



## **UCP-ASS004 Higher Education Academic Integrity Policy**

### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 As an academic community, UCP recognises that the principles of truth, honesty and mutual respect are central to the pursuit of knowledge. Behaviour that undermines these principles weakens the community, both individually and collectively, and diminishes UCP's values. UCP is committed to ensuring that every student and member of staff is made aware of the responsibilities s/he bears in maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity and how those standards are protected.
- 1.2 This policy ensures that higher education students are given adequate guidance about the importance of academic misconduct and that cases of academic misconduct are dealt with promptly in a transparent and consistent manner.

### **2 SCOPE**

- 2.1 This policy applies exclusively to all Higher Education provision offered by University Centre Peterborough. This also applies to sub contractual provision.

### **3 RELATED DOCUMENTS**

- UCP-EXM001 Higher Education Examination Policy
- UCP-ASS001 Higher Education (Non-examination) Assessment Policy for Open University Programmes
- Awarding Body Regulation:
  - Anglia Ruskin University: [https://web.anglia.ac.uk/anet/academic/academic\\_regulations.phtml](https://web.anglia.ac.uk/anet/academic/academic_regulations.phtml)  
UCP Rules, Regulations and Procedures for students (ARU students)
  - The Open university: Please see [UCP.ac.uk/policies](https://www.open.ac.uk/policies) where the Link to Regulation for validated Awards will be added when available
  - Bishop Grosseteste University: <https://www.bishopg.ac.uk/about-bgu/policies-and-procedures>

### **4 RESPONSIBILITIES**

- 4.1 The Academic Director has overall responsibility for the procedure, but has delegated day-to-day responsibility for overseeing its implementation to the staff identified.

### **5 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 5.1 This policy is required to ensure that correct procedures are in place and are followed.  
**Analyse risks of non-adherence to this policy**
- 5.2 Failure to adhere to this policy could lead to academic failure of students, complaints and in extreme cases, legal action.

#### **Staff training needed**

- 5.3 All staff involved in this procedure are required to undertake annual training delivered by the Student Support Team to outline the process by which they need to adhere. This training will be enhanced by annual updates provided on procedural requirements.

## **6 DATA PROTECTION**

- 6.1 UCP complies with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation Data Protection Act, 2018. As such, applicants' and student data are treated as confidential by all staff involved in this process and is not divulged unnecessarily or inappropriately. However, the aforementioned Act requires UCP to release certain information to UK authorities upon request in order to assist those authorities with the prevention and detection of fraud or other crimes. We will release the requested information on receipt of an appropriate request from UK authorities such as (but not limited to) the police, Home Office (for immigration and related matters), local authorities, and the Department for Work and Pensions. We may use anonymised data for the purpose of fulfilling statistical and reporting requirements.

## **PROCEDURE**

### **7 Good Academic Practice**

- 7.1 UCP's standard referencing in written work, is the Harvard Referencing System. Where this system is not appropriate to disciplines, Course Leaders produce written outlines of alternative referencing systems for distribution to students.
- 7.2 UCP seeks to educate its students about academic integrity prior to assessment to both reduce breaches of academic integrity and to highlight the severity with which certain offences will be dealt. Good Academic Practice is a requirement of all higher education study and identifies the required skills and approach of higher education students. It is a requirement that students demonstrate this to prevent instances of plagiarism or collusion. Turnitin will be used to ensure originality of submissions and assessments to be submitted. It should be noted that Turnitin is not a punitive tool but should be used as part of the formative assessment process to develop academic writing and referencing.
- 7.3 To demonstrate good academic practice students must:
- Develop their independent evaluation of academic issues.
  - Draw upon research from academics in their field of study.
  - Discuss and evaluate existing concepts and theories.
  - Demonstrate their understanding of the key literature.
  - Develop their arguments.
- 7.4 To support their own good academic practice, they will need to develop:
- Study and information skills (e.g. reading, note taking, research etc.)
  - Skills of critical enquiry and evaluation (e.g. taking a balanced opinion, using reasoning and argument).
  - Appropriate academic writing skills (e.g. for essays, reports, dissertations etc.)
  - Accurate referencing skills to prevent allegations of poor academic practice, dishonesty, plagiarism, cheating or fraud. Individual work needs to be clearly identified to prevent collusion. If students in a class are instructed or encouraged to work together in the pursuit of an assignment, such group activity is regarded as approved collaboration.
  - Examination techniques (e.g. preparation, revision).
- 7.5 All students must be given guidance in relation to academic integrity and academic offence before submitting their first assignment. Discussion should form part of induction and tutorial activity.

