

**STANDARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR  
COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS  
FOR DEALING WITH ALLEGED CASES OF  
ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT IN TAUGHT COMPONENTS AND PROGRAMMES**

*The Appendices included within this procedure have been designed to ensure that they match the requirements of the regulations and whilst Collaborative Partners may wish to add additional wording to the letters and/or memos or emails, they are discouraged from deleting any wording without first consulting with the University's Ombuds Office. Documentation appended to this procedure is highlighted in **bold italic print** in the relevant paragraph below:*

**NOTE:** *Academic misconduct is an overarching term used in the Regulations relating to Academic Misconduct (Taught Components and Programmes) and in these SAPs to cover a range of offences included within the following specified types; **academic negligence, academic malpractice and academic cheating**. It is important that you familiarise yourself with the **Definitions, Examples and Types of Academic Misconduct (see Appendix 1)** of these SAPs.*

*Any communication to the student and staff (including letters, evidence or invitations) should, wherever possible be sent via email. However, in order to ensure the delivery or reading of an email, the option of a delivery and read receipt when sending an email must be activated.*

*The term designated member of staff used in these SAPs will normally be the Module Tutor suspecting the academic misconduct who is either employed by any of its Collaborative Partners or an Academic Conduct Coordinator[ACC] if the School/Collaborative Partner has appointed a person to this role. Schools/Collaborative Partners must determine at the commencement of each academic year which of the two roles will undertake this role of designated member of staff.*

*The Collaborative Partner hosting the module in which the student is suspected of academic misconduct will be responsible for arranging and administering the Informal Stage Meeting and Stage 1 Meeting. However, due to the increased range of possible penalties and associated progression issues, the Stage 2 Hearing will be arranged and administered by the School in which the student is enrolled, i.e. their 'home' school.*

*The Informal Stage, Stages 1 and 2 must be held as soon as possible following the allegation of academic misconduct. Students found guilty of academic misconduct close to the progression point will be deferred.*

# CONTENTS

1. **Informal Stage**
2. **Stage 1 Meeting**
3. **Stage 2 Hearing**
4. **Advice to Students**
5. **Procedure for viewing the piece of alleged Plagiarism in advance of Stage 1 or Stage 2**
6. **Non-Attendance**
  - **Informal Stage**
  - **Stage 1 Meeting**
  - **Stage 2 Hearing**
7. **Programmes Leading to Professional Exemption and/or Providing a Licence to Practice**
8. **Revoking an Award**
9. **Reporting Procedure**

**APPENDICES** (located on the Ombuds Unity site which is at:  
<https://unity3.tees.ac.uk/Departments/USEC/OmbudsOffice/HEBPPartners/HEBPAcadMis/default.aspx?InitialTabId=Ribbon%2ERead&VisibilityContext=WSSTabPersistence> )

- 1 Definitions, Examples and Types of Academic Misconduct
- 2 Record of Informal Stage Meeting
- 3 Informal Stage Letter – Denial by Student, but Guilty
- 4 Informal Stage Letter – Non Attendance by Student and Guilty
- 5 Informal Stage Letter – Student referred to Stage 1 or Stage 2
- 6 Record of Stage 1 Meeting
- 7 Stage 1 Letter – Notification of Meeting (Student)
- 8 Stage 1 Letter – Non Attendance by Student and Guilty
- 9 Stage 1 Letter – Non Attendance by Student and Not Guilty
- 10 Stage 1 Letter – Guilty
- 11 Stage 1 Letter – Not Guilty
- 12 Documentation Checklist Stage 1 and Stage 2

## 1 INFORMAL STAGE

**The Informal Stage deals with first alleged cases of academic negligence. It is intended primarily as an educational/warning route and, although penalties may be imposed, they will be of a relatively minor nature.**

