

Academic Conduct Policy and Academic Misconduct Procedures

Student and Academic Services

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Academic Conduct Policy

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1. Introduction and purpose

The University values a culture of honesty and mutual trust and expects all members of the University to respect and uphold these core values. Every student of the University is expected to act with integrity in relation to the production and representation of academic work, and in acknowledging the contributions of others in their work. This is crucial to maintaining the credibility and quality of academic standards and upholding the value of degrees awarded. We describe this as “academic integrity.”

This policy sets out the responsibilities, expectations and requirements of staff and students in promoting and maintaining academic integrity. It provides definitions of the types of assessment offences that will be investigated under the university’s academic misconduct procedures and outlines the frameworks that ensure academic standards are maintained.

Students’ commitment to ethical conduct is essential in maintaining the integrity of the university’s academic standards. Students should have a baseline understanding of what constitutes cheating in an academic context by the time they reach University-level study.

2. Scope

All staff and students are responsible for adhering to this policy.

Students who fail to adhere to the expectations of this policy will be subject to investigation under the university’s academic misconduct procedures. The academic misconduct procedures contain the operational detail that supports the delivery of this policy. They explain the process of investigation when an assessment offence is alleged, and the penalties that may be applied.

3. Responsibilities

Academic Board provides senior management oversight of academic integrity matters at the University, with a reporting line through to the Board of Governors.

Executive Officers have oversight of assessment offences in their respective colleges.

The Student Voice and Academic Policy Team is the designated UWE contact for matters concerning this policy and for advice and guidance concerning the application of the academic misconduct procedures.

The Assessment Offences Advisers network provides contacts in individual college and professional services that support the Student Voice and Academic Policy Team in the fulfilment of their duties.

4. Expectations and requirements

The University will:

- Ensure that students are provided with appropriate information and learning opportunities about good practice and scholarship, and how to avoid engaging in poor practice up to and including misconduct;
- Promote good practice in assessment design as a proactive strategy to prevent assessment offences by designing assessments that are clear, meaningful, and aligned

with learning objectives so that students are motivated to engage in authentic, ethical learning experiences;

- Be committed to ongoing staff development to effectively respond to technological advancements that may have an impact on academic integrity;
- Provide appropriate support to students experiencing personal difficulties, thereby helping them navigate challenges and reduce the likelihood of committing assessment offences;
- Ensure allegations of assessment offences are investigated robustly and fairly;
- Maintaining a culture of integrity and accountability by providing robust support for whistleblowers who report assessment offences;
- Monitoring assessment offences on an annual basis and using this data to inform academic practice.

Students are expected to:

- Be aware, as members of the academic community, of the ethical and academic standards expected of them;
- Fully engage with the information and training opportunities provided by the University aimed at developing their understanding of academic practice and skills such as referencing, citation, paraphrasing and compiling a bibliography or reference list;
- Be responsible for their own work, avoid assessment offences, and not knowingly allow others to commit assessment offences.

5. Types of Assessment Offences

Behaviour that constitutes an assessment offence in the context of this policy and the academic misconduct procedure includes **but is not limited to:**

Plagiarism

- Copying from another person's work without the use of quotation marks;
- Copying from another person's work without referencing/acknowledgement of the sources;
- Summarising another person's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation;
- Paraphrasing material from a source without acknowledging the original author;
- Not respecting or acknowledging the copyright and intellectual property of others;
- Presenting concepts or designs that have been created by others without acknowledging the original source;
- Copying another student's work with or without their knowledge or agreement;
- Downloading material from the web and submitting it as your own work, or submitting work created by using AI tools without acknowledgement;
- Using course notes without referencing;

- Self-Plagiarism - you may not re-use work (wholly or in part) that has been submitted for a different assessment for which credit has been/is due to be awarded.

Collusion

- Unethically collaborating with one or more students to complete an assignment, take an exam, or engage in other academic activities with the intent to deceive or gain an unfair advantage. This can include sharing answers or jointly submitting work when individual efforts are stipulated;
- Assisting another person in the completion of work submitted as that other person's own unaided work;
- Sharing your work with another person and/or permitting them to copy all or part of it and submit it as their own unaided work.

Contract Cheating

- Submitting as your own work which has been produced in whole or part by another person on your behalf, e.g. by using a 'ghostwriting service, essay mill or similar;
- Making available, or seeking to make available, material to another student or students with the intention that it is used by them to commit an assessment offence e.g. posting exam questions online.

Falsification

- Falsifying or misrepresenting the results of experimentation/research data;
- Falsifying your references and/or bibliography or in-text citations;
- Falsifying reports or projects.

Fabrication

- Reporting on experiments/research never performed or data never collected.
- Providing references or/and in-text citations that do not exist.

Research ethics breaches

- Breaches of the policies relating to Research governance and research ethics.

Cheating in controlled conditions assessments

- Having in your possession materials and/or devices which are not allowed for that assessment;
- Fraudulent activity, e.g. gaining access to the questions or solutions in advance of an assessment and using this to fraudulently complete the assessment;

- Unauthorised communications, including the use of online platforms to discuss online assessments;
- Arranging for someone else to impersonate a student in an assessment.
- A combination of any of the above

6. The use of text-matching software

The University tests for assessment offences as part of its assessment of student work and may subject work to scrutiny using text-matching detection software, or other resources, as appropriate, on either a comprehensive or sample basis. The University will make available to staff suitable software and other resources for this purpose as it deems appropriate. Schools will determine their approach to the use of text-matching detection software. This may include but is not limited to, electronic submission of student work (with or without an accompanying hardcopy) in accordance with UWE online submission and anonymity policies.

