Step-by-step Student Guide to the

Academic Misconduct Process

This guide is intended to give students an idea of what to expect if they are notified that an allegation of Academic Misconduct has been raised in relation to one or more of their assessments.

There is lots more information, including examples of what constitutes Academic Misconduct, available on the [Academic Misconduct webpage](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/registry/Pages/Unfair_Practice.aspx) and the [full procedures are available here](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/registry/academichandbook/Pages/Ah1_08.aspx) within the Academic Handbook.

# 1. School refers an allegation of Academic Misconduct to Registry Services

If, in the course of marking an assessment or invigilating an exam, there is a suspicion that Academic Misconduct has occurred, an allegation of Academic Misconduct will be sent by the school to Registry Services, who will process the case and ultimately issue the outcome.

If the allegation relates to Collusion (working with somebody else but submitting work individually), you will already have been interviewed by your school or partner college as they attempt to determine the reason for any similarities between students’ work. The student(s) will usually be notified by their programme team that an allegation has been raised. Interviews will also be conducted if the allegation relates to inappropriate use of AI or suspicion regarding the authenticity of your submission.

# 2. Allegation is reviewed by Registry Services

The Academic Misconduct team within Registry Services will review the allegation report and evidence submitted by the school and gather more evidence and/or information if necessary. Depending on the details of the allegation, one of the below outcomes will apply within a few weeks of Registry receiving the allegation:

1. A school level warning is sent (via email)
2. ii. Fixed Penalty Letter issued (via email) with the choice of accepting a Fixed Penalty (either Standard or Second Level) or requesting that your case is heard by an Academic Integrity Committee
3. Academic Integrity Committee Letter issued (via email), informing you that the case will need to be considered by a formal Academic Integrity Committee
4. Case is dropped

Each of these options is explained in more detail below.

i School-level Warning issued

This option will normally be offered if all the following factors apply:

* It is a first offence;
* The offence has occurred within the first term of the student’s time at the university (regardless of level);
* There are indications that the offence has occurred because of poor academic practice rather than a deliberate attempt to gain unfair advantage and the assessment is worth 20 credits or fewer.

## ii Fixed Penalty Letter issued

This option will normally be offered if it is a first or second offence (in which case it may be a Second Level Fixed Penalty).

The Fixed Penalty Letter will detail which assessment(s) the allegation relates to and what type of Academic Misconduct is deemed to have occurred (e.g. plagiarism, collusion etc.). Any relevant evidence received from the school will also be attached.

The letter will explain that you can either accept the Fixed Penalty or request that your case is considered by a formal Academic Integrity Committee (a panel of academic staff).

You will have 14 days to respond to the email; if you do not respond within this timeframe, you will automatically be issued with a Fixed Penalty and will lose your right to challenge the allegation.

### Choosing between Fixed Penalty and Academic Integrity Committee

Accepting a Fixed Penalty also means accepting that Academic Misconduct has occurred, so students should understand that doing so means you cannot later submit an Academic Misconduct appeal in relation to that allegation.

*Please note, even if you accept the Fixed Penalty within the stipulated two weeks, you will have failed the assessment and will be issued your reassessment (where eligible) at the same time as anyone else who has failed the module – this means you will need to wait for the next Exam Board before reassessment is confirmed. If you are a final year student, unfortunately this means you may not be awarded in time for the graduation ceremonies that year; however, you will be invited to attend a future ceremony.*

If you wish to contest your case as you do not believe Academic Misconduct has occurred, you should choose the Academic Integrity Committee option. Please note it could take up to 8 working weeks, from the date you request a committee meeting for a committee meeting to be convened.

If you need help with this decision the [Students’ Union](https://www.cardiffmetsu.co.uk/support/academic/) are available for impartial advice (this is detailed on the Fixed Penalty letter) and there are also Frequently Asked Questions on the [Academic Misconduct webpage](http://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/registry/Pages/Unfair_Practice).

If you have a question which is not covered there, please email aup@cardiffmet.ac.uk.

Once you have made your decision and replied to the Fixed Penalty letter via email, you will receive a response from the AUP Team confirming any next steps and further confirmation of the Fixed Penalty or the Academic Integrity Committee. If you have chosen the Fixed Penalty, see below section 4. Reassessment.

## iii Academic Integrity Committee Letter issued

If you are issued with an Academic Integrity Committee letter, this will be because:

- this is necessary due to the nature of the allegation (serious offence and/or third offence);

*or*

- you have requested that your case is heard by a formal Academic Integrity Committee.

A committee hearing may take up to 8 working weeks to convene. Once we have established a date we will email you again, giving you further information on the Committee Panel members and details of what information is required regarding your attendance and /or any statements.

## iv Case is dropped

If, after further investigation, it is decided the Academic Misconduct allegation should be dropped (i.e. the flagged work does not constitute Academic Misconduct or there is insufficient evidence to prove Academic Misconduct), the AUP team will email you and your school/partner college to confirm this.

When a case is dropped there will be no further action taken and you are permitted to keep your original mark for that submission / examination.

# 3. If case is considered by an Academic Integrity Committee

An Academic Integrity Committee is a panel of academics who will seek to establish if, on the balance of probabilities given the evidence available, Academic Misconduct has or has not occurred.

Academic Integrity Committee meetings are held virtually on Microsoft Teams and you are entitled to attend the hearing (attendance is not compulsory) and/or provide a statement for consideration.

## Before the committee

Prior to your case being heard, the AUP team will write a briefing document for consideration by the panel members. You will be sent a copy of this document, along with all evidence being considered, via email approximately one week before the date of the committee. You will also be given a deadline to provide any additional evidence for the panel which you think is relevant to your case (any evidence not received by this date will only be accepted with the express permission of the Chair).