## **8 Turnitin Policy**

- 8.1 Turnitin is an online service used by students to submit assignments and by staff to provide feedback. At UCP, Turnitin is integrated with CANVAS with assignments being created, submitted and marked through this interface.
- 8.2 Turnitin has three integrated tools:
- a) Originality Check used to check for plagiarism
  - b) Grademark tool for online marking and comments
  - c) Peermark which allows the instructor to distribute the paper for peer review
- 8.3 UCP uses Turnitin to identify text within submitted assignments to other sources of text, this can highlight work which is not properly referenced and non-original content in the work submitted by students.
- 8.4 Module and Course Leaders must ensure that the approach to be adopted in using Turnitin is clearly communicated to students either before or at the time the assignment is set.
- 8.5 Module Leaders are responsible for setting up Turnitin assignments.
- 8.6 Students may submit their work as many times as they wish or are able up until the final submission deadline. Permitting draft submissions allows students the opportunity to practice and improve their academic writing and referencing skills. As Turnitin requires 24 hours between original and subsequent submissions students should not submit draft assignments within 24 hours of the submission deadline. If they do so, their draft submission will be taken as their final submission.
- 8.7 Turnitin may be used by UCP staff who suspect that work submitted for assessment has been plagiarised. If plagiarism is suspected students may be asked to provide an electronic copy of their work (whether or not the assessment has been set up on Turnitin). However, as Turnitin only highlights matched text; it does not detect plagiarism. Interpretation of originality reports rests with the tutor marking the assignment, who may request an investigation to be carried out following the Academic Offence procedure outlined in section 6 below.

## **9 Academic Offences Investigation**

- 9.1 UCP will ensure that students are treated fairly when being assessed and that any student suspected of a breach of academic integrity will be investigated and will have a fair hearing.
- 9.2 The HE Council has approved procedures for dealing with an alleged assessment offence and these are conducted under the auspices of the Academic Standards and Quality Committee (ASQC) which is formally responsible for the investigation of all such cases. Through its Chair (or nominee), the Committee may establish a Panel to hear each case.

## **10 Academic Offences Definitions**

- 10.1 An academic offence is the general term used to define cases where a student has tried to get unfair academic advantage in an assessment for themselves or another student.
- 10.2 There are many forms of assessment offence including (this is not an exhaustive list):
- any relevant breaches of the Academic Regulations governing the Conduct of UCP Examinations;
  - taking unauthorised material into the examination room;
  - impersonating another student;
  - causing any disturbance (and continues to do so after warning) such as disruption caused by a mobile telephone, shouting, talking, whispering, eating and/or drinking;
  - submitting someone else's work as their own (known as "plagiarism": see below for a definition);

- falsifying data;
- obtaining an examination paper in advance of its authorised release;
- the unauthorised and unattributed submission of an assessment item which has been produced by another student or person;
- the behaviour of one or more students which may result in the poor academic performance of another student or students;
- any attempt to bribe or provide inducements to members of UCP staff, or to internal or external examiners in relation to the assessment process in its entirety;
- any attempt which, if enacted, is designed to undermine or breach the Academic Regulations.

10.3 Plagiarism is when someone presents another person's work, words, images, ideas, opinions or discoveries, whether published or not, as his or her own. It is also when artwork, images or computer-generated work of others, is used without properly acknowledging where this is from or without their permission.

