19. Policy and procedures relating to academic misconduct

This section of the Examinations and Assessment Handbook contains the following:

19.1 Statement on Academic Misconduct
19.2 Procedures relating to academic misconduct
19.3 Procedures of the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct
19.4 Guidance on scale of offences and penalties in respect of academic misconduct

19.1 Statement on academic misconduct

Cheating, which is the attempt to gain an advantage for oneself or another by deceit, and other misconduct, are breaches of discipline under the University's Regulations for Conduct and are punishable by a range of sanctions.

(a) Cheating in assessed coursework (for example, dissertations, long essays or projects) and open book examinations includes, but is not restricted to:

(i) Plagiarism

For the purposes of these regulations, plagiarism is defined as the fraudulent representation of another's work as one's own. This applies whatever the source of the material (for example, a published source, the web, or the work of another student), whether the material is copied word for word or paraphrased, and whatever the extent of the material used. Wilful and deliberate disregard for good academic practice in respect of attribution of material will be construed as plagiarism. [Please note that programme handbooks normally provide discipline-specific advice on the appropriate use and attribution of source material).

(ii) Taking a copy of another student's work without his or her permission (whether or not this work is subsequently plagiarised).

(iii) Reproduction of work assessed elsewhere

Unless otherwise stated, it is not permissible for a piece of work submitted for assessment to include substantial sections which are drawn from another piece of work submitted for a qualification, whether of this University or another awarding body. In the case of assessments where the incorporation of work from another assessment is permitted, the relevant School will inform students accordingly. Any material in an assignment which has been drawn from another
piece of work submitted for a qualification should be clearly indicated with a reference to the assessment and qualification for which the material was previously submitted.

(iv) Falsifying data, evidence, or experimental results.

(v) Collusion: acting with another student with the intention to deceive.

(b) **Cheating and other academic misconduct in written examinations (including tests and examinations administered by a School/Department) include, but are not restricted to:**

(i) Taking into the examination hall, or possessing while in the examination hall, any books, memoranda, notes or other similar material (including material held electronically) except that students are permitted to deposit such material in an area designated by the invigilator prior to the start of the examination. Material which has been supplied by the invigilator or authorised by the Examiners is exempt from this proscription.*

(ii) Taking into the examination hall or possessing while in the examination hall any device which permits communication with others or receipt of communication from others or receipt of information;*

(iii) Copying from, consulting or otherwise making use of another candidate’s script; or attempting to copy from, consult or otherwise make use of another candidate’s script;

(iv) Improperly aiding or attempting to aid another candidate, or improperly obtaining or attempting to obtain aid from any person;

(v) Consulting or attempting to consult, any books, memoranda, notes or any other similar material (including material held electronically) while present in the examination hall during the period of the examination;*

(vi) Impersonating or attempting to impersonate another candidate or being knowingly impersonated.

* Please note: For the purposes of these regulations, ‘examination hall’ includes the examination room, the toilets and any other areas to which candidates have access during the examination.

(c) **Other misconduct in written examinations**

(i) Candidates are not allowed under any circumstances to talk to each other or to behave in a manner likely to disturb or distract other candidates during an examination.

(ii) Candidates are not permitted to smoke in the exam room. Candidates are not permitted to eat in the exam room and are permitted to drink still water only,
except where a specific alternative arrangement has been agreed in respect of eating and/or drinking in the exam room, which would normally be on the grounds of health or wellbeing.

(iii) Candidates are not permitted to have a pencil case or other container in the vicinity of their examination desk, unless the pencil case or container is transparent.

(iv) It is forbidden to remove an examination script or a part of an examination script from the examination room.

(v) Candidates are not allowed to leave the examination before it has finished without the permission of the invigilator or to leave the examination room temporarily for any purpose without the permission of the invigilator.

(vi) Invigilators are authorised to instruct candidates who are talking or behaving in a disruptive manner to leave the room. Invigilators will report candidates whose conduct appears to constitute cheating.

(vii) It is an offence to disregard a legitimate instruction given by an invigilator. Candidates failing to comply with such instructions will be liable to disciplinary action.

