred to the relevant Head of School/Research Institute for additional consideration.
- 3.6 Regulation B1, *Student Discipline*, provides separate procedures that will deal with any discipline issues that arise during the investigation of academic misconduct (e.g. verbal abuse of an examination invigilator).

4. Good Academic Practice

- 4.1 Students should use the professional and academic toolkit module on the KLE (found under the Learning tab) to find support resources. Students can get further help and advice on how to improve their academic practice and skills by contacting the Student Learning team <https://www.keele.ac.uk/studentlearning/contactus/> where they can access 1:1 support and workshops
- 4.2 International students and students whose first language is not English are encouraged to contact the Language Centre to arrange a 'One-to-One' tutorial to discuss their work with one of the English Language tutors. Appointments can be booked online at <https://www.keele.ac.uk/study/languagecentre/11tutorials/>, in person at the Language Centre office in CBB0.001 or by contacting the Language Centre administrators (enl@keele.ac.uk Tel: 733013).
- 4.3 The research governance tool kit provides key information and guidance for students wishing to conduct research that involves, for example but not limited to, human subjects, their data or bodily material, security sensitive information or overseas activity.
- 4.4 Students should keep all draft copies of assessed work to help prove they wrote the work if challenged. Academic Conduct Officers may ask students to provide evidence that shows how they had prepared for and wrote the assessed work. This can include: copies of any drafts of the work, the articles/books that were read, and any notes made from them. Academic Conduct Officers and Misconduct Committees will need to know if anyone proofread the work. If the work was proofread, students should be able to bring copies of the work before and after it was proofread, along with copies of any correspondence between themselves and the proofreader.
- 4.5 Students are responsible for the security of their work, and for not knowingly allowing others to pass off their work as their own. Not keeping work secure could have professional implications. A student may be guilty of collusion if they pass work

they have previously completed to another student who then submits it, in whole or in part, as their own.

5. What is Academic Misconduct?

- 5.1 Academic misconduct is any action or attempted action which may result in the student gaining an unfair academic advantage in an assessment. The types of action that will be classed as academic misconduct include, but are not limited, to the following:
- (a) Plagiarism - the student copies words or ideas from another person and presents those words/ideas as their own in an assessment without properly acknowledging and citing the source(s);
 - (b) Self-plagiarism - the student submits the same or almost identical work for more than one assessment without proper acknowledgement. (N.B. Students will not be guilty of self-plagiarism if they are repeating a module and are given the same assignment. Schools/Research Institutes should ensure that, where a suitable alternative exists, students who are repeating are given different assignments where possible.);
 - (c) Collusion - a piece of work is prepared by more than one student, including work used for a piece of authorised collaborative group-work, and is presented in whole or in part for assessment as if it were the student's own work;
 - (d) Commissioning - the commissioning and/or submission of work to be assessed which is not the student's own work and presenting it as if it were (see section 6 for more details);
 - (e) Giving another student a copy of all or part of one's own work so that they can use it in the submission of an assignment;
 - (f) Writing part of, or all, of another student's assignment;
 - (g) The falsification of data or sources;
 - (h) Falsification of official documents or signatures, where these are used for academic benefit;
 - (i) Attempting to manipulate an assessment to avoid academic misconduct being found;
 - (j) Research misconduct as defined by the Research Misconduct Procedure¹;
 - (k) Allowing someone else to write or make material changes to one's work. Further details are in Section 6;
 - (l) Having work translated from another language by another person or by using a translation service or software;
 - (m) Translating work written by someone else in another language and submitting it as one's own work without properly acknowledging and citing the source(s).
 - (n) Gaining or trying to gain access to any assessment details, e.g. examination paper, before the release of the assessment details;

¹<https://www.keele.ac.uk/media/keeleuniversity/hr/disciplinegrievanceandraisingconcerns/Research%20Misconduct%20Policy.final.pdf>

- (o) Possession of unauthorised material and/or electronic devices in an examination or class test;
- (p) Communicating or attempting to communicate with someone else, apart from an invigilator, during an examination or class test;
- (q) Copying, or attempting to copy another student's answers during an examination or class test;
- (r) Continuing to write (or continuing to perform whatever task is being examined) after the end of the examination or class test;
- (s) Allowing another person to impersonate yourself or impersonating another person in an examination, test or hearing;

