

# **Academic Misconduct Policy, Procedures and Guidance**



**Harper Adams  
University**

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# Academic Misconduct Policy, Procedures and Guidance

1. This document includes:

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## Policy and Procedures

2. Those studying for Harper Adams University credit and awards, including research degrees and those studying through the Harper Adams Veterinary Nursing Approved Centre, are expected to follow accepted academic practice, when submitting work for assessment. Accepted academic practice is that any information, data, visuals, ideas, commentary or other content not created by the author should be attributed to its source(s), even when that content may be adapted in some way. The only exception to this is what is termed 'common knowledge' or a widely held truth (see current edition of *Guide to Report Writing* available from the library webpages). Furthermore, accepted academic practice also includes an expectation that where an author uses their own previous work (and this includes a student's earlier coursework submissions), this should also be attributed to the original source (see current edition of *Guide to Referencing* available from the library webpages for guidance on this). There is also a requirement that work is created truthfully and without intention to deceive. Students are also responsible for the security of their work and must take measures to ensure their work is protected at all times. Failure to secure work, thus providing opportunities for another student to gain access to it, resulting it being used albeit without their explicit consent, may be regarded as academic misconduct. The University's academic misconduct policy also applies to the conduct of students during time-constrained assessments e.g. examinations. All students are required to be familiar with the University's examination rules (**Annex 5.05** of the *Academic Quality Assurance Manual*), which may be accessed via the University's Key Information Page [www.harper.ac.uk/keyinfo](http://www.harper.ac.uk/keyinfo)). Any infringement of these rules shall be regarded as academic misconduct.

3. Any individual who does not follow accepted academic practice in their assessed work is considered to have committed *academic misconduct*. This includes:

- cheating;
- infringement of examination regulations;
- ethical breaches, which may include falsifying data, evidence or experimental results;
- collusion; and
- plagiarism.

Each of these is outlined in the *Student Guide to Academic Misconduct*, reproduced at the end of this document.

4. Academic misconduct is unacceptable as it means that one (or more) student(s) will have an unfair advantage over others but, more importantly, it undermines the value of all awards. It is therefore treated very seriously and a process has been established to deal

consistently with reported cases. This includes formal reports of infringements of the examination rules from invigilators, the use of detection software and the appointment of a Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator. The Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator, or their nominee, will lead in the investigation of the more severe categories of suspected academic misconduct. At partner colleges, the role of Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator will be determined on a case-by-case basis to ensure no conflict of interest.

### **Academic Misconduct Categories**

5. A student (singly or in conjunction with others) who is considered to have violated expectations of acceptable academic practice will be penalised, with the severity of the penalty determined by whether they are deemed to have committed any of the following:
- minor academic misconduct;
  - major academic misconduct;
  - gross academic misconduct.

Table 1 outlines the misconduct categories and the associated penalty that would normally be applied, as well as the outline processes for dealing with each category. As the penalty for academic misconduct may result in a direct and significant impact on a student's ability to proceed with their studies, the burden of proof rests with the University for each category of academic misconduct.

6. The indicative behaviour categories incorporate the following considerations<sup>1</sup>:
- prior experience of the student, taking into account the guidance that has been made available to them;
  - nature or seriousness of the misconduct (ranging from, for example, incomplete or inconsistent citation through to using another's work with no attribution);
  - impact of the misconduct on the work (ranging from, for example, a few lines of limited consequence to the assessment criteria, to a large proportion which significantly relates to the assessment criteria);
  - intention of the student to deceive (ranging from, for example, no intention to deceive but carelessness in using correct paraphrasing and citation conventions, to acting fraudulently [eg falsifying reference sources or data, using another student's work without their permission or taking notes into a closed-book examination]);
  - record of previous misconduct;
7. The following guidance will enable tutors to judge which category **best** describes any suspected misconduct, as follows<sup>2</sup>:

### **Minor Academic Misconduct**

- a. less than 25% of the assessed work was involved or the misconduct occurred in a part of the work of lesser importance in relation to the assessment marking criteria;
- b. the misconduct arose solely from poorly applied citation conventions, including the absence or incorrect use of quotation marks where other's words are reproduced, as opposed to the inclusion of unattributed material;

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from **Carroll, J.** 2007. *A Handbook for deterring plagiarism in higher education*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Oxford:Oxford Centre for Staff and Learning Development

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from a workshop session with Jude Carroll and done so with her permission

- c. the misconduct occurred early in the student's HE studies or there is another well-founded reason to suppose that the student did not understand academic conventions;
- d. there is no indication that the student had intent to gain unfair advantage;
- e. there is no prior record of the student having committed any category of academic misconduct.

