

How to investigate and sanction suspected academic misconduct

Responsibilities for Chairs of Examiners, Senior Examiners and Chairs of Degree Committees

Scope

Where candidates have submitted formal/summative assessments from 1 October 2023¹ onwards, a Chair of Examiners, Senior Examiner or Chair of the Degree Committee has responsibility for investigating academic misconduct and determining the outcome of the investigation. This guide explains what action to take where academic misconduct is suspected. This guidance is in line with the University's Student Disciplinary Procedure (the Procedure).

This guide applies to all Registered Students of the University, whether undertaking primarily taught or research-based courses.

Support

If after reading this guide you are uncertain how to proceed please email OSCCA@admin.cam.ac.uk, it is important that you do not take action that is not in line with the Procedure.

Guidance relating to formative assessment is available on the University's [Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct website](#)².

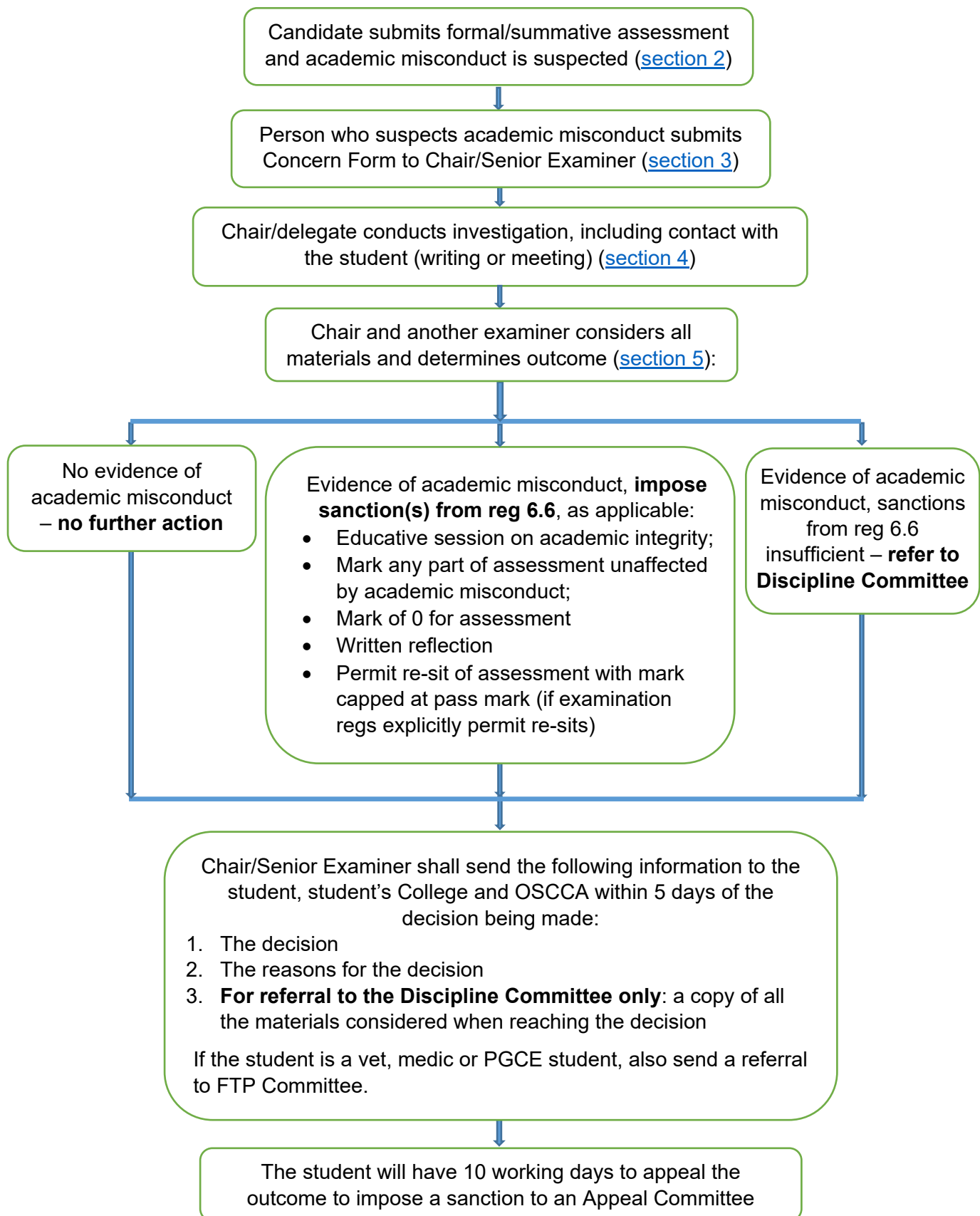
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¹ For formal/summative assessments submitted before 1 October 2023, the previous procedure should be followed, available at: https://www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/files/sdp_-_oct_19.pdf

² See the document "Plagiarism and good academic practice: notes for Supervisors, Directors of Studies and Tutors"

1. A flowchart of the action to be taken for suspected academic misconduct



2. Defining academic misconduct

The University's Rules of Behaviour within the Student Disciplinary Framework state that:

2. A registered student must not... (g) engage in any form of academic misconduct

'Academic misconduct' is gaining or attempting to gain, or helping others to gain or attempt to gain, an unfair academic advantage in formal University assessment, or any activity likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research. It includes being in possession of unauthorised materials or electronic devices during an examination, including recording or communication devices or devices that can store data, even where Registered Students are unaware that such materials or devices are unauthorised, have no intention of using them, or are unaware that they have them in their possession. Academic misconduct also includes:

