

Academic Regulation

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

September 2025



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The latest version of this document is always found at:

<https://policies.docstore.port.ac.uk/policy-297.pdf>

Summary

What is this document about?

The Academic Misconduct Policy outlines acceptable academic behaviour of students of the University to ensure the proper functioning of the University.

Who is this for?

This document will be of most interest to new and existing students and University staff. It will also be of interest to Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB's), the Office for Students, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA), and Office of the Independent Adjudicator: Higher Education (OIAHE). It may also be of interest to the wider public.

How does the University check that this is followed?

Academic Registry is responsible for ensuring that the Policy is followed. A record of all formal action taken by staff against students is kept by Academic Registry.

Who can you contact if you have any queries about this document?

If you have questions about this document, please contact Academic Registry by email at studentcasework@port.ac.uk

Accessibility Statement

The Student Conduct Policy is designed to be accessible to all students. If you have any special needs that mean you are unable to use the Policy in the way set out in this document, please contact us at studentcasework@port.ac.uk to discuss how the process can be adjusted to fit your needs, and to receive this Policy in alternative formats.

1. Introduction

1.1. Key Principles

- 1.1.1. The University is committed to engaging every student in a life-changing experience allowing them to fulfil their potential and make a positive contribution to society. The Academic Misconduct Policy upholds this commitment. Our [Student Charter](#) outlines these expectations through five core values: community, respect, support, education, and opportunity.
- 1.1.2. Academic integrity¹ is a fundamental part of a student's studies at the University. Academic misconduct is any inappropriate activity or behaviour by a student which may give that student, or another student, an unpermitted academic advantage in a summative assessment. This includes activity during preparation for assessment, even if there is no direct evidence of misconduct in the submitted work itself.
- 1.1.3. This Policy works alongside other key University policies:
- The [Student Conduct Policy](#) - This process should be followed when a student has been reported to have demonstrated unacceptable behaviour (defined as behaviour that could be reasonably perceived to cause upset, distress or harm to another person or cause harm to an organisation);
 - The [Assessment Regulations](#) - Our Assessment Regulations are designed to support the student experience and promote academic success for all students equally, while preserving academic integrity and safeguarding academic standards.
 - The [Fitness to Practise Policy and Procedures](#) apply to the range of regulated programmes offered by the University that lead to successful students being eligible to seek registration with the relevant professional, statutory and regulatory body (PSRB). Findings of proven intent to commit academic misconduct may also be referred to the Fitness to Practise Procedures.
- 1.1.4. Schools, Departments and London Campus will provide advice and clear examples to students of what constitutes academic misconduct. They will inform students of these regulations and the possible outcomes of academic misconduct.

¹ The University has signed up to the QAA Academic Integrity Charter for UK Higher Education. [QAA Academic Integrity Charter](#)

- 1.1.5. Students have a responsibility to undertake available training, read relevant guidance, and take responsibility for the integrity of their work, including asking for clarification when needed.
- 1.1.6. This policy applies the University's [Code of Practice](#) on Freedom of Speech and Expression and supports the principles of academic freedom as defined in the *Education Reform Act 1988*. The Code sets out the University's approach to freedom of speech and academic freedom, its value to the University, and how the University promotes and secures those rights for members of its community. The University upholds both the principles of academic freedom and inclusion. While the University encourages respectful and informed approaches to diverse topics, academic staff retain the right to present evidence-based research, theories, and scholarly viewpoints on all subjects, including those related to protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Course content should aim to represent diverse perspectives, while preserving the academic freedom to explore challenging or contested topics through rigorous scholarly discourse (Protected academic expression). Where potential tensions may arise between creating inclusive environments and protecting freedom of expression, the University will seek to enable both by focusing on the manner of expression rather than restricting legitimate content. The University is committed to facilitating difficult conversations while ensuring respect for all community members.
- 1.1.7. The University investigates all reports of misconduct using the same process. Under the Policy, the standard of proof is the "balance of probabilities". This means that, following an investigation into misconduct, the University can decide whether it believes that something is more likely to have happened than not, based on the evidence available. This does not require certainty but rather a reasonable belief, based on the evidence, that misconduct has occurred.
- 1.1.8. The outcomes of investigations and Panels under this Policy are generally final; however, the University will, on occasion, reopen an investigation if new evidence emerges that could not have been obtained sooner or if there are outstanding obligations relating to professional regulatory requirements.
- 1.1.9. In exceptional circumstances, the Academic Council may deprive any person of any award granted by the University, on the recommendation of the Vice-Chancellor or the relevant Board of Examiners.
- 1.1.10. Confirmed instances of academic misconduct and any sanction imposed may be referred to in student references and may be reported to relevant approving bodies for professional courses.

