

GLOBAL STUDENT ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY

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PURPOSE

The primary purposes of the University are the advancement and application of knowledge and the education of its students; its central activities are teaching, learning and research. These purposes can be achieved only if the members of the University community can live and work together in conditions which permit freedom of thought and expression within a framework of respect. To achieve and maintain such conditions, and to ensure academic standards, there are structures and procedures in place ensuring that the necessary steps can be taken where behaviour falls short of that expected from students.

The Senate is responsible for regulating the discipline of **all** students at the University. This is achieved through policies which provide rigorous, fair, transparent, and consistent processes for investigating and considering reported incidents involving alleged academic misconduct and for imposing penalties where appropriate. The Global Student Academic Misconduct Policy (hereinafter referred to as the Policy) outlines specific responsibilities and actions for appropriate members of staff of the University and appropriate bodies investigating alleged academic misconduct offences and applying disciplinary penalties.

The academic integrity of the vast majority of the University's students is exemplary. Nevertheless, unacceptable academic behaviour can happen, so the University has a *Global Student Academic Misconduct Policy* that applies to all undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University irrespective of their mode, level, or location of study.

The Policy covers all types of academic misconduct and a range of penalties which can be imposed.

The Policy protects the University and its community, deterring those who interfere with its work and activities, and ensures that where necessary, appropriate sanctions can be imposed. Students explicitly agree to abide by the University's [Ordinances, Regulations, Policies, Procedures, Rules](#), and [Values](#) when they enrol.

This Policy applies to **all** students who enrol at Heriot-Watt University (HWU), regardless of whether studying as a Postgraduate Research, Postgraduate Taught or Undergraduate student. However, with regard to students at the University studying at Heriot-Watt University Malaysia, the Registrar General Malaysia may issue directions from time to time under Section 46 of the Private Higher Educational Institution Act 1996 [Act 555].

The Policy also applies to **all** students regardless of their location or mode of study, and therefore includes those studying:

- (1) as a doctoral student (at any level);
- (2) via a doctoral and/or industrial training programme¹ (such as Engineering Doctorates, Centre for Doctoral Training students, Doctoral Focal Awards students, Doctoral Landscape Award/Doctoral Training Programme/Partnership, etc); and,
- (3) at any collaborative partnerships, for example, an Approved Learning Partner (ALP), Joint Educational Partnership (JEP), or any other academic partnership of the University, where that student is undertaking a University programme of study or academic course;
- (4) by HW Online or Distance learning;
- (5) as a Graduate Apprenticeship (GA);
- (6) all visiting and exchange students.

Students are expected to make themselves familiar with the policies that apply to them. The Policies are available at the [HWU Policy Bank](#). Students are additionally expected to read and follow the [academic integrity guidance](#) provided by the University.

The University has a duty to investigate all concerns raised regarding potential misconduct, but it also recognises that these remain allegations until investigations have concluded and outcomes have been determined. Where the allegations are found not proven, there will be no record of the investigation on a student's academic transcript and record.

Purpose

The purpose of the Policy is to regulate student academic behaviour, in particular, student academic misconduct, to secure the proper working of the University in the broadest sense. In support of this goal, students are expected always to conduct themselves in a manner which:

- i) Demonstrates respect for staff and fellow students;
- ii) Enhances the reputation of the University;

¹ Under the UKRI Doctoral Training Programme PhDs may be part funded from UKRI and part funded/supported by Industry.

- iii) Is sensitive to culturally diverse environments;
- iv) Demonstrates active engagement in the learning process, a commitment to University-level study, and determination to succeed.

The Policy means that:

- i) Students can be assured that any instances involving alleged academic misconduct will be investigated and considered under robust, consistent, fair, and transparent procedures and decision-making processes;
- ii) Staff of the University can be assured that procedures are in place to deal with instances when students do not abide by the University's Ordinances, Regulations, Policies, Procedures, Rules, Values and expectations, and that appropriate action will be taken where required.

Objective

The objective of the Policy is to:

- i) Deal with academic misconduct offences in a way which is fair and proportionate to their severity;
- ii) Make provision for informality and flexibility in proceedings so that matters can be considered at the Primary Academic Unit at an early stage where appropriate;
- iii) Ensure, as far as possible, that all parties involved are on an equal footing procedurally and able to participate fully in proceedings;
- iv) Avoid delay as far as is compatible with fairness and the proper consideration of the matters involved.

The Policy provides a framework to ensure that academic standards and expectations are met and defines a framework of penalties which may be imposed for substantiated academic misconduct that are appropriate, proportionate, and consistent.

In all disciplinary cases, the rules of natural justice (the right to a fair hearing) shall be observed.

The University embraces a positive attitude towards the promotion of [equality and diversity](#). The Policy applies equally to **all** students irrespective of colour, age, disability, ethnic origin, gender, marital status, civil partnership, nationality, race, religion, or sexual orientation.

All disciplinary cases, investigations, communications, and meetings will normally be conducted in English. Any exceptions will require the written approval of the Chair of the University Discipline Committee prior to any investigation being undertaken.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Senate is responsible for regulating the discipline of **all** students at the University. [Regulation A13: Student Discipline](#) (hereinafter referred to as *Regulation A13*) sets out the provisions for regulating student discipline. Any actions under the disciplinary procedures are undertaken on behalf of the [Senate](#) under a structure and system of delegated authority.

Students and staff are expected to make themselves familiar with the Policy that applies to them. The Policies are available at the [HWU Policy Bank](#).

- 1.2 *Regulation A13* makes provision for the Policy for regulating student discipline.
- 1.3 A member of staff who reports the incident, or is/was involved in the decision making of any submitted work (as listed below), or is the Course Leader, Supervisor, or internal examiner, or where there are any other conflicts of interest, will have no input in the decision-making of the alleged academic misconduct offence. This includes, but not limited to:
- Any form of marked assessment under investigation;
 - Any form of progression work (e.g. literature reviews, annual progression reports, etc.)
 - Any form of oral examination (including annual appraisals by viva).
- 1.4 The Senate reserves the right to add to or amend the Regulations and Policies as it deems appropriate and with immediate effect. Such amendments will be publicised on the University website.
- 1.5 The University Discipline Committee will oversee the processes outlined in this Policy and, acting with the delegated authority of the Senate and in consultation with relevant staff, shall be responsible for approving the nominated members of staff, who, in addition to those specified in the Policy, shall investigate, and consider alleged cases of academic misconduct.
- 1.6 All communications with a student will be sent to the student's University email address.
- 1.7 Standard of Proof:
In considering alleged academic misconduct disciplinary offences, the standard of proof required is that it is more likely than not that something is or is not the case (the '*balance of probability*', or civil justice) rather than 'beyond all reasonable doubt' (as in criminal justice).
- 1.8 The definitions and categories of academic misconduct are set out in Sections 2 and 3.
- 1.9 The composition of the committees established to consider disciplinary matters is set out in *Regulation A13 Student Discipline* and further detail is provided in the [Global Student Academic Misconduct Procedures](#).
- 1.10 A student against whom an allegation has been made under the Policy may seek the assistance of a third-party. The University will only deal with a third-party providing assistance to a student where there is written and signed authorisation by the student to allow this to happen, except with respect to where a student is under 18 and a responsible person (e.g. guardians, parents or designated person, in case of minor students) is required. The student remains the responsible person with respect to any allegation under consideration. The student is not permitted to appoint someone to act on their behalf.
- 1.11 In accordance with existing University and sector-wide practice, students do not have the right to legal representation under the Policy.
- 1.12 A student against whom an allegation has been made may wish to access support from the Student Union Advice Hub (UK based students) or the Student Representative Bodies for students at their applicable campus. If such assistance is sought, it remains the responsibility of the student to prepare and submit any evidence or statement for consideration and to liaise directly with the relevant member of staff or body.
- 1.13 The University monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of this Policy regularly to ensure that penalties are fair and functioning as intended and to consider the types of cases being identified. An anonymous summary of cases and their outcomes is reported to the Senate on an annual basis.
- 1.14 Breaches of the [Research Ethics Policy](#) by **all** students will be considered under this Policy.

