

Quality Assurance Committee

Updates to the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic)

Date of Meeting: [15/04/2026]

1. Purpose of the Paper

The purpose of this paper is to:

- Consider and approve the proposed changes to the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic).

2. Previous Consideration by / Further Approval Required

The PGT Policy Review Task and Finish Group (TFG) has met twice to discuss the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic). The first time, in December 2025, was to share initial feedback from Schools and relevant services from a PGT perspective, in order to inform some of the updates to this Code. The TFG met again in late March 2026 to consider the input received from the Education Committees and Senate, and agree a final version of this document. In addition, consultation meetings were held in January 2026 with different stakeholders to review the Code more holistically (Annex B).

The table below shows the Committees and groups that have considered and discussed the amendments to the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic) to date, and targets that we are currently aiming for to approve the changes:

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/ discussed by	PGT Policy Review TFG	[01/12/2025]
	Consultation with a variety of colleagues from across the University	January 2026
	Student Support and Experience Committee (SSEC)	[12/02/2026]
	Academic Policy and Regulations Group (APRG)	[13/02/2026]
	Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)	[18/02/2026]
	University Education Committee (UEC)	[24/02/2026]
	PGR Committee	[11/03/2026]
	Senate (discussion)	[18/03/2026]
	APRG (approval)	[31/03/2026]
Further consideration/ approval required by	QAC (approval)	[15/04/2026]
	UEC (approval)	[21/04/2026]
	Senate (approval)	[13/05/2026]
	Court (approval)	[24/06/2026]

3. Recommended Action

The Committee is invited to **approve** the draft changes to the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic), as set out in Annex A.

4. Discussion

- 4.1 In September 2025, a Task and Finish Group (TFG) was established to review the University's policies relating to Postgraduate Taught (PGT) students and programmes, with the aim of ensuring they remain fit for purpose and aligned with the needs of our academic community and future PGT delivery across all UoA campuses and online.
- 4.2 As part of this work, it was identified that the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic) required revision from a PGT perspective, as the current version is considered disproportionately punitive for PGT students, particularly in light of the changing demographics of recent cohorts. The TFG met to discuss the Code in December 2025, and members also provided asynchronous feedback through a shared document. The Group convened again in late March 2026 to review the input received from the consultation exercise, as detailed in Sections 2, 4.3 and 4.4 of this paper.
- 4.3 Further consultation was undertaken in January 2026 with colleagues from across the University (see Annex B) to discuss the changes from a more holistic perspective.
- 4.4 A first draft of the Code was presented at the relevant Education Committees and Senate during Cycle 4, as well as at the PGR Committee. Further changes to the draft were made as a result of feedback received at these meetings.
- 4.5 Key proposed amendments include:
 - i. Adopting a more supportive and less punitive tone and process throughout the document.
 - ii. Updating definitions and processes to ensure they are future-proof and adaptable.
 - iii. Replacing references to "cheating" with the broader and more appropriate term "academic misconduct".
 - iv. Clarifying which processes and outcomes apply to postgraduate research degrees (Sections 2.9 and others refer).
 - v. Removing references to outdated terminology (e.g. Academic Registrar, Common Assessment Scale) or replacing it with more appropriate language (e.g. replacing "Preliminary Investigation" with "School-level Investigation").
 - vi. Clarifying the expected timelines for investigation of cases of academic misconduct (Sections 4.1.2, 5.2, and Appendix B Section 1.1 refer).
 - vii. Replacing outcomes of "proven/not proven" to "upheld/not upheld". Clarifying the "case dismissed" option (Section 2.4, 6.2.1 and others refer).
 - viii. Including reference to Fitness to Practice processes where applicable (Section 2.7 refers).

