University Centre Leeds

luminate EDUCATION GROUP

HE Academic Misconduct Process 2026 - 2029

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1. INTRODUCTION

The underpinning purpose of this process and associated policy is to ensure that academic standards are upheld with any breaches, due to academic misconduct, being dealt with fairly and consistently across all University Centre Leeds Higher Education provision, including those delivered at Luminate Education Group's FE Colleges. The following principles apply to this process:

- The active promotion of academic integrity throughout University Centre Leeds Higher Education activities and the learning experience;
- The provision of an open and transparent process;
- The timely resolution of suspected academic misconduct cases in a fair and equitable manner;
- The assurance that students will not be disadvantaged once an instance of academic misconduct has been reported.

University Centre Leeds has the authority to determine the academic progress of students because of delegation of this authority to University Centre Leeds by an Awarding Body, (subject to retaining ultimate responsibility for the exercise of such authority). Any cases of academic misconduct proven under the process will be reported to the relevant Assessment and Progression Exam Board.

2. COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS

The investigation and processing of suspected cases of academic misconduct shall be conducted in accordance with this process, which is informed by the:

- University Centre Leeds Higher Education Academic Regulations;
- QAA Academic Integrity Charter;
- QAA Quality Code Sector-Agreed Principle 11;
- OfS Condition of Registration (B4) Assessments and Awards.

This is for the purpose of seeking to uphold the principles of fairness, consistency, equity and equal opportunities.

The handling of all suspected academic misconduct cases should normally be completed within 60 days of the start of this process.

3. TYPES OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic misconduct is defined by University Centre Leeds as any activity or behaviour by which a student seeks to gain an academic advantage over their peers.

This includes academic dishonesty, whether unintentional (Academic Negligence) or deliberate (Academic Malpractice), which infringes the integrity of University Centre Leeds assessment procedures. These include but are not restricted to:

ACADEMIC NEGLIGENCE

Any text or opinion that has been quoted, paraphrased, or relied upon to support a student's work, must be properly attributed. Similarly, students must acknowledge the source of any images (including designs and plans), computer code or other such media created by another person.

Academic negligence is when a student unintentionally claims credit for another person's work or gains an unfair academic advantage, rather than intentional cheating. This is often caused by poor referencing (citations), misunderstanding of the rules, misuse of artificial intelligence tools, or carelessness. This is referred to as plagiarism:

Plagiarism
This is the presenting of another person's ideas or expressions without acknowledging the source, including internet sources.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- The inclusion of extracts from another person's work without the use of quotation marks/and or acknowledgement of the source(s)
- When a student presents their work as their own, but the work is generated by the use of artificial intelligence and is not correctly referenced this back, or sought authorisation for use.
- The summarising of another person's work without acknowledgement
- The substantial and unauthorised use of the ideas of another person without acknowledgement
- Self-plagiarism- when a student submits work for credit which has already been submitted elsewhere for credit. This may be part of a piece of work or the entire piece of work and may have been submitted to University Centre Leeds or another institution.

Plagiarism is considered in the first instance to be academic negligence and will be addressed in accordance with this process. If a student then submits further pieces of work deemed to contain elements that have been plagiarised, that is considered to be academic malpractice.

ACADEMIC MALPRACTICE
Academic malpractice is when a student intentionally attempts to gain an unfair advantage in assessment. Examples include:

Subsequent cases of Academic Negligence	Repeated instances of plagiarism or self-plagiarism, deemed as academic negligence, as defined above
Collusion	Working with others on an assessment when collaboration is not permitted
Fabrication/falsification	Inventing, misrepresenting, or falsifying research results, data, material, for example
Research misconduct	Unethical and/or irresponsible collection of research data
Impersonation	Having another person complete an assessment or exam on their behalf
Cheating in examinations	Breaching exam procedures, as outlined by University Centre Leeds, in a way that compromises the integrity of the assessment
Contract cheating	Asking or paying someone else to complete an assignment or exam on their behalf
Unethical behaviour	Unacceptable conduct in relation to confidentiality, data collection or handling, or ethics
Theft of materials	Use of another students work without permission
Misuse of Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Presenting AI-generated content as their own work without acknowledgement
Exceptional Cases	Cases that do not easily fall into the categories listed above but where there is a reasonable belief that the work is not the students' own

For more detailed information about each type of academic malpractice listed above, please see Appendix 1.