2. DEFINITIONS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

- 2.1 This section outlines the definitions and terminologies used in this Policy. These definitions will be used as the agreed University approach to academic misconduct.
- 2.2 The University defines academic misconduct as a breach of academic integrity, ethical misconduct and any action or attempted action that may result in a student or group of students obtaining an unfair academic advantage in formal University assessment, or any activity likely to undermine the academic integrity essential to scholarship and research.
- 2.3 Academic misconduct includes all assessments, for example, examinations, class tests, essays, coursework, dissertations, research projects, internally or externally submitted reports, postgraduate thesis, annual or progression reports, student research papers (whether published or not), Vivas, oral presentations and assessments, and any other form of internal or external assessment as deemed subject to academic misconduct by the University.
- 2.4 All reported allegations of academic misconduct are taken seriously and, where proven, may lead to disciplinary action.
- 2.5 Any student who during any part of the assessment process copies, steals, or appropriates the work of another, or who introduces into an examination room any materials or other aids not explicitly permitted under the rubric of the examination, or who uses other unfair methods to gain an advantage in an assessment, will be deemed to have breached the University's policy on academic misconduct. This applies to all work submitted as part of the assessment process, in whatever year, and whether produced under formal examination conditions or as part of a programme of continuous assessment. Any student who knowingly assists others in this process will also be regarded as being guilty of academic misconduct.
- 2.6 Academic misconduct is regarded as a breach of University Regulations and where proven will result in penalties being imposed (as described below). Where allegations are not proven, the assessment will be returned to the normal process, such as marking.
- 2.7 Any attempt by a student to gain an unfair advantage in any type of assessment, including examinations and Vivas, will be regarded as a breach of academic integrity. The University will not accept academic misconduct in any form and the seriousness of the offence will be reflected in the penalties which are imposed.
- 2.8 Any student who knowingly permits another student to plagiarise, copy or reproduce their work will be regarded as having breached this Policy.
- 2.9 The University recognises the benefits of discussion of assignments requiring a group response; such activities are normal in any academic community. Assessment guidelines will provide students with instructions as to what is acceptable and authorised and what is not in group assessments. Unless stated otherwise in the assessment guidelines, the University considers that all members of the group are equally responsible for the submitted assessment.
- 2.10 It is the duty of academic staff to ensure that they are providing students with fair and ethical support to achieve their independent learning.
- 2.11 [Guidance](#) on how to avoid academic misconduct will be provided for students as part of their induction to all programmes and throughout their studies.
- 2.12 All students are required to undertake mandatory online self-paced short course(s) on academic integrity, as mandated by the Senate; in addition, postgraduate research students may also be required to undertake other trainings, as prescribed by the University, for example, the University's Responsible Innovation Training.
- 2.13 The University reserves the right to utilise electronic and similarity detection checker systems for identifying academic misconduct and, where such systems are available, requires students to make their submissions through them. The use of these systems allows the student and the University to check systematically for signs of academic misconduct, thus ensuring that all students' assessed work is original and written by the student. Students must use only University approved detection tools.

- 2.14 With respect to students following a programme offered by the University at a partner institution, in the case of alleged academic misconduct relating to a University award, the case must be dealt with by the University.
- 2.15 Where students are studying via a collaboration or joint partner programme of study, the allegation of academic misconduct will be determined by the lead University, unless otherwise stated in the collaboration or joint partnership agreement.
- 2.16 The following lists a summary of terminologies that HWU uses in relation to any academic misconduct cases:

Terminology	Definition
Allegation	A concern raised by a member of University and other persons who have concerns over (1) whether a piece of work submitted for assessment is the student's own or (2) regarding the conduct of research. There is no presumption that misconduct has occurred; the University has an obligation to investigate allegations and determine whether they are proven or not.
Component (taught courses only)	Any part of the assessment that has been referred to Discipline Committees. Academic misconduct proven in a component (part or whole of an assessed piece of work), in some instances, regardless of the percentage, may result in the overall course for that semester being reported as Invalid Grade, and the reassessment of that component will be added to the other elements of the course assessment(s) at the reassessment diet only (taught courses).
Course	Regulation A1 Definitions and Interpretation: "Course" means a series of teaching and learning events leading to the award of credit which form part of a Programme of Study, and is further prescribed in Regulation A4, Courses, Programmes and Assessment, paragraph 2.
Invalid Grade (IG)	Course result of 'IG' will be added to a student's record by the relevant Registry and Academic Support team only when it has been determined by the relevant Discipline Committee that an entire course is void. This applies to all taught students, and any taught and assessed element of research student's work. The result of 'IG' remains permanently on a student's transcript.
Investigation Pending (IP) (taught courses only)	A course result of 'IP', for taught courses, will be added to a student's record by the relevant Registry and Academic Support team to any course being investigated for suspected academic misconduct. The result of 'IP' will be updated by the relevant Registry and Academic Support team following the completion of the relevant Discipline Committee's investigation, i.e., on receipt of the formal outcome letter issued by the University Student Conduct Office.
Offence	A case of proven academic misconduct will be referred to as an offence.
Stage	The various levels/progression points within a programme and the year in which a student is enrolled.
Void	For taught students, the penalty is providing no credit for the submitted work, e.g., a component of a coursework, an entire coursework, an examination, or any form of research project, that is under disciplinary investigation. This means the student will get no mark for that component. Depending on the severity of a case, the committee may impose the voiding of one or more than one course as penalty, where applicable. As such, the student who receives this penalty will not receive any marks for those courses, i.e., will receive an invalid grade (IG) for those courses. As a result, the student will not be able to get credit for the course since they did not pass it. If the student has exhausted their attempt opportunities, voiding a course means they may not be able to graduate from the programme in which they enrolled. For postgraduate research students (including students on doctoral or industry training programmes), the committee may impose the voiding of the entirety of any (or all) taught elements (credit bearing) and any (or all) research related submissions (including a student's final doctoral thesis) and research papers/publications in the name of the University.