It is important to note that the use of electronic detection software in this way is seen only as an addition to the normal exercise of academic judgement, not as a replacement for it.

Where an assessment offence is suspected in a particular piece of work it may be scrutinised using University-approved electronic detection software and/or other resources. Should there be a case to answer, the student will be informed that the process has taken place and they will be able to view the outcome report as part of the evidence gathered during the investigation.

7. Breaches of the policy

The University is committed to upholding the standards of academic integrity and will investigate any suspected breach of this policy. The investigation process is guided by the Academic Misconduct Procedures that explain the steps to be taken when a breach is identified. The procedures ensure fairness and transparency in addressing allegations of academic misconduct.

Depending on the nature and severity of the breach, the University may apply a range of sanctions, which could include written warnings, academic penalties, suspension, or even expulsion. The sanctions applied will be determined after a thorough and impartial assessment of the evidence, considering the circumstances and severity of the misconduct.

8. Further guidance and support

The Student Voice and Academic Policy Team can be contacted for further guidance and queries concerning this policy and the application of the academic misconduct procedures.

The Academic Integrity web page provides guidance and support resources for students.

Intranet guidance for staff is available concerning the application of academic misconduct procedures.

Web-based training concerning ethical approval is provided for research supervisors via the Learning and Development Unit.

9. Ownership and Oversight

Document name:	Academic Conduct Policy
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This version was approved by:	Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee
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Senior Policy Owner:	Academic Registrar
Policy Author:	Nick Biggs, Senior Policy Adviser, SAS
Overseeing committee:	Learning, Teaching and Student Experience Committee

10. Version History

Version	Date	Summary of changes	Author
V1.0	November 2023	Policy replaces the current Assessment Offences Policy	Nick Biggs

Academic Misconduct Procedures

(Last updated August 2024)

1. Principles of Investigation

Where the University suspects that an assessment offence has been committed it will apply the procedures explained in this document. The procedures apply to all students studying towards degrees at or validated by UWE Bristol. In most cases, the procedures will also apply to UK partner colleges and international partners, but individual partnership agreements should be checked before progressing an investigation.

It is for the University to prove whether or not an assessment offence has been committed, and the standard of proof that is used in this policy is the 'balance of probabilities'. This means that when considering all the evidence about a potential assessment offence, the University needs to be satisfied that it is more likely than not that an offence has occurred.

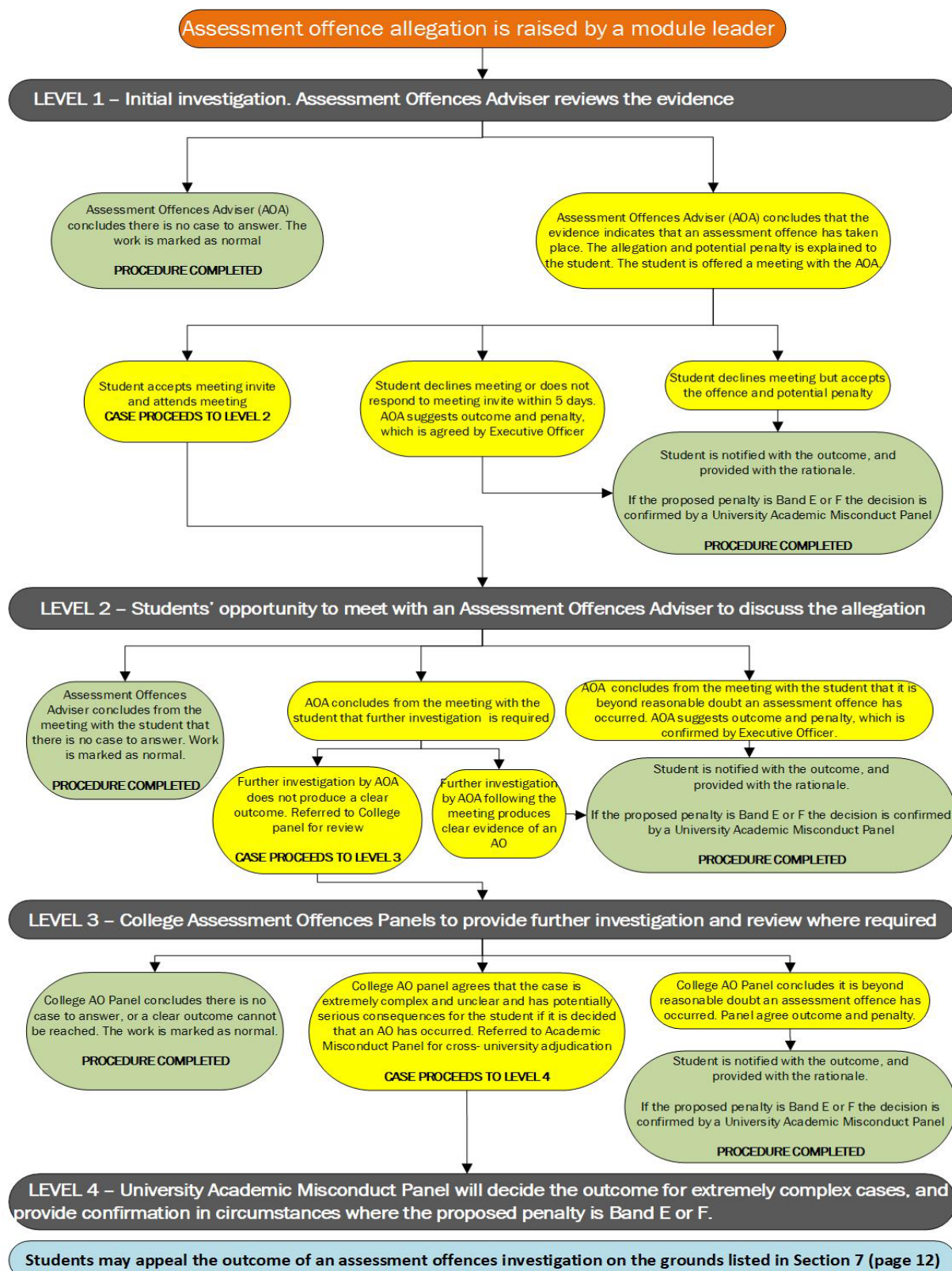
The University applies a principle of 'strict liability' to assessment offences, this means that the student's intentions are not relevant to determining whether or not an assessment offence has been committed. In practice this means that the University does not consider whether the offence was an accident or was deliberate in concluding whether or not an offence was committed, however, we do consider a student's intentions when deciding on an appropriate penalty once an offence has been proven.

