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## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Applicable to all cohorts

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The University values the prior learning experiences of its student body. It recognises that one outcome of this diversity of experience may be that academic integrity and associated skills are unfamiliar to some students. Academic integrity is concerned with the ethical code that applies to the standards by which the academic community operates. It represents the values of honesty, fairness, and respect for others. While this encompasses the expectation that students will not cheat in assessments nor deliberately try to mislead examiners and assessors, it is just as important to emphasise the positive role that academic integrity plays in each student's intellectual and professional development, and in their successful transition to graduate employment and future careers. The University is committed to supporting students as they develop their awareness and abilities in this area, and to providing opportunities for reflection and development throughout this process. It aims to foster a learning environment which produces students who embrace academic integrity, understand that they must produce their own work, are able to acknowledge explicitly any material that has been included from other sources or legitimate collaboration, and to present their own findings, conclusions or data based on appropriate and ethical practice.
- 1.2 There are conventions of academic practice, such as established referencing and citation protocols, which both display and ensure academic integrity. The acquisition of relevant study skills such as effective note-taking, ability to critically evaluate other writers' theories and concepts, and presentation skills, will help students to understand these conventions. Failure to adhere to these conventions can result in poor academic practice or, if there is a clear intention to deceive examiners and assessors, to unfair and/or dishonest academic practice. This policy sets out the penalties that will be applied where academic misconduct has been established.
- 1.3 There are five categories of academic misconduct. Categories A and B are distinct from Categories C to E. Categories A and B are determined by the academic judgement of the marker/assessor and cover practice where there has been failure, due to lack of academic ability or understanding, to observe the expected standards associated with academic integrity when undertaking academic work. Category C captures first offences in which dishonesty can be assumed, but intent to deceive cannot be established because there has been no prior warning given to the student. Category D covers misconduct when intent to deceive is apparent because a prior warning has been given. Category E covers misconduct after two prior warnings have been given, as well as inherently dishonest acts where a student intends to gain an advantage over other students by wilfully seeking to deceive assessors and/or examiners. Such acts are often but not always premeditated and would include offences subsequent to a prior written warning of academic malpractice.

## 2. Definitions

The following definitions apply to all types of work submitted by students, including, for example, written work, diagrams, designs, charts, musical compositions, and pictures:

### 2.1 Minor Errors

Minor errors arise when a student has attempted to adopt academically acceptable practices but has failed to do so accurately or fully. Examples include forgetting to insert quotation marks, minor mistakes in referencing or citation, and gaps in the bibliography or reference list.

### 2.2 Collusion

Collusion occurs when, unless with official approval (e.g. in the case of group projects), two or more students consciously collaborate in the preparation and production of work which is ultimately submitted by each in an identical or substantially similar form and/or is represented by each to be the product of his or her individual efforts. Collusion also occurs where there is unauthorised co-operation between a student and another person in the preparation and production of work which is presented as the student's own.

### 2.3 Copying

Copying occurs when a student consciously presents as their own work material copied directly from a fellow student or other person without their knowledge. It includes the passing off of another's intellectual property, not in the public domain, as one's own. It differs from collusion in that the originator of the copied work is not aware of or party to the copying. Copying of work from published sources would be dealt with as plagiarism. Copying of work from previously submitted work by the same student could be considered academic misconduct. However, this is dependent on the nature of the assessment and academic judgement of the examiner.

### 2.4 Submission of Commissioned or Procured Coursework

The dishonest practice occurs when a student presents as their own work coursework assessment tasks (or parts thereof) which have been intentionally procured (by financial or other inducement means) for this purpose. The definition includes the practice of requesting another party to prepare all or part of a course assignment (with or without payment) on the student's behalf.

### 2.5 Dishonest Use of Data

Throughout this policy the term "dishonest use of data" is used to cover one or more of the following:

***Embellishment or Falsification of Data*** occurs when a proportion of the total data is altered, enhanced or exaggerated in order to emphasise data which has been obtained by legitimate means.

***Fabrication of Data*** occurs when a student creates and presents an extensive amount or significant piece of data in order to conceal a paucity of legitimate data; or wholly fabricates a set of data in the absence of legitimate data.

