

# ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT – GUIDANCE FOR STUDENTS

## 1. Academic Misconduct (Unfair Practice)

Bath Spa University emphasises the need for academic integrity at all times. This means that students are expected to be honest in their studies, acknowledging the work of others where appropriate and giving credit where they have legitimately used other people's ideas as part of presenting their own work.

## 2. Academic Misconduct Policy

Bath Spa University is clear that all students will be judged on their own ability and that all assessment work submitted must be original. Academic Misconduct is defined as any activity used by a student which provides them with an unfair academic advantage over others. Academic Misconduct is sometimes called 'unfair practice' or 'cheating'. The University regulations pertaining to Academic Misconduct can be reviewed in Section 11 of the University's [Academic Regulations](#).

Academic Misconduct is different from Poor Academic Practice, which the University defines as a minor breach of standard academic conventions, such as poorly attributed or incorrect referencing, or limited over-reliance on reference material, usually resulting from a misunderstanding or lack of confidence in conventions and where there is clearly no intention to deceive. Poor academic practice will be dealt with as part of the marking and feedback process, as it represents a failure to follow assessment and marking criteria.

You are expected to present your own words, your own analysis and your own arguments in your work. It is acceptable to use the work of others to support arguments and analysis and tutors will be able to inform you as to what constitutes good practice and to give help with conventions such as referencing and the provision of footnotes. If you are in any doubt about what constitutes good practice and what constitutes plagiarism, you are advised to consult your tutors for advice. It is also recommended that you seek advice from the [Writing and Learning Centre](#) regarding academic writing and referencing.

Where cases of Academic Misconduct are suspected, the University will follow the Academic Misconduct Policy outlined below. Students should be in no doubt that Academic Misconduct is regarded as a very serious offence in higher education. Pleas that a student was not aware of the offence or its consequences, or did not understand what constitutes Academic Misconduct, will not be accepted under any circumstances. Academic Misconduct will result in a penalty even when it is unintended or unwitting.

Students should be aware that an Academic Misconduct case can be opened at any time, even if the student has graduated and is no longer a current student.

### **3. Plagiarism detection**

Bath Spa University is a member of the **Turnitin UK Service** and uses this service to aid Academic Misconduct detection. All student work is fed through the online Turnitin system, which compares the document against a database of billions of internet pages, previous student papers and journals (amongst others). Turnitin provides an originality report for each document uploaded to it, which shows the level of similarity with other sources.

Plagiarism detection is not limited to the use of Turnitin. Tutors will also look to evidence of the following:

- Plagiarism from published texts (not necessarily available online);
- Similarities with the work of other students which may suggest collusion;
- Content that appears to be clearly beyond the known capabilities of a student;
- Work that is expressed in a style which does not match the known writing or language abilities of a student.

### **4. Types of academic misconduct**

Academic Misconduct may take a variety of forms, and the following explains some of the most common types of Academic Misconduct. This list is not definitive; any activity which meets the University's definition of Academic Misconduct may be considered under this policy.

#### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is submitting the work or ideas of someone else as your own, without appropriate referencing. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Copying sections from one or more books/articles/other published sources without acknowledgement of the source(s). It is still plagiarism if you reproduce sections from several sources rather than one;
- Excessive dependence upon one or a limited number of sources is plagiarism if the sources are inadequately referenced, even if the original text has been paraphrased;
- Copying from other members while working in a group;
- Submitting your own previous work (in whole or in part) from another course/module, even if this is from a different institution. This is sometimes known as 'self-plagiarism' or 'double-counting';
- Submitting the work of any third party, including students and former students.

#### **Impersonation**

Impersonation is submitting work prepared by another person for assessment purposes. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Purchasing essays;
- Writing an assessment for another student.

## **Collusion**

Collusion is the failure to work independently, where this is required, and passing the work off as your own individual effort.

Students should note that collusion is different to collaboration and some assignments may specify that students should work together and submit joint work. Students should never submit joint work unless it is clearly stated as a requirement in the module's written documentation, and, in such cases, students should always seek clarification from their tutors as to the level of collaboration that is acceptable.

