Academic Integrity Policy
Poor Academic Practice Procedure
And
Academic Misconduct Procedure

VERSION CONTROL STATEMENT

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Author:	**Dean for Teaching, Learning and Student Experience**
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Contents

Introduction

The University's Academic Integrity Policy, Poor Academic Practice Procedure, and Academic Misconduct Procedure are all very closely linked with each other. To make it as easy as possible for students and staff to access and read through all three, and understand how they are associated, they are all contained within this one document.

The contents list below sets out the pages on which you can find information on specific topics, and if you would like to jump to the policy or either of the procedures, you can click on these links to take you to the relevant part of the document:

Academic Integrity Policy

Purpose

1. The University of Stirling is committed to protecting the quality and standards of its awards. Consequently, the University seeks to promote and nurture academic integrity, support staff academic integrity, and support students to understand and develop good academic skills that facilitate academic integrity. In addition, the University deals decisively with all forms of academic misconduct.

2. The University has signed up to the QAA and Academic Integrity Advisory Group's, 'Academic Integrity Charter'. This represents an institutional pledge to implement its principles and commitments which include working with staff and students and, in collaboration across the sector, to protect and promote academic integrity, and take action against academic misconduct.

3. This policy sets out the University's position in respect of academic integrity and exists in parallel with the Academic Misconduct Procedure which provides the process through which the University considers and responds to academic practice which may constitute academic misconduct.

Definitions

4. **Academic Integrity:**
   The University adopts the following statement to define academic integrity:
   Academic integrity is acting consistently in accordance with the fundamental values of honesty, fairness, responsibility, respect, trust and courage in your studies, research and conduct.[1]
   Where a student does not act with academic integrity, their work or behaviour may demonstrate poor academic practice or it may represent academic misconduct.

5. **Academic Misconduct**
   The University defines academic misconduct as:
   any act or attempted act that does not demonstrate academic integrity and that may result in creating an academic advantage for you or another person, or an academic disadvantage for any other member or member of the academic community.[2]

6. **Assessment**
   Coursework, examination (remote or in-person, wherever taken), oral, skills assessment or class test that is considered and/or marked by academic staff as part of the learning and teaching of a module/programme.

[1] Adapted from the International Center for Academic Integrity's Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity, https://academicintegrity.org/resources/fundamental-values
[2] Adapted from the University of California at Berkeley's, 'Defining Academic Misconduct', https://gsi.berkeley.edu/gsi-guide-contents/academic-misconduct-intro/definitions/

7. **Poor Academic Practice**
   The submission of any type of assessment with a lack of, or inadequate referencing which does not effectively acknowledge the origin of words, ideas, images, tables, diagrams, maps, code, sound and any other sources used in the assessment. Poor academic practice is further defined and distinguished from plagiarism in paragraph 19.

8. Different forms of Academic Misconduct are defined in paragraph 20.

Scope

9. Members of University of Stirling staff have a range of responsibilities within this policy and in operating the Poor Academic Practice and Academic Misconduct Procedures.

10. This policy, and the associated procedures on Poor Academic Practice and Academic Misconduct, all apply to all students of the University. This includes students on taught and research programmes offered at Undergraduate and Postgraduate levels, visiting students and students undertaking a University of Stirling programme through an integrated INTO/University of Stirling route.

11. The Academic Integrity Policy and its associated procedures also apply to students taking a University of Stirling programme through a collaborative, partnership or integrated route. Whilst this policy and its associated procedures will only apply to those parts of study provided by or under the name of the University of Stirling, if a student receives any academic integrity-based outcomes or penalties from the collaborative/partner institution, these will be counted within any determination of an outcome or penalty under the University of Stirling Academic Misconduct Procedure.

12. Matters of academic misconduct are considered through the Academic Misconduct Procedure which accompanies and operates in parallel with this policy. However, where a student is confirmed to have carried out academic misconduct and their actions may also represent non-academic misconduct, the University may decide that it is necessary for action to be taken under Ordinance 2, the Code of Student Discipline, *in addition* to the action taken through the Academic Misconduct Procedure. Where this is the case, action under Ordinance 2 will be progressed after the outcome of the Academic Misconduct Procedure has been determined.

Points of Policy

13. Academic integrity describes the values that are held as essential in UK Higher Education, and it is expected that all staff and students demonstrate these values in all aspects of their academic studies, research and conduct.

14. The six fundamental academic values the University of Stirling upholds are that staff and students as members of the University community act consistently with:

    - **Honesty**, and are truthful about which ideas are their own and which are from other people's work in their learning, research and practice, and about the methods and results of their research.
    - **Fairness**, and do not take advantage of other people's work, for example, by pretending it is their own work.
    - **Responsibility**, by taking responsibility for their own learning, actively seeking out the information they need to study effectively and, as part of the University community, sharing responsibility for these values being upheld.
    - **Respect**, and show respect for other students, staff and the work of others and expect the same in return.
    - **Trust**, and trust that they and the whole University community will act fairly and consistently in protecting these values.
    - **Courage**, and as part of the University community, show courage to uphold these values, even when it is difficult to do so.

