



UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

CODE OF PRACTICE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

(INCLUDING PLAGIARISM AND CONDUCT IN EXAMINATIONS AND CLASS TESTS)



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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Code of Practice applies to all Registered Students, students on Leave of Absence, Students with Thesis Awaited Status, Externally Registered Students and Graduands ('Students').
- 1.2 This Code of Practice relates to all assessed academic work (Assessments) required for academic progress which include:
 - 1.2.1 'Coursework', which means written assignments, data interpretation and calculations, essays, reports, dissertations, theses, portfolios, projects, presentations;
 - 1.2.2 'Practical Examinations', which means clinical assessments, laboratory assessments, oral examinations;
 - 1.2.3 'Class Tests', which means timed assignments, including data interpretation and calculations, and timed essays;
 - 1.2.4 'Written Examinations', which means Centrally Coordinated Written Examinations, which are those arranged by the Central Examinations Office, Principal Academic Unit (PAU) Written Examinations, which are those arranged by the PAU; and
 - 1.2.5 any other Assessment type not covered by the categories mentioned above.
- 1.3 The University has an obligation to uphold the academic integrity of the degrees and diplomas it awards. Academic Integrity refers to the values of the academic community and includes undertaking Assessments honestly, in a responsible manner and respecting other's ideas.
- 1.4 Any Assessment will be liable to scrutiny to identify any issues of academic misconduct or plagiarism. This scrutiny may include, but is not limited to; the use of text-matching and other software, and the use of invigilators in Written Examinations.
- 1.5 Plagiarism occurs where a Student claims as their own, intentionally or by omission, work which was not done by that Student. This may occur in a number of ways e.g. copying and pasting material, adapting material and self-plagiarism. Plagiarism also includes a Student deliberately claiming to have done work submitted for assessment which was never undertaken by that Student, including submitting work written by a third party and fabricating data. Other examples of what constitutes plagiarism are set out in Appendix A to this Code of Practice.



- 1.6 A Practical Examination Irregularity, Class Test Irregularity and Written Examination Irregularity occurs when a Student fails to follow oral and written instructions in the Assessment and includes the breaches set out in Appendix B to this Code of Practice.
- 1.7 For the purposes of this Code of Practice, any department within Corporate Services delivering a Programme or module of the University is considered to be the (PAU) in respect of that Programme.
- 1.8 For the purpose of this procedure, 'working days' refers to University working days (i.e. Mondays – Friday, excluding Public Holidays and University Closed Days).
- 1.9 In the case of students based at the University's overseas campuses working days will reflect national public holidays and any locally designated closed days.

2. PAU Responsibilities

- 2.1 The PAU has the following responsibilities in regards to promoting good academic conduct to Students in relation to all Assessments:
 - 2.1.1 To provide to Students during the induction process and in writing, in programme materials and other media as appropriate, guidance on plagiarism, which should cover programme-specific content and include:
 - (a) referencing (and any preferred referencing style);
 - (b) how to avoid plagiarism;
 - (c) acceptable use of a proof-reader, including guidance on declaring the use of a proof-reader.
 - 2.1.2 Where Programmes include collaborative/group work:
 - (a) to advise on the boundary between legitimate collaboration and inappropriate collaboration/collusion;
 - (b) to advise on any method to be used to demonstrate individual and/or collective contributions.
 - 2.1.3 To provide to Students during the induction process and in writing, in programme materials and other media as appropriate, guidance on conduct and permitted materials in Practical Examinations, Class Tests and Written Examinations.



- 2.2 Where a PAU has in place any formal learning agreement relating to the avoidance of plagiarism, advice will be given to Students on the requirements before a Student is asked to sign the agreement.
- 2.3 All PAUs will have in place an Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) who will normally be nominated by the Head of School or Head of PAU, or nominee.
- 2.4 The PAU will have in place methods for upholding the Academic Integrity of their Assessments including:
- methods of detecting any plagiarism;
 - procedures to review, monitor and quality-assure reports generated by any text-matching or other software;
 - procedures to detect issues around conduct in Practical Examinations, Class Tests and PAU Written Examinations.
- 2.5 PAUs will assist with the implementation of procedures to detect issues around conduct, in Centrally Coordinated Written Examinations.