- ix. Section 3: Introducing a clear overarching definition of “academic misconduct” as an umbrella term, with more detailed examples relocated to Appendix A.
 - x. Section 4: Simplifying the procedures by moving from multiple different processes (one for each type of misconduct) to a single unified procedure, accompanied by a list of possible outcomes to be applied at the School’s discretion. For first ‘offences’, focus on supportive measures that allow students to learn from a mistake.
 - xi. Section 6: Streamlining the section by consolidating the possible outcomes of a Discipline Hearing into a single list.
 - xii. Introducing the requirement that the expulsion outcome is ratified by the Principal (or nominee).
- 4.6 The Committee is invited to discuss and approve the proposed to the Code.
- 4.7 Subject to approval of the proposed changes, appropriate training and dissemination plans will be developed to ensure that relevant staff and students are informed and supported in the implementation of the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic).

5. Further Information

Further information is available from Jason Bohan, Dean for Student Support & Experience (jason.bohan@abdn.ac.uk), and Isabella Fausti, Academic Policy and Quality Officer (isabella.fausti@abdn.ac.uk).

Date Paper Was Written: [02/02/2026]

Last updated: [02/04/2026]

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status

Open

**UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN
ACADEMIC QUALITY HANDBOOK**

CODE OF PRACTICE ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE (ACADEMIC)

1. PURPOSE OF THIS CODE

The University is a community dedicated to the advancement and dissemination of knowledge through research, teaching and learning. Those objectives can only be achieved if the members of the University community can live and work beside each other in conditions of safety and security and with respect for the norms of academic behaviour. This Code is intended to support these objectives by [providing a clear process for addressing cases of](#)~~prescribing sanctions against~~ Academic Misconduct by i) currently registered students ([including, undergraduate, postgraduate taught and -postgraduate research students](#)) ~~and~~, ii) Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Graduates ~~and~~ iii) [visiting postgraduate research students](#). In the case of Postgraduate Research Graduates, the [Policy for Dealing with Allegations of Academic Misconduct Against Graduates of the University](#) applies and not this Code. It is expected that students will have been made aware of what is meant by Academic Misconduct by their respective Schools at the start of teaching/their programme/[their research degree](#). This Code should be read and applied in the light of the above.

Students undertaking courses, programmes and / or elements of assessment subject to the requirements of a Professional, [Statutory and](#) Regulatory ~~and Statutory~~ Body (PSRB), may be subject to an additional regulatory framework in respect of Academic Misconduct. Where these regulations are more stringent than those stipulated within the University's own regulations, those of the PSRB will take priority.

Frameworks which exist in this regard are listed in Appendix [ED](#), and will be widely publicised to the students concerned.

2. GENERAL PROVISIONS

2.1 The Head of School is mentioned throughout this Code as having responsibility for dealing with alleged cases of Academic Misconduct [at School level](#). The Head of School may, however, delegate full authority under this Code to another member of academic staff.

~~**2.2**~~ [For cases that are being dealt with at University level, A](#)an Investigating Officer will be selected ~~by the Academic Registrar~~ from a list of ~~members of~~[academics approved by](#) Senate. The Investigating Officer will be from a different School from which the allegation has been raised.

~~**2.3**~~[2.2](#)

~~**2.4**~~ The Academic Registrar may delegate responsibility under any aspect of the Code to another member of staff.

~~**2.5**~~[2.3](#) The standard of proof that shall be used in all cases under this Code is the balance of probabilities. ~~This is the same standard used in civil law proceedings.~~ This means that a Head of School, Investigating Officer or anyone else permitted to make a decision under this Code will be satisfied that an event occurred if they decide, having reviewed the evidence available, that the occurrence of the event was more likely than not.

~~**2.6**~~[2.4](#) The possible decisions an Investigation Officer can take when deciding if a case of alleged Academic Misconduct has taken place are [that the allegation is: upheld](#)~~proven~~; not [upheld](#)~~proven~~; or case dismissed.

~~**2.7**~~[2.5](#) Reference to the CGS in the Code refers to grades available under the University's ~~ies~~ Common Grading Scale. ~~(or in older cases or those involving historical data, CGS refers to the previous grading system Common Assessment Scale, CAS).~~

~~**2.6**~~ [The role of internal and external examiners shall be restricted to the presentation of evidence; they shall have no role in deciding whether a student is guilty of cheating](#)[Those presenting evidence to](#)

~~support~~ regarding an allegation of academic misconduct will not be involved in deciding the outcome of the investigation.