- 2.17 For the purposes of the University's academic misconduct policy **plagiarism** constitutes a form of academic misconduct. Plagiarism is defined as the presentation by a student, for assessment, of work

(written or otherwise), ideas, or [intellectual property](#)² that has been taken from another source without appropriate acknowledgement of that source. Plagiarism also occurs when a student, having had the opportunity to receive advice and guidance, submits work that they know contains material taken from other sources, or involves the misappropriation or use of others' ideas, intellectual property, or work (written or otherwise), without sufficient acknowledgement or permission, and for which no attribution is provided in accordance with the conventions normally adopted in academic writing.

2.18 **Plagiarism** may take different forms, such as:

- **Copying and pasting parts or all of resources, digital or otherwise, without clear acknowledgement.**
- **Visual plagiarism:** A 'like for like' copying of the sum of a design or creative process; or adjusting or adapting another person's work, where significant original similarity, elements or attributes remain that can definitely be attributed to the original work.
- **Verbatim (word-for-word) quotation without clear acknowledgement.** This includes word-for-word translation from non-English resources to English.
- **Inappropriate paraphrasing.**
- **Inaccurate citation.**
- **Failure to reference.**
- **Self-plagiarism**, in which a student resubmits work that they originally completed and submitted for another purpose, **without acknowledgment of this**. This is regarded as academic misconduct (unless resubmission was permitted). This includes PGR students who may have published a research or review paper and used the same text in their final thesis which must be properly cited in any submitted work.

2.19 For the purposes of the University's academic misconduct policy **collusion** occurs where students work together to complete an assessment, in whole or in part, that should have been completed independently. Submissions should present a student's own personal skills and understanding and not seek to take credit for the contributions or knowledge of another student.

2.20 **Collusion** may be found in cases where the student works too closely with one or more individuals to help solve and/or answer an assessed task or question and produce a joint answer or solution (intentionally or not) to gain an unfair advantage for their own personal benefit. A student can be guilty of collusion by receiving inappropriate help from one or more other students or individuals (either internally or externally), or by providing inappropriate help to one or more other students (internally). All forms of work which have been submitted by a student for assessment should not be shared with other students, to either students studying the course in the same academic year or who have studied the course in prior academic years.

2.21 **Falsifying References:** It is a student's responsibility to ensure that their references list or bibliography accurately reflects genuine sources from which they got their information. Failing to cite and reference correctly, either intentional or unintentional, is a form of academic misconduct.

2.22 **Misuse of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) Tools:** any suspected misuse of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) will be dealt with under this policy. In most instances misuse of GenAI would fall under the definition of plagiarism (either through failing to appropriately reference sources (i.e. GenAI) or presenting work that is not student's own as if it were) but could also fall under the definition of dishonest practice where appropriate.

² PGR students are expected to respect the intellectual property rights of others and to ensure that all work submitted as part of their research is appropriately attributed. Misconduct may include, but is not limited to, the unauthorised use, reproduction, distribution, or presentation of another person's ideas, data, methods, software, creative works, or research outputs without proper permission or acknowledgement. It may also include the misappropriation of research results, breach of copyright, infringement of patents or licensing agreements, breaches of funder terms and conditions relating to the ownership, use, dissemination, or exploitation of research outputs, or the improper use or disclosure of confidential information. Students must comply with Heriot-Watt University policies, contractual obligations, funder requirements, and applicable intellectual property laws, and should seek guidance where ownership, authorship, or usage rights are unclear. Depending on the nature and seriousness of the infringement, breaches of intellectual property requirements may be addressed through the University's disciplinary procedures, through formal legal processes, or through both where appropriate.

2.23 Examples of **research ethics-related misconduct** include, but are not limited to:

- Conducting research requiring ethical approval without obtaining the appropriate level of approval (including “full approval” prior to data collection), or failure to secure approval through the University’s Ethics Management System where required;
- Failure to comply with the conditions of ethical approval, including deviation from approved research protocols without appropriate amendment or re-approval;
- Misrepresentation of research findings through fabrication, falsification, deception, or selective reporting;
- Obstruction of the research process, including withholding, destroying, or falsifying relevant evidence;
- Unfairly influencing research participants, witnesses, or interviewees, including coercion or inappropriate inducement;
- Breach of confidentiality obligations, including failure to protect participant identity or personal data in accordance with data protection legislation and University policy;
- Failure to implement appropriate data management, storage, or security measures, including failure to undertake a Data Protection Impact Assessment where required;
- The deliberate commercial exploitation of the ideas or work of others without appropriate acknowledgement and, where necessary, informed consent; and,
- Failure to comply with statutory, regulatory, or institutional requirements, including those relating to ethical review, data protection, and external approvals (e.g., NHS or other regulatory bodies where applicable).

2.24 Other examples of academic misconduct include but are not limited to the following:

- **Deliberately authorising, facilitating, or voluntarily providing HWU credentials, to any third parties, including any AI tools, to take unfair academic advantage:** this includes giving third party’s access to University systems, either directly or via another person. In the example of AI tools, they can normally only gain access to University systems (e.g. Canvas) if students deliberately or voluntarily provide their University login details (e.g. Canvas credentials) to the third party.
- **Purchasing or Soliciting Material/Work Undertaken by others and presenting it as their own work:** the use of services to produce student work for assessment (such services may try to persuade students that this is entirely normal and acceptable practice, when in fact it is misconduct).
- **Selling Material:** Selling or offering to sell, by whatever means, material or using other inducements, to assist a student in producing work for assessment.
- **Falsifying and Fabricating Data:** presenting data based on work which a student claims to have carried out but which they have invented or obtained by unfair means.
- **Examination Misconduct:** unauthorised materials or devices being in the vicinity of a student during an examination or the use of such materials, the use of electronic devices not permitted during an examination, or any other conduct not permitted under the University’s Regulations, Policies, and Procedures on examinations.
- **Dishonest Practice:** this covers any form of practice which attempts to deceive others, or obtain any form of academic advantage, but is not specifically identified by the above.
- **Contract Cheating:** The University shares the same definition as what [Quality Assurance Agency \(QAA\)](#) defines as:
“Contract cheating happens when a third party completes work for a student who then submits it to an education provider as their own, where such input is not permitted. Over the last decade, an industry has developed where companies, based in the UK or overseas, are paid to undertake this work. These companies have become known as ‘essay mills’, although many supply a range of services in addition to essay writing. Typically, the essay

mill will outsource the commissioned work to individual writers engaged on an ad hoc basis. The term 'contract cheating' does not apply exclusively to essay mills. It can, for example, also refer to situations such as friends or family members completing assignments for students in whole or in part and does not always involve a financial relationship". For more details, refer to [this](#) document on the University policy bank website.

- **Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations:** The University shares the same definition as contained in [The Concordat to Support Research Integrity](#) ('the Concordat') and their examples:
 - not observing legal, ethical, and other requirements for human research participants, animal subjects, or human organs or tissue used in research, or for the protection of the environment
 - breach of duty of care for humans involved in research whether deliberately, recklessly, or by gross negligence, including failure to obtain appropriate informed consent
 - misuse of personal data, including inappropriate disclosures of the identity of research participants and other breaches of confidentiality
 - improper conduct in peer review of research proposals, results, or manuscripts submitted for publication. This includes: failure to disclose conflicts of interest; inadequate disclosure of clearly limited competence; misappropriation of the content of material; and breach of confidentiality or abuse of material provided in confidence for the purposes of peer review.

