



Procedures for Dealing with Suspected Academic Misconduct

This document sets out the University's procedures for dealing with suspected cases of academic misconduct by students or graduates of the University. These procedures apply to all type of academic misconduct including plagiarism, self-plagiarism, collusion, falsification, deceit, and cheating.

The University takes very seriously any suspected incidences of academic misconduct and aims to ensure that all suspected cases are investigated efficiently and dealt with appropriately.

1. Reporting of Suspected Academic Misconduct

1.1 Any member of staff who suspects that an academic misconduct offence has been committed in a piece of work submitted for assessment must complete an Academic Misconduct Report. This should be submitted in the first instance to the School Academic Misconduct Officer (SAMO) and copied to the Course Organiser. The report must be accompanied by all relevant documentation. Unless for good reason, the work under investigation should be considered for assessment and a face value mark¹ applied prior to referral to the SAMO. **(NOTE: Slightly different arrangements apply for the reporting of suspected academic misconduct by Postgraduate Research students. These are set out at section 9).**

A copy of the Academic Misconduct Report form may be downloaded from the Academic Services website at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline/plagiarism>

2. Investigation by the School Academic Misconduct Officer (SAMO)

2.1 The SAMO is responsible for deciding whether there is a case to answer. If the SAMO decides that there are grounds for investigation, they will:

- (a) ascertain from the relevant College whether this is a first or repeat offence for the student under investigation; and
- (b) determine whether the case is 'minor' or 'major' (see 2.2 below).

¹ The face value mark is that would the work is believed to merit based solely on the content as presented. Where the level of academic misconduct is so significant that the student has not been able to demonstrate any achievement of the learning outcomes, there may be no alternative but to award a mark of zero.

Minor Offence

2.2 A case may be judged to be minor if:

- it is a first offence; **and/or**
- the student is a first or second year undergraduate AND the SAMO is satisfied that the case has come about through genuine lack of understanding (poor scholarship) rather than any deliberate intention to cheat; **and**
- the SAMO believes that the case can be appropriately dealt with without recourse to a mark penalty

2.3 If the SAMO judges the case to be minor, he or she will arrange a meeting with the student, together with the relevant course organiser and/or marker. The student may be accompanied at that meeting by a member of the University community, e.g. their Director of Studies or a EUSA Adviser. If the student is a distance-learner or is unavoidably away from Edinburgh for a significant period (e.g. the summer vacation) contact will be by written correspondence either by letter or email.

2.4 No mark penalty will be applied for minor cases of academic misconduct. However the SAMO, in agreement with the course organiser, may decide to apply one of the following:

- a) award a mark for the work based on its academic merits after any affected sections have been discounted. The SAMO will then report back to the Board of Examiners accordingly; **or**
- b) share (not necessarily equally) the mark between students who have colluded in producing a piece of assessed work. The SAMO will then report back to the Board of Examiners accordingly.

The SAMO cannot give permission for a student to be given an opportunity to resubmit over and above that which is automatically available to other students.

Major Offence

2.5 All cases which fail to meet the criteria set out at 2.2.above will be dealt with as major cases. Major cases of suspected academic misconduct are referred by the SAMO to the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) for investigation. Prior to referring the case, the SAMO may wish to check whether any other work submitted by the student is similarly affected. The SAMO must complete the relevant section of the Academic Misconduct Report and submit this to the College Academic Misconduct together with all relevant case documentation. The SAMO should also alert the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners. This should be done as soon as possible.

3. Investigation by the College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO)

3.1 The CAMO is responsible for investigating all major cases of suspected academic misconduct referred to them by a SAMO and for deciding on the penalty (if any) to be applied.

3.2 Having reviewed the case documentation and the report submitted by the SAMO, the CAMO will arrange a formal academic misconduct interview with the student(s). The interview panel, which will be chaired by the CAMO, will normally comprise at least one representative from the relevant College Academic Misconduct Panel (not from the same School as the student) and any other relevant member of staff. The student may be accompanied by a member of the University community, e.g. a EUSA adviser. It is preferable for the student to attend for interview in person if at all possible, however if they are unable to attend they may choose to be represented by a member of the University community, such as their EUSA adviser.

