

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Academic integrity is a fundamental value in higher education. No student should seek to gain an unfair advantage in assessment and the University expects students to be aware of what constitutes good academic practice. Students who compromise this value threaten the reputation and quality of the University's awards.
- 1.2 This policy applies to any student and any qualification of Falmouth University, whether offered solely by the University or in conjunction with any academic, professional or other institution in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, irrespective of the mode of study. The policy applies equally to Foundation, undergraduate and postgraduate students.
- 1.3 The requirement for academic integrity applies to all work submitted by all students for both formative and summative assessment. It includes – but is not confined to – essays, dissertations, prints, designs, images, performances, artefacts, projects and computer programs. It is the student's responsibility to ensure the integrity of the work that they submit for continuous and final assessment.
- 1.4 Allegations of academic misconduct will be investigated and, in proven cases, penalties will be applied. Where academic misconduct is proven, it will remain on the student's record. Any module at Level 5 or Level 6 capped as a result of infringement of this policy may not be dropped in the calculation of degree classification.
- 1.5 The University acknowledges that it has a responsibility to make clear guidance available on what constitutes good academic practice. Similarly, all students are required to ensure they are familiar with the regulations and the expectations made of them i.e. a defence that an academic offence was committed unintentionally will not normally be accepted or taken into account in the consideration of an appropriate penalty.
- 1.6 The University uses the text-matching software Turnitin for some courses. In submitting work for assessment, students are agreeing to their work being checked and retained by this software.

2 Definitions of academic misconduct

- 2.1 All students should ensure that they understand and familiarise themselves with the terms that are used to describe different forms of academic misconduct in continuous and final assessment, including assessment by exhibition. These include (but are not limited to) the following:
 - a) **Plagiarism:** the unacknowledged use of another's work or ideas, whether published or unpublished, submitted or presented by the student as their own. Such unattributed use is plagiarism whether obtained from articles, books, essays, papers, reports,

performances, data, projects, or any other material originated by another person, no matter the medium used by the source. It is plagiarism whether the medium is literary (for example essays, reports), graphical (for example designs, graphics, diagrams), electronic (for example computer programs), oral (for example presentations) or any other medium specified within an assessment brief.

Examples of plagiarism include but are not confined or limited to:

- copying another student's work;
- unacknowledged verbatim copying from a text book, article, web resource or other source;
- unacknowledged copying through the paraphrasing or summarising of another's work by altering word order, omitting words, phrases or sentences and inserting linking words or phrases over a paragraph or a number of paragraphs;
- using the creative ideas of others in written or visual work without appropriate acknowledgement;
- making significant use of unattributed quotations from sources.

b) Collusion: This is when work is produced by more than one person without prior authorisation and/or is presented for assessment as if it is the work of a single individual without acknowledging the contribution of others. Group projects or pairings are distinctive features of many courses at the University, and the University encourages collaborative work both within and between different courses. This is not collusion, as long as the work submitted for assessment is a clear and accurate reflection of a student's individual contribution to a collaborative project. Group work must explicitly and appropriately acknowledge the contribution of others or collusion may be deemed to have occurred.

c) Commissioning: This is when a student asks another person to produce a piece of work on their behalf, whether for payment or not, which the student then submits as their own work. It may be appropriate or good practice in some disciplines to commission, for example, an element of an artefact, but this must be agreed in advance with the student's course team, formally acknowledged in writing by them, and clearly indicated when the work is submitted for assessment (the formal acknowledgement from the course team should also accompany the submission).

Commissioning applies to both the person submitting the work and the person creating it: if a student of the University has produced a piece of work specifically for submission by another student, without acknowledgement, both students concerned will be subject to disciplinary action.

d) Duplication: This can also be known as 'multiple submission' or 'auto-plagiarism'. It is the term applied when a student submits one piece of work for assessment on two occasions. It can also apply if a piece of work is substantially the same as one that the student has previously or simultaneously submitted for assessment (this is sometimes referred to as 'self-plagiarism'). Exceptionally, on occasion and as a referral, a student

may be required to re-submit for assessment a previous piece of work, reworked to demonstrate how they have improved it (for example, a product). It will be clear from the referral brief given to the student whether this is what is required, and in this instance, this will not constitute duplication or self-plagiarism.

