

# Student Academic Misconduct Procedure

Effective from 1 September 2024

This procedure is applicable to **all registered and partnership students** and should be read in conjunction with the [Student Disciplinary Policy](#).

It sets out what you can expect if you are the subject of an Academic Misconduct investigation.

For a glossary of terms and roles used within this document, see [Appendix 1](#).

Where reference is made within this document to any named University role, this also includes their appropriate nominee.

## Introduction

Newcastle University has a [Student Charter](#) which sets out the University's expectations for the standards of conduct of its students. These academic values are essential to the integrity of an academic community and you are expected to:

- Maintain high standards of academic conduct and honesty
- Familiarise yourself with and applying the guidance provided on good academic practice, including the avoidance of plagiarism and other academic misconduct (for example, the purchasing or inclusion of unacknowledged content)
- Ensure that your submitted work is your own and that you acknowledge appropriately any use made of the work from other sources (as recommended on the [ASK webpage](#))
- Abide by the [Exam Rules and Guidance](#).

University disciplinary investigations use the civil standard of proof. This means that during any University investigation, the authorised person making the determination will need to assess the evidence available to them and make a reasoned judgement as to whether, *on the balance of probabilities*, Academic Misconduct has taken place.

The University is duty-bound to investigate any allegation of Academic Misconduct made against a student and will take disciplinary action where it decides, on the balance of probabilities, that Academic Misconduct has taken place.

## Support and Guidance

We understand that being involved in an investigation into Academic Misconduct can be a stressful experience. You may find it helpful to seek support and advice via the following services:

- [Student Health and Wellbeing Service](#)
- [Student Progress Service](#)
- [Student Advice Centre of the Students' Union](#)

If you are required to attend any meetings throughout this process, you may choose to be accompanied by a friend or supporter. Please see the [guidance on the role of a friend or supporter](#). We strongly encourage you to access this support.

If you are disabled or have a specific support need, you are encouraged to disclose this at the start of any investigation; the University will then discuss with you whether any adjustments or arrangements are appropriate to enable you to engage with the process.

## Academic Misconduct Procedure

There are three levels at which Academic Misconduct decisions may be considered:

**Level 1: Local Resolution:** Reports of academic misconduct are considered locally in the first instance. The Chair of the Board of Examiners for your programme of study (or their nominee) will investigate the reported Academic Misconduct and decide on appropriate action.

**Level 2: Formal Investigation:** Where a Level 1 investigation has taken place and the reported Academic Misconduct is considered to be more significant, your case may be referred to the Student Progress Service for a formal investigation to take place. This is likely to be the case if the reported Academic Misconduct is considered to be major, happen in an examination room, where there have been repeated incidents, or where it is felt that you have not engaged with or been honest during the Level 1 investigation. A Case Officer will be appointed to investigate the case and the outcome will be determined by the Academic Registrar after consideration of all the available evidence.

**Level 3: Student Disciplinary Committee:** Where the Academic Registrar determines that the reported Academic Misconduct is sufficiently complex or major, your case will be referred to a Student Disciplinary Committee for further consideration and determination of an appropriate outcome.

### At all levels of the procedure:

The Academic Misconduct procedure has two aspects: academic and disciplinary. Where it is determined that, on the balance of probabilities, Academic Misconduct has occurred, there will usually be both an academic and disciplinary sanction imposed.

Notes will be taken of any meetings you are asked to attend; these are not word for word and meetings will not normally be recorded. You will be provided with a copy of the notes of any meetings you attend, with the exception of formal hearings which will be provided on request.

You are expected to respond to the details of the report, engage with the investigation and be present (in person or virtually) at any interview or hearing to which you are invited. However, if you fail to engage or attend, without good reason, the University may proceed in your absence.

If your programme of study leads to professional registration and Academic Misconduct is found to have occurred, you may also be investigated under the [Fitness to Practise procedure](#).

If you withdraw from the University while the investigation into Academic Misconduct is still ongoing, the case may be concluded in your absence.