1.1.11. Academic judgement is “a judgement that is made about a matter where the opinion of an academic expert is essential” ([OIA](#), 2018). Disagreement with academic judgement is not, in itself, grounds for appeal.

- i) ***Decisions that involve academic judgement:*** *Academic staff conducting misconduct investigations will evaluate evidence within assessed work to determine, on the balance of probabilities, whether misconduct occurred, its nature, and extent. These evaluations constitute exercises of academic judgement.*
- ii) ***Decisions not normally requiring academic judgement:*** *After determining the nature and extent of misconduct, the appropriate sanction from Appendix B should be applied- this typically does not involve academic judgement. Establishing factual matters based on evidence generally does not require academic judgement.*

1.1.12. Artificial Intelligence: The University permits the use of AI as a tool to assist and inform research and generation of ideas, planning and output. The use of AI in submitted work must adhere to principles of academic integrity, with proper citation and clear indication of where AI has been utilised. Failure to do so will be considered for academic misconduct action. Guidance can be found in the University’s use of [AI statement document](#).

1.1.13. As a general principle, the consequences for academic misconduct will depend on the severity of the offence, any previous incidents of academic misconduct, and any additional mitigating or aggravating factors.

1.1.14. Additional supporting information for students is available on the Student Casework team’s [MyPort pages](#).

1.2. Scope

1.2.1. This Policy applies to all registered University students, no matter the course, its campus/location, level or mode of study.

1.2.2. This Policy may apply after students have left the University.

1.2.3. Allegations pertaining to assessments from previous academic years can be investigated retrospectively, provided there is compelling evidence to justify the investigation.

1.3. Exclusions

1.3.1. This Policy does not cover:

- Behavioural misconduct (covered by the [Student Conduct Policy](#));
- Research misconduct (covered by the Research Misconduct [procedure](#)).

1.4. Rights of Students

1.4.1. Students suspected of academic misconduct have the right to:

- Confidential advice and support throughout the process;
- Fair treatment and respect;
- Timely processing of their case;
- Access to all evidence considered in their case;
- Clear information about the process.

1.4.2. Students with additional needs as defined by the *Equality Act 2010* are entitled to reasonable adjustments to the procedure. Examples include:

- Extended deadlines for responses;
- Alternative format documentation;
- Communication support in meetings;
- Assistance with understanding procedures;
- Adjustments to meeting format or location;
- Breaks during panel hearings.

To request reasonable adjustments, students should contact the Investigator or the Student Casework team as early as possible in the process.

1.4.3. All deadlines within this Policy should be met by both students and the University whenever possible, but it may be possible to continue outside of the timelines given if there are acceptable reasons for the delay.

1.4.4. Students are entitled to meet with the Student Casework team at any point during a conduct case for advice or to discuss procedural adjustments.

1.4.5. Students who receive an academic misconduct sanction remain subject to standard University regulations regarding referral assessments and mark capping, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

1.5. Support

- 1.5.1. The [Student Life team](#) is available to support any students involved in misconduct cases of any nature. The support offer includes navigational support to help students engage with the relevant services in an efficient and timely manner, and welfare support.
- 1.5.2. Students involved in procedures under this Policy are encouraged to make use of the [Students' Union Advice Service](#) for independent support and advice at all stages of the Policy, including access to representation.
- 1.5.3. Students may bring a supporter to meetings. This can be a friend or family member, a UPSU Advice Representative or someone else nominated by the student. It is always helpful to inform the meeting host of this as soon as possible, so arrangements can be made to accommodate this. At the meeting, your supporter may make a statement to us and ask questions but should not answer questions on your behalf. You may talk privately with your supporter at any time during the meeting and may ask for a brief adjournment to do so.
- 1.5.4. Legal representatives are not required. If a student wishes to bring a legal representative, they must notify the University in advance, and the University may arrange legal representation for its staff as a result.
- 1.5.5. The [Student Wellbeing Service](#) is available to support students and provide free mental health wellbeing and counselling support.
- 1.5.6. [Chaplaincy](#) is available for support, guidance and confidential one-to-one chats, and is open to all students, regardless of the student's values or beliefs.