- *Plagiarism: using someone else's ideas, words, data, or other material produced by them without acknowledgement;*
- *Self-plagiarism: using the Registered Student's own ideas, words, data or other material produced by them and submitted for formal assessment at this University or another institution, or for publication elsewhere, without acknowledgement, unless expressly permitted by the assessment;*
- *Contract cheating: contracting a third party to provide work, which is then used or submitted as part of a formal assessment as though it is the Registered Student's own work;*
- *Collusion: working with others and using the ideas or words of this joint work without acknowledgment, as though it is the Registered Student's own work, or allowing others to use the ideas or words of joint work without acknowledgment;*
- *Impersonating someone or being impersonated in an examination or arranging for someone to impersonate someone else by sitting their examination;*
- *Fabrication, falsification or misrepresentation of data, results or other outputs or aspects of research, including documentation and participant consent, or presenting or recording such data, etc, as if they were real; or*
- *Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations in carrying out research. This includes failure to follow agreed protocol if this failure results in unreasonable risk or harm to humans, other sentient beings or the environment, and facilitating of misconduct in research by collusion in, or concealment of, such actions by others. It includes any plan or conspiracy to attempt to do any of these things.*

Plagiarism

In practice, plagiarism forms a notably high portion of reported academic misconduct allegations and this can include:

- direct plagiarism: copying and pasting words of others (research, online sources, lecture handouts or transcripts, etc.) without proper attribution;
- paraphrasing: rephrasing or rewriting others' ideas and points as if they were one's own;
- mosaic or patchwork plagiarism: copying material from several sources and re-arranging such material without due acknowledgment and in an attempt to pass off work as one's own.

Plagiarism can occur in respect to all types of sources; text, illustrations, graphics, codes and materials downloaded from online sources, as well as unpublished/published material, including lecture handouts and other students' submitted works.

Complying with instructions issued relating to summative assessments

A core requirement of summative assessment is that all students are given equal opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and that the University is able to maintain confidence in its academic standards. These responsibilities result in the University, through its examiners, invigilators and supervisors, providing a number of instructions to students about the parameters for carrying out assessments. Providing the assessment instructions are reasonable and issued appropriately, where students do not comply with these instructions, it is likely that this will amount to academic misconduct.

Academic misconduct and AI

A student using any unacknowledged content generated by artificial intelligence within a summative assessment as though it is their own work, unless explicitly permitted within the assessment brief, constitutes academic misconduct. The University published a statement on [Artificial Intelligence and academic integrity](#) in Easter Term 2023. Further guidance will be published in due course, as the University's approach is developed.

Academic misconduct & intent

Academic misconduct can occur with or without deliberate intention, for example:

- A student copying others' work into their notes without making it clear which parts are quotes, paraphrased or their own original ideas, and coming back to their notes at a later time, believing that ideas or phrases within are their own;
- A student forgetting to acknowledge others' work in their assessment or not having time to reference correctly;
- A student claiming they misunderstood, or did not receive, the appropriate referencing skills or they were unaware that referencing was required;
- A student sharing their coursework with others prior to the submission deadline;
- A student having a mobile telephone in their pocket while undertaking an exam.

Whether or not a student has intended to engage in academic misconduct is likely to impact the sanction imposed, see [section 5 'Determining the outcome following investigation'](#). However, regardless of intent, academic misconduct may have taken place.

Academic misconduct and Turnitin/detection tools

Examiners have a responsibility to ensure that academic integrity is maintained by having a process for assuring assessments are free from academic misconduct. The University offers access to examiners to text-matching software, to support such a process, although it is not a University requirement for examiners to use this software routinely. It is also possible that individual examiners or assessors may identify possible copied text or other forms of academic misconduct independently of detection software.

Reports generated by text-matching or detection software require careful interpretation, preferably by a subject expert. A report without interpretation is not proof of academic

misconduct; it simply highlights text that appears to match with other text already contained within its database. The interpretation of a report helps to determine whether academic misconduct may have taken place. For example, whether the highlighted text has been properly acknowledged or is a subject relevant or common phrase. More information about text-matching software is on the University's [Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct website](#).

Timeliness and reporting academic misconduct

While academic misconduct is most likely to be suspected during the examining process, it is possible that concerns will be raised long after the original submission, particularly in relation to a thesis, which may be embargoed for a number of years before publication. The amount of time that has passed between submission and the concern arising is irrelevant in relation to whether or not the assessment contains academic misconduct. Consequently, and in order to maintain academic standards, there is no deadline or timeframe for reporting academic misconduct.

3. Action to be taken where academic misconduct is suspected

Raising a concern

Any person who suspects that a Registered Student has engaged in academic misconduct, see [section 2 'Defining academic misconduct'](#), should report this emailing [Appendix 1 – Concern Form](#) or the equivalent details to the relevant Senior Examiner or Chair of Examiners, or the Chair of the Degree Committee. This role can be delegated but where possible the same individual should undertake all parts of the role relating to academic misconduct. The Concern can be reported directly to the appropriate person, or to the Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (OSCCA) at OSCCA@admin.cam.ac.uk, who will forward the Concern Form onto the appropriate person.

The person who suspects academic misconduct shall provide as much information as possible regarding their suspicions, this may include:

- original source material which they believe has been plagiarised;
- evidence of unauthorised notes or a mobile telephone being found on the person during an examination;
- similarity detection software or AI detection software alleging a similarity or use of AI, which has not been acknowledged within the assessment.

Action following receipt of Concern Form

Following receipt of the Concern Form and accompanying evidence, the Chair of Examiners, Senior Examiner or Chair of the Degree Committee will determine, based on the information provided, to either:

- commission an investigation;
- take no further action.