15. Promoting and upholding academic integrity is the collective responsibility of the University, its staff and its students. All staff and students have a responsibility to contribute to the continuing integrity and therefore quality of University of Stirling degrees, including by highlighting any acts of academic misconduct or external sources that encourage and promote cheating, such as essay mills.

The University:

- Ensures, via the Education and Student Experience Committee and its sub-committees, that its Academic Integrity Policy and associated procedures are robust and effective, and distributed widely to staff and all students, and that steps are taken to support easy access and understanding of the policy and procedures.
- Ensures that appropriate training in academic integrity, what constitutes academic misconduct and good academic practice is available to all students and staff.
- Ensures that all students and staff have access to the University's Academic Integrity Policy.
- Ensures that all academic staff are provided with the appropriate training in identifying and dealing with academic misconduct.
- Provides accurate details on a student or staff member's academic honesty and integrity in any employer or professional body reference for a student or staff member in which such information is requested.

Academic Staff:

- Should encourage students to explore sources of knowledge and collaborate while explicitly and purposefully:
    - Ensuring that all students for whom they provide supervision, or set and/or assess/examine work, are provided with information on what is expected of them in terms of academic integrity and the University's Academic Integrity Policy, the

academic expectations and conventions in their field, and what constitutes good academic practice.
    - Supporting and embedding academic skills development in reading, writing, referencing and proof reading, which support good academic practice in their modules and programmes.
    - Designing assessments at module and programme levels in such a manner that makes academic misconduct less likely (e.g. change questions regularly, set realistic assessments in terms of level, load and submission dates, and provide formative assessments and exemplars for students).
    - Setting appropriate conditions for group work and make it clear where the distinction lies between group work and individual work.
    - Cultivating a culture with their students of mutual respect for the production of one's own work.
    - Acting with academic integrity both broadly as a member of the University's staff, and when creating and producing their own academic work.
    - Applying the Academic Integrity Policy and Academic Misconduct Procedure consistently and fairly.

Students:

- The foundation of learning is sharing knowledge and collaborating with other others to create new knowledge. Students are encouraged to share knowledge, work together, reflect on exemplars of good practice, offer and receive constructive feedback from peers and seek guidance or support as required. In doing so, students must:
    - Act with academic integrity.
    - Submit for assessment only work that they produced themselves and which duly acknowledges ideas, words and works of others that were used in the production of their own work.
    - Follow the referencing guidelines for their discipline.
    - Not share their individual work with another student.
    - Not act in a way which enables, facilitates or encourages academic misconduct in others.
    - Secure and protect their work at all times.
    - Not discuss test/examination questions with anyone else while the test/examination is taking place unless specifically permitted in the test/examination.
    - Ensure that they act within the boundaries of the Academic Integrity Policy.
    - Ensure that they act in accordance with the University's policy on Audio Visual Material to Support Learning, and do not inappropriately share any audio-visual materials prepared by the University.
    - Secure the required ethical approval before undertaking research for dissertations and theses.
    - Proactively ensure they have a clear understanding of academic integrity and the University's expectations in relation to this, including through completion of any academic integrity related training or tutorials that the University provides.

- Take the opportunity to use the similarity checking programme available within the VLE to check the originality of their written work on all text-based assessments prior to final submission.
- Use artificial intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT, ethically and within the guidelines issued by the University and in connection with specific assessments.

16. Learning to express oneself in written English is an essential part of studying at a UK university. The University recognises this is a learning process and that some students may benefit from guidance offered by proof-readers. Details of who can be a proofreader, when they may be used and how they should be acknowledged on the student's work is set out in the University Proofreading Policy.

17. Where a student does not act with academic integrity, their work may demonstrate poor academic practice, or it may represent academic misconduct. One act of poor academic practice would not constitute academic misconduct, however repeated acts could be considered as academic misconduct.

18. Where academic misconduct is suspected or alleged after the University has confirmed and/or granted an academic award or academic credit, the matter should be referred to Academic Registry in the first instance via quality@stir.ac.uk. Academic Registry will work in collaboration with the relevant Faculty and the University Chief Examiner, and progress consideration of the matter as appropriate to the circumstances, and in broad alignment with the principles of this policy and the Academic Misconduct Procedure.

19. **Poor Academic Practice**

19.1. Good academic practice is a skill which students take time to learn and develop through repeated practice and with guidance and support. Therefore, instances of poor academic practice can be part of the learning process. In the context of this learning process, it is the responsibility of students to act as set out in paragraph 14, including to complete all relevant training that is offered, ensure that the referencing guidelines for their discipline are followed, and seek support where required.

19.2. Poor Academic Practice occurs when a student submits any type of assessment that does not properly acknowledge the origin of words, ideas, images, tables, diagrams, maps, code, sound, and any other sources used in the assessment. It is distinguished from plagiarism in the first instance by the volume of unacknowledged material and its distribution throughout the assessment.

