

REGULATIONS & PROCEDURE FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

DEFINITIONS:

Cheating is defined as any attempt to gain unfair advantage in an assessment by dishonest means, and includes e.g. cheating in an examination, stealing another student's work, commissioning of an assessment from a third party, impersonation of another student.

Plagiarism is the act of taking someone else's work and passing it off as your own. This includes incorporating either unattributed direct quotation(s) or substantial paraphrasing from the work of another/others/or yourself.
It is important to cite all sources whose work has been drawn on and reference them fully in accordance with the referencing standard used in each academic school.

Collusion is when two or more people combine to produce a piece of work for assessment that is passed off as the work of one student alone. The work may be so alike in content, wording and structure that the similarity goes beyond what might have been coincidence. For example – where one student has copied the work of another, or where a joint effort has taken place in producing what should have been an individual effort.

DETECTION:

Instructions for Staff

When a member of academic staff believes that there is a potential case of academic misconduct the following action will be taken.

Collusion

The assignments which exhibit similarity will be passed to the School Academic Misconduct Co-ordinator. The assignments should be accompanied by a statement from the member of staff explaining their concerns with the work.

In many cases the similarity will be obvious, in that the text will be identical, however there will be occasions e.g. with scientific or information technology assignments when additional specialist knowledge will be required by the investigating panel.

Plagiarism

The assignment will be passed to the School Academic Misconduct Co-ordinator. It must be accompanied by a copy of the identified source material and/or the Turnitin Report.

Cheating

The Student Office will submit the original invigilators report and the examination script, with any evidence e.g. crib notes, to the Conduct and Appeals Unit as soon as possible after the examination has concluded.

In the case of an in-class test the supervising staff member must take the evidence to the School Academic Misconduct Co-ordinator.

The Conduct and Appeals Unit will then liaise with the appropriate School.

Academic or administrative staff should not discuss the matter with students. Students who enquire about their assessment should be told that they will be receiving a letter from the School inviting them to a meeting to discuss the work.

Allocation of Grades

Once the module leader is satisfied that there is sufficient evidence for a case to be brought forward then a grade of OAM should be entered on to the SITS system. This must be done to enable a grade to be entered on to the system following the meeting with the student.

PROCEDURE PRIOR TO THE STAGE ONE HEARING:

The School Academic Misconduct Co-ordinator will liaise with the Conduct and Appeals Unit – a date will be agreed for the hearing.

The School will write to the student inviting them to the hearing. The student will be given at least seven days notice of the hearing. The letter will clearly state the allegation that is being made and identify in which piece of assessment the offence has allegedly been committed.

The letter should contain a statement in relation to the standard of proof to be applied. The standard and burden of proof is for the University to prove the allegation(s) of misconduct and if on the available evidence it is more likely than not that misconduct has occurred then the burden and standard of proof is fulfilled and a penalty will be imposed as appropriate. The letter will inform the student that they have the right to present evidence in person, and provide written statements if they are unwilling or unable to attend the meeting

It must be made clear to the student that if they fail to attend the meeting without a valid reason then a decision will be taken in their absence.

The student will be informed that they can be accompanied by a “friend”. This will normally be a fellow student, or an Officer of the Students’ Union. Contact details for the Students’ Union Advice & Support Centre are available at their website: www.wolvesunion.org

Under no circumstances will it be appropriate to bring a member of University staff as a “friend”.

A standard invite letter, which must be used, is available from the Conduct & Appeals Unit.

THE STAGE ONE HEARING:

The hearing will have in attendance

- A senior member of academic staff from the School to which the module belongs.
- The Head of the Conduct & Appeals Unit
- Student (and friend)
- Note taker to provide a summary of the meeting (provided by the Conduct and Appeals Unit)

The student will be given the opportunity to discuss with the panel the circumstances which have led to the assessment which is at the centre of the allegation. The standard and burden of proof is for the University to prove the allegation(s) of misconduct and if on the available evidence it is more likely than not that misconduct has occurred then the burden and standard of proof is fulfilled and a penalty will be imposed as appropriate.

The student will be informed in writing by the Head of the Conduct and Appeals Unit of the penalty which will be imposed, as soon as possible after the hearing. This will normally be within seven working days. It must be noted that at busy times of the academic year there may be delays.