6. Commissioning²

- 6.1 Commissioning work is a very serious form of academic misconduct. Commissioning occurs when a student obtains work for assessment that has been written, either in full or in part, by another person, where input from another person is not allowed. Money does not have to be exchanged in order for work to be 'commissioned'. Commissioned work might be prewritten or specifically prepared for the student and might be obtained from a company or individual.
- 6.2 If it is suspected that a student has submitted work that has not been written by them, the student will normally be asked to attend an interview with the marker and School/Research Institute Academic Conduct Officer. In the interview, the student will need to demonstrate that they understand the content of the work and show how they wrote the work (see section 10.11). It is very important that students keep copies of any drafts and materials that they use when researching and writing assignments.
- 6.3 If the student is not able to assure the marker and Academic Conduct Officer that they are the author of the assignment, the case will be referred to the Academic Misconduct Committee for consideration. If the student is able to demonstrate that they had the work proofread, but the proofreading has gone beyond what is allowed in the proofreading guidance (see section 7), the Academic Conduct Officer will deal with the case as a major offence of plagiarism.
- 6.4 The recommended penalty for submitting commissioned work is permanent exclusion from the University (see the tariff in section 14).

7. Proofreading

- 7.1 Students might choose to get support from their peers when preparing their assignments, such as discussing the subject matter, exchanging ideas and/or receiving suggestions for improving the work. This is peer-support and the university accepts this as a reasonable expectation when completing coursework/assessment. **However, peers must not make any changes to the work; students must make decisions about and draft the content of their work themselves.**

² This may also be termed contract cheating. In October 2017 the QAA produced a guidance document 'Contracting to Cheat in Higher Education' which can be found at: <http://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/Publications/Documents/Contracting-to-cheat-in-higher-education.pdf>

- 7.2 The University provides guidance to all students that explains good academic practice in relation to third-party proofreading of academic work. Students are allowed to use a proofreader for an assessment, as outlined in the proofreading guidance, unless they are told it is not permitted for that module or assignment. The guidance, which can be found at: <https://www.keele.ac.uk/studentacademicconduct>, sets out what a proofreader can or cannot do.
- 7.3 In summary, the guidance states that you must not allow anyone, other than a Keele member of staff or disability support worker supporting you, to go beyond what is permitted in the proofreading guidance. The following list is taken from the proof reading guidance document and sets out what a student must not allow anyone to do:
- (a) translate your work into English or any other language;
 - (b) rewrite passages in order to clarify meaning;
 - (c) change the text of the work so as to develop the ideas and arguments;
 - (d) change the ideas and arguments put forward within the work;
 - (e) reduce the length of the work so that it falls within the specified word limit;
 - (f) contribute additional material to the original;
 - (g) correct information within the work;
 - (h) rewrite sections where the argument or logic is faulty;
 - (i) substantially change the content of a piece of work;
 - (j) change the words or figures or notation (except to identify the correct spelling or verb tense of the word used);
 - (k) rearrange passages of text, sequence of code or section of other material;
 - (l) reformat the material;
 - (m) check calculations or formulae;
 - (n) rewrite formulae, equations or computer code;
 - (o) re-label figures or diagrams;
 - (p) correct faulty references or compile reference lists/bibliographies.

8. Roles and responsibilities

Academic Staff

- 8.1 Academic staff who suspect academic misconduct in an assignment must refer the matter to the Academic Conduct Officer for consideration.
- 8.2 Markers must not rely solely on the similarity index in a text/patent matching software report when deciding whether to refer a case. Markers must consider the substance of the copied material, not only the quantity. It is a matter of academic judgement. When referring the case, the marker may be asked to provide copies of the key sources that have been plagiarised.
- 8.3 The University provides guidance for using Turnitin and how to interpret its originality reports in Organisational Development workshops, and via learning technologists.

Academic Conduct Officers (ACOs)

- 8.4 At least one member of academic staff or senior professional services staff in each School/Centre/Research Institute fulfils the role of Academic Conduct Officer. The

Head of each School/Centre/Research Institute appoints the Academic Conduct Officer and the Deputy Academic Conduct Officer. Partner institutions responsible for collaborative programmes will also appoint an Academic Conduct Officer.