1.6. Expectations of All Parties

- 1.6.1. All parties must treat each other with dignity and respect. The University retains the right, where we consider the actions of anyone involved in a case to be unacceptable, to depart from the procedure. The University needs to ensure that all those involved do not suffer any disadvantage from individuals who act in an unacceptable manner. Restrictions may include:
 - Modifying the manner in which individuals are permitted to communicate with us;
 - Restricting the right to communicate with us, both now and in the future;
 - The Student Casework Team may also raise the matter as a disciplinary issue under the Student Conduct Policy.
- 1.6.2. Recording of discussions is not permitted without express permission from all parties.

1.7. Confidentiality

- 1.7.1. The person carrying out an investigation needs to be able to communicate and discuss the suspected misconduct with everyone involved. It is for this reason that we will not generally investigate anonymous reports of academic misconduct, although each case will be determined on its own merits by the Student Casework Team.
- 1.7.2. Investigation details will be shared only with those who need to know. Staff involved in the case will handle all correspondence sensitively and will only reveal the information necessary to each member of staff or student as appropriate.
- 1.7.3. Following disciplinary procedures, only relevant parties will be informed of the outcome. In the majority of cases of academic misconduct, this will be the Student Casework team, the student, the student's Head of School (or equivalent) and the Associate Dean (Academic) (or equivalent).
- 1.7.4. The University expects all those involved in a misconduct case at any stage of this Policy to respect the confidentiality of the Policy. The University will only breach the confidentiality of this Policy if there is a clear lawful basis for doing so, particularly if the safety of students, staff or the general public is at risk.

1.8. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 1.8.1. We are committed to an inclusive process free from discrimination. Our Policy is designed to be fair, transparent and accessible to everyone, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, or any other characteristic protected by law.
- 1.8.2. We recognise that individuals from different backgrounds and identities may experience barriers to participating effectively in misconduct cases. We commit to handling all allegations with sensitivity, impartiality and respect, while actively addressing any issues related to inequality, bias or discrimination that may arise.
- 1.8.3. To discuss any ways we can better support you to engage with this process, please contact the [Student Casework team](#).

2. What is Academic Misconduct?

2.1 Definitions

- 2.1.1. Academic Misconduct is defined by the OIA (2018), as: “Any action by a student which gives or has the potential to give an unfair advantage in an examination or assessment or might assist someone else to gain an unfair advantage, or any activity likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research.”
- 2.1.2. Examples of academic misconduct given by the OIA (2018) and recognised by this Policy include:
- Plagiarism - presenting someone else’s work or ideas as the student’s own;
 - Self-plagiarism - submitting work that is the same or substantially the same as work that the student has already submitted for another assessment when this is not permitted;
 - Taking a copy of another student’s work without their permission;
 - Falsifying data, evidence or experimental results;
 - Collusion - working with someone else on an assessment which is intended to be the student’s own work;
 - Contract cheating - where someone completes work for a student who then submits it as their own (including the use of essay mills or buying work online);
 - Arranging for someone else to impersonate a student by sitting their examination;
 - Cheating in examinations (or other formal assessments), including possession of unauthorised material or technology during an examination, and attempting to access unseen assessment materials in advance of an examination;
 - Submitting fraudulent extenuating circumstances claims or falsifying evidence in support of extenuating circumstances claims (this may also be considered a non-academic disciplinary matter);
 - Breaches of research and ethics policies relating to undergraduate or postgraduate taught courses- e.g. carrying out research without appropriate permission;
 - Improper use of generative AI (see 1.1.12)
- 2.1.3. The University recognises that legitimate research on controversial, sensitive, or challenging topics forms an essential part of academic inquiry. The pursuit of knowledge may sometimes involve engaging with materials or viewpoints that some may find offensive or disturbing. Where such research is conducted with appropriate ethical approval, methodological rigour, and in accordance with scholarly norms, it will be protected from misconduct allegations based solely on its subject matter.
- 2.1.4. It is not necessary to prove intention to commit academic misconduct to make a finding of academic misconduct. However, proof of a lack of intent to commit misconduct is likely to be considered a

mitigating factor when determining the outcome. Similarly, proven intent to commit academic misconduct is likely to be considered an aggravating factor when determining a sanction. Examples of proven intent include, but are not limited to:

