

## UCO Policy and Procedure

### Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure for Academic Misconduct

*Applicable to all students undertaking Open University or Pearson courses delivered at UCO*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

At University Campus Oldham (UCO), Higher Education at Oldham College, academic integrity is defined as upholding honest, fair, and responsible standards of academic behaviour. It is a core principle embedded within UCO's commitment to good academic practice and to fostering a culture of trust, fairness, and respect in learning and research.

This Policy sets out UCO's approach to supporting students in maintaining integrity in their studies. This is reinforced by the Academic Misconduct Procedure, which outlines the steps taken in cases where misconduct is suspected. Together, these provide a framework that ensures fairness, consistency, and transparency. UCO adopts a proactive and strategic approach to preventing and managing academic misconduct. We encourage a holistic culture of integrity, supported by clear regulations and guidance for both staff and students.

All members of staff, across academic and professional services, play a vital role in promoting academic integrity. By modelling good practice, providing guidance, and fostering open dialogue, staff help students to understand the importance of integrity and to develop the skills needed for personal, academic, and professional success. Students are supported through both their Course Team and central support services. Guidance is provided in areas such as information literacy, study skills, referencing, and problem solving, with a strong emphasis on personal development and employability. Clear expectations around academic conduct are communicated to students from the outset, including what constitutes misconduct, its potential consequences, and strategies for developing sound academic practice, are embedded across all courses and levels of study. UCO also makes use of tools such as Turnitin, which serve both as an educational resource to support learning and as a mechanism for detecting plagiarism. Course Teams are encouraged to design assessments that minimise opportunities for misconduct, by adopting effective practices in curriculum design, assessment methods, delivery, and evaluation.

Where academic misconduct is suspected, this will be investigated in line with the Academic Misconduct Procedure. Outcomes are determined by the evidence presented and in proportion to the seriousness of the case. Cases are monitored and reported centrally, ensuring transparency and accountability, with findings used to inform future improvements in policy and practice. Through this integrated approach, UCO

demonstrates its strong commitment to upholding academic standards, supporting students to achieve with integrity, and fostering a community of trust, fairness, and responsibility.

The following table summarises the commitments by staff and students to promote academic integrity and eliminate academic misconduct:

<b>UCO will:</b>	<b>Students will:</b>
Design assessments which are engaging, relevant and minimise the potential for academic misconduct.	Engage with all assessments in a timely, honest and professional manner.
Deliver assessment schedules and information in a timely and effective manner.	Use best efforts to meet assessment deadlines and be familiar with the guidance on referencing, proof-reading and ethics relevant to their discipline area.
Support students from all backgrounds to achieve sound academic practice across courses at all levels.	Engage positively with the range of support that is available from Course Teams and central Services.
Provide information and education about what constitutes academic misconduct and its consequences.	Understand what constitutes academic misconduct and how it can be avoided by using effective referencing and citation practices.
Promote the use of Turnitin and other technologies as an education and detection tool.	Make use of Turnitin as an education and detection tool.
Investigate suspected cases of academic misconduct in a fair and timely manner.	Engage positively with any investigation, including retaining and providing copies of drafts of assessed work.
Monitor cases of academic misconduct and develop action plans focusing on improvements.	Take steps to secure their work, hardware, software, laptops, data etc from improper use by others.

## 2. SCOPE

This Policy and Procedure applies to all students, including members of staff who are registered as students, for all taught courses delivered at UCO in Partnership with the Open University and Pearson. This Procedure applies to the preparation and presentation of all forms of assessed work including without limitation: written and oral examinations and other time- constrained assessments, coursework, essays, assignments, projects, dissertations, theses, presentations, practical work, placement or field trip reports and the production of artefacts.

This Procedure should be read in conjunction with the Academic Regulations of the Partner Institution:

- **Open University:**  
<https://www.uco.oldham.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/OU-Validation-Regulations-Single-Awards-2023-24-Final-1.pdf>
- **Pearson:**  
<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/understanding-our-qualifications/policies-for-centres-learners-and-employees.html>

Where academic misconduct is suspected or proven, UCO will reserve the right to investigate previously marked work and apply penalties in line with this Procedure.

Where academic misconduct is established after an award has been conferred, the Assessment Board may recommend that the award be rescinded.