2.8 2.7 Outcomes of Academic Misconduct investigations may be referred to in 'Fitness to Practise' investigation, for the programmes where this applies.

2.8 When considering a case relating to an Undergraduate or Postgraduate Taught Graduate the School and Investigating Officer will, after referring to the *Policy for Dealing with Allegations of Academic Misconduct Against Graduates of the University*, investigate the case following relevant procedures below, as if the Graduate was a registered student, and will also refer to Section 7.

2.9 For cases of research misconduct, the Research Governance Handbook should also be referred to. Where the subject of the allegation is a PGR who is both a staff member and a student, the investigation process to be followed will be determined by the Head of School. If the alleged research misconduct relates to work on their programme of study, the student process will normally be followed. If it relates to their employment, the staff process will normally be followed. In addition, any case of research misconduct involving a PGR student will need to be reported to the Scottish Funding Council within one month of the conclusion of the investigation, via the Academic Policy and Quality Team.

3. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

- 3.1** This section outlines four separate offences that the University regards as Academic Misconduct. These are: Plagiarism (including self-plagiarism) / collusion; Contract Cheating, other forms of Cheating and Research Misconduct. Committing an act of Academic Misconduct in any assessment, examination process or in any required element of a programme, whether formative or summative, can result in disciplinary action being taken under this Code. The University of Aberdeen expects that all students (undergraduate, postgraduate taught and research postgraduate students) will undertake their studies with integrity and will submit assessments (including PGR annual progression exercises and research theses) that have been prepared by themselves. To do otherwise, to act dishonestly and cheat in any form of assessment (formative or summative), is classed as academic misconduct and will incur penalties. The university will seek to promote the importance of academic integrity and support students so that they can understand and develop the necessary skills to facilitate academic integrity.
- 3.2** The University is a signatory to the QAA Academic Integrity Charter which represents the collective commitment of the UK higher education sector to promote academic integrity and take action against academic misconduct. Academic integrity is a commitment to the fundamental values of honesty, fairness, trust, respect, and accountability in their academic endeavours. Where a student does not act with academic integrity this may demonstrate poor academic practice or academic misconduct.
- 3.3** Academic misconduct is an umbrella term which describes any action which gains, attempts to gain, or assists others in gaining or attempting to gain unfair academic advantage. This includes the intentional presentation of work for any assessment (formative or summative) which is not wholly the work of the student without appropriate acknowledgement of sources. The most common examples of academic misconduct are listed in Appendix A.

Plagiarism

“Plagiarism” is defined by the University as the use, without adequate acknowledgment, of the intellectual work of another person in work submitted for assessment. This definition includes the unattributed use of course materials and applies to all types of assessment, including ‘open book’ assessments. A student cannot be found to have committed plagiarism where it can be shown that the student has taken all reasonable care to avoid representing the work of others as his or her own.

“Self-plagiarism” is defined as the duplication of work for assessment by submitting coursework containing material identical, or substantially similar, to material which has already been submitted by the same student for any other assessment.

Plagiarism through the use of artificial intelligence tools is defined as the unauthorised or unacknowledged use of artificial intelligence tools to generate content for work submitted for assessment.

Collusion

“Collusion” is a form of plagiarism and is therefore treated in the same way as plagiarism. It is defined as collaboration between students in an assignment that has not been authorised by the course coordinator. It does not refer to authorised group work that is assessed by a single group report.

Contract cheating

“Contract cheating” is an umbrella term to denote the submission of work by a student where some or all has been produced by someone other than that student with the intention to deceive. This can be achieved through having another person, or commercial service, produce work that is subsequently submitted for an assessment, whether that person/commercial service is paid or not.