### **Major Academic Misconduct**

As minor academic misconduct but more serious infringement demonstrated by:

- a. between 25% to 50% of the assessed work was involved;
- b. the misconduct arose from the inclusion of unattributed material, as opposed, solely, to the misuse of citation conventions;
- c. there is no reasonable reason to suppose that the student did not understand academic conventions and the need to declare where work is substantially that of another (be it published or from other sources including friend, family, employer or another student);
- d. there is a record of the student having previously committed minor academic misconduct.

### **Gross Academic Misconduct**

As major academic misconduct but more serious infringement demonstrated by:

- a. more than 50% of the assessed work was involved;
- b. the misconduct occurred in an important part of the work, in relation to the assessment marking criteria;
- c. there is a reasonable indication that the student had sought to gain an unfair advantage;
- d. there is a prior record of the student having previously committed academic major misconduct;
- e. being in possession of unauthorised items/materials during an examination.

**Table 1 Academic misconduct categories and associated arrangements**

| <b>Category of misconduct</b> | <b>Student Category</b> | <b>Burden and Standard of Proof</b>                                      | <b>Associated normal penalty</b>   | <b>Dealt with by</b>  | <b>Student can appeal to</b>   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Minor academic misconduct     | Taught student          | The University to establish proof on the <b>balance of probabilities</b> | Possibility of reduced or zero mark awarded for the piece of work and a written warning  | Module Leader   | Chair of Academic Misconduct Panel   |
|                               | Research student        |  | Failure but with opportunity to resubmit   | Relevant examiner (of year one or year two report or final thesis) in consultation with the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator  |  |
| Major academic misconduct     | Taught student          | The University to establish proof on the <b>balance of probabilities</b> | Zero marks for the module, with opportunity to be reassessed   | Module Leader in consultation with the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator   | Chair of Academic Misconduct Panel   |
|                               | Research student        |  | Failure but with opportunity to resubmit   | Relevant examiner (of year one or year two report or final thesis) in consultation with the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator  |  |
| Gross academic misconduct     | Taught student          | The University to establish proof on the <b>balance of probabilities</b> | Ranges from failure of module with no entitlement to reassessment through to failure of all modules in the year and withdrawal | Module Leader, Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator and Academic Misconduct Panel   | Director of Academic Services<br><br>(using the Academic Appeals Policy which may be accessed via:<br><a href="http://www.harper.ac.uk/keyinfo">www.harper.ac.uk/keyinfo</a> ) |
|                               | Research student        |  | Failure with no opportunity to resubmit or continue with studies   | Relevant internal examiner (of year one or year two report or final thesis) in consultation with the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator and Academic Misconduct Panel |  |

### Academic Misconduct Penalties for Students on Taught Programmes

8. The following outlines the penalties normally associated with each misconduct category, for students on taught programmes (see paragraph 9 for research degree students).

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| Minor academic misconduct | <p>1 Marks reduced in line with extent of assessment affected taking into account proportion of work and importance of the parts affected in relation to assessment marking criteria. Maximum penalty is award of zero marks for the work<br/>and<br/>Written warning and direction to written guidance by Module Leader and note to student record database and file</p>  |
| Major academic misconduct | <p>2 Zero marks for the module with opportunity to be reassessed recommended, but eligibility within the assessment regulations to be determined by the Course Assessment Board<br/>and<br/>Written warning and direction to written guidance by Module Leader and note to student record database and file</p>  |
| Gross academic misconduct | <p>3 Failure of module with no reassessment and recommendation that the failed module should impact on any progression or award entitlement with opportunity to restudy only if eligible within the assessment regulations, as determined by the Course Assessment Board</p> <hr/> <p>4 Failure of module with no reassessment and recommendation to the Course Assessment Board that the failed module should impact on any progression or award entitlement, with no opportunity to restudy that or alternative module<br/>and<br/>Record on student record database and file</p> <hr/> <p>5 Failure of all modules studied in the academic session with no opportunity for reassessment and a recommendation to the Course Assessment Board that either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) an opportunity to restudy in the following academic session is permissible</li> <li style="text-align: center;">or</li> <li>b) the candidate is withdrawn from the programme with no opportunity to re-enrol until at least one year has elapsed</li> <li style="text-align: center;">or</li> <li>c) the candidate is withdrawn from the programme permanently</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;">and</p> <p>Record on student record database and file</p> |
|                           | <p>The <b>minimum</b> penalty for cheating in time-constrained assessments or being found in possession of unauthorised items/materials during an examination is the failure of all modules taken in the academic year, withdrawal from the course and exclusion from studies for a minimum period of one year, after which restudy of failed modules may be permitted.</p>  |