4. PRINCIPLES OF THE PROCESS

University Centre Leeds' primary approach to managing academic misconduct is to educate students to develop good academic practice to help them avoid academic misconduct. In doing so, University Centre Leeds provides the following support:

- Advice and guidance from Programme Teams;
- Learning Resource Centre providing writing and study skills support and individual tutorials on referencing and paraphrasing;
- Academic Support tutors within each department for academic support needs;
- Provision of resources via the VLE (Virtual Learning Environment - Blackboard);
- Provision of e-detection Turnitin software.

The consideration of work submitted by students for assessment is based on the principle that the work has been carried out by that student and is their own work.

Student work that fails to clearly identify the work done by others, may be subject to penalty under in line with the Academic Misconduct Policy and this process.

While University Centre Leeds accepts that a student's work may be inspired by what they have read, the use of someone else's ideas must be cited as such. Students should refer to the support, advice and guidance outlined above if they are unsure how to do this.

An accusation of academic misconduct is not in itself proof that a student is committed the offence. Any such decision would only be reached upon conclusion of the process contained in this process. The burden of proof rests with University Centre Leeds and must be based on clear, logical, and convincing evidence.

Usually, students will be allowed to progress with their academic studies while an investigation into allegations of academic misconduct is taking place. However, students subject to professional body requirements may be required to suspend their studies pending the outcome of this process. The Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body (PSRB) requirements that would affect this decision, are referred to in the programme's approval documentation (for example, LLB and Health Play Specialism).

If an allegation of academic misconduct student is upheld, any reassessment judged to be necessary will take place at the next available opportunity. Please note that this could lead to a delay in progression in extenuating circumstances where the case cannot be resolved prior to Examination Boards. Any such decisions will be made according to the academic regulations of the awarding body of the course in question.

Students accused of academic misconduct must be informed within 30 days of the work being submitted, and have the right to challenge the accusation.

Any case of academic misconduct upheld against a student, will be recorded against the student Exam Board record and on the Registry Academic Misconduct tracker. All documentation, including submitted assessments, relating to each proven case will be retained by Registry in case there is a request for a review by the student. These papers will be destroyed one academic year after the case is closed.