3. Students Responsibilities

- 3.1 Students are expected to undertake their Assessments with Academic Integrity and in doing so have the following responsibilities:
- 3.1.1 To familiarise themselves with the guidance provided by the PAU and/or the University, in relation to the avoidance of plagiarism.
- 3.1.2 To familiarise themselves with guidance provided by the PAU and the University in relation to conduct in Practical Examinations, Class Tests and Written Examinations
- 3.1.3 To follow written and oral instructions provided in relation to all Practical Examinations, Class Tests and Written Examinations, including:
- (a) the announcements made at the start, during and at the end of the Practical Examination, Class Test and Written Examination,
 - (b) the instructions at the top of the question paper (rubric), and



- (c) any other written instructions provided by the PAU and/or University in relation to the Practical Examination, Class Test or Written Examination.

3.2 Students will be expected to provide evidence of their identity in Class Tests and Written Examinations by displaying their University identification card on the desk.

4. Investigations

4.1 Plagiarism Investigation

- 4.1.1 Concerns about suspected plagiarism, should be reported to the AIO in the PAU for consideration.
- 4.1.2 Where it is suspected that plagiarism has occurred, or issues are suspected, in a project or thesis submitted by a Student on a postgraduate research Programme of study, examination of the project or thesis must be suspended until it has been established whether or not plagiarism has occurred.
- 4.1.3 An AIO who suspects that plagiarism may have occurred will undertake an investigation, which would normally involve considering any evidence, which may include a report generated by text-matching software, or observations reported by the marker or invigilator.
- 4.1.4 Where, following the investigation, the AIO has a reasonable suspicion that plagiarism has occurred, the Student will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation and will be invited to a meeting (the Academic Integrity Meeting). The Student may be accompanied to the meeting by a Friend as defined in Regulation 1. The Student is responsible for arranging for any Friend to accompany them to the meeting.
- 4.1.5 The AIO will write to the Student informing them of the allegation and inviting them to the Academic Integrity Meeting. The Student should normally be given at least five working days' notice of the Academic Integrity Meeting.
- 4.1.6 The AIO reserves the right to approve a meeting via telephone, video-conferencing, or other means where it is deemed appropriate.



- 4.1.7 If the Student fails to confirm their attendance at the Academic Integrity Meeting and/or confirms they will attend but fails to do so, the meeting may proceed in the Student's absence.
- 4.1.8 During or in advance of the Academic Integrity Meeting, the Student should bring to the AIO's attention and where appropriate provide evidence of, any mitigating factors that they want the AIO to consider. Mitigating factors will normally be considered in determining the sanction only and not whether or not plagiarism has occurred or the category of plagiarism. Where a student has issues that have impacted them they will normally be expected to request an extension to their submission deadline in advance of the submission.
- 4.1.9 Following the Academic Integrity meeting, the AIO, in consultation with other appropriate members of staff at the Academic Integrity Meeting, will decide whether plagiarism has occurred, if so, assign a category, and depending on the category apply an appropriate sanction.
- 4.1.10 This outcome should be communicated to the Student in writing (the Outcome Letter) normally within five working days of the Academic Integrity Meeting. The Outcome Letter will include key points of the discussions which took place in the meeting, the reasons for the decision and should be retained on the Student's file.

4.2 Investigation of Practical Examination Irregularity, Class Test Irregularity or Written Examination Irregularities/Academic Misconduct

- 4.2.1 Concerns about a Student's conduct in a Centrally Coordinated Written Examination or a PAU Written Examination, Practical Examination or Class Test shall be reported for consideration and investigation in accordance with Regulation 8 – Student Conduct.

- 4.3 Unauthorised items may be confiscated, inspected and retained as evidence until disciplinary proceedings and any related appeals are completed.

5. Categories of Plagiarism

- 5.1 There are three levels of plagiarism. Following an investigation the AIO will assign a category taking into consideration a number of factors, including those set out below:



- (a) the academic level (e.g. F, C, I, H, M, D as detailed in Regulation 6) of the Student;
- (b) whether there is a reasonable expectation that the Student should have learned appropriate referencing skills and received sufficient guidance;
- (c) the nature of the irregularity;
- (d) the severity/ or proportion of the work affected;
- (e) whether there have been any previous recorded instances of Plagiarism.