(d) Penalties

It must be emphasised that the most serious view is taken within the University of cheating and other academic misconduct, whether in written examinations or coursework. Any such case will be treated as a disciplinary matter and will be referred to the School Director of Teaching and Learning (in respect of students registered on taught programmes) or the School Director of Postgraduate Research (in respect of students registered on research programmes) who may impose a penalty or refer the matter to the Senate Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct (SCAM) which has the power to impose more severe penalties including expulsion from the University.
19.2 Procedures in relation to academic misconduct

1. The University is committed to conducting a fair process when considering issues of academic misconduct. When it is alleged that a student has committed academic misconduct, the student will be referred to this procedure.

2. This procedure applies to all registered students of the University as defined in Ordinance.

3. This procedure applies to students who are studying at the University of Reading, Malaysia.

4. At its meeting on 8 December 2010, the Senate agreed that the procedures set out below should be followed in cases of academic misconduct.

5. Principles
   - Advice Students are encouraged to seek independent advice from the Advice Service in Reading University Students’ Union. www.rusu.co.uk/advice
   - Diversity and Inclusion The University is committed to fair, equal and non-discriminatory treatment for all and this principle is set out in its Charter of Incorporation. Staff who consider cases of academic misconduct will be appropriately trained, including on issues relating to Diversity and Inclusion.
   - Confidentiality Appropriate levels of confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process. Students involved in this process will also be required to maintain confidentiality.
   - Timeliness The University will investigate allegations without undue delay.
   - Reporting Academic Misconduct cases will be recorded, anonymised as appropriate, and reported annually to the University Board of Teaching and Learning.
   - Reasonable adjustments The University will make reasonable adjustments to this procedure where appropriate.

School Director of Teaching and Learning

6. The relevant School Director of Teaching and Learning is the School Director of Teaching and Learning of the School which ‘owns’ the module in which academic misconduct is alleged.

7. References to the School Director of Teaching and Learning should be understood to refer, except where otherwise specified, to the School Director of Postgraduate Research Studies in cases where the allegation relates to a student registered on a postgraduate research programme.
8. For the Henley Business School only, the Directors of Studies will investigate all allegations of academic misconduct and will propose penalties in line with the powers of the SDTLs set out in this guidance. However all decisions will be ratified (and may be changed where appropriate) by the Henley SDTL. All other duties in this guidance allocated to SDTL will remain with the Henley SDTL.

9. The School Director of Teaching and Learning based at the University of Reading is responsible for investigating allegations of academic misconduct at branch campuses.

10. Where the School responsible for the module is not the School responsible for the student’s programme, the School Director of Teaching and Learning responsible for the module should, at an early stage, consult with the School Director of Teaching and Learning responsible for the student’s programme, and relevant documentation should be copied to the School Director of Teaching and Learning responsible for the student’s programme.

**Identifying allegations of academic misconduct in coursework**

11. The marker of a student’s work has a responsibility to be vigilant for instances of academic misconduct in coursework. This includes but is not restricted to:

   (i) Plagiarism;

   (ii) Taking a copy of another student's work without his or her permission (whether or not this work is subsequently plagiarised);

   (iii) Reproduction of work assessed elsewhere;

   (iv) Falsifying data, evidence, or experimental results;

   (v) Collusion: acting with another student with the intention to deceive.

12. For allegations of plagiarism, where a marker considers work to be excessively derivative and poorly referenced but not to be plagiarism (within the terms of the University’s definition) the work should be treated as an instance of poor academic practice and not academic misconduct. It is not subject to disciplinary procedures. The student should be given an appropriately low mark, appropriate advice, and a warning in respect of future academic conduct. A note that such advice and a warning have been given should be entered on the student’s RISIS record by the School Director of Teaching and Learning. Records of advice and warnings will be recorded appropriately.
13. Where a student persists in reproducing the work of another without adequate acknowledgement, the record that the student had been advised about poor academic practice provides important evidence for establishing that the student is showing wilful disregard for good academic practice which is construed, under the University’s regulations, as plagiarism.

14. Where a marker believes plagiarism to have been committed (i.e. that a student has fraudulently represented the work of another as his or her own), he or she is required to report the case to the School Director of Teaching and Learning which ‘owns’ the module who shall investigate the allegation.