For students enrolled on courses delivered at UCO in Partnership with Sheffield Hallam University, University of Lancashire, or University of Huddersfield, the applicable Partner's Policy will apply. Please see links below:

- **University of Lancashire**  
<https://www.lancashire.ac.uk/legal/student-policies>
- **Sheffield Hallam University**  
<https://www.shu.ac.uk/myhallam/university-life/university-rules-and-regulations>
- **University of Huddersfield**  
<https://www.hud.ac.uk/policies/registry/regs-taught/>

### **3. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT PROCEDURE**

#### **3.1. OUTLINE**

Assessment is the means by which the UCO tests whether a student has achieved the learning outcomes of their course and the standards of an award. It is a fundamental principle that students are assessed fairly and on equal terms.

Material submitted for assessment in any form must be the student's own work. Students must produce work for assessment and engage in examinations in a timely, honest and professional manner, and without attempting to gain an unfair advantage.

Students are bound by their Academic Regulations and are expected to familiarise themselves with these and also the guidance on referencing and proof-reading provided during the course, and ethical policies relevant to their discipline as appropriate. Students must retain draft copies of work used in the preparation of final submissions to help prove the work is their own, if challenged.

UCO regards all cases of academic misconduct seriously and penalties will be imposed where academic misconduct is proven. Students should be aware that a record of academic misconduct may have significant academic and professional consequences. Students can be excluded from UCO for very serious or repeat offences.

##### **3.1.1. Principles**

Academic Integrity Leads and Academic Misconduct Committees have authority to impose penalties for academic misconduct.

Where academic misconduct is suspected, an Assessment Board shall not determine the student's assessment result until the facts have been established and the case has been concluded. The assessment in question may be suspended as an interim measure pending the outcome of this Procedure.

UCO will aim to deal with suspected cases of academic misconduct within 25 working days from the date when the marks are released. In exceptional cases, where it becomes clear that the investigation is likely to be complex, variation of the timescale and the reasons for this will be notified to the student.

Interviews and hearings may be conducted remotely via Microsoft Teams or in person at UCO.

Confidentiality will be preserved during the investigation of an allegation of academic misconduct to protect the interests of everyone concerned, unless disclosure is necessary to progress the investigation in line with the rules of natural justice. UCO expects that all parties will respect the confidentiality of the process.

### **3.1.2. Support for Students**

At all stages of this Procedure, a student is entitled to be accompanied by a person of their choosing. Any person accompanying the student at any stage in this Procedure is there in a supporting capacity. The name and designation of any supporting person must be provided 48 hours before any meeting.

This Procedure is intended to be fair and to comply with the rules of natural justice. It is not a formal court process and, therefore, should not be adversarial or overly legalistic, and there is no need for anyone to have formal legal representation. A student may be accompanied by a person who is legally qualified, providing that person understands and respects the nature of the hearing and does not adopt an overly adversarial or legalistic stance.

Other support is available from UCO Student Services, including support in relation to student wellbeing and support in relation to overcoming poor academic practice and developing study skills.

### **3.1.3. Reasonable Adjustments**

Reasonable adjustments will be made where students have mobility or communication difficulties so that they may be informed of the process and have the opportunity to present their case, test the evidence, and offer an explanation.

### **3.1.4. Identifying Academic Misconduct**

Academic judgment will be applied based on the evidence that is available, when identifying suspected cases of academic misconduct. It is not necessary for intent to be proven in determining whether an offence of academic misconduct has occurred. It is sufficient that a particular act or omission has occurred. The method of detection will depend on the nature and form of the assessed work.

Students' work may be submitted electronically to Turnitin UK which is a web-based system that provides comprehensive checking of submitted work for matching text on web pages, electronic journals and previously submitted student work. Turnitin UK generates an Originality Report to facilitate the identification of potential plagiarism cases. The Originality Report can be used as evidence and to support the related decision-making process.

### **3.1.5. Academic Judgment**

Academic judgment will be applied in:

- interpreting detection software reports, where the substance of the copied material will be considered as well as the quantity, and there is no percentage threshold for an investigation to be initiated; and
- determining the nature and severity of the matter and whether poor academic practice, academic misconduct or gross academic misconduct has occurred.