2. Scope of investigation

- An assessment offence investigation may be commenced at any point whilst the student is still registered with the university, irrespective of whether a module outcome has been confirmed by an examination board.
- Should concerns arise in the course of an investigation about other modules' assessments, this can prompt further allegations and investigations.
- If an allegation of academic misconduct is made against an individual who is no longer a UWE Bristol student, but the allegation relates to a time when they were a UWE Bristol student, the university reserves the right to investigate. If upheld, this could potentially result in an award being revoked.
- Where concurrent first Assessment Offences may have been committed, these will be investigated together. A concurrent assessment offence is considered to be one where the student has not yet been notified of the outcome of an ongoing first assessment offence allegation. All further offences will be treated as independent offences.
- Cases will not be treated as concurrent where it is beyond reasonable doubt that there was intent to cheat, deceive or gain an unfair advantage.

Procedures and penalties for students registered on undergraduate and postgraduate taught programmes

1. Diagrammatic summary of investigational procedures



2 Staff roles

Assessment Offence Advisers will:

- Provide advice to staff members on whether a suspected assessment offence case should be formally referred to the assessment offence process.
- Provide guidance and advice to individual students who have been formally referred to the assessment offence process for poor scholarship/where an assessment offence has been upheld; including advice on remedial action, support, and/or further training.
- Take an active role to identify and promote good practice and staff development in relation to the detection and deterrence of assessment offences.
- Promote good practice in assessment design as a key strategy for avoiding assessment offences.
- Take an active role in monitoring and analysing assessment offence data and consider suitable actions.

Executive officers or their nominees will:

- Be responsible for implementation and compliance with the policy within their college.
- Facilitate the formation of and chair college assessment offences panels where required.
- Facilitates communication of the panel outcome to all relevant parties.

An Executive officer is nominated by the Head of College and should be a Dean of College or School Director/Associate Head of School (or equivalent)

3. Initial review (Level 1)

- An individual who considers that a student has committed an assessment offence should report the allegation by providing supporting evidence to the Module Leader.
- If the Module Leader determines that there is no case to answer, the investigative process will cease.
- In cases where the assessed work is found to display poor levels of scholarship, and it is deemed appropriate to deal with this without formally recording an assessment offence, the Module Leader will ensure the mark reflects the poor scholarship and that the student is offered advice and support.
- If the Module Leader supports the allegation, they should refer the case to the relevant Assessment Offences (AO) Adviser. If it is an AO Adviser who is raising the allegation then an alternative AO adviser should be selected to fulfil the AO adviser role.
- In cases where the evidence suggests an assessment offence has occurred, the student will be advised in writing of the nature of the concerns and the proposed

outcome/penalty. The student will be invited to meet with the Assessment Offences Adviser and will have five working days to confirm whether they will be attending.

- If the student does not respond or declines the invite, the penalty for the assessment offence as determined by the Assessment Offences Adviser and confirmed by the Executive Officer will be applied. The student will normally be notified of the outcome within five working days of the date of their response to the initial communication.
- If the student confirms they wish to attend a meeting with the Assessment Offences Adviser to discuss the allegation, the case proceeds to Level 2.

4. Meeting with an Assessment Offences Adviser (Level 2)

- The University will give reasonable notice of the meeting, normally a minimum of 5 working days. The student may be accompanied by a friend or adviser from the Students' Union Advice Centre; however, they will not be able to speak on the student's behalf.
- Meetings can be online or face-to-face, and may be recorded.
- An Assessment Offence Adviser can request that a subject-matter expert attend the meeting to explore the student's level of knowledge and understanding of the assessment topic.
- In the meeting, the Assessment Offence Adviser will review the evidence including any explanation provided by the student and consider the nature and extent of the alleged offence. They will consider the contribution of the work item or component to the whole module and whether the student has previously been found to have committed an assessment offence.
- The student may be informed of the recommended outcome/penalty in the meeting.
- Within five working days of the meeting, the student will normally receive the final decision of the Executive Officer in writing, unless further investigation is required.
- An Academic Misconduct Panel (see section 4.6) will be convened to confirm the outcome if the penalty recommended by the Executive Officer is either Band E or F.
- If the Assessment Offences Adviser concludes that further review of the case is required, a College Assessment Offences Panel will be convened and the case proceeds to Level 3.