15. In the case of a research student, the School Director of Postgraduate Research Studies of the School where the student’s primary supervisor is based shall investigate the allegation.

**Identifying allegations of academic misconduct in examinations**

16. If an Invigilator believes that a student is cheating in a written examination, he or she is required to report the case immediately to the Chief Invigilator. If a marker believes that a student has been cheating in a written examination, he or she is required to report the case immediately to the School Director of Teaching and Learning, who should contact the University Examinations Officer.

   NB: The University reserves the right to confiscate from examination candidates mobile phones and other items that are not permitted within the examination centre. Confiscated items may be retained until the procedures have been completed.

17. The Chief Invigilator is required to investigate any reported suspicion of cheating and then at his or her discretion:-

   (i) to determine that there are not *prima facie* grounds for believing an offence to have been committed and that no further action be taken; OR

   (ii) to determine that there are *prima facie* grounds for believing an offence to have been committed, and to submit a report to the University Examinations Officer, who will refer the case to the School Director of Teaching and Learning responsible for the module.

18. The Chief Invigilator and/or the Examinations Officer, in investigating a case of suspected cheating, should normally interview the student about whom the suspicion has been raised.
19. Where a Chief Invigilator reports a case for referral to the School Director of Teaching and Learning, the School Director of Teaching and Learning shall investigate the allegation.

**Procedures at School level**

**Investigating allegations of academic misconduct**

20. To investigate the allegation, the School Director of Teaching and Learning should normally interview the student against whom the allegation of academic misconduct has been made. The student has the right to be accompanied in any such interview by a ‘friend’ who must be a currently registered student of the University, a member of staff of the University, a Student Officer of the Students’ Union or a student adviser working within the RUSU Advice Service.

21. The School Director of Teaching and Learning shall issue a full report on the allegation including the Minutes of the interview with the student, and produce the cumulative record of all cases of academic misconduct involving the student.

22. The School Director of Teaching and Learning shall consider the case and determine at his or her discretion:

   a) that no case has been established and that no further disciplinary action be taken.

   *Note on poor academic practice:* In cases of poor academic practice, the School Director of Teaching and Learning should be taken to ensure that the student is aware of good academic practice. In such cases, the work may be marked as if the offending passages had been omitted and a corresponding mark awarded. Where the student has been given a warning in respect of future conduct, a record should be held on the student’s RISIS record;

   OR

   b) that a case of academic misconduct has been established.

**Penalties for offences of academic misconduct**

23. If a case of academic misconduct has been established and assessment is purely formative (i.e. it does not contribute to classification or progression), the student should be warned that the practice is unacceptable, and a record be kept of this
24. If a case of academic misconduct has been established and the work concerned does contribute to classification or progression, the School Director of Teaching and Learning will either:

a) impose a penalty for offence of academic misconduct, in accordance with the Guidance on scale of offences and penalties in respect of academic misconduct;

The School Director of Teaching and Learning has the power to impose the following penalties for academic misconduct:

• Admonish the student;
• Reduce the mark in the relevant assessment;
• Fail the relevant assessment with the normal right to resit;
• Fail the relevant assessment without the normal right to resit;
• Fail the relevant module with the normal right to resit;
• Fail the relevant module without the normal right to resit.

OR

b) refer the case to the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct.

The School Director of Teaching and Learning shall always refer the case to the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct in the following circumstances:

i. if the School Director of Teaching and Learning is of the view that the appropriate penalty, prior to taking account of any mitigating circumstances, is beyond the powers of a School Director of Teaching and Learning, set out in Section 24, should be imposed; OR

ii. if the allegation of academic misconduct occurred in a module of special significance*; OR

iii. the appropriate penalty, prior to taking account of any mitigating circumstances, will result in any professional accreditation in being removed; OR

iv. if allegation of academic misconduct occurred in a module which is worth more than 40 credits of the student's programme.

*Note: If the module is of special significance, that is, the progression rules for the programme requires the student to pass the relevant module, or would result in the student being removed from the University, the
School Director of Teaching and Learning must refer the case to the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct. The School Director of Teaching and Learning has the authority to impose a penalty where the student shall fail the programme at first or second attempt directly as a result of the penalty due to the student’s marks in his or her other modules.