19.3. Poor Academic Practice includes:

- Inappropriate quoting from sources, including artificial intelligence tools, whether or not referenced in-text and/or in the bibliography: this can include directly quoting material from a source without placing it in quotation marks; using short or larger sections from

one or more sources, omitting some words and/or changing the word order, without using quotation marks and consequently presenting the work as your own.

- Limited collaboration between students where the requirement is to submit individual work: this occurs, for example, when students use the same structure, sources and/or quotations in assessments that do not follow a prescribed structure.
- Lack of references in small sections of an assessment: this can include lack of in-text and/or bibliographic references; referencing sources correctly in the bibliography but omitting the references in the text or vice versa.
- Poor academic practice during closed book assessments: this includes, for example, having a phone or electronic device on your person, even if it is switched off.

19.4. One act of poor academic practice does not constitute academic misconduct. This includes instances of poor academic practice in more than one assessment that are submitted around the same time, and therefore before poor academic practice has been highlighted to the student. However, any repeated act of poor academic practice after poor academic practice issues have been raised with the student will normally be considered as academic misconduct, depending on the severity of conduct and the engagement of the student in developing their skills in this area.

19.5. The steps that are to be taken in response to a case of poor academic practice are set out in the 'Poor Academic Practice Procedure'.

20. Academic Misconduct

20.1. Academic misconduct can take several forms, although it should be noted that academic misconduct *does not* include differences in opinion and interpretation of research results and data. The University recognises, amongst others, the following forms of academic misconduct:

20.1.1. Contract Cheating

Contract cheating takes place when a student submits an assessment that was completed by a third-party either for payment or for free. It is a broad category that includes, but is not limited to, work bought from so-called essay mills, substantially unchanged/unmodified output from an artificial intelligence tool, customised work commissioned from ghost writers, and selling or exchanging work for use by others. A further example would be a friend or family member completing an assessment for a student. Work in this category covers the whole spectrum of assessment types. Any form of contract cheating constitutes academic misconduct, often of the most serious form.

20.1.2. Inappropriate use of artificial intelligence tools

Using artificial intelligence tools effectively is an important skill for students to learn. However, inappropriate use of artificial intelligence tools in preparing assessments breaches some or all of the six fundamental academic values set out in paragraph 14. Examples are:

- Submission of any form of assessment, which the student has not individually created or written, as the content wholly or substantially originates from output of an artificial intelligence tool.
- When a student uses an artificial tool in breach of the Proofreading Policy.
- Where an artificial intelligence tool has been used in a manner contrary to the instructions of the particular assessment.
- When part of an assessment originates from an artificial tool without appropriate acknowledgement.

Guidance on appropriate use of artificial intelligence tools can be found in the student guide.

20.1.3. **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism (as distinguished from poor academic practice), can be defined as:
The practice of taking someone else's work or ideas or words and passing them off as one's own.[3]

Plagiarism is a specific form of cheating which usually occurs when a student is working independently on an assessment (e.g., essays, reports, presentations, or dissertations). Examples of other people's 'work' can include anything taken from any form of publications, internet sources, the spoken word, graphics, data, and written text.

There are different forms of plagiarism including:

- The inclusion of extracts from another person's work without the appropriate acknowledgement of the original source(s), whether in its original form or in a linguistically modified form.
- The summarising of another person's work without acknowledgement.
- The substantial use of the ideas of another person without acknowledgement.
- Including material from teaching resources in assessments without acknowledgement of its origin.
- The use of websites or software to mask or facilitate plagiarism.

20.1.4. **Self-plagiarism**

Students may only submit an item of written work for assessment once during their studies at the University of Stirling. Duplicate submission of the same work (whether in whole or in part, e.g., re-using only a paragraph from previous submitted work), is not permitted unless it is where:

- Resubmission is expressly required/allowed within the assessment instructions for the module
- Assessment is being resubmitted after failing the module, as part of a resit attempt.

[3] Adapted from the Oxford English Dictionary definition of plagiarism',
https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/plagiarism

Duplicate submission of an item of written work in any other circumstance is not allowed and constitutes academic misconduct.

Different forms of self-plagiarism include:

- Recycling the whole or parts of previously submitted assessment in the writing of another assessment, even if due recognition of this is given in the references.
- Reusing the whole or part of assessment submitted in a different module in a different subject.
- Reusing the whole or part of assessment submitted by the student to another educational institution.

20.1.5. **Collusion**

In simple terms, collusion is:

- When one student copies the work of another student either with or without the knowledge of the original author; or
- When two or more students work together to produce an assessment that they are to submit individually.

Collusion is not:

- Working on an assessment with members of a designated group of students as expressly directed in assessment details in a module. Where the assessment is based on a single piece of work produced by the group as a whole, students are expected to cooperate fully in all phases of the project. However, any part of the work which should be completed individually, and which contributes towards an individual student's formal assessment must be produced by that individual student alone.