## 2.6 Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when a student misrepresents, as his/her own work, work in the public domain, written or otherwise, of any other person or of any institution. Examples of forms of plagiarism include:

- the verbatim (word for word) copying of another's work without appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgement and citation of the source;
- the paraphrasing of another's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without an appropriate and correctly presented acknowledgement and citation of the source;
- failure to reference appropriately or to adequately identify the source of material used;
- unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another's work;
- the deliberate presentation of another's concept as one's own.

**The University treats the decision as to whether minor errors, poor academic practice or unfair and/or dishonest academic practice has taken place as a matter for academic judgement<sup>1</sup> and the penalties applied will vary according to the individual case and the seriousness of the offence (for details of the range of penalties see Section 4 below.)**

### 3. Dealing with Academic Misconduct

- 3.1 The University aims to provide advice and training in its staff development programme on how to detect and deal with academic misconduct and on how to help students to avoid it.
- 3.2 If academic misconduct or malpractice is suspected in relation to work submitted by a student, in the interest of helping students to avoid continued acts, cases should be investigated as promptly as possible.
- 3.3 Academic Units should require students, when submitting work for summative assessment, to provide either a signed hard-copy declaration *or* an equivalent acknowledgement where electronic submission is used, to confirm that they have not plagiarised nor copied material, nor have they embellished, fabricated nor falsified any of the data nor have they colluded in producing the work nor submitted commissioned or procured work. The coversheet appended to the guidelines to this policy may be used for this purpose, but academic units may use their own procedures/forms to obtain the necessary declaration.
- 3.4 Cases of suspected academic misconduct should be evidenced and documented before the appropriate procedure is instigated.

### 4. Penalties and Procedures

#### Category A: Minor Error

- 4.1 If the internal examiner identifies minor errors, such as a missing quotation mark or minor mistakes in referencing, a mark penalty may be applied to the assessment task. Details of any penalty should generally be specified in the marking scheme provided to students and the student should be given feedback on how to avoid such a mistake in future work.

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that where plagiarism is indicated using plagiarism detection software, Examiners, Examination Officers and Board of Examiners must still exercise academic judgement in determining whether plagiarism has taken place. Please refer to "Turnitin Guidelines" on Learning Mall.

- 4.2 If a student is found to have committed a minor error the examiner will use academic judgement in determining the appropriate mark for the assessment, in accordance with the relevant marking criteria and taking into account, as appropriate, matters such as the quality/accuracy of the referencing and citations and the quality of data presented:
- (i) if the marking scheme used for the assessment does not specify a means of penalizing students for minor errors, then a mark penalty of up to 10% of the maximum mark may be applied;
  - (ii) the mark penalty will be notified to the student by the module examiner;
  - (iii) the student's entitlement to resit in failed modules is not affected.

### **Category B: Poor Academic Practice**

- 4.3 This category covers a range of poor practices in which there is no clear intention to deceive. If poor practice is identified by the internal examiners a mark penalty will be applied to the assessment task(s). Details of any penalty should generally be specified in the marking scheme provided to students and the student should be given feedback on how to avoid poor academic practice in future work. The student will also be recommended to complete an on-line tutorial on good academic practice.
- 4.4 If poor academic practice is repeated by the student the mark penalty will be imposed for each multiple or subsequent example of poor academic practice. This creates a strong incentive for the student to avoid further penalty and should encourage the student to benefit from the remedial effect of the advisory on-line tutorial.
- 4.5 If a student is found to have committed poor academic practice:
- (i) if the marking scheme used for the assessment does not specify a means of penalizing students for poor academic practice, then a mark penalty of up to 25% of the maximum mark may be applied for that assessment task by the examiner;
  - (ii) the examiner will recommend the student to complete an on-line tutorial on good academic practice;
  - (iii) the mark penalty will be notified to the student by the module examiner;
  - (iv) the student's entitlement to resit in failed modules is not affected.

