Academic Misconduct Policy

Version: 8
Revision date: 31/01/2025
Document owner: Head of Policy & Governance
Due for review: 31/01/2027

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1. Policy statement

1.1 This policy outlines UCQ's approach to addressing academic misconduct. Academic misconduct occurs when a student violates the principles of academic integrity by seeking an unfair academic advantage, including failing to adhere to established academic procedures or assessment protocols. Allegations of academic misconduct will be investigated in accordance with this policy and guided by the principles of academic integrity.

1.2 Academic misconduct undermines the quality and standards of UCQ's programmes. UCQ is committed to addressing such misconduct through fair, transparent, and consistently applied policies and procedures. Allegations must be supported by sufficient evidence based on the balance of probability. Investigations involve academic judgment, and UCQ may employ reasonable and fair measures to detect academic misconduct. All related information will be documented to support monitoring and review processes. Records of academic misconduct will be maintained on individual student files for the duration of their studies.

2. Values of academic integrity

2.1 UCQ adopt the International Center for Academic Integrity's (ICAI) fundamental values of academic integrity[1]:

1. Honesty – being truthful and giving credit to the owner of the work
2. Trust - promoting transparency in values, processes and outcomes
3. Fairness – applying rules and policies consistently and engaging with others equitably
4. Respect –affirming others and accepting differences
5. Responsibility – being accountable for own actions, knowing and following rules and codes of conduct
6. Courage – Taking a stand to address a wrongdoing

3. Principles for academic integrity

3.1 UCQ has signed QAA's Academic Integrity Charter as an institutional pledge to protect and promote academic integrity across the organisation. The principles for academic integrity[2] are summarised as follows:

Principle 1: Everyone is responsible as part of a 'whole community approach'

All members of the UCQ community share responsibility for fostering and upholding academic integrity.

Principle 2: A 'whole community' approach

Academic misconduct can occur for various reasons, both intentional and unintentional. UCQ employs a comprehensive approach combining education, prevention, detection, and enforcement to promote independent learning and minimise misconduct.

[1] ICAI The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity (3rd edn): https://academicintegrity.org/images/pdfs/20019_ICAI-Fundamental-Values_R12.pdf
[2] QAA Academic Integrity Charter for UK Higher Education: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/academic-integrity/charter

Principle 3: Working together as a sector

UCQ collaborates with other higher education institutions to address sector-wide challenges, such as combatting essay mills, sharing best practices, and preserving academic integrity across the UK.

Principle 4: Engage with and empower students

UCQ ensures students understand academic integrity policies through accessible materials, inductions, and ongoing support. Students are accountable for their academic choices, and UCQ provides education on the consequences of misconduct, including impacts on future careers.

Principle 5: Empower and engage with staff

UCQ equips teaching and professional staff with tools, resources, and training to identify and deter academic misconduct. Staff are encouraged to act as champions of academic integrity within the institution.

Principle 6: Consistent and effective institutional policies and practices

UCQ's policies emphasise education and prevention, define various forms of misconduct, outline proportional penalties, and ensure fair and transparent investigation processes.

Principle 7: Institutional autonomy

As an autonomous institution, UCQ maintains responsibility for promoting academic integrity, safeguarding academic standards, and supporting students in fostering independent learning and ethical practices.

4. Different forms of academic misconduct

4.1 Plagiarism

Representing another's work, ideas, or thoughts—including outputs from generative AI tools—as one's own without proper acknowledgment. This includes complete, partial, self-plagiarism, or collusion.

4.2 Falsifying data

Presenting fabricated or unfairly obtained data as genuine in reports, projects, or dissertations.

4.3 Impersonation

Pretending to be another person to gain an unfair advantage.

4.4 Irregular behaviour relating to examinations

Engaging in unauthorised behaviours during exams, such as using prohibited materials, communicating with others, or copying answers.

4.5 Dishonest practice

Examples include bribery, false declarations, submitting work altered by another person, or using purchased assignments.

4.6 Breaches in confidentiality and/or unethical practice in coursework

Failing to adhere to protocols regarding confidentiality or anonymity in coursework, such as disclosing privileged information or identifiable data.

5. Investigative procedure

5.1 In all proceedings related to academic misconduct, no action will be taken until an investigation has been concluded. The investigative procedure follows these steps:

1. **Submission of concerns:** Concerns must be submitted in writing via email to the Academic Misconduct and Extenuating Circumstances (AMEC) Sub-Committee at extenuating@ucq.ac.uk, accompanied by supporting evidence. Submissions should be made as soon as possible and no later than 5 working days after the suspected misconduct has been identified.
2. **Initial review:** The AMEC will acknowledge receipt of the concern within 2 working days and conduct an initial review within 5 working days. Additional information may be requested during this stage. Allegations involving multiple students will be investigated collectively, ensuring fairness to all parties.
3. **Notification to the student:** If sufficient grounds exist, the student will be formally notified of the allegations via their UCQ email address. This notification will include:
    - A summary of the allegations.
    - The evidence submitted.
    - The timeframe for responding (normally within 5 working days after the notification to student).
    - Information on support services available.
4. **Student response and investigation:** The student may submit a written response and supporting evidence within the given timeframe. The AMEC may also request further clarification or conduct interviews where necessary. The investigation will typically be completed within 10 working days from the student's response deadline.
5. **Evaluation and decision:** The AMEC evaluates all evidence and determines an outcome, which may include a recommendation for penalties to the Board of Examiners. A report summarising the findings and decision is provided to the Board.
6. **Outcome notification:** The student will be informed of the decision in writing via email. The written notification will include:
    - The final decision.
    - Any penalties applied.
    - Information on the right to appeal under the UCQ Appeals Policy.
7. **Appeals:** Students may appeal the decision in accordance with the UCQ Appeals Policy. The appeal must be submitted within 28 calendar days of receiving the written outcome.

