



Ruskin College
Oxford

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

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Approved: SLT

Last Reviewed: -

Responsibility for Review: SLT

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Ruskin College takes any allegations of academic misconduct seriously and has put in place a policy to manage and reduce the risk of these in assessed work. The policy applies to all higher education programmes of study within the College and is provided to all students working towards validated higher education awards. The Programme Academic Lead for the relevant programme, working in close conjunction with the Programme Manager HE, is the member of academic staff responsible for investigating any allegations of misconduct.

1.2 Academic misconduct is an overarching term used in this policy to cover a range of offences included within the following specified types:

- academic negligence
- academic malpractice
- academic cheating

This policy is intended to allow the College to determine whether or not academic misconduct has taken place within *summative* assessments. It is expected that academic misconduct suspected in *formative* work will be drawn to the student's attention by staff.

2. SCOPE

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2.1 The policy covers the following areas:

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- Definitions and examples of academic misconduct.
- The procedures that are to be followed in the event that an allegation of academic misconduct is reported.
- The action that would result from a substantiated report of academic misconduct in assessed work.

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3. DEFINITIONS

Academic misconduct is defined by the College as any activity or attempted activity which gives an unfair advantage to one or more students over their peers.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE POLICY

4.1 The College aims to educate students to develop good academic practice and writing skills. As part of this philosophy to help students avoid academic misconduct - and also warn of the consequences of committing academic misconduct - the College provides the following support:

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- Advice and guidance from programme teams and course information.
- The learning support team and library staff provide writing and study skills support.
- Opportunities for students and staff to use plagiarism e-detection software using G-Suite / Google Classroom, Moodle and Turnitin similarity checking and anti-plagiarism software.

4.2 The assessment of students as regards their achievement of learning outcomes is based on the principle that, unless clearly stated otherwise in the assessment instructions, the work undertaken by a student for assessment has been carried out by that student and is their own work.

4.3 All students will be required to read and sign a plagiarism declaration at the time that assessed work is handed in for marking.

4.4 The work submitted by a student for assessment must therefore have been carried out by

the student. Work presented in such a way that it fails clearly to identify the work done by others may attract the charge of academic misconduct.

- 4.5 Any essays, dissertations or other assessed work undertaken must be a student's own work and any passages quoted, paraphrased or opinions relied upon must be properly attributed.
- 4.6 Equally, if a student uses images, designs, plans, diagrams, computer code or other such media which have been originated by someone else, the student must specify the source.
- 4.7 The College accepts that a student's work may be inspired by what they have read, but a student must not copy or paraphrase whole sentences, paragraphs or parts of someone else's work without proper attribution.
- 4.8 Where a student reproduces someone else's ideas, but in their own words to a greater or lesser extent (or paraphrasing), they must cite the original source and, in the case of direct quotes, include the page number. If a student is in any doubt as to how to cite reference material, they must consult a member of academic staff.
- 4.9 Where an element of group work is an appropriate part of the assessment methodology, the assessment instructions must make clear the nature, content and extent of such group-based activity.
- 4.10 Staff are required to give students specific instructions on when, how and in what form they should submit/undertake any assessment and students are encouraged to seek clarification.
- 4.11 Students accused of academic misconduct shall be innocent until judged to be guilty following the process set out below. Normally, students will be allowed to progress with their academic studies until the conclusion of procedures under the Policy relating to Academic Misconduct. However, where - as a consequence of being found guilty of academic misconduct - a student needs to be re-assessed, this will take place at the next available opportunity but may impose a delay in progression. Any such decisions will be made according to the academic regulations of the awarding body. Students subject to professional body requirements may be required to suspend their studies subject to an outcome under this procedure. The Professional or Statutory, Regulatory Body [PSRB] requirements are referred to in programme approval documentation.
- 4.12 Students accused of academic misconduct shall have the right to be made aware of the accusation and challenge that accusation.
- 4.13 The burden of proof shall rest with the College and must be based on clear, strong and cogent evidence.
- 4.14 Where a student is found guilty of academic misconduct at any stage, then a record will be kept of this and any associated penalty on their record. One complete set of papers relating to each proven case will be retained in a separate file by the Academic Registrar to be referred to only in the event that a subsequent action, for example a request for a review by the student, necessitates reference to this material.
- 4.15 At the commencement of their programme, students must be advised of the College procedure for dealing with alleged academic misconduct and the penalties which may be imposed if they are found guilty of academic misconduct.
- 4.16 Programme handbooks must make reference to the dangers and penalties of academic misconduct, and these references must be reinforced orally by staff.

- 4.17 Staff who suspect that academic misconduct has taken place shall pursue the process outlined in the Policy relating to Academic Misconduct.
- 4.18 All communication including letters, evidence and invitations will, wherever possible, be sent via email.
- 4.19 Staff who sit as Academic Misconduct Panel members must have had no previous involvement in the student's case.

5 PROCEDURE

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5.1 The College recognises three broad types of academic misconduct offences; academic negligence, academic malpractice and academic cheating. Academic negligence is the least serious, and academic cheating the most serious. The member of staff suspecting academic misconduct must first arrange to check the student's records to identify whether the student has been found guilty of a previous academic misconduct offence. The member of staff should then consult with the Programme Academic Lead and Programme Manager HE before taking any action whatsoever. Together they will make a decision on the type of alleged offence and determine the action to be undertaken.

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5.2 The Programme Manager HE and Programme Academic Lead will conduct an investigation into the allegation. The actions pursued may include some or all of the following:

- Checking sources used
- Checking of any suspect work using specialist anti-plagiarism software
- Comparing the suspected work directly against other submitted work
- Seeking the advice of the relevant External Examiner.