The actions of all students involved in a case of collusion will be considered through the academic misconduct procedure, even where it is asserted that a student has copied another student's work without the knowledge of the authoring student. This is because it is the responsibility of all students to ensure that their work is secure at all times, and therefore not available to be copied by another student. The decisions regarding academic misconduct in respect of each of the students may be different depending on the circumstances of the case.

20.1.6. **Falsification**

Data collected from observations, experiments, surveys, questionnaires, interviews, and polls are often used in academic assessments. It is academically dishonest to report anything other than the results obtained using the stated method of data collection. Falsification is the fabrication or invention of data, information, or references in any formal academic exercise. Falsification includes knowingly misrepresenting data and research to show either a different process that was followed or a different end result from what was actually obtained or both. In particular, students must not:

- Change or manipulate the method of data collection before the end of the data collection period, unless a full account is provided in the final report.

- Change or omit data that has been collected without appropriate explanation and justification.
- Add data collected outside the data collection period.
- Add fictitious data.
- Falsify data in order to make it fit a particular theory or preferred outcome

20.1.7. **Piracy**

The deliberate exploitation of ideas from others without proper acknowledgement.

20.1.8. **Impersonation**

Students must not impersonate another student, nor allow themselves to be impersonated at any time whether in a learning and teaching activity, in an assessment or at University meetings. Furthermore, it is also unacceptable for a student to coerce another to produce an assessment on their behalf.

20.1.9. **Use of unfair means in an assessment taken under exam conditions**

Some assessments, including examinations or class tests, may be conducted under exam conditions. 'Exam conditions' refers to when an assessment is required to be completed by a student: without consultation with others and within a set period of time. Students must not use any unfair means in any assessment taken under exam conditions. Therefore, any unfair means, including the following, are unacceptable during an assessment taken under exam conditions:

- Unauthorised notes or information resources in any form.
- The use of a mobile phone unless authorised by the invigilator.
- The use of an electronic device, with the exception of digital exams where students are permitted to use their own devices.
- The use of unauthorised calculators or dictionaries.
- The use of smart watches.
- Reading from another student's work.
- Communicating with another student unless the activity is specifically permitted.
- Attempting to circumvent or circumventing online exam firewalls and other online proctoring tools.

20.1.10. **Bribery or Intimidation**

All forms of bribery are illegal in the United Kingdom in terms of the Bribery Act 2010. In the context of this policy, attempting to improperly influence a member of staff in order to achieve an academic outcome through any means such as the giving of money or gifts, or through intimidation constitutes academic misconduct. In addition, attempting to improperly influence or intimidate another student to produce or share academic work constitutes academic misconduct.

20.1.11. **Dishonest Practice**

Dishonest practice includes a wide variety of activities that aim to obtain an unfair advantage through:

- Making false declarations to Faculties, Academic Staff members, Boards of Examiners or Appeal Panels.
- Attempts to circumvent the similarity checking programmes that the University uses.
- Submitting documents which have been forged in any way.
- Attempting to gain or gaining access to examination or class test papers prior to their release and/or sharing examination or class test papers prior to their release.
- Deliberate avoidance or refusal to engage with the relevant ethics review and approval process.
- Making false or misleading statements as to the extent to which, and how, artificial intelligence tools were used in an assessment.
- Making a false or misleading statement regarding proofreading.

20.1.12. **Inappropriate use of proofreaders**

Students must submit work which they have individually created or written. The University Proofreading Policy sets out the parameters for the use of proofreaders and how their use should be acknowledged. Breach of that policy will be regarded as inappropriate use of proofreaders for the purposes of this policy and procedure.

21. Where the University considers that a student's work may demonstrate academic misconduct, this will be considered in line with the Academic Misconduct Procedure that accompanies this policy.

22. Decisions taken under the provisions of the Academic Misconduct Procedure on whether or not an allegation of academic misconduct is confirmed, the classification of academic misconduct offences, and academic misconduct offences constitute academic judgement.

Poor Academic Practice Procedure

23. In line with the provisions of the Academic Integrity Policy, where one instance of poor academic practice is demonstrated this will not constitute academic misconduct and the student will be allowed to learn from the process (see paragraph 19.4). All cases of poor academic practice should be explicitly highlighted in written feedback provided to the student and it is the student's responsibility to seek additional guidance and support to ensure that the poor academic practice does not re-occur.

24. Where there are particular concerns about the extent of poor academic practice or repeated academic practice, the staff member assessing the piece(s) of work should advise the Subject Chief Examiner and the Module Coordinator of this. The Module Coordinator (or nominee)will arrange to have an Academic Practice Discussion with the student.

25. An Academic Practice Discussion is a less formal discussion than those that take place in line with the Academic Misconduct Procedure and will include advising the student:

    - Of the poor academic practice issue(s);
    - On what constitutes good academic practice, and/or signpost them to sources of guidance and support in order that the student can learn from this;
    - Of the requirement for them to complete relevant training on Academic Integrity;
    - That if the Academic Integrity training is not completed, or if further poor academic practice is demonstrated, this would constitute academic misconduct and as such would be considered further through the Academic Misconduct Procedure.

