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KMMS Academic Misconduct Procedures

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The procedures set out in this document apply to all forms of academic misconduct and all programmes of study within KMMS.

Students have a responsibility to act with honesty, integrity, and fairness in completing assessment requirements in relation to their course of study (including assessments related to the admissions, recruitment, and selection process into KMMS and to progression during the programme). Such academic integrity plays a positive role in student development both during study and when moving into employment.

In demonstrating these positive behaviours, students should take note of the concepts of [good academic practice and academic integrity](#).

2. Definitions

2.1 Academic Integrity is a positive commitment to approaching academic work with honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility. As a fundamental value in higher education, it includes producing your own work, properly acknowledging the contributions of others, and adhering to established rules to ensure a fair learning environment for all.

2.2 Academic Misconduct is any act that “gives or has the potential to give an unfair advantage in an examination or assessment or might assist someone else to gain an unfair advantage, or any activity likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research. Any form of cheating poses a threat to the academic standards and to the integrity of qualifications awarded to the majority of students who achieve their qualification entirely by legitimate means” ([Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education](#) definition). Some examples of the most common forms of academic misconduct are (the list is not exhaustive):

2.2.1 Plagiarism - presenting someone else’s work or ideas as your own;

2.2.2 Self-plagiarism - submitting some, or all of the same work that you have already submitted for another assessment when this is not permitted;

2.2.3 Taking a copy of another student's work without their permission;

2.2.4 Fabrication - the falsification of data, evidence, experimental results, quotations or other information in any assessed work. This includes falsifying attendance records;

2.2.5 Collusion - working with someone else on an assessment which is intended to be your own work, and/or sharing work;

2.2.6 Contract cheating - submitting work created by someone or something else (including use of essay mills or buying work online);

2.2.7 Submitting materials to unauthorised academic support platforms - sharing University-owned materials, including assessments, briefs, study notes and other course and module materials, to unauthorised websites to obtain academic feedback.

2.2.8 Impersonation - Arranging for someone else to sit your exam or sitting an exam pretending to be someone else;

2.2.9 Cheating in examinations (or other formal assessment) - including possession of unauthorised material or technology during an exam, and attempting to access unseen assessment materials in advance of an exam;

2.2.10 Breaches of research and ethics policies - such as carrying out research without appropriate permission

2.2.11 Unauthorised use of artificial intelligence: Use of generative AI beyond the scope permitted for the specific assessment, or failure to

appropriately acknowledge its use where allowed. If no specific guidance is provided for a specific assessment, generative AI use must be in-line with the University's Gen AI principles and guidance available at [Using generative AI in your studies A student guide - Your studies - University of Kent](#).

2.2.12 Attempting to influence a member of staff - seeking to gain an advantage by offering an examiner or teacher any incentive to treat assessed work more favourably than it merits.

3. Student Responsibilities

- 3.1 You must uphold academic integrity in all aspects of your work and your assessments.
- 3.2 You must read and ensure you understand this policy and any information provided by KMMS, particularly relating to referencing techniques and required academic practices.
- 3.3 You must take responsibility for your actions and adhere to any instructions and/or further training requirements.

4. University Responsibilities

- 4.1 KMMS will provide you with guidance and training on academic integrity and how to avoid misconduct early on in your studies. Additional guidance is available throughout your studies.
- 4.2 Investigations will be fair and transparent and, if the offence is confirmed, you will be advised how to correct poor academic practice and avoid further breaches.
- 4.3 The University will handle cases promptly and aims to finish the whole process, including any appeals, within 90 working days (see breakdown of stages below). The initial investigation and Academic Misconduct Lead decision will be

communicated to you within 40 days. You will be kept updated throughout the process.

4.4 The University will clearly inform students suspected of misconduct of:

- The specific breach of academic misconduct.
- The process to establish whether a breach has occurred including how you can respond to the allegation and present any information, explanation or extenuating circumstances you feel are relevant.
- The support available to you during and after the process.
- Any penalty given and how it will be applied.
- The right to appeal and how to do so.