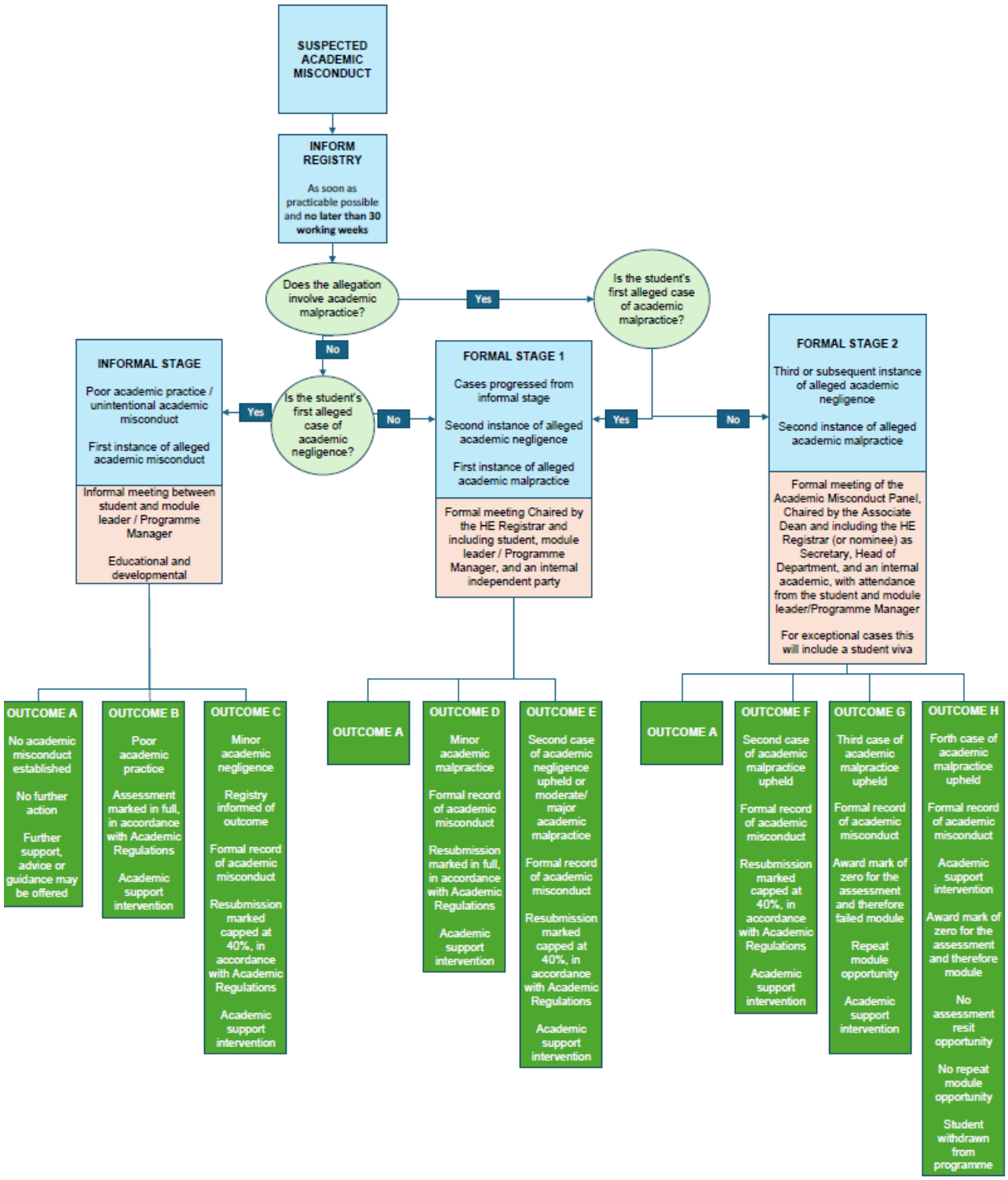
All cases of academic misconduct that are not proven or withdrawn will not be recorded on the student's record.

5. THE ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT PROCESS

Allegations of academic misconduct within formative and summative assessments are considered through the following stages:

- Informal Stage
- Formal Stage 1
- Formal Stage 2

The below process map gives an overview of each stage and the potential outcomes should the allegation be upheld. A more detailed breakdown of each stage can be found in Appendix 2:


SUSPECTED ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT
INFORM REGISTRY
As soon as practicable possible and no later than 30 working weeks
Does the allegation involve academic malpractice?
Yes
Is the student's first alleged case of academic malpractice?
No
INFORMAL STAGE
Poor academic practice / unintentional academic misconduct
First instance of alleged academic misconduct
Informal meeting between student and module leader / Programme Manager
Educational and developmental
Yes
Is the student's first alleged case of academic negligence?
No
FORMAL STAGE 1
Cases progressed from informal stage
Second instance of alleged academic negligence
First instance of alleged academic malpractice
Formal meeting Chaired by the HE Registrar and including student, module leader / Programme Manager, and an internal independent party
Yes
No
FORMAL STAGE 2
Third or subsequent instance of alleged academic negligence
Second instance of alleged academic malpractice
Formal meeting of the Academic Misconduct Panel, Chaired by the Associate Dean and including the HE Registrar (or nominee) as Secretary, Head of Department, and an internal academic, with attendance from the student and module leader/Programme Manager
For exceptional cases this will include a student viva
OUTCOME A
No academic misconduct established
No further action
Further support, advice or guidance may be offered
OUTCOME B
Poor academic practice
Assessment marked in full, in accordance with Academic Regulations
Academic support intervention
OUTCOME C
Minor academic negligence
Registry informed of outcome
Formal record of academic misconduct
Resubmission marked capped at 40%, in accordance with Academic Regulations
Academic support intervention
OUTCOME A
OUTCOME D
Minor academic malpractice
Formal record of academic misconduct
Resubmission marked in full, in accordance with Academic Regulations
Academic support intervention
OUTCOME E
Second case of academic negligence upheld or moderate/ major academic malpractice
Formal record of academic misconduct
Resubmission marked capped at 40%, in accordance with Academic Regulations
Academic support intervention
OUTCOME A
OUTCOME F
Second case of academic malpractice upheld
Formal record of academic misconduct
Resubmission marked capped at 40%, in accordance with Academic Regulations
Academic support intervention
OUTCOME G
Third case of academic malpractice upheld
Formal record of academic misconduct
Award mark of zero for the assessment and therefore failed module
Repeat module opportunity
Academic support intervention
OUTCOME H
Forth case of academic malpractice upheld
Formal record of academic misconduct
Academic support intervention
Award mark of zero for the assessment and therefore module
No assessment resit opportunity
No repeat module opportunity
Student withdrawn from programme

