

A guide to the Academic Misconduct rules

These comments are not part of the regulations. They are written by the Students' Union to guide you on the regulations and what you need to do because of them.

We have numbered these comments the same way that the University's regulations are numbered so you can compare them side by side if you want to.

1. Introduction

Whenever you are marked on a piece of work, it must be your own work. You can quote other people's work as long as you say you are doing this. All use of someone else's work must be labelled/quoted so that the marker can see what work is yours and what is not.

If you get this wrong:

- The University calls this "Academic Misconduct". You will be given a penalty. Sometimes, you will be removed from your course.
- If you are on a professional course, "Academic Misconduct" might stop you from joining the profession.

The University must do things this way because the University's job is to mark what you know and how you think. If your work is not your own, it cannot do this.

If you are not sure how to do your work or how to make sure your work follows these rules, you can get help from:

- Your tutor or course leader
- The Academic Skills Know-How team
http://www.staffs.ac.uk/support_depts/infoservices/learning_support/academic_skills/index.jsp

The detailed rules for your course will be in your course and module handbooks.

2. Definition (some examples of "Academic Misconduct")

This is a list of the things you must not do.

Remember the principle: "Whenever you are marked on a piece of work, it must be your own work".

- i) "Aiding and abetting"

Do not help anyone else to break the rules. Do not let other students see your work either – they might use it to break the rules and you might not be able to prove you did not mean this to happen.

- ii) "Bribery"

Do not pay anyone to get early copies of questions or exams. The University is not just testing how well you can do your work – it is also testing how quickly you can do your work and how well you manage your time.

iii) "Collusion"

Do not work as a group and then pretend the work is your own.

Some work is done in groups. If you are given academic work like this, get advice from your tutor or the Academic Skills Know-How team if you are not sure about how to do the work.

If you are not told a piece of work is group work, it is **not** group work.

iv) "Commissioning"

Do not pay anyone else to do your work for you. Do not use essay-writing services to do your work for you.

v) "Computer Fraud"

Do not copy someone else's work from the net or a computer – it is still not your own work.

vi) "Duplication"

You should do new work for each assessment. If you use old work in a new assessment, quote it as if it was someone else's.

vii) "False declarations"

Do not lie to get better treatment. For example: do not lie to claim Extenuating Circumstances - do not lie about having problems you do not really have.

viii) "Falsification of data"

If you do research, give the results fully and truthfully. If you use research equipment use it properly.

ix) "Fabrication of data"

Do not make up fake test or research results.

x) "Misconduct in examinations or tests"

- You will be told what you can take with you to any test or examination. Do not take anything else into the test or examination.
- Do not try to see the paper before the examination
- Do not try to see anyone else's work
- Do not talk to other students in the examination
- Do not take an examination for another student
- Do not ask anyone else to do the examination for you
- Do not use hidden notes
- Do not take papers out of the examination room
- Stop writing when you are told to.

xi) "Plagiarism"

If you use work from someone else - for example sentences, ideas, graphs, pictures, or computer code – mark it clearly as someone else's ("reference the source").

The idea is: the marker must be able to see clearly what is yours and what you have used from other people.

Your course handbook will tell you how to mark ("reference") other people's work that you use ("quote").

Remember: lecturers are not stupid and they know their subject very well. If you try to avoid these rules by changing a few words in someone else's work (for example using a thesaurus) the lecturers will notice. You will be in a lot of trouble if you try this because doing this shows that you intentionally tried to get away with breaking the rules.

If you are not sure how to follow any of these rules, get advice from your tutor or the Academic Skills Know-How team

http://www.staffs.ac.uk/support_depts/infoservices/learning_support/academic_skills/index.jsp

3. Categories of Academic Misconduct

It is not Academic Misconduct to put too many quotes in your work as long as you reference them properly. If you put too many quotes in your work, you are not likely to get a good mark. Remember: the University wants to mark *your own* thought. If you are not sure how to get this right, get advice from your tutor or the Academic Skills Know-How team

http://www.staffs.ac.uk/support_depts/infoservices/learning_support/academic_skills/index.jsp

There is no "safe" level of Academic Misconduct. Some students think that it does not matter if it is less than 5% of a piece of work. Those students are wrong.

If the University thinks you might have broken these rules, it will investigate. How bad this will be depends on:

- Whether you can prove you did not break the rules.

And if you did break the rules:

- Whether or not you broke the rules on purpose
- How much of your work is involved
- Whether or not you have done this before
- How long you have been at University
- Whether or not you have any "Extenuating Circumstances" (the Student Advice Centre can advise you on this)

The rest of the regulations are about the investigation processes. If you are investigated, speak to the Students' Union's Student Advice Centre

<http://www.staffsunion.com/advice/contactus/> as soon as you can. This is important because you cannot usually appeal against the result of the investigation.