- 1.1 Collaborative Partners may choose to make use of the role of Academic Conduct Coordinator [ACC] and Deputy Academic Conduct Coordinator [DACC] to process allegations at the Informal Stage or they may allow this responsibility to be exercised by the Module Tutor in full consultation with the relevant College Coordinator or School Deputy/Assistant Dean or nominee. The term 'designated member of staff' is used in these SAPS to cover both possibilities.
- 1.2 The Informal Stage will be administered and arranged by the Collaborative Partner hosting the module.
- 1.3 Prior to commencing the Informal Stage, the designated member of staff must first check the University's SITS via the School Senior Administrator to verify whether there has already been a proven case(s) of academic misconduct to determine the stage of the procedure to be followed.
- 1.4 Collaborative Partners will conduct the Informal Stage at their own institution but must first consult with the relevant School Deputy/Assistant Dean or nominee and together decide on the type of offence and which stage of the procedure is to be followed (**see Appendix 1**). Following the Informal Stage Meeting where a student is found guilty, the Collaborative Partner must send the School Senior Administrator a copy of the Record of the Academic Misconduct Informal Stage Meeting (**Appendix 2**).
- 1.6 Having obtained agreement to proceed as in 1.4 above, the designated member of staff who believes that academic misconduct has occurred must undertake the Informal Stage.
- 1.7 The designated member of staff must immediately contact the student concerned with the alleged academic negligence to explain their suspicions and request an informal meeting to discuss. At this point, the student must be advised of the range of services available from The Link based in the Students' Union and Student Services Department, University Main Campus or equivalent facility at the Collaborative Partner. The meeting will normally involve the student and the designated member of staff.  
  
**NB:** This does not necessarily require the designated member of staff to write to the student, nor give 5 working days notice of the Informal Meeting. The meeting should be arranged on an informal basis at a mutually convenient date and time to both.
- 1.8 For the conduct of the Informal Stage Meeting please refer to Appendix 6 of the Regulations Relating to Academic Misconduct (Taught Components and

Programmes), Recommended Guidance for the Preparation and Conduct of an Informal Stage Academic Misconduct Meeting

- 1.9 If at the end of the Informal Meeting, it becomes apparent that there is no firm basis for the allegation of academic negligence or the student has provided an adequate explanation, then the proceedings must be stopped immediately and the student notified verbally that no further action will be taken. The member of staff must complete the Informal Stage Record Proforma (**Appendix 2**), ensuring that both parties sign the Record and then provide a copy to the student advising that no record of the allegation will be entered on University's SITS or the Student's file. However, in order to comply with the current guidance from the QAA and for Learning and Teaching research purposes. Collaborative Partners are required to keep anonymous statistical data on unproven informal cases.
- 1.10 If the student agrees that there are grounds for alleging academic negligence and provides a detailed explanation of their conduct, the designated member of staff must:
  - 1.10.1 Offer the student advice and guidance on how to avoid academic misconduct and suspicion of academic misconduct, which may include referring the student to the Learning Hub, University Main Campus or equivalent facility at the Collaborative Partner and also encourage them to inform their Personal Tutor or equivalent who will be able to support and offer additional advice.
  - 1.10.2 Advise the student regarding the marking of the work (penalty 1 – **see Appendix 1**).
  - 1.10.3 Complete the Informal Stage Record Proforma (**Appendix 2**), ensuring that both parties sign the proforma and then provide a copy to the student advising that the occurrence of academic misconduct will be recorded on the University's SITS and also advise that any future allegation of academic misconduct, at any future point of their studies if upheld, will lead to more severe sanctions.
- 1.11 If the student does not accept the allegation and does not provide a satisfactory explanation, but the designated member of staff considers it to be well founded, then the member of staff must:
  - 1.11.1 Advise the student regarding the marking of the work (penalty 1 – **see Appendix 1**).
  - 1.11.2 Complete the Informal Stage Record Proforma (**Appendix 2**), ensuring that both parties sign the proforma and then provide a copy to the student advising that the occurrence of academic misconduct will be recorded on the University's SITS and also advise that any future allegation of academic misconduct, at any future point of their studies if upheld, will lead to more severe sanctions.

- 1.11.3 Inform the student in writing that they can proceed to the Academic Misconduct Stage 1 procedure (*see Appendix 3*).
- 1.12 If the Student fails to attend the Informal Stage Meeting without reasonable explanation or fails to communicate with the Collaborative Partner in any way, the designated member of staff will make a decision based on the evidence available, as to whether academic misconduct has occurred and complete the Informal Stage Record Proforma. The student will be sent a copy of the Informal Stage Record and informed of the decision in writing, together with the penalty, normally within 5 working days of the date the Informal Stage Meeting would have taken place (*Appendix 4*). If the student subsequently disagrees with the decision, they can proceed to Stage 1.
- 1.13 If, during the course of the Informal Stage Meeting, it becomes apparent to the designated member of staff that the nature of the allegation is such that it must be dealt with at either Stage 1 or Stage 2, then the member of staff will halt the Informal Stage Meeting and refer the case to either Stage 1 or 2 as appropriate, advising the student of this. (*Appendix 5*)