3. CATEGORIES OF DISCIPLINARY OFFENCES

3.1. Offences are categorised below:

For Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students:

Academic misconduct is subdivided as Category A or Category B offences based on the apparent gravity of the offence and the penalty that could be imposed if an allegation is substantiated.

Category B offences are those where the penalty will not affect the student's progression in their degree or their final award, and the offence is for the first time or of a relatively minor nature. Alleged offences that meet the circumstances listed below may be classified as Category A offences:

- i) A repeat of a previous offence.
- ii) Where the penalty to be imposed might require a student to withdraw from the University.
- iii) In the case of any student other than a postgraduate student, where an allegation has been considered as a Category B offence, and where the penalty proposed might alter the final award.
- iv) In the case of a postgraduate student, when an allegation has been considered as a Category B offence and because of the proposed penalty to be imposed there would be no opportunity for the student to complete the programme of study
- v) Contract cheating allegations.
- vi) Inappropriate and unethical usage of Large Language Modules (LLMs) and any artificial intelligence technology.

Postgraduate Research Students:

The University Discipline Committee (UDC) will consider all allegations of academic misconduct by postgraduate research students, at both the preliminary and formal investigation stages. The UDC will determine whether there is a case to be heard and, if required, following the formal meeting what formal outcome and applicable penalties are to be imposed.

- 3.2. The University shall have the right to investigate any allegation of academic misconduct against a student (including those who have graduated) and may take disciplinary action where it decides, on the balance of probabilities, that a disciplinary offence (as defined in this policy) has been committed.
- 3.3. All decisions regarding reported Postgraduate Research allegations of academic misconduct cases must be reported to the University Student Conduct Office immediately, who will refer the cases to the

Chair and Vice-Chair of the UDC to determine the appropriate next steps. The UDC will be responsible for determining whether a case of academic misconduct has occurred or not, and to determine what, if any, penalty or penalties are imposed for the offence(s) proven.

- 3.4. The Procedures and responsibility for the initial consideration of cases in determining the classification of the offence are set out in a separate [Procedures](#) document. It is the duty of every member of staff, in whose opinion a breach of discipline *may* have occurred, to report the incident as soon as possible to the relevant staff member with responsibility for considering the allegation and the University Student Conduct Office, via the University's agreed submission processes.
- 3.5. For Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students, based upon the nature of the incident, responsibility for the consideration of cases in determining the categorisation of an alleged offence is summarised below:
 - 3.5.1. All reports and paperwork must be sent to the University Student Conduct Office (USCO). The USCO will log the referral and arrange for the case to be discussed with the relevant Chair of the School Discipline Committee to which the course or research activity resides.
 - 3.5.2. The Executive Dean of the Primary Academic Unit in which the course resides will appoint a Chair of the School Discipline Committee, who will be a member of academic staff in the Primary Academic Unit with appropriate experience for the purpose of the procedures. The School Discipline Committee must have at least two academic members of staff to be quorate. No member of staff determining the outcome of an alleged academic misconduct will have had any involvement in the case prior to the referral to the Committee (e.g., delivery of the course, marking of the assessment, personal tutor of the student(s), etc.).
 - 3.5.3. The Primary Academic Unit (PAU) for which the course or research activity resides will conduct the academic misconduct investigation and determine an appropriate penalty. Where applicable, the home PAU (determined by the student's programme) will be informed of the outcome via the outcome letter as well as the Chair of the School Discipline Committee and the academic member of staff who reported the case. Where required, the Student Records and Awards (SRA) Team will be informed of the outcome (see Section 4.15).
- 3.6. Any member of staff reporting a case of alleged academic misconduct should submit an online Incident Report Form. Please refer to the [Procedures](#) document for the relevant links and details on how to report an allegation.
- 3.7. A written record will be maintained of meetings held with students involved in cases of alleged academic misconduct. Any documentation on a matter of alleged academic misconduct, including letters, emails, photographs, or reports, may need to be disclosed to relevant parties during the consideration of a case of alleged academic misconduct and, therefore, should be factual and balanced. All records of individual cases should be retained in accordance with the [University Records Management Policy](#).
- 3.8. Examples of general evidence and documentation required to be submitted will normally include:
 - 3.8.1. a copy of the coursework guidelines and assessment criteria issued to students, where applicable.
 - 3.8.2. any relevant guidance issued to students that you feel may be useful, such as screenshots of links to referencing guidance provided on the [Virtual Learning Environment \(VLE\)](#) pages, such as Canvas, or class activities on avoiding academic misconduct.
 - 3.8.3. Plagiarism: the student's work showing plagiarised material; the Turnitin similarity report; copies of sources of material allegedly plagiarised, where available.
 - 3.8.4. Examination Misconduct: examination script(s); confiscated material; Examination Report Form from the invigilator.
 - 3.8.5. Collusion: the Turnitin similarity report of the student's submission, a copy of the student's original submission as well as a copy of the work alleged to have been copied, these documents should be annotated to show where the similarities between them are, relevant pages of the Student Handbook.

3.8.6. Generative AI: Evidence of work alleged to have been written by Artificial Intelligence.

3.8.7. Falsifying References: annotated versions of the list of the references which have been identified as being inaccurate, non-existent or not within the body of the assessment.

- 3.9.** Original evidence should be submitted. All evidence submitted should be clearly referenced with relevant extracts marked up appropriately. Additional evidence may be sought at any stage during the process of consideration of an alleged breach of discipline.
- 3.10.** Where more than one student is alleged to have committed the same reported offence, for example, collusion, the evidence of each of the alleged offenders will be disclosed to all parties, unless deemed not appropriate by the Chair of the relevant Discipline Committee or the University Student Conduct Office.
- 3.11.** For the reported alleged academic misconduct cases where more than one student is reported, all evidence will be redacted or edited as necessary prior to sharing with other students, in compliance with the University's Data Protection Policy. Work in which alleged academic misconduct has been identified should be withdrawn from the assessment process (including marking) until any investigation into alleged academic misconduct has been concluded.
- 3.12.** When an examination irregularity occurs, the student must hand over to the invigilator any unauthorised material and will normally be permitted to continue with the examination. The invigilator will retain the confiscated material at the conclusion of the examination and return it to the Academic Registry with the Examination Report Form. The University will maintain an Invigilator's Handbook which contains guidance for invigilators on the procedures to follow in the event of an examination irregularity.
- 3.13.** Any student against whom an allegation of academic misconduct is being made will be informed if a case is being submitted for consideration, by the relevant course leader, programme leader, or primary research supervisor. Where an assessor or examiner (either internal or external³ to the University) raises a concern regarding the academic work or submission of a student, the relevant course leader, programme leader or primary research supervisor must be informed and are required to report the concern to the University Student Conduct Office following approved procedures.
- 3.14.** Students who have an allegation of academic misconduct are expected to fully co-operate with the University during the investigation of an allegation of academic misconduct and should be prepared to attend meetings if required in connection with the investigation. Students who do not co-operate may be subject to further disciplinary procedures.
- 3.15.** All students, including students undertaking a programme of study at an Approved Learning Partner, collaborative partner, or other recognised partner institution or organisation, or by distance learning or HW Online learning, are expected to be available for interview, if required, by means of University's approved teleconferencing platform, and must be able to have their camera on during the interview.
- 3.16.** If a member of staff believes that the student(s) should be suspended whilst an investigation is carried out, they are required to discuss this with the Chair of School Discipline Committee who shall make such a recommendation through University Student Conduct Office to the Chair/Vice-Chair of the University Discipline Committee. Such a suspension should only be imposed if it is considered in the best interests of the University, its staff or students, or the student concerned, or is necessary to ensure an effective investigation.
- 3.17.** Penalties imposed that include voiding an entire course, or part thereof, or research submission (including research projects and doctoral thesis) and allowing reassessment or resubmission, will require a student to pay the relevant reassessment/resubmission fee and, where applicable, any repeat viva, or similar evaluation. When a course is voided, any further reassessment will be classed as the subsequent opportunity.
- 3.18.** Tariffs of penalties for academic misconduct are detailed in Sections 4 and 9. They provide a point of reference for appropriate staff and bodies with responsibility for imposing penalties and show recommended penalties based upon the circumstances presented.