6. Penalties for plagiarism

6.1 UCQ applies the AMBeR Tariff to determine appropriate penalties for plagiarism. A formal warning is issued in all cases, and records are maintained as part of the student's history. Penalties are assigned based on accumulated points, as outlined in Appendix A.

Appendix A

The AMBeR Tariff

Assign points based on the following criteria

History:

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

Amount/extent

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

* Critical aspects are key ideas central to the assignment
† Some institutions may consider this to be a separate form of academic malpractice

Level/stage

Level 1	70 points
Level 2	115 points
Level 3/Postgraduate	140 points

Value of assignment

Standard weighting	30 points
Large project (e.g. final year dissertation	60 points

Additional characteristics

Evidence of deliberate attempt to disguise plagiarism by changing words, sentences or references to avoid detection 40 points

Award penalties based on the points

Penalties (Summative work)

Points	Available penalties (select one)
280 – 329	• No further action beyond formal warning • Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required, with no penalty on mark
330 - 379	• No further action beyond formal warning • Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required, with no penalty on mark • Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required but mark capped or reduced
380 - 479	• Assignment awarded 0% - resubmission required but mark capped or reduced • Assignment awarded 0% - no opportunity to resubmit
480 - 524	• Assignment awarded 0% - no opportunity to resubmit • Module awarded 0% - re-sit required, but mark capped or reduced • Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, but credit still awarded
525 - 559	• Module awarded 0% - re-sit required, but mark capped or reduced • Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, but credit still awarded • Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to re-sit, and credit lost • Award classification reduced • Qualification reduced (e.g. Honours -> no Honours) • Expelled from institution but credits retained • Expelled from institution with credits withdrawn
560+	• Module awarded 0% - no opportunity to resit, and credit lost • Award classification reduced • Qualification reduced (e.g. Honours -> no Honours) • Expelled from institution but credits retained • Expelled from institution with credits withdrawn

Penalties (Formative work)

280 – 379	Informal warning
380+	Formal warning, with record made contributing to the student's previous history

Initial equalities impact assessment

Department: All	Completed by: Tara Henderson, Head of Policy & Governance	Date of initial assessment: 26/01/22
Area to be assessed:	TLA-001 Academic Misconduct Policy	
Existing or new policy/procedure:	Existing	
What evidence has been used to inform the assessment and policy? (please list only)		
External guidance and requirements: ICAI The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity (3rd edn): https://academicintegrity.org/images/pdfs/20019_ICAI-Fundamental-Values_R12.pdf QAA Academic Integrity Charter for UK Higher Education: https://www.qaa.ac.uk/en/about-us/what-we-do/academic-integrity/charter **Internal guidance and requirements:** ➢ Consultation with Policy Approval Working Group		

1. Describe the aims, objectives or purpose of the policy/procedure		This policy deals with UCQ's approach to academic misconduct. Academic misconduct refers to instances when a student does not follow the values of academic integrity by attempting to gain an unfair academic advantage. This includes not following published academic procedure and assessment protocols. Any allegations of academic misconduct will be investigated under this policy and in accordance with the principles for academic integrity.		
2. Which stakeholders/groups are intended to benefit from this policy/procedure?		All students and staff		
The Equality Act 2010 requires public bodies to have 'due regard' to the need to:- (1) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimization (2) Advance equality of opportunity between different groups; and (3) Foster good relations between different groups		**3. Could the policy/procedure have a disproportionately negative impact in terms of the aims set out in (1) to (3) of the Act on any of the protected characteristics?:-** **High** **Medium** **Low** **No effect**	**4. Briefly explain how the policy/procedure furthers or prevents the aims set out in (1) to (3).**	**5. If there is a disproportionately negative impact on any protected characteristics, can it be justified on the grounds of promoting equality or any other reason? If yes, please explain.**
Protected characteristics	**Age**	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Disability	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Gender	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Gender reassignment	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Marriage and Civil Partnership	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Pregnancy and Maternity	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Race	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable

	Religion or Belief	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable
	Sexual Orientation	No effect	Not applicable	Not applicable

6. Has there been any consultation/engagement with the appropriate protected characteristics?		Not applicable
7. What action(s) will you take to reduce any disproportionately negative impact, if any?		Not applicable
8. Based on the information in sections 1 to 7, should this policy/procedure proceed to Full Impact Assessment? (recommended if one or more 'High' under section 2)		No
Assessor signature:	**Approved by:** **Michelle Elliott**	**Date approved:** 26/01/2022