## Attending the committee

If you wish to attend you should inform the AUP team as soon as possible. They will then inform you of how this will happen. Alternatively, you can request that a member of the [Students’ Union](https://www.cardiffmetsu.co.uk/support/academic/) attends in your absence. In these instances students are encouraged to submit a statement for consideration by the panel in advance. Please note that representatives will not be permitted to talk on your behalf but can only witness that procedures are being correctly followed. **Your case will be heard whether you attend or not.**

Students are entitled to be accompanied at the Committee by a friend or family member who may act as moral support, however they must inform Registry in advance. The Academic Misconduct procedures also stipulate that the student must notify the University if the person accompanying them has any legal qualifications – they cannot attend in any legal capacity.

The meeting will be conducted in English (or Welsh if requested). If you are concerned about participating in English, you can arrange for someone to accompany you who can interpret for you.

## Academic Integrity Committee outcome

Once the Academic Integrity Committee has taken place, you will be sent an outcome letter and report via email within 5 working days (whether you attended or not).

If the Committee determines that Academic Misconduct has not occurred, you will normally be permitted to keep your original assessment mark. You may be signposted to other University services for additional support.

If the Committee determines that Academic Misconduct has occurred, details of any penalty will be confirmed in your outcome letter and any additional support signposted if appropriate.

# 4. Reassessment

Whether Academic Misconduct is confirmed or not, it is likely your assessment mark has not yet been confirmed by an Examination Board; therefore, you will need to wait for any official Exam Board outcome for confirmation of your result.

If you are eligible to complete reassessment for the module(s) affected, this will be confirmed to you in writing by your school or partner college once your profile has been considered by an Exam Board.

You will not be issued reassessment opportunities sooner than other students who have failed the module. This means that your progression or award will be delayed until after you have completed your reassessment. If you are a final year student, unfortunately this means you may not be awarded in time for the graduation ceremonies that year, however you will be invited to attend a future ceremony.

# 5. Academic Integrity Committee Appeal

Students can appeal the outcome of an Academic Integrity Committee if they satisfy at least one of the two specific grounds for appeal:

*1. Irregularities in the conduct of the Academic Misconduct procedure which may have affected the Committee’s decision-making*

*2. Exceptional personal circumstances relevant to the Academic Misconduct which could not have been reported to the Committee before its meeting*

The Students’ Union can advise students about whether they may have genuine grounds for appeal. Supporting evidence will be required and any appeal must be submitted [via the relevant online form](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/registry/Pages/appeals.aspx) **within 14 days of your Academic Integrity Committee outcome letter**.

Please note, you must continue to follow the previous outcome issued while your appeal is considered. This means you should stick to any reassessment deadlines issued, as there is no guarantee your appeal will be upheld.

# 6. Student Support

## Academic Misconduct Procedure Support

If you need help understanding or negotiating the Academic Misconduct procedure or process, the Students' Union provide impartial advice about academic regulations and procedures, including Academic Misconduct: [www.cardiffmetsu.co.uk/support/academic/](https://www.cardiffmetsu.co.uk/support/academic/)

Email: suadvice@cardiffmet.ac.uk

## Academic Skills Support

If you feel you need more support with your academic writing or have questions about how to make sure your assessments are properly referenced (especially if you have already been issued with a penalty for Academic Misconduct and want to avoid it happening again), Library Services provide information about Academic Skills and training in [Academic Practice](https://library.cardiffmet.ac.uk/academic_practice).

## Student Wellbeing Support

If you are struggling with your academic workload and/or personal circumstances and feel you need to speak somebody, you can contact the [Student Wellbeing Team](https://www.cardiffmet.ac.uk/study/studentservices/wellbeing-service/Pages/Home.aspx) in Student Services.

Please note, students at our partner institutions will need to use local Student Services.

# 7. Case Study – An Example of A Case of Academic Misconduct

You have some friends who are a year behind you on the same programme of study. You started out on the same cohort, but unfortunately they did not pass the previous year and are redoing some of the modules. During a visit to the bingo/cinema/bog snorkeling, one of your friends, Nigella, asks you for a copy of your work from last year, so that she can get an idea of where she must have gone wrong.

You don’t want to disappoint your friend, so you send a copy to Nigella for her to look at. She tells you it was very helpful and thinks her own work will definitely pass this time.

A few weeks later, you receive an email from your Programme Director asking you to come to an interview to explain a high level of similarity between your work and Nigella’s new submission. You decide to attend and tell the truth.

What happens next?

* The Programme Director explains to you both the serious consequences of collusion.
* Nigella will now have her work reported to the AUP team who will process it as an allegation of academic misconduct.
* If it’s her first instance of academic misconduct, the consequences will be less severe, but if it’s a second or third instance, it could impact her progression and her overall degree result.

# 8. Useful Terms

**Allegation** – a claim that someone has done something wrong; in the context of academic misconduct, the University will contact you with an ‘allegation letter’ to let you know that there is a claim by members of staff that you have attempted to gain an unfair advantage in your work through one of a variety of ways

**Plagiarism** – taking someone else’s ideas and/or words and using them as your own

**Collusion** – collaboration or cooperation with another student(s) in a way that goes against the assignment briefing and aims at gaining an unfair advantage in the assessment

**Penalty** – a consequence for breaking a rule; in the context of academic misconduct, the penalty is the consequence for engaging in unfair academic practice

**Outcome** – the end result of the investigation or allegation

**Appeal** – a formal application for a decision to be reviewed or reversed