3.3 The purpose of the meeting will be to enable to CAMO to obtain further relevant information on the alleged incident and to allow the student the opportunity to put forward their response to the allegation. The CAMO will take into account the information obtained at the interview in coming to a decision on any penalty to be applied. The student will be informed of the decision as soon as possible following the interview (and not normally at the time of the interview – see 3.5 below).

3.4 Following the interview, the CAMO will circulate as soon as possible a draft confidential report of the meeting. The student will be given the opportunity to agree the accuracy of the draft report before it is finalised. The report will not normally be copied more widely (e.g. to a EUSA Adviser or a Director of Studies) unless this is specifically requested by the student. The CAMO will decide on the penalty, if any, to be applied (see 4.1 below).

3.5 Once the report is finalised, the CAMO will submit a written report to the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners. This will include details of any penalty which the Board will be required to apply in light of the academic misconduct (see section 5 below). The CAMO will also notify the student of their decision.

3.6 Occasionally a CAMO may decide that a formal academic misconduct interview is not necessary. This may, for example, be appropriate in cases where the student fully and willingly acknowledges the offence and does not wish to have an opportunity to offer further comment. In such cases the CAMO may simply write to the student and the Convener of the Board of Examiners with their decision on the penalty. In such cases the SAMO should be requested to meet with the student concerned in order to provide advice on academic best practice. This route would never be appropriate in the case of repeat offenders.

4. Major Offences: Penalties

4.1 Having investigated a major case of suspected academic misconduct, the CAMO will decide what penalty, if any, will be applied. The CAMO alone will determine the penalty, taking into account the nature of the offence, the individual circumstances,

and the penalty applied in similar cases in their College The following options are available to the CAMO:

- (a) There is found to be no case to answer and no penalty is therefore to be applied;
- (b) In the case of a first offence which is a result of poor scholarship rather than any deliberate attempt to cheat, the CAMO may decide that a mark penalty will not be appropriate;
- (c) A mark penalty of 15% or 30% of the maximum available mark is to be applied to the face value mark awarded to the piece of work under investigation. The penalty applied should be proportional to the offence. This highlights the importance of the awarding of a face value mark to the work prior to investigation. Any penalty will apply only to that piece of work under investigation which may represent only a percentage of the mark awarded for a course.

For example: A student is found to have plagiarised in an assessment worth 50% of the mark for that course. The assessment is marked out of 100. The student has been given a face value mark of 60. If a 30% mark penalty is applied by the CAMO, their mark of 60 will be reduced by 30, leaving them with a final mark of 30 for that assessment. If a 15% mark penalty is applied, their mark will be reduced by 15 leaving the student with a final mark of 45 for that assessment. In either case any mark(s) for the additional coursework contributing the other 50% of the overall mark for the course, will not be affected.

- (d) The mark is to be reduced to zero;
- (e) In cases where students have colluded in producing a piece of work the mark awarded will be shared (not necessarily equally) between the students involved unless otherwise determined by the CAMO;
- (f) In very exceptional circumstances the CAMO may allow a resubmission of the piece of work concerned;
- (g) In exceptionally serious cases or where the student is a serial repeat offender, the CAMO may decide to refer the case to an Authorised Officer for discipline within the College. The Authorised Officer will then consider whether the case is sufficiently serious that it should be referred to the University Student Discipline Committee. Details of the University disciplinary procedures and of the penalties available to the Disciplinary Committee are available at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline/code-discipline>

5. Application of Penalties

5.1 The Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners will be notified in writing of the penalty which is to be applied (see 3.5 above). The Board of Examiners is required to apply the penalty imposed by the CAMO. It must not apply any additional penalty for the offence. In the event of a significant delay in arranging a meeting of the Board of Examiners, Convener's Action may be taken so that the penalty can be applied in

good time. The Convener should write to the student to inform them of the mark agreed by the Board.

5.2 Should the Board of Examiners disagree with the CAMO's decision on the penalty to be applied, the Convener may request that the decision be referred for review by the CAMOs of the University's other two Colleges jointly. The Convener should write to the student to inform them that their case has been referred for review, explaining that the final mark had therefore not yet been agreed.

6. Request for a Review of a CAMO Decision

6.1 Should the Board of Examiners wish to request a review of the CAMO decision (see 5.2 above), the Convener will submit a request in writing as soon as possible to the relevant contact in Academic Services at the University Academic Registry, Old College (currently David Robinson David.Robinson@ed.ac.uk). The request should be submitted together with a copy of all of the case documentation which was considered by the CAMO and a brief report outlining the reason(s) for the Board's request for review.