- 8.5 Deputy Academic Conduct Officers will assist Academic Conduct Officers with investigating cases in their School/Research Institute by sharing the workload. They will deal with any cases where the Academic Conduct Officer has a conflict of interest (see section 8.8). Any reference in this code to the Academic Conduct Officer also applies to the Deputy Academic Conduct Officer.
- 8.6 Training will be provided centrally to new and ongoing Academic Conduct Officers.
- 8.7 Academic Conduct Officers are only permitted to make decisions on first and second offences of plagiarism and collusion in work submitted for modules. All other offences must be referred to the Academic Misconduct Committee for consideration, after an initial investigation by the Academic Conduct Officer.
- 8.8 An Academic Conduct Officer cannot deal with any cases where they have been involved in the marking of that student's assessment for the module.
- 8.9 It is the responsibility of the Academic Conduct Officer to check if there are any prior offences in order to ensure that they can deal with the case. This information will also be needed when selecting the penalty.
- 8.10 Academic Conduct Officers can only issue penalties in accordance with the tariff listed in section 14. If, for any reason, they think the penalty is inappropriate (e.g. a student discloses exceptional circumstances which they want taken into account), they must refer the case to the Academic Misconduct Committee for consideration.
- 8.11 Students are able to appeal decisions made by Academic Conduct Officers. See section 16 for more detail on this.

Academic Misconduct Committee

- 8.12 The Academic Misconduct Committee membership list consists of:
- A minimum of 3 Chairs who will be senior academic members of staff;
 - A minimum of 3 members of academic staff from each Faculty;
- 8.13 An Academic Misconduct Committee meeting will consist of:
- A Chair;
 - A member of academic staff from the Faculty in which the alleged offence has taken place but without prior involvement in the case;
 - A member of academic staff from another Faculty.
- 8.14 The Academic Misconduct Committee will consider all allegations of academic misconduct in assessments that do not fall within the duties of an Academic Conduct Officer (see section 8.7). Where a case is proven, the Committee can issue penalties as outlined in section 14.
- 8.15 The processes in this Code of Practice also apply to cases of alleged academic misconduct by students studying on a Keele programme at a partner institution. Cases will be dealt with either via video conferencing with the Keele Misconduct Committee or by the collaborative partner if this responsibility was given as part of the contractual arrangements. Where this is the case, the partner will arrange a local committee. This local committee will act as a Keele Academic Misconduct Committee, following the same processes and informed by its case law. The constitution of the partner's committee will be approved in advance by the Head of

Academic Quality and Student Conduct. It will report its recommendations to the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct for approval before the student is informed of the outcome. Recommendations for exclusion from the University must be approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor at Keele.

- 8.16 All appeals against Academic Misconduct Committee decisions (both at Keele and partner institutions) will be dealt with using the appeals procedure outlined in section 16.

Staff Presenting Cases to the Academic Misconduct Committee

- 8.17 Most cases will be presented to the Committee by a member of staff who will normally either be an examination invigilator or a member of staff from the School/Research Institute (usually the Academic Conduct Officer, module leader, or the dissertation/project supervisor) where the offence has taken place.
- 8.18 The presenting member of staff will produce a written report explaining the nature of the alleged offence and provide supporting evidence. The report and supporting evidence will be given to the student and the Academic Misconduct Committee in advance of the meeting. At the meeting, the presenting member of staff will explain the nature of the alleged offence and answer any questions the Committee have.
- 8.19 Normally the case will be presented in person. However, if the case is straightforward and is clearly presented in writing, the Chair of the Academic Misconduct Committee may agree to consider the case without the requirement that the case is presented by a member of staff. The student will always be given the opportunity to attend and be heard about their case.

9. Academic misconduct procedure

Initiating the process

- 9.1 Examiners (internal or external) or supervisors who have good cause to suspect academic misconduct (as defined in section 5) at the point of submission or during the preparation stages, must report the case to the relevant Academic Conduct Officer and produce any evidence they have in support of the allegation.
- 9.2 The Academic Conduct Officer will consider the evidence and will decide whether there is a case to answer. If there is no case to answer the examiners will be instructed to complete the marking process.
- 9.3 If there is a case to answer, the Academic Conduct Officer must first decide if case falls within their jurisdiction (see section 8.7).
- 9.4 The Academic Conduct Officer must consult with the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Team to check if there are previous offences of academic misconduct on record.
- 9.5 For any case not within their jurisdiction, the Academic Conduct Officer will carry out an initial investigation, which may involve interviewing the student, and will then refer the case to the Academic Misconduct Committee for consideration.
- 9.6 Invigilators and internal or external examiners must report any allegation of cheating or other misconduct in an examination or class test to the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Manager. If there is a case for investigation, the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Manager will inform the student of the nature of the allegation and of the arrangements for an investigation by the Academic Misconduct Committee.