6. PRIVACY, CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

All evidence brought forward in support of an allegation should be treated with respect for the privacy of the student, and should be confidential to those members of staff concerned with the investigation of the case.

Any member of staff involved with an appeal in any capacity will ensure that the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 is complied with at all times.

7. FAIR TREATMENT

No individual under investigation through this process, whether successfully proven or otherwise, will be treated any different by any member of staff than if the case had not been brought. All staff involved in handling any stages of an investigation have a duty to ensure that any decision made regarding the outcome of an investigation or determination of penalty, or the way a student is treated, must not be influenced by the identification of potential academic misconduct. If evidence to the contrary is found, the member of staff may be subject to action under the Staff Disciplinary Procedure.

Where an individual believes that the investigation of a suspected case is likely to affect the relationship between a student and a member of staff, all parties will be expected to continue that relationship in a professional manner. Only in exceptional circumstances will the Dean of Higher Education consider agreeing to a request for alternative working arrangements whilst the case is being investigated.

8. IMPARTIALITY OF DECISION-MAKERS

In order to ensure impartiality in the dealing of suspected cases of academic misconduct no person shall be permitted to take part in the making of a decision regarding a case where s/he has an interest through being a member of the same academic department in which the student is registered.

9. ADVICE AND GUIDANCE

Individuals can obtain advice on this process from a number of sources. In the first instance, Registry should be contact with any queries. In addition, a representative from the Students' Union (SU) can provide advice, independent of the University Centre Leeds, including attending any hearings in support of the student. Staff can seek advice and support on understanding the process from Registry.

Registry can only provide advice to students and staff on the operation of this process.

Academic staff will not be able to provide advice to students on individual cases that reach the formal stages of the academic misconduct process.

10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Registry will undertake credible, evidence-based evaluation of whether their actions are making a significant and credible difference, and to review and adjust their approach where appropriate. This will go beyond using reporting rates alone as a measure of prevalence or effectiveness, and will include:

- prevalence and experience data, including relevant student surveys and other sources of student feedback;
- number, nature and characteristics of concerns and reports received;
- patterns in academic misconduct behaviours, including barriers to learning and differences in support needs between student groups;

- timeliness and effectiveness of University Centre Leeds' response, including investigation outcomes and the use and effectiveness of preventative and support activities;
- equality monitoring;
- feedback from students and their representatives on the effectiveness of the policy and process; and
- evidence from relevant external research, sector data and good practice.

Statistical data relating to the number of academic misconduct cases, including a summary of its decisions, will be included in University Centre Leeds Annual Review.