The School Director of Teaching and Learning may wish to seek advice from a Teaching and Learning Dean.

25. The ‘relevant assessment’ is the assessment in which the student has committed academic misconduct in; and ‘relevant module’ is the module in which the student has committed academic misconduct.

26. In cases where a student is given a specific warning about, or is found to have committed, plagiarism and poor academic practice has been a contributory factor, the School Director of Teaching and Learning should, as a matter of routine, advise the student to contact the Study Advisor for appropriate advice.

Records

27. The School Director of Teaching and Learning is responsible for ensuring that instances of poor academic practice, and offences of academic misconduct are appropriately recorded on RISIS. The School should maintain a cumulative record of all cases of academic misconduct, indicating the name of the student, the nature of the allegation, the finding in the case, and the action taken. Minutes should be kept of the interview between the School Director of Teaching and Learning and the student against whom an allegation has been made.

Procedures at University level

28. Where a case has been referred to the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct, the Committee shall, without undue delay, normally hold a meeting with the student (or, where this is not possible, receive a written submission) and with the School Director of Teaching and Learning (or a designated alternate) and shall, at its discretion will determine:

   a) that no case has been established and that no further disciplinary action be taken. Where the student has been given a warning in respect of future conduct, a record should be held on the student’s RISIS record;

   OR
b) that a case of academic misconduct has been established.

29. The Procedures of the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct are set out in Section 19.4.

30. The Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct shall consider the allegation and has the power to impose the following penalties:

- Admonish the student;
- Reduce the mark in the relevant assessment;
- Fail the relevant assessment with the normal right to resit;
- Fail the relevant assessment without the normal right to resit;
- Fail the relevant module with the normal right to resit;
- Fail the relevant module without the normal right to resit;
- Fail any module with the right to resit;
- Fail any module without the right to resit;
- Fail any module(s) and cap the classification of the award;
- Fail a Part;
- Terminate the student’s registration retaining eligibility for a lesser award;
- Terminate the student’s registration without eligibility for a lesser award.

**Appeals**

31. All students have the right to appeal against a penalty that has been imposed on them for academic misconduct.

32. Appeals against the decision of a School Director of Teaching and Learning shall be considered by the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct. If a student wishes to appeal against the decision of a School Director of Teaching and Learning, he or she should submit a statement outlining their reasons for appeal to studentappeals@reading.ac.uk within seven calendar days from being informed of the penalty in writing.

33. Appeals against the decision of the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct, where the decision is not in respect of an appeal against the decision of a School Director of Teaching and Learning, shall be considered by the Student Appeals Committee. If a student wishes to appeal against the decision of the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct, he or she should submit a statement outlining their reasons for appeal to studentappeals@reading.ac.uk within seven calendar days from date of the formal outcome letter.
19.3 Procedures of the Senate Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct

1. The Senate Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct, “the Committee” has two functions:
   
   i. The Committee is responsible for considering cases of alleged misconduct which have been referred to the Committee, and for imposing penalties on those students found to have committed offences of academic misconduct.

   ii. The Committee is responsible for considering appeals of penalties imposed by the School Directors of Teaching and Learning for academic misconduct. The Committee shall only consider an appeal if the student submits a statement of appeal within seven calendared days from being informed of the penalty that has been imposed by the School Director of Teaching and Learning.

Membership

2. The membership of the Committee comprises a Chair appointed by the University Executive Board, the School Directors of Teaching and Learning, and a Student Officer from RUSU. The Teaching and Learning Deans shall be alternate Chairs. The University Secretary shall nominate a Secretary.

3. The Committee normally delegates to a panel its powers and responsibilities for considering and determining cases of alleged misconduct. The panel shall be drawn from the membership of the Committee and shall normally comprise the Chair, a Student Officer from RUSU, which shall normally be the Education Officer, and any other two members.

4. A Teaching and Learning Dean shall not be Chair if they have advised the School Director of Teaching Learning on the student’s case at any stage of the procedures.