- 9.7 If a member of staff suspects that a student has submitted falsified evidence or documentation (e.g. an appeal form or exceptional circumstances claim) in order to gain unfair academic advantage, they must report this to the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Manager. If there is a case for investigation, the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Manager will inform the student of the nature of the allegation and of the arrangements for an investigation by the Academic Misconduct Committee.
- 9.8 Alleged research offences will initially be referred to the Research Integrity Team for consideration and referral to the appropriate Research Ethics Committee(s). The Committee(s) will consider the case and decide if ethical approval should be withdrawn. The case may then be referred to the Academic Misconduct Committee for consideration and will be presented by the appropriate Academic Conduct Officer, with expert advice from the Research Integrity Team as to the severity of the offence.
- 9.9 Any case involving a former student will initially be investigated by the School/Research Institute's Academic Conduct Officer, supported by the Student Appeals Complaints and Conduct team³. If evidence of serious academic misconduct is found the case will be referred to the Academic Misconduct Committee for consideration.

10. Investigation by the Academic Conduct Officer

- 10.1 After receiving an allegation of academic misconduct, the Academic Conduct Officer will carry out an investigation. This may include but is not limited to:
- (a) Past academic misconduct history;
 - (b) Academic performance;
 - (c) Attendance/engagement;
 - (d) Text/patent matching software report;
 - (e) Nature of the assessment;
 - (f) Any known exceptional circumstances relevant to the module in question.
- 10.2 The Academic Conduct Officer will invite the student for an 'investigating interview' if the evidence suggests that further investigation is necessary.
- 10.3 The examiner making the allegation may be present at this meeting or submit information for consideration.
- 10.4 The student will normally be given 7 calendar days' notice of the meeting (see section 11.1).
- 10.5 If the student does not attend, without good reason, a decision will be made in their absence.
- 10.6 In cases of possible collusion, the Academic Conduct Officer will require individual investigating interviews with all parties involved.
- 10.7 Following the interview, the Academic Conduct Officer will either decide if the case is proven⁴ or not, or refer the case to the Academic Misconduct Committee for consideration. If the Academic Conduct Officer finds the case proven, they will decide a penalty in accordance with the tariff outlined in section 14.

³ The protocol 'Suspected Academic Misconduct by Former Students' will be invoked in such cases.

⁴ See section 13 for definition of 'Proven'.

- 10.8 If the student discloses exceptional circumstances, the Academic Conduct Officer must ask the student if they want the case to be referred to the Committee where the circumstances can be taken into account. The student should be given the opportunity to make this decision once the Academic Conduct Officer has told the student whether it is a major or minor offence. Students must be given 48 hours to make this decision and should be told that it would be in their best interests to consult with ASK in the Students' Union before deciding. Students will be informed that if the Academic Misconduct Committee finds the case proven, it will decide whether the exceptional circumstances are relevant to the case. If the exceptional circumstances are relevant, the penalty may be varied. Regardless of exceptional circumstances, if the case is proven the offence will remain on the student's record. Students must be made aware that the Academic Misconduct Committee will normally only take exceptional circumstances into account in determining a penalty if appropriate supporting evidence is provided.
- 10.9 In a collusion case, if the Academic Conduct Officer suspects that there may be an innocent party after interviewing the students involved, the case should be referred to Academic Misconduct Committee for consideration.
- 10.10 The Academic Conduct Officer will confirm the outcome of the interview to the student in writing.
- 10.11 Where there is doubt over the authenticity or authorship of a piece of assessed work, the investigation may include, at the discretion of the Academic Conduct Officer, an interview. Such an interview would be conducted by the Academic Conduct Officer, normally with the assistance of a relevant member of academic staff. The student will be given a minimum of 7 calendar days' notice for the interview. The interview will provide the student with the opportunity to demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the academic subject matter and to provide evidence of the authorship of the specific item(s) of assessment in question. Following the interview, the Academic Conduct Officer will decide whether there is sufficient evidence to refer the case to the Academic Misconduct Committee for further consideration.