## **2 ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT STAGE 1 MEETING (STAGE 1)**

**Stage 1 deals with first cases of academic malpractice (NOTE: This includes second and subsequent cases of academic negligence, which are classed as academic malpractice) (see Appendix 1) and any cases progressed from the Informal Stage.**

- 2.1 Prior to commencing the Stage 1 procedure, the member of staff suspecting the academic misconduct must first arrange to check University's SITS via the School Senior Administrator to ascertain whether there has already been a proven case of academic misconduct at Stage 1 or Stage 2 and thereafter consult with the relevant School Deputy/Assistant Dean or nominee to decide the type of offence and which stage is to be undertaken (*see Appendix 1*).
- 2.2 Collaborative Partners will conduct the Stage 1 Meeting at their own institution but first must consult with the relevant School Deputy/Assistant Dean or nominee and together decide on the type of offence and which stage of the Regulations is to be followed (*See Appendix 1*). Following the Stage 1 Meeting, if the student is found guilty, the Collaborative Partner must send the School Senior Administrator a copy of the Record of the Academic Misconduct Stage 1 Meeting. The School Senior Administrator is responsible for reporting proven academic misconduct cases to the relevant Module Assessment Board.

The purpose of the Stage 1 Meeting is to decide whether academic misconduct has occurred and if so, award a penalty and **report** such to the Module Assessment Board.

The Stage1 Meeting will normally be invoked:

- At the request of the member of staff suspecting the academic misconduct, following discussion with the School Deputy/Assistant Dean or nominee.
- At the request of the student following the Informal Stage.
- Following an Informal Stage Meeting, when the student has denied the alleged academic misconduct and/or failed to provide a satisfactory explanation.
- Following an Informal Stage Meeting, which the student has failed to attend and they have been found guilty of academic negligence by the member of staff in their absence, but the student does not agree with the decision.
- For second and subsequent occurrences of academic misconduct where the first case has been proven either through the Informal Stage or Stage 1 or 2.

2.3 Stage 1 Meetings will be administered and arranged by the Collaborative Partner hosting the module who will formally notify the student concerned, giving a minimum of 5 working days notice prior to the date of the Stage 1 Meeting (**Appendix 7**).

The correspondence must include:

- The full details of the nature of the alleged academic malpractice. Copies of all relevant documentary material or other evidence of the alleged academic malpractice, unless the nature of the documentation does not allow this, then the correspondence must explain the process for viewing the material in situ prior to the Stage 1 Meeting. The viewing process is explained in section 4.0 of the main body of the Regulations relating to Academic Misconduct (Taught Components and Programmes).
- The date, time and venue of the Stage 1 Meeting.
- The range of services available from The Link based in the Students' Union and/or Student Services Department, University Main Campus or equivalent facility at the Collaborative Partner.
- Their right to be accompanied at the Stage 1 Meeting by a friend, who is entitled to speak or act on their behalf and may be a representative from the Students' Union or equivalent person based at the Collaborative Partner.
- A copy of the current Regulations relating to Academic Misconduct (Taught Components and Programmes).
- The constitution of the Stage 1 Meeting Panel, which will be a neutral Module Leader from the School hosting the module in which the student is suspected of academic misconduct, who will chair the meeting and the member of staff suspecting the academic misconduct.

- Notification that the Stage 1 Meeting will proceed in their absence should they fail to provide reasonable explanation or fail to communicate with the School/collaborative partner in any way.
- Advise the student that they will receive a copy of the completed Stage 1 Meeting Record within 5 working days of the Stage 1 Meeting.
- If more than one student is involved, and the Chair of the Stage 1 Meeting wishes to interview all students involved together, the students must be informed of the Chair's request and informed that they must respond prior to the commencement of the Stage 1 Meeting, confirming their consent (or not). If the students do not consent to be interviewed together, they will be interviewed separately.

2.4 For the conduct of an Academic Misconduct Stage 1 Meeting, please refer to Appendix 7 of the Regulations Relating to Academic Misconduct (Taught Components and Programmes) 'Format for the Preparation and Conduct of a Academic Misconduct Stage 1 Meeting'.

A Documentation Checklist is provided to support the Stage 1 Meeting (**Appendix 12**). It is important that staff who sit as Panel members at Stages 1 and 2 must have had no previous involvement in the student's case.

2.5 In the event that a student fails to attend the Stage 1 Meeting without reasonable explanation or fails to communicate with the Collaborative Partner in any way, the Stage 1 Meeting will proceed in their absence. The student will be informed of the recommendation of the Stage 1 Meeting via the Stage 1 Meeting Record which must be sent to them normally within 5 working days of the meeting (**Appendix 8 (guilty) or Appendix 9 (not guilty)**).

