

SCOT Chapter 4 - Academic offences and bad academic practice V.1

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Students are expected to write assignments in their own words and to reference the sources they use in accordance with the conventions of their discipline. There are occasional exceptions where the exact words from existing sources need to be used in an assignment, including the use of direct quotations. However, students should note that using the work of others word for word in any work submitted for assessment should be done sparingly and only when absolutely necessary. Students should also note that there are conventions when quoting the work of others which should be followed.
- 1.2. Students who feel that they need assistance in writing appropriate English to help them avoid accidentally committing an academic offence should, in the first instance, seek guidance from their Module Lecturer or Programme Teaching Assistants. Further information and guidance can be accessed through the relevant Academic Administration Executives.
- 1.3. Students subject to this procedure may ask the Board of Examination to review their case but only after the Metro Campus's procedure has been exhausted.

2. Definitions

- 2.1. **Bad academic practice** is the presentation of work that is not the student's own as if it were. It is the passing off of ideas, data or other information that are not within the realm of common knowledge in the discipline as if such materials were originally discovered by the student, or it is the word for word duplication of short phrases in written work, in oral presentation, or equivalent duplication in non-written forms, where the source is not mentioned, and where such duplication is minor in scale.
- 2.2. It is an academic offence for a student to commit any act which is intended to modify or evade, in an unauthorised manner and/or by unfair means, the condition of assessment specified by the Institute in relation to a programme leading to a Qualification award. The following are examples of such an academic offence but do not represent an exhaustive definition:
- 2.3. Examination malpractices
A candidate commits the offence of cheating in an examination if s/he:
 - Deliberately acquires advance knowledge of the detailed content of the examination
 - Copies from the examination script of another candidate
 - Allows another candidate to copy from his or her examination script

- Provides information to another candidate in an examination
 - Communicates (or attempts to communicate) with another candidate in an examination
 - Obtains any other assistance from another candidate
 - Uses or has access to unauthorised material
 - Impersonates another examination candidate or allows himself or herself to be impersonated
 - Has access to an electronic communication device
 - Does any other thing with the intention of gaining unfair advantage over other candidates.
 - Refuses to comply with a reasonable request made by a member of the Institute staff where they suspect an incidence of cheating.
- 2.4. In such circumstances, all candidates concerned may be deemed to have committed an academic offence.
- 2.5. **Unauthorised material** is defined as any textual or numeric material or any device which is not explicitly identified as authorised material in the examination paper rubric, and which may reasonably be considered to offer a candidate an unfair advantage. Only material listed on the question paper is allowed in the examination room.
- 2.6. It shall be an offence for a candidate to use or have access to unauthorised material at any time while the examination is in progress. The definition of '**access**' includes material on the candidate's person or on or by his or her examination desk.
- 2.7. **Plagiarism** is the deliberate attempt to gain advantage by presenting any work, data or concepts (including drafts and work in progress) that are not the student's own as if they were. An example of this may be the word-for-word substantial duplication of phrases or sentences in written work, or in oral presentations and the creative arts, whether or not the original source is mentioned.
- 2.8. This definition of **plagiarism** also extends to non-written forms of production (for example, in performance, design, drawings, the making of circuits or other objects) where equivalent duplications are made; this is sometimes referred to as a 'visual plagiarism'. An example of this may be where a student's work copies, parodies, appropriates, pays homage to, or pastiches a specific source but fails to acknowledge or reference the influence or significance of this source. In all cases, such sources may include the work of other students at the Institute or another institution or contracted third parties.
- 2.9. The Institute reserves the right to test any work submitted by a student, for consideration by an academic member of staff, for plagiarism. This includes the

submission of student work to third parties for electronic testing. Content submitted to such third party providers is only ever disclosed to another university or equivalent institution in the event of matching text being found.

- 2.10. **Acquiring and submitting work not written by the student**
It is an academic offence for a student to acquire (or attempt to acquire) and then subsequently submit work that they have not written or produced themselves. Examples of this can include, but are not limited to, work that is purchased from third parties and/or online sources and work that has been substantially amended and/or improved by a third party.
 - 2.11. **Fabrication of results**
It is an academic offence for a candidate to claim to have carried out experiments, observations, interviews or any form of research which s/he has not, in fact, carried out.
 - 2.12. **Collusion** is the deliberate attempt to gain advantage by presenting work that is not solely the student's own as if it were where the source of the unreferenced work is that of another student who has connived to deceive. Being party to collusion in providing material for another student is just as much an academic offence as using such material. Collusion is recognised by the duplication of passages or phrases in written work or in oral presentations, or equivalent duplication in non written forms, and it necessarily involves a conspiratorial attempt to deceive. Collusion must not be confused with the good practice of collaborative learning and peer support.
 - 2.13. As per the definitions, students who have repeated cases of bad academic practice could be found to have committed an academic offence and will be dealt with accordingly.
 - 2.14. **Reuse of assessed material**
It is an academic offence to include in work submitted for assessment material which has already been submitted for a different assessment (whether in the current programme or for a different award at this Institute or any other institution) unless such inclusion has been agreed with the appropriate module leader or equivalent and is fully referenced. Students can thus utilise previous work as a building block for future work as long as this is explicitly referenced.
3. **Actions to be taken in the event of suspected academic offences (Students of taught programmes)**
 - 3.1. **Informing the Examination Secretary and Chair of the Board of Examinations**
 - 3.1.1. **Bad Academic Practice is going to handle**