11. Student Support and Representation

- 11.1 Students are strongly encouraged to be accompanied to any formal meetings with either the Academic Conduct Officer or the Academic Misconduct Committee (see sections 6.2, 10.2 and 12.2). This would normally be a member of the ASK (Advice and Support at Keele) Team, a current student, an elected officer of the Keele University Students' Union or the Keele Postgraduate Association or a member of staff.
- 11.2 The University has the discretion to accept other supporters where this is deemed necessary. If you wish to be accompanied by an alternative supporter you should request this via the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct team in the first instance.
- 11.3 The accompanying person may attend the parts of the meeting the student is invited to attend, even if the student chooses not to attend in person.
- 11.4 If being accompanied by someone internal to the University as set out in 11.1, students must give the Academic Conduct Officer or the Academic Misconduct Committee the name and status of the accompanying friend or representative at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. Students will normally be given 7 calendar days' notice of the meeting.

- 11.5 Any supporter or representative accompanying the student to a meeting with an Academic Conduct Officer, or a meeting of the Academic Misconduct Committee, is there in a supporting capacity. The student may ask them to speak on their behalf or clarify particular points.

12. Academic Misconduct Committee procedure

- 12.1 The procedure for an investigation conducted by the Academic Misconduct Committee will normally follow the following arrangements.
- 12.2 The student will be given a letter inviting them to the meeting of the Academic Misconduct Committee. The letter will also set out the nature of the allegation and a copy of the documentation that will be presented to the Committee. This letter will be sent to the student normally a minimum of 7 calendar days in advance of the meeting.
- 12.3 The Committee will be made aware of all previous offences of academic misconduct when considering a case. The student will be given a copy of the relevant documents that the Committee is given relating to these previous offences.
- 12.4 The student will be informed of their right to call witnesses, give evidence and to be accompanied (see section 11 for who is allowed to accompany a student).
- 12.5 The student can submit a response to the allegation. This must be received at least 48 hours before the meeting, and must include any previously unknown circumstances and supporting evidence which could support them. The Committee can ignore any circumstances discussed at the meeting that were either not included in the student response or not accompanied by supporting evidence. This statement will be given to the presenting member of staff (see section 8.17) and the Committee.
- 12.6 If the student fails to attend without good reason, the Academic Misconduct Committee may deal with the case in their absence.
- 12.7 The format of the meeting will normally be as outlined below. However, the Chair can allow the conduct of the meeting to vary if necessary. For example, adjourning, to allow conflicting evidence to be resolved. If the presenting member of staff is not able to attend, the case may proceed in their absence using the documentation provided if the Chair of the Committee determines the case is straightforward.
- 12.8 The University may decide to make an audio recording of the meeting. The student will be informed of this in the letter inviting them to the meeting (see section 12.2).
- 12.9 The student will be told that if they do not wish the meeting to be recorded, they must inform the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Manager no less than 48 hours before the meeting, so that a note taker can be arranged.
- 12.10 The Committee will first discuss the case in private and agree what questions they need to ask.
- 12.11 The student, their supporter or representative (if attending) and presenting member of staff will join the Committee at the same time. Any witness(es) may be called as required during the meeting.
- 12.12 The Chair will introduce the other staff attending, and any others present, by name and explain the responsibilities of the members of the Committee.
- 12.13 The Chair will explain the procedure of the meeting and the powers of the Committee.

- 12.14 The Chair will invite the presenting member of staff to present the case and the Committee will then ask questions.
- 12.15 The Chair will then ask the student or representative to explain the events leading up to the alleged academic misconduct and the Committee will ask questions. The student can call witnesses at this point.
- 12.16 The Committee can ask the presenting member of staff further questions if there is a discrepancy between the student's and the presenting member of staff's account.
- 12.17 The presenting member of staff and the student cannot ask each other questions.
- 12.18 The Committee will then ask the student if there is anything they wish the Committee to take into consideration. The student will be asked if they wish the presenting member of staff to leave before speaking to the Committee about any mitigation.
- 12.19 Once the Chair is satisfied that all questioning is completed, the student, their representative and the presenting member of staff (if still present) will leave. The Academic Misconduct Committee will then decide if the case is proven, and if so, what penalty will be given (see section 14).
- 12.20 If for any reason the Committee requires further clarification of any aspect of the case, the student and their supporter/representative (if attending) and the presenting member of staff may be invited back into the meeting.
- 12.21 The Academic Misconduct Committee's decision will be confirmed in writing.

13. Standard and Burden of Proof

- 13.1 It is the University's responsibility to prove an allegation of academic misconduct. When deciding if the student has committed academic misconduct, the University has to be confident, on the basis of the available evidence, that it is 'more likely than not' that misconduct has occurred. This is called proof on 'the balance of probabilities'. The University will assess the probabilities on the understanding that the more serious the allegation, the stronger the evidence must be before the University concludes that the allegation is established on the balance of probability.
- 13.2 Unproven cases will not be kept on the student's record or disclosed to the Academic Misconduct Committee if there are any further allegations of academic misconduct.