## Academic Misconduct Penalties for Students on Research Programmes

9. The following outlines the penalties for students on research degree programmes (see paragraph 8 for penalties for students on taught programmes).

|   |   |
|---|---|
| Minor academic misconduct and major academic misconduct | Failure of Research Degree report / thesis with opportunity for resubmission recommended to Research Degrees Awarding Board<br><br>and<br>Written warning and direction to guidance by relevant internal examiner, and note on student file |
| Gross academic misconduct                               | Failure of Research Degree report / thesis with a recommendation to the Research Degrees Awarding Board that there should be no opportunity to resubmit the report / thesis nor continue with studies                                       |

## Retrospective Considerations of Academic Misconduct

10. Where evidence of suspected academic misconduct comes to light, at any time after either individual modules or an award has been conferred, the Academic Misconduct Panel, will, in the first instance, consider that evidence and make a written recommendation with an accompanying report if the allegation(s) are upheld. Where gross misconduct is, on the basis of the evidence, believed to have occurred, the penalties will be retrospectively imposed, in line with those in the indicative penalty tariff, so necessitating the removal of previously awarded module credits or awards. The recommendation to rescind academic credit or awards is considered by the appropriate Course Assessment Board or Research Degrees Awarding Board.

## Poor Academic Practice

11. Academic misconduct is distinct from poor academic practice where an unacceptable proportion of the assessed work is based directly on the work of others, albeit with correct attribution and citation. Given the requirement for HE level work to be articulated in one's own words and to incorporate original thinking, over-reliance on others' work and words will attract a lower mark than that which is original, including a mark of zero.

## Tutor Guidance for Dealing with Poor Academic Practice or Academic Misconduct

12. The assessment regulations for taught awards (available via the University's Key Information Page [www.harper.ac.uk/keyinfo](http://www.harper.ac.uk/keyinfo)) and guidance for research degree students (the *Postgraduate Research Students Handbook*) outline that academic misconduct will be penalised. The *Student Guide to Academic Misconduct* (appended) gives further details on what constitutes cheating, collusion and plagiarism. The following outlines the procedures in place for dealing with suspicions of either poor academic practice or academic misconduct.

### **Poor academic practice**

13. For coursework, where students correctly quote and/or paraphrase with attribution an excessive proportion of their text, they are considered to have demonstrated poor academic practice, rather than academic misconduct. This is because the point of assessment is to develop and test independent thinking skills.
14. In order to discourage poor academic practice and ensure that regurgitation of others' words is not unduly rewarded, tutors should impose a penalty by adjusting marks accordingly, where acceptable levels of direct quotation or paraphrasing, without interpretation, have been exceeded. It is not helpful to prescribe how the penalty should be applied but should take into account the extent to which the marking scheme requires

description, explanation, application, analysis, evaluation and associated conclusions or recommendations and the originality of these within the work. The work may be awarded zero in severe cases of poor academic practice, at the discretion of the tutor. The feedback to students should indicate that adjustments to marks have been made in this way. Tutors should fulfil marking turnaround in line with Annex 5.29 of the *Academic Quality Assurance Manual*. These cases do not need to be brought to the Academic Misconduct Panel nor reported to the Chair of the panel. Where a student wishes to appeal against the poor academic practice outcome, they should may submit their appeal to the Chair of the Academic Misconduct Panel via the Examinations Office.

### **Academic misconduct**

15. Where any form of academic misconduct is suspected, as outlined above in paragraph 7, the tutor should take the steps outlined in paragraphs 16-18, having established whether the work demonstrates minor academic misconduct, major academic misconduct or gross academic misconduct (including reference to the central database which records prior occurrences of any category of misconduct and which can be found on the intranet under 'Academic misconduct' at the bottom of the front page). For research students, the procedure for dealing with minor academic misconduct is the same as that for major academic misconduct.