Other forms of cheating

“Other forms of cheating” include but are not limited to:

possession in an examination of any material or electronic device which has not been authorised in writing by the relevant Course Co-ordinator. This also applies to the possession of mobile phones and/or any other device on one’s

~~person during an exam even if that device is switched off. Students whose first language is not English may, however, refer to a dictionary where this is approved by the Invigilator at the start of the examination;~~
~~copying from another student in an examination;~~
~~talking to another student in an examination setting~~
~~removing an examination book from an examination setting;~~
~~bringing into an examination room any other examination book, or part of one;~~
~~impersonating another candidate in relation to any assessment;~~
~~permitting another person to impersonate oneself in relation to any assessment;~~

- (a) producing work for another student to use and;
- (b) any other conduct reasonably considered to amount to cheating as decided by the Head of School on a case by case basis.

3.1 Research Misconduct

- 3.1.1 “Research Misconduct” applies to students studying a fully research-based programme such as the Master of Research or PhD. “Research Misconduct” is defined by the University as: The fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or deception in proposing, carrying out or reporting results of research, or deliberate, dangerous or negligent deviations from accepted practices in carrying out research. It includes failure to follow established protocols (incl. ethical approval) if this failure results in unreasonable risk or harm to humans, other organisms, or the environment, and facilitating of misconduct in research by collusion in, or concealment of, such actions by others. It also includes financial impropriety in accounting for research funds, intentional unauthorised use, disclosure or removal of, or damage to, research-related property of the University or of another, including apparatus, materials, writings, data, hardware or software or any other substances or devices used in or produced by the conduct of research. It also includes mismanagement or inadequate preservation of data and/or primary materials, breach of duty of care to research participants, animal subjects, human organs or tissue used in research, or for the protection of the environment, and also behaviour that constitutes bullying and harassment. This list is not exhaustive and further examples of research misconduct are explained in the [University of Aberdeen Research Governance Handbook](#)
- 3.1.2 Research Misconduct does not include honest error or honest differences in the design, execution, interpretation or judgement in evaluating research methods or results, or misconduct unrelated to the research process. Similarly, it does not include poor research unless this encompasses the intention to deceive.

4. SCHOOL PROCEDURE IN CASES OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

4.1 Preliminary School-level Investigation for all forms of academic misconduct

- 4.1.1 Where there is reason to believe that Academic Misconduct may have taken place, the Head of School shall decide if it is appropriate to conduct a [Preliminary School-level Investigation](#) in accordance with section 4.1.2. [In cases where academic misconduct is identified during a research degree viva voce, consideration as to the most appropriate course of action will be given in accordance with Section 4.1.3.](#)
- ~~4.1.2 The possible outcome following a Preliminary Investigation depends on the nature of the allegation and in the case of Plagiarism/Collusion whether the student has been found guilty of Plagiarism/Collusion before. The outcomes and processes for allegations of Plagiarism/Collusion in a course at level 1-5 (taught element only) are outlined in section 4.2 with the outcomes and processes for other forms of Academic Misconduct outlined in section 4.3 and section 4.4.~~
- ~~4.1.3~~ [4.1.2](#) The procedure to be followed by the Head of School when conducting a [Preliminary School-level Investigation](#) is as follows, with further provisions applying to both [Preliminary School-level Investigation](#) meetings and Discipline Hearings outlined in Appendix [BA](#):
- (a) a meeting, held on campus or online (e.g. [via Microsoft Teams](#)), should be arranged with the student no later than 10 working days after the allegation is raised, [giving the student at least 5 working days’ notice of the meeting, unless otherwise agreed in writing](#);
 - (b) the student should be contacted, in writing, outlining the reasons for the meeting, clearly stating the allegation, and confirming that they may be accompanied by another person if they wish. At the same time the student must be provided with copies of all evidence supporting the allegation

of Academic Misconduct [\(see Section 5\)](#). Such meetings will be held in the appropriate way, whether on-campus or online;

~~(b)~~(c) [where relevant, the student may be questioned to determine their level of understanding of the work submitted. In some cases, an appropriate subject specialist will be invited to attend the meeting to facilitate this. The student should be informed if any additional members of staff will be invited to attend the meeting.](#)

~~(e)~~(d) another member of staff shall be present at the meeting for the purpose of taking a record of the

discussion, and additional staff members may be present if the Head of School requests; and
~~(d)~~ the student should be sent a copy of the meeting's outcome (using the appropriate pro forma) and record of the discussion to confirm its accuracy, no later than 5 working days after the meeting is held.