When commissioning an investigation it is relevant to consider that following an investigation, the decision-maker(s) shall need to determine on the balance of probabilities (what is more likely than not to have happened, based on the available evidence), whether or not academic misconduct has taken place.

Where an investigation is commissioned, the Chair of Examiners, Senior Examiner or Chair of the Degree Committee (or delegate) will undertake the investigation or delegate the investigation to a specified individual (see Section 4 'Investigating academic misconduct').

Where an investigation is not commissioned, the Chair of Examiners, Senior Examiner or Chair of the Degree Committee (or delegate) should inform the Reporting Person, the person who submitted the Concern, providing reasons for the decision.

4. Investigating suspected academic misconduct

Gathering and analysing relevant evidence

The first action for the Chair or delegate to take is to gather the relevant evidence; this will look different in every case but could include the following documentation:

Example 1: Suspected plagiarism - unacknowledged journal article material in assessment

- Concern Form
- Student's submitted assessment
- Turnitin Report
- Original source material
- Analysis from assessor/examiner regarding the likelihood of inappropriate use of the original source material (either part of the Concern form or separate statement)
- Copy of statement confirming the assessment is student's own work;
- Information that student has received regarding referencing/academic integrity etc

Example 2: Suspected exam misconduct – unauthorised notes on student during exam

- Concern form
- Student's submitted assessment
- Invigilator and/or Supervisor's Report (any written record of what took place)
- Confiscated unauthorised notes
- Any further evidence (sometimes invigilator may have photographs of scene)
- Information student has received about not bringing notes to exam (invigilator instructions read out to students, exam notice issued by Proctors, Department information etc)

Example 3: Suspected use of AI

- Concern Form;
- Student's submitted assessment;
- Detection software reports from AI detection tools or other reasons to suspect AI;
- Analysis from assessor/examiner regarding the likelihood of inappropriate use of AI within the assessment;
- Copy of statement confirming the assessment is student's own work;
- Information that student has received regarding referencing/academic integrity etc

Once this information has been gathered, the Chair or delegate can determine whether to meet with the student to gather their account, or to request a written statement from the student where the matter is straightforward (see the template letter at the end of this section). Straightforward investigations may be more appropriately handled by way of written statement, otherwise, a meeting may be the simplest way to be able to find out the appropriate information from the student.

Contacting the student and receiving information

Once the Chair or delegate has determined whether to meet or request a written statement from the student, they should write to the student, outlining the allegation and explaining the next steps, even where the student has otherwise completed the course or even graduated.

A student's College Tutor or Graduate Tutor should be copied into all correspondence with the student, to ensure that the student has independent support. The student should also be referred to the support available through Cambridge SU's Student Advice Service.

Requesting a written statement from the student

If the Chair or delegate is requesting a written statement from the student, then all evidence relating to the academic misconduct needs to be sent to the student alongside the request.

Meeting with the student

Where the student is invited to a meeting, the student can either receive all the investigation materials alongside the invitation; or receive sufficient information about the suspected academic misconduct and then receive the full investigation materials during the meeting. In either case, the student must know in advance what the meeting is about.

Option 1 - Provide all investigative materials

The student can familiarise themselves with the materials in advance and then respond to detailed questions.

Option 2 - Provide summary of suspected academic misconduct

While this option may open up further opportunities to check the veracity of the student's account, the meeting will take longer and time will need to be given for the student to understand and process the relevant reports and information relevant to the investigation.

An optional template letter have been designed to help share the appropriate information with the student [Appendix 2 - Template letter: Informing student of suspected academic misconduct and invitation to provide response](#).

Declining or postponing the meeting

If the Chair or Delegate has invited the student to a meeting and the student declines, the student should receive an opportunity to submit a written statement. If the student chooses not to engage with either a meeting or written statement then the investigation shall continue without the engagement of the student. The Chair can take into account the student's reticence to meet or provide a statement in making their decision.

Where the student agrees to attend a meeting, do not timetable it during the student's assessments or just before a coursework deadline. Where relevant, if the meeting cannot take place before a class list is published, then it is likely that the classing of this student will have to be postponed.

It is reasonable to postpone or rearrange the meeting once or in exceptional cases twice, where the student has a good reason for not attending. Otherwise, where it appears unlikely the student will engage with the meeting, continue with the investigation without the student's engagement, following opportunity for them to provide a written statement.

Meeting attendees and mode of meeting

The Chair or delegate will chair the investigative meeting, which can take place in person or virtually.

The following persons shall attend the investigative meeting (gender balance should be considered):

- One of the Examiner(s)/Assessor(s) responsible for examining the assessment;
- the candidate (or all relevant candidates in the case of suspected collusion, though they will be invited into the meeting individually);
- the candidate’s College Tutor, Graduate Tutor or Director of Studies;
- if the candidate wishes, an additional supporter or representative in addition to the College member (if this is a legal representative the student will need to seek permission from the Chair in advance – permission shall be granted if the allegation is serious or it is a reasonable adjustment);
- a note taker;
- (optional) a member of OSCCA, to provide procedural advice only.

Avoid conflicts of interest: candidates should not choose supporters or representatives that are otherwise involved in the investigation (for example, a supervisor); the Chair, examiners and assessors should not have personal connection with the student.

In cases of collusion, candidates (and relevant College, supporters and representatives) involved should be invited into the meeting one at a time but all candidates should be available for the duration of the meeting.

