

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

(Cheating, plagiarism, collusion, and other such issues)

What is Academic Dishonesty?

The University Definition:

"Academic dishonesty may be defined as any attempt by a student to gain an unfair advantage in any assessment." Staffordshire University (2007)

What are the main issues?

- **Plagiarism** Presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own
- **Collusion** working with another student, on an individual assignment, and presenting these ideas as your own work
- **Commissioning** Getting someone else to write your assignment for you
- **Duplication** Submitting the same piece of work twice for different assignments or modules

The above is not a comprehensive list. See the University website for more information on what constitutes academic dishonesty <http://www.staffs.ac.uk/current/regulations/academic/index.php> (click on "Procedure for Dealing with breaches of Assessment Regulations – Academic Dishonesty")

Why is this big issue?

- UK universities regard plagiarism as a serious offence
- You are more likely to be detected due to advances in software
- The penalties can be very severe

What happens if the University alleges Academic Dishonesty?

Stage 1

- Where academic dishonesty is suspected, the tutor will analyse the work in question with another member of staff
- You may be invited to a preliminary hearing without prejudice, to establish whether these suspicions are correct. You will be given at least 24 hours notice to attend
- A written report of the allegations and the outcome of the investigation will be produced.

Stage 2

If it is decided that an offence has occurred, you will be invited to an informal meeting. **You are strongly advised to attend this with a Student Adviser.**

Prior to the Informal meeting:

- Read the "Procedures for Dealing with Breaches of Assessment Regulations - Academic Dishonesty" so you are fully aware of what is going to happen in the interview
- Try and find out as much as possible about your case. Be clear in your own mind what has happened and what the allegations are based on.

At the informal meeting:

- The interview is about whether you will sign the Report created at **Stage 1**, thereby acknowledging that Academic Dishonesty has occurred. **NO PENALTY WILL BE DECIDED AT THE INTERVIEW.**
- Do not feel pressurised to sign the Report. If you do not accept that you have cheated or plagiarised, don't sign the statement. According to the University Regulations, **you are allowed 24 hours to decide whether or not to sign the Report.** If you're considering not signing, get SAC advice on the implications of this.
- Read the Report carefully. If there is any wording (or tone) that you disagree with, explain this to the Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor (or nominee) and ask if it can be amended.
- At any point during the interview, if you feel you need a few minutes on your own, just ask.

Stage 3

If you sign the Report you will have acknowledged that academic dishonesty has occurred. The following will then happen:

- It will be sent to the Academic Registrar, the Faculty Pro-Vice Chancellor and the Chair of the relevant Examination Board for consideration.
- You will be advised to produce a **written statement** to the Chair of the Examination Board outlining any relevant facts that the Board should take into account when considering the case concerned. Remember to spend time preparing your letter and explain your circumstances in detail, with as much supporting evidence as possible.

If you do not sign the Report it will be sent to the Academic Registrar and your case will be referred to The Assessment Disciplinary Committee. Details of how the committee meeting is run are outlined in the Academic Dishonesty Procedures.

Penalties

The Examination Board will decide an appropriate penalty (these are outlined in the Academic Dishonesty procedures). **They can range from awarding the assessment a zero mark and in very serious cases failing the Award.**

Will any breach of the Academic Dishonesty Regulations go on my Academic Reference?

Where your registration with the University has been terminated, and the University receives a request for an academic reference for further study, details of the offence and the subsequent penalty will be recorded.

Where can I get help?

The Student Advice Centre can help you with the following:

- We can advise you on the University regulations and procedures
- Accompany you to meetings/interviews
- Help you prepare your case and written statement

Please contact us for an appointment to discuss your case