4.5 Investigating staff will be appropriately trained and conduct their duties without bias or prejudice.

4.6 The policy laid out in this document will be followed in all cases.

5. Investigating Concerns about Academic Integrity

5.1 If it is suspected that academic misconduct has occurred, it is the responsibility of the reporter and the investigator to prove the allegation against you. The standard of proof required is the “balance of probabilities”. A balance of probabilities means that it is more likely than not that academic misconduct has occurred.

5.2 The University considers academic misconduct using the concept of “strict liability”. This means that your intention or negligence is not considered when determining whether or not academic misconduct has taken place. For example, if you accidentally take notes into an exam, you are still guilty of an offence, even if you did not take the notes out of your pocket during the exam. Whether or not you intended to use the notes during the exam is not relevant to the

offence.

5.3 Identifying suspected academic misconduct will often, but not always, involve academic judgement. This is based on the scholarly and/or professional knowledge and expertise that academic staff draw upon in reaching academic decisions about assessment. Examples of academic judgement might include deciding the extent of the plagiarism or other academic misconduct (for example, by interpreting a Turnitin similarity report, or by assessing whether content has been appropriately or inappropriately paraphrased); in cases of alleged collusion, determining whether identical answers across more than one student's assessments is outside of common usage in the subject area; or deciding whether the standard of work is out of line with your other assessments, or whether your notes and drafts support a case that the submitted work is your own.

5.4 The University recognises that academic misconduct may be caused by poor academic practice, particularly at the outset of your studies. Investigations and subsequent penalty decisions will consider some, or all, of these points, as applicable to your case:

- i. The type and severity of the academic offence.
- ii. The level of study and your previous educational background.
- iii. Whether you admit or deny the allegation.
- iv. Previous or concurrent academic offences.
- v. The impact of the penalty on your progress or award.
- vi. Any aggravating or mitigating factors
- vii. The suggested mark to be awarded for the work, including sections identified as potential misconduct.

5.5 Allegations of academic misconduct may be reported against students who have already completed their studies. If this happens, an investigation can still take

place through this process and/or through the student conduct processes.

5.6 It may be appropriate in investigating an allegation of misconduct for a student to be referred to the procedure for non-academic discipline or the KMMS Low-Level Concerns, Fitness to Study and Fitness to Practise Procedure. For example, where it is alleged that a student has falsified documentation as part of an academic procedure, such as the mitigation of extenuating circumstances, or where the misconduct raises questions about a student's honesty, trustworthiness, or character. The Academic Misconduct Lead, or nominee, completes a Notification Form for all students under investigation for alleged academic misconduct.

6. Process for Investigating Concerns about Academic Integrity

6.1 Markers or invigilators report cases of suspected misconduct through an online reporting tool, providing as much information as they can gather.

6.2 You will be informed in writing via email about the case. Your mark may be withheld while your case is investigated but feedback on your work will still be provided.

6.3 The case is reviewed by the KMMS Academic Misconduct Lead (AML), an academic staff member trained to assess allegations, consider evidence and make related judgements. The AML determines if there is a case to answer. If there is a case to answer, they assess the severity and impose an appropriate penalty.

6.4 You will be informed of the decision in writing via email. If they determine that there is no case to answer, you will still be notified and (if withheld) the mark released as normal. If the AML determines that the severity of the breach is either a low or moderate case to answer a penalty will be recommended and you will be given the opportunity to respond and submit additional evidence within 15

working days of receipt of the outcome.

6.5 If the offence is deemed serious, an Academic Misconduct Panel will automatically take place to consider your case and any additional information that you provide. The Panel will decide on an appropriate outcome, and you will be informed of this, and the reasons behind the decision. See Section 7, below, for full details.