14. Penalties

- 14.1 The University's academic misconduct procedures, and its tariff of penalties, are designed to encourage students who have demonstrated poor academic practice, or been found guilty of academic misconduct, to reflect on and improve their academic working practices, with appropriate support.
- 14.2 Where the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Manager decides that there has only been a technical breach of the examination regulations and procedures (e.g. bag beside desk, tearing pages out of the answer booklet) a warning letter will be issued. Repeated breaches of the examination regulations will be referred to the Academic Misconduct Committee.

Penalties issued by Academic Conduct Officers

- 14.3 The tariff in section 14 sets out the scope of the Academic Conduct Officer's jurisdiction and the fixed levels of penalty available to them. It applies to students in programmes at all academic levels.

- 14.4 The Academic Conduct Officer can require a student to take additional instruction in the expectations and requirements of academic study and behaviour. For first offences of plagiarism, Academic Conduct Officers should ensure that students have the opportunity to learn from their mistake and direct them to appropriate support and guidance.

Penalties issued by the Academic Misconduct Committee

- 14.5 In proven cases, the Committee can impose any of the penalties set out in the tariff (see section 14.9 onwards) but is not restricted to these and can impose another penalty provided this is appropriate and proportionate. If the Academic Misconduct Committee decides that a student be permanently excluded from the University, the decision must be ratified by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor. If the student appeals, the appeal will be heard by the Academic Misconduct Appeals Committee and any decision for exclusion must be ratified by the Vice-Chancellor.
- 14.6 Where a collaborative partner holds its own Academic Misconduct Committee, any outcome must be approved by the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct. This is to ensure consistency with similar cases dealt with by Keele's Academic Misconduct Committee.
- 14.7 The tariff below lists the penalties that will normally be applied for a proven offence. The Committee will consider the standard penalty and will decide if it is appropriate taking into account the following:
- (a) The academic level of the student;
 - (b) Extent of the plagiarism (minor/major);
 - (c) Previous academic misconduct history of the student;
 - (d) Exceptional circumstances⁵;
 - (e) Any procedural irregularities;
 - (f) Evidence of any intention to deceive;
 - (g) Nature of the work.
- 14.8 The Committee may also consider the following:
- (a) Where a reassessment opportunity is allowed, should the student be allowed to resubmit the same piece of work or not (following consultation with the relevant School/Research Institute where necessary);
 - (b) If a note of mitigation should be placed on the student's record about any circumstances surrounding the offence;
 - (c) Where there is a subsequent fitness to practise issue, if the Committee wish to pass on any information.
 - (d) In proven cases involving graduates, Academic Misconduct Committee will make a recommendation to the Senate for the academic award to be revoked or amended.
 - (e) In proven cases where it is decided that the student (or student who has withdrawn or completed their studies) has submitted work written wholly or in part by a third party, the Academic Misconduct Committee will decide, in consultation with the School/Research Institute Academic Conduct Officer, if assessments previously submitted by the student should be looked at to decide if there is any evidence to

⁵ The Committee will normally only take extenuating circumstance into account if appropriate supporting evidence has been provided. Where the Committee agree that the exceptional circumstances disclosed by a student are relevant, the penalty may be varied but the offence will remain on the student's record.

show that these assessments were also written by a third party. The procedure for dealing with allegations of academic misconduct where there are doubts about the authenticity of the work will be followed if evidence is found. While this investigation is underway, the University will withhold the release of any award or marks for the assignments in question.