10.4 Examples of plagiarism include: (this list is an example and not exhaustive)

- directly copying from written work, physical work, performances, recorded work or images, without saying where this is from;
- using information from the internet or electronic media (such as DVDs and CDs) which belongs to someone else, and presenting it as your own;
- rewording someone else's work, without referencing them; and
- the close paraphrasing of another person's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation without acknowledgement;
- submitting an assessment which has been produced by another student or person.

10.5 Self-plagiarism occurs when a student submits their own work which has already received credit. This may be part of a piece of work or the entire piece of work. Self-plagiarism does not apply in circumstances where students are required to complete reassessment or repeat a module(s).

10.6 Collusion is when two or more students collaborate in the preparation or production of work which is submitted by each as his or her own unique work but is identical or substantially similar. Collusion also occurs where there is unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the student's own.

10.7 Many parts of university life require students to work together. Working as a team, as directed by a tutor, and producing group work is not collusion. Collusion only happens if work is produced jointly to benefit of one or more person and try to deceive another (for example, the assessor).

10.8 Examples of collusion include:

- agreeing with others to cheat;
- copying the work of another person (with their permission);
- allowing another student to copy your own work.

10.9 Cheating is when someone aims to get unfair advantage over others. Examples of cheating include:

- taking unauthorised material into the examination room;
- inventing results (including experiments, research, interviews and observations);
- handing your own previously graded work back in;
- getting an examination paper before it is released;
- behaving in a way that means other students perform poorly;
- pretending to be another student; and
- trying to bribe members of staff or examiners.

10.10 Contract cheating occurs when a student instructs a third party to do some or all of a piece of work (paid or unpaid).

10.11 Fabrication is when someone makes up data, information, or references.

- 10.12 Impersonation is assuming a student's identity with intent to provide an advantage for the student.
- 10.13 Fraudulent claims for Extenuating Circumstances are seeking to gain the unfair advantage of additional time to complete assignments by abuse of the Mitigating Circumstances Procedure.
- 10.14 Fraud occurs when someone has deliberately and knowingly allowed or paid another person to do their work or sit an examination for them. Examples of fraud include:
- getting someone else to produce part or all your work;
  - submitting essays from essay banks and essay writing services;
  - paying someone to produce work for you;
  - submitting computer programs from a computer program writing service;
  - allowing someone to sit an examination for you; and
  - pretending to be another student.
- 10.15 Poor academic practice is a term usually used when work is badly referenced and cited incorrectly. Examples of poor academic practice include: (i) occasional verbatim copying of short phrases from one or more sources, with in-text and bibliographical acknowledgement; (ii) occasional close paraphrasing of sentences from one or more sources, with in-text and bibliographical acknowledgement; (iii) loaning completed work or assignment notes to fellow students and; (iv) allowing others to use, advertently or inadvertently, completed work or assignment notes. This is not an exhaustive list. An alleged assessment offence that occurs in an examination situation cannot be considered as poor academic practice at any level of study.
- 10.16 For the purpose of these Academic Regulations, multiple concurrent offences are cases where a student has committed more than one offence of the same nature within the same trimester AND where the process for considering the former offence(s) has not been concluded (at either Stage 1 or Stage 2) by the time the student undertakes/submits the latter assessment task(s) where an offence is committed. In such cases "multiple concurrent offences" (which may extend over one or more modules) are regarded as a single offence for the purpose of this regulation.

## **11 Initial Reporting of an Assessment Offence**

- 11.1 A student may be found guilty of academic misconduct whether or not there has been any intention to deceive; that is, a judgement that negligence has occurred is sufficient to determine guilt.
- 11.2 All cases of suspected academic offences must be reported to the Academic Office within 20 working days (30 working days for a Major Project module) of the original submission (or extended) deadline for consideration. Any case of suspected academic offence must be supported by evidence documented by the person who suspects the academic offence. For example, in a case of possible plagiarism, the marker of the assignment should highlight those passages which are unattributed, should provide a note of the sources from which these passages come and should indicate the extent of plagiarism as a percentage of the assessment in question (i.e. Turnitin Report).
- 11.3 A new allegation of an assessment offence which is brought to the attention of the Academic Office after 20 working days have passed since the original submission (or extended) deadline can only be progressed if new evidence which leads to the allegation emerges that was not previously available. The Academic Office must be satisfied that a case for progressing the allegation exists, based only on the new evidence.
- 11.4 If the behaviour of a student becomes threatening or abusive during Stage 1 or Stage 2 of the process detailed below, then the Faculty HE Manager or Panel Chair respectively is empowered to suspend the process and refer the matter to the Deputy Director under the disciplinary procedures contained within the Rules, Regulations and Procedures for Students. The process may resume later, pending the outcome of the disciplinary process.