- e) **Misrepresentation:** This includes making false statements and the falsification of data. It is applied when data are presented in reports, projects or any other form of submission that is based on work purported to have been carried out by the student but which has actually been invented by the student, altered, copied or otherwise obtained by unfair means. A false declaration in order to receive special consideration by an Assessment Board, to obtain extensions to deadlines, or exemption from work is also considered to be misrepresentation.

3 Definitions of academic misconduct in formal unseen examinations

3.1 Forms of academic misconduct in formal unseen examinations include the following:

- a) A candidate taking to their examination desk any books, notes or materials of any kind other than those permitted by the invigilator, or using prohibited materials, equipment or software.
- b) A candidate copying or attempting to copy the work of any other candidate.
- c) Any unauthorised communication during the examination either with other candidates in the examination room or with anybody outside it. Taking communication equipment into the examination room may also be construed as misconduct.
- d) Any attempt to gain improper access to an examination paper before an examination is taken, whether or not that examination is to be sat by the student concerned.
- e) The impersonation of another student during an examination.
- f) Any other action or failure to follow the rules that might result in a student gaining an unfair advantage.

4 Transferring to other courses or institutions

- 4.1 A student with an outstanding investigation or disciplinary action against them for a suspected academic offence will not be allowed to transfer to another course at the University. Similarly, if a student who is under suspicion of an academic offence withdraws from their course before the completion of the procedures, an application to another course at the University will not be considered until the investigation and procedures have been completed. Students in this situation should be aware that an outcome may be that a transfer or application to another course will be rejected if academic misconduct is confirmed.
- 4.2 Any student wishing to transfer to another institution for which they require an academic reference from the University should be aware that a proven case of academic misconduct and the penalty applied by the University will be disclosed in that reference. If

a student has withdrawn before an investigation into a suspected academic offence has been completed, no reference will be given until an investigation has taken place and the procedures completed.

5 How academic misconduct applies to graduates

- 5.1 Where an allegation of academic misconduct is submitted against a graduate of the University, with reference to work submitted as part of the degree for which they were enrolled, the University will investigate as far as is practicable and reserves the right to alter or revoke an award if appropriate.
- 5.2 In the case of academic misconduct being proven against a graduate, the following penalties may be applied:
- a) a reduction in the class of degree that was awarded;
 - b) the revocation of the original award;
 - c) a marking penalty or re-marking of the work with the plagiarised section exempted, recognising that this may require either a reduction in the class of degree that was awarded or the revocation of the original award.

6 Identifying academic misconduct in assessed work

Stage 1: minor offence

- 6.1 A minor offence is an offence of plagiarism which constitutes a small proportion of a piece of assessed work. An internal assessor may judge a first offence that constitutes misconduct in a small proportion of work to be a serious offence in respect of level and context, and may elect to escalate the investigation to stage 2.
- 6.2 If an internal assessor suspects that an academic offence has occurred, they should analyse the work in question to assess the extent and nature of the offence. If it is a first offence and is adjudged to be a minor offence as defined in 6.1 above, academic staff must notify Quality Assurance & Enhancement (QAE) and address the matter with the student within ten working days of the issue being identified. The student should be required to attend a tutorial to permit the tutor to:
- a) explain the situation and how to avoid such occurrences in the future;
 - b) inform the student that they will receive a letter of warning issued by their Head of Subject which will be noted on their student record;
 - c) direct the student to attend mandatory study skills sessions (the academic department should liaise with the ASK team to ensure that they are aware that the student should be attending study skills sessions with them);
 - d) note that the work will be marked with the affected section(s) disregarded, and that should this result in a failing mark, the work will be referred in accordance with usual procedure (should this occur there will be a concomitant loss of attempt number, and may, therefore, lead to the termination of study in accordance with the Academic Regulations governing attempt numbers).