Owner: HE Registry
Introduced: September 2015
Last Review: December 2026
Next review: September 2029

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – TYPES OF ACADEMIC MALPRACTICE

Category	Definition	Key Examples & Specific Guidelines
Collusion	Unauthorised collaboration or sharing of work with others, regardless of whether advantage was gained or if money exchanged hands. Both the giver and receiver of the work are held accountable.	• Unauthorised collaboration with other students; • Submitting work purchased from a third party; • Sharing their own work with someone else; • Third-party proofreading/editing (must be done by the student); • Third-party translation services (translation software is permitted). **Note**: Special dispensation is available for registered students with agreed Dyslexia & Disability Support plans.
Fabrication / Falsification	Fabricating data, content, word counts, group contributions, or unreferenced material generated by Artificial Intelligence.	• Inventing or altering research data; • Misrepresenting word counts or group contributions; • Using unreferenced AI-generated content; • Professional misconduct (especially in teaching and healthcare fields).
Research Misconduct	Failure to conduct assessment-related research in an ethical and responsible manner.	• Failing to secure ethical approval prior to starting primary research; • Unethical conduct with participants; • Improper data handling.
Impersonation	Assuming another person's identity, or allowing someone else to assume theirs, to gain or enable an advantage or access.	• Taking a test/assessment on behalf of another student; • Having someone else represent themselves or take an assessment for them.
Cheating in Examinations	Any breach of exam procedure that compromises assessment integrity, regardless of intent or advantage gained. (Applies to formal exams, lab tests, and class tests).	• Obtaining exam papers in advance (unless designated as 'seen'); • Copying from candidates or unauthorised materials/devices; • Bringing unauthorised materials or devices (phones, smartwatches, laptops, tablets, electronic dictionaries) into the exam; • Communicating with candidates or non-invigilators; • Disruptive behaviour or ignoring invigilator instructions;

		• Leaving the room without permission; • Removing unauthorised exam materials from the room. **Note:** Any behaviour deemed unacceptable or as misconduct will be investigated in line with the HE Student Code of Conduct and Disciplinary Policy.
Contract Cheating	Knowingly approaching an individual, group, or service to obtain or have assessments written on a paid or unpaid basis, then claiming it as original work.	• Purchasing essays or commissioning custom academic work online or in person.
Unethical Behaviour	Unacceptable practices surrounding confidentiality and data handling.	• Breaches of confidentiality; • Improper handling of private information collected during research; • Failing to obtain appropriate ethical clearance before data collection.
Theft of Materials	Using another person's assessed work, in whole or in part, without their permission.	• Taking another student's file, draft, or finished assignment without consent to submit as their own.
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	Any unauthorised or unreferenced use of AI tools to gain an unfair advantage (intentional or unintentional).	• Using AI to write an entire assessment from start to finish. • Not correcting referencing (citing) AI-generated text, even if it is using their own ideas, can be considered plagiarism. **Note:** What is allowed, depending on context, is the use of AI for idea generation or planning (where allowed by the assessment context).
Exceptional Cases	These are cases that do not easily fall into the categories listed and described above.	An example of an exceptional case is where the module tutor marking the piece of work reasonably believes that the work is not the students' own (for example the work is so inconsistent with any previously produced work, or the language used in the piece is inconsistent with that used in previous pieces), but the potential sources of the work cannot be identified.

APPENDIX 2 – THE ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT PROCESS

Stage	What is considered	What is involved	Outcomes
Inform Registry	Programme team to notify Registry as soon as practicable possible and no later than 30 days from the submission date	Registry will then determine if this if the student's first, or subsequent offence, and the nature of the offence	Confirmation of next stage of process
Informal Stage	First Instance, or minor case, of Academic Misconduct, which can include: • Poor academic practice / academic negligence – misunderstanding, inadequate referencing, poor paraphrasing, failure to acknowledge assistance, etc; • Academic misconduct/malpractice – deliberate or reckless behaviour intended to gain an unfair advantage or representing work as the student's own when it is not; • Unauthorised use of generative AI (where AI use gives an unfair advantage) – which can fall into either category depending on the circumstances.	The informal stage is intended to be educational and developmental where the circumstances are appropriate, while maintaining the integrity and standards of the award An Informal meeting with the student and Module Leader/Programme Manager to deal with all first alleged cases of academic negligence. The Module Leader/Programme Manager will invite the student to an informal meeting via email as soon as is practically possible. Prior to the meeting the student should receive information regarding: 1. Notification that there is a concern; 2. The specific alleged breach. During this meeting the curriculum team will determine through conversation: • The approach which the student has taken to draft/develop the assessment • Was the behaviour permitted	**Outcome A** No Academic Misconduct Established Where the evidence does not establish that academic misconduct or poor academic practice has occurred, no further action will be taken under the Academic Misconduct Process. Where appropriate, the student may nevertheless be offered academic guidance or advice. **Outcome B** Poor Academic Practice / Academic Negligence Where the evidence indicates that the student has demonstrated poor academic practice or academic negligence, but the circumstances do not warrant a finding of academic misconduct, the matter may be resolved through an academic support intervention. The assessment will be marked in accordance with assessment regulations.