## **12 Initial Scrutiny of an Allegation**

- 12.1 The Academic Office records the allegation and passes all paperwork to the Faculty HE Manager.
- 12.2 The Faculty HE Manager is responsible for determining if there is evidence that an assessment offence has occurred and, in so doing, determines the nature of the formal allegation to be put to the student (e.g.: plagiarism, collusion etc.). In reaching this conclusion, the Faculty HE Manager may consult the Chair of ASQC who may ask a member of the committee (who is not a member of the Faculty concerned) to consider the issue and provide a second opinion to the Faculty HE Manager.
- 12.3 In the case of an examination irregularity, the Faculty HE Manager will need to consider any report made by the invigilator.
- 12.4 Where the Faculty HE Manager believes that no assessment offence of any nature has occurred a formal allegation is not made against the student and no further action is taken.
- 12.5 The Faculty HE Manager may deem a student's first instance of suspected plagiarism or collusion to be an example of poor academic practice. In such cases, the student receives appropriate academic counselling at this point from the Module Leader rather than the allegation progressing further. The piece of work is marked appropriately (including the possibility of a fail mark) to take account of the poor academic practice.
- 12.6 The Faculty HE Manager maintains a record of students who receive academic counselling for poor academic practice to avoid any subsequent suspected cases of plagiarism or collusion being wrongly considered as poor academic practice.
- 12.7 If the Faculty HE Manager is satisfied that there is enough evidence that an assessment offence has occurred, the case progresses to a formal allegation at Stage 1; a full investigation by the Faculty.

## **13 Stage 1: Faculty Investigation**

- 13.1 Within 20 working days of the alleged assessment offence being brought to the attention of the Faculty HE Manager, he/she informs the student of the exact nature of the alleged assessment offence in writing and sends the student copies of relevant documentary evidence detailed below asking for a response to the allegation within 15 working days of the date of the letter (the response may constitute a meeting between the Faculty HE Manager and the student to discuss the allegation further):
- evidence of the original source materials;
  - the student's work cross-referenced against the source materials;
  - brief written statements from staff bringing the allegation.
- 13.2 In cases where the Faculty HE Manager deems it to be appropriate, the student is invited to attend a viva-voce examination as part of the investigation process. The purpose of the examination is to test the student's knowledge and understanding of the piece of work which is the subject of the allegation. The examination is conducted by the Faculty HE Manager and a second member of academic staff with appropriate subject expertise.
- 13.3 If the student admits to the offence, the Faculty HE Manager confirms the assessment offence and appropriate penalty, as prescribed in Regulation 9, to the Chair ASQC (or nominee). Formal notification of the penalty is communicated to the student, in writing, by the Academic Office and is copied to the student's file. The student's academic record on UCP's student record systems is amended accordingly (but no reference to the assessment offence appears on the academic transcript).
- 13.4 If no response is received from the student within 15 working days, or the student fails to attend a viva-voce examination (without reason and notice), the student is deemed as not contesting the

allegation and, therefore, admitting to the offence and the process outlined in Regulation 9 is applied.

- 13.5 In all cases where a student admits (or fails to respond) to the allegation as a first offence the student is invited to arrange an interview with the Faculty HE Manager (or a nominee) where the student is told of the seriousness of the offence and receives advice on good academic practice and the accepted conventions in the preparation of work in whatever form it takes.
- 13.6 If the student denies the alleged assessment offence the matter is referred to Stage 2: A Panel hearing, which is conducted in accordance with Regulations 8.