26. All instances of Poor Academic Practice should be submitted online via the Poor Academic Practice Report Form. Data held in the central student management system will serve as a point of reference in monitoring of Poor Academic Practice and compliance with conditions.

27. In marking the assessment(s) containing poor academic practice, all sections containing poor academic practice will be excluded and the grade/outcome will be awarded solely on the basis of the student's own work.

Academic Misconduct Procedure

Nature of the Academic Misconduct Procedure

28. The Academic Misconduct Procedure does not consider or set out to consider any matters which are criminal in nature. Therefore, the procedure is not a legal proceeding and students may not be legally represented within it and may not be accompanied to any meetings that take place within the procedure, by an individual who is legally qualified, including where the individual is a member of the University community.

Academic Misconduct Decisions

29. Decisions on whether or not an allegation of academic misconduct is confirmed are determined on the balance of probabilities and as noted in paragraph 21, constitute academic judgement. This means that even in circumstances where the available information or evidence may not be 100% definitive, a decision will be made on whether it indicates that academic misconduct is more likely to have taken place than not. It is not required to prove intention for academic misconduct to be confirmed as having taken place. Information to inform decision-making regarding academic misconduct will be aligned with the particular circumstances of the case. Information may be obtained, for example:

    - When similarity checking software (such as Turnitin) flags up sections in a student's work that are derived or taken verbatim from other published sources which are not acknowledged in the text.
    - If a member of staff is able to locate specific source(s) that have been copied without due acknowledgement.
    - If there is evidence from a student's previous portfolio of work (including assignments and examination scripts) that the work is not the student's own.
    - If there is evidence of cheating such as having a set of notes in e.g. a pocket/stationery case/similar.
    - Any evidence of collusion having taken place via social media or other means.

Procedure

Irregularities during an Examination

30. If an invigilator suspects academic misconduct during an assessment under examination conditions the invigilator will inform the candidate of the misconduct behaviour they are displaying. Any prohibited materials will be removed by the invigilator. The invigilator will advise the candidate at the end of the assessment that an Invigilator Report form describing the incident will be submitted to the relevant Divisional/Subject Chief Examiner and that the Academic Misconduct Procedure will be followed.

31. The invigilator will prepare and send the Invigilator Report as soon as possible after the event to the relevant Divisional/Subject Chief Examiner in order that this Academic Misconduct Procedure can consequently be followed.

Use of Similarity Checking Software

32. Final copies of all text-based assessments and PGR progress reports must be submitted electronically through tools specified by the University, by the due date. The University makes use of similarity checking software to check originality. The University protocol is that assessments will be checked for originality after they have been marked. Undergraduate, and postgraduate taught and research students in all years for all modules, are allowed open access to the similarity checking programmes to check the originality of their written work on all text-based assessments prior to final submission. Staff of the University will only use such software and methods of detection of misconduct as approved by the University.

33. While ultimately academic judgement will be exercised in determining if academic misconduct had indeed taken place, similarity checking software is an important tool in detecting some forms of academic misconduct. This software required to be used consistently and with consistency of interpretation of scores, around the University. In all cases where similarity checking indicates that academic misconduct may have taken place, this procedure should be invoked and followed.

Postgraduate Research Work

34. In the case of postgraduate research work that has been submitted for examination or for purposes of progression or compulsory assessment prior to final submission, assessment of that work should cease at the point academic misconduct is suspected, pending the outcome of consideration of the matter in line with this procedure.

35. If academic misconduct is suspected in the thesis during the examination process, the examination process must be stopped immediately, even if this is on the day of or in the oral examination, pending the outcome of consideration of the matter in line with this procedure.

36. If academic misconduct is suspected in the thesis after the oral examination has taken place, but before the award has been made, the award or conferment process should be suspended pending the outcome of consideration of the matter in line with this procedure.

37. If academic misconduct is otherwise suspected in a PGR student's work, the concern(s) should be considered in line with this procedure.

Academic Integrity Panel

Academic Integrity Panel Meetings

38. In all suspected cases of academic misconduct, the student should be: made aware of the allegation against them in advance of a meeting of the Panel; invited to attend or contribute to a meeting of the Academic Integrity Panel as considered appropriate by the Panel; and given information on how to access support via Student Learning Services, Student Support Services, etc.

39. Academic Integrity Panels have discretion to decide whether or not a student's attendance at the meeting of the Panel is necessary. As such, an Academic Integrity Panel will decide whether to invite a student to attend the meeting or to submit a short, written statement in advance of the meeting for the Panel to consider.

40. The Academic Integrity Panel will act under authority delegated to them from the Education and Student Experience Committee and in line with this procedure to consider and make a decision on the specific case.

41. The Academic Integrity Panel membership will comprise the Divisional/Subject Chief Examiner who will act as Chair, and one other academic member of staff from the relevant Division, normally the Module Coordinator. Where the suspected case of infringement involves more than one module in different Divisions or relates to processes regulated at Faculty level the meeting will be chaired by the Faculty Chief Examiner.