### **Minor academic misconduct**

16. The **tutor** should judge the extent to which the affected work contributes to the achievement of the assessment criteria and discount from the total marks that which would have been awarded for the work had it been correctly prepared. Reference should always be made to the central database on which occurrences of academic misconduct by individual students are stored, to confirm whether an apparent illustration of minor academic misconduct, based on the extent of affected work alone, should in fact be categorised as major academic misconduct, with an associated greater penalty. As specified in Table 1, the standard of proof required is that based on the balance of probability. The student should also be sent a letter (as at **Annex 5.02a-g** of the *Academic Quality Assurance Manual*) by the tutor, advising them of the contravention and directing them to a source of guidance, with a copy sent to the student file, Course Tutor and to the Examinations Office, marked for the attention of the Chair of the Academic Misconduct Panel. The occurrence of minor academic misconduct will be recorded, centrally, on a database, for all tutors to access, in order to help them in determining whether there have been prior occurrences of misconduct for any individual students at a future date (see paragraph 17). Students have the right to appeal against Minor Academic Misconduct decisions to the Chair of the Academic Misconduct Panel if they believe that there was a material error or irregularity which affected the decision. Students may not appeal against academic judgement. Where such an appeal is not upheld, the student still retains the right to appeal using the [Academic Appeals Policy](#) after the Course Assessment Board has confirmed the results.

### **Major academic misconduct**

17. In determining whether major academic misconduct has occurred, **tutors / relevant internal examiners** (first year / second year / final thesis internal examiner as relevant) should use the characteristic descriptions in paragraph 7 in making a judgement, in conjunction with the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator. In the first instance, **tutors / internal examiners** should complete the following steps **before** referring any suspected cases of major academic misconduct to the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator:
  - a) Review the central academic misconduct database (available via The Portal) to confirm if the student has previously contravened the academic misconduct expectations of the University;
  - b) Review the Turnitin® originality report for the submitted work to determine if the work represents poor academic practice or requires further investigation;

- c) If after completing the steps above, major academic misconduct is still suspected, tutors should collate the following information for the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator:
- i) A short report explaining why major academic misconduct is suspected;
  - ii) A copy of the work under suspicion;
  - iii) A copy of the assignment brief and the Turnitin® originality report.

18. Tutors should consult with the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator in sufficient time to fulfil marking turnaround in line with Annex 5.29 of the *Academic Quality Assurance Manual*. The student will be invited to meet with the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator to discuss the suspicion. The Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator will set out the reasons why there is a suspicion of major academic misconduct, which the student should be given the opportunity to refute. Students are required to respond promptly to requests from the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator. This must be within the time specified in all communications which will be reasonable and take into account assessment board schedules. In light of discussions in this meeting, the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator and tutor / relevant internal examiner will then confirm whether major academic misconduct has been committed and if such has been agreed, apply the penalty outlined in paragraphs 8 (for taught programmes) and 9 (for research degree programmes). If they do not agree, the Chair of Course Assessment Boards / Research Degrees Awarding Board will be asked to adjudicate. As specified in Table 1, the standard of proof required is based on the balance of probability. The tutor / relevant internal examiner should also send a letter to the student (as at **Annex 5.02a-g** of the *Academic Quality Assurance Manual*) advising them of the contravention and directing them to sources of written guidance. This letter should be copied to the student file, Examinations Office, Course Tutor / Director of Studies and Chair of the Academic Misconduct Panel. The occurrence of major academic misconduct will be recorded, centrally, on a database by the Examinations Office, for all tutors / internal examiners to access, to help them in determining whether there have been prior occurrences of misconduct for any individual students, at a future date (see paragraph 16). Students have the right to appeal against Major Academic Misconduct decisions to the Chair of the Academic Misconduct Panel if they believe that there was a material error or irregularity which affected the decision. Students may not appeal against academic judgement. Where such an appeal is not upheld, the student still retains the right to appeal using the [Academic Appeals Policy](#) after the Course Assessment Board has confirmed the results.