### **3.1.6. Standard of Proof**

UCO will decide whether an allegation of academic misconduct is proven based on the evidence presented during the investigation. The standard of proof will be the civil standard of proof which means that 'on a balance of probabilities', the facts of the allegation are more likely than not to have happened.

### **3.1.7. Poor Academic Practice**

Poor academic practice falls short of academic misconduct and normally occurs where a student has attempted but failed to adopt good academic practice. It is normally the result of a failure to understand the required protocols and is most likely to occur at an early stage in the course and form a relatively small part of the student's assessed work.

Examples of poor academic practice include inadequate referencing, omitting to include quotation marks or gaps in the reference list. UCO will apply academic judgment in determining whether poor academic practice or academic misconduct has occurred.

## **3.2. DEFINITIONS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

Academic misconduct is defined as any action or attempted action by a student which gives or has the potential to give an unfair advantage in an assessment or might assist another student to gain an unfair advantage or otherwise undermines the academic integrity of UCO. Academic misconduct includes the following without limitation:

### **a) Cheating**

Cheating is defined a form of examination malpractice relating to formal invigilated examinations or other assessments. Examples of cheating include without limitation:

- communicating with another candidate during an examination;
- communicating with any other person other than an authorised invigilator or other member of staff during an examination;
- copying or attempting to copy from another candidate during an examination;
- possession of any written or printed materials during an examination, unless expressly permitted by the examination rules;
- possession of any electronically stored information or accessing any information via a network during an examination, unless expressly permitted by the examination rules;
- use of any information, communication, technology device e.g., mobile phone, watch or calculator during an examination, unless expressly permitted by the examination rules;
- substitution of examination materials;
- impersonation e.g., where a student arranges for someone else to impersonate them or impersonates another person in an examination, test or hearing;
- gaining or attempting to gain access to unauthorised assessment materials in advance of the specified time, unless expressly permitted by the examination rules;
- obtaining a copy of a written examination paper in advance of the date and time for its authorised release.

### **b) Plagiarism**

Plagiarism occurs where a student copies words or ideas from another person and presents those words or ideas as their own in an assessment without properly acknowledging and citing the source(s). Examples of plagiarism include, without limitation:

- the inclusion in a student's work of another's work whether published or not;
- without proper acknowledgement;
- the substantial summarising of another's work without proper acknowledgement;
- the substantial and unauthorised use of the ideas of another person without proper acknowledgement.

**c) Re-presentation of work**

Re-presentation of work occurs where a student submits the same work in full or in part, that they have previously submitted for academic credit, where this is not expressly permitted by the assessment brief.

**d) Collusion**

Collusion is an attempt to deceive the examiners by disguising the true authorship of an assessed piece of work in full or in part. Examples of collusion include without limitation:

- where student A copies, or imitates in close detail, student B's work;
- where two or more students divide the elements of an assignment among themselves and/or copy, or imitate in close detail, one another's answers.

All students involved will be regarded as jointly responsible in cases of collusion. It is also an offence of collusion to allow one's work to be copied or imitated in close detail. Students should take reasonable steps to safeguard their work, data and hardware from improper use by others. Collusion should not be confused with the normal situation in which students learn from one another, sharing ideas, as they generate the knowledge and understanding necessary for each of them successfully and independently to undertake an assignment or research project. Nor should it be confused with group work on an assignment or research project where this is specifically authorised.

**e) Unauthorised Use of Technology**

Academic misconduct will occur where a student uses technological aids and/or Artificial Intelligence (AI) to generate all or part of an assessment without specific authorisation, including translation software, paraphrasing tools, text generating software (essay bots) and tools to generate graphics or artworks.

**f) Commissioning of Assessed Work**

Commissioning occurs where a student commissions a third party to complete all or part of an assessed piece of work and then submits it as their own. Commissioned work may be pre-written or specifically prepared for the student. It might be obtained from a company or an individual and may or may not involve a financial transaction. It includes the use of essay mills or buying work on-line or the use of a proof-reading service that includes re-writing the original assessed piece of work.

Where it is suspected that a student has submitted work that has not been written by them, the student may be asked questions about the work during an interview with the Academic Integrity Lead or Academic Misconduct Committee to give them the opportunity to demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the subject matter and that they understand the content of the work. Students must keep copies of drafts and other materials used in researching and preparing their work.