If you choose to suspend your studies while the investigation is still ongoing, the case may be put on hold until you return.

The content of the work reported as Academic Misconduct may be submitted to a checking tool, for example where the report relates to plagiarism or to text generated by Artificial Intelligence.

Where relevant your understanding and/or engagement with your programme of study may be taken into account when Academic Misconduct is reported and investigated.

If the reported Academic Misconduct relates to a degree that has already been awarded, please read the [Procedure for Revocation of a Degree or other Distinction conferred by the University](#), which explains what happens in such cases.

#### Level 1: Local Resolution

Most reports of minor Academic Misconduct are considered and determined by the Chair of the Board of Examiners (or nominee) for your programme of study.

The Chair or nominee will notify you of the reported Academic Misconduct in writing and will provide you with relevant evidence. They will invite you to provide a written statement in response to the report made against you and may also invite you to an interview to discuss the reported Academic Misconduct, which may involve consideration of your engagement with your studies and/or understanding of the work you have submitted.

The Chair will consider all the evidence available to them and decide on an appropriate outcome, which may include academic and disciplinary sanctions being imposed on you if misconduct is found.

You will be informed, in writing, of the outcome of your case and will be given details of how to appeal any decisions you are dissatisfied with.

Under some circumstances, the Chair may decide it is more appropriate for your case to be referred to Level 2 of this procedure. These circumstances include where:

- The reported irregularity is believed to be major/academically significant or complex;
- The case involves repeated or persistent Academic Misconduct;
- It is determined that you have wilfully intended to deceive the examiner, not been honest during or engaged fully with the Level 1 investigation.

### Level 2: Formal Investigation

If your case is being investigated under Level 2 of this procedure, a Case Officer will be appointed to investigate the reported misconduct. If this took place within an Examination Room, an Examinations Officer will usually carry out the investigation.

You will be provided with relevant evidence and invited to submit a written statement in response to the reported Academic Misconduct. It is also likely that you will be invited to attend an interview as part of this process. During this interview, you will be given the opportunity to provide your version of events, provide clarification, and present any mitigating circumstances that you wish to be considered.

The collated details of the case will be considered by the Academic Registrar and you will be informed in writing whether misconduct has been found, along with any relevant academic or disciplinary sanctions imposed on you. You will also be given details of how to appeal any decisions you are dissatisfied with.

Where the Academic Registrar determines that the reported Academic Misconduct requires further is sufficiently major, academically significant or complex, your case may be referred to a Student Disciplinary Committee to be considered under Level 3 of this procedure.

### Level 3: Student Disciplinary Committee

More complex, major and/or academically significant Academic Misconduct cases may be referred to a Student Disciplinary Committee for further investigation. The Student Disciplinary Committee will hold a hearing to consider the evidence. You will be asked to attend the hearing to answer questions and respond to the evidence presented.

You will normally be informed in writing within 5 working days of your Level 2 interview and/or receipt of a statement if your case is to be heard by a Disciplinary Committee. You will be notified in writing of the members of the Student Disciplinary Committee and documentation to be presented. If you have any concerns about the impartiality of any member of the Student Disciplinary Committee, you may write to the Director of the Student Progress Service within 5 working days to request a review of the Committee membership by the Disciplinary Convenor. If you require any reasonable adjustments to be made to enable you to engage with the Disciplinary hearing, please submit your request in writing to be considered by the Chair of the Committee.

A representative from your School may be invited to attend the Student Disciplinary Committee hearing in order to advise the Committee on issues relating to the academic subject or specific assessment(s). The School representative will play any part in the decision-making process.

After considering all available evidence, the Student Disciplinary Committee will determine an appropriate outcome, which may include sanctions. [Appendix 2](#) provides a defined list of academic and disciplinary sanctions appropriate at this level.

You will be informed of the outcome in writing after the hearing and will be issued with a letter stating the full reasons for the decision within 10 working days. You will also be given details of how to appeal any decisions you are dissatisfied with.