5.2.1 **Poor Academic Practice**

Poor academic practice arises through a Student's lack of following expected academic conventions, where a Student may not yet be familiar with the requirements of University level Assessments.

5.2.2 **Moderate Plagiarism**

Moderate plagiarism arises when a Student fails to follow guidelines on what is regarded as a Student's own original work, ignoring conventions and failure to follow acceptable academic practice.

5.2.3 **Serious Plagiarism – Academic Misconduct**

Serious plagiarism arises where there has been an occurrence of reasonably extensive quantities of unattributed or incorrectly attributed copying and/or self-plagiarism. Serious plagiarism also arises where there has been an attempt to deceive the marker by the Student passing off as their own, work which they have not done; including submitting work that has in full or in part been produced by a third party. This category also includes a case of repeated moderate plagiarism.

6. **Consequences and Sanctions**

6.1 **Poor Academic Practice**

Where poor academic practice has been found to have occurred the Student may be required to undertake another attempt at the Assessment. This Assessment will count as the same attempt under normal assessment regulations (Regulation 7). A record shall be retained on the Student's file. No further action shall be taken.

6.2 **Moderate Plagiarism**

Where moderate plagiarism has been found to have occurred a sanction shall be applied from the list below:



6.2.1 Taught Programmes or modules

For Students on taught Programmes of study, or Students on research-based Programmes of study where moderate plagiarism has been found to have occurred on a taught module taken as part of that Programme:

- (a) the Assessment mark obtained to stand;
- (b) resubmission of the Assessment. The mark for this resubmission shall be capped at a mark deemed appropriate by the AIO and the cap shall be no lower than the pass mark. This resubmission counts as the same attempt under normal assessment regulations (Regulation 7);
- (c) reduce the Assessment mark to an appropriate level, including an award of zero. If this leads to failure of the module, and another attempt would be permitted under normal assessment regulations (regulation 7), a further attempt shall be permitted, with the overall module mark awarded capped at the pass mark;
- (d) reduce the Assessment mark to an appropriate level, including an award of zero, with no opportunity to resit.

6.2.2 If the sanction applied results in the Student failing the Programme of study, the case shall be referred to a College Misconduct and Fitness to Practice Committee to be heard in accordance with the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee.

6.2.3 Research Elements

- (a) For Students on research Programmes of study, where a Moderate plagiarism has been found to have occurred within a research Assessment that does not carry a numerical mark, the Student will be given one further opportunity to submit the Assessment at a date specified by the AIO, in the Outcome Letter.
- (b) For Students on research-based Programmes of study, where a Moderate plagiarism has been found to have occurred within the research element, the Student may resubmit, within a maximum of 20 working days' of the Outcome Letter, the dissertation/thesis for the original qualification with the offending sections/data edited and re-worked so that the plagiarism is removed. The extent of any additional work will be determined by the AIO and should normally be limited to ensuring that no sentences are incomplete due to the removal of offending sections/data. This resubmission counts as the same attempt for examination purposes.



6.3 **Serious Plagiarism – Academic Misconduct**

Where a Serious plagiarism has been found to have occurred, the case shall become a case of Academic Misconduct under the University Regulations Section 8 - Student Conduct, and will be referred to a College Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee to be heard in accordance with the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee.

7. **Student's Request for the Outcome to be considered by a College Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee**

7.1 Where a Student does not agree with the outcome of the Academic Integrity Meeting, the Student may request that their case be considered by a College Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee in accordance with the Code of Practice on Misconduct and Fitness to Practise Committee. The request should be submitted to the AIO within 10 working days of the Outcome Letter. Requests received after the 10 working day deadline will only be considered in the most exceptional circumstances.

7.2 A Student may not normally use other processes e.g. those under the Code of Practice on Extenuating Circumstances and/or the Code of Practice on Academic Appeals, to request an outcome that would change the outcome of an Academic Integrity Meeting.