### **g) Falsification and Fabrication of Data**

Falsification occurs where data, evidence or experimental results are altered or enhanced.  
Fabrication occurs where a student creates data, results or other outputs and presents them as if they were real.

### **h) Ethical Breaches**

Ethical breaches may occur where there is a failure to comply with UCO's research and ethics policies and procedures, including conducting research and data collection without prior ethical approval from UCO. Students should ensure that they are familiar with the ethical policies of UCO and their discipline area.

### **i) Any Other Attempt to Deceive**

Any other deliberate attempt to deceive, including offering a bribe to any member of staff or external person who is connected to UCO.

## **3.3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **3.3.1. Academic Integrity Lead**

UCO appoints Academic Integrity Leads in order to ensure a consistent approach to the promotion of academic integrity and the detection and investigation of cases of academic misconduct. The role of the Academic Integrity Lead is to:

- provide advice and guidance to staff on academic integrity related issues;
- decide the level at which each case should be managed and when cases should be referred to the Academic Misconduct Committee;
- manage the Category 2 and 3 processes;
- monitor the occurrence of academic misconduct within UCO and report on this to the Curriculum, Quality, and Standards Committee;
- create action plans for UCO focusing on improvements;
- assist with the delivery of staff development on academic integrity related issues.

### **3.3.2. Academic Misconduct Committee**

The membership of the Academic Misconduct Committee (the Committee) will normally comprise as a minimum:

- Head of HE Curriculum, who will act as Chair;
- One member of staff from a different discipline, usually a Course Leader;
- HE Quality and Standards Manager.

No members of the Committee will have been involved in the teaching, supervision or assessment of the student concerned.

The terms of reference of the Academic Misconduct Committee shall be:

- to determine the facts of the case based on the evidence before it;

- to decide on the balance of probabilities whether academic misconduct has occurred;
- to consider any explanation given by the student;
- to confirm the penalty in cases where it is established that academic misconduct has occurred.

### **3.4. PROCEDURE FOLLOWING AN ALLEGATION OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

Any member of staff or examiner (internal or external) who has cause to suspect that academic misconduct has occurred at the point of submission or preparation of an assessment should report the case to the relevant Course Administrator and provide any evidence to support the allegation. The Course Administrator will refer the matter to the appropriate Academic Integrity Lead for consideration.

Where academic misconduct is identified during an examination, the matter should be reported to the Course Administrator in the first instance, who will refer the matter to the appropriate Academic Integrity Lead for consideration.

The Academic Integrity Lead will review the evidence and may consult with relevant staff to decide whether there is a case to answer and, if so, how it should be managed in line with one of the following categories. Academic judgment will be applied in determining whether poor academic practice or academic misconduct has occurred. The Academic Integrity Lead will check the student record to determine whether there are any previous findings of academic misconduct on record.

The Academic Integrity Lead will deal with cases within Categories 2 and 3. For other cases including potential Category 4 cases of gross academic misconduct, the Academic Integrity Lead will conduct an initial investigation, which may involve interviewing the student, before referring the case to the Academic Misconduct Committee for consideration.

#### **3.4.1. CATEGORIES OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

##### **1. Category 1: Poor Academic Practice**

This covers a range of poor academic practices (see previous definition in paragraph 10). Examples of Category 1 poor academic practice include, without limitation:

- inadequate referencing
- omitting quotation marks

##### **2. Category 2: Academic Misconduct**

Category 2 academic misconduct will normally be defined as a first instance of academic misconduct. Where there is evidence of academic misconduct in multiple assignments that were submitted at the same time within the same cycle of assessment(s), this will normally be treated as a single occurrence. Examples of Category 2 academic misconduct include, without limitation:

- Plagiarism
- Re-presentation of work
- Collusion
- Cheating/examination malpractice
- Repeat instances of poor academic practice

##### **3. Category 3: Academic Misconduct**

Category 3 academic misconduct will normally be defined as a repeat offence of academic misconduct in any form, where the student has previously incurred a penalty and a warning for academic misconduct, and where the repeat instance occurs in a subsequent cycle of assessment(s). Examples of Category 3 academic misconduct include, without limitation:

- Repeat instances of category 2 academic misconduct in any form
- Cheating/examination malpractice