³ External assessors and examiners will be advised as part of their engagement letter of their requirement to report to the University any concerns about academic misconduct.

- 3.19. Where an academic misconduct allegation is identified near the time of a student's graduation, they will not be entitled to receive their award until their case is resolved. A graduation hold will be placed on their record. Even if the case is concluded in advance of the next available graduation ceremony, their graduation is likely to be postponed to a subsequent ceremony to allow time for the necessary academic and administrative processes to be carried out.
- 3.20. Offences of an academic nature identified following graduation and involving academic misconduct in academic work which contributed towards a University award will be considered under this Policy. In such cases even if they have graduated the term 'student' in the *Policies* shall mean the person against whom an allegation is being made.

4. OUTCOMES AND PENALTIES

- 4.1. A list of outcomes for Category A and B allegations is set out below:

- **Dismissed.** There is no evidence of misconduct, and the assessment is referred back to the normal process, such as marking. No record of the allegation of the academic misconduct will be made on the student's academic profile in such circumstances.
- **Insufficient evidence.** There is insufficient evidence that, on the balance of probabilities, an act of academic misconduct occurred, and the assessment is referred back to the normal process, such as marking process. No record of the allegation of the academic misconduct will be made on the student's academic profile in such circumstances.
- **Not proven.** There is evidence that, on the balance of probabilities, an act of academic misconduct may have occurred, but it was not able to be fully proven. The assessment is referred back to the normal process, such as marking. No record of the allegation of the academic misconduct will be made on the student's academic profile in such circumstances.
- **Proven.** There is sufficient evidence that, on the balance of probability, academic misconduct has occurred.

- 4.2. A list of penalties and their relevance to Category A and B offences are set out below for any proven cases and are indicative of the types of penalties which may be applied; other forms of penalty may also be considered where these are deemed to be more appropriate or where more than one allegation is considered.

- 4.3. A student who is deemed to be in breach of discipline may be liable to one or more of the following penalties:

- 4.3.1. An official written warning (for Category A or Category B offence), which may include a capping of the overall course mark.
- 4.3.2. Exclusion, suspension, or disqualification from assessments or studies (for Category A offence).
- 4.3.3. Where an offence could have resulted in an improvement in academic performance, reduction in marks/grades awarded in one or more of the assessments (or component), with re-assessment as a further opportunity. The mark for any reassessments will normally be capped, unless exceptionally agreed by the UDC (for Category A or Category B offence).
- 4.3.4. Where an offence could have resulted in an improvement in academic performance, annulment (voiding) of one or more of the assessments (or component), with re-assessment as a further opportunity. The mark for any reassessments will normally be capped, unless exceptionally agreed by the UDC (for Category A or Category B offence).
- 4.3.5. Where an offence could have resulted in an improvement in academic performance, annulment (voiding) of one or more of the assessments, with no reassessment opportunity, and the overall course results may be capped (for Category A or Category B offence).
- 4.3.6. Where an offence could have resulted in an improvement in academic performance

for undergraduate or postgraduate taught students, a reduction in classification of degree to be awarded (for Category A offence).

4.3.7. Where an offence could have resulted in an improvement in academic performance, for postgraduate research students, a reduction in the degree that can be awarded (i.e. only permitted to submit for a Masters/MPhil) or determination that no award is to be conferred.

4.3.8. For **ALL** students, revocation of an award, having determined that there is good cause to do so. Revocation of an award also includes the deprivation of all privileges connected with the award.

4.3.9. For **ALL** students, expulsion from the University.

4.3.10. Revocation of visa status, including post graduate visa restrictions.

4.4. Where applicable, if the incident relates to postgraduate research students who are funded by internal or external grants (including scholarships and fee waivers), and where that funders or reporting body's reporting requirements obligate the University to do so, these must be reported to, and in the manner prescribed by, the funders or funding bodies, and in line with their timelines (i.e. the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), UK Research and Innovation (UKRI), Government bodies, employers, etc).

4.4.1. Postgraduate Students found to have been proven for academic misconduct may have their funding, scholarship or fee waivers withdrawn, either by the funder or the University, depending on the severity of the act of academic misconduct.

4.4.2. The University reserves the right to reclaim any fees and stipends from a student who has been proven to have committed an act of academic misconduct.

5. RECORDS AND REPORTS

5.1. Full notes should be taken of all proceedings, and the University Student Conduct Office has the responsibility for recording proceedings and retaining all records.

5.2. With regard to the nature of reports on proceedings, the following should be observed:

5.2.1. Reports should be sufficiently full to reflect the reasoning by which conclusions and recommendations have been reached;

5.2.2. Reports should be sufficiently comprehensive to allow the appropriate member of staff or Committee, depending upon the stage of appeal, to use them as a basis for any further review of a case;

5.2.3. Reports should be compiled with all due regard for confidentiality.

5.3. The Clerk to a committee must ensure that minutes and reports on meetings of a committee are agreed upon by the Chair of the Committee.

5.4. All records of individual cases should be retained in accordance with the University Records Management Policy.

5.5. An annual report on discipline cases considered under the Policies will be submitted by the University Discipline Committee to the Senate.

6. APPEALS

6.1. Appeals against academic misconduct outcomes will follow the University's [Global Student Discipline Appeals Policy and Procedures](#). Appeals against an academic misconduct outcome may be formally requested, subject to the acceptable grounds for an academic misconduct appeal.

6.2. In the academic misconduct outcome letter, the University will inform the appellant of their right to submit an Academic Misconduct Appeal, where appropriate.