### Student Disciplinary Appeals

You have the right to appeal against any decision or sanction imposed on you.

You should carefully consider your reasons for appeal so that you can explain why you are appealing. Your reasons should include at least one of the following:

- New material evidence is available that was not previously reasonably available;
- Procedural irregularity (i.e. you feel that this procedure was not correctly followed);
- Bias or prejudice (i.e. you feel that the investigation was prejudged or unfair in some way);
- Excessive or inappropriate sanction (i.e. you believe that the sanction imposed on you is not proportionate to the determined irregularity);
- The decision was one that no reasonable person/committee could have reached on the evidence available.

Appeal requests must be submitted in writing to [casework@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:casework@ncl.ac.uk) within 21 calendar days of the date of either the Outcome letter (for Level 1 or 2 cases) or the Statement of Reasons (for Level 3 cases).

The University Disciplinary Convenor will review your case and decide whether or not your appeal meets the grounds to be admitted. If the Disciplinary Convenor agrees that there are grounds for appeal, the appeal will be considered as follows:

**Level 1 or 2 cases:** The Disciplinary Convenor will appoint a member of the Disciplinary Panel who was not involved with the original case to consider your appeal. They may call a Disciplinary Appeal Committee hearing if they believe this would give more appropriate consideration to the case.

**Level 3 cases:** The appeal will be considered by a Disciplinary Appeal Committee and you will be invited to attend an appeal hearing. The Disciplinary Convenor will decide whether a full re-hearing is required or only a reconsideration of the sanction.

If the Disciplinary Convenor determines that there are no grounds to your appeal, the appeal request will be dismissed.

When a Level 1 or 2 case appeal is considered by a Disciplinary Panel member, or when a Level 3 case appeal is considered by a Disciplinary Appeal Committee, the outcome of the appeal may confirm, change or remove the original disciplinary outcome: if a Disciplinary Appeal Committee is only required to reconsider sanctions, the outcome of the appeal may only confirm or change the original sanctions.

When an appeal hearing is convened, the arrangements will be as for a Student Disciplinary Committee hearing, except that the Disciplinary Panel member or Disciplinary Appeal Committee members will not have been involved with any earlier considerations.

The decision of the Disciplinary Convenor, Disciplinary Panel member or Disciplinary Appeal Committee is final. At that point the procedures of the University will be exhausted and you will be issued with a Completion of Procedures letter.

### External Ombudsman

The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student complaints. The University subscribes to this scheme. Where all of the University procedures relating to your Academic Misconduct have been completed and you remain dissatisfied with the outcome offered by the University, you can seek an external review by submitting a complaint via the [OIA website](#).

Complaints must be submitted to the OIA within 12 months of the date of the Completion of Procedures letter.

### Confidentiality

See also: [Student Disciplinary Policy](#)

The Academic Misconduct Procedure is an internal and confidential process. It is important that you, and any friend or support you choose to accompany you to meetings, respect this confidentiality and treat all information as confidential. Where confidentiality is breached, this may be treated as an act of misconduct under the Student Disciplinary Procedure.

### Related Documents

- [Student Disciplinary Policy](#)
- [The University's Code of Practice for Research Degree Programmes](#)
- [Fitness to Practise Procedure](#)

## Appendix 1: Terminology

### Roles

**Academic Registrar:** the senior University employee with overall responsibility for ensuring a proper outcome of a disciplinary investigation.

**Authorised Person/Case Officer:** an employee of the University who is authorised to undertake disciplinary investigations. This is usually the Chair of the Board of Examiners (Level 1), and a member of the Student Progress Service (Casework team/Examinations Office) (Level 2). The Authorised Person can nominate another senior colleague with appropriate knowledge of the Academic Misconduct procedure to act on their behalf.

**Chair of the Board of Examiners:** an academic employee of the University, responsible for overseeing assessment and award process within a specific programme of study. The Chair of the Board of Examiners is responsible for undertaking and determining Level 1 Academic Misconduct investigations.