2.6 At the conclusion of the Stage 1 Meeting, the Chair will complete the Stage 1 Meeting Record (**Appendix 6**) and send to the Student, along with an accompanying communication (**Appendix 10 (guilty) or Appendix 11 (not guilty)**) within 5 working days of the Stage 1 Meeting. The Meeting Record must include the nature and extent of the academic misconduct, together with any decision regarding any penalty to be imposed. The Meeting Record must also be sent to the following:

- Relevant member(s) of staff alleging academic misconduct
- Academic Conduct Coordinator/Deputy Academic Conduct Coordinator, or School Deputy/Assistant Dean or nominee of the School hosting the module in which the student is suspected of academic misconduct.
- Senior School Administrator and College Administrator
- Chair of relevant Module Assessment Board (only if student found guilty)

2.7 Students found guilty at Stage 1, but who do not agree with the decision, may choose to proceed to Stage 2 and this option must be included within the communication sent to the student accompanying the Stage 1 Meeting Record (**Appendix 10**).

- 2.8 Copies of all correspondence, the Stage 1 Meeting Record and any other documents signed by the student in **guilty** cases must be lodged in the student's file and a record maintained on University's SITS.
- 2.9 It is the responsibility of the School Senior Administrator or equivalent at the Collaborative Partner to advise the Module Assessment Board of any occurrences of proven academic misconduct.
- 2.10 If it becomes apparent that there is no firm basis for the allegation of academic misconduct, or the student has provided an adequate explanation such that the allegation can be withdrawn, then the proceedings must be stopped and the case dismissed. The student will be informed in writing via the Stage 1 Meeting Record, within 5 working days, noting that the grade/mark, without penalty, will be reported to the Module Assessment Board and if appropriate the student will be provided with advice on how to obtain support and guidance on avoiding academic misconduct in the future **(Appendix 11)**.
- 2.11 In cases where academic misconduct is not found, then no record will be kept on the student's file or recorded on University's SITS. However, anonymous statistical data on unproven cases will be kept for the purposes of adhering to current guidance from the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education [QAA] and learning and teaching research purposes only.
- 2.12 All Module Assessment Board agendas should carry a standing item in order to make the Board aware of all cases of proven Stage 1 academic misconduct.
- 2.13 The School is responsible for maintaining a record of the proven Stage 1 Academic Misconduct cases and any associated penalties as follows:
- University's SITS
  - Student's file, e.g. copies of correspondence sent to the Student
  - Electronic system for academic misconduct Cases. This Report on the previous academic year should be reported electronically to the Department of Educational Partnerships by mid-November each year.
  - Confidential School 'Case' File for Proven and Unproven Academic Misconduct Cases (to be retained for a period of 6 years, and only referred to in the event of a subsequent action requiring a judgement to be made about the conduct of the plagiarism case)

### **3 SCHOOL ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT STAGE 2 HEARING (STAGE 2)**

**Stage 2 deals with all academic cheating offences, including academic cheating in examination cases, second and subsequent occurrences of**



**academic malpractice, exceptional cases and any cases progressed from Stage 1 (see Appendix 1).**

- 3.1 Prior to commencing the Stage 2 procedure, the member of staff suspecting the academic misconduct must first arrange to check University's SITS to ascertain whether there has already been a proven case of academic misconduct at Stage 1 or Stage 2 and thereafter consult with the relevant School Deputy/Assistant Dean or nominee to decide the type of offence (**see Appendix 1**).
- 3.2 The purpose of the Stage 2 Hearing is to decide whether academic misconduct has occurred and if so, recommend a penalty to the Module Assessment Board.
- 3.3 The Stage 2 Hearing will normally be invoked:
  - At the request of the member of staff suspecting the academic misconduct, following discussion with the School Deputy/Assistant Dean.
  - At the request of the Student following a Stage 1 Meeting.
  - Following a Stage 1 Meeting, when the Student has denied the alleged academic misconduct and/or failed to provide a satisfactory explanation.
  - For all academic cheating offences, including academic cheating in examination cases and Exceptional Cases (see Appendix 5 in the Regulations relating to Academic Misconduct (Taught Components & Programmes).
  - For second and subsequent occurrence of academic misconduct where the first case has been proven either through Stage 1 or 2.
  - When an allegation of academic misconduct is made against an ex-Student (where an award may be revoked if the case is proven).
- 3.4 Stage 2 Hearings will be arranged, administered and held in the School in which the student is enrolled, i.e. their 'home' School.