### ***Gross academic misconduct***

19. Having reassured themselves (following steps a, b and c in paragraph 17) that a piece of work falls into the gross academic misconduct category, in line with paragraph 7, including reference to the database which records occurrences of individual academic misconduct, the tutor / relevant internal examiner should refer further consideration to the Academic Misconduct Panel. The tutor / relevant internal examiner should forward a report indicating why gross academic misconduct is suspected, as well as the Turnitin® originality report, if relevant, any assessment brief and the work under suspicion, to the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator. The tutor / relevant internal examiner should return a copy of the coursework / report to the student. A note should indicate that, "Your submission has been passed to the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator to consider whether it demonstrates gross academic misconduct. You will receive an invitation to discuss this matter with them shortly." For taught awards, feedback and the mark that would have been awarded for the work, assuming that acceptable academic practice has not been contravened, should be advised to the student, but with a note to indicate that, "This mark is provisional and assumes that the work has been produced within normal academic practice expectations. It is, therefore, subject to change, depending on the outcome of the Panel's deliberations".

20. Where student conduct within time constrained assessments (e.g. examinations) is suspected to represent gross academic misconduct (in accordance with the guidance detailed within paragraph 7), the Senior Invigilator should refer further consideration to the Academic Misconduct Panel. The Senior Invigilator should forward a report indicating the reasons why gross academic misconduct is suspected, which, where possible, should include the relevant physical evidence (e.g. unauthorised materials), photographic evidence (where retention of physical evidence is not possible) and if appropriate, statements from other individuals (staff or students) who also observed the actions of the student.
21. The Chair of the Academic Misconduct Panel, with assistance from the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator, is responsible for the processes concerned with consideration of gross academic misconduct as follows:
- a. On receipt of a report outlining suspicions of gross academic misconduct from a tutor/Senior Invigilator, the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator will, normally within five working days, invite the student to meet with them, outlining the nature of the suspicion, the possible penalties associated with academic misconduct, and the arrangements by which a panel considers the validity of the suspicion and the consequent penalty. At this stage, the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator will share with the student the tutor's / relevant internal examiner/Senior Invigilators report, as outlined in paragraphs 19 and 20. If the suspicion arises during an examination period, the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator may exercise their judgement to defer this meeting.
  - b. The student will be invited to write to the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator, normally within 72 hours of the meeting, indicating whether they accept or refute the suspicion of gross academic misconduct and whether they would like to present their case in person to the Academic Misconduct Panel.
  - c. Having spoken with the student, if the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator is satisfied that there is evidence of gross academic misconduct they will convene a meeting of the Academic Misconduct Panel, constituted as outlined in paragraph 22, normally, within ten working days of the initial meeting between them and the student. If they are not satisfied that there is evidence of gross academic misconduct, they will propose that the tutor treat the submission as a less grave category or reject the suspicion. Where the tutor and Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator disagree, the Chair of the Course Assessments Boards/Research Degrees Awarding Board will be asked to adjudicate.

### **Academic Misconduct Panel Procedures**

22. a. An Academic Misconduct Panel will be convened when a student is suspected of gross academic misconduct, once the procedures outlined in paragraph 21 have been completed.
- b. An Academic Misconduct Panel has the full delegated authority of the relevant Course Assessment Board or Research Degrees Awarding Board and its decision is final. The Academic Misconduct Panel will, however, make recommendations to the board, for it to determine the consequences of its decisions on student progression or award.
- c. The Academic Misconduct Panel comprises at least three staff members and one student representative, typically the SU President, although the Student Services Manager may be called upon when the SU President is unavailable. The Chair is a member of staff, nominated by the Quality Standards Committee. Other staff members are, typically, but not exclusively, drawn from the Quality and Standards Committee membership. The panel members will be independent of the case

under consideration. Under no circumstances shall the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator be permitted to actively participate in any subsequent Academic Misconduct Panel that may be convened.