**PGR Panel:** For postgraduate research degree programmes, both the Project Approval Panel and the Annual Review Progress Panel are deemed to be equivalent to the Board of Examiners for taught programmes.

**Student Disciplinary Committee:** a Committee made up of three impartial senior university employees whose role is to assess evidence presented to them and decide on an outcome and any related sanctions. Members of Student Disciplinary Committees undergo extensive training on numerous topics relating to disciplinary cases.

**Student Disciplinary Appeal Committee:** a Committee made up of two impartial senior university employees who were not involved in the original investigation and a Students' Union Sabbatical Officer, whose role is to assess an appeal against a Disciplinary decision or sanction.

**Student Progress Service:** the University service with responsibility for the operation of the Disciplinary Process which includes formal Academic Misconduct investigations.

**Student Responder:** The student who is the subject of an investigation into the reported misconduct (including Academic Misconduct).

**University Disciplinary Convenor:** A senior academic employee of the University appointed by the University Education Committee to convene Student Disciplinary and Disciplinary Appeal Committee hearings. The Disciplinary Convenor may nominate a deputy, drawn from the University Disciplinary Panel, to act on their behalf.

**University Disciplinary Panel:** A panel of appropriately trained senior University employees, appointed by the University's Education Committee to undertake investigations into reports of student misconduct.

## Outcomes and sanctions

A sanction is a penalty imposed on a student when it has been determined that there has been academic or behavioural misconduct.

See [Appendix 2](#) for a list of examples of misconduct outcomes and their likely sanctions.

**No Further Action:** it is determined that Academic Misconduct has not taken place.

**Advice and Guidance:** There is insufficient evidence available for the University to determine that misconduct has occurred or the misconduct is deemed to be low or related to poor academic practice. You will be provided with direction on how to improve your academic practice within assessments. No further action will be taken against you on this occasion, unless further evidence is made available to the University. No record will be kept on your University file of the disciplinary investigation or its outcome. This outcome is possible at any level of the procedure.

**Misconduct Noted on Record:** There is sufficient evidence for a finding of minor misconduct and the level of misconduct is deemed to be low. A note of the finding of misconduct and will be recorded on your University file and may be reported if a further instance of academic misconduct is found to have occurred. This will not normally need to be disclosed in references. This outcome is possible at any level of the procedure.

**Warning:** There is sufficient evidence for a finding of misconduct and the level of misconduct is deemed to be moderate. A written warning will be issued to you. A record of the finding of misconduct and the warning will be kept on your University file. It is for any referee to decide whether to disclose this outcome in references. This outcome is possible at any level of the procedure.

**Final Warning:** There is sufficient evidence for a finding of misconduct and the level of misconduct is deemed to be serious. A final warning will be issued to you. A record of the finding of misconduct and the final warning will be kept on your University file. It is for any referee to decide whether to disclose this outcome in references. If further similar misconduct is found, it is likely that you will be referred to a Student Disciplinary Committee for further consideration. This outcome is possible at Level 2 and 3 of the procedure.

**Suspension:** There is sufficient evidence for a finding of misconduct and the level of misconduct is deemed to be very serious. You will be suspended from the University for a defined period of time (usually up to one academic year) and will not be allowed on campus during this time. This will be recorded on your University file and will usually be disclosed in references. This outcome is possible at Level 3 of the procedure only.

**Deferred Expulsion:** There is sufficient evidence for a finding of misconduct and the level of misconduct is deemed to be very serious. A Student Disciplinary Committee has decided that an expulsion would be an appropriate sanction but has agreed to postpone that sanction to allow you the opportunity to change your behaviour. If



further similar misconduct is found, it is likely that you will be re-referred to a Student Disciplinary Committee to decide whether an immediate expulsion is appropriate. This will be noted on your University file and will usually be disclosed in references. This outcome is possible at Level 3 of the procedure only.