During the meeting

The purpose of this meeting is to investigate the academic misconduct. Any information gained from the student can only be used to determine whether academic misconduct has taken place and should not otherwise impact any academic mark awarded for the assessment, for example the meeting cannot be used for the purpose of an oral examination.

During the meeting, the Chair of the meeting is responsible for ensuring the meeting is appropriately conducted. The student should be offered breaks as appropriate/requested. The following elements should be included within every meeting:

1	Everyone in attendance introduces themselves and explains their role in the meeting
2	The Chair explains the purpose of the meeting
3	The Chair confirm the student understands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the purpose of the meeting; • the College is present to support/represent them; and • they could have invited an additional supporter and/or representative (if one is not present) • breaks can be requested at any time
4	The Chair (or the examiner/assessor at the Chair’s request) outlines the alleged academic misconduct being investigated
5	The Chair provides an opportunity for the candidate to give an oral account of their perception of the circumstances that led to the suspected academic misconduct and any reasons for their behaviour e.g. any mitigation or relevant personal circumstances
6	The Chair provides an opportunity for discussions or queries between the Examiners/ Assessors and the Candidate:Where appropriate, discussion may include questions

	about the academic substance of the assessment, to help determine the student's knowledge and ability in relation to the assessment task.
7	The Chair provides an opportunity for the College or other representative to share any relevant information about the suspected academic misconduct
8	The Chair can seek clarification/ask questions of the College or other representative, and can permit the Examiners/Assessors to do so
8	At the end of the meeting, the Chair explains the next steps, including that they will be provided a record of this meeting and given 5 working days to suggest any amendments to the record. The student will then be informed of the outcome of the investigation, normally within a week of confirmation of the meeting record, or if this timeframe is not possible, the student will receive an update and the expected timeframe for the outcome.

Following the receipt of the student statement or the record of the meeting

Where a delegate has undertaken the investigation, all investigation materials and any findings will be shared with the Chair of Examiners, Senior Examiner or Chair of the Degree Committee.

5. Determining the outcome following investigation

Following the investigation, the Chair of Examiners, Senior Examiner or Chair of the Degree Committee, shall consider all of the information, normally consult with at least one other Examiner or member of the Degree Committee (which may be the delegate who undertook the investigation where applicable) and make one of the following decisions:

- a) *There is no evidence of academic misconduct, and no further action should be taken;*
- b) *There is evidence of academic misconduct and sanctions from paragraph 6.6 will be imposed, in accordance with the sanctions guidance;*
- c) *There is evidence of academic misconduct and further sanctions than those available in paragraph 6.6 may be required, consequently, the matter requires a referral to the Discipline Committee.*

The decision-maker(s) need to determine on the balance of probabilities (what is more likely than not to have happened, based on the available evidence), whether or not academic misconduct has taken place. It is for the evidence to prove that such misconduct has taken place, rather than the student to prove that it did not happen.

Decision-makers must refer to [Section 6 'Academic misconduct sanctions guidance'](#) when making this decision and take into account the information in this section.

Further information about outcome a)

If there is insufficient evidence to find that the student's behaviour met the definition of academic misconduct, or the behaviour found to have taken place does not amount to academic misconduct, then decision a) should be chosen.

If there is insufficient evidence that academic misconduct took place but it is considered that additional support around academic integrity would be helpful for the student then this can be specified but would be advisory – it cannot be required. Although hopefully this is something that a Director of Studies (for undergraduate) or supervisor (for postgraduates) could encourage with the student.

Further information about outcome b)

Within the Procedure, Chairs of Examiners, Senior Examiners and Chairs of Degree Committees are permitted to impose the following sanctions under paragraph 6.6:

- a) *An educative session regarding academic integrity;*
- b) *A mark for the assessment that only reflects the parts of the assessment not affected by academic misconduct;*
- c) *A mark of 0 for the assessment affected by academic misconduct;*
- d) *An apology;*
- e) *A written reflection;*
- f) *Where re-sits are permitted by the course of study regulations, a re-sit assessment where the maximum mark permitted is a pass mark.*

Where none of these sanctions are appropriate, the matter will need to be referred to the Discipline Committee, where any academic .

Further information on each of these sanctions is as follows, examples of the appropriate use of each sanction can be found in section 6 'Academic misconduct sanctions guidance'. The decision-maker can choose to impose one or more sanctions from paragraph 6.6.

a) An educative session regarding academic integrity;

This session could be delivered by a librarian, academic within the Department or Faculty, or a member of the student's College. The person who will be responsible for organising the session should be specified (they may delegate the running of the session to someone else, if permitted). The sanction can specify the length and purpose of the session or it can be left to the person organising it. A deadline should be included for when the session will be completed and it is appropriate to require the person organising the session to confirm that the session has taken place and the student engaged appropriately with the session. This sanction is of particular importance where the student shall be submitting future assessments.

b) A mark for the assessment that only reflects the parts of the assessment not affected by academic misconduct;

This sanction could result in a pass or fail mark for the student, depending on the quantity of the assessment deemed to have been affected by academic misconduct and where the academic misconduct has taken place (the introduction may be less important than an analysis section).