- d. Where a student has elected to attend an Academic Misconduct Panel meeting to present their case, they may be accompanied by a current Harper Adams University enrolled student, Students' Union representative or staff member for support. The person accompanying the student may offer advice to the student during the Academic Misconduct Panel, however, they have no right to question any member of the Panel but may be permitted to make a statement to the Panel if invited to do so by the Chair. Where the need to make reasonable adjustments to the normal process is demonstrated by the student (e.g. appointment of a representative), the panel will confirm with the Student Wellbeing Officer the most appropriate approach/adjustments to apply.
- e. The Academic Misconduct Panel shall conduct its business in an open and constructive manner and, normally, in accordance with the procedures outlined herein. However, the Chair, in consultation with other members of the Panel, may change the procedures to take account of particular circumstances. This may include inviting the module leader / relevant internal examiner to the meeting to clarify aspects, or to defer decisions pending resolution of conflicting evidence, or undertaking the proceedings by correspondence if the student elects not to attend.
- f. Documentation summarising the student's position will be circulated, by the Academic Misconduct Panel Chair, prior to the panel meeting, to each of the panel members and the student whose work is under suspicion at least seven calendar days in advance of the meeting. This will, typically, include a statement from the student indicating whether they refute or accept the accusation and any circumstances they wish the panel to consider plus a report from the module leader / relevant internal examiner, including the items listed in paragraph 17, and any other relevant information or evidence collected by the Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator, in the course of their enquiries.
- g. The Academic Misconduct Panel will meet in private to discuss the issues pertinent to the student's case.
- h. The student, and advisor if appropriate, will be invited to join the meeting of the Academic Misconduct Panel.
- i. The Chair will set out the reasons why there is a suspicion of gross academic misconduct, making reference to supporting evidence.
- j. The student will be offered the opportunity to refute the suspicions, and associated evidence. The student will also be given the opportunity to ask questions of the Panel.
- k. The Panel will ask the student questions in order to clarify issues.
- l. The student will be given a final opportunity to explain their position.
- m. The student, and advisor if present, will be asked to withdraw from the meeting and the Panel will meet in private to arrive at its decision.
- n. The Panel's decision shall be guided by the standard of proof required (ie balance of probability, as Table 1) and the penalty tariffs in paragraph 8 (taught programmes) and 9 (research degree programmes). The student, and advisor if present, will be invited to return to the meeting and they will be informed of the Panel's decision.
- o. The student will receive written confirmation of the Panel's decision, from the Chair of the Panel normally within 5 working days of the meeting. The decision of

the Panel shall be implemented with immediate effect. For information, a report will also be submitted to the next meeting of the relevant Course Assessment Board or Research Degrees Awarding Board and copied to the student's file, Course Tutor or Director of Studies and relevant module leader / relevant internal examiner.

- p. The student has the right to appeal against the decision of the Academic Misconduct Panel. An appeal must be received by the Director of Academic Services within **fourteen days** of the notification of the Panel's decision to the student. The extant Academic Appeals policy may be accessed via the University's website ([www.harper.ac.uk/keyinfo](http://www.harper.ac.uk/keyinfo)).

Where a student elects not to attend the meeting, steps h, j, k, l and n are omitted.

Where suspected breaches occur at partner colleges, the approved academic misconduct procedures of the partner college will apply. However, the categories of academic misconduct and the associated penalties that will be applied by the partner colleges are common to the principals outlined in paragraphs 7 and 8 of the Harper Adams University Academic Misconduct Policy.

### **Student support**

- 23. In cases of alleged misconduct students may seek support from their Course Team, Students Services, or the Student Wellbeing officer. For advice about the alleged misconduct in question students may contact the Module Leader or Principal Academic Misconduct Investigator.

## Student Guide to Academic Misconduct

Academic awards are made, primarily, on the basis of an individual's achievements, as judged through coursework and exams. Students who attempt to gain an unfair advantage over others, in any way, will find themselves facing an investigation panel which considers academic misconduct and they will be penalised. Harper Adams, as many other universities, uses software to check that student submissions are their own work. Students found guilty of **cheating, plagiarism or collusion**, will receive a serious penalty which will range from failure of the module, to failure of the entire year, to expulsion from the University. Academic misconduct will also be noted on a student's record. Please ensure sure you are not guilty of the following:

### Cheating

Cheating is interpreted as any attempt by a student to gain unfair advantage in an assessment by dishonest means. Cheating includes:

- Communicating, or trying to communicate in any way, with another candidate in an examination.
- Introducing unauthorised material into an examination (eg books, cribnotes etc).
- Obtaining an examination paper in advance of its authorised release.
- Stealing another student's essay and passing it off as your own.
- Falsely claiming to require special assessment arrangements or fabricating evidence of mitigating circumstances
- Falsifying data, or modifying/fabricating reference material details.
- Misleading tutors in order to circumvent assessment requirements, for example, by uploading the wrong digital file for misconduct checking or understating word counts.