- 3.1.1.1. either by the Assessor or Programme Manager/ Quality Assurance Manager without reference to the examination secretary
- 3.1.1.2. by the Examinations Secretary, if a programme manager is unable to make a clear distinction between bad academic practice and plagiarism.

3.1.2. Cheating in examinations

In accordance with the requirements of the Instructions to Invigilators, an invigilator shall, where a candidate is suspected of contravening the 'Examination Regulations', endorse the candidate's script at the appropriate point with the time and with a brief description of the incident and shall inform the candidate that the circumstances will be reported to the appropriate officer/ chief invigilator/examinations secretary and the Chair of the Board of Examinations.

- 3.1.3. In the case of a student on a taught programme, when a supervisor, tutor or examiner suspects plagiarism, collusion, fabrication of results, reuse of assessed material, or any academic offence other than bad academic practice in any work which forms part or all of a unit of assessment, s/he shall report the matter to the Examination's Secretary and notify the Chair of the Board of Examination for information.
- 3.1.4. Any student has the right to draw the attention of the Examination's Secretary to any suspicions of an academic offence.

3.2. Actions taken by the Examinations Secretary

3.2.1. Consultation with the Registrar/ Head of Student and Academic Services

In the case of a taught course student, the Examinations Secretary will act in accordance with protocols devised by the Board of Examinations. This will include establishing whether the case is a first offence. The Board of Examinations will provide guidance on appropriate courses of action in order to provide for consistency and fairness across the Institute.

- 3.2.2. In cases of academic offences, within fourteen working days of receiving a report from a member of staff or from an examiner/invigilator, the Examinations Secretary, shall take action to inform the student concerned in writing of the allegations and invite the student to a formal hearing. At the hearing the student may make representations and submit any appropriate evidence.

3.2.3. After considering any representations from the student, including any evidence in mitigation, the Examinations Secretary will decide whether there may be any substance to the allegations. The Academic Practice Officer can decide:

- to take no further action if s/he believes there is no case to answer
- to take action in accordance with the options given in the Bad Academic Practice and Academic Offences
- to refer the case to the Board of Examinations as a major offence

3.2.4. Standard penalties

3.2.4.1. In cases where a student has clearly exercised considerable ingenuity and forethought in preparing and/or secreting unauthorised material during an examination the Examinations secretary may refer the case to the Board of Examination even if it is the student's first academic offence. This may also be the case if there is evidence of (or suspicion of) collusion between students in relation to cheating during an examination.

3.2.4.2. If the student has failed in the work or module, then the Board of Examinations shall determine whether s/he has the right to be reassessed in that work or module, subject to the Institute's normal re-assessment regulations and any specific subject, programme or module regulations.

3.2.5. Student's right of appeal against a Decision of Examinations Secretary

3.2.5.1. If a student believes that Examinations Secretary's decision was not reached in accordance with the procedures described in these regulations then the student may present his/her case, giving reasons, to the Registrar/ Head of Student and Academic Services in writing within 14 working days of the date on which the Examinations Secretary notified the decision to the student.

3.2.5.2. Upon receipt of such written representation Registrar will review the action taken by the Examinations Secretary. If there are good grounds for the appeal, the Registrar will appoint two members of the Board of Examinations from outside the student's Faculty to consider the case. The decision of the Registrar/ Head of Student services shall be final and not subject to review by any other Institute Body.

3.2.6. Referral to Board of Examinations

- 3.2.6.1. Cases involving students on taught programmes must be referred to the Academic committee comprised of Faculty Heads.
- 3.2.6.2. If there is any doubt, the matter must be referred to the Board of Examinations.
- 3.2.6.3. If the Examinations Secretary decides to refer the case to the Panel, the Panel shall consider the case and shall be responsible for determining whether, and the degree to which, the allegations have been substantiated.
- 3.2.6.4. If the matter is referred to the Board of Examinations, the Academic Practice Officer shall provide the Board with the Academic Services, supervisor's, tutor's or examiner's original report and any other information or observations which the Examination's secretary wishes the Board to consider. The Examinations secretary will normally be required to attend the Board meeting.