#### 14 **Stage 2: Panel Hearing**

- 14.1 If a student has denied an alleged assessment offence presented by the Faculty's HE Manager, the Chair of ASQC convenes a Panel to hear the allegation to give the student an opportunity to demonstrate that the offence has not occurred. A Panel hearing is conducted in the most appropriate medium for the student. A video-conference, Skype interaction (or other appropriate method) is considered if it is not possible for a student to attend UCP's main campuses in the UK (e.g. a student studying on a module delivered by flexible or distributed learning etc.)
- 14.2 The Academic Office is responsible for arranging and servicing Panel hearings. The Panel comprises:
- a member of the ASQC (who acts as Chair);
  - a member of academic staff who is not a member of the Faculty in which the student is registered nor has taught the student or in any other way have been closely associated with the student;
  - the Student Officer (or nominee)
  - The Academic Office appoints an Executive Officer who minutes the Panel meeting and deliberations.
  - In addition, the following have the right to be in attendance:
  - the presenter(s) of the case (Module Leader (where appropriate) and Faculty HE Manager or nominee);
  - the student whose case is being heard and friend.
- 14.3 Neither UCP nor the student whose case is being heard is legally represented during the conduct of a hearing.
- 14.4 The Panel hearing is a formal meeting and takes place as soon as possible and no later than two months after the student has responded to the formal allegation in Stage 1, requesting a referral to a Stage 2 Panel Hearing.
- 14.5 Exceptionally, in the event of the unavoidable absence of a Panel member (e.g.: due to illness), in order to reduce the inconvenience to the student, the Panel Hearing may proceed with two members provided that:
- One of the two members is a member of the ASQC approved to act as the chair of a hearing and;
  - The student whose case the Panel has been convened to hear has no objections to proceeding with a two-member Panel.
- 14.6 If the student fails to attend the interview this should not prevent the Panel Chair from deciding on the evidence presented.
- 14.7 UCP reserves the right to involve such other individuals at the hearing as it deems appropriate to the presentation of the case.
- 14.8 The hearing is conducted in the following sequence:

- Faculty HE Manager (or nominee) presenting the allegation with a view to demonstrating that the offence has occurred. The evidence may be in writing and/or witnesses may be called;
- witnesses in support of the allegation;
- the student (or friend) with a view to rejecting the allegation and demonstrating that the offence has not occurred. The evidence may be in writing and/or witnesses may be called;
- witnesses in support of the student;
- final statement by Faculty HE Manager (or nominee) and witnesses;
- final statement by student (or friend) who is the subject of the allegation.

- 14.9 The members of the Panel have the right to question to any person attending the hearing.
- 14.10 The Faculty HE Manager (or nominee) and witnesses, the student who is the subject of the allegation and friend, have the right to be present during the taking of evidence. All have the right to question to the witnesses and to each other.
- 14.11 If the student who is the subject of the allegation does not appear at the hearing, the Panel may proceed to deal with the allegation in the student's absence provided the Panel membership is satisfied that the student has received proper and timely notification of the Panel hearing.
- 14.12 In reaching its decision, the Panel sits in private and considers whether the case has been proved.
- 14.13 If the Panel concludes that the case has not been proved, the allegation is dismissed, and no further action is taken.
- 14.14 If the Panel concludes that an assessment offence has been proved, the appropriate penalty, as prescribed in Regulations 9, is implemented.
- 14.15 The Executive Officer notifies the student of the Panel's conclusion, in writing, within ten working days of the Panel hearing and this is copied to the student's file and Faculty HE Manager. The student's academic record on UCP's student record system is amended accordingly (but no reference to the assessment offence appears on the academic transcript).
- 14.16 In all cases where an assessment offence is proved at a Panel hearing, the student is subsequently interviewed by the Deputy Director (or a nominee) and told of the seriousness of the offence. If relevant to the offence, the student receives advice on good academic practice and the accepted conventions in the preparation of their work in whatever form it takes.