(e)

4.1.3 Identification of academic misconduct during a research degree viva voce:

- (a) Where concerns relating to academic misconduct, including the inappropriate or undeclared use of artificial intelligence, are raised by an external examiner in advance of or during the examination of a research degree, careful consideration must be given to the appropriate course of action. A decision must be made as to whether the concerns can be fairly and proportionately explored and addressed within the *viva voce* examination, or whether they are of such a nature that a formal investigation under section 4.1.2 must be initiated and concluded prior to the examination proceeding.
- (b) It is recognised that determining the appropriate route may be complex and context-specific. In such circumstances, the external examiner should discuss the concerns promptly with the internal examiner. Advice must then be sought from the School PGR Director to determine whether the matter can be appropriately managed within the *viva voce*, or whether the examination should be paused pending the outcome of a formal investigation.

4.2 School dealing with alleged Plagiarism/Collusion by students in taught courses at level 1-5 Possible outcomes of School-level investigations

4.2.1 The Head of the School, having completed the School-level Investigation and considered all of the evidence submitted, may:

- (a) decide that misconduct has not occurred and the allegation is not upheld, or
(b) decide that academic misconduct has occurred and the allegation is upheld.

4.2.2 The outcome of a School-level investigation should be communicated in writing to the student using the appropriate pro-forma within 5 working days of the meeting. The Academic Policy and Quality Team should be included in the outcome communication, for recording and reporting purposes, in the following cases:

- (a) For undergraduate and postgraduate taught students and graduates: all upheld cases.
(b) For postgraduate research students: all investigated cases (upheld and not upheld), in line with 2.9.

~~4.1.4~~ Where an allegation of ~~Plagiarism or collusion~~ academic misconduct is identified, made against a student registered in a course at level 1-5 (not including the project or dissertation element of a PGT programme) the Head of School shall ~~contact the Registry to ascertain whether the student has been found guilty of committing Plagiarism/Collusion under this Code before~~ there are any prior allegations of academic misconduct against the same student that were upheld. ~~In determining if a student has committed Plagiarism/Collusion before the Registry~~ This will take into account the date the outcome of a previous case was communicated to the student and its relationship to the submission date of the new piece of work, to ensure the student had enough time to learn from the previous case. Assuming the student had submitted the work under investigation after a previous finding of ~~Plagiarism/Collusion~~ academic misconduct was made under this Code, the allegation shall be taken to relate to a second offence.

~~4.1.5~~ The Head of School shall then conduct a ~~Preliminary Investigation as outlined in 4.1.3 above~~.

4.1.6 4.2.3

~~4.1.7~~ The Head of the School, having completed the ~~Preliminary Investigation and considered all of the evidence submitted, may:~~

- (a) ~~decide that plagiarism/collusion has not occurred and dispose of the case, or~~
- (b) ~~decide that plagiarism/collusion has occurred.~~

~~4.1.8 If the Head of the School decides that plagiarism/collusion has not occurred the case should be disposed of as follows:~~

~~4.1.9 the student should be written to within 5 working days informing them that no further proceedings will be taken;~~

~~4.1.10 in the case of plagiarism, the student shall be informed that the mark awarded for the assessment in question will reflect the amount of independent work of the student and appropriately referenced work of the student and the student shall be provided, in writing, the University's definition of Plagiarism and guidance on its avoidance, including how to reference material correctly;~~

~~4.1.11 in the case of collusion, the student shall be informed that the mark awarded for the assessment in question will reflect the amount of independent work of the student and the student shall be provided with guidance on when, and under what circumstances, group assignments are acceptable.~~