The marking should take place as though the section(s) linked to academic misconduct does not exist. As such, this sanction is not punitive or educative and therefore, should primarily be used where the academic misconduct is unintentional, and/or in conjunction with other sanctions.

c) A mark of 0 for the assessment affected by academic misconduct;

This sanction affects only the assessment that has been found to have contained academic misconduct. The mark of 0 may appear on the student's transcript, dependent on the assessment type, and the mark of 0 should be taken account in any classing calculation for the student. This sanction may result in the student not being able to progress onto the next academic year of their course or receive the academic award for their class. The decision-makers should be aware of the consequences this sanction will have on the student when it is imposed, to ensure that the sanction has no unintended consequences.

d) An apology;

An apology can be requested to be written to an affected individual, e.g. the author of the source material, or the Chair of Examiners etc as a figurehead of the examination process. In either case, the decision-makers should receive a copy of the apology in the first instance to ensure it is of an appropriate standard. The decision-makers may suggest a word-length or focus of the apology or leave it up to the student. Where an apology is not of sufficient quality then the student should be given a further opportunity to re-submit the apology. If the apology is to be sent onto someone else this should be organised by the Chair (rather than the student making direct contact). A deadline should be provided, and where relevant an instruction that the apology should be drafted following any educative session.

e) *A written reflection;*

A written reflection normally has a minimum word limit associated with it and will be considered by the Chair of Examiners etc to ensure appropriate quality. This sanction is normally twinned with a reflective session (where such engagement has not already taken place) and in which case an appropriate deadline should be considered. This sanction can be requested to be completed under the supervision of the student's DOS or supervisor.

f) *Where re-sits are explicitly permitted by the course of study regulations, a re-sit assessment where the maximum mark permitted is a pass mark.*

This sanction has limited use, as it is only for courses of study that routinely permit re-sits of examinations or resubmissions of coursework within their regulations, in circumstances where students are automatically offered this option if they fail a first attempt at the examination, without consideration of personal/exceptional circumstances.

Where the course regulations permit this type of re-sit then, where it is appropriate to do so, the decision-maker(s) may require the student to undertake the re-sit but cap the maximum mark that a student can achieve to the pass mark for the course. .

Further information about outcome c)

Where the sanctions under section b) are insufficient then a referral to the Discipline Committee is required. Where a referral is made, the Discipline Committee will consider the matter afresh – e.g. if the student has not admitted the academic misconduct then the Committee will firstly determine whether academic misconduct has taken place. As a result, the reasoning for choosing outcome c) can be brief, indicating only that there is evidence of academic misconduct and the sanctions in paragraph 6.6 are insufficient.

Some examples of factors that would make it more likely to refer a matter to the Discipline Committee would include if the student had previously been found to have engaged in academic misconduct or if the student showed no insight into their behaviour and therefore, there were concerns that the behaviour would be repeated.

Communicating the decision

Once the decision has been made, the Chair of Examiners, Senior Examiner or Chair of the Degree Committee (or delegate) shall write to the student, copied to the student's College, OSCCA and any student representative, with the outcome and reasons for the outcome.

[Appendix 3 – template letter: academic misconduct outcome](#) ensures that all relevant information is communicated with the student.

Where there is a referral to OSCCA, the full investigation materials, the student's examination results (if known) and classing criteria must be sent to OSCCA at the same time as the decision letter. Do not send the outcome letter to the student without having the relevant information ready to send to OSCCA at the same time. While the intention behind communicating with the student quickly is good, in practice, communicating a referral to OSCCA prior to referring the case to OSCCA causes significant anxiety to the student.

6. Academic misconduct sanctions guidance

This guidance is applicable to undergraduate and postgraduate taught students only. Suspected academic misconduct relating to the summative assessments of Postgraduate Research students, while rare is very serious. Where suspicions relate to an academic award that has already been granted, this is likely to require referral to a Discipline Committee. Where academic misconduct is suspected prior to an academic award having been granted, it may still be preferable to seek advice either from OSCCA or the Postgraduate Committee in advance of determining the outcome.

This guidance offers transparency and provides typical sanctions for a range of scenarios. It is not possible to provide a list of exhaustive examples or to account for every possible circumstance. In order to provide consistency and fair decisions, decision-makers shall use their discretion when imposing sanctions. Individual circumstances will be taken into account by decision-makers and may lead to different sanctions (more serious or more lenient) than those listed here.

The sanctions available for Chairs of Examiners, Senior Examiners or Chair of the Degree Committee (normally consulting with at least one other Examiner or member of the Degree Committee) are as follows (regulation 6.6 of the Student Discipline Procedure):

- a) *An educative session regarding academic integrity;*
- b) *A mark for the assessment that only reflects the parts of the assessment not affected by academic misconduct;*
- c) *A mark of 0 for the assessment affected by academic misconduct;*
- d) *An apology;*
- e) *A written reflection;*
- f) *Where re-sits are permitted by the course of study regulations, a re-sit assessment where the maximum mark permitted is a pass mark.*

Examples of breaches of the Rules of Behaviour	Typical sanction for first breach
<i>Academic Misconduct – in an examination</i>	
<p>Example 1 A student in possession of unauthorised materials/ electronic devices in an examination, seemingly accidentally and where the student has not left the examination room during the examination. Student immediately and fully admits what has happened. Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • phone switched off and forgotten about, no attempt to hide the phone and full transparency when spotted; • full-size and full set of revision notes, forgotten about and left on the desk or underneath the desk, with no attempt to hide the materials. <p>Example 2 Being found in an examination(s) with unauthorised materials/electronic devices where it appears the student had the intention to use them, or used them but where the student acknowledges their wrongdoing/the impact of academic misconduct.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educative session • written reflection • Written apology to Chair of Examiners/Senior Examiner <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the mark for the relevant assessment(s) to '0' • Written apology to Chair of Examiners/Senior Examiner

