Academic Integrity Policy and Academic Misconduct Procedure

1. Scope and Purpose

1.1   This Academic Integrity Policy provides all Bath Spa registered students with:

    a. An explanation of why academic integrity is important

    b. Information about sources of support and guidance about academic integrity and good academic practice

    c. Clear definitions of what academic practice is acceptable and what is not acceptable and therefore what constitutes academic misconduct

    d. The procedure that will be used to investigate potential cases of academic misconduct and the way in which the University will engage with a student/s in this process

    e. Information about how the University will determine the outcome of a potential case of academic misconduct and the actions it may take in response to that outcome

    f. Information on how the Academic Integrity Policy fits with other University policies, including the Ethics Policy

    g. The approach that the University will take to review the outcomes from this policy on a regular basis and implement improvements where required

2. Policy

2.1 Definition

Academic integrity means that a student must ensure that the work they produce for assessment is their own. This concept – based on honesty, fairness, and respect – is a core part of studying in higher education as part of a scholarly community and lays the foundations for future professional life. Actions that demonstrate academic integrity include:

- Producing work for assessment that is completed solely by you

- Fully acknowledging the authors or sources you quote or reference in your assessments

- Ensuring that the information and / or data you use in your assessments are valid and real

- Complying with any ethical approval requirements related to your assessments

- Complying with the University Assessment Regulations

2.2 Support

The University recognises the importance of supporting students in understanding academic integrity. Each student will have their own previous experience of applying academic integrity principles to their work. These experiences may vary depending partly on their previous level of study, the academic integrity conventions they may have experienced when studying in another country and the length of time since they were in a formal education setting. The University therefore provides students with support which operates as follows:

The University supports all students' understanding of the core principles of academic integrity by:

- Providing every student with access to this policy

- Ensuring that every undergraduate and taught postgraduate student has a session/s embedded into one or more modules that focus on academic integrity and how the principles are applied. Session/s will cover core topics but will be tailored to the discipline and type of assessments within the course.

- Providing PGR students with an introductory session that focuses on academic integrity and how the principles applied as part of postgraduate research degrees through induction and the researcher development programme.

- Providing any undergraduate, taught postgraduate or doctoral student undertaking research that requires ethical approval with access and signposting to the relevant University policy as well as guidance from a member of staff.

The University also provides additional tailored support for students by:

- Your Module Tutor or Academic Advisor being available to provide further guidance if you are unsure or do not understand the academic integrity support offered in your module/s. You should make an appointment to see your Academic Advisor if you need extra help.

- The Academic Skills Service provides guidance on academic writing, referencing and using Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) ethically. You Tutor may also advise you to approach the Academic Skills Team.

If you are an undergraduate or taught postgraduate student, the University may require you to complete an Academic Integrity in Action short course if your current assessment shows that your academic integrity skills require improvement before you complete your next assessment. This may be a requirement if your assessment shows poor academic practice (e.g. unacknowledged quotations) or minor academic misconduct.

2.3 Boundaries of Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct occurs when you do not apply the academic integrity principles set out at the start of this Policy. The University recognises that there may be different reasons why a student may do this. These include:

- Not fully understanding how to apply the principles. The University aims to help students avoid this situation by providing the sources of support set out in section 2.2.

- Personal concern about your academic success and where you may lack confidence in your own abilities. If you are feeling concerned, we strongly advise you to talk to your Academic Advisor, to access support from Student and Registry Services, or to talk to the Students' Union Advice Centre, friends or family. If you feel that you have circumstances that are affecting your ability to study and complete your assessments such as ill health, we strongly encourage you to submit exceptional circumstances request/s ahead of your assessment deadlines and get in contact with Student Wellbeing Services, through MyWellbeing.

- Experiencing pressure from other people to succeed, or where you feel the need to please them but are concerned that you will not meet their expectations through your own academic abilities. If you are having these experiences or feelings, we strongly advise you to talk to your tutor, to access support from Student Wellbeing Services, Academic Skills Service. Student and Registry Services, or to talk to the Students' Union Advice Centre, friends or family. You can access all University services through the BSU App or via your educational partner support services.

- A direct intention to gain advantage for yourself or to help another student gain advantage.

In any of these circumstances, it is never the right course of action to ignore or not apply academic integrity principles. Doing so is unacceptable and will be defined as academic misconduct; this is a serious matter and will result in an Academic Misconduct report (see section 3). The following section sets out what is acceptable practice and what is not acceptable practice and therefore what constitutes academic misconduct. If your course has professional accreditation, your definitive programme document   will set out any additional or different practice requirements to those set out below.