		• What evidence establishes this (ie; draft versions etc) • Was the breach intentional, reckless or inadvertent? • What advantage was obtained • Whether the student has a good understanding of the assessment, • The context and the learning outcomes measured. The student should be given an opportunity to provide relevant evidence concerning how the assessment was produced, which may include drafts, notes, version history, research records, AI interaction records or other appropriate evidence. **Note:** AI detection software must not, by itself, constitute sufficient evidence of academic misconduct. Any allegation must be based on consideration of the totality of the available evidence.	**Outcome C** Minor Academic Misconduct Where the evidence establishes a minor breach of academic integrity, the student will be notified that this is a recorded occurrence of academic misconduct and if the student is found in breach for a second time then they will move into the formal stage. The penalty should be proportionate to the nature and seriousness of the breach and will likely include: • a requirement to undertake a resubmission with a capped mark in accordance with University Centre Leeds' academic regulations • referral to academic skills or other appropriate support. In all cases Registry to be informed of outcome
Formal Stage 1	Academic Malpractice This could include • All cases progressed from the Informal Stage; • Second alleged offences which would usually have been classed as Academic Negligence	A panel will be convened made up the following: • HE Registrar (or nominee) as Chair; • Programme Manager (or nominee) from the programme area; • Independent Party (someone internal not involved with the course or student).	**Outcome A** No Academic Misconduct Established **Outcome D** First instance of minor academic malpractice upheld Student will need to re-submit the full piece of work having rectified the academic misconduct issues and the

	(including second cases of AI misuse); • Self-plagiarism: submitting work that is identical to work that has already been submitted by the student for another assignment and having gained credit for this previously; • Extensive sections of the assignment with poor paraphrasing and/or no attempt at acknowledging sources; • Failure to follow instruction in regards to extent and limits in group work; • Collusion; • Fabrication/Falsification; • Research Misconduct; • Impersonation; • Cheating in Examinations; • Contract cheating; • Unethical behaviour; • Theft of Materials; • AI misuse; • Exceptional cases.	Registry will invite the student to a Formal Stage 1 meeting via email as soon as is practically possible. Prior to the meeting the student should receive information regarding: 1. Notification that there is a concern; 2. The specific alleged breach. During this meeting the Panel will determine through conversation: • The approach which the student has taken to draft/develop the assessment • Was the behaviour permitted • What evidence establishes this (ie; draft versions etc) • Was the breach intentional, reckless or inadvertent? • What advantage was obtained • Whether the student has a good understanding of the assessment, • The context and the learning outcomes measured. Students may be accompanied by a friend or SU Officer to support them in the meeting, although they cannot answer questions on the students' behalf. Where the panel are considering exceptional cases, prior to the meeting, with the module tutor who	work will be marked with a full range of marks. The case will be recorded against the student Exam Board record and on the Registry Academic Misconduct tracker, and formal outcome letter sent to the student, by Registry, via email within 10 working days. The student will be given advice on how to avoid academic misconduct and will be referred to academic skills or other appropriate support. **Outcome E** Second instance of academic negligence or moderate/major academic malpractice Student will need to re-submit the full piece of work having rectified the academic misconduct issues and the work will be capped at the minimum pass mark. The case will be recorded against the student Exam Board record and on the Registry Academic Misconduct tracker, and formal outcome letter sent to the student, by Registry, via email within 10 working days. The student will be given advice on how to avoid academic misconduct and will be referred to academic skills or other appropriate support.