6 DECISION OF PROGRAMME MANAGER HE AND PROGRAMME ACADEMIC LEAD

6.1 If the Programme Manager HE and Programme Academic Lead are satisfied that academic misconduct has not taken place, no further action will be taken in relation to the case and no formal record of the issue will be kept. The student will be informed of this outcome in writing (email).

6.2 If the Programme Manager HE and Programme Academic Lead are satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that academic misconduct has occurred, one of the following courses of action will apply and the student will be notified of the outcome in writing (email).

6.3 Courses of action:

1. Referral to Academic Misconduct Board

6.4 Where the student:

6.5 i) Has a previous case of academic misconduct recorded against them where the first instance was not the result of Academic Malpractice (and where the second/subsequent offence has occurred after the procedures for the first offence have been completed. If multiple instances are discovered and investigated at the same time or an instance occurs before the conclusion of the first academic misconduct meeting, this should be considered as one instance).

6.6 ii) Where the Programme Manager HE believes an appropriate penalty for the instance is not available to them under this policy;

6.7 The Programme Manager HE will forward the decision letter and supporting evidence

to the Academic Registrar for the case to be heard by an academic misconduct panel. The referral to the panel must be made within two weeks of the student being notified of the suspected academic misconduct.

- 6.8 The Chair of the academic misconduct panel will call a meeting with the student to put the allegation to him or her and hear his or her account of the matter. The student may be accompanied to this meeting by no more than one other person who may be their tutor or a friend or a representative of the Students' Union. The Chair will also have another tutor present who is not the students personal tutor.
- 6.9 Where a case is reported to the Academic Registrar, the Programme Manager HE will also inform the relevant Examination Board. The Examination Board must defer consideration of the work in question until the academic misconduct panel has made a decision on the case. The results for modules unaffected by the suspected misconduct should be considered by the Examination Board and released to the student.

8.7 7. ACTION TAKEN IF PLAGIARISM, CHEATING OR ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT IS SUBSTANTIATED

7.1.1 If the Chair of the academic misconduct panel is satisfied that plagiarism, cheating or academic misconduct has taken place, then s/he determines what penalty will be applied to the student with reference to the AMBeR Tariff, set out below.

7.2 AMBer Tariff and the points system
The basis of the AMBeR tariff is a points-based methodology used to grade plagiarism offences according to certain criteria. It operates by assigning a number of points to each offence. The number of points are aggregated and penalties are assigned according to a table which range from no marks penalties awarded to being expelled from an Institution without any award no matter what unchallenged credit has been accumulated.

8.8 History of identified plagiarism offences

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1st Time	100 points
2nd Time	150 points
3rd/+ Time	200 points

Amount / Extent of plagiarism identified

Below 5% AND less than two sentences	80 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised	105 points
Between 5% and 20% OR more than two sentences but not more than two paragraphs	105 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised 130 points Between 20% and 50% OR more than two paragraphs but not more than five paragraphs	130 points
As above but with critical aspects* plagiarised	160 points
Above 50% OR more than five paragraphs	160 points
Submission purchased from essay mill or ghost-writing service	225 points

* *Critical aspects are key ideas central to the assignment*

9. Level

Level 4	70 points
Level 5	115 points
Level 6	140 points
Level 7	140 points

Value of Assignment

Standard weighting	30 points
Heavy weighting (e.g. end of year dissertation / independent study)	60 points

Additional Characteristics

Evidence of deliberate attempt to disguise plagiarism by changing words, sentences or references to avoid detection	40 points
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7.3 The penalty (for summative work) will be awarded at the discretion of the Chair of the academic misconduct panel, based on the points accrued and the seriousness with which the offence is viewed. In all cases a formal warning is given and a record made contributing to the student's previous history. For the available penalties, see the table below.

Points Accrued	Penalties (select one)
Less than 280	A minor offence (see below) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an informal warning reinforced with development activity and additional support for the student
280 - 329	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further action beyond formal warning • Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required, with no penalty on mark
330 - 379	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No further action beyond formal warning • Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required, with no penalty on mark • Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required but mark capped or reduced
380 - 479	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required but mark capped or reduced • Assignment awarded 0% - no opportunity to resubmit
480 - 524	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assignment awarded 0% - no opportunity to resubmit • Module awarded 0% - re-sit required, but mark capped or reduced • Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, but credit still awarded
525 – 559	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module awarded 0% - re-sit required, but mark capped or reduced • Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, but credit still awarded • Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, and credit lost • Award classification reduced • Qualification reduced (e.g. Honours -> no Honours) • Expelled from institution but credits retained • Expelled from institution with credits withdrawn
560+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to resit, and credit lost • Award classification reduced • Qualification reduced (e.g. Honours -> no Honours) • Expelled from institution but credits retained • Expelled from institution with credits withdrawn

7.4 Minor offences may be characterised by inadvertently inaccurate description of methods, data collection and/or analysis, poor referencing, unattributed quotations, inappropriate paraphrasing, incorrect or incomplete citations, particularly where there is reason to believe that the student had not yet fully absorbed the normal academic conventions in these regards.

7.5 Additionally, where it is deemed helpful and regardless of the seriousness of the offence, the Chair of the academic misconduct panel shall have the right to require a student to undertake additional instruction in the expectations and conventions of academic scholarship.

10. RIGHT OF APPEAL

10.1 The student shall have a right of appeal against the decision in accordance with the College's Academic Appeals Procedure, which can be found

at: <https://www.ruskin.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Admin-Appeals-and-Comp>

[laints-Ruskin.docx-1.pdf](#)