Tariff of penalties

- 14.9 The following table lists the recommended penalties that will be given by either the Academic Conduct Officer or the Academic Misconduct Committee for proven offences. Academic Misconduct Officers are only permitted to issue penalties 1-6. If the Academic Conduct Officer decides the case warrants a more serious penalty (e.g. suspected commissioning) then the case must be referred to the Academic Misconduct Committee for consideration. If the student discloses exceptional circumstances to the Academic Conduct Officer and asks for these to be taken into account, the Academic Conduct Officer is empowered to vary the penalty for a major offence and allow the student a further assessment opportunity to be classed as the same attempt as the plagiarised submission where this is appropriate. Minor offences can be dealt with by issuing a warning letter and allowing the student to receive the original mark for the assessment.
- 14.10 As stated in Section 14.5 the Committee can impose any of the penalties set out in the tariff but is not restricted to these and can impose another penalty provided this is appropriate and proportionate. In practice, this means that the given penalty can be less or more severe, at the discretion of the Committee. The reasons for varying the penalty must be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. Where the offence/assessment does not fall within the offences/assessments listed in the tariff, the Committee can agree a suitable penalty.
- 14.11 The standard penalties set out below may exceptionally be amended by an Academic Conduct Officer if the consequence of a proven offence would lead to a disproportionate outcome e.g. a first offence leading to failure of a programme of study.
- 14.12 Multiple instances of alleged plagiarism in the same module will be classified as individual offences.
- 14.13 Multiple offences of alleged plagiarism will be classed as concurrent offences if they occur before the student receives notification, in writing, that they have been found guilty of academic misconduct.
- 14.14 Where there is a prior history of examination misconduct, the Academic Conduct Officer may choose to refer the case of alleged plagiarism/collusion to the Academic Misconduct Committee for consideration.

	Type of offence⁶	Recommended Penalty
1	Low-level poor academic practice (no previous offences)	Issue of a warning.
2	A first instance of giving another student a copy of all or part of one's own work which results in	Issue of a warning.

⁶ The Academic Conduct Officers will use their academic judgement in plagiarism and collusion cases to decide if a case is poor academic practice, a minor, or a major offence. They will take into account the level of study, background of study, nature of the assessment, the quality of the copied text, and any previous offences on record.

	<p>poor academic practice or academic misconduct.</p> <p>Further offences of this nature will be treated as first major offences.</p>	
3	First minor offence of plagiarism or collusion (taught and research degrees).	The original mark, if any, is held back until an acceptable version is submitted. (Not reassessment) ⁷ . The final mark will be capped at the pass mark. The student must take appropriate instruction and practice in academic writing.
4	First major offence of plagiarism or collusion (in taught and research degrees apart from research degree thesis or published work).	The issue of a written warning for academic misconduct plus allocation of a mark of zero for the assessment unit in question and with the normal consequences, if any, for reassessment.
5	Second minor offence of plagiarism or collusion (in taught and research degrees apart from research degree thesis or published work).	The issue of a written warning for academic misconduct plus allocation of a mark of zero for the assessment unit in question and with the normal consequences, if any, for reassessment.
6	Second major offence of plagiarism or collusion (in taught and research degrees apart from research degree thesis or published work).	The issue of a written warning for academic misconduct plus allocation of a mark of zero for the module in question and with the normal consequences, if any, for reassessment. This means that all the assessment components for the module will be set to zero and if reassessment is allowed the student will have to take reassessment of all the module components again. For modules of 30 credits or more, where allocating a mark of zero for all assessment components would be disproportionate, the Academic Conduct Officer will consult with one of the Chairs of the Academic Misconduct Committee to decide on an appropriate penalty.
7	Third and subsequent offences of plagiarism or collusion (in taught and research degrees apart from research degree thesis or published work).	Permanent exclusion from the University

⁷ The work must be re-drafted to either receive a capped mark or a fail mark. If the student makes no attempt to re-draft the work, a mark of 0 will be awarded for the assignment. If the student resubmits the work and it is still not acceptable, the student will be given a final opportunity to resubmit the work in an acceptable format and will be warned that if they submit a further unacceptable version they will receive a mark of 0 for the assignment.

8	Major plagiarism in a research degree thesis or published work.	Permanent exclusion from the University
9	The commissioning and/or submission of work which is not the student's own work.	Permanent exclusion from the University
10	Writing part of, or all, of another student's assignment.	Permanent exclusion from the University
11	Falsification of data or sources	Permanent exclusion from the University
12	Falsification of official documents e.g. medical notes or signatures where these have been used to gain academic benefit	Permanent exclusion from the University
13	First offence of examination misconduct (where student has no previous record of academic misconduct on file) where the student had unauthorised material in their possession.	A mark of 0 for the module (not just the examination) with the normal consequences, if any, for reassessment and with any reassessment being for credit purposes only. This means that all the assessment components will be set to 0 and the student will have to take all the module assessments again. Should the student pass, they will be awarded the credit but will receive a mark of 0. This 0 mark will be used in the degree calculation and so could impact on the class of degree awarded. The 0 mark will also appear on the student's transcript.
14	A student allowing someone to impersonate them during an examination or test	Permanent exclusion from the University
15	Impersonating another student in an examination or test	Permanent exclusion from the University
16	Second and subsequent offences of examination misconduct	Permanent exclusion from the University
17	Gaining access to assessment details e.g. examination paper, prior to the release of the assessment details	Permanent exclusion from the University
18	Research offence	Case by case basis up to permanent exclusion or retraction of the degree depending on the severity of the breach.