6.2 Registry Academic Services will arrange for the case to be reviewed by the CAMOs of the other two Colleges. Each CAMO will be sent the documentation and will be asked to come to a decision separately before meeting to discuss the case. A meeting to discuss the case will be arranged as soon as possible and will involve both CAMOs and a representative from Registry Academic Services. The CAMOs may decide to invite the student to a further Academic Misconduct Interview, for example, if further information is required or if there are concerns about the operation of the previous interview. If a further interview is not deemed necessary, the CAMOs will come to a joint decision there and then.

6.3 Registry Academic Services will notify the Convener of the Board of Examiners and the student in writing of the joint CAMO decision. The Board will be required to adhere to that decision and cannot request a further review. The Convener of the Board of Examiners should write to the student to inform them of the final mark agreed by the Board.

7. Right of Appeal

7.1 Students have a right to appeal decisions made by Board of Examiners, including decisions affected by the outcome of an academic misconduct investigation. Students wishing to submit such an appeal should refer to the University's Academic Appeal Regulations and related guidance which can be accessed on the Academic Services website at:

www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/students/undergraduate/academic-appeals/overview

This includes information on the specific grounds under which students may submit an academic appeal and details of the University's procedures for consideration of appeals.

7.2 For very serious cases of academic misconduct where a penalty has been applied by a College Authorised Officer for discipline or by the University Student Discipline Committee, arrangements for right of appeal are set out at sections 4.1.3 and 4.1.4 and section 5.2.1 of the University Code of Discipline.

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline/code-discipline>

8. Suspected Academic Misconduct by Students Who Have Since Graduated

8.1 The University takes seriously allegations of academic misconduct occurring in any assessed coursework, including work submitted in the course of their studies by students who have since graduated. If academic misconduct is suspected to have occurred in work which was assessed by the University for the award of a degree, diploma or certificate and it transpires that the nature and extent of the offence may have an impact upon the award or class of award, the case will be investigated by the relevant CAMO. As part of their investigation the CAMO will write to the graduate notifying them of the allegations and inviting their response.

8.2 Following retrospective investigation the following options are open to the CAMO:

(a) If the allegation is found not to be substantiated, the CAMO will report the case and the come of the investigation to the Convener of the relevant Board of Examiners and to the University Secretary. No further action will be taken;

(b) If it is concluded that account of the academic misconduct was taken at the time of the original award, the CAMO will report the case and the outcome of the investigation to the Convener of the Board of Examiners and to the University Secretary and no further action will be taken;

(c) If the allegation is found to be proven, to be substantial and to merit further action, the case will be referred to an Authorised Officer for Discipline based in the College concerned. The Authorised Officer will consider whether it ought to be referred for consideration by the University Student Discipline Committee.

8.3 If an offence is found to have occurred in assessed work submitted by a graduate in the course of their studies, the University may decide to reduce the classification of any award conferred or to revoke the award.

8.4 Graduates have the same right of appeal as that which exists for matriculated students (see section 7 above).

9. Suspected Academic Misconduct by Postgraduate Research Students

9.1 Where academic misconduct is suspected to have been committed by a student at PhD level, the alleged offence should be reported directly to the College Academic Misconduct Officer rather than via the SAMO. Any member of staff who suspects that an academic misconduct offence has been committed in work submitted for assessment by a PhD student must complete an Academic Misconduct Report. This should be submitted, together

with all related documentation, to the relevant College Academic Misconduct Officer.

A copy of the Academic Misconduct Report form may be downloaded from the Academic Services website at:

<http://www.ed.ac.uk/schools-departments/academic-services/staff/discipline/plagiarism>

- 9.2 The College Academic Misconduct Officer will assess whether there is a case to answer and, if so, whether the case should be regarded as a minor or major offence.