### **Category C: Plagiarism, Copying, Collusion or Dishonest Use of Data**

- 4.6 This category is intended to capture first offences in which academic misconduct has occurred but intent to deceive cannot be established because the student has not received a prior written warning of misconduct.
- 4.7 If cases of plagiarism, copying, collusion or dishonest use of data are suspected by the internal examiners an investigation must be carried out by the Examination Officer in the academic unit that 'owns' the module concerned.
- 4.8 The Examination Officer will investigate the allegation on behalf of the Chair of the appropriate Module Board of Examiners by inviting the examiner to provide evidence and reasons for his/her allegation and the student(s) to provide an explanation of the circumstances for the plagiarism, copying, collusion or dishonest use of data.
- 4.9 The student(s) must be afforded the opportunity to make any representations that they may wish to make. If the investigation involves a meeting, each student suspected of a Category C offence will be entitled to be accompanied by another

member of the University, e.g. a fellow student.

- 4.10 In cases deemed proven by the Examination Officer, s/he will provide a report to the Chair of the appropriate Module Board of Examiners or, recommending the imposition of the mark penalty and detailing his/her findings, including the circumstances of the alleged offence, the investigation undertaken and the representations made by the student(s).
- 4.11 If two or more students are found to have colluded in producing a piece of assessed work (this includes one student allowing another to copy his/her work and submit it as his/her own), then each should receive the mark penalty for the assessment task. If one or more students are found to have copied the work of another student in any form without his/her knowledge, then any resulting warning and penalty should apply only to the student(s) that copied the work.
- 4.12 If the Chair of the Module Board of Examiners finds the student to have committed plagiarism, copying, collusion or dishonest use of data:
- (i) a breach of the policy has taken place and the assessment task should be given a mark of zero;
  - (ii) the mark penalty will be reported to the relevant Module Board of Examiners;
  - (iii) the student will be given a written warning from the Examinations Officer;
  - (iv) the student will be required to complete an on-line tutorial on good academic practice;
  - (v) a note will be placed on the student's records;
  - (vi) the student's entitlement to resit in failed modules is not affected.
- 4.13 If the Chair of the Module Board of Examiners disagrees with the recommendation, s/he should make an alternative recommendation and the procedure for that Category should be followed. Where the recommendation is that no offence has taken place, this must be communicated to the student.
- 4.14 After the first written warning has been issued, any subsequent work submitted by the student in which plagiarism, copying, collusion or dishonest use of data have occurred will be treated as Category D. Any offence detected in work submitted before the first written warning is issued will be treated as a category C breach of the policy.
- 4.15 Where a student commits a Category C offence in Level 0 (Stage 1) the penalty will be applied and a record of the offence will be retained. However, the offence will not be counted as such when determining the penalties for any offence committed after the student has progressed from Stage 1.
- 4.16 In the case of a student being awarded a mark of zero and as a result failing their dissertation or Final Year Project, the Board of Examiners will decide whether they should be permitted to re-submit the dissertation or project, revised and corrected, or whether they must complete and submit a whole new dissertation or project.

#### **Category D: Second Category C Offence following a Written Warning**

- 4.15 This category covers instances when academic malpractice can be determined and intent to deceive can be established because the student has received a prior written warning of misconduct.
- 4.16 If cases of plagiarism, copying, collusion or dishonest use of data are suspected by the internal examiners an investigation must be carried out by the Examination Officer in the academic unit that 'owns' the module concerned.