All students implicated in a case of collusion will be considered as having breached Academic Practice, even when one student is believed to have copied from another. This is because the act of not adequately securing your work or sharing/showing someone else your work can make you culpable for collusion. Only where students can provide clear proof that their work has been stolen or otherwise acquired without their consent may they be exonerated from the accusation of collusion.

## **Exam misconduct**

Exam misconduct means breaching exam regulations to gain an unfair advantage. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Use of unauthorised technology during the exam;
- Use of unauthorised notes/other aids;
- Refusing to hand in your paper at the allocated time;
- Impersonation in exams.

## **Falsification**

Falsification means submitting data, observations or other research in assessed work which has been either fabricated or falsified.

# **5. Penalties for Academic Misconduct**

Where an accusation of unfair practice has been substantiated to the satisfaction of the Academic Misconduct Panel, the accusation is said to be established. In determining the appropriate penalty, the Academic Misconduct Panel will usually consider the following:

- The degree of deception involved;
- Whether the student has been subject to a previous accusation of Academic Misconduct;
- The level of study;
- The extent of the Academic Misconduct;
- Any admission and/or explanation by the student of the Academic Misconduct.

It is possible that additional factors may be considered when determining the appropriate penalty, if these are deemed relevant by the Academic Misconduct Panel.

Students should be aware that an established accusation of Academic Misconduct may lead to severe consequences for the career prospects for a student on a course which has a particular focus on honesty, integrity and ethical behaviour.

The University has published a table of categories, which dictates the penalties available to the Academic Misconduct Panel. As many variables are taken into consideration by the Panel when determining an appropriate penalty, it is not possible to provide a definitive list of offences and the penalty these will incur. The following table is therefore intended to provide an indicative estimation only.

<i>Indicative Level of Offence</i>	<i>Indicative Penalty Category</i>
<p><b>Minor</b></p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Unwitting plagiarism</i></li><li>• <i>Very minor infringement</i></li></ul>	1 - 2
<p><b>Moderate</b></p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Moderate or repeated minor misconduct</i></li><li>• <i>Substantial portions of directly copied/unreferenced text</i></li></ul>	3 - 4
<p><b>Severe</b></p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Stealing an exam paper</i></li><li>• <i>Purchasing essays</i></li><li>• <i>Falsifying research data</i></li></ul>	5 – 7

Students should note that, at Penalty Category 4 and above, the consequences will include a permanent record on the student's transcript, and the requirement that any capped mark (which may be zero) must count for classification purposes (above Level 4).

Students should be aware that, if the module to which an Academic Misconduct penalty has been applied is subsequently failed, the penalty will be carried over and will apply to whatever module is added to a student's record as a result of the failed module.

Students should be aware that instances of very severe Academic Misconduct may additionally lead to disciplinary action.

The full list of Academic Misconduct penalty categories can be found in the [Academic Misconduct Penalties](#) (.pdf).

### **Guidance for handling poor academic practice and academic misconduct**

Where Academic Misconduct is suspected, the tutor(s) should complete a copy of the form below, summarising the nature of the offence and providing appropriate evidence (e.g. colour Turnitin Report showing similarity scores). This should be emailed to Student and Registry Services ([mystudents@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:mystudents@bathspa.ac.uk)).

Student and Registry Services will contact the student by email, attaching the report and a copy of the Academic Misconduct policy, and requiring a written response by a specified date. Students are given ten working days to respond to the accusation. The tutor(s) will be asked to comment on the student's response.

The Academic Misconduct Panel will consider all aspects of the case, including the report from the tutor(s), any response from the student and any subsequent comments from the tutor(s).

Where Academic Misconduct is suspected, it is important for the tutor(s) to submit a report and evidence to Student and Registry Services within a suitable timeframe to enable the Academic Misconduct Panel to receive sufficient evidence to fully consider the case and to advise the next University Assessment Board of the Panel's decision.

When students receive a copy of the Academic Misconduct accusation, they are advised that they may request a meeting with their tutor(s) to discuss the matter. It is recommended that at least two members of staff should be present at the meeting and a written record taken.

If tutors have any additional questions about the procedures for dealing with accusations of Academic Misconduct, they are encouraged to contact Student and Registry Services via email: [mystudents@bathspa.ac.uk](mailto:mystudents@bathspa.ac.uk) or telephone **+44 (0)1225 876115**.