Plagiarism

What is acceptable practice: Work that you create for assessment will often reflect upon the ideas and concepts of other people or upon information that has been created by GenAI. Using such sources is entirely appropriate to demonstrate your research skills and to support the narrative or facts that you are aiming to convey and where you appropriately acknowledge the original authors. You must ensure that you use appropriate citations and referencing for any work that you use in your assessment

and that it is adequately paraphrased. Please see the [Academic Skills (ASk) resources](#) for more information on referencing including how to cite sources correctly.

What is not acceptable practice and is plagiarism: Plagiarism is where you include ideas and concepts from other sources and present them as your own. This means that the assessment has not been completed appropriately and it therefore cannot be marked as your own work. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Copying sections from published materials and not appropriately referencing the original author/s

- Rewording sentences, paragraphs, or larger sections of published materials and not appropriately referencing the original author/s.

- Utilising the structure or layout of published materials without appropriately referencing the original source

- Copying the work of another student, including in group work, or copying the work of a former student who has completed the same or similar assessment in the past

- Paraphrasing the work of another student, including in group work, or paraphrasing the work of a former student who has completed the same or similar assessment in the past

- Copying or paraphrasing slides or other materials from lectures or classes without acknowledging that they have been created by a member of academic staff

- Copying the written or artistic style (e.g. parody, pastiche, homage) of another person without referencing the source

- Self-plagiarism (see definition below)

Published materials include, but are not limited to books, articles, journals, reports, digital storage media, data, on-line sources, creative pieces of work such as art, dance, theatre or music and materials created through Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI).

Reusing previously assessed material or self-plagiarism (also known as 'double counting')

What is acceptable practice: You may re-use part of your previously assessed material if the assessment brief for a reassessment task requires you to improve on your original performance. This is known as 'retrieval' of assessment, and in accordance with the Assessment and Feedback Policy, already resubmitted material can be incorporated into your resubmitted piece of work.

If you have failed a module and are retaking it with attendance or restarting the year, you can re-use part of your previous submission, provided you disclose this and

appropriately reference any previously submitted content (if the assessment briefs remain the same). Please check with your module leader before doing this. You may also use or refer to materials you have published for another purpose (e.g. on a blog, personal website, etc.) if these are referenced appropriately in the assessment task.

What is not acceptable practice and is self-plagiarism: Self-plagiarism is where you use all or part of a piece of work for an assessment that you have submitted previously for a different assessment for a module that you have not taken before, whether this is in your current programme of study or for submission at any other institution.

Please note that if you failed a module and are retaking it with attendance, and you decide to re-use all or part of your previous submission, you are expected to disclose this and appropriately reference any previously submitted content, otherwise this will be considered as self-plagiarism.

Collaboration or Collusion?

What is acceptable practice: You may work with another student/s if the assessment brief requires you to plan or compile a task together. The assessment brief will clarify the extent of that collaboration and what is expected to be your own work. If another student approaches you for help with an assessment that is to be completed independently, you should helpfully signpost them to the Module Leader so that they can get the help that they are seeking.

What is not acceptable practice and is collusion: Collusion is where you and another student/s liaise or work together on preparing or compiling an assessment task where collaboration is not part of the assessment brief. This means that your assessment(s) have not been completed appropriately. The work that has had input from another student cannot be marked as your work; it also means that the student who has inputted to your work has given you an unfair advantage, which is not acceptable. Examples of collusion include, but are not limited to:

- Working together to plan how you will respond to an assessment task

- Including the ideas and concepts of another student/s in your assessment task

- Providing another student/s with access to part or all the material that will form the assessment submission, including any draft work

- Using the materials provided by another student within your assessment without acknowledging the source (see also the definition of plagiarism)

Using Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

What is acceptable practice: The guidance document provides information on when it can be appropriate to use GenAI to support your learning and assessment as does this policy. As a general principle, GenAI tools may help you form an initial summary to develop your understanding of the assessment topic / brief. GenAI tools used in

your research must be cited and referenced as you would any other source of information. Your assessment brief may also provide additional information on how GenAI can be used appropriately or if it may not be used. If in doubt, check with your tutor.