- 6.3 The academic department must lodge the letter of warning with QAE for the student's record within ten working days of such a letter being issued. A template for this letter is available from QAE, which also holds a template for the student to confirm their attendance at study skills sessions. The student is required to give this to their academic department upon the completion of these mandatory study skills sessions. Non-attendance at these sessions may not be used by the student as mitigation of any further offence(s); further, any such non-attendance may lead to the student being issued with a Learning Agreement by the academic department with which they must comply.
- 6.4 Should a second minor offence be deemed to have been committed and submitted before the warning for the first minor offence has been notified to the student, the second minor offence is to be dealt with at the same level as the preceding offence and not escalated to Stage 2.

7 Stage 2: major offence

- 7.1 A major offence is an offence of plagiarism, affecting a significant proportion of a piece of assessed work (see also section 6.1).
- 7.2 If a major offence at any level is identified and/or it is a second minor offence, the work in question should be forwarded to QAE with a covering report, the relevant assessment brief(s), Module Information Form(s) (MIF), and the alleged source(s) identified. The report, which may be informed by the Turnitin software, should indicate the extent and nature of the alleged offence under investigation and any previous minor offence. QAE holds a template for such reports for use by the academic departments.
- 7.3 The report, work in question, relevant assessment brief(s), MIF(s) and alleged sources must be forwarded to QAE within six weeks of the submission date of the assessment.
- 7.4 The Head of QAE (or nominee) will convene an Academic Misconduct Panel. The Panel will comprise:
- the Director of the academic department (or nominee) (Chair)
 - an elected sabbatical officer of the FXU Students' Union (or nominee)
 - two members of academic staff from a different academic department; and
 - Head of Quality Assurance & Enhancement (or nominee) (Secretary).

A quorum of the Panel shall be at least three members including the Chair. A Student Administration Officer may be in attendance as a minute secretary. The assessor (or nominee) will also be in attendance.

- 7.5 The Head of QAE will inform the student in writing and via e-mail that an allegation of academic misconduct has been made and that an Academic Misconduct Panel is being convened. A copy of this Policy shall be forwarded to the student together with a copy of the report, and the student will be invited to attend the Panel. The student will usually be given at least five (5) working days' notice of the Panel meeting. The student may attend the Panel meeting in person or they may respond in writing. If responding in writing, they

should outline any relevant factors that the student would like the Panel to take into account. If the student is submitting a claim of extenuating circumstances, evidence to support this must also be included.

7.6 The student may be accompanied in the Panel meeting by one other person if they wish. That person must be one of the following:

- a) another student who is currently enrolled on a course at the University;
- b) a representative from FXU Students' Union;
- c) an accessibility or academic support worker.

If the student is bringing another person with them, they must confirm with QAE at least twenty-four (24) hours in advance of the interview who that person will be. The person accompanying the student under investigation will not normally be allowed to make representations on the student's behalf other than in exceptional circumstances (for example, where the student has a disability which affects their ability to communicate). This must be agreed in advance of the meeting.

7.7 The Panel may proceed in the absence of the student or where there has been no response from the student (whether due to non-attendance in person or non-engagement with the process) provided that the stipulated notification of the Panel meeting has been sent to the student.

7.8 The Panel will consider the evidence and, together with the assessor or nominee, may question the student to obtain a clearer understanding of their methodology, understanding of academic integrity and other factors which might have had a bearing on the work in question. Should the student wish the Panel to take any extenuating circumstances into account, the student must provide evidence of the extenuating circumstances at the Panel meeting.

The Panel may also question the assessor to gain a clearer understanding of the information provided to students regarding academic integrity within their course, the clarity of the brief and any other factor which the Panel deems pertinent to their decision. The assessor or nominee may be questioned separately from the student if this is deemed appropriate by the Panel.

7.9 The Academic Misconduct Panel will decide an outcome from the Panel meeting after the student, any person supporting the student, and the assessor has left the meeting.

The outcomes will be:

- a) unproven – no further action. The allegation will be removed from the student's academic record;
- OR

- b) proven - referral of work in question for a capped mark; concomitant loss of attempt number; mandatory attendance at study skills sessions. The panel may further determine whether the module result should be capped;
OR
- c) recommendation to the Academic Disciplinary Committee of termination of study forthwith, with or without the student being permitted to claim any lower award.