5. Assessment Offences Panels (Levels 3 and 4)

College Assessment Offences Panel Terms of reference

- A College Assessment Offence Panel will be chaired by the Executive Officer or nominated representative and a minimum of two members of academic staff from the college who are unrelated to the investigation, ideally one of whom will be from the discipline area.
- A College Assessment Offences Panel will be convened by the Executive Officer or nominated representative where the information and evidence concerning a case is inconclusive and requires further exploration.

University Academic Misconduct Panel Terms of Reference

- Any assessment offence investigation which may result in a Band E or Band F outcome will be referred to a University Academic Misconduct Panel to confirm the decision.
 - University Academic Misconduct Panel will be chaired by an Executive Officer or nominated representative and a minimum of two members of academic staff, one of whom must be from outside the college. All members of an Academic Misconduct Panel must be unrelated to the investigation.
-
- Panel meetings can be online or face to face, and may be recorded. The investigation will review the evidence, establish whether an offence occurred and, if so, its nature and effect, and the appropriateness of any penalties to be imposed. In the course of this investigation, it may be necessary to consider other module assessments and further evidence may arise.
 - A student may be invited to panel meetings. The University will give reasonable notice of the meeting, normally a minimum of 5 working days. In these cases, the student is encouraged to be supported through the assessment offence process by a friend or adviser from the Students' Union Advice Centre. The Panel meeting may be rescheduled if the student is unable to attend, but if the student declines a second invitation then it will proceed without their attendance. A written statement by the student will still be taken into consideration if they are unable to attend the panel meeting.
 - In cases where two (or more) students may be involved e.g. collusion, the Assessment Offences Panel may request a joint meeting and/or share the statements and evidence with those involved.
 - The Executive Officer will report the decision of the Assessment Offences Panel in writing to the student, normally within five working days of the meeting.

6. Appealing an assessment offence outcome

The only grounds for appealing the outcome of an assessment offences investigation are where:

- The student believes there has been a material and significant administrative error or other material irregularity in the management of the case **or**
- There is new evidence, which for valid reason was not previously available and might have materially affected the outcome and penalty applied.

Students must appeal the outcome of an Assessment Offences investigation within ten working days by contacting studentcasework@uwe.ac.uk

7. Assessment offence penalties

Summary of applicable penalties for Assessment Offence cases at undergraduate and postgraduate taught level.

Band	Penalty Details	Nature of offence	Further information
BAND A	Not recorded as a formal offence but concerns are noted and may be taken into consideration if an offence is committed subsequently. Mark may be adjusted to reflect the concerns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poor scholarship Minor plagiarism Minor collusion e.g. student's work is copied by another student Minor breaches of research ethics 	For first offences, a student receives a written warning, including signposting to support resources and/or advice as appropriate. There is an expectation for the student to engage with the support resources provided. Non-engagement with these can be taken into consideration in the application of penalties if further offences are committed.
BAND B	Mark of 0 for the work item	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence of substantial plagiarism Evidence of significant collusion Previous concerns raised at Band A level 	
BAND C	Mark of 0 for the work item with a mark reduction (40% levels 3-6, 50% level 7) applied to the work item if a resit or retake is required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The majority of work and/or critical elements are plagiarised or show evidence of collusion Contract cheating Falsification or fabrication of data/content/references/citations Second offences at Band B level Using prohibited materials or devices in an exam Absence of Ethical Approval 	
BAND D	Mark of 0 for the work item, and mark reduction applied to the whole module (40% levels 3-6, 50% level 7) if a resit or retake is required.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Second offences at Band C level 	In some instances, a Band E penalty may be deemed appropriate for second offences at the Band C level (see Band E below).
BAND E	Not permitted to continue on the programme (required to withdraw) Student is permitted to complete modules they are currently enrolled on, excluding the one where the offence has occurred	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple offences (two or more) at Bands C or D level depending on the nature of the offence 	Referral to other university procedures/policies including fitness to practice/professional suitability/student conduct Band E and F penalties will be approved by the Academic Misconduct Panel.
BAND F	Immediate expulsion from the university	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three or more offences at Band C or above Repeated deliberate and significant undermining of assessment integrity 	

8. Guidance to inform an assessment offence penalty

Issues which may be considered when deciding an appropriate penalty for an assessment offence include:

- Whether the student accepts an offence, if an offence has been committed, at the earliest opportunity;
- Whether the student intended to deceive, and/or their honesty and integrity in dealing with the investigation;
- Whether the student has committed any previous assessment offences;
- Volume/proportion of the assessment affected;
- Size of assessment with respect to the overall module, and credit-weighting of the module;
- Level of study, amount/nature of previous study;
- Impact of penalty on progression;
- Issues identified concerning the clarity of the assessment brief.
- Personal circumstances

Penalties for assessment offences for students on awards validated or accredited by professional or statutory bodies may be constrained by the regulations of those bodies. This may include reporting the offence to the professional or statutory body.