19	Any serious offence of academic misconduct which is found to be proven after the credit/award has been awarded / approved by a University Examination Board.	Retrospective removal of credit and/or award, subject to confirmation by the Senate of the University
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Notes:

- (a) Module marks are capped at the minimum pass mark if they include any reassessment.
- (b) The assessment units are those defined in the electronic Student Records System (SCIMS) for each module.
- (c) Setting the module mark to zero means setting all elements of assessment for the module to zero, whether first or reassessments.

15. Recording of an offence

- 15.1 All academic misconduct offences will be recorded at University and School/Research Institute level. The outcome will be sent to the student, and notified to the School/Research Institute Academic Conduct Officer, the relevant Head(s) of School/Research Institute, the School/Research Institute Manager, the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Manager, and other relevant staff as required to administer and support the student's academic progress. Warnings will not be centrally recorded.
- 15.2 All proven academic misconduct offences will remain part of the student's central record.
- 15.3 Offences will be kept on file for those students who proceed from the Foundation Year to an undergraduate programme of study and for students who repeat a year of study. Offences will not be kept on file for those undergraduate students who continue studying at Keele on a postgraduate programme.
- 15.4 For students subject to fitness to practise procedures, the offence will be disclosed to the relevant Head of School for consideration. Where a case is referred to the School Health and Conduct Committee and/or Fitness to Practise Committee, the Committee will consider the nature of the offence and decide any professional consequences. Neither Committee has the power to amend the penalty imposed by the Academic Conduct Officer/Committee.
- 15.5 Where relevant the professional body will be informed.
- 15.6 Unproven cases will not be kept on the student's record or disclosed to the Academic Misconduct Committee if there are any further allegations of academic misconduct.

16. Appeals

- 16.1 A student has the right to appeal to the Academic Misconduct Committee against the decision of an Academic Conduct Officer. Appeals can be made only on one or both of the following grounds:
 - (i) procedural irregularity in the conduct of the original investigations of the Academic Conduct Officer;

(ii) exceptional circumstances, providing that these circumstances can be substantiated and there is a valid reason why these were not made known at the time when the penalty was imposed.

16.2 A student can appeal the decision of the Academic Misconduct Committee (to the Academic Misconduct Appeals Committee), unless the Academic Misconduct Committee's decision was on an appeal against the decision of an Academic Conduct Officer. The membership of the Academic Misconduct Appeals Committee must be different to the original committee membership when the appeal is heard. Appeals can only be made on one or both of the following grounds:

(i) procedural irregularity prior to or in the conduct of the Committee meeting;

(ii) there is new evidence that can be substantiated, including exceptional circumstances, which were not known at the time and may have affected the outcome had it been known to the Committee and that there is a valid reason for not making it known at the time.

16.3 Appeals must be sent to the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Manager within 10 calendar days of the date on the letter informing the student of the outcome.

16.4 Appeals will be considered in the first instance by the Head of Academic Quality and Student Conduct and one of the members of the Academic Misconduct Committee (or nominee). This is called the sifting stage of the appeals process. It consists of an initial assessment of readily available documentation, to include the student submission, information on SCIMS, and the paperwork from the case considered by either the Academic Conduct Officer or the Academic Misconduct Committee.

16.5 If it is clear that a case for consideration has not been established, the case may be rejected.

17. Grievances

17.1 Following exhaustion of the appeals procedure, a student may submit a grievance to the University Council under the terms provided for by Statute 17(22). Grievances must be submitted within 14 calendar days of the letter informing the student of the outcome of the appeal and must be made in writing to the Secretary to Council.

17.2 Grievances can only be made on one or both of the following grounds:

(a) procedural irregularity in the conduct of the case;

(b) there is new evidence that can be substantiated, including exceptional circumstances, which was not known at the time, and may have affected the outcome had it been known to the Committee and that there is a valid reason for not making it known at the time.

18. Office of the Independent Adjudicator

18.1 Grievances to Council represent the completion of the University's internal procedures. When the process is exhausted and the student has been issued with a Completion of Procedures letter, students who remain dissatisfied may contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education, which provides an independent review of student complaints.