- 4.17 The Examination Officer will investigate the allegation on behalf of the Chair of the appropriate Module Board of Examiners by inviting the examiner to provide evidence and reasons for his/her allegation and the student(s) to provide an explanation of the circumstances for the plagiarism, copying, collusion or dishonest use of data.
- 4.18 The student(s) must be afforded the opportunity to make any representations that they may wish to make. If the investigation involves a meeting, each student suspected of a Category D offence will be entitled to be accompanied by another member of the University, e.g. a fellow student.
- 4.19 In cases deemed proven by the Examination Officer s/he will provide a report to the Chair of the appropriate Module Board of Examiners recommending the imposition of the mark penalty and detailing his/her findings, including the circumstances of the alleged offence, the investigation undertaken and the representations made by the student(s).
- 4.20 If two or more students are found to have colluded in producing a piece of assessed work (this includes one student allowing another to copy his/her work and submit it as his/her own), then each should receive the mark penalty for the assessment task. If one or more students are found to have copied the work of another student in any form without his/her knowledge, then any resulting warning and penalty should apply only to the student(s) that copied the work.
- 4.21 If, after receiving a prior written warning, a student is found to have committed plagiarism, copying, collusion or dishonest use of data for the second time:
- (i) the Examination Officer will ask the Module Board of Examiners to approve a recommendation that that a breach of the policy has taken place and that the student should be given zero for the module, regardless of any other assessment component marks for the module;
  - (ii) the student will be given a second written warning from the Examinations Officer;
  - (iii) the student will be required to complete an on-line tutorial on good academic practice;
  - (iv) a note will be placed on the student's records;
  - (v) the student's entitlement to re-sit failed modules is not affected.
- 4.22 If the Board of Examiners disagrees with the recommendation, it should make an alternative recommendation and the procedure for that Category should be followed. Where the recommendation is that no offence has taken place, this must be communicated to the student.
- 4.23 After the second written warning has been issued, any subsequent work submitted by the student in which plagiarism, copying, collusion or dishonest use of data have occurred will be treated as Category E. Any offence detected in work submitted before the second written warning is issued will be treated as a Category D breach of the policy.
- 4.24 Where a student commits a Category D offence in Level 0 (Stage 1), the penalty will be applied and a record of the offence will be retained. However, the offence will not be counted as such when determining the penalties for any offence committed after the student has progressed from Stage 1.
- 4.25 In the case of a student being awarded a mark of zero and as a result failing their dissertation or Final Year Project, the Board of Examiners will decide whether they should be permitted to re-submit the dissertation or project, revised and corrected, or whether they must complete and submit a whole new dissertation or project.

### **Category E: Unfair and/or Dishonest Academic Practice or a third Category C offence following two Written Warnings**

- 4.26 This category covers academic malpractice where a clear intent to deceive and gain unfair advantage can be established. Examples include the use of purchased or commissioned coursework or data, passing off as one's own work the work of another student or person, extensive fabrication and falsification of data, and coercive collusion. The practices in this category are defined as those serious enough even as a first offence to warrant suspension or termination of studies and do not depend on a student's prior actions.
- 4.27 This category also covers instances when academic malpractice can be determined and intent to deceive can be established because the student has received two prior written warning of misconduct.
- 4.28 When unfair and/or dishonest academic practice is identified, the matter must be reported to the Examination Officer in the academic unit that 'owns' the module concerned.
- 4.29 The Examination Officer will investigate the allegation on behalf of the Chair of the appropriate Board of Examiners by inviting the examiner to provide evidence and reasons for his/her allegation and the student(s) to provide an explanation of the circumstances for the unfair and/or dishonest practice.
- 4.30 The student(s) must be afforded the opportunity to make any representations that they may wish to make. If the investigation involves a meeting, each student suspected of a Category E offence will be entitled to be accompanied by another member of the University, e.g. a fellow student.
- 4.31 If, following the investigation, the Examination Officer concludes that unfair and/or dishonest academic practice has taken place, the Examination Officer will provide a report to the Chair of the appropriate Module Board of Examiners detailing his/her findings, the circumstances of the alleged unfair and/or dishonest practice, the investigation undertaken and the representations made by the student.
- 4.32 The Chair of the Board of Examiners will consult with the Board of Examiners and decide whether it deems the findings of the Examination Officer appropriate and acceptable and apply the appropriate penalty. No person who was involved with any aspect of the investigation and drafting of the Examination Officer's report should be party to the decision made by the Board of Examiners.
- 4.33 If a student is found to have committed unfair and/or dishonest academic practice, the relevant Board of Examiners shall determine the penalty to be applied and shall determine any award to be made to the student. The minutes of the Board should accurately record the decision making process. The penalty to be applied for a Category E offence is a mark of zero for the module, regardless of any other assessment component marks for the module and either:
- (i) Suspension of studies for a period not exceeding one academic session, or
  - (ii) Termination of studies, with credit awarded for what has already been passed without unfair and/or dishonest academic practice.
- 4.34 If the Board of Examiners disagrees with the recommendation, it should make an alternative recommendation and the procedure for that Category should be followed.
- 4.35 In all cases, the decision taken must be communicated to the student by Registry Office after the final approval by the University Board of Examiners.