7.10 The Secretary to the Panel will write a report of the meeting which will be approved by the Chair. The student will be informed in writing of the outcome within ten (10) working days of the meeting of the Panel. The student will receive at the same time a copy of the report from the meeting and a copy of the appeals procedure.

7.11 An Assessment Board cannot overturn the decision of the Academic Misconduct Panel.

8 Procedures for dealing with academic misconduct in formal unseen examinations

- 8.1 Any candidate suspected of contravening the assessment/examination regulations in a formal assessment/examination must be approached at the time by one of the invigilators, whenever possible, and the nature of the contravention made clear to the candidate. Except where the candidate is causing a disturbance likely to affect other candidates, they should be permitted to complete the assessment/examination. The candidate should be informed that the incident will be notified to QAE and instructed to attend any remaining assessments/ examinations as normal.
- 8.2 A full report must be written immediately after the incident by the invigilator(s)/ assessor(s) and submitted to the Head of QAE. The Head of QAE will convene an Academic Misconduct Panel to take place as soon as possible.
- 8.3 The procedures will then follow those detailed in 7.3 – 7.10 above. The invigilator(s)/ assessor(s) who has/have brought the allegation will attend in place of the internal assessor at the Panel.

10 Stage 3

- 10.1 Stage 3 will be invoked when the severity, level of study and number of previous offences so warrants.
- 10.2 The work in question and the alleged source(s) duly annotated should be forwarded to QAE with a covering report, the relevant assessment brief(s) and Module Information Form(s) (MIF), and the alleged source(s) identified. The report, which may be informed by the Turnitin software, should indicate the extent and nature of the alleged offence under investigation and any previous offence.
- 10.3 The report, alleged sources, relevant assessment brief(s) and MIF(s) must be forwarded to QAE within six weeks of the submission date.
- 10.4 The Head of QAE will notify the Academic Disciplinary Committee who will consider the case at its next scheduled meeting but ensuring that the student has notice of at least ten

(10) working days prior to the meeting. If there are not ten (10) working days between the notification to the student and the earliest scheduled meeting of the Committee, the case will be considered at the Committee's following scheduled meeting.

11 Academic Disciplinary Committee

11.1 The remit of the Academic Disciplinary Committee is to review any recommendation by the Academic Misconduct Panel to terminate a student's studies, and to consider any cases at Stage 3.

11.2 The membership of the Academic Disciplinary Committee will comprise:

- a) Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Chair);
- b) two senior academics from departments other than those of the student(s) under consideration;
- c) the President of the FXU Students' Union (or nominee);
- d) Head of Quality Assurance & Enhancement (or nominee) (Secretary)

Any member of staff (other than the Secretary to the Academic Disciplinary Committee and the FXU representative) who has been previously involved in the case(s) under consideration, may not sit on the Academic Disciplinary Committee considering that case.

A quorum of the Committee shall be at least three members including the Chair.

11.3 The Academic Disciplinary Committee shall receive the following paperwork as appropriate:

- a) all the evidence placed before the Academic Misconduct Panel;
- b) the report from the Academic Misconduct Panel;
- c) the report by the invigilator;
- d) any confiscated materials;
- e) any further representation from the student (and any supporting evidence), if one has been made.

11.5 For a Stage 3 allegation of academic misconduct the Head of Quality Assurance & Enhancement or nominee will inform the student in writing and via e-mail that an allegation of academic misconduct has been made and that the Academic Disciplinary Committee will consider the case. Where the Committee is to review a decision to terminate a student's studies, the Head of QAE will so inform the student. In both instances, a copy of this Policy shall be forwarded to the student together with a copy of all paperwork going to the Committee.