~~4.1.12~~4.2.4 If the Head of School decides that ~~Plagiarism/Collusion has occurred~~allegation of academic misconduct is upheld, and this is the first time academic misconduct ~~the student~~ has been found ~~to have committed in the work of a student such an offence~~ further to section 4.2.3.1 above, the Head of School shall have the following outcomes available to dispose of the case. The outcome chosen can be based on consideration of mitigating circumstances raised by the student during the Preliminary School-level Investigation or the general significance of the elements of the assessment in question:

(a) To signpost the student to available guidance, additional training or support to avoid academic misconduct in the future (which may include referral to the Student Learning Service for advice and support), with or without any additional penalty;

(b) To ask that work be assessed ignoring the sections where academic misconduct was found, and a mark (or outcome) be provided in the usual way, reflecting the amount of independent work of the student;

(c) To deduct up to a maximum of 3 CGS points¹;

~~(a) to award a mark of G3 for the assessment in question;~~

(d) To allow the student to resubmit the work in question for assessment, taking into account advice given during the meeting on avoiding ~~plagiarism/collusion~~academic misconduct and any other support deemed appropriate for the specific case (which may include referral to the Student Learning Service for advice and support and/or signposting to additional training), as a first attempt and therefore without capping the grade (or outcome); ~~the ultimate grade for the assessment in question being capped at a D3 where deemed appropriate; and~~

(e) To allow the student to resubmit the work in question for assessment, taking into account advice given during the meeting on avoiding plagiarism/collusion and any other support deemed appropriate for the specific case (which may include referral to the Student Learning Service for advice and support) with the ultimate grade for the assessment in question being capped at a D3²;

(f) To award a CGS of G3 for the component of assessment (for example, a written examination or piece of in-course assessment) in which extensive academic misconduct occurred. If the imposition of this penalty means that the student fails the course and a resit is permitted, the CGS mark attainable following reassessment will be restricted to a maximum of CGS D3³.

~~(b) —~~

~~(c) In the case of plagiarism, to ask that the work be assessed, ignoring the plagiarised elements, and a mark provided in the usual way.~~

¹ Please note that this outcome does not apply to postgraduate research degrees.

² Please note that this outcome does not apply to postgraduate research degrees.

³ Please note that this outcome does not apply to postgraduate research degrees.

~~4.1.13~~ After choosing an outcome the Head of School must write to the student within 5 working days of the meeting confirming that the outcome will be passed to the Academic Registrar who will issue a formal written warning to the student that any future allegation of Plagiarism/collusion will be dealt with under the Code and the nature of the penalty that may be imposed in such a case. The finding of Plagiarism/Collusion, and the specific outcome, shall then be recorded on the student's record by Registry.

~~4.1.14~~ If the Head of School decides that ~~plagiarism~~ academic misconduct has occurred ~~has been committed, and the student has previously been found to have committed plagiarism~~ this is a second offence further ~~to~~ in accordance with ~~section 4.2.3~~ 1 above, the Head of School shall refer the matter ~~to the Academic Registrar~~ for a Discipline Hearing in accordance with ~~section 5~~ Section 5. The Head of School must inform the student in writing that the matter is being referred ~~to the Academic Registrar~~ for a Discipline Hearing to be arranged under this Code. ~~Similarly, if the Head of School decides that collusion has been committed, and the student has previously been found to have committed collusion further to section~~

~~4.1.15~~ 4.2.5 ~~4.2.1~~ above, the Head of School shall refer the matter to the Academic Registrar in accordance with section 5. The Head of School must inform the student in writing that the matter is being referred to the Academic Registrar for a Discipline Hearing to be arranged under this Code.

~~4.1.16~~ 4.2.6 The Head of School shall have the discretion to refer any case where ~~plagiarism/collusion~~ academic misconduct is suspected for further investigation ~~through the Academic Registrar~~ at Discipline Hearing in accordance with section 5. The Head of School must inform the student in writing that the matter is being referred ~~to the Academic Registrar~~ for a Discipline Hearing to be arranged under this Code.