5. The School Director of Teaching and Learning who is responsible for the module in which the student allegedly committed academic misconduct, or the student’s programme, shall not be a panel member.

6. No act or ruling of the Committee will be invalidated by reason only of vacancy in the Committee or by reason of absence of one panel member from any meeting provided always that the Committee will not proceed to consider any case unless the Chair and two of its members are present.

On receipt of the referral

7. To refer a case to the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct, the School Director of Teaching and Learning who investigated the allegation shall normally provide the following:

   For allegations of academic misconduct in coursework
• A referral letter setting out the grounds for referral and an overview of the enclosed documents;
• A Turnitin report, if applicable;
• A marked up copy of the assignment indicating the plagiarised passages, if applicable;
• A marked up copy of the sources that have been copied into the piece of work, if applicable;
• Minutes of the interview with the student;
• A copy of the relevant sections of the handbook with information about plagiarism;
• A copy of any warnings that were issued to the student;
• A copy of any internal emails or letters about the case;
• Any relevant emails and letters to the student.

For allegations of academic misconduct in examinations

• A referral letter setting out the grounds for referral and an overview of the enclosed documents;
• A copy of any illicit material relevant to the allegation;
• A copy of the student’s examination script;
• A copy of the examination script the student allegedly copied from, if applicable;
• Minutes of the interview with the student;
• A copy of any warnings that were issued to the student;
• A copy of any internal emails or letters about the case;
• Any relevant emails and letters to the student.

8. On receiving the appropriate documentation, the Secretary shall invite the student to a meeting on a specified date and time, and inform the student of the procedure to be followed. The student shall normally be given at least seven days’ notice.

9. The School Director of Teaching and Learning who investigated the allegation shall be invited to the same meeting and shall act as the School’s representative.

10. The student, the School Director of Teaching and Learning acting as the School’s representative, and the Committee shall receive the same documents in advance of the meeting:

• When the Committee is considering an allegation at first instance, this will normally comprise of a written report provided by the School Director of
Teaching and Learning and any relevant evidence set out in Section 7 of this procedure.

- When the Committee is considering an appeal of a decision of the School Director of Teaching and Learning, this will normally comprise of: an appeal statement submitted by the student and any supporting evidence, the outcome letter from the School Director of Teaching and Learning containing the penalty that has been imposed, and a copy of all evidence considered by the School Director of Teaching and Learning when he or she considered the allegation.

11. The student should also be informed of the following in advance of the meeting:

   i. How to access advice from RUSU Advice Service;

   ii. The composition of the Committee;

   iii. The student’s right to be accompanied by a ‘friend’ which for this purpose is defined as: an adviser from Reading University Students’ Union Advice Service team, a current member of staff of the University of Reading, a currently registered student of the University of Reading, or a University of Reading Students’ Union Student Officer. A person who does not fall within these categories will not be able to act as a ‘friend’ unless otherwise agreed by the Chair.

   The role of the ‘friend’ is to support the student in preparation for the hearing; accompany the student at the hearing; the ‘friend’ may speak on the behalf of a student, with the permission of the Chair. It is not the role of the ‘friend’ to present the student’s case on their behalf, except in the most exceptional circumstances. Disabled Students may also be accompanied by a Support Worker in addition to a ‘friend’, as appropriate to their needs.

   iv. If the student is not able to attend the meeting in person, they will have the opportunity to attend via teleconference.

   v. If the student has any special requirements to allow them to attend and/or participate fully in the hearing he or she should notify the Secretary in advance of the meeting so that the University can make appropriate reasonable adjustments.

12. The advice of the Head of Counselling and Wellbeing Service or an appropriate professional will be available in appropriate cases. Where a student does not consent to medical information being provided to the University, the
investigation will proceed on the basis of the information available to the University at the time.

During the meeting

13. The student, the ‘friend’ and the School’s representative will be present throughout the Committee’s hearing of evidence.

14. The proceedings of the Committee will not be invalidated by the failure of the student or the ‘friend’ to attend the hearing or by their exclusion from the meeting. The School Director of Teaching and Learning is expected to attend the meeting but proceedings will not be invalidated by the absence of the School Director of Teaching and Learning.