9. Penalties and professional suitability

- The penalty confirmed for a student registered on a professionally accredited programme will be communicated to the Head of School who may report the outcome to the regulatory body if required.
- If a Band E or F penalty is confirmed for a student registered on a professionally accredited programme, the Head of School will report the outcome to the regulatory body and also decide whether the student is permitted study on a professional accredited programme at the university in the future. This decision will be recorded in the university's record system.

10. Group work

Any penalty applied in the event of an assessment offence will normally be applied to all members of the group. The two exceptions are:

- a. where a member of the group acknowledges, in writing to the Assessment Offence Adviser, that they have committed an assessment offence;

- b. where the offence can be shown to have been committed by (a) specific member(s) of the group responsible for those sections of the work that are the subject of an assessment offence.

In the case of these exceptions, the penalty will only be applied to the member(s) of the group who has committed the assessment offence.

11. Reporting penalties to the Examining Boards

It is not within the remit of the Examining Board to determine whether an offence has occurred or to decide on an appropriate penalty.

However, where an assessment offence is found to have occurred in relation to one or more modules the Examining Board may take these into account when considering decisions on:

- compensation of failed credit;
- Whether any further action is required such as referral to other UWE Bristol policies and/or external bodies e.g. professional, statutory or regulatory bodies.

Investigation procedures and penalties for Postgraduate Research degrees

1. Expectations

The University considers that all allegations of assessment offences relating to research study undertaken by postgraduate researchers for the purpose of an MPhil or Doctoral level award are serious and must be investigated accordingly. All students of the University, including postgraduate researchers, are subject to the University's published policy about academic integrity and assessment offences.

2. Regulations

E10. Research Governance, Conduct and Assessment Offences

- (i) Candidates must comply with the University (and/or the approved equivalent collaborative partner institutions) policies and Code of Good Research Conduct as set out in Regulation A5.
- (ii) The Director of Studies and supervisory team will ensure that candidates have access to information and training on the University's expectations.

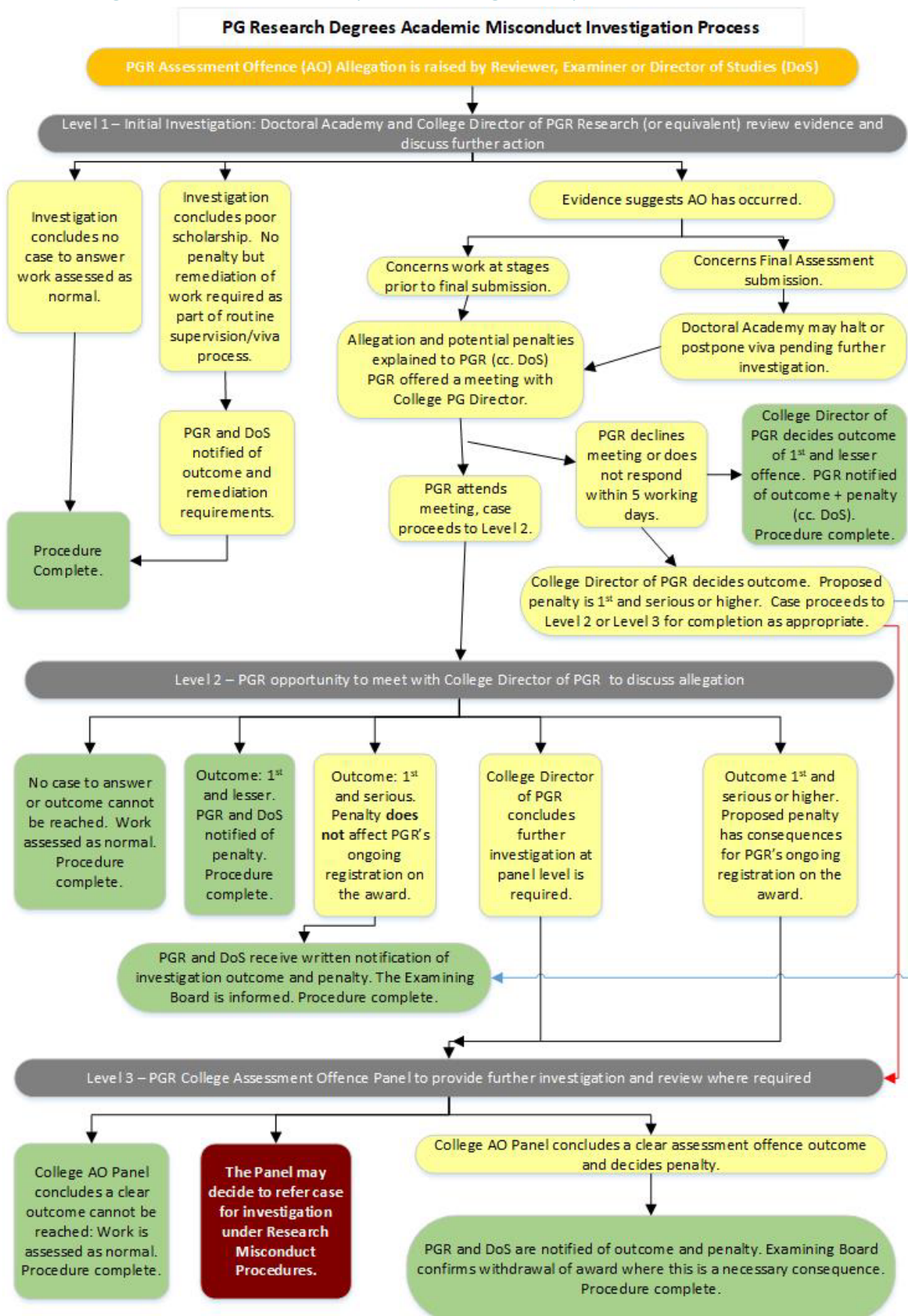
- (iii) Allegations of misconduct will be investigated in accordance with the procedures set out in the University's Code of Good Research Conduct and/or the University's Assessment Offences Policy.