6.6 You have a right to appeal the decision through the formal appeals process (see Appeals section 9, below).

7. Academic Misconduct Panels

7.1 The Academic Misconduct Panel will meet if a case is deemed serious, or if you wish to contest a low or moderate penalty. You must clearly explain why you are contesting and give evidence to support it.

7.2 The panel will consist of:

- Three Academic Misconduct Leads, or suitably trained nominees, one from KMMS who will act as Chair
- A student representative, where available
- A secretary will be present to keep a record of the conversation (usually a member of the Quality Assurance and Enhancement Office).

7.3 The student representative will be fully trained and will treat your case with confidentiality and discretion. The representative is there to ensure that the Panel is conducted fairly, consistently and with no bias. There may be occasions when a student representative is unavailable, such as outside of academic term time, or where all available representatives could be perceived at risk of bias. Every effort will be made to secure a representative but if there is no-one available, you will be asked if you agree for the Panel to go ahead without them, to allow the case to be resolved quickly. You may wait for a representative to become available if you wish.

- 7.4 The Panel meeting is your opportunity to discuss your case, including the reasons why you feel the allegation against you should not be classed as a breach of the regulations, and/or to review the proposed penalty. The panel may ask you questions about how you produced your work, tools you used, research methods, etc., so you should prepare for this. Please ensure you have read all provided details and evidence in advance of the meeting.
- 7.5 The Panel will review any written representation and evidence you provide, information about any previous cases, and the original referral report and evidence. You may submit further evidence to the Panel during the online meeting (verbally and/or via email). Your case documentation, including any additional statements and evidence, will be shared with the Panel members, including the student representative. Should you wish for any information not to be shared, please inform the secretary at least 48 hours before the panel is scheduled.
- 7.6 If you wish to attend the Panel, you may be accompanied by a member of staff, a student at either University, a relative or a member of staff of either Students' Union. Supporting parties cannot interrogate the Panel, they are there to provide personal support only. Panels are not legal proceedings, and a legal representative may not normally accompany you, even if the legal representative is a member of staff or a student at the University or a member of staff of the Students' Union or a relative. However, in complex misconduct cases, or cases where the outcome can potentially lead to a serious consequence, students may be permitted to have legal representation. Please let us know if you wish to be accompanied during the Panel, or if you have any special requests for accessibility reasons.
- 7.7 Panel meetings normally take place online via MS Teams. You will be sent a link prior to your allotted time and may be asked to wait in a virtual lobby while other cases are heard. Information to help you prepare for the meeting will be sent to by email at least seven calendar days prior to the hearing.

7.8 You should confirm your intention to attend the Panel meeting at least 24 hours in advance. It is not mandatory to attend the meeting but if you do not attend without good reason there is no obligation to arrange another meeting (but you will still have the right to appeal as below).

7.9 Panel members will not include any members with a close relationship to you, anyone who you have previously made a formal complaint about or the original reporter of the offence. If you feel that any member of the Panel is unsuitable (i.e. you don't believe they can be neutral), you should raise this at the earliest opportunity and no later than 48 hours before the hearing.

8. Penalties

8.1 Penalty decisions will be based on some or all of these points, as applicable:

- i. The type and severity of academic offence.
- ii. Your level of study and previous educational background.
- iii. Whether you admit or deny the allegation.
- iv. Previous or simultaneous academic offences.
- v. The impact of the penalty on your progress or award.
- vi. Any aggravating or mitigating factors.
- vii. The suggested mark to be awarded for the work, including sections identified as potential misconduct.

8.2 If you have previously been found guilty of committing a similar offence, or failed to complete required training, the applied penalty may be greater. If you admit to committing an offence, this will be taken into account when considering your penalty.

8.3 Academic Misconduct Leads and Panels have discretion to apply appropriate penalties, or a combination of penalties, but must ensure that they are consistent in their approach and there is a justified rationale.

8.4 All students will be required to complete the [Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism](#) Moodle module if they have not already done so. Academic support referrals (where you will be given one-to-one advice on upholding academic integrity, including how to correctly reference and paraphrase, etc) may also be requested at the request of the Academic Misconduct Leads and Panels, regardless of the severity of the case.