Appendix A

A.1 Plagiarism

In addition to the definition mentioned earlier, in section 1.5, plagiarism includes the following:

A.1.1 Copying

Presenting as their own, work done by others, including the copying of the work of another Student (past or present, from this or another institution), the reproduction of course materials, including lecture notes, presentations or data, the cutting and pasting of material derived from the internet and the direct transcription of the contents of a textbook or journal. It may include inadequate or misleading referencing and paraphrasing.

A.1.2 Self-plagiarism (also called auto-plagiarism)

The reproduction in full, or in part, of work the Student has previously submitted, including work submitted as part of the same Programme or any previous Programme at this or another institution. This would also include reproduction of articles, publications, software produced by the Student, without appropriate referencing.

A.1.3 Collusion

Collaboration between two or more Students in preparing a piece of work that is then presented as their own individual work. This does not include permitted collaboration as part of group work.

A.1.4 Fabrication or misrepresentation

A Student claiming to have done work submitted, which was never undertaken by that Student. This includes the negligent, false or misleading representation by a Student of evidence, results or data which forms part of their submitted work. This constitutes an attempt to deceive the marker.

A.1.5 Commissioning work/ buying essays & Software

Submitting as all or part of their Assessment, work they have not done themselves which has been; bought from an essay writing company/website, downloaded from an essay repository, or prepared by someone other than the Student. This would constitute a deliberate attempt to deceive the marker.



A.1.6 Unacceptable proof-reading

Rewriting of text with the purpose of improving the Student's research arguments or contributing new arguments or rewriting computer code is not acceptable and may be deemed to be plagiarism.

For the sake of clarity, for postgraduate research theses written in English, proof-reading by a member of the supervisory team, a professional or non-professional proof-reader is acceptable to the extent that it involves the rewriting of some of the text originating from the student for the purposes of clarifying written English only.



Appendix B

B.1. Practical Examinations, Class Tests and Written Examinations

This section sets out guidance about conduct and examples of irregularities in Practical Examinations, Class Test and Written Examinations:

B.1.1 Possessing or Accessing Non-Permitted Materials during an Examination or Class Test

The rubric will inform Students of items that they are permitted to have during an examination or class test. Students must not have in their possession, or access to, non-permitted items during a Practical Examination, Class Test or Written Examination, whether or not they have been used, or were unintentionally or intentionally retained. Such items include:

- (a) communication devices and other unauthorised electronic, mobile, technical or computer equipment capable of accessing the internet, email and/or storing data, including notes and photographs e.g: mobile phone or smart-watch;
- (b) all papers;
- (c) notes; e.g. on paper, in permitted text, on hand or other body part
- (d) textbooks;
- (e) bags;
- (f) coats, jackets, body warmers and hats with the exception of religious headwear;
- (g) correctional/removal fluid or tape.

B.1.2 Copying from another Student

Students must not copy or attempt to copy from another Student's work.

B.1.3 Obtaining, or attempting to obtain, access to an unseen Assessment

Students must not obtain or access, or attempt to obtain or access, an unseen Assessment e.g. Written Examination questions, or Class Test question(s), except where this has been expressly agreed with the PAU

B.1.4 Personation and Impersonation

Students must not be involved in an arrangement whereby another party undertakes the Assessment on behalf of the Student.

B.1.5 Non-Permitted Communication



Students must not communicate, or attempt to communicate, with another party (except Invigilators) inside or outside of the Practical Examination, Class Test or Written Examination venue during the Practical Examination, Class Test or Written Examination.

B.1.6 Causing a Disturbance

Students must not cause a disturbance to those in the Practical Examination, Class Test or Written Examination venue.

B.1.7 Pencil Cases and Other Containers

All containers left on a Student's desk during the examination, including pencil cases or boxes, spectacle cases or drinks containers must be transparent and should not contain any notes or other non-permitted materials.

B.1.8 Dictionaries

Students whose first language is not English will be permitted to use a standard paper, non-technical, un-annotated and un-marked dictionary, except where the rubric specifically state this is not permitted.

B.1.9 Where there is uncertainty over the identity of the Student undertaking a Practical Examination, Class Test or Written Examination, the Student's identity, will be verified after the Student has concluded the Assessment.