15. The Committee will deliberate in private.

16. The Committee has the power to adjourn a hearing for a reasonable period.

17. The Committee has the power to call any witnesses it wishes, whether requested by the student or the School Director of Teaching and Learning or not.

After the meeting

18. The Secretary will normally send the Minutes of the hearing to the student within seven calendar days.

19. The Secretary will record the penalty on RISIS.

20. If the Committee was considering an appeal of a decision of the School Director of Teaching and Learning and the appeal is not upheld, the Secretary shall normally issue a Completion of Procedures letter. In this instance, the appeal to the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct concludes the University’s internal procedures. If the student remains dissatisfied with the final decision of the University, he or she may submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) provided that the complaint is eligible under the OIA rules. Students who wish to do so must submit a complaint to the OIA within twelve months of the date of the University’s Completion of Procedures letter.

21. If the Committee was considering an allegation of academic misconduct at first instance, the student shall be informed of their right to appeal against the decision of the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct to the Student
Appeals Committee. In this instance, the appeal to the Student Appeals Committee will conclude the University’s internal procedures, and the Secretary will normally issue a Completion of Procedures Letter. If the student remains dissatisfied the final decision of the University, he or she may submit a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) providing that the complaint is eligible under the OIA rules. Students who wish to do so must submit a complaint to the OIA within twelve months of the date of the University’s Completion of Procedures letter.

22. The Secretary shall maintain a cumulative record of all cases of academic misconduct considered by the Committee, and will report the outcomes to Senate.
19.4 Guidance on scale of offences and penalties in respect of academic misconduct

Please refer to the diagram indicating the scale of offences and penalties: Examinations and Assessment Procedures Handbook, Section 19b

19.4.1 Governing principle

It is a fundamental principle that the penalty for academic misconduct (prior to mitigation of a penalty in the light of medical or personal circumstances) should have greater detriment to the student than the simple exclusion of the material directly affected by the misconduct in the determination of the mark.

19.4.2 Scale

The diagrammatic scale of offences and penalties indicates the range of penalties which would normally apply for offences (prior to mitigation of penalties in the light of medical or personal circumstances). It is recognised that the severity and circumstances of offences within the same category will differ, and, in consequence, the competent body should exercise its discretion in determining an appropriate penalty which will normally be within the specified range. In exceptional circumstances, the relevant body may impose a penalty outwith the normal range for the category of offence. The relevant body shall not in any case agree a penalty which exceeds its powers to impose; in cases where the relevant body considers that an offence merits a penalty which is more severe than the relevant body has the power to impose, the relevant body should refer the case to the higher body.

The Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct may impose a penalty which is not specified in the framework, provided that such a penalty relates to a formal result for academic work such as a mark or classification awarded for academic work or a requirement that further academic work be undertaken. The Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct shall not impose as a penalty suspension from the University nor a financial penalty, although penalties imposed by the Committee (and by other relevant bodies) may entail, as a consequence, additional costs to the student and/or a period of suspension from the University.

In determining an appropriate penalty, the competent body should take account of the extent of the cheating and its impact on the assessment. Consideration should be given to the importance of the task and to the significance of the material affected by academic misconduct to the task.
Please note that the indications of extent in respect of plagiarism are not intended as precise measures of quantity but are intended to represent orders of magnitude. In determining extent, the proportion of plagiarised material within a piece of work should be taken into account.

**Gross academic misconduct**

For example:

- Plagiarism which is substantial in extent. The extent of the plagiarism depends on the centrality of the material to the piece of work and the intended gain: for example, reproducing material which is substantial from a source or sources without acknowledgement; or the substantial use of ideas and arguments of a source or sources which does not appear in the references or bibliography, where the context is such that it is presented as the student’s own ideas.

- Falsification of data which is substantial in extent or importance, including the principal data on which the results of a postgraduate dissertation or thesis are based.

- Impersonation or being impersonated.

- Cheating in written examinations which is extensive or systematic.

**Penalty:** normally removal from membership of University with no eligibility for lesser award or retaining eligibility for lesser award.