Minor Offence

- 9.3 If the offence is deemed **minor**, the following arrangements will normally apply:

- the work submitted will be assessed on academic merit only after any affected section(s) have been discounted. This will be regarded as corrective work under provision 4.1.8 (b) of the University Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees;
- the matter will be taken into account in the Examiners recommendations to the Board of Examiners²;
- the internal examiner will be asked to draft a report for the CAMO confirming whether the case should be regarded as a minor offence;
- provided all are agreed that the offence is minor, it will be taken into account by the relevant Board of Examiners in determining the final outcome. ;
- If it is considered that there has been no deliberate attempt on the part of the student to deceive, they will normally be informed at this stage not only of the offence, but also of any other areas of significant academic concern within the work. This will enable the candidate to address all concerns within a single resubmission, as permitted by the University Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees.

Major Offence

- 9.4 If the offence is deemed **major**, the following arrangements will normally apply:

- the internal examiner will be asked to draft a report for the CAMO confirming whether the case ought to be viewed as a major offence;
- provided all are agreed that the offence should be regarded as major, an academic misconduct panel comprising the CAMO and one other (for example the Head of Graduate School or another appropriate representative from a different school in the same college) will interview the student. The panel will determine what penalty should be imposed

² For Postgraduate Research Student, the Board of Examiners will normally be the College committee which is responsible for overseeing postgraduate research studies within that College

or, if the case is very serious, may instead decided that it should be referred to University Student Discipline Committee for consideration;

- Excepting cases referred to the University Student Discipline Committee, the academic misconduct panel will notify the Convener of the Board of Examiners of the penalty to be applied.
- The CAMO will notify in writing the convener of the relevant Board of Examiners of the penalty which is to be applied and will also inform the student.

Penalties

9.5 The following options are available to the CAMO:

- (a) There is found to be no case to answer and no penalty is therefore to be applied;
- (b) (Where the offence is deemed minor). Require the work to be assessed on academic merit once the affected section(s) have been discounted. This will be regarded as corrective work under provision 4.1.8 (b) of the University Postgraduate Assessment Regulations for Research Degrees;
- (c) Require the work to be re-examined with the material in question discounted. No account can be taken of the consequences of this action, which might include failure or the award of a lesser degree;
- (d) Require the work to be resubmitted with the inappropriate material removed and sufficient editing done to make the thesis comprehensible. In such cases, the student will be advised of the time allowed for the resubmission. A consequence of this may be that the resubmitted thesis is no longer sufficiently substantial for the original degree and so may only be resubmitted for a lesser degree;
- (e) Deem the thesis a fail and instruct the Board of Examiners accordingly.
- (f) (Where the offence is deemed extremely serious) Refer the case to an Authorised Officer for discipline within the College. The Authorised Officer will then consider whether the case should be referred to the University Student Discipline Committee.