- False authorship or impersonation;
- Falsifying data;
- Falsifying content or evidence as part of an extenuating circumstances claim;
- Accessing any unauthorised websites (including Moodle) during an examination;
- Taking or accessing unauthorised, concealed, or pre-prepared materials into an examination and where the materials are potentially relevant to the examination.

2.1.5. Academic judgement will be applied when identifying suspected cases of academic misconduct, with detection methods varying based on the assessment type.

3. Reporting Misconduct

3.1 Disciplinary action against a student may be initiated by any member of staff, or student of the University, or by anyone involved in the student's provision of work-based learning, training or placement opportunity, including patient/service users.

3.2 Suspected academic misconduct should be reported to the relevant Head of School or Department or equivalent within 10 working days of discovery.

3.3 Reports should include:

- i. The nature of the suspected misconduct;
- ii. Available evidence;
- iii. Course and module details;
- iv. Student information (if known).

4. Preliminary Assessment

4.1 Within 15 working days of receiving a report, the Head (or equivalent) or their nominated representative will conduct a preliminary assessment to:

- Review the report and relevant assessment materials.
- Determine if there is sufficient evidence to proceed.
- Classify the potential misconduct.

4.2 Possible outcomes of preliminary assessment:

- No evidence of academic misconduct - no further action;
- Potential Poor Academic Practice - refer to Section 5;
- Potential academic misconduct requiring formal investigation - refer to Section 6.

4.3 In making this determination, the Head (or representative) or equivalent will consider:

- The nature and extent of the alleged misconduct;
- The student's academic level and previous record;
- Whether the case meets the criteria for Poor Academic Practice (see Section 4.7-9).

4.4 The Poor Academic Practice process may be undertaken when all the following criteria are met:

- The affected assessment(s) in this instance are worth no more than 30 credits; and
- In the Head's (or representative's) opinion, the extent of the offence identified is minor; and
- The student has not previously followed the Poor Academic Practice process for an instance of Academic Misconduct.

4.5 It is likely that cases falling under this severity will be offences such as incorrect use of referencing or an omission to reference, seemingly genuine mistakes, undue haste or academic inexperience (for example, at an early stage in an undergraduate degree programme).

4.6 It may be evident that genuine cultural issues appear to be involved, and where there is doubt that the student has fully understood what constitutes academic misconduct.

4.7 A case cannot be considered Poor Academic Practice where the student has a pattern of previous, similar offences.

4.8 Where the Head (or representative) decides to initiate the Poor Academic Practice process, or the Formal Investigation process, the student will be notified within 5 working days of the decision being made.

5. Poor Academic Practice

5.1 Poor academic practice refers to minor breaches of academic integrity, often stemming from a lack of understanding of proper academic conventions or a failure to take adequate care to follow

assessment guidelines. It typically involves unintentional misconduct like inadequate referencing or poor paraphrasing, rather than a deliberate attempt to deceive or gain an unfair advantage.

- 5.2 Where Poor Academic Practice is identified, the student will be invited to a meeting with the Associate Head (Students), or equivalent, or their nominated representative, who will explain the nature of the concern.
- 5.3 This will be a formative learning opportunity for the student who will be given advice and will be signposted to relevant support and educational opportunities regarding good academic practice. The student may be required to undertake an academic integrity learning activity.
- 5.4 There should be no sanctions given for this category; the response is supportive and ensures that the student complies with an educational process to raise their academic practice.
- 5.5 In these cases, the mark awarded should be based on an academic judgement of the quality of the work overall. The outcome will be determined via the standard marking processes and the work marked against the assessment criteria only.
- 5.6 The student will be informed that if poor academic practice occurs in the future, it will be dealt with by a formal investigation, and associated sanctions will be imposed.
- 5.7 The Associate Head (Students), or equivalent, will complete a record of the meeting using a standard form which will outline the advice given. A copy will be given to the student.