- 6.3.** For Where a case is to be referred back to the applicable Discipline Committee (University Discipline Committee for Category A; School Discipline Committee for Category B) any required hearing should take place as soon as practicably possible and will be handled in accordance with the University's Global Student Academic Misconduct Policy.
- 6.4.** When conducting a hearing into a case referred back to the applicable Discipline Committee, following an appeal, that Discipline Committee will comprise at least two members of the Committee who have not previously had any involvement in the case under consideration. This ensures that there is no conflict of interest in relation to the student(s) involved.
- 6.5.** The applicable Discipline Committee will receive copies of the documentation provided by the student as part of their appeal.
- 6.6.** The clerk of the applicable Discipline Committee will provide the student with written notification of the decision of the Committee normally within ten working days of the decision being made. Every reasonable effort will be made to meet this time limit. Where it is not met, the student will receive an explanation for the delay. The notification shall include a statement of facts held to be proved, the substance of any findings that such facts constitute a breach of discipline, and a record of any penalty imposed. The letter to the student will confirm the right of the student of referral to the Scottish Public Service Ombudsman.

7. MODIFICATION OF POLICIES

- 7.1.** Any modifications made to these Policies will be made in accordance with *Regulation A13*.

8. FURTHER INFORMATION, HELP and ADVICE

- 8.1.** This document can be provided in other formats (such as large print, audio, and Braille) if required by contacting: disability@hw.ac.uk or 00 44 (0) 131 451 3386.
- 8.2.** The University Student Conduct Office (academic.misconduct@hw.ac.uk)

9. TARIFF OF PENALTIES: THE TARIFF OF PENALTIES PROVIDES EXAMPLES OF PENALTIES THAT MAY BE IMPOSED FOR PARTICULAR OFFENCES.

Appendix One summarises the different forms of academic misconduct and categories that the University recognises, along with the suggested tariff of penalties. Other academic misconduct types not specifically mentioned in the following tables (e.g., dishonest practice) will follow comparable tariffs.

The outcome of any disciplinary investigation will be made by the relevant Discipline Committee (School or University), based on the evidence submitted by academics and/or students and the severity of cases, in line with the tariff of penalties tables provided in this policy.

The examples of offences and penalties given below are a guide and it is expected that School Discipline Committees and the University Discipline Committee will apply the relevant penalty for an offence which has been proven. Under appropriate circumstances other penalties may be applied where they can be justified and where, in the case of Category B offences approval of the Dean is given.

APPENDIX ONE:

9.1. Table of tariff for proven forms of plagiarism and collusion (and similar offences): Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students only.

The relevant Discipline Committee will follow Table 9.1 when determining an outcome for forms of plagiarism (including collusion as an example) (as listed above):

Table 9.1 - Penalties relating to proven forms of plagiarism and collusion (and similar offences).

Penalties:	Discipline Committees (Category A or B)				University Discipline Committee Decision only (Category A):
	Formal Warning (overall course mark <u>may</u> be capped)	Void the component ^{1,2,3}	Void the entire course ⁴	Void the entire course and other(s) ⁵	
Reassessment:		May permit reassessment ⁶ at next available opportunity ⁷ for the component/course(s). (overall course mark <u>may</u> be capped)			No further assessment Permitted ^{8,9}
Global College programmes (first offence)	X	X	X		
Global College programmes (repeat offence)	X	X	X	X	X
Stage 1 or 2 (direct entrants only) – first offence	X	X	X		
PGT Year 1 (direct entrants only), Semester 1 – first offence		X	X	X	
Other UG stages (including projects and dissertations) – first offence	X	X	X		X
Other PGT stages – first offence			X	X	X
All PGT and UG Stages - Repeat or Multiple offences Notes: - This applies to students who have previously been cited for plagiarism, regardless of when the previous offence occurred. - Students who have progressed through the Global College programmes prior to commencing their Undergraduate or Postgraduate studies will have received Academic Integrity guidance and therefore are not treated as direct entrants. - Applies to students where two or more offences have occurred in the same semester, regardless of whether the first offence investigation has, or has not, been completed.					X

9.2. Contract Cheating and inappropriate use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students only.

The relevant Discipline Committee will follow Table 9.2 when determining an outcome for forms of Contract Cheating and inappropriate use of GenAI tools (as listed above), but should refer to Tables 9.2b and 9.2c when considering cases of (a) deliberately authorising, facilitating, or voluntarily providing HWU credentials, to any third parties, including any GenAI tools, to take unfair academic advantage or (b) falsifying references, respectively.

Table 9.2 – Penalties relating to proven forms of Contract Cheating and inappropriate use of GenAI tools

	Discipline Committees (Category A or B)		University Discipline Committee Decision only (Category A):
Penalties:	Void the entire course ⁴	Void the entire course and other(s) ⁵	
Reassessment:	May permit reassessment ⁶ at next available opportunity ⁷ for the course(s). (overall course mark <u>will</u> be capped)		No further assessment Permitted ^{8, 9}
Global College programmes	X	X	X
Stage 1 or 2 (direct entrants only) – first offence	X	X	
PGT Year 1 (direct entrants only), Semester 1 – first offence	X	X	
Other UG stages (including projects and dissertations) – first offence		X	X
Other PGT stages – first offence		X	X
All Stages - Repeat or Multiple offences			X
Notes: • This applies to students who have previously been cited for Contract Cheating and inappropriate use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools, regardless of when the previous offence occurred. • Students who have progressed through the Global College programmes prior to commencing their Undergraduate or Postgraduate studies will have received Academic Integrity guidance and therefore are not treated as direct entrants. • Applies to students where two or more offences have occurred in the same semester, regardless of whether the first offence investigation has, or has not, been completed.			

9.2a Deliberately authorising, facilitating, or voluntarily providing HWU credentials, to any third parties, including any GenAI tools, to take unfair academic advantage: *Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students only.*

This includes giving third party's access to University systems, either directly or via another person.

	University Discipline Committee only (Category A):
Penalty:	Immediate expulsion from the University
All Stages: Notes: • This applies to all students who have been proven to have deliberately authorised, facilitated, or voluntarily provided their HWU credentials, to any third parties, including any AI tools, to take unfair academic advantage. • This includes giving third parties access to University systems (e.g. Canvas).	

9.2b Falsifying References: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students only.