### Collusion

Collusion is a situation in which two or more students have collaborated to produce a piece of work to be submitted (in whole or in part) for assessment, and this is presented as the work of one student alone.

Collusion which is intended to deceive markers that the work submitted has been produced by one student will be dealt with as a serious offence. Such collusion, which is intended to give students concerned an unfair advantage over other students, will attract a serious penalty. This includes the situation in which one student shows another their work. Both students are considered to have colluded and will be appropriately penalised.

There are occasions on which students are encouraged or even required to work together and to produce joint projects or reports, which are then assessed as a joint effort. Sometimes students work together in a group, but produce independent work. Your assignment briefs should identify where team or group work is acceptable. If they don't, you should assume the work is to be completed independently.

It is extremely important that if you are in any doubt about the appropriateness of working with another person in the production of assignments, you ask your Module Leader for clarification. It is also essential that students take care to safeguard the security of their work, so that it cannot be stolen and used by another. Failure to secure your work, therefore providing opportunities for another student(s) to gain access, may constitute academic misconduct by collusion, even if this was unintentional. Furthermore, any student who takes and uses another student's work without their explicit consent will be considered to have committed a very serious case of academic misconduct.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the inclusion of unattributed writing or paraphrasing from someone else's work into your own. In effect, it is stealing another's work and passing it off as your own.

During your time at Harper Adams, you will be given advice on how to use other people's work (published or unpublished) to support your own arguments and analysis, in essays, assignments and projects.

If you use words, graphics and ideas from a published author or from a fellow student without proper acknowledgement, then you are guilty of intellectual theft. So make sure that you understand what constitutes plagiarism. Be aware that sloppy referencing or failure to note in your rough work when you quote another's words is no excuse, nor is the argument that you have changed some of the words or the order of the sentences. Take care to cite your sources properly, and get into the habit of using a standard format whenever you make a reference to someone else's work. Whenever you do reproduce another's words you must insert that text into quotation marks and note the source of the quote fully. Beware of relying, excessively, on others' words, since text is expected to be primarily your own and will be penalised if it is not, as poor academic practice

Please read the examples overleaf. These illustrate the difference between acceptable and unacceptable practice.

**Auto-plagiarism** is also a form of academic misconduct. This is sometimes known as self-plagiarism and is when a student submits work that has previously contributed to academic credit or awards and either not declaring or understating it.

***Keep it above the line!***

# Are You Guilty of Plagiarism?

## Where should you draw the line?

The following scenarios are based on a staff development exercise led by Jude Carroll, which, in turn, was informed by **Swales and Feak**. 1993. *Academic Writing for Graduate Students*. Michigan: University of Michigan.

Please read the descriptions below that outline how a student might use another's work in producing their own. Then consider whether your coursework submissions fall below the line. If so, please note that you have been guilty of plagiarism and **academic misconduct** for which there are serious penalties. You may **only** copy work from elsewhere if you place it within quotation marks. You must also ensure that your references are correctly cited in both the text and in the reference list. However, be aware that overuse of quotations that result in work primarily of others' words and thoughts rather than your own, even if properly referenced, will be penalised for **poor academic practice**.

It is **acceptable** to:

Acceptable

1. Quote a paragraph by placing it in block format in quotation marks with the source and page number cited in the text eg (Jones, 1999, p3) and listed in the references.
2. Paraphrase a paragraph with substantial changes in language and organisation: the new version will also have changes in the amount of detail used and the examples cited; in text acknowledgement, eg (Jones, 1999) and inclusion in reference list.

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It is **not acceptable** to:

Not Acceptable

3. Compose a paragraph by taking short phrases of 10-15 words from a number of sources and putting them together and adding a few words of your own to make a coherent whole; all sources are included in reference list, but are not cited in the text.
4. Copy and paste a paragraph by using sentences of the original but omitting one or two and putting one or two in a different order, with no quotation marks; no in-text acknowledgement plus inclusion in the reference list.
5. Copy a paragraph and make small changes eg by inserting alternative words with the same meaning, replacing a few verbs; source in the list of references, without citing the source into the text.
6. Copy text from elsewhere, include the in-text citation, but not place the copied text in quotation marks.

Students should refer to: **Harper Adams University**. latest edition. *Guide to Referencing*. Newport: Harper Adams. This is available at the library homepage on the intranet. It details how others' work should be cited and referenced in all written work.