6. Formal Process

6.1 Investigation

- 6.1.1. The Head (or equivalent) or their nominated representative shall appoint an Investigator who:
 - Has no previous involvement in the case;
 - Has received appropriate training in the academic misconduct procedure;
 - Is independent of the student's teaching team when possible;
 - Has declared no conflict of interest in the case.
- 6.1.2. The Investigator will determine:
 - i. Whether (on the balance of probabilities) unacceptable behaviour has taken place;

- ii. Whether (on the balance of probabilities) it was the reported student(s) who were responsible for this behaviour;
- iii. Whether there were any factors for consideration which resulted in the behaviour;
- iv. Whether the investigation will consider Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body expectations associated with the Student's course.

6.1.3. The investigation must be carried out as quickly as possible and should, normally, be completed within 30 working days of the start date. If, in rare cases, the investigation cannot be completed within that time, students must be informed of the new deadline and reasons for the delay in writing.

6.1.4. The Investigator will:

- i. Invite the reported student to a meeting with clear information about the process (see 6.1.5);
- ii. Interview or correspond with other relevant witnesses;
- iii. Produce a report of findings.

6.1.5. The reported student will receive the following information in advance of any meeting with the Investigator:

- i. Details of the alleged breach and scope of the investigation;
- ii. Details as to how the investigation will be undertaken;
- iii. Any supporting evidence of the alleged breach;
- iv. A copy of the Student Conduct Policy;
- v. Details of, and offer to make a referral to, additional support services available to the student;
- vi. Right to be accompanied at the meeting by a Supporter who could be a student/staff union representative, colleague, or a family member or friend.

6.1.6. On the conclusion of all meetings, the notes of the meeting will be shared with the attendees to check for matters of factual accuracy.

6.1.7. Meetings can be held in person or virtually, and reasonable adjustments can be applied as necessary.

6.1.8. If the reported student(s) fail to attend the meeting without good reason, the Investigator may proceed in their absence.

6.1.9. The possible outcomes of the investigation include:

- The student has not been considered to be in breach of the Policy, and the matter will be closed;
- The student has been considered to be in breach of the Policy and the matter can be resolved at this stage with the imposition of a minor or moderate sanction (see [Appendix B](#));
- The student has been considered to be in breach of the Policy, and a Panel should be convened to consider if a major sanction is appropriate.

6.1.10 The investigation report will be shared with the reported student and that student's Head of School (or equivalent) as well as the Student Casework team.

6.2 Panel

6.2.1 Where a Panel is required, the Investigator submits the investigation report and a Panel request to the Student Casework team, who will determine if the request is valid.

6.2.2 The Academic Registrar or nominee may direct that a Panel is not appropriate at any time before the issue of the Panel Decision Notice. If this is the case, written reasoning will be provided to all parties.

6.2.3 If the request is valid, the Student Casework team will give notice of this to all those involved within 10 working days of receipt of the investigation report.

6.2.4 The Student Casework team will then, within 30 working days of the notice issued at 6.2.3, appoint and schedule a Panel and Secretary of members with no previous involvement in the matter, and who have declared that they do not have a conflict of interest in relation to the case. The Panel will have a quoracy of three members consisting of:

- A member of the Academic Council or its subcommittees or an Authorised Person as Chair;
- A senior academic or professional services staff member;
- A representative nominated by the Students' Union.

6.2.5 Where required, the Panel membership may be expanded to include any additional member(s) where required by the relevant Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body associated with the student's course of study, or to include specialist/expert staff from other areas of the University.

6.2.6 The Panel and the reported student will be given at least 10 working days' notice of the Panel, including the following information:

- i. A copy of the Investigation Report;

- ii. The date, time and venue of the meeting;
- iii. Details of where help and advice may be sought;
- iv. A copy of any evidence that will be considered;
- v. Details of a student's right to bring a Supporter to the Panel;
- vi. The right to request reasonable adjustments.

6.2.7 If the reported student is unable to attend (physically or virtually) they can submit a written statement of case in advance by email to studentcasework@port.ac.uk which will be considered at the Panel meeting.