<p>It is unnecessary to prove that these unauthorised materials/devices have been used. Examples of this include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • phone switched on or phone somewhere discreet (on person or nearby, e.g. in toilet) • unauthorised notes written in a permitted book (and allegedly forgotten about) • full-size and full set of revision notes allegedly forgotten about and on the person, with no attempt to hide them. <p>Example 3 Being found in an examination(s) with unauthorised materials/electronic devices where it appears the student had the intention to use them, or used them but where the student does not acknowledge wrongdoing or show insight into their behaviour or the impact of academic misconduct.</p> <p>Example 4 Second offence, having previously been found to have engaged in academic misconduct.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • written reflection on academic integrity • educative session <p><i>Refer to Discipline Committee</i></p> <p><i>Refer to Discipline Committee</i></p>
<p>Academic misconduct – plagiarism</p>	
<p>Example 1 Student on taught course, using small amounts of unauthorised or unacknowledged sources or materials within their assessment, limited to small amounts, or found within certain sections, such as the introduction or sections which do not focus on a student’s ability to analyse, criticise or otherwise complete the objective of the assessment (this can include self-plagiarism)</p> <p>Example 2 Student on taught course, using unauthorised sources or materials to produce significant amounts of content within an assessment, or producing sections of analysis or core arguments within the assessment (this can include self-plagiarism)</p> <p>Example 3 Student on research course, using small amounts of unauthorised or unacknowledged sources or materials within their thesis or dissertation submitted for examination, limited to small amounts, or found within certain sections, such as the introduction or sections which do not focus on a student’s ability to analyse, criticise or otherwise complete the objective of the assessment (this can include self-plagiarism)</p> <p>Example 4 Student on research course, using unauthorised sources or materials to produce significant amounts of content within a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark the assessment, discounting the plagiarised text; • Educative session • Written apology to Chair of Examiners/Senior Examiner; • written reflection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the mark for the relevant assessment to ‘0’ • Written apology to Chair of Examiners/Senior Examiner • written reflection • Educative session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dependent on course regulations, either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If re-sits/resubmission is permitted, require this; any numerical mark limited to a ‘pass mark’; or ○ Mark assessment, discounting the plagiarised text • Written apology to Chair of Examiners/Senior Examiner • written reflection • Educative session <p><i>Refer to Discipline Committee</i></p>

thesis or dissertation submitted for examination, or producing sections of analysis or core arguments within the assessment (this can include self-plagiarism)	
Academic misconduct - collusion	
<p>Example 1 Working with someone else, or using unpermitted technology in an assessment and using these ideas without acknowledgement</p> <p>Example 2 Giving someone words and ideas for their assessment, upon request but with no knowledge of its intended use – e.g. the student believed it was for revision purposes</p> <p>Example 3 Discussing data or giving ideas to someone for their assessment, knowing this would likely be used for an assessment</p> <p>Example 4 Giving someone words or data for their assessment, upon request, knowing this would likely be used for an assessment</p>	<p>Sanctions align with Example 1, 2 or 3 in the <i>Academic Misconduct – plagiarism</i> section above, dependent on quantity and course type.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educative session • Written reflection on academic integrity • Written apology <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educative session • Written reflection on academic integrity • Written apology <p><i>Refer to Discipline Committee</i></p>
Academic misconduct – contract cheating	
<p>Example 1 Contracting a third party to provide or produce work or research, which is then used as a basis for completing and submitting a formal assessment</p> <p>Example 2 Contracting a third party to provide or produce work or research, which is then used in whole, or in large part, as the submission for the Respondent’s formal assessment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the mark for the relevant assessment to ‘0’ • Written apology • written reflection on academic integrity • Educative session <p><i>Refer to Discipline Committee</i></p>
Academic misconduct – fabrication of data	
<p>Example 1 Using fabricated data, false data or misrepresenting data within any summative assessment where there is clear evidence that the data was believed to be true at the time of submission</p> <p>Example 2 Using fabricated data, false data or misrepresenting data, where issues were known by the student or where reasonable checks were not carried out by the student</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where assessment due to be published/used (e.g. PhD thesis) Student given opportunity to re-submit the assessment with accurate data • For undergraduate students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assessment marked with elements affected by faulty data discounted • For postgraduate students:

<p>Example 3 Using fabricated data, false data or misrepresenting data within a postgraduate-level dissertation or thesis, where these issues were known by the student or where reasonable checks were not carried out by the student</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assessment given 0/fail, where regulations permit a re-sit the maximum mark the student can obtain will be a pass mark, otherwise, fail stands. ● For all <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Educative session ○ Written apology ○ written reflection <p><i>Refer to Discipline Committee</i></p>
<p><i>Academic misconduct – providing work for others to submit as though it is their own for financial or personal gain</i></p>	
<p>Example 1 Providing academic work for others to use or submit as though it was their own, for financial or other gain. This includes circumstances where the Respondent has stated that it must not be used for the purpose of submission, however, on the balance of probabilities this appears to be the purpose it will be used for. An example would be the person requesting the work is a student of this University or another University.</p>	<p><i>Refer to Discipline Committee</i></p>

7. What should be reported to the final Examiners' Meeting?

The outcome of all suspected academic misconduct should be reported anonymously where possible (e.g. without identifying the student), alongside the outcome of any actions taken with regard to academic misconduct, including a summary of any investigative meetings, should be reported back to the final Examiners' Meeting, or the Degree Committee, as appropriate. Where the candidate is not part of a cohort and therefore, it is not possible for the candidate to remain anonymous, it is preferable to determine the student's academic outcome prior to knowledge of the academic misconduct suspicion so that there can be no accusation from the student that knowledge of the investigation impacted the outcome.

The candidate's academic marks should be reported in the usual way. The candidate must be classed on the basis of the classification scheme, and marks awarded, subject to any action agreed by the Chair and Examiners. Further marks should not be deducted.