#### **4. Category 4: Gross Academic Misconduct**

Category 4 will normally be defined as gross academic misconduct where a clear intent to deceive and gain an unfair academic advantage can be established. Examples of Category 4 gross academic misconduct include, without limitation:

- A repeat instance of Category 3 academic misconduct in any form
- Impersonation
- Commissioning of assessed work
- Fabrication or falsification of data

### **3.4.2. OUTCOMES OF IDENTIFIED ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

#### **a) Developmental Engagement (Category 1)**

Where poor academic practice is identified, the student will be invited to a meeting with a member of staff who will explain the nature of the concern. This will be a formative learning opportunity for the student who will be given advice and will be referred to relevant support and educational opportunities regarding good academic practice. The student may be required to undertake an online academic integrity learning activity.

The student will be informed that if poor academic practice occurs in the future, it will be dealt with by a formal meeting with the Academic Integrity Lead and associated penalties will be imposed.

The member of staff will complete a record of the meeting using a standard form which will outline the advice given and will be signed by the student and the member of staff. A copy will be given to the student. A record will be retained on the Student Data System for the purposes of taking appropriate action if further instances occur, although this will not form part of the formal student record.

#### **b) Interview with the Academic Integrity Lead (Categories 2 and 3)**

The Academic Integrity Lead will consider all Category 2 and 3 academic misconduct cases and potential Category 4 gross academic misconduct cases. The Academic Integrity Lead will consider the evidence and may consult with relevant staff, to decide whether there is a case to answer and, if so, how it should be managed. As part of this process, the student record will be checked to determine whether there are any previous findings of academic misconduct.

The Course Administrator will invite the student to attend an interview with the Academic Misconduct Lead to discuss the alleged case of academic misconduct. The purpose of the interview will be to give the student the opportunity to establish to UCO's satisfaction that the work is their own.

The student will be given at least 5 working days' notice of the time, date and place of the interview. The following information will be included with the notice:

- the grounds on which the alleged academic misconduct is believed to have occurred;
- a copy of the originality report or other evidence to be referred to in the meeting;
- the right to be accompanied.

The Course Leader (or nominee) or Chief Examination Invigilator may be present to explain the allegation in detail. The Course Administrator will be in attendance to advise on the process and take a record of the interview using a standard report template.

In suspected cases of collusion, the Academic Integrity Lead will require individual interviews with all parties involved.

If the student does not attend the interview without good cause, a decision may be made in their absence and a penalty may be imposed (see below).

The Academic Integrity Lead may:

- ask the student to provide evidence that shows how they prepared for and wrote the assessed work e.g., copies of drafts or notes; and/or
- ask questions about the submitted work during the interview to give the student the opportunity to demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the subject matter and that they understand the content of the work.

The Academic Integrity Lead will:

- determine the facts of the case on the basis of the evidence before them;
- decide on the balance of probability whether academic misconduct has occurred;
- consider any explanation given by the student;
- consider any aggravating factors e.g., any previous finding of academic misconduct;
- confirm the penalty in cases where it is established that Category 2 or 3 academic misconduct has occurred;
- refer the case to an Academic Misconduct Committee where it is believed that Category 4 gross academic misconduct has occurred.

The student will normally be notified verbally of the outcome and the associated reasons at the end of the interview. Written notification of the outcome and the associated reasons will be sent to the student within 5 working days of the meeting, along with the formal record of the meeting. The outcome letter will identify the evidence considered, the decision on the outcome, the penalty and associated reasons, and the student's right of appeal.

### **c) Referral to an Academic Misconduct Committee (Category 4)**

An Academic Misconduct Committee will be convened where:

- a) the Academic Integrity Lead in consultation with relevant staff considers that there is a suspected case of Category 4 gross academic misconduct; or
- b) a case is referred from the UCO's Policy on Ethics.

The Academic Integrity Lead will prepare a written report explaining the nature of the alleged offence and provide supporting evidence. The report will state why the alleged offence is considered to be gross academic misconduct including why there is considered to be a deliberate attempt to deceive and gain an unfair academic advantage.

The student will be invited to a hearing with the Academic Misconduct Committee. The purpose of the hearing will be to give the student the opportunity to put their case, and to establish to UCO's satisfaction, that the work is their own.