6.2.8 The Panel will consider the evidence and form a conclusion based on the balance of probability. The possible outcomes of the Panel are:

- No breach of the Policy has been demonstrated, and the case will be closed;
- The student has been considered to be in breach of the Policy and the Panel shall decide whether to impose one or more sanctions at any level of severity.

6.2.9 Following the meeting, the Panel will communicate in writing to the student and the Investigator a Decision Notice, copied to the student's Head of School. The notice shall consist of the following:

- i. A summary of the major points made during the meeting;
- ii. A concise statement of the Panel's findings;
- iii. Justification of the decision reached, and the sanctions imposed, including the assessment of fairness and proportionality;
- iv. In the case of any finding that a student's behaviour is unacceptable, the actions required and the arrangements for the application of any sanction;
- v. An explanation of the student's right of appeal;
- vi. Appropriate support available for the student.

6.2.10 The Panel will communicate in writing where appropriate to the Professional Statutory and Regulatory Body associated with the student's course, following the conclusion of the process.

7 Appeals

7.1 Students may appeal within 10 working days of receiving a decision. We recommend students use this time to seek advice from the sources listed in section 1.5 above before submitting their appeal;

however, students can submit their appeal at any time during these 10 working days, particularly if they need an urgent decision.

7.2 The grounds for appeal are as follows:

- i. There has been a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the disciplinary process;
- ii. New material evidence is available which was not previously reasonably available;
- iii. The decision made was unreasonable, and/or the sanction imposed was disproportionate to the disciplinary offence.

7.3 The Academic Registrar or nominated representative, who has had no previous involvement in the case, will consider the appeal within 10 working days and will advise the student whether valid grounds for appeal have been established.

7.4 Where, in the opinion of the Academic Registrar or nominee, a valid ground for appeal has been established, the Student Casework team will convene an Appeal Panel, consisting of members with no previous involvement in the matter and who have declared no conflict of interest. The Appeal Panel will have a quorum of three, and members must be eligible to take part in a Panel as set out at section 6.2.4 above.

7.5 The Appeal Panel will reconsider the case and is entitled to overturn the decision of the original Panel. This will take place as soon as possible and normally within 30 working days of the decision of the Academic Registrar. If the Appeal Panel does not uphold the appeal, the decision of the Panel will stand: there will be no further opportunities for appeal, and the University's internal procedures are completed. Students will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter at this point.

7.6 Where, in the opinion of the Academic Registrar or nominee, no valid ground for appeal has been established, the decision of the Panel will stand and there will be no further opportunities for appeal. The Student Casework team will reject the request and will write to the reported student to inform them of this decision. Students will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter at this point.

8 Review by the OIA

8.1 Students will receive details of how to apply to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#) (OIA) in the Completion of Procedures letter issued by the Academic Registry, and will have 12 months to do so.

9 Monitoring and Reporting

9.1 Annual reports on conduct cases are submitted to University leadership and the Students' Union for their information and to consider and recommend action on any university-wide issues arising from conduct cases, including:

- Number of cases considered suitable for the Poor Academic Practice process;
- Number and outcomes of cases investigated and the number and outcomes of Panels;
- Number of cases with academic freedom considerations and the outcomes of these cases, along with actions taken to monitor any “chilling effect” caused by conduct cases;
- Appeals and their outcomes;
- Actions taken;
- Equality monitoring statistics.

10 Records Retention

10.1 Documents relating to conduct cases are kept for six years following resolution, in line with the University's Retention Schedule.

Appendix A: Definitions

Academic Registrar

The Academic Registrar or any member of staff delegated by the Academic Registrar to act on their behalf.

Authorised Person

The Authorised Person is any person who has responsibility for Panel attendance or for the informal process under this procedure.

Balance of probabilities

A standard of proof in which a decision is made following an objective assessment of the evidence of whether it is more likely than not that an alleged incident occurred.

Exclusion

The cancellation of a student's registration, where they will no longer be a member of the University and will not be able to complete their studies or access the University campus or other services, is effective immediately.

Investigator

The Investigator is any person who is appointed by the Student Casework team to investigate under the formal process. The role and functions of the Investigator are undertaken by appropriately trained individuals appointed by the University.

Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

An independent body set up to review student complaints about Higher Education Providers in England and Wales. It provides students with the opportunity of an independent review of their complaint or appeal once the University's internal procedures have been followed and completed.

Poor Academic Practice

Poor academic practice refers to minor breaches of academic integrity, often stemming from a lack of understanding of proper academic conventions or a failure to follow assessment guidelines. It typically involves unintentional mistakes like inadequate referencing or poor paraphrasing, rather than a deliberate attempt to deceive or gain an unfair advantage.

Procedural Irregularity

Procedural irregularity means the University has not acted in accordance with its own regulations or procedures or has not acted with procedural fairness.

Protected academic expression

Examples of protected academic expression may include: scholarly analysis of, e.g. gender theory; critique of theoretical frameworks; respectful debate on legal or policy issues related to protected characteristics; or teaching materials that present diverse viewpoints on controversial issues. **These contrast with prohibited behaviours such as** directing slurs at individuals; refusing to use agreed names or pronouns in direct communication; persistently targeting individuals for their protected characteristics; or creating a hostile environment through a pattern of behaviour targeting individuals rather than ideas.

Representative / Supporter

The Representative is defined as a person who may represent the Responding Student during the process and make representations on their behalf. A Supporter is someone who attends the meeting alongside the reported student for the purposes of supporting them.

Student

Any person currently registered for a programme of study or module(s) and who has registered as a student on that programme at the University, whether the mode of study is full-time, part-time, sandwich, or as a research student. Students at collaborative partners of the University will be subject to these procedures for Academic Misconduct but will be subject to the local rules relating to general student misconduct for the collaborative partner. Under this Policy, references to “student” mean a student at the University who is reported under this Policy for suspected misconduct.

Suspension

Involves either total or selective restriction on attendance at or access to the University, including placement arrangements. The exact details of any suspension will be communicated in writing.

Vice-Chancellor

The Vice-Chancellor or any member of staff delegated by the Vice-Chancellor to act on her/his behalf.

Witness

The Witness is defined as a person who has witnessed a Student’s alleged misconduct or otherwise has relevant information about the suspected misconduct. A Witness is not restricted to someone to whom misconduct was directed.

Working day

Monday to Friday, not including Bank Holidays, nor the period that the University is closed over the Christmas period.

Appendix B: Taxonomy of Misconduct and Sanctions

- 1.1. Where a breach of the Policy is proven, the University will apply one or more sanctions.
- 1.2. Only a Panel can apply a major sanction, but Panels will be able to apply the full range of sanctions as appropriate.
- 1.3. A student's previous disciplinary record will not normally be relevant to whether they have committed an offence. However, it is likely to be relevant to decisions about convening a Panel and to decisions on sanctions. The Student Casework team will advise Panels on any relevant previous disciplinary offences only once a breach of the Policy is proven.
- 1.4. The Student Casework team will also advise the decision makers of relevant precedents relating to similar cases, whilst recognising that each case must be considered on its own merits.
- 1.5. In matching an offence to a level of sanction, the decision maker must consider the full range of sanctions available at that level and must only apply a higher sanction than the lowest available if there is a good reason that the lower sanctions are insufficient, which must be documented.
- 1.6. Mitigating and aggravating factors may include (but are not limited to) consideration of the following;
 - Whether it is a first or further offence;
 - Where the impact of imposing a sanction on a student's progression or award would be disproportionate;
 - The extent of the potential advantage to the student;
 - The presence of significant and applicable extenuating circumstances;
 - The extent of the intent to deceive;
 - Where the University's reputation has been damaged by the actions of the individual.
- 1.7. Moderate offences: behaviour which would have deceived the marker and/or could have gained an unfair advantage for the student. There is a clear intent to deceive; however, the extent of the action is limited in scope and impact. It is likely that cases falling under this severity will be some deliberate plagiarism or self-plagiarism that is not extensive, or minor collusion.

- 1.8. Major offences: more serious cases of academic misconduct that would significantly undermine the assessment process and give a clear advantage to the student. Cases may involve evidence of extensive academic misconduct, repeated incidents of academic misconduct or with a clear and obvious intent to deceive. It is likely that cases falling under this severity will be extensive plagiarism or self-plagiarism, fabrication of data, extensive cheating in an examination, extensive collusion, impersonation, or contract cheating.