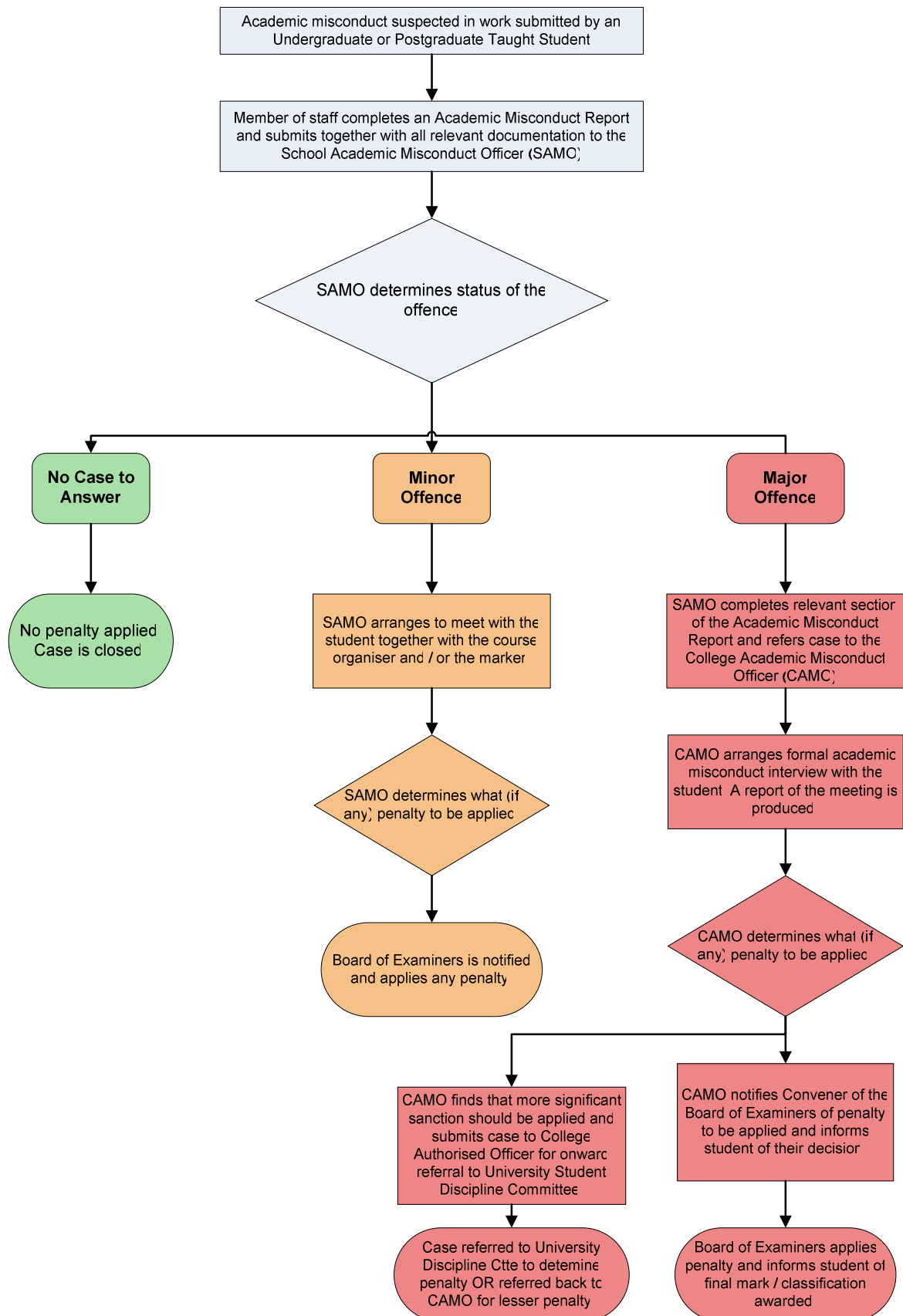
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Appendices:

Appendix A: Flowchart showing steps to be following where academic misconduct is suspect in work submitted by UG/PGT students.

Appendix B: College Academic Misconduct Officers & University Authorised Officers for Discipline 2011/12

Flowchart showing steps to be following where academic misconduct is suspected in work submitted by a UG/PGT student.



1. College Academic Misconduct Officers (CAMOs)

College of Humanities & Social Science:

Dr Rowena Arshad OBE

email: rowena.arshad@ed.ac.uk

Tel: +44 (0)131 651 6371

College of Medicine & Veterinary Medicine:

Dr John Stewart

email: John.stewart@ed.ac.uk

Tel: +44 (0)131 650 8267

College of Science & Engineering:

Dr Ewen Macpherson

email: Ewen.Macpherson@ed.ac.uk

Tel: +44 (0)131 650 5601

2. University Authorised Officers for Discipline (2011/12)

In addition to Vice Principals of the University, who are *ex officio* Authorised Officers in respect of exercising summary jurisdiction in student disciplinary matters, the following are Authorised Officers of the University for the 2011/12 academic year:

Senior University Officers

Dr K Waldron, University Secretary

Dr A Cornish, Deputy Secretary

Mr F Gribben, College Registrar CHSS

Dr D B Nelson, College Registrar CSE

Senior academic management officers

College of Humanities and Social Science

Dr M Donaldson

Professor R Williams

(Two to be confirmed)

College of Medicine and Veterinary Medicine

Professor A Cumming

Dr F Kristmundsdottir

Professor E Watson

Professor D Argyle

Professor J Bradshaw

Professor S Rhind

College of Science and Engineering

Professor S Bates

Professor W Williams

Managers in Information Services and Corporate Services Groups

Mrs S Cannell, Director of Library and Collections

Mr B Gilmore, Director, IT Infrastructure

Mr S Marsden, Director, Applications Division

Mr R Kington, Director Accommodation Services

Mrs L Duff, Assistant Director Residence Life

Mr J Jarvis, Principal Warden

Mr A Majothi, Designated Warden

Mr N A L Paul Director of Corporate Services

Mr J Aitken, Director for Centre for Sport & Exercise

Ms L Campbell, Assistant Director for Centre for Sport & Exercise