**Expulsion with Immediate Effect:** There is sufficient evidence for a finding of significant or repeated misconduct and the level of misconduct is deemed to be very serious. Your studies will be terminated with immediate effect. You may or may not be entitled to an exit award. This will be recorded on your University file and will usually be disclosed in references. This outcome is possible at Level 3 of the procedure only.

### Types of Academic Misconduct

**Breach of ethical governance:** any academic practice which goes against ethical guidelines for student research at any level.

**Breach of University examination rules:** this includes copying from/conferring with other students; being in possession of/using unauthorised materials or equipment in an examination room; causing disruption in an examination (such as by leaving a mobile phone switched on); being in possession of/using a mobile phone/smart watch during an exam; notes within a dictionary or other object.

**Collusion:** Working with other students to produce a piece of work that you submit for individual assessment. This can happen in take home exams or for assignment submissions. Collusion can include allowing another student to copy your assessed work or providing opportunity for them to do so. Some levels of proof reading may also be considered collusion.

**Contract cheating (sometimes known as 'custom essay writing'):** Purchasing or attempting to purchase assessed work created by another person which you then submit as your own work. It is also an offence to supply your own work to another student or a third-party, regardless of whether or not you receive payment.

**Dishonesty:** any attempt to deceive the examiners that the work presented is your own work and any irregularity detected prior to the work being submitted for marking.

**Falsification of research results:** this includes falsifying results by inclusion or suppression.

**Plagiarism:** the unacknowledged use of ideas or works from another source, presented as your own, without specific acknowledgement. Plagiarism can occur in an examination script as well as in assessed coursework. This may also involve the use of electronic materials and the use of material generated through use of artificial intelligence (unless previously approved e.g. as a reasonable adjustment for a disability etc.). The inclusion of a source in a bibliography is not always sufficient to avoid plagiarism if the source is not specifically acknowledged within the text of the assessment.

**Self-plagiarism (sometimes known as 'auto-plagiarism'):** this is when you submit work that you have already submitted (in part or in whole) for another assessment at Newcastle or

elsewhere. It may be considered as an attempt to gain multiple credit for the same piece of work. This does not apply to draft copies of research work.

**Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Unacknowledged inclusion of content, including text and images, generated by artificial intelligence tools or other knowledge based systems to create the response to an assessment submitted as your own work.

#### [A note on minor/major Academic Misconduct](#)

There is no firm definition of what constitutes 'minor' or 'major' Academic Misconduct, as it depends on lots of factors, including:

- The proportion of the submitted work affected;
- Whether this is your first offence of Academic Misconduct;
- Whether the Academic Registrar believes there was an intention to deceive the examiners;
- Whether you have displayed dishonesty during the course of the investigation;
- Whether the work was academically significant to the programme or for a higher level award;
- Any mitigating circumstances.