Table of misconduct and sanctions

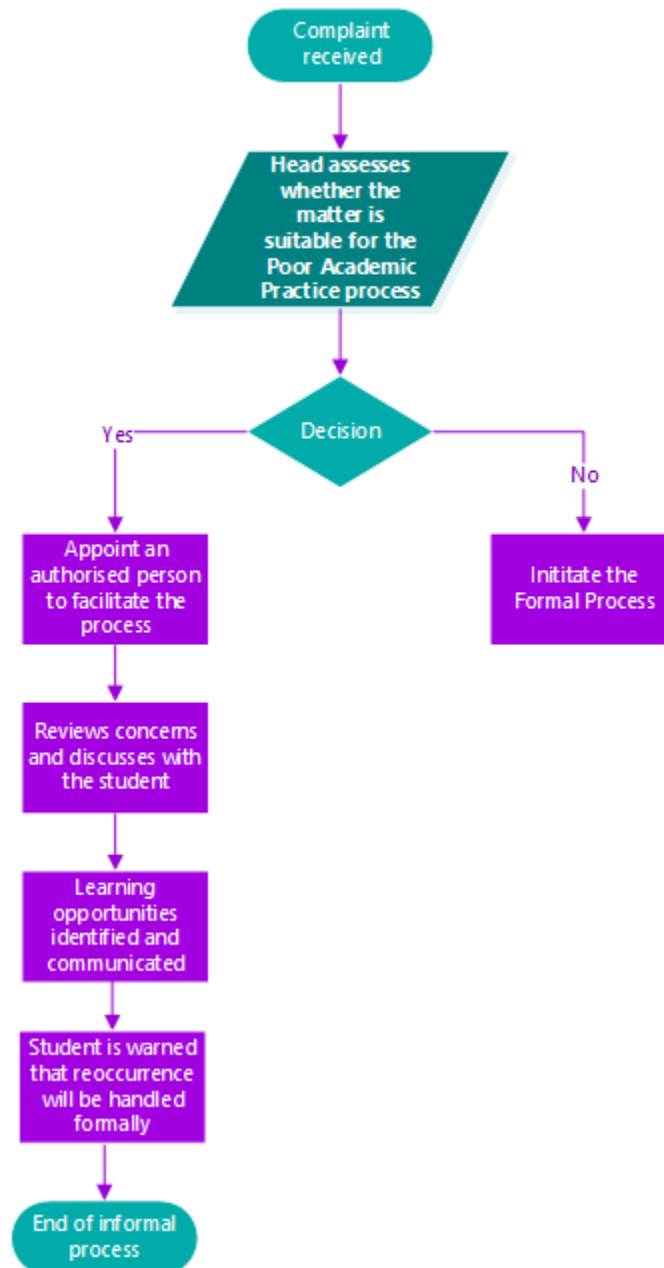
- 1.9. As above, all acts of misconduct and sanctions are provided as illustrations of what may typically be considered under each level of misconduct. This is not meant to be an exhaustive list and must be considered in the situational context.

| Minor/Moderate Misconduct | Sanctions |
|--|---|
| <p>First instances of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plagiarism; Collusion; Breach of examination rules; Falsifying extenuating circumstances Failure to provide an electronic copy when asked; The late return of equipment loaned by a Faculty or Department, which is required by other students to complete an assessment; Inappropriate use of generative AI. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warning issued to student - held on their record for 12 months; Mark for assessment reduced to module pass threshold where the original mark is above the threshold; The student is expected to undertake training to ensure that future occurrences do not arise. <p>N.B. Support for better academic practice must also be provided</p> |
| Moderate Misconduct | Sanctions |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated or extensive minor offence, such as substantial plagiarism or cheating in an examination; Purchase of an online assessment (first offence) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Warning issued to student - held on their record until completion of their current course; Mark for assessment reduced to zero; Student required to undertake training to ensure that future occurrences do not arise. |
| Major Misconduct: always escalated to a Panel | Sanctions |

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Repeated moderate offence (including further repeated minor offences) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mark for the relevant module reduced to zero; Mark for the whole year reduced to zero; The student is excluded from the University |
|---|--|

Appendix D: Flowcharts

Poor Academic Practice



Formal Process