**Lowest penalising body:** Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct

**Major academic misconduct**

For example:

- Plagiarism which is major in extent. The extent of the plagiarism depends on the centrality of the material to the piece of work and the intended gain: for example, the substantial use of others’ ideas and arguments where their source appears in the references or bibliography, although the ideas and arguments are not themselves acknowledged.

- Falsification of data which is major in either extent or importance.
• Cheating in written examinations which is less extensive.

Penalty: normally

(a) Failure of Part with marks of zero in all modules, retaining any normal right of resit; or

(b) (as a possible penalty in the case of Finalists) Fail relevant modules and cap classification to Pass.

Lowest penalising body: Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct

Significant academic misconduct

For example:

• Plagiarism which is significant in extent or importance. The extent of the plagiarism depends on the centrality of the material to the piece of work and the intended gain: for example, plagiarism that falls short of being substantial but still has a potentially significant bearing on the outcome of the assessment.
• Falsification of data which is significant in either extent or importance, including work where the data are the basis on which conclusions are derived and knowledge is claimed to be based.
• Cheating in written examinations which may not be extensive.

Penalty: normally

(a) Fail specified modules/assessments extending beyond those in which misconduct took place with or without normal right to resit.

(b) Fail module or assessment in which misconduct took place without normal right to resit.

Lowest penalising body: School Director of Teaching and Learning

Minor academic misconduct

For example:
• Plagiarism which is minor in extent. The extent of the plagiarism depends on the centrality of the material to the piece of work and the intended gain: for example, a clear example of plagiarism, although it is of little significance to the piece of work.

• Falsification of data which is minor in either extent or importance, for example data associated with demonstrating known practices. Any falsification of experimental data which are intended to or would normally be expected to generate knowledge, including those in a postgraduate or a final year undergraduate project, cannot be regarded as minor.

Penalty: normally

• Fail module in which misconduct took place with normal right to resit.
• Fail assessment in which misconduct took place with normal right to resit.
• Reduce mark of assessment in which misconduct took place.
• Admonition.

Lowest penalising body: School Director of Teaching and Learning

19.4.3 Second offences

Penalties for second offences

In the case of a student who is found to have committed ‘sequential’ offences of academic misconduct where the second offence is significant or above, a student will normally be removed from membership of the University. This principle applies whether or not the sequential offences are of the same type of academic misconduct (cheating in coursework or cheating in written exams).

The convention that a student is not normally removed from the University for a second offence which is minor is deemed proportionate, and should not be construed as condoning serial minor offences. A third offence, whether minor or not, should normally result in removal from the University.

What count as ‘sequential’ offences?
It should be noted that an offence is deemed to be ‘sequential’ if, at the time of committing the second offence, the student could reasonably be assumed to be aware that he or she was committing a second offence.

In respect of written examinations, there is a presumption that a student who brings notes into examinations or who copies from another student is fully aware that he or she is committing an offence. A student who commits offences in two examinations would normally be considered to have committed ‘sequential’ offences, whether or not he or she has been apprehended and interviewed in respect of the first offence.

In respect of plagiarism, there is normally a presumption that a student who commits plagiarism, having received the University’s standard documentation in respect of academic misconduct and the guidance included in programme handbooks, is fully aware that he or she is committing academic misconduct. However, consideration should be given to whether there are factors, such as lack of experience of higher education, which lead to a failure fully to appreciate the distinction between poor practice and academic misconduct and which mean that such a presumption would be unsafe. Where such factors apply, it may not be appropriate to deem a second offence ‘sequential’ unless a warning has been given.

19.4.4. **Intent**

It should be noted that the University’s definition of plagiarism as academic misconduct incorporates the concepts of intent and willful disregard for good academic practice; and that other forms of academic misconduct are based on the principle of strict liability (i.e. there is no requirement that intent be established). In the case of academic misconduct other than plagiarism, however, intent should be taken into account in determining the penalty.