What is not acceptable practice and is misuse of GenAI: Misuse of GenAI is where you use one or more GenAI tools to give you an unfair advantage in your assessment and undermines your learning process. The following examples of misuse of GenAI include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarising information from GenAI sources without appropriate referencing (see also the definition of plagiarism)

- Using a GenAI tool to generate all or part of your assessment (see also the definition of contract cheating) and not developing your own academic voice

- Using a GenAI tool to improve the standard of your assessment beyond your own competence. This includes for example, the style of your usual written English, or using it to generate coding

- Falsifying information resulting from the GenAI tool you use (see also the definition of falsification)

- Using new features of GenAI to gain an unfair advantage

Contract Cheating

What is acceptable practice: The [Academic Skills Service (ASk)](#) can provide you with support to improve your overall academic skills, including writing and referencing. You are required to complete any assessed piece of work on your own unless the assessment brief requires you to plan or compile a task with another student/s.

What is not acceptable practice and is contract cheating: Contract cheating is where you engage with another person or organisation to complete part or all your assessment, which you then submit as your own work. Contract cheating can take place with or without a formal contract. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Engaging with an essay writing service that you may seek out online or in person, or which may try to contact you online or in person. The UK Government criminalised essay mills in 2022 and their operations are therefore illegal. If you are approached or becomes aware that another student has used an essay mill, this should be reported anonymously via the [Report and Support tool.](#)

- Asking another person to contribute to, or undertake in full, an assessment. This includes but is not limited to asking other students, friends, family, private tutors and copy-editing services

- Using a GenAI tool to create part or all your assessment

Contract cheating will be considered as major misconduct.

Cheating in Test or Examination Conditions (in person or online)

What is acceptable practice: You must complete any test or examination by yourself unless the assessment brief requires you to complete the assessment with another student. The assessment brief will clarify the extent of that collaboration and what is expected to be your own work.

You may have agreed reasonable adjustments that include being accompanied or supported by another person (e.g. an amanuensis or scribe) or by Generative Artificial Intelligence, but your academic output will remain solely yours.

What is not acceptable practice and is cheating: Cheating in a test or examination is your attempt to gain advantage for you and/or for another student/s and includes, but is not limited to:

- Attempting to acquire or acquiring advance knowledge of the content of an examination or test before it is issued

- Attempting to communicate or communicating with other student/s or other individual (other than an invigilator or member of staff) during the assessment, including through technology and social media

- Attempting to copy, or copying from another student

- Allowing another student to copy or to attempt to copy from you

- Obtaining, or attempting to obtain, any other assistance from another student

- Using, or attempting to gain access to, any material or device not permitted as part of the assessment

- Impersonating another student or allowing another student or any other individual to impersonate you in the assessment

- Refusing to comply with a reasonable request made by a member of staff where they suspect potential cheating

- Any other action that you take with the intention of gaining unfair advantage

Falsification of information

What is acceptable practice: It is appropriate to use real information in your assessment (unless your assessment brief specifies that material should be invented – for example, in creative work).

What is not acceptable practice and is falsification of information: Falsification of information is where you include information in your assessment that is not real. This includes but is not limited to:

- Claiming to carry out experiments, observations, interviews, data collection or any other form of research when you have not done so

- Creating false data

- Manipulation and/or selection of data or imagery that creates a false outcome

- Using a GenAI tool that may provide you with false information

- Creating or obtaining information illegally

- Using essay mills (see Contract Cheating) from which the information may not be real

Falsification will be considered as major misconduct.

Ethics

What is acceptable - and required – practice: All research and research-based activities will have received ethical approval prior to these activities commencing. Please refer to the Integrity and Ethics advice on the following link: Integrity and Ethics

What is not acceptable practice: It is not acceptable to bypass the University's ethics approval requirements. This includes but is not limited to:

- Conducting research, knowledge exchange, public engagement activity, or anything involving data collection without ethical approval in place

- Changing the research methodology from what was approved on the ethics form, including any aspect of the procedure, participant recruitment (including advertisement, and other information given to participants) and groups without a formal modification request being approved prior to the change being made

- Applying for ethical approval retrospectively (after the activities have been conducted) unless a robust case can be made to the University Ethics Committee in line with the Retrospective Ethical Approval Policy.

3. Alleged Academic Misconduct Procedure

3.1 Reports of academic misconduct

Potential academic misconduct in a student's work may be identified by a member of staff marking the work, the internal moderator, an External Examiner, or reported by another student. The member of staff who has identified the possible misconduct or

had this reported to them must complete an Alleged Academic Misconduct Form (available on the [website](#)) and attach supporting evidence.