8.5 The following table shows some possible outcomes and actions (not exhaustive):

Code	Level	Outcome	Action	Example
N1	N/A	No case	Refer to Personal/Clinical Academic Tutor or Skills for Academic Success (SAS) for academic support if appropriate.	Referred but insufficient evidence or not an appropriate referral.
N2	N/A	Poor academic practice	Refer to complete SAS academic integrity module, where appropriate, undertake unpenalised reassessment at earliest opportunity.	Poor academic practice. First offence.
L1	Low	Formal warning	Record kept in case of future breaches.	Repeated unintentional poor academic practice. No advantage gained over other students.
M1	Moderate	Marks reduction	Assessment mark is reduced to reflect the severity of the breach, Academic Misconduct Lead in liaison with academic referrer.	Lengthy incidences of material inappropriately close to the original source, significant failure to attribute material, lengthy inappropriate manipulation of data, part of the work completed by a third party (including undeclared AI), student deemed to have gained an advantage or placed other students at a disadvantage.

M2	Moderate	Fail assessment	Assessment is given a mark of zero.	Little or no independent academic value, repeat offence of the same nature, fabrication or falsification of data, work largely or wholly completed by a third party (including undeclared AI), clear intention to deceive, student gained a significant advantage (e.g. by exam misconduct, impersonation by third party, or influencing and examiner).
S2	Serious	Termination of registration or revocation of award	Student's registration on the course is terminated. May be given an alternative exit award if appropriate.	Significant and repeated or large-scale deliberate misconduct that seriously undermines academic integrity and, potentially, the reputation of the University.

9. Appeals

9.1 You may appeal against an academic misconduct outcome via the formal appeals process on the following grounds:

- When there is clear, objective evidence of an administrative, procedural, or clerical error that may have influenced the outcome.
- New evidence can be provided that could not reasonably have been shared earlier and raises doubt about the outcome's reliability.
- That the outcome and/or penalty were unreasonable or not justified given the evidence which was available at the time.
- There is evidence of prejudice or bias or the reasonable perception of prejudice or bias against you.

9.2 Appeals are managed by the Appeals, Conduct and Complaints Office as per the [Academic Appeals Policy](#).

9.3 If you are dissatisfied with the outcome of a formal appeal and any subsequent appeal review request, you have a further right to appeal through the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) within 12 months of the Completion of Procedures Letter. Full guidance is available on their website: www.oiahe.org.uk/students/.

10. Confidentiality, Disclosure of Information and GDPR

10.1 Your academic transcript does not include reference to academic misconduct allegations, whether proven or otherwise; transcripts solely provide details on the final marks awarded for modules taken, together with the class of award (where appropriate).

10.2 The University is obliged to release details relating to academic misconduct offences if these are explicitly requested by prospective employers as part of an

academic reference or where disclosure is an obligatory professional requirement.

10.3 Appropriate levels of confidentiality will be maintained throughout academic misconduct procedures. Details about you and your case will only be shared with a small number of people who are directly involved with handling the case. In the event of serious concerns for your welfare, your information may be shared with support services.

10.4 The University will collate statistics on academic integrity cases for monitoring and training purposes, but these will not include personal information specific to you as an individual.

10.5 Details of how we use and collect your data can be found in the KMMS [Privacy Notice](#)

10.6 Data is retained in line with the [Documentation Retention and Archiving Policy](#).

11. Support

11.1 You can access advice and guidance in relation to any allegation of academic misconduct via [Kent Students' Union Advice Centre](#) or [Canterbury Christ Church Student Union](#)

11.2 You may also wish to speak to the [Student Support and Wellbeing](#) team and/or the KMMS Student Life and Guidance team..

11.3 For academic skills support, including advice on referencing, paraphrasing and avoiding academic misconduct please contact the [Skills for Academic Success](#) team or your Personal/Clinical Academic Tutor.