42. The purpose of a meeting of the Academic Integrity Panel is for the Panel members to make a decision on whether or not academic misconduct has taken place, and classify any offence that is confirmed. It is not the business of the meeting to seek to determine intention.

43. The Panel should decide in each case whether or not the student is required to attend the meeting. If not, the student should be made aware of the allegation(s) against them and that an Academic Integrity Panel will consider and decide upon an outcome to the allegations, and given the opportunity to provide any written information they wish the Panel to take into account. The student should be given at least three working days to prepare and submit this written information. Where a student does not submit any written information when they have been invited to do so, this will not preclude the Academic Integrity Panel from deciding on the matter and taking appropriate action in accordance with this procedure, and the Academic Integrity Policy.

44. Meetings of the Academic Integrity Panel will normally take place in person. However, in some circumstances, the University may decide that it is appropriate for a meeting to proceed remotely, through electronic means. Where a student is to be invited to attend the Academic Integrity Panel meeting, the provisions of paragraphs 45 to 52 are required to be followed.

45. Where a student is to attend an Academic Integrity Panel meeting, they should normally do so individually. Where more than one student is involved in the suspected academic misconduct, the Academic Integrity Panel has discretion to decide to meet with all the students involved as a group in one meeting or in groups over a number of meetings. However, where this is the case, each student must be given the opportunity to either also meet with the Panel individually, prior to the meeting which also includes other students, or to provide any written information they wish, for the Panel to consider.

46. The student will be provided the opportunity within the meeting to respond to the allegation of academic misconduct and to provide both verbal and written information that is relevant to their response. The student has the right to be accompanied at the meeting by one member of the University of Stirling community which includes a fellow student, staff member, or a representative from the University of Stirling Students' Union. This meeting is not a legal proceeding and therefore a student may not be accompanied by an individual who is legally qualified, including where the individual is a member of the University community.

47. No audio or video recording of the meeting is permitted, either by staff or by students. However, students may take notes if they wish. As set out in paragraph 57, a report of the meeting is prepared and provided to the student as a record of the meeting.

48. Faculties should consistently ensure that these meetings are convened as soon as possible. Normally the timeline for a meeting to take place will be ideally no longer than 10 working days after the suspected academic misconduct had been identified. However, timeline will be dependent upon the particular circumstances and the point of the academic year may not support the ideal timeline being operated.

49. Students should be given notice, by email, of the meeting at least five working days before it is due to take place and must notify the Faculty/Divisional/Subject Chief Examiner of the name and designation/role/position of any accompanying person at least two working days before the meeting. Should a student request to be accompanied by someone other than an appropriate member of the University community, the Chair of the Academic Integrity Panel has discretion to consider the request, however such requests will normally be turned down.

50. It is the responsibility of the Chair to ensure that a non-threatening approach is adopted at meetings, and that any Agreed Record of University Accessibility Adjustments (ARUAA) considerations are taken into account where required and appropriate adjustments made.

51. The failure of the student to attend the meeting will not prevent the Academic Integrity Panel from deciding on the matter and taking appropriate action in accordance with this procedure, and the Academic Integrity Policy. Where a student has documented good cause for being unable to attend the proposed meeting, but indicates that they wish to attend, a suitable revised meeting date must be arranged.

In cases of alleged contract cheating, it may be beneficial for the Panel to compare the work in which academic misconduct is suspected with assessments previously submitted by the student.

52. Where this is the case, at the meeting the student may be invited to
    - Comment orally on the work they had submitted – e.g., defend/explain the main arguments presented in the written work or discuss one aspect of the topic; and/or
    - Write a short (100-200 word) summary of the main focus or arguments of the written work; and/or
    - Translate a short (100-200 words) section into the target language (in language and translation modules).

    In addition, consideration should be given by the Panel to the most appropriate overall approach to considering cases of contract cheating. This should take account of e.g., the number of staff members who will remain with the student while any written response is being prepared, the recency of the work that was submitted, any support requirements that student may have.

Academic Integrity Panel Outcomes

53. Academic Integrity Panels are required to consider and decide upon the outcome in line with the overall provisions of the Academic Integrity Policy and this procedure, and particularly with the provisions relevant to classifications and penalties set out in paragraphs 65 to 74.

54. In all cases, Academic Integrity Panels will discuss and consider the case in private. As such, where a student has attended the meeting, at the end of the meeting, they should be advised that deliberations will be conducted privately and asked to leave the meeting at that point.

55. In all cases, the student should be advised that they will receive a letter within seven working days of the meeting, notifying them of the Panel's decision and where academic misconduct is confirmed, why the work submitted constitutes academic misconduct and any penalty that is to be applied. The Panel should also offer guidance to the student on where and how to seek help and support.