19.4.5 **Student’s experience**

The level of a student (first-year undergraduate, Finalist, postgraduate, etc) is not in itself a relevant factor in determining the seriousness of the offence or the penalty to be imposed. However, the relevant body should, in appropriate circumstances, give due consideration to a student’s experience of UK higher education (or equivalent). The relevant body, for example, may consider that a student’s inexperience may have contributed to his or her failure to understand the seriousness of an offence, and, in these circumstances, may decide to mitigate the penalty. Such a consideration is likely to be more relevant in cases of plagiarism than in cases of cheating in written examinations. Normally, a first-year student will be less experienced than a third-year student, but it should be recognised that some first-year students may have significant
experience of UK higher education (or equivalent). Due consideration should also be
given to differences in academic cultures which may mean that some overseas students
(including postgraduates) may have less experience of the conventions in UK universities.

19.4.6 Consequences of penalties

In determining an appropriate penalty, the relevant body should impose a penalty
commensurate with the offence. Due consideration should be given to the consequential
implications of the penalty for the individual student: for example, in some cases failure
in a module and removal of the normal right to resit might mean, due to the progression
rules for the programme, that the student had irredeemably failed his or her programme
and would eventuate in the student's removal from the University. If the relevant body
believes that such an outcome would be disproportionate, it may impose a variant on the
normal penalty. Equally, however, due consideration should be given to the significance
of the offence in relation to the core requirements for the student's programme: an
offence in a core module which is testing competences central to the award may be
considered as particularly serious, and may therefore merit a more severe penalty.

19.4.7 Plagiarism and referencing

In considering allegations of plagiarism, the relevant body should determine whether the
student has attempted to pass off another's work as his or her own. In this context,
failure to observe normal referencing conventions or failure to include quotation marks
would normally be treated as poor academic practice rather than academic misconduct
provided there is a serious attempt at attribution. For example, a general attribution to
unnamed 'authorities', while far from ideal, indicates that the student is not seeking to
pass off the views as his/her own. Similarly, where a student includes in the
bibliography the source for material which is discussed in an essay without specific
attribution, it may be appropriate to treat such a case as poor academic practice (except
in the case of postgraduate students).

19.4.8 Mitigating circumstances

The University does not accept a student's medical or personal circumstances as an
excuse/reason for cheating. However, the bodies responsible for imposing penalties for
academic misconduct are obliged to consider whether the penalty should be mitigated in
the light of personal or medical circumstances.

The University has established and well publicised procedures for considering medical or
personal circumstances which a student believes have impaired their performance in
assessment. If students are experiencing difficult circumstances, they should discuss
their problems with their personal tutor and submit an extenuating circumstances form in respect of assessments. In consequence, a student’s medical or personal circumstances shall not constitute grounds for exonerating a student from an offence of academic misconduct, other than in the exceptional case where a student’s capacity for rational judgement has been severely impaired.

Exceptionally, where a student’s capacity for rational judgement has been severely impaired, the body responsible for considering the case may determine that the student has not committed academic misconduct.

In cases where a student has been found to have committed academic misconduct and was experiencing difficult medical or personal circumstances which were beyond his or her control and are judged to have contributed to his or her commission of the offence, the body responsible for considering the case is required to take due account of the circumstances in determining the penalty for the offence.

Where a School is minded to determine that a student has not committed academic misconduct on the grounds that his or her rational judgment was impaired or is minded to mitigate a penalty in the light of medical or personal circumstances, the endorsement of the Teaching and Learning Dean is required for the decision to become effective. Teaching and Learning Deans are responsible for ensuring, by reference to benchmarks established by precedent, that consistency is maintained across Schools in determining impairment of rational judgment and in mitigation of penalty.

19.5 Use of Turnitin Text Matching Software

For guidance on the use of Turnitin Text Matching software which can be used to aid detection of plagiarism, please see the Examination and Assessment Procedures Handbook, section 15.8: [www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/staff/exa-handbook.aspx](http://www.reading.ac.uk/internal/exams/staff/exa-handbook.aspx)

For guidance on recording academic misconduct on RISIS, please see the link to the Procedures for recording on RISIS offences of academic misconduct and warnings in respect of risk of academic misconduct:

[https://www.isisweb.reading.ac.uk/si/RISISweb%20portal%20documents/Academic%20misconduct%20Feb%202010.doc](https://www.isisweb.reading.ac.uk/si/RISISweb%20portal%20documents/Academic%20misconduct%20Feb%202010.doc)