APPEAL PROCEDURE: *Against the outcome of a stage one hearing.*

A student will have the right to appeal against the decision reached by a Stage One hearing. The grounds for appeal are:

- That an administrative error or material irregularity has occurred in the conduct of the investigation.
- That there were personal circumstances which they believe would have affected the decision taken by the panel had they been made aware of them. The student must have a good reason not to have revealed the circumstances to the Stage One hearing.

Appeals must be made within twenty working days of the receipt of the letter which informs the student of the penalty imposed and should be made in writing to:

The Dean of Students
Student Services Gateway
MB Building
Stafford Street
WOLVERHAMPTON WV1 1SB

The Dean of Students will review the request for an appeal to determine whether or not the appellant has demonstrated valid grounds for an appeal to proceed. If it

is determined that the student has demonstrated a valid case for an appeal to proceed then the case will be referred to a Stage Two Hearing. If the Dean of Students does not find this to be the case a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued, in accordance with the format prescribed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education¹.

An appeal review by the Dean of Students should normally be completed in no more than twenty working days.

THE STAGE TWO HEARING:

The membership of a Stage Two Panel will be:

- A Dean of School other than that to which the student belongs.
- A senior member of academic staff from another School.
- A Students' Union representative nominated by the President of the Students' Union.

An officer of the Conduct and Appeals Unit, will act as note taker to the panel

The appellant must be given written notice, at least seven working days prior to the hearing, of the date and place of the hearing, and a copy of the University's misconduct procedure, drawing attention to the appellant's rights under the procedure. The standard and burden of proof applied will be the same as at stage one of this procedure.

At least five working days before the hearing, members of the Stage Two Panel and the appellant will be provided with the appropriate documentation. The appellant may also provide an additional written statement to the panel.

The appellant has the right to appear before and be heard by the Stage Two Panel. They may be accompanied by a friend. (The student shall be responsible for notifying the Conduct and Appeals Unit of the identity of the friend and of any witnesses to be called not less than two working days prior to the interview meeting). It would normally be expected that a student attend a stage two hearing, however, if they fail to attend the meeting without a valid reason then a decision will be taken in their absence.

If the Panel upholds an appeal it can decide to impose an alternative penalty or to rule that no penalty should be imposed. The decision taken by this panel will be final. The Panel decision must be communicated to the Chair of the Assessment Board.

At this stage a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued to the student, confirming the outcome, by the Conduct and Appeals Unit in accordance with the format prescribed by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. This should normally be within seven working days.

¹ Further details of the review scheme operated by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) are available at their website: www.oiahe.org.uk

PENALTIES:

The following penalties in case of proven academic misconduct should normally be applied, to maintain consistency and parity of treatment for similar offences across the University. The penalty will be determined by the investigating panel.

Offence	Penalty
A first offence committed by a student in their first year of study on a University of Wolverhampton award.	Failure of the assessment task in question (e.g.F0) <i>The student will be permitted to retake the component but will be restricted to a D5 grade.</i>
A first offence committed by a student not in their first year of study Or A second offence committed by any student on a University of Wolverhampton award.	Failure of the module in question (e.g.F0) <i>The student will be permitted to retake the module but will be restricted to a D5 grade.</i>
A third offence committed by a student on a University of Wolverhampton award.	Exclusion from the University.
Serious Offences – Serious academic misconduct is defined as any case of deliberate, premeditated cheating, which has either been admitted by a student, or which a panel has judged to be a premeditated attempt to deceive and gain unfair advantage. <i>For example – theft of another students work, cheating in an examination, commissioning work, impersonation of another student.</i>	
First Serious Offence at Undergraduate Level	Restriction of the award the student may ultimately achieve.
Second Serious Offence at Undergraduate Level	Exclusion from the University.
First Serious Offence at Postgraduate Level	Exclusion from the University.
It is noted that in cases of exclusion from the University the student would receive the award to which they were entitled at the time of the exclusion being imposed.	

Associated documents:

- University of Wolverhampton Policy on tackling academic misconduct – available at www.wlv.ac.uk/polsregs

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