	Discipline Committees (Category A or B)			University Discipline Committee Decision only (Category A):
Penalties:	Void the component ^{1,2,3} (overall course mark may be capped)	Void the entire course ⁴	Void the entire course and other(s) ⁵	
Reassessment:	May permit reassessment ⁶ at next available opportunity ⁷ for the course(s). (overall course mark will be capped)			No further assessment Permitted ^{8, 9}
Global College programmes	X	X	X	X
Stage 1 or 2 (direct entrants only) – first offence	X	X	X	
PGT Year 1 (direct entrants only), Semester 1 – first offence	X	X	X	
Other UG stages (including projects and dissertations) – first offence			X	X
Other PGT stages – first offence			X	X
All Stages - Repeat or Multiple offences Notes: • This applies to students who have previously been cited for falsifying references, regardless of when the previous offence occurred. • Students who have progressed through the Global College programmes prior to commencing their Undergraduate or Postgraduate studies will have received Academic Integrity guidance and therefore are not treated as direct entrants. • Applies to students where two or more offences have occurred in the same semester, regardless of whether the first offence investigation has, or has not, been completed.				X

9.3. Examination Irregularities: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students only.

The relevant Discipline Committee will follow Table 9.3 when determining an outcome for forms of exam irregularities (as listed above):

Table 9.3 – Penalties relating to proven forms of Exam Irregularities

	Discipline Committees (Category A or B)				University Discipline Committee Decision only (Category A):
Penalties:	Formal Warning (overall course mark <u>may</u> be capped)	Void the component ^{1,2,3}	Void the entire course ⁴	Void the entire course and other(s) ⁵	
Reassessment:		May permit reassessment at next available opportunity ⁷ for the component/course(s). (overall course mark <u>will</u> be capped)			No further assessment Permitted ^{7,8}
Reason: Minor Breach of Regulations relating to examinations (e.g., in possession of mobile telephone during an examination with no evidence of use of unauthorised devices such as phone or smart devices)	X	X	X		
Reason: Major Breach of Regulations relating to examinations (e.g., communicating with another individual during an examination; unauthorised material found in an examination whether evidence or not of use)			X	X	X
For minor breaches like unauthorised material brought to the examination, but there is evidence that the unauthorised material was not used, a combination of above penalties, such as returning for marking (i.e., formal warning), but capping the course or exam mark at pass mark can be imposed.					

9.4. Breaches of Research Ethics: Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught students only.

The relevant Discipline Committee will follow Table 9.4 when determining an outcome for forms of breaches of research ethics (as listed below):

This tariff of penalties applies to all students and all locations, regardless of where the data is collected from.

If there are more than just an allegation of breach of research ethics involved, the Chair of the School Discipline Committee should contact the University Student Conduct Office or Chair/Vice Chair of the University Discipline Committee for guidance.

Table 9.4 – Penalties relating to proven forms of Breach of Research Ethics

	Discipline Committees (Category A or B)			University Discipline Committee only (Category A)
Penalties:	Formal Warning (overall course mark may be capped)	Void the entire course ⁴	Void the entire course and other(s) ⁵	Void the entire course and other courses
Reassessment:		May permit reassessment ⁶ at next available opportunity ⁷ for the course(s) ¹¹ (overall course mark will be capped)		No further assessment Permitted ^{8, 9, 10}
Reason: Student does not engage with the ethics approval process at any point: • Data collected and no evidence of seeking approval			X	X
Reason: Student does not engage with the ethics approval process until after submission: • Data collected and no evidence of seeking approval until after the assessment submission deadline.		X	X	X
Reason: Using unapproved methods of data collection not in original approval (1) Due to waiting for approval (i.e., based on literature review) and not deliberate attempt to avoid reapproval.	X	X		

	Discipline Committees (Category A or B)			University Discipline Committee only (Category A)
Penalties:	Formal Warning (overall course mark <u>may</u> be capped)	Void the entire course⁴	Void the entire course and other(s)⁵	Void the entire course and other courses
Reassessment:		May permit reassessment⁶ at next available opportunity⁷ for the course(s)¹¹ (overall course mark <u>will</u> be capped)		No further assessment Permitted^{8, 9, 10}
Reason: Using unapproved methods of collection not in original approval (2) and deliberate attempt to avoid reapproval.			X	X
Reason: Data collected and applied for approval just before submission deadline and (1) Retrospective approval <u>can</u> be applied. Conducted research without having valid approval in advance, but methods in the ethics approval are followed in the course.	X	X		
Reason: Data collected and applied for approval just before submission deadline and (2) - Retrospective approval <u>cannot</u> be applied. - Conducted research without having valid approval in advance, and whilst methods are followed in the course, they were not approved		X	X	X

9.5 Penalties for Postgraduate Research Students (and similar)

The PGR tariff table below focuses on the available penalties rather than attempting to prescribe every possible misconduct scenario. This reflects the policy's current approach that all PGR cases are considered by the University Discipline Committee (UDC) and allows proportionality based on seriousness, intent, scale, and any previous misconduct.

Table 9.5 – Penalties Relating to Proven Academic Misconduct: Postgraduate Research Students (and similar)

Penalty	Minor / First Offence	Significant Offence	Serious or Deliberate Offence	Most Serious / Repeat Offence
Formal written warning	X	X		
Mandatory research integrity, ethics, or academic integrity training	X	X	X	
Correction of errors, citations, references, acknowledgements or records ⁴	X	X		
Revise and resubmit progression report, annual review or thesis		X	X	
Delay progression, examination, viva, or award pending correction		X	X	
Redaction or removal of affected material, with examination of remaining work		X	X	
Reassessment or examination of unaffected work only		X	X	
Failure of progression assessment, report, examination or any element of assessment.		X	X	
Final resubmission opportunity only		X	X	
No further resubmission permitted			X	X
Examination for lower award only (e.g., MPhil)			X	X
Exit with lower qualification			X	X
Termination of registration			X	X
Reclamation of Fees/Stipend			X	X
Expulsion from the University				X
Compulsory Withdrawal from the University with no award				X
Revocation or rescission of a previously awarded degree				X
Notification to funders, sponsors, publishers, regulators, ethical bodies, or professional bodies (where required)	X	X	X	X

⁴ Students may be liable for any additional costs and expenses that are required as a result of having to rectify their work.

Table 9.5 Notes:

- The University Discipline Committee (UDC) may impose one or more penalties where appropriate.
- The UDC will determine the severity of a proven misconduct, based on the balance of probabilities, and determine whether it is minor, significant, serious, or most serious.
- Verbal feedback may be given for first drafts, recognising and addressing poor practice at the start, before escalation.
- Penalties may be differentiated for repeated, or denial of clear academic misconduct, or where student has not responded to feedback (i.e. not improved).
- Penalties should be proportionate to the seriousness of the misconduct, taking account of intent, extent of the misconduct, impact on the integrity of the research, and whether there have been previous findings of misconduct.
- Where correction or resubmission is permitted, a student's progression, examination, viva voce examination and/or award of degree (and any graduation) may be delayed until the required actions have been completed.
- Where misconduct affects only part of a research submission, the Committee may require correction, redaction, or resubmission of the affected material rather than imposing failure of the entire submission.
- Where external funding, ethical approvals, publishers, sponsors, professional bodies or regulators are involved, reporting requirements may apply following a proven case of academic misconduct.
- Revocation of an award may be considered where misconduct is discovered after graduation and contributed to the award being conferred.

A significant offence will be deemed proven where the University Discipline Committee is satisfied, on the balance of probabilities, that the student committed academic misconduct which materially compromises the integrity, originality, reliability, or assessment of the research, but which does not reach the threshold for the most serious sanctions such as termination of registration, expulsion, or revocation of an award. Such misconduct would normally result in more than a formal warning and is likely to result in correction, resubmission, reassessment, failure of an assessment stage, or restriction of future submission opportunities.