56. Following the conclusion of the meeting of the Academic Integrity Panel and the Panel's deliberations, the Academic Misconduct Report Form should be completed and submitted online by the Chair of the Panel, within three working days of the meeting. The information required includes notes of the meeting and the discussion held, the decision of the Academic Integrity Panel regarding: whether or not academic misconduct is confirmed; and where appropriate, the offence and the proposed penalty, and clear justification for the decisions. The form also notes that the offence classification/penalty requires to be ratified by the Timetabling, Exams and Graduation team before considered confirmed.

57. In all cases where an Academic Integrity Panel decides that academic misconduct is confirmed and the offence should be classified as either Serious or Gross, this decision should be

communicated to the Faculty Chief Examiner (FCE) for endorsement prior to the Academic Misconduct Report Form being finalised. The endorsement of the FCE should be confirmed on the form.

58. The submission of the form attaches it to an e-mail which is sent to the student as a record of the meeting. The entire form is also automatically sent to Timetabling, Exams and Graduation in order to enable the offence and penalty to be ratified and recorded. This ratification of the Academic Integrity Panel's decision on the offence and penalty acts as an opportunity for final consideration of appropriateness and institutional consistency.

59. Should it be considered necessary, in ratifying an offence and/or penalty, further discussion with the Panel Chair may take place.

60. Once ratified, Timetabling, Exams and Graduation will send the student formal confirmation of the Academic Integrity Panel's decision, any offence that has been confirmed and any penalty that is to be applied, within seven working days. The communication will also provide confirmation as to whether the student should or should not continue with their studies and information on support available and that will be provided. The Faculty and other relevant services will also be provided with a copy of this communication.

61. Where an Academic Integrity Panel decides that no academic misconduct has occurred, this will be communicated to the student by Timetabling, Exams and Graduation. Where no academic misconduct is confirmed, the same case may be considered again by an Academic Integrity Panel should new information or evidence in relation to the case become available.

62. If the Academic Integrity Panel establishes that academic misconduct did take place, and the offence is categorised as Serious or Gross, the communication to the student advising them of the offence will also explain that the case will also be reported to Student Discipline and may also be investigated under the University's student disciplinary procedure, Ordinance 2, the Code of Student Discipline. In addition, it should be made clear that the decision of the Academic Integrity Panel and any associated penalties will stand, regardless of whether or not student disciplinary action is progressed, and any outcome determined through that action.

63. If a student whose academic integrity is being considered through the Academic Misconduct Procedure behaves in a way towards members of the Academic Integrity Panel, or other individuals involved in the matter in a way which is abusive, intimidating or otherwise inappropriate, they will be referred to the Student Discipline and their conduct may be considered in line with the Ordinance 2, the Code of Student Discipline.

64. All confirmed offences will be reported to relevant Professional, Statutory and Regulatory bodies (PSRBs) and Fitness to Practice Panels where this is considered relevant and required.

65. All confirmed instances of academic misconduct should be notified to the relevant Board of Examiners through established Faculty procedures.

Classifications and Penalties

66. The purpose of the Academic Misconduct Procedure is not solely punitive, in that opportunities should be taken to facilitate a student learning from the experience so that it minimises the likelihood of repetition in the future. All students with a confirmed academic misconduct offence will be required to undertake academic integrity training and should be referred to Student Learning Services for support as appropriate.

67. Where an Academic Misconduct penalty is applied, this will remain current throughout the student's programme of study, or another programme of study at the same level, where a student decides to transfer to a different programme. However, should a student go on to begin another programme at the University, at a higher level of study, no academic misconduct offences/penalties will be carried over into that programme.

68. Where an academic misconduct offence is confirmed, the Academic Integrity Panel is required to decide how the offence should be classified. The classification will inform the penalty to be applied. Academic misconduct offences may be classified as follows:
    a. Minor
    b. Moderate
    c. Major
    d. Serious
    e. Gross

69. In cases where a student is found to have demonstrated academic misconduct in more than one assessment: if the second act of academic misconduct was undertaken before the student had received the first notification that academic misconduct was suspected and this would be considered by an Academic Integrity Panel; and these are the first occurrences of academic misconduct, and each instance is subsequently categorised as a Minor or Moderate offence; the penalty appropriate to the level of each INDIVIDUAL offence will be applied, but the offences will not be concluded to represent an offence at the next higher level.

70. However, in cases where a student is found to have demonstrated academic misconduct in more than one assessment, and the second case occurred after the meeting of the Academic Integrity Panel took place to consider the first, the offences will usually represent an offence at the next higher level.

71. The University seeks to operate this procedure to respond consistently and appropriately to academic misconduct, and in a way which is fair. In determining the severity of an act of academic misconduct and the penalty to apply, the Academic Integrity Panel will be guided by matters such as the nature of the conduct, the level and year of study, the extent of the academic misconduct and the impact of penalties on the student.