The Academic Misconduct Committee may:

- ask the student to provide evidence that shows how they prepared for and wrote the assessed work e.g., copies of drafts or notes; and/or
- ask questions about the submitted work during the meeting to give the student the opportunity to demonstrate appropriate knowledge of the subject matter and that they understand the content of the work.

The student will be given at least 5 working days' notice of the time, date and place of the hearing. The following information will be included with the notice:

- the grounds on which the alleged academic misconduct is believed to have occurred;
- a copy of a report prepared by the Academic Integrity Lead and any supporting evidence;
- the right to be accompanied;
- the right to call witnesses and give evidence.

The student will be asked to submit a written statement in response to the allegation together with any evidence e.g., copies of drafts or notes.

The Academic Integrity Lead and/or Course Leader will normally be present to explain the allegation in detail. The Course Administrator will be in attendance to advise on the process and take a formal record of the meeting using a standard report template.

If the student does not attend without good cause, a decision may be made in their absence and a penalty may be imposed (see below).

The order of proceedings at the meeting will normally be as follows:

- The Academic Misconduct Committee will convene in private session to discuss the case and what questions need to be asked.
- The student and any representative and the presenting member(s) of staff (who will normally be the Academic Integrity Lead), will attend the meeting at the same time.
- The Chair will invite all those present to introduce themselves and their role in the proceedings and will explain the purpose and structure of the hearing and the possible outcomes.
- The Chair will invite the presenting member(s) of staff to present the case.
- The Committee and the student (or representative) may ask questions.
- The Chair will invite the student (or representative) to explain the circumstances surrounding the alleged academic misconduct from their perspective and respond to the allegation of academic misconduct.
- The Committee and the presenting member(s) of staff may ask questions.
- Any witnesses called by the presenting member(s) of staff or the student may be called at this point, where previously agreed by the Chair.

- The present member(s) of staff will be invited to sum up.
- The student (or representative) will be invited to give an explanation and to sum up their case.
- Once the Chair is satisfied that all questioning is completed, all parties apart from the Committee and the Course Administrator will withdraw.
- The Committee will deliberate to reach a decision, and may seek further information and/or adjourn to a later date.

The Academic Misconduct Committee will:

- determine the facts of the case based on the evidence before it;
- decide on the balance of probabilities whether academic misconduct has occurred and its severity;
- consider any explanation given by the student;
- consider any aggravating factors e.g., whether it is a repeat offence;
- confirm the penalty where it is established that academic misconduct including gross academic misconduct has occurred.

The student will normally be notified verbally of the outcome and the associated reasons at the end of the meeting. Written notification of the outcome and the associated reasons will be sent to the student along with the record of the meeting, within 5 working days of the meeting. The outcome letter will identify the evidence considered, the decision on the outcome, the penalty and the associated reasons, and the student's right of appeal.

The Chair will ensure that all cases are formally recorded using a standard report template and reported to the Assessment Board.

### **3.4.3. PENALTIES FOR ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

The penalties for academic misconduct will be determined based on:

- the severity of the case;
- the circumstances of the case;
- the level at which the offence took place;
- what stage of the programme the student is at;
- whether it was a repeat offence;
- any explanation given by the student;
- the extent to which a clear intent to deceive and gain an unfair academic advantage has been established.

#### **1. Category 1 Penalties**

The outcomes will be determined via the standard marking processes. The element of assessment will be marked and the mark will be reduced (by 10% of the original mark) to reflect the failure to address the assessment criteria regarding referencing.

The student will be given advice and will be referred to relevant support and learning opportunities regarding good academic practice.

#### **2. Category 2 Penalties**

A mark of 0% for the element of assessment which must be resubmitted where permitted\*, to the required standard. The mark for the element of assessment following resubmission will be capped at the minimum pass mark.

*Or*

A mark of 0% for the element of assessment which must be resubmitted where permitted\*, to the required standard. The mark for the module following resubmission will be capped at the minimum pass mark.

*Plus*

A written warning setting out the consequences of further academic misconduct and a referral to learning opportunities regarding good academic practice. A flag will be placed on the student record system.

### **3. Category 3 Penalties**

A mark of 0% for the module with no opportunity for re-assessment. The student may be permitted to retake the module in a subsequent year when the module result will be capped at the pass mark for the module.

*Plus*

A final written warning setting out the consequences of further academic misconduct and a referral to learning opportunities regarding good academic practice. A flag will be placed on the student record system.