Examples of Significant Offences

The following would normally be considered significant offences, depending on the extent of the misconduct and the surrounding circumstances:

- Substantial plagiarism within a progression report, literature review, journal manuscript, conference paper, or thesis chapter.
- Extensive unattributed use of Generative AI in research work where this breaches University requirements but does not fundamentally invalidate the research.
- Falsification of references, citations, sources, or bibliographic information on a scale beyond minor referencing errors.
- Collection of research data without the required ethical approval, where the student ought reasonably to have known approval was necessary.
- Deliberate departure from an approved ethics protocol, where participant welfare or data integrity has not been seriously compromised.
- Submission of materially misleading research records, progress reports, or evidence of research activity.
- Limited fabrication, falsification, or manipulation of data affecting part, but not the entirety, of a research project.
- Self-plagiarism through substantial reuse of previously submitted or published material without appropriate declaration or permission.
- A repeat offence following a previous formal warning or finding of academic misconduct.

Examples of Serious Offences

Serious offences cases would normally move into the most serious category where there is proven evidence of:

- Fundamentally undermining the credibility of a thesis or research project.
- Extensive fabrication or falsification of data or results.
- Extensive fabrication or manipulation of research findings.
- Serious plagiarism within a thesis or major research submission.
- Deliberate misrepresentation of authorship or contribution.
- Serious breaches of research ethics or research integrity.
- Deliberate misuse of Generative AI in circumstances that fundamentally undermine the integrity of the research.
- Deliberate deception over a sustained period.
- Disclosing improperly the identify of those involved in research without their consent or other breach of confidentiality.
- Repeated academic misconduct following an earlier proven offence.
- Where it places any of those involved in research in danger (whether as subjects, participants, or associated individuals) without their prior consent and/or without appropriate safeguards even with consent (including reputational danger where that can be anticipated).
- Or where the University cannot be satisfied as to the integrity of the student's research or the validity of the award.

Factors that the UDC will take into consideration when making decision:

- Whether the misconduct was deliberate, reckless, or negligent.
- The extent and scale of the misconduct.
- Whether the misconduct affected a progression decision, publication, thesis examination, or award outcome.
- Whether research participants, collaborators, funders, or the University could have been adversely affected.
- Whether only part of the research is affected or the integrity of the entire project is called into question.
- Whether the student has previously received advice, training, warnings, or findings of misconduct.
- Any explanation, mitigation, admission, or corrective action offered by the student.

9.6 Appendix one notes

Void the component

¹ Where the voided component relates to a piece of coursework, i.e., not an examination component, the common practice will be to apply a void of the component with no resubmission permitted. However, the relevant Committee can, under exceptional circumstances, allow a resubmission of the voided component (usually for Stage 1 students). The resubmitted piece of work will be subject to a cap at an appropriate pass mark, i.e., 40% (e.g., undergraduate) or 50% (e.g., postgraduate taught).

² When a component is void, the common practice will be to apply a cap of marks to the overall course mark. However, the relevant Committee can, under exceptional circumstances, choose not to apply a cap of the overall course mark.

³ If by voiding a component, the student is required to take the standard reassessment for the course, the reassessment course mark will be subject to cap at an appropriate pass mark, e.g., 40% (usually undergraduate) or 50% (usually postgraduate taught), decided jointly by the Discipline Committee and the Primary Academic Unit. The reassessment will usually be at the next available opportunity, and the Primary Academic Units (i.e., Schools) will advise students of the details.

Void the entire course

⁴ Where a course is void the relevant Committee, may or may not allow reassessment of the course(s). If the reassessment of the voided course(s) is permitted, the overall course(s) mark will be capped at an appropriate pass mark, e.g., 40% (usually undergraduate) or 50% (usually postgraduate taught), decided jointly by the Discipline Committee and the Primary Academic Unit. This penalty could still affect progression which can be part of the imposed penalty. The reassessment will usually be at the next available opportunity, and the Primary Academic Units (i.e., Schools) will advise students of the details.

Void the entire course and other(s)

⁵ In the case of voiding of more than one course, the additional course to be voided will *normally* be the highest mark of the student in the same semester. There are, however, situations that this is not applicable, e.g., programme structure changes, timing of the disciplinary investigation, or the highest mark is from the other semester.

- Any resubmitted work because of a disciplinary penalty, is always subject to cap of the mark for the component or the course at an appropriate pass mark, i.e., 40% or 50% (for mainly postgraduate taught students).
- If the voided course is synoptic, all linked synoptic courses will be voided.
- All imposed penalties are at the discretion of the relevant Committee.
- University Discipline Committee for very serious academic misconduct allegation cases, can void more than two courses from any prior semester courses or academic years of studies.
- University Discipline Committee for very serious academic misconduct allegation cases, can impose a "No further assessment permitted" penalty.

Reassessment

Reassessment opportunities

⁶ The University may allow reassessment for less severe offences but will not permit for major offences of contract cheating and inappropriate use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools. If one of the courses is a dissertation, the other course to void can be any taught course(s) from any prior semester courses (usually the course with the highest mark).

Next available opportunity

⁷ Students should note this could be in a subsequent academic year, and therefore could result in a break in study, and a significant delay in progressing and graduating. Students should be aware that 'capped' mark could affect a year average, which may indirectly affect their progression and degree classification.

No further assessment permitted

⁸ University Discipline Committee may impose further penalties to those listed under Category B.

⁹ This may result in the student being required to withdraw from the University with a different award to the one for which they were studying or with no award.

¹⁰ The UDC can void any number of courses, including those in previous semesters.

Research Ethics Breaches

Reassessment opportunities

¹¹ The reassessment opportunity should be on a new topic (data collection) and the resubmitted assessment's mark will be capped at an appropriate pass mark.

Version	Changes
V1 - September 2025	Annual update to policy, approved by Senate on 12 June 2025
V1.1 March 2026	Updates approved by SCIBE, on behalf of Senate (09 March 2026): (1) Update to Section 2.17: Deliberately authorising, facilitating, or voluntarily providing HWU credentials, to any third parties, including any AI tools, to take unfair academic advantage (2) New Tariff under Section 9, where cases are clearly proven (effective immediately): 9.2b Deliberately authorising, facilitating, or voluntarily providing HWU credentials, to any third parties, including any AI tools, to take unfair academic advantage.
V2 – June 2026	(1) Minor changes (e.g. adding Global throughout) and correcting grammar/typos; (2) Clarification on Postgraduate Research Students (PGR), and related research students, being subject to this Policy; (3) Updated definitions of academic misconduct, aligned to the <i>The-Concordat-to-Support-Research-Integrity</i> (the ‘Concordat’), the requirements of both the SFC and UKRI regarding investigating academic misconduct related to research, and have incorporate the definitions contained with the University’s Research Ethics Policy; (4) Removal of the large sections of the Appeals Process, removing the actual detail which is duplicated in the separate Student Appeals policies and procedures.
V3 – September 2026	(1) Updates following working group consideration of required clarifications for postgraduate research students; and, (2) Inclusion of Table 9.5, agreed by that working group, and subsequently by SCIBE, on behalf of Senate