## Appendix 2: Examples of misconduct and likely sanctions

Level of procedure	Academic Misconduct Type	Indicative disciplinary actions/sanctions	Indicative academic sanctions
<p><b>Level 1</b></p>	<p>Any academic misconduct identified as negligible/poor academic practice</p> <p>Any <u>minor</u> breach of the rules for University exams, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- failure to follow invigilator instructions, being in possession of/using unauthorised calculators/dictionaries, causing disruption during an exam (including leaving a mobile phone switched on, opening an exam paper or starting to write before the start of an exam, continuing to write after the exam has ended.</li> </ul> <p>Any <u>minor</u> Academic Misconduct reported for submitted coursework including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Permitting another student to copy – verbatim or in substance – any assessed coursework (this includes providing an opportunity for another student to copy work even if it was not the intention that the work be copied).</li> <li>- Sharing assessed coursework online via a website or any other medium, other than for a genuine academic reason.</li> <li>- The falsification of research results (including the suppression of data).</li> <li>- Plagiarism or unacknowledged use of another source</li> <li>- Self-plagiarism</li> <li>- Collusion, without permission</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advice and Guidance only</li> <li>- Academic Misconduct Noted</li> <li>- Warning</li> </ul> <p><i>N.B. No sanction greater than a Warning can be given at Level 1</i></p>	<p>A reduced mark, based on the work that is deemed to be the students own work (which may be zero)</p> <p>A requirement to resubmit the assessment (or an alternative) within timescales determined by the Chair of the Board of Examiners.</p> <p>A requirement to resubmit a project proposal or progress report within a defined timescale <b>(Postgraduate Research Students only)</b></p> <p>A requirement to make minor amendments to research data or thesis submitted for examination <b>(Postgraduate Research Students only)</b></p> <p>An appropriate and proportionate alternative sanction agreed with the Student Progress Service</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Procuring or attempting to procure assessed work created by another person.</li> <li>- Unacknowledged inclusion of content, including text and images, generated by artificial intelligence (AI) tools or other knowledge based systems</li> <li>- Dishonesty (including attempted Academic Misconduct detected before the submission of work)</li> </ul> <p>Any <u>minor</u> breach of research ethics.</p>		
Level 2	<p>Any <u>more major breaches</u> of the rules for University exams, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- copying from or conferring with another student; being in possession of/using unauthorised notes/materials in an examinations room; possession of/using a mobile phone or smart watch during an exam; unauthorised notes within/on a dictionary or other object.</li> <li>- Impersonating another student or allowing another student to impersonate you.</li> <li>- Introducing unauthorised exam scripts into the examination process.</li> </ul> <p>Any <u>more major</u> Academic Misconduct reported for submitted coursework including, but not limited to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Permitting another student to copy – verbatim or in substance – any assessed coursework (this includes providing an opportunity for another student to copy work even if it was not the explicit intention that the work should be copied).</li> <li>- Sharing assessed coursework online via a website or any other medium, other than for a genuine academic reason.</li> <li>- The falsification of research results (including the suppression of data).</li> </ul>	<p>Any of the above or:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Final warning</li> </ul> <p><i>N.B. No sanction greater than a Final Warning can be given at Level 2</i></p>	<p>Any of the above or:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A mark of zero for one or more modules</li> <li>- A mark of zero for the future calculation of stage averages and degree classification, with or without resit</li> <li>- A requirement to resubmit the assessment (or an alternative) within timescales determined by the Chair of the Board of Examiners.</li> <li>- A requirement to resubmit the assessment (or an alternative) within timescales determined by the Chair of the Board of Examiners but must be passed to progress on the programme.</li> <li>- A requirement to resubmit a project proposal or progress report within a defined timescale <b>(Postgraduate Research Students only)</b></li> <li>- A requirement to make amendments to research data or thesis submitted for examination <b>(Postgraduate Research Students only)</b></li> <li>- A requirement to resubmit the thesis, in accordance with research degree conventions</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Plagiarism or unacknowledged use of another source</li> <li>- Self-plagiarism</li> <li>- Collusion, without permission</li> <li>- Procuring or attempting to procure assessed work created by another person.</li> <li>- Unacknowledged inclusion of content, including text and images, generated by artificial intelligence (AI) tools or other knowledge based systems</li> <li>- Dishonesty (including attempted Academic Misconduct detected before the submission of work)</li> </ul> <p>Repeated or persistent instances of any of the above already considered under Level 1 of this procedure</p> <p>Any <u>more major</u> breach of research ethics</p>		
<b>Level 3</b>	<p>Any of the above where the case is believed to be complex, sufficiently serious, or academically significant to warrant further impartial consideration, or where there are repeated instances of Academic Misconduct.</p>	<p>Any of the above or:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Suspension from studies</li> <li>- Deferred Expulsion</li> <li>- Expulsion with immediate effect (with exit award)</li> <li>- Expulsion with immediate effect (without exit award)</li> </ul>	<p>Any of the above or:</p> <p>Being deemed to fail the whole academic year and required to pass the module or stage before being permitted to proceed</p> <p>Being deemed to fail the whole programme and not being permitted to be considered by a Board of Examiners</p> <p><i>N.B. An SDC may impose further academic sanctions to those listed as deemed appropriate due to the circumstances of the case</i></p>