11.6 The student may attend the Committee meeting in person or they may respond in writing. If responding in writing, the student should outline any relevant factors that the student would like the Committee to take into account. If the student is submitting a claim of extenuating circumstances, evidence to support this must also be included. If

attending in person the student may be accompanied in the Committee meeting by one other person if they wish. That person must be one of the following:

- a) another student who is currently enrolled on a course at the University;
- b) a representative of the FXU Students' Union;
- c) an accessibility or academic support worker.

If the student is bringing another person with them, they must confirm with QAE at least twenty-four hours in advance of the interview who that person will be. The person accompanying the student under investigation will not normally be allowed to make representations on the student's behalf other than in exceptional circumstances (for example, where the student has a disability which affects their ability to communicate). This must be agreed in advance of the meeting.

11.7 The Committee may proceed in the absence of the student, or of any response from the student (whether due to non-attendance in person or non-engagement with the process) provided that the stipulated notification of the Committee meeting has been sent to the student.

11.8 The Committee will consider the evidence and may question the student. Should the student wish the Committee to take any extenuating circumstances into account, the student must provide evidence of the extenuating circumstances at the Committee meeting.

The Committee may also question the internal assessor and/or invigilator to gain a clearer understanding of the information provided to students regarding academic integrity within their course, the clarity of the brief and any other factor which the Committee deems pertinent to their decision. The assessor or nominee may be questioned separately from the student if this is deemed appropriate by the Committee.

11.9 The Academic Disciplinary Committee will decide the outcome of a Stage 3 allegation of academic misconduct after the student and any person supporting the student have left the meeting. The outcomes will be:

- a) unproven – no further action. The allegation will be removed from the student's academic record
OR
- a) proven - referral of work in question for a capped mark; concomitant loss of attempt number; mandatory attendance at study skills sessions. The panel may further determine whether the module result should be capped;
OR
- b) proven – termination of study forthwith, with or without the student being permitted to claim any lower award for which they are eligible.

11.10 Where the Academic Disciplinary Committee is reviewing a recommendation from the Academic Misconduct Panel of termination of a student's studies, the outcome from the Committee will be either:

a) to uphold the decision of the Academic Misconduct Panel confirming the recommendation of termination

OR

b) where compelling new evidence is supplied, exceptionally to permit referral of work in question for a capped mark, with concomitant loss of attempt number and mandatory attendance at study skills sessions. It shall be at the discretion of the Academic Disciplinary Committee to decide what constitutes compelling new evidence.

11.11 The Secretary to the Committee will write a report of the meeting which will be approved by the Chair. The student will be informed in writing of the outcome within ten (10) working days of the meeting of the Committee. The student will receive at the same time a copy of the report from the meeting and any other relevant information to include the appeals process. Where there are implications for the student's marks or progression, the appropriate Assessment Boards shall also be notified of the decision.

11.12 An Assessment Board cannot overturn the decision of the Academic Disciplinary Committee.

12 Further procedures

12.1 A student who is reported for two or more offences at Level 6 shall have all offences considered as a whole and may be capped on all affected modules rather than their studies being terminated, so long as the offences occurred concurrently and Stage 2 or 3 processes were incomplete when subsequent offences were identified.

12.2 Any academic offence at Level 7 shall be progressed immediately to either Stage 2 or Stage 3 of this policy, in accordance with the severity of the case and as determined by QAE.

12.3 Any student will progress immediately to Stage 3 of this policy for any work submitted and alleged of academic misconduct after an outcome of 7.9 b) above has been notified to the student.

13 Review of student's work

13.1 Should an Academic Disciplinary Committee deem it warranted, it may order a review of any or all other work submitted by a student under consideration in that academic year. The student will be so advised in the outcome letter from the Committee. The Committee may decide (in this instance only) to defer a decision pending the review.

13.2 The review of the student's work must be completed within five (5) weeks of the Committee's meeting and the student apprised of the outcome of the review within ten (10) working days. The Committee shall then be reconvened to consider the case.

14 Right of appeal

14.1 Students have the right to appeal against the decision(s) of the Academic Misconduct Panel or the Academic Disciplinary Committee.

13.2 Students wishing to appeal against the decision of the Academic Misconduct Panel or the Academic Disciplinary Committee should follow the University's Appeals Procedure.