Where a case is referred to OSCCA for consideration under the disciplinary regulations, classing should normally be suspended. Advice should be taken regarding whether the student can progress with the course while awaiting the outcome of any disciplinary referral.

8. Annual reporting on academic misconduct cases

OSCCA will compile the information it receives as a result of being copied into student's letters indicating the outcome of academic misconduct investigations. It will then form part of the case statistics that it reports through the University governance structure, via the General Board's Education Committee and will be published on the website, as part of the OSCCA Annual Report.

9. Contact OSCCA for further support

The Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals (OSCCA) provides procedural advice to all students involved in this process. An investigation does not require the involvement of OSCCA unless it is being referred to OSCCA. However, OSCCA can provide the following support to staff:

- Initial action to take following suspected academic misconduct, including templates;
- The investigation meeting and relevant templates;
- To attend any investigative meetings to provide procedural advice;
- To provide informal advice on the potential outcomes of an investigation;
- To receive any referrals to the Student Discipline Procedure where, following investigation by the Chair of Examiners/Degree Committee, academic misconduct is still suspected and has not been determined as 'minor'.

To receive any support or advice, contact OSCCA at OSCCA@admin.cam.ac.uk.

Appendix 1 – Concern Form

1.	Student's name:	
2.	Student's blind candidate number or USN (if known):	
3.	Student's course of study:	
4.	Assessment suspected of academic misconduct:	
5.	Date of submission of assessment (if known):	
6.	Reason for suspected academic misconduct:	
7.	Describe any action taken/ relevant materials (e.g. Turnitin reports, source material, unauthorised notes):	
8.	Any other relevant information:	
9.	Name and role of reporting person:	
10.	Confirmation that information provided is accurate to the best of the Reporting Person's knowledge:	
11.	Date information sent to Chair of Examining Board/ Senior Examiner or Chair of Degree Committee:	

Appendix 2 - Template letter text: Informing student of suspected academic misconduct and invitation to provide response

Dear **student name**,

Suspected academic misconduct – information and request to respond

I am writing to you in my capacity as the **Chair of Examiners/Senior Examiner/Chair of Degree Committee etc.**, to inform you that suspected academic misconduct has been identified in an assessment you have submitted. An investigation is being conducted into the suspected academic misconduct in accordance with the University's [Student Discipline Procedure](#) (the Procedure) and this letter sets out:

1. The suspected academic misconduct;
2. The investigation process that will take place;
3. The possible outcomes and next steps; and
4. The support available for you during this process.

Receiving information about an investigation can be worrying; however, I would urge you to read all of the information within this letter before taking any action. Your College is copied into this letter in order to support you.

1. The suspected academic misconduct

Your assessment, **provide details of assessment**, submitted on **date**, has been referred to me as a result of suspected academic misconduct. The University's Rules of Behaviour state that a student must not engage in any form of academic misconduct, which is defined as *"gaining or attempting to gain, or helping others to gain or attempt to gain, an unfair academic advantage in formal University assessment, or any activity likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research."*

Your assessment was referred by an **Examiner/Assessor/Reporting Person** who has identified concerns with **summarise concern, e.g. the extent of original work within your written assessment**.

Following receiving this concern, I initiated an investigation and provide you with a copy of the following relevant information that has been gathered (**provide relevant information – not all of the following list will apply in all circumstances**):

- A copy of the student's assessment with suspected academic misconduct flagged
- A copy of the Turnitin text match report;
- A copy of source material (describe);
- The Departmental guidance and information about academic misconduct provided to candidates undertaking the course and assessment – including any declaration that the candidate signed to confirm the work was their own;
- A copy of the submission statement signed by the student;
- A copy of the marking criteria for the assessment;
- Any other relevant documents which are to be referred to during the process.

2. The process

As part of the investigation, I am requesting you to provide a response to the suspected academic misconduct by **supplying a written statement/inviting you to an investigative meeting**. This is to enable you to provide any and relevant information that you wish me to take into account when considering this matter. You will also have the opportunity to provide any written documentation.

Any information that is provided may be used to inform or support future disciplinary action. If you choose not to provide any information to me then I will make a decision about the academic misconduct without your engagement but this may lead to a more serious outcome, as I will not be able to take into account any explanation or relevant personal circumstances.

[where a statement is requested, otherwise delete] Please provide a written statement to me at **[email address]** by **[date]**. You are able to receive support from your College or another supporter of your choosing in compiling your statement and any accompanying documentation.

In your statement please provide any information about the suspected academic misconduct, including:

- a) Whether you admit academic misconduct took place;
- b) Whether you intended to engage in academic misconduct;
- c) Any circumstances relevant to the academic misconduct;
- d) Any mitigation or relevant personal circumstances (must be evidenced)
- e) Include any evidence or documentation to support your statement

[where a meeting is offered, otherwise delete] You are invited to attend an investigative meeting at **[date]**, **[time]** and **[location/Teams etc]**. If you are unable to attend a meeting at the time, please let me know as soon as possible I will Chair the meeting, along with **[examiner/assessor etc]**. Someone from your College will also be in attendance and you can bring a further supporter or representative if you wish. Legal representation is not normally deemed necessary but if you believe it necessary please let me know. Notes of the meeting will be taken by a note-taker and you will have an opportunity after the meeting to comment on the notes of the meeting.

During the meeting I will give you an opportunity to provide any information you wish about the suspected academic misconduct, including;

- a) Whether you admit academic misconduct took place;
- b) Whether you intended to engage in academic misconduct;
- c) Any circumstances relevant to the academic misconduct;
- d) Any mitigation or relevant personal circumstances (must be evidenced)

You are able to send me in advance of the meeting to **[email address]**, or bring along with you any evidence or documentation to support your account.