## 4 ADVICE TO STUDENTS

4.1 There is no requirement to advise the Student to contact either the Students' Union or the University's Department of Student Services prior to the Informal Meeting. However, following the Informal Stage Meeting, Collaborative Partners may wish to make the Student aware of the advice and support available from these departments.

4.2 Prior to the Stage 1 Meeting, the Student should be advised as to the range of services available from the following sections and encouraged to contact them:

- The Link based in the Students' Union, University Main Campus
- Department of Student Services, University Main Campus
- The equivalent facilities in the Collaborative Partner

They should also be encouraged to advise their Personal Tutor or equivalent so that they can receive additional advice and support.

The Student should also be informed that a Friend (or a representative from either of the above sections) may accompany them to the Stage 1 Meeting.

## 5 PROCEDURE FOR VIEWING THE PIECE OF ALLEGED PLAGIARISM IN ADVANCE OF STAGE 1 MEETING

5.1 At the same time that the Student is informed in writing of the date and time of the Stage 1 Meeting, the Student must also be notified of the process for viewing the piece of alleged academic misconduct and supporting documentation in advance of the Stage 1 Meeting. **(See Appendix 7)**

5.2 If the Student takes up this option, they must contact the College Cocordinator or nominee to arrange a date and time prior to the Stage 1 Meeting.

5.3 It is to be noted that during the 'viewing':

- The Student may be accompanied by a Friend or representative from the Students' Union or Department of Student Services or equivalent Collaborative Partner facility.
- No documentation can be removed from the Collaborative Partner.
- A member of Collaborative Partner staff must be in attendance at all times, as an observer **only**. The observer will **not** be at liberty to comment or provide advice to the Student or Friend on either the alleged plagiarism or associated procedures.

## 6 NON-ATTENDANCE

- 6.1 **At Informal Stage** – if a Student who has been invited to attend an Informal Meeting fails to do so at the arranged time without reasonable explanation, then the member of staff suspecting the academic misconduct and meeting with the student will make a decision based on the evidence available, as to whether academic misconduct has occurred. The student will be informed of this decision and the penalty in the Informal Stage Record and this Record will be sent along with correspondence, normally within 5 working days of the date of the Informal Meeting would have taken place (**Appendix 4**).
- 6.2 **At Stage 1 Meeting** – If a student fails to attend the Stage 1 Meeting without reasonable explanation or fails to communicate with the School/collaborative partner in any way, the Stage 1 Meeting will proceed in their absence. The student will be informed of the recommendation of the Stage 1 Meeting via the Stage 1 Meeting Record which must be sent to them normally within 5 working days of the meeting (**Appendix 8 (guilty) Appendix 9 (not guilty)**).

## 7 PROGRAMMES LEADING TO PROFESSIONAL EXEMPTION AND/OR PROVIDING A LICENCE TO PRACTICE

Where a student is pursuing a programme of study leading to professional registration/qualification and/or providing a licence to practice, then it is possible that a single proven instance of academic misconduct will prevent that student obtaining the relevant licence. If a student is found guilty of academic misconduct, the usual penalty for that offence must be identified. However, under certain circumstances, before that penalty is implemented, it may be necessary to initiate proceedings using Programme or School specific regulations dealing with professional conduct issues and/or inform relevant PSRB(s) of the proven academic misconduct. This may result in a recommendation to the relevant Progression/Award Assessment Board that the student is withdrawn from the programme and the relevant Progression/Award Assessment Board may terminate the student's programme of study forthwith. The student will exit the programme gaining an award appropriate to their credit record.

## 8 REVOKING AN AWARD

The University may revoke an award, and all rights associated with an award, where it is established that a person has obtained the award by committing academic misconduct. In such cases of alleged academic misconduct, the Stage 2 procedure will be followed. If the Stage 2 Hearing concludes that the allegation is proven, then it will recommend to the relevant Award Board that the award be revoked. If the Award Board accepts such a recommendation, then it will report its decision to the University's Academic Board for information.

## 9 REPORTING PROCEDURE

Collaborative Partners are required to maintain a record of unproven Informal cases, plus unproven and proven Stage 1 academic misconduct cases. Collaborative Partners are expected to provide as part of their annual review and monitoring report the Department of Educational Partnerships, by mid-November each year, the number of cases for the previous academic year. The University's Ombuds Office will then produce an annual report on the number and types of cases of academic misconduct and the penalties invoked (**see Appendix 12.**) This data is then provided to the University Academic Standards Committee and Academic Board on an annual basis.