## Demerit Points

4.36 Furthermore, students will also accrue demerit points in addition to the specified penalties for the aforementioned offences, based on the severity of the breach as specified in the Student Discipline Point System, which is detailed in the appendix of the Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations.

## 5. Right of Appeal

Students may appeal against the decision of the Board of Examiners in relation to a Category C, D, or E decision, but only on the grounds that there was a procedural error in determining a decision in the conduct of the investigation into the alleged offence. Students may not appeal against the decision of the Board of Examiners other than in accordance with the Assessment Appeals Procedure.

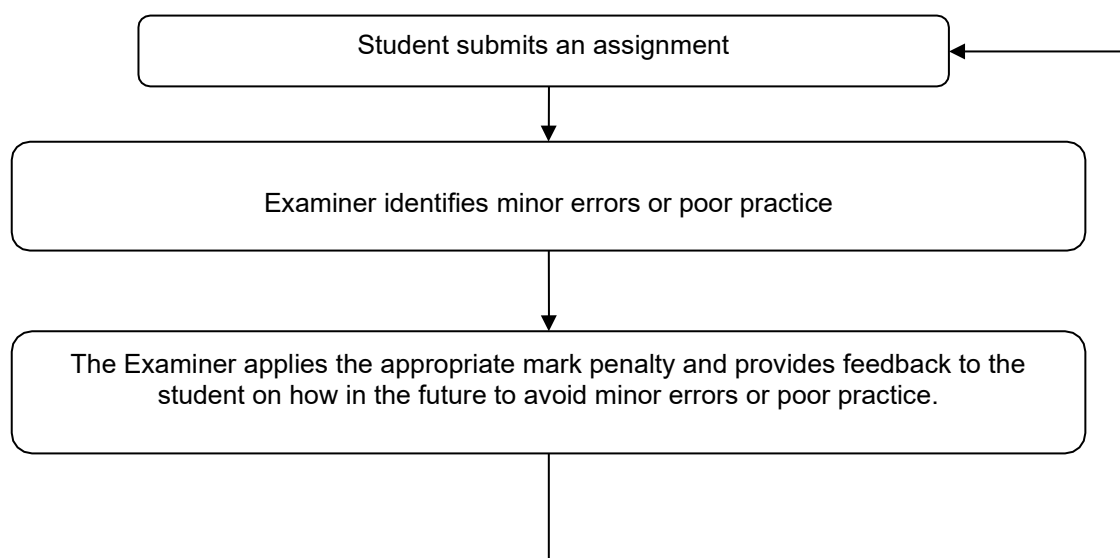
## 6. Poor Academic Practice, Unfair and/or Dishonest Practice and Fitness to Practise

For some vocational and/or professional programmes there may be requirements for students to meet specified standards in respect of their fitness to practise in the relevant vocation or profession. Where a finding of poor academic practice or unfair and/or dishonest plagiarism, collusion and/or dishonest use of data against a student may call into question the student's fitness to practise, this must be clearly stated in the programme information provided to students.