## 15 Academic Offences Penalties

- 15.1 In deciding which academic penalty to impose, the panel will take into consideration, amongst other matters, admission of academic misconduct by the student, the seriousness and the extent of the misconduct.
- 15.2 Each case will be considered and judged on an individual basis in the light of all information available. Where there is an established, clearly evidenced, repeated pattern of behaviour this may be taken into consideration when determining whether a sanction should be applied.
- 15.3 If during Stage 1 or 2 of the process, the student provides evidence of extenuating circumstances that the student asserts directly led to the assessment offence being committed, such information does NOT impact on the either the HE Manager or the Panel's decision as to whether the assessment offence has occurred. However, if the HE Manager (during Stage 1) or Panel (during Stage 2) believes that, as a result of the extenuating circumstances, the prescribed penalty is exceptionally inappropriate, the HE Faculty Manager/ the Panel can, at their discretion, review the default penalty and propose an alternative penalty in light of the extenuating circumstances presented by the student. The application of an alternative penalty must be supported by relevant documentary evidence. ASQC monitors the extent to which such discretion is exercised.



- 15.4 The 'count' of the number of assessment offences for a student does not continue for separate registrations between an undergraduate and a postgraduate course. In such cases, the 'count' is reset to zero for a student registered on a postgraduate course irrespective of any assessment offences committed in a previous registration on an undergraduate course. The 'count' is maintained for separate registrations on courses at the same (undergraduate or postgraduate) level.
- 15.5 An exceptional circumstance claim submitted against an (initial or re- assessment) attempt at an element of assessment for which a penalty has been applied cannot be considered. The mitigation claim is deemed null and void.
- 15.6 Table A0-1 (at the end of this section details the penalties to be implemented for assessment offences admitted by the student and penalties to be implemented for assessment offences proven by a Panel hearing.
- 15.7 In cases where the recommended prescribed penalty is expulsion of the student, the Chair of ASQC is required to present the recommendation to the Deputy Director who considers the request. A student who is expelled under the Assessment Offence process receives a transcript detailing the credit they have attained.
- 15.8 Student are notified in writing of the outcome within 20 working days of the conclusion of the process by the Faculty HE Manager. Such notifications direct students to consult the range of information held on UCP's webpages which relate to academic honesty and avoiding assessment offences.

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

- 16.1 The panel's decision will be final and marks the end of the UCP process in relation to Academic Offence in relation to Pearson validated awards (HNC/HND). The decision will be final and will be communicated to the student in a Completion of Procedures letter. This letter will advise the student of their right to submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for review, the time limit for doing so (12 months) and where and how to access advice and support.
- 16.2 Students on University Validated awards will not be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter but will be advised on how to take their complaint to the University responsible for their qualification. If the University does not resolve the complaint to the student's satisfaction, they will be advised on how to appeal to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

## **17 Record Keeping**

- 17.1 A copy of the records of all academic misconduct cases will be placed on the relevant student file by the Academic Office. Where a case is dismissed, all documentation will be removed and shredded.
- 17.2 UCP will hold an electronic record of all allegations of academic misconduct; this data will inform the review processes.
- 17.3 Where a student has a penalised mark for work as a result of an academic offence the penalty will not be carried forward if the student repeats a year. However, the record of misconduct is kept on the student's record and any further misconduct will be classified as subsequent misconduct.

## **18 The effect of Academic Misconduct upon Examination Boards**

- 18.1 Except for noting the outcomes of this policy and process, Assessment Panel shall take no account of allegations of academic misconduct. The Panel will apply any penalty determined through this procedure. The Panel has no authority to vary the penalty.

- 18.2 Where the penalty allows resubmission or reassessment, the work required will to be determined by the Assessment Panel in the usual way.
- 18.3 Assessment Panel's will be notified of every case where a decision on an academic misconduct allegation is pending, and will not confirm an outcome for the relevant assessment until the decision is known. The element of assessment will be clearly identified and a 'deferred decision' will be recorded.
- 18.4 Assessment Panel's will not be notified of any suspected academic misconduct not upheld.
- 18.5 Deferred Assessment Panel decisions will be formalised at a resit or summer retrieval Assessment Panel's.