3. Scope of the investigation procedures

Assessment offence allegations made against postgraduate researchers (PGRs) registered on an MPhil or doctoral level award (including those who are also members of University Staff or affiliated Staff) will be investigated under the University's Academic Regulations and Procedures as follows.

1. Assessment offence allegations made against PGRs relating to the assessment of taught elements of the award for which UWE credit is awarded (e.g., taught modules) will be investigated in accordance with part D10 of the University Regulations and procedures relating to taught programmes within this policy.
2. Assessment offence allegations made against PGRs relating to the assessment of the research project, the thesis or the critical commentary (MPhil/DPhil by publication), or any other element of research undertaken directly relating to the award, will be investigated under regulations at D10 and E10 and the procedures described below. The investigation will align with the principles of the University Code of Good Research Conduct as appropriate.
3. Allegations of research misconduct relating to any other area of research with which the postgraduate researcher is connected will be investigated under procedures set out in the University Code of Good Research Conduct. In addition the investigating College Director of PGR or PGR Assessment Offence Panel Chair may also refer an assessment offence case for consideration under the University's Research Misconduct Procedures at any stage where there are clear grounds to do so.

4. Diagrammatic summary of investigative procedures



5. Assessment offence penalties

Summary of applicable penalties for proven assessment offence cases in MPhil and doctoral level awards

The penalty tariff is designed with due regard to:

- the intent to deceive;
- the proportion of the material affected;
- the level of study;
- the extent of previous skills support training having been undertaken;
- any previous offences having been recorded against the candidate by the University at any level of study, but particularly at Masters level 7 and Doctoral level 8.

Offence Outcomes	Nature of the Offence committed	Normal penalty to be applied, or range of penalties where there is more than one available.
Poor scholarship	Incomplete, inaccurate or missing citation in a small number of instances.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Details of areas for concern are included in written feedback and sent to both the candidate and the Director of Studies (DoS), who must meet to agree a plan of action to improve the candidate's understanding of good academic practice and any further training needed.• All examples must be rectified within the work concerned.• Poor scholarship within a thesis submitted for final examination will be raised as part of the viva process and will require correction and / or amendment as appropriate.• No offence will be recorded on the candidate's student file/record.
First and lesser offence (Not applicable for offences found in a thesis submitted for final examination)	Evidence shows plagiarism or other assessment offence of a minor nature in terms of volume with very little significance to the piece of work overall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The investigating College PGR Director (or other designated person) issues a formal written warning to the candidate copied to the DoS, advising that further offences will be deemed 'serious' and may result in a severe penalty being applied from the range described.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The offence is recorded candidate's student file/record until graduation. • Candidate and DoS must meet to agree an action plan as above which will be subject to College/School scrutiny as appropriate. • All examples must be rectified within the work concerned.
<p>All other offences including:</p> <p>First and serious offence;</p> <p>Second / subsequent offences;</p> <p>All offences detected within the thesis after its submission for final examination, other than instances of poor scholarship.</p>	<p>Evidence shows plagiarism or other assessment offence that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is not extensive and is of relatively minor significance to the piece of work or thesis; <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is extensive amounting to a considerable portion of the piece of work or thesis, or there are numerous occurrences throughout the work <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is significant and compromises the academic integrity of piece of work or thesis as a whole; <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate has committed a second/subsequent offence, where a proven previous offence has also been recorded against them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affected material is redacted within the work to the investigating Director's satisfaction and the assessment is permitted to go ahead. <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate is required to resubmit the work or thesis for assessment in a manner and within a timescale decided by the Investigating Director (or other designated person)/College Assessment Offences Panel no further resubmission outcome permitted; <p>or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate is required to withdraw by the College Assessment Offences Panel and their registration is terminated, no resubmission is permitted. The candidate will not qualify for the award on which they are registered; <p>and/or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The candidate is referred for investigation under the University Research Misconduct Procedures. • In all cases the offence will be recorded on the candidate's student file/record and included in future academic references.

6. Roles and responsibilities

The Doctoral Academy will:

- Provide advice to staff members on whether a suspected assessment offence should be referred to the PGR assessment offence process.
- Provide guidance and advice to individual PGR candidates who have been referred to the assessment offence process.
- Take an active role in monitoring and analysing assessment offence data and provide guidance on suitable investigative actions within the scope of the policy.
- Provide support and regulatory guidance to the investigating College Director of PGR (or other designated person) or College Panel throughout an assessment offence investigation.