		raised the concerns. This will involve a short question and answer session to establish whether the work is that of the student. Students may be accompanied by a friend; however the friend will not be able to speak on the students' behalf during the viva. All panel members must be present for the viva, ensure it is carried fairly and to hear the nuances of the discussion. Once the viva has finished the tutor should advise the panel as to whether they feel that student has been able to demonstrate that the work is their own. The student should be given an opportunity to provide relevant evidence concerning how the assessment was produced, which may include drafts, notes, version history, research records, AI interaction records or other appropriate evidence.	
Formal Stage 2	Academic Malpractice This could include: • Subsequent alleged offences following a formal stage 1 for any type of suspected misconduct (list not exhaustive); • Second alleged offences which would usually have been classed as Academic Negligence (including second cases of AI);	An Academic Misconduct Panel will be convened made up the following: • Associate Dean (or nominee) as Chair; • HE Registrar (or nominee) as Secretary; • Head of Department of the student's programme of study; • Internal Academic (from a different programme to the student's programme of study). Registry will invite the student, and the Programme Manager, to a Formal	**Outcome A** No Academic Misconduct Established **Outcome F** Second case of academic malpractice upheld Student will need to re-submit the full piece of work having rectified the academic misconduct issues and the work will be capped at the minimum pass mark

	• Self-plagiarism: submitting work that is identical to work that has already been submitted by the student for another assignment and having gained credit for this previously; • Extensive sections of the assignment with poor paraphrasing and/or no attempt at acknowledging sources; • Failure to follow instruction in regards to extent and limits in group work; • Collusion; • Fabrication/Falsification; • Research Misconduct; • Impersonation; • Cheating in Examinations; • Contract cheating; • Unethical behaviour; • Theft of Materials; • AI misuse; • Exceptional cases.	Stage 2 meeting via email as soon as is practically possible. Prior to the meeting the student should receive information regarding: 1. Notification that there is a concern; 2. The specific alleged breach. During this meeting the Panel will determine through conversation: • The approach which the student has taken to draft/develop the assessment • Was the behaviour permitted • What evidence establishes this (ie; draft versions etc) • Was the breach intentional, reckless or inadvertent? • What advantage was obtained • Whether the student has a good understanding of the assessment, • The context and the learning outcomes measured. Students may be accompanied by a friend or SU Officer to support them in the meeting, although they cannot answer questions on the students' behalf. Where the panel are considering exceptional cases, prior to the meeting, with the module tutor who raised the concerns. This will involve a short question and answer session	The case will be recorded against the student Exam Board record and on the Registry Academic Misconduct tracker, and formal outcome letter sent to the student, by Registry, via email within 10 working days. The student will be given advice on how to avoid academic misconduct and will be referred to academic skills or other appropriate support. **Outcome G** Third case of academic malpractice upheld Student has failed the assessment and therefore module. Student may be allowed to repeat the module in the next academic year, and should be advised of the HE Fees, Academic-Related Charges, and Refunds Policy. **Outcome H** Forth case of academic malpractice upheld Award a mark of zero for the assessment and therefore module. Inform the student in writing that there is no resit opportunity and no opportunity to repeat the module. Withdraw the student from the programme of study.

		to establish whether the work is that of the student. Students may be accompanied by a friend; however the friend will not be able to speak on the students' behalf during the viva. All panel members must be present for the viva, ensure it is carried fairly and to hear the nuances of the discussion. Once the viva has finished the tutor should advise the panel as to whether they feel that student has been able to demonstrate that the work is their own. The student should be given an opportunity to provide relevant evidence concerning how the assessment was produced, which may include drafts, notes, version history, research records, AI interaction records or other appropriate evidence.	Student can retain any credits gained and claim any award available up to that point