Student Disciplinary Procedure

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1. Introduction

1.1 This Procedure relates to non-academic misconduct. Academic misconduct, such as plagiarism, is addressed within UCQ's Academic Misconduct Policy (TLA-001).

1.2 The Academic Council of UCQ are ultimately responsible for maintaining discipline among students of UCQ, and in this, students can expect the Academic Council to be assisted by all UCQ staff.

1.3 The discharge of this responsibility in respect of managing student conduct is delegated by UCQ's Academic Council to the Senior Leadership Team ("the Disciplinary Officers").

1.4 The burden of proof of the allegations of misconduct lies with the person or persons alleging the misconduct. The judgement of the allegation/s will be based on balance of probabilities.

1.5 The seriousness of the offence will be taken into account in assessing the cogency, weight and quality of evidence presented.

1.6 UCQ will not investigate anonymous allegations.

1.7 Where an act of misconduct is also considered criminal behaviour, a referral to the Police will be made.

1.8 The disciplinary procedure has an informal stage and four formal stages. Any stage in the process may be invoked immediately, depending on the nature and severity of the behaviour. However, it is expected in most cases a progressive, staged approach to student discipline will be implemented.

1.9 Before invoking a formal disciplinary process, any member of UCQ staff may use their professional judgement and issue verbal warnings informally. The formal process is to be implemented if the severity of the conduct means that an informal verbal warning is not sufficient.

2. Procedure

2.1 A broad summary of the progressive staged approach is outlined below:

2.1.1 **Stage 1** Verbal warning confirmed formally in writing to the student

2.1.2 **Stage 2** Written warning

2.1.3 **Stage 3** Final written warning

2.1.4 **Stage 4** Suspension from attendance on the UCQ programme for a specified period or while an investigation takes place, which may lead to expulsion.

2.2 Verbal warnings can be issued by:

2.2.1 Lecturing Staff, Professional Development Assessors, HE Admissions Manager, Senior Leadership Team or voting members of the Academic Council

2.3 Written warnings can be issued by:

2.3.1 Senior Leadership Team or voting members of the Academic Council

3. Procedural stages

3.1 Severity of misconduct

3.1.1 The nature of the misconduct and surrounding circumstances may result in any of the following four stages being implemented with immediate effect.

3.1.2 All formal warnings will be recorded in the student's file.

3.1.3 Notice of all warnings will be recorded the UCQ Student Behaviours Log.

3.2 Stage 1 – Verbal warning confirmed formally in writing

3.2.1 In most cases, a student will have received an informal warning before receiving a formal verbal warning.

3.2.2 Verbal warning: This is actioned by an approved staff member (2.2) and countersigned by a Curriculum or Line Manager. Some examples of behaviour that may warrant a verbal warning are:

- Unauthorised use of mobile technology devices in class
- Use of intimidating/unwelcome discriminatory language or behaviour
- Any behaviour that disrupts learning
- Littering

3.2.3 After the formal verbal warning takes place, details of the nature of the warning will be confirmed in writing to the student and their employer. This will be countersigned by a Curriculum or Line Manager.

3.3 Stage 2 – Written warning

3.3.1 In most cases, a student will have received a verbal warning before receiving a formal written warning.

3.3.2 Written warning: This is actioned by a member of the Senior Leadership Team or voting member of the Academic Council where required and countersigned by another member of staff. Some examples of behaviour which may warrant a written warning are:

- Use of intimidating/unwelcome discriminatory language or behaviour
- Illegal Internet Access/ transmission of offensive materials or statements
- Damage to UCQ property

- Smoking outside a designated area
- Persistent disruption to learning

3.3.3 After the formal written warning takes place, details of the nature of the warning will be given or forwarded to the student and their employer.

3.4 Stage 3 – Final written warning

3.4.1 In most cases, a student will have received a written warning before receiving a final written warning.

3.4.2 Final written warning: This is actioned by a member of the Senior Leadership Team or voting member of the Academic Council where required and countersigned by another member of staff. Some examples of behaviour which may warrant a written warning are:

- Use of intimidating/unwelcome discriminatory language or behaviour
- Suspected malpractice

3.4.3 After the formal final written warning takes place a letter detailing the nature of the warning will be given or forwarded to the student and their employer.

3.5 Stage 4 – Suspension from the UCQ programme for a specified period or while an investigation takes place, which may lead to expulsion

3.5.1 A student is likely to have received a final written warning before reaching this stage.

3.5.2 Suspension/Expulsion: If a student is suspected of gross misconduct, the Academic Council may suspend them immediately to allow an investigation to take place prior to further action. Student suspension or expulsion can be actioned only by an Academic Council quorum.

3.5.3 Some examples of behaviour considered to be gross misconduct and warranting suspension/expulsion are:

- Unlawful harassment, discrimination, support for proscribed terrorist groups or incitement to violent
- Being under the influence of alcohol and/or illegal drugs
- Committing a criminal act e.g. vandalism, assault
- Contravening UCQ's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Safeguarding or Health and Safety policies
- Any other conduct that is deemed to be gross misconduct

3.5.5 After the student has been advised of their suspension/expulsion and when a formal suspension/expulsion meeting takes place, details of the nature of the incident will be given or forwarded to the student.

3.6 Readmission following expulsion

3.6.1 Any student seeking readmission to a UCQ course following an expulsion should apply through the normal UCQ application process.

4. Right of appeal

4.1 All students have the right to appeal a disciplinary action at each stage of the disciplinary process if there are extenuating or mitigating circumstances, additional evidence or information that is relevant but not known by the member of staff at the time of the disciplinary action. Appeals must be lodged in accordance with AC-001 Appeals Procedure.

5. Document history

ISSUE NO.	DATE	PAGE	REVIEWER	DETAIL OF AMENDMENT
04	28/11/2025	All	Tara Henderson	Periodic review completed: S5 added.

6. Initial equalities impact assessment

Department: All	**Completed by:** Tara Henderson, Head of Policy & Governance	**Date of initial assessment:** 11/01/2022
Area to be assessed:	GP-024 Student Disciplinary Procedure	
Existing or new policy/procedure:	Existing	
What evidence has been used to inform the assessment and policy? (please list only)		
External guidance and requirements: ➢ Consultation with awarding organisations as required **Internal guidance and requirements:** ➢ Consultation with Policy Approval Working Group (including Principal & CEO)		

1. Describe the aims, objectives or purpose of the policy/procedure		This Procedure relates to non-academic misconduct. Academic misconduct, such as plagiarism, is addressed within UCQ's Academic Misconduct Policy (TLA-001). The Academic Council of UCQ are ultimately responsible for maintaining discipline among students of UCQ, and in this, students can expect the Academic Council to be assisted by all UCQ staff. The purpose of this procedure is to maintain a safe and fair studying environment for all students, employers and staff.		
2. Which stakeholders/groups are intended to benefit from this policy/procedure?		All students, employers 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:** 11/01/2022