The College Director of PGR (or equivalent designated person) will:

- Be responsible for implementation and compliance with the policy within the College in so far as it applies to postgraduate research and PG researchers.
- Take an active role to identify and promote good practice in relation to the detection and deterrence of assessment offences within postgraduate research.
- Facilitate the formation of College PGR assessment offence panels where required and support the College Dean of Research and Enterprise who will chair College PGR AO panels.
- Facilitate communication of the investigation outcome to all relevant parties in conjunction with the Doctoral Academy.

7. Initial allegation – an offence is suspected.

- A person who considers that a postgraduate researcher (PGR) has committed an assessment offence within research work submitted for assessment or review must report the allegation in writing as soon as possible to the Doctoral Academy. Preliminary evidence to support the allegation should also be included. The Doctoral Academy will liaise with the Director of PGR (or other designated person) for the College in which the PGR candidate is registered.
- Where the allegation concerns work submitted for the Progression Examination the viva may need to be postponed while the investigation is taking place. The Doctoral Academy will inform the PGR candidate of this.
- Where the allegation concerns work that has already been submitted by the PGR for final assessment (ie., the thesis or critical commentary) the Doctoral Academy will liaise with the College Director of PGR (or other designated person) to determine whether it is necessary to suspend the final assessment process or postpone the viva voce examination while further investigation of the allegation is carried out.

8. Initial investigation (Level 1)

- The investigating College Director of PGR/other designated person and the Doctoral Academy will consider the preliminary evidence and carry out additional investigation to determine whether there is a case to answer, and if so the likely seriousness of the offence.
- If there is the potential for a conflict of interests the allegation will be investigated by another member of the College as appropriate or by the Director of PGR for another College.

No case to answer

- If the investigating Director of PGR decides that there is no case to answer the investigation process will cease. No offence will be recorded on the PGR candidate's student record.

Poor Scholarship

- If the investigating Director of PGR decides at this preliminary stage that the issue is one of a poor level of scholarship, they will inform the PGR candidate and their Director of Studies (DoS) of this in writing. The work must be corrected as part of ongoing supervision and the DoS will provide advice and guidance to the candidate on good research practice and discuss what further training should be undertaken.
- Where poor scholarship is identified in work submitted for final assessment this will be addressed as part of the viva process through required amendments.
- In either event no offence will be recorded on the PGR candidate's student record.

The evidence suggests an offence has occurred.

- Where the evidence suggests that an offence has occurred it is for the investigating College Director of PGR to determine both the volume and significance of the suspect work to the research project as a whole, and the seriousness of any offence.
- In doing so they may consult colleagues with subject or technical expertise to assist in the investigation. Individuals called upon in this way will be unconnected with the PGR candidate or the research project concerned.
- In the case of work submitted for final assessment the investigating PGR Director may also consult the appointed PGR examiners where this is appropriate (ie., where the examiners have had sight of the work).
- From this point onwards the PGR candidate's Director of Studies (DoS) and supervision team will play no part in the investigation, other than to provide information or evidence as required by the investigating College Director of PGR.
- The nature and complexity of allegations about doctoral level work means that this investigation stage may take some time. Where the investigation is likely to take more than 10 working days from the date the allegation is received, the Doctoral Academy will write to the candidate (cc the DoS) to explain this and provide an estimate of when the investigation stage is likely to be concluded. Updates will be issued if the investigation takes significantly longer than estimated.

- Once the Level 1 investigation stage is complete the investigating College Director of PGR will write to the candidate to explain the allegation and the potential penalties that may be imposed. The candidate will be invited to meet with the investigating Director of PGR to discuss the allegation. The candidate will have five working days to respond to this letter.
- The letter will be sent to the candidate's UWE email address and by post to their registered address.
- The letter will signpost the candidate to University sources of support and advice including the Student Union Advice Centre and Wellbeing Service support.
- If the candidate declines the meeting or does not reply without good reason, the Director of PGR will move to consider the outcome of the investigation and decide any penalty as appropriate, forwarding the case for further review or confirmation if the seriousness of the offence requires it. The candidate will have no further opportunity to meeting to explain their actions or submit further evidence at this stage.
- If the candidate confirms they wish to attend the meeting the case proceeds to Level 2.

9. Meeting between the candidate and the investigating College Director of PGR (Level 2)

- The University will give reasonable notice of the meeting, normally a minimum of five working days. The candidate may be accompanied by a friend or adviser from the Student's Union Advice Centre but they will not be able to represent the candidate or speak on their behalf.
- A face-to-face meeting is preferred, but the meeting can be conducted online where necessary. The meeting may be recorded, or a contemporaneous note of the meeting taken.
- A member of the Doctoral Academy staff will attend the meeting to advise on regulatory matters and in absence of suitable recording equipment will take a written note of the proceedings for subsequent circulation to attendees.
- The investigating Director of PGR may also invite another member of staff with subject or technical expertise who may also put questions to the candidate about the work under scrutiny.
- The candidate will have an opportunity to present any additional evidence or mitigating explanation at this point. The Director of PGR will review the evidence, including any mitigation, will consider the nature and extent of the offence, and the penalty as appropriate.
- The candidate may be advised of the likely outcome and proposed penalty at the meeting if it is appropriate to do so but will receive written confirmation of the outcome from the investigating Director of PGR within ten working days.
- Where it is found that there is no case to answer the process will stop and no offence will be recorded on the candidate's student record. Assessment of the work may then resume as normal.
- Where the offence is found to be first and lesser this outcome confirmation will comprise

a written warning to the candidate, copied to the Director of Studies.