3. Possible outcomes of the Procedure

Following consideration of all of the evidence, including your **written statement/investigation meeting** and any documentation you provide to me, I will determine, in accordance with paragraph 6.5 of the Procedure:

- There is no evidence of academic misconduct, and no further action shall be taken;
- There is evidence of academic misconduct has taken place, and sanction(s) from paragraph 6.6 will be imposed, in accordance with the sanctions guidance;
- There is evidence of academic misconduct and further sanctions than those available in paragraph 6.6 may be required, consequently, the matter requires referral to a Discipline Committee.

The sanctions available in paragraph 6.6 of the Procedure are as follows:

- An educative session regarding academic integrity;*
- A mark for the assessment that only reflects the parts of the assessment not affected by academic misconduct;*
- A mark of 0 for the assessment affected by academic misconduct;*
- An apology;*
- A written reflection;*
- Where re-sits are permitted by the course of study regulations, a re-sit assessment where the maximum mark permitted is a pass mark.*

If, in due course, sanctions are imposed then you will have an opportunity to appeal this decision, as outlined in the Procedure.

4. The support available for you during this process.

Your College, who has been copied into this correspondence, is available to support you in this process. In addition, the Student Advice Service, a team of professional advisors within Cambridge SU can also provide independent and confidential advice.

If you find that your mental wellbeing is impacted by this process then there is support available [within your college](#), via [University support services](#), [NHS or external services](#). If any urgent support is required the best contact points are [available here](#).

If you require any reasonable adjustments or additional support in relation to this process, please discuss this with me as soon as possible, in order that I can make appropriate arrangements.

Yours sincerely,

SIGN OFF

cc: College

Appendix 3 – Template letter text: academic misconduct outcome

Dear **student name**,

Academic Misconduct - outcome

I am writing to you in my capacity as the **Chair of Examiners/Senior Examiner/Chair of Degree Committee etc.**, to inform you that my investigation of the suspected academic misconduct has been completed. This letter provides you with the outcome of the investigation and the next steps. This action is in accordance with the University's [Student Discipline Procedure](#) (the Procedure).

Receiving information about an investigation can be worrying; however, I would urge you to read all of the information within this letter before taking any action. Your College is copied into this letter in order to support you.

Investigation

Your assessment, **provide details of assessment**, submitted on **date**, has been investigated by me as a result of suspected academic misconduct. The University's Rules of Behaviour state that a student must not engage in any form of academic misconduct, which is defined as "*gaining or attempting to gain, or helping others to gain or attempt to gain, an unfair academic advantage in formal University assessment, or any activity likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research.*"

As you are aware, I have investigated this matter, which has included gathering and considering the following information:

- A copy of your assessment
- A copy of the Turnitin text match report;
- A copy of source material (describe);
- The Departmental guidance and information about academic misconduct provided to candidates undertaking the course and assessment – including any declaration that the candidate signed to confirm the work was their own;
- A copy of the submission statement signed by the student;
- A copy of the marking criteria for the assessment;
- A copy of your written statement/the information you provided in the investigation material;
- the documentation provided to evidence your written statement/information provided during the investigation meeting
- Any other relevant documents which are to be referred to during the process;
- A copy of the Student Discipline Procedure

Decision

Following careful consideration of all of the information, I consulted with **another Examiner/member of the Degree Committee (name them)**, and determined in accordance with paragraph 6.5 of the Procedure that: a) There is no evidence of academic misconduct, and no further action should be taken; **OR** b) There is evidence of academic misconduct and sanctions from paragraph 6.6 will be imposed, in accordance with the sanctions guidance; **OR** c) There is evidence of academic misconduct and further sanctions than those available

in paragraph 6.6 may be required, consequently, the matter requires a referral to the Discipline Committee.

[Where a) is chosen] As a result of my decision, no further action shall be taken and this matter is now closed. Your assessment will be marked in accordance with the marking criteria and the Examining Board/Degree Committee will continue with the marking process as usual, and your full marks will be published in due course.

[Where b) is chosen] As a result of my decision, the following sanctions have been imposed *[delete/provide further details as appropriate]*:

- a) An educative session regarding academic integrity;
- b) A mark for the assessment that only reflects the parts of the assessment not affected by academic misconduct;
- c) A mark of 0 for the assessment affected by academic misconduct;
- d) An apology;
- e) A written reflection;
- f) Where re-sits are permitted by the course of study regulations, a re-sit assessment where the maximum mark permitted is a pass mark.

[Where c) is chosen] As a result of my decision, this matter will now be referred to the Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals, who will organise a University Discipline Committee to take place. You will be contacted by the Secretary of the Discipline Committee with further information about the Committee meeting.

Reasons for the decision

The reasons for my decision are as follows:

- a) List all the relevant decisions, if you have made a finding of academic misconduct, you will want to confirm that on the balance of probabilities, you and the other examiner/degree committee member have considered there is sufficient evidence that academic misconduct has taken place
- b) You will want to be explicit where the student has mentioned personal circumstances that these have been considered and taken account of, you will want to note whether the circumstances were evidenced.

Support

Your College, who has been copied into this correspondence, is available to support you. In addition, the Student Advice Service, a team of professional advisors within Cambridge SU can also provide independent and confidential advice.

If you find that your mental wellbeing is impacted by this process then there is support available [within your college](#), via [University support services](#), [NHS or external services](#). If any urgent support is required the best contact points are [available here](#).

Yours sincerely,

SIGN OFF

cc: College