72. Whilst the Academic Integrity Panel can take directly relevant mitigating factors into account in making its judgement on a case, it is important to note that the University does not accept a student's medical or personal circumstances as an excuse or reason for cheating. The established

procedures on extensions and extenuating circumstances allow medical or personal circumstances that a student believes are impairing or have impaired their performance to be considered. Consequently, a student's medical or personal circumstances will not be a basis from which to exonerate a student from an offence of academic misconduct, other than in highly exceptional cases where a student's capacity was so severely impaired, they did not have the ability to make rational judgements. In such cases, a referral should be made to the University's Fitness to Study procedure (via fitnesstostudy@stir.ac.uk) in order that the fitness of the student to continue engaging with their studies can be appropriately considered.

73. Where an Academic Integrity Panel is minded to decide that a student has not committed academic misconduct on the grounds that their rational judgment was impaired or, on the same grounds, to mitigate and reduce a penalty which would otherwise have been appropriate in respect of the offence, the endorsement of the relevant Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching and the University Chief Examiner is required for the decision to become effective. The purpose of this endorsement is to support consistency.

74. A brief range of examples of the kinds of misconduct which may be categorised under each of these classifications, and possible penalties that may be associated with each is noted in the table provided in paragraph 75. It is important to note however that each case of academic misconduct will be considered on its own merits and the Academic Integrity Panel has the authority to decide on the classification of offences as it considers most appropriate to the circumstances. Therefore, an academic misconduct offence may be classified differently to what is set out in paragraph 75, depending on the circumstances. Furthermore, the information included in the table should not be considered to be exhaustive and is provided for the purposes of exemplification only.

75.

Classification: Minor	
Examples of Misconduct	**Examples of Potential Penalties**
• Academic misconduct where the impact of the misconduct made only a minor contribution to the submitted work.	The submission is graded however all sentences in the assessment that contain academic misconduct are excluded from marking, and the grade/outcome will be awarded solely on the basis of what is the student's own work. In these circumstances, the student would continue to have an opportunity for reassessment in line with the Assessment Policy and Procedure. The student should undertake academic integrity training and be encouraged to seek guidance from Student Learning Services.

Classification: Moderate	
Examples of Misconduct	**Examples of Potential Penalties**
• Academic misconduct where the impact of the misconduct made a moderate contribution to the submitted work. • Any academic misconduct case where the impact of the misconduct made only a minor contribution to the submitted work, but where the student has a previous academic misconduct offence recorded against them.	The submission is graded however all sentences in the assessment that contain academic misconduct will be excluded from marking, and the grade / outcome will be awarded solely on the basis of what is the student's own work. For taught provision, the final mark for the submission will be capped at the pass mark. In these circumstances, the student would continue to have an opportunity for reassessment in line with the Assessment Policy and Procedure. The student should undertake academic integrity training and seek guidance from Student Learning Services.

Classification: Major	
Examples of Misconduct	**Examples of Potential Penalties**
• Academic misconduct where the impact of the misconduct made a majority contribution to the submitted work. • Any academic misconduct case where the impact of the misconduct made a moderate contribution to the submitted work and where the student has a previous academic misconduct offence recorded against them. • Circumventing of the similarity checking programmes or online proctoring tools.	Allocation of zero for the relevant assessment. Thesis/dissertation not accepted in its present form but the student given the opportunity to revise and resubmit the thesis within three months. For taught provision, the final mark will be capped at the pass mark. Reassessment is allowed in line with the Assessment Policy and Procedure if necessary/applicable. The student should undertake academic integrity training and be encouraged to seek guidance from Student Learning Services.

Classification: Serious	
Examples of Misconduct	**Examples of Potential Penalties**
• Impersonation. • Dishonest Practice. • Falsification. • Contract Cheating.	Allocation of zero for the module, no reassessment allowed, and unable to graduate with honours or masters. PGR thesis not accepted in its present form, student given the opportunity to amend the affected portion only for resubmission for an award at a lower level.

• Academic misconduct where the impact of the misconduct made a majority contribution to the submitted work, and where the student has a previous academic misconduct offence recorded against them.	The student should undertake academic integrity training and be encouraged to seek guidance from Student Learning Services.

Classification: Gross	
Examples of Misconduct	**Examples of Potential Penalties**
• Bribery. • Contract Cheating. • Provision of material to an essay mill or equivalent site. • Any serious academic misconduct case where the student has a previous academic misconduct offence recorded against them.	Termination of studies and no award possible. PGR thesis rejected and no degree possible to be awarded.

Appeals

76. The University of Stirling Academic Appeal process exists to provide an opportunity for a student to request a review of a decision made regarding an academic matter. Where a student wishes to submit an appeal, they are required to do so on the appropriate appeal form, and an appeal will only be considered by the University where there is both: a right of appeal in respect of the decision the student wishes to be reviewed; and grounds for appeal.

77. There is no right of appeal against a decision made on the basis of academic judgement, where this judgement has been applied in line with the relevant policy and/or procedure.

78. The grounds for appeal are that the decision: was unreasonable because it did not adequately take into account all the factors affecting the student's performance; is procedurally incorrect or has been taken in the absence of all the relevant information (for example, the existence of a medical condition). Appeals are not considered on the grounds that academic performance was adversely affected by factors such as ill-health if there is no contemporaneous, independent, medical or other evidence to support this.