4.2 — School dealing with alleged Contract Cheating by students in taught courses at level 1-5

~~4.2.1~~ Contract cheating is an umbrella term to denote the submission of work by a student that has been produced by someone other than that student with the intention to pass the work off as their own. Suspicion that a student has submitted work that has not been written by them may arise when there is a disparity in the grades awarded, or the style or fluency of writing, in an assessment in comparison to other assessments submitted by that student or in comparison to their overall performance in tutorials/discussion groups. It may indicate that the assessment has been purchased or otherwise acquired from a third-party supplier, e.g. an essay mill (essay writing service), purchased (for money or other goods/services) from another individual or produced by any other person on behalf of the student.

~~4.2.2~~ Where an allegation of Contract Cheating is made against a student, the Head of the School shall conduct a Preliminary Investigation as outlined in section 4.1.3 above. Students should be advised in advance that they may be interviewed, that the meeting will be recorded and that they may be required to submit additional information prior to, or following, the Preliminary Investigation.

~~4.2.3~~ The student may be interviewed to assess their level of understanding of the work submitted. This interview should be carried out by the Head of School, or their appointed nominee. If the interview takes place it will be recorded and notes taken to help inform future investigations.

~~4.2.4~~ The Head of the School, having held the Preliminary Investigation and considered all of the evidence submitted, may:

- ~~(a)~~ decide that Academic Misconduct has not occurred; or
- ~~(b)~~ decide that there are good reasons for believing that Academic Misconduct may have occurred.

~~4.2.5~~ If the Head of the School decides that Academic Misconduct has not occurred, they shall write to the student within five working days of the meeting informing them that no further action will be taken.

~~4.2.6—If the Head of School decides that Academic Misconduct may have occurred, they shall refer the matter to the Academic Registrar in accordance with section 5. The Head of School must inform the student in writing that the matter is being referred to the Academic Registrar for a Discipline Hearing to be arranged under this Code.~~

~~4.3—School dealing with other cases of Academic Misconduct~~

~~4.3.1—Where an allegation of Academic Misconduct is made against a student that is not covered by section 4.2 and 4.3, the Head of the School shall conduct a Preliminary Investigation as outlined in section 4.1.3 above.~~

~~4.3.2—The Head of the School, having held the Preliminary Investigation and considered all of the evidence submitted, may:~~

~~(a) decide that Academic Misconduct has not occurred; or~~

~~(b) decide that there are good reasons for believing that Academic Misconduct may have occurred.~~

~~4.3.3—If the Head of the School decides that Academic Misconduct has not occurred, they shall write to the student within 5 working days of the meeting informing them that no further action will be taken.~~

~~4.3.4—If the Head of School decides that Academic Misconduct may have occurred, they shall refer the matter to the Academic Registrar in accordance with section 5. The Head of School must inform the student in writing that the matter is being referred to the Academic Registrar for a Discipline Hearing to be arranged under this Code.~~

5. REFERRING A CASE FOR A DISCIPLINE HEARING

5.1 Cases must be referred in writing ~~to the Academic Registrar~~ for a Discipline Hearing within five working days of the conclusion of the ~~Preliminary School-level~~ Investigation. When referring a case ~~to the Academic Registrar~~ for a Discipline Hearing, ~~no less than~~ the following should normally be provided:

- ~~A~~ A covering letter or email confirming the full details of the allegation;
- ~~A~~ A copy of the record taken at any meeting/discussion held during the ~~Preliminary School-level~~ Investigation;
- ~~T~~ The original piece(s) of work clearly identifying the sections in which Academic Misconduct is alleged to have taken place;
- ~~F~~ For Plagiarism cases:
 - a) ~~T~~ The source of the plagiarised material should be clearly marked on the original piece(s) of work submitted to identify the corresponding section(s) and, if available, the Originality report;
 - b) ~~T~~ The source(s) of the plagiarised materials;
 - c) ~~C~~ Copies of relevant Student Handbook(s), Course Handbook(s) and any other written material routinely provided to students drawing their attention to the University's definition of Plagiarism together with additional details of information and support provided to students on how to avoid Plagiarism;
- ~~F~~ For collusion cases:— copies of relevant Student Handbook(s), Course Handbook(s) and any other written material routinely provided to students drawing their attention to the rules regarding the boundaries for collaborative working;
- ~~F~~ For contract cheating cases:— copies of examples of the student's work, including the piece under investigation and notes/recording of the interview carried out to assess their understanding of the work submitted for assessment;
- For any other cases, appropriate evidence or the reasons for suspecting academic misconduct, as applicable and wherever possible.