3.2 Supporting evidence

An Alleged Academic Misconduct Form must be accompanied with supporting evidence. Where a student has reported the potential academic misconduct of another student, the member of staff responsible for the module will oversee the gathering of evidence. Supporting evidence can include, but is not limited to:

- A report from Turnitin. All written assessments are reviewed by the Turnitin UK Service on-line tool. This tool compares the words in a student's assessment against published on-line sources and provides a report on the level of similarity. Supporting evidence in a suspected report of academic misconduct will not normally be based on Turnitin reports alone. Turnitin reports should be contextualised by the person making the report stating why the nature and extent of similarity is of concern in relation to the specific assessment brief.

- Extracts from hard-copy or on-line published sources and a comparison with relevant sections of the student's work.

- Similarity to the work submitted by another current or previous student and a comparison with relevant sections of the student's work.

- How the student's style (e.g. writing style) significantly changes within the assessment or when compared with a previous assessment.

- Information ascertained from a viva or similar meetings with the student(s) and two members of the course team. This would take the form of notes taken during the meeting and/or a recording of the meeting. Questions asked during the meeting may not have received sufficient responses to believe that the assessment has been independently completed by the student.

- Data or analysis of data that does not appear true or has been manipulated inappropriately.

- Absence of ethical approval as part of the assessment process or where actions have been taken outside the ethical approval.

3.3 Review of an Alleged Academic Misconduct Report

Completed forms and supporting evidence will be reviewed by the academic school (or by the nominated contact in the Partner College) and cross-referenced to a student's level of study. The academic school or the nominated contact in the Partner College will decide if the evidence shows that:

- The concern is a case of **poor academic practice** (e.g. unacknowledged quotations or inconsistent referencing, inadequate referencing/excessive paraphrasing). In such instances, a meeting between the academic school or

nominated contact and the student will be scheduled (in person or online), the concerns will be discussed, and support (see section 2) will be put in place tailored to the student's specific circumstances.

- The concern goes beyond poor academic practice and the evidence suggests that possible **academic misconduct** may have occurred. Minor academic misconduct includes poor referencing and minor plagiarism by using unreferenced sources including GenAI. Major academic misconduct. includes, but are not limited to, using substantial sections of unreferenced text or other sources including from GenAI, collusion with another student, contract cheating including use of GenAI, cheating in a test or examination, falsifying data including through GenAI, or breaching ethical requirements.

3.4 Panel meetings to consider potential academic misconduct

The University will contact you by email if there is evidence of potential academic misconduct. You will be provided with a summary of the concern and the supporting evidence that has been compiled to date. You will be given 10 working days' notice of the meeting that has been scheduled to discuss the concerns. You will be given the opportunity to write a response to be considered by the Panel at that meeting. This written response will need to be submitted by the stated deadline. The Students' Union Advice Centre can give you independent support including helping you to write a response to the report of alleged academic misconduct. More information is available on their website.

The Academic Misconduct Panel meeting will comprise the following people:

- Pro Vice-Chancellor (Student Experience) – Chair
- Two academic members of staff
- Representation from the SU
- Secretary to the Academic Misconduct Panel

The Students' Union representation on the Panel is to support the process and ensure overall student representation and representation will be drawn from outside of the Students' Union Advice Centre.

Potential cases of academic misconduct are considered on the balance of probability. This means that for an allegation of academic misconduct to be upheld, the Panel needs to show sufficient evidence that the misconduct occurred or is more than likely to have occurred. The Panel will also take into consideration a student's level of study.

3.5 Outcomes from panel meetings

The outcome from panel meetings will be one of the following:

- There is insufficient evidence to show on the balance of probabilities that academic misconduct occurred, and no further action will be taken

- You admit misconduct in writing and an associated outcome will be provided

- There is sufficient evidence to show that on the balance of probabilities that academic misconduct occurred, and an associated outcome will be provided

- Very exceptionally, further investigation is required. The panel would ask your tutor to provide further information and, if they have not already done so, they may also ask them to arrange a meeting with you to discuss the accusation further. The Students Union Advice Centre would be able to attend alongside you to offer support during the meeting. After this, the panel will meet again to consider the accusation. This follow-up meeting will normally take place within 5 working days of the original panel meeting, however it may take longer depending on the investigation needed.

The University will inform you of the outcome of the meeting within 5 working days. You will have the right to request a review of the outcome based on specific criteria (see section 3.9). The Students' Union Advice Centre is available to support you with a review request.

Reports from the Panel meeting will be provided to Student and Registry Services so that an institutional overview of the operations of the academic misconduct panel can be maintained for annual aggregate (anonymous) reporting.