### **4. Category 4 Penalties**

Level failed and a requirement to withdraw from the course. (This does not preclude the student from applying for re-admission to UCO after a period of time defined by the Committee.)

*Or*

Expulsion from UCO on a permanent basis.

The Academic Misconduct Committee will advise the Assessment Board regarding the student's entitlement to any exit award or credit achieved. The student will normally be entitled to retain an exit award or any credits awarded for work that has already been passed without evidence of academic misconduct.

A flag will be placed on the student record system.

*\*Where academic misconduct is detected for the first time on a reassessment for an already failed assessment, no further reassessment will be permitted and the appropriate fail grade will be conferred.*

*The above penalties will apply where a student transfers from one UCO course to another during their period of studies and module credits gained on the former course are transferred to the current course.*

## **4. EXPLANATORY CIRCUMSTANCES**

Students will have the opportunity to provide an explanation for their actions during an interview with the Academic Integrity Lead or Academic Misconduct Committee. Any explanation will not be relevant to deciding whether academic misconduct has occurred but may be taken into account when deciding on the penalty.

Where students experience circumstances which affect their performance, there are procedures for students to apply for extenuating circumstances, and such cases will be treated in a supportive and appropriate way. Given the existence of these procedures, extenuating circumstances should not be considered in deciding whether academic misconduct has taken place, and may only be considered in determining the level of penalty where there is evidence of compelling personal circumstances which impaired the student's judgement.

## **5. APPEAL**

The student may, where there are valid grounds, submit an appeal within 10 working days of the official notification of the outcome of a decision by the Academic Integrity Lead or the Academic Misconduct Committee in line with the Academic Appeals Procedure.

Appeals against decisions on academic misconduct will only be valid if they are based on the following grounds:

- a) that the original hearing was not conducted fairly and/or in accordance with the published procedure;
- b) that the original decision was unreasonable in all the circumstances.

An appeal against a decision by an Academic Misconduct Committee on a Category 4 case of academic misconduct will proceed directly to the second stage of the Academic Appeals Procedure to be considered by an Appeals Panel.

## **6. EXTERNAL REVIEW**

Having completed the Academic Appeals Procedure, the student may request an external review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

## **7. RECORDING AND DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION**

Any finding of academic misconduct will be recorded on the student's record and reported to the Assessment Board. Offences will be kept on file so that penalties can be applied where a student transfers from one course to another during their period of studies and module credits gained on the former course are transferred to the current course.

Where an allegation of academic misconduct has been upheld, UCO will inform relevant third parties of the nature and outcome of the case as required, including:

- the Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body in the case of students on professionally regulated courses or students who are professional registrants;
- the employer in the case of students on apprenticeship courses or members of staff who are registered as students for an award or students who are professional registrants.

UCO will also reserve the right to inform other third parties of the nature and outcome of the case, including:

- placement providers; and/or
- potential employers in the event of a reference request.

The student will be informed in the event of any such disclosures.

## 8. MONITORING AND REVIEW

Academic Integrity Leads will monitor the occurrence of academic misconduct and create action plans focusing on improvements.

An annual report on the occurrence of academic misconduct across UCO will be submitted to the Curriculum, Quality and Standards Committee, paying particular regard to equality issues, for the purposes of assuring the integrity of all academic awards and improving the provision of guidance to students about good academic practice.

## 9. RELATED DOCUMENTS

Open University Academic Regulations  
UCO Academic Regulations: Pearson Higher Nationals

### Version History:

Issue	Changes	Author	Approved at	Date of Issue
1	Policy and Procedure Implemented	Head of HE Quality and Registry	QIC / C&Q	March 2020
1.1	Minor Amends: Section 1 with reference to QAA and OIA frameworks; addition of Pearson Regulations in 'Related Documents' section	Head of HE Quality and Registry	CQSC	September 2022
1.2	Minor Amends: Section 1 with updated reference to QAA and OIA frameworks; Section 3 inclusion of additional forms of academic misconduct	Head of HE Quality and Registry	CQSC	September 2024
2	Full Policy and Procedure Review	HE Quality and Standards Manager	CQSC	September 2025

### Published on:

UCO Website	UCO Staff Intranet	UCO Student VLE
✓	✓	✓