- Where the offence is found to be first and serious, but the penalty proposed will not affect the candidate's ongoing registration on the award the penalty will be confirmed in writing, and the Examining Board will be informed of the outcome.
- Where the offence is found to be first and serious or higher and the proposed penalty has potential consequences for the candidate's ongoing registration on the award, or where the investigating Director of PGR concludes that further investigation is required, the case will be referred to the College PGR Assessment Offence Panel and proceed to Level 3.

10. College PGR Assessment Offence Panel provides further investigation and review (Level 3).

College PGR Assessment Offences Panel terms of reference

- A College PGR Assessment Offence Panel will be chaired by the College Dean for Research and Enterprise (or nominated representative) and comprise a further two members of academic staff, one of whom will be the College Director of PGR who conducted the initial investigation, and the other a representative from outside the College who is an experienced research supervisor having successfully supervised at least four candidates to completion, and has completed the UWE supervisory training. In addition, a subject or technical expert nominated by the Chair may be added to the panel in an advisory capacity.
- No member of the panel will have a connection to the PGR, the supervisory team, or the research project.
- A senior member of Doctoral Academy staff will attend the panel to provide regulatory advice and guidance.
- The Panel will be convened by the College Dean for Research and Enterprise where the

Level 3 panel process

- A face-to-face meeting of the College PGR Assessment Offence Panels is preferred, but meetings may be conducted online where necessary. Meetings may be recorded.
- In the absence of suitable recording equipment, the Doctoral Academy will take a note of the proceedings for subsequent circulation to attendees.
- The candidate may be invited to a College PGR Assessment Offence Panel meeting. Where Chair of the Panel decides that this is appropriate the University will give the candidate reasonable notice of the meeting, normally a minimum of 5 working days. The candidate is strongly advised to be accompanied at the Panel by a friend or adviser from the Student's Union Advice Centre who may support the candidate but may not represent or speak on behalf of the candidate, or take any active role in the meeting.
- The Panel may be rescheduled if the candidate has been invited but is unable to attend, but if the candidate declines a second invitation, then it will proceed without their attendance.
- A written statement by the candidate can be considered by the Panel if they are unable to attend.

- The Panel will review the evidence, decide the outcome of the investigation, and where required decide an appropriate penalty from the range available.
- The Chair of the Panel will write to the candidate informing them of the outcome decision and any penalty, normally within 10 working days of the meeting. The penalty will subsequently be reported to the Examining Board
- In addition to, or instead of an outcome decision and penalty from the range available at 3. above, the Panel may decide to refer the case for investigation under the University's Research Misconduct Procedures. In which case the candidate will be informed in writing of this decision.

11. The penalty to be imposed results in withdrawal of registration.

- Where the penalty decided by the Assessment Offences panel requires the PGR candidate to withdraw, their registration will be terminated, and no award will be made. In such cases the penalty decision will override any right of the candidate to defend their work at a viva voce examination of their work.

12. Additional procedures for the investigation of allegations arising during the final assessment process for PGR awards.

- A PGR examiner who suspects an offence may have occurred while scrutinising the thesis or submitted work prior to the viva should contact the Doctoral Academy as soon as possible as at section 5. of these procedures above.
- Where concerns arise once the viva voce examining panel has assembled or during the viva itself the examiner should raise their concern with the Independent Chair who is responsible for the conduct of the viva.
- Following a brief discussion with the examining panel in camera (in private) the Chair will decide whether the viva should continue or, in extremis, should be stopped. The Independent Chair may contact the Doctoral Academy for advice on this point, and must contact the Doctoral Academy immediately if it is deemed necessary to stop the viva.
- Where the viva continues the examiners may question the candidate about areas of concern within the thesis/submitted work and this should be clearly recorded in the examiners' outcome report. If at the end of the viva the examiners are not confident that the thesis/submitted work is the candidate's own work, then this should be indicated in the relevant section of the report.
- The Doctoral Academy will liaise with the relevant College Director of PGR to determine the necessary course of action or ensuing investigation as per the procedures described above.
- Where an assessment offence is found to have occurred in the thesis/submitted work after it has been examined but before the degree has been awarded, the Examining Board may delay confirmation of the award while an investigation takes place. Subject to the outcome of the investigation the decision of the examiners may then need to be reconsidered, or the award may be withdrawn and the candidate's registration

terminated.

- Where a serious assessment offence is found to have occurred in a thesis or submitted work after an award has been conferred, the University reserves the right to investigate further and rescind the award if necessary, and to inform any journal or other publication which the research contained within the PGR project has been published that an assessment offence or research misconduct has occurred.

Partnership students

The procedures detailed in this document also apply to students studying at UK partner colleges and international partners.

UK Partnership students

- The partner is responsible for reporting all alleged assessment offences to the relevant Faculty Assessment Offence Adviser at UWE.
- The partner has the responsibility for investigating and providing evidence of an assessment offence to UWE.
- UWE has the final decision regarding the outcome of the investigation and will communicate the decision to the student.

International partnership students

- The partner is responsible for reporting all alleged assessment offences to the Partnerships Team at UWE.
- The partnership agreement confirms that assessment offence identification and investigation are conducted by the relevant Module Leader and Assessment Offence Adviser at the partner location.
- UWE is informed of the outcome of the assessment offence investigation and the penalty recommended by the partner.
- The partner is responsible for notifying the student of the outcome.