3.6 Outcomes for upheld cases of academic misconduct

The Panel will determine an outcome where, on the balance of probability, there is evidence to show that academic misconduct occurred or is more than likely to have occurred. The outcome will consider:

- The nature and severity of the academic misconduct and therefore the extent to which the student was dishonest within the assessment

- If the nature, extent and severity of the academic misconduct means that the student will also be subject to the Fitness to Practice Policy where they are studying on a course that is associated with professional body requirements.

- The student's level of study

- Any previous upheld cases of academic misconduct

- Admission of misconduct

- Exceptional circumstances that are relevant to why the action was taken

In determining an outcome for major academic misconduct, the panel will not normally place any significance on these last four points because of the student's intent to deceive.

In cases of collusion where more than one student is involved in academic misconduct, the Panel will ensure consistency of approach in any outcome that applies. Any differentiation will normally only apply where there is a difference in exceptional circumstances, in admission of the offence or if a student presented another student's work as their own. The Panel will ensure that there is a fair and equal opportunity for both or all students to be heard individually before a decision is reached.

3.7 Revisiting academic misconduct previously unfounded or dismissed: current students

The University may revisit cases of potential academic misconduct that have been previously unfounded or dismissed if new evidence is presented. This action will always take place where the evidence shows potential major academic misconduct and/or that impacts on fitness to practice.

3.8 Academic misconduct identified after graduation

The University may investigate cases of potential academic misconduct after a student has graduated where new evidence is presented. This action will always take place where the evidence shows potential major academic misconduct and/or that relates to fitness to practice. The University will use the procedure set out in this policy. The graduate will be invited to attend the meeting. The University reserves the right to rescind an award where this would be an appropriate outcome in response to the nature of the academic misconduct and where a case is upheld.

3.9 Requesting a review of a panel decision

If you wish to appeal the decision of the Academic Misconduct Panel, you should follow the Stage Two: Review procedure set out in the Appeal Policy and Procedure (section 3.8). You will only be able to request a review of the decision based on criteria set out in that document. The Students' Union Advice Centre is available to help you with any matters relating to a review request.

Appendix A: Grid of Academic Misconduct Outcomes (in use since 2019/20)

Category	Action regarding Progression	Action regarding Mark	Explanation of Actions	Notes (Guidance Only)
N/A	None	None	None	No evidence of academic misconduct, student exonerated.
0	None	None, warning only	Warning provided to the student.	Unwitting offence. Evidence of academic misconduct, but clear that this was not substantial and was also unintended.
1	None	Assessment capped at pass mark	Assessment mark is capped, if passed.	Unwitting offence. Evidence of academic misconduct, but clear that this was not substantial or was unintended.
2	Fail assessment, may redo	Assessment capped at pass mark	Must complete a reassessment which will be capped.	Evidence of minor infringement at lower level of study.
3	Fail assessment, may redo	Module capped at pass mark	Must complete a reassessment, whole module mark will be capped.	Evidence of moderate infringement, or evidence of minor infringement at higher level of study.
4	Fail module, may retake. May be recorded on transcript.	Module capped at pass mark which, if level 5-7, must count in degree classification.	Fail module, can retake it but new module will be capped at the pass mark. Academic Misconduct may be recorded on transcript.	Evidence of major infringement, or evidence of moderate infringement at higher level of study.
5	Fail module, may retake. Recorded on transcript.	Module capped at zero which, if level 5-7, must count in degree classification.	Fail module, can retake it but new module will be capped at 0, so only credit is awarded. Academic Misconduct will be recorded on transcript.	Evidence of major infringement with clear attempt to deceive.
6	Fail module, cannot retake. Recorded on transcript.	N/A	Fail module, cannot redeem the credit so cannot receive full award. Can continue with any remaining modules to aim for a lower award. Academic Misconduct will be recorded on transcript.	Evidence of major infringement with clear attempt to deceive. This may include repeated misconduct.
7	Fail course, dismissed from University. Recorded on transcript.	N/A	Fail course, cannot continue. May be eligible to receive a lower award from credit achieved or may receive no award. Academic Misconduct will be recorded on transcript.	Gross misconduct.

The grid of outcomes is for guidance only. The Academic Misconduct Panel reserve the right to apply whatever outcome it deems appropriate in each individual case.

The impact of an outcome may depend on previous study (e.g. if the misconduct was regarding a reassessment attempt) and student's circumstances. If there has been previous misconduct, the Panel will likely decide on a higher outcome category.

Document Details

Responsible Office: Student and Registry Services

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Approving Authority: Academic Board

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Related Policies and Procedures: Academic and Student Policies

https://www.bathspa.ac.uk/about-us/governance/policies/

Supersedes: Academic Misconduct Procedure

Next review due: 1 September 2026