## 7. Research Degrees

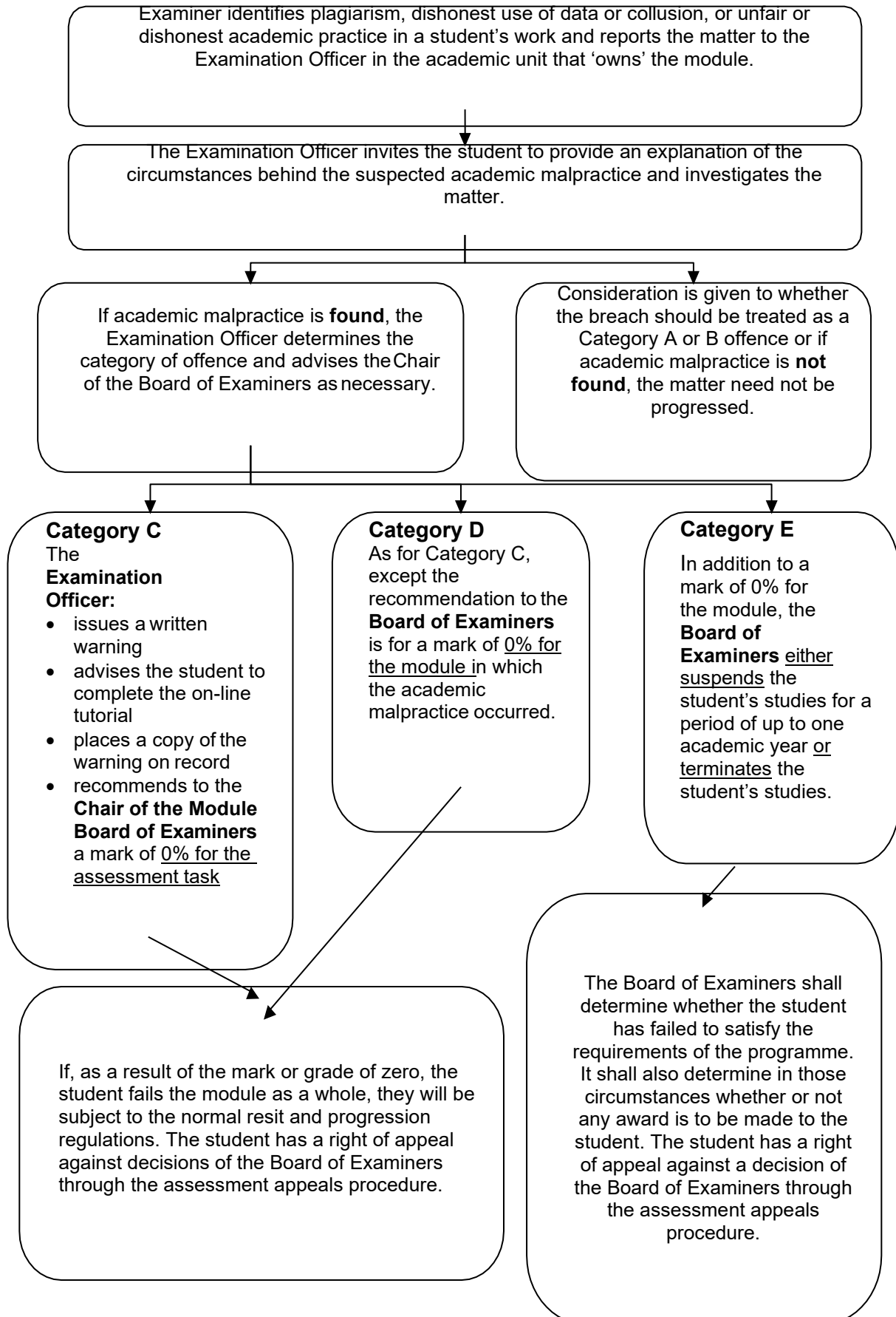
References can be made to University of Liverpool policies and guidelines for dealing with plagiarism, collusion and fabrication of data in research degrees (PhD).

### PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH CATEGORY A and B PRACTICES





## PROCESS FOR DEALING WITH CATEGORY C, D and E PRACTICES



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### Approval and Revision Log

<b>Date</b>	<b>Approved by</b>	<b>Description</b>
4 May 2016	APESC	Pending minor changes via Chair's action
22 June 2016	LTC	...., to replace "Policy for Dealing with Plagiarism, Collusion and the Fabrication of Data" as of 2016/17
14 November 2016	Chair's action	Following additions approved to take immediate effect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clause 1.1</li> <li>• Clause 7 re. research degrees</li> </ul>
22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2017	Administrative changes	Clauses in Section 4 re-numbered to ensure continuity.
15 June 2022	ULTC	Revisions include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Terminology alignment with the new Education System;</li> <li>-Alignment with latest academic structure and latest practices, deletion of out of date information</li> </ul>
August 2024	ULTC Chair's action	Administrative updates in alignment with the Regulations for the Conduct of Examinations.