- [W](#)ritten reports from individuals, Tutors or Invigilators present at the time that the alleged offence took place (if applicable).

5.2 ~~Following a referral, a~~ On receipt of a properly referred case the Academic Registrar shall then arrange for a Discipline Hearing- will to- be conducted in accordance with the procedures in this Code. An outcome of the investigation will normally be provided to the student within 20 working days of referral to a Discipline Hearing, and within 5 working days of the Hearing taking place.

5.3 ~~When arranging a Discipline Hearing, the Academic Registrar shall select an~~ University Investigating Officer will be selected, in line with Section 2.2, to hear the case in accordance with this Code. They shall also ensure a Clerk will also be present at the meeting to take a general note of discussion and to provide guidance on procedure and the application of this Code.

~~5.3~~ Notwithstanding 5.3, if a student has admitted to Academic Misconduct during the School-level Investigation, it may not be necessary for a Discipline Hearing to take place. In such cases, the University Investigating Officer will be able to decide the appropriate outcome, on the recommendation of the School, via circulation.

5.4

6. STANDARD OUTCOMES FOLLOWING A DISCIPLINE HEARING

6.1 General Provisions

6.1.1 The procedure to be followed by the Investigating Officer at the Discipline Hearing is outlined in Appendix C.

~~6.1.1~~ **6.1.2** The penalties which can be imposed by an Investigating Officer following a Discipline Hearing where an allegation of Academic Misconduct is ~~proven~~ upheld are as set out in sections 6.2 to 6.8 below.

~~6.1.2~~ **6.1.3** An Investigating Officer has the discretion to impose a lesser or reasonable alternative penalty than provided in this Code where it is thought appropriate to do so having reviewed all the evidence in the case and any statements or explanations provided by the student.

~~6.1.3~~ **6.1.4** If the penalty imposed means that the student fails the course, the normal rules for resit examination, re-submission of assessed work or other re-assessment for that course shall apply, unless otherwise stated.

~~6.1.4~~ **6.1.5** Where a reassessment diet arises before the conclusion of proceedings under the Code, the student should be allowed to submit for reassessment, but the grade should be withheld by the School until the outcome of proceedings are known and applied.

~~6.1.5~~ **6.1.6** Where mentioned, expulsion means the termination of matriculated student status involving a total prohibition on attendance at or access to the University and on any participation in University activities. A student who has been expelled will not usually be eligible for re-admittance to the University. For Student visa holders, this outcome may result in visa sponsorship withdrawal.

~~6.1.6~~ **6.1.7** Where a student is expelled under this Code, if they have already satisfied the requirements for an award prior to the offence(s) being committed, they will be allowed to graduate with that award, in absentia.

~~6.1.7~~ **6.1.8** In the context of an Undergraduate or Taught Postgraduate Graduate the wording within a penalty relating to expulsion is not applicable (see Section 7).

~~6.1.8~~ **6.1.9** An Investigating Officer can make alterations to the process to be followed at a Discipline Hearing where it is reasonable to do so, AND the student agrees to the alterations in advance.

6.2 Standard Possible outcomes where an allegation of academic misconduct is upheld at ~~for a Discipline Hearing first offence of Plagiarism/Collusion in a level 1-5 taught course~~

6.2.1 Following a Discipline Hearing, the Investigating Officer, having completed the investigation and considered all of the evidence submitted, may:

- (a) Decide that academic misconduct has not occurred and the allegation is not upheld, or
- (b) Decide that academic misconduct has occurred and the allegation is upheld, or
- (c) Decide that the case should be dismissed due to procedural irregularity.

6.2.2 Where an allegation of academic misconduct is upheld at Discipline Hearing, the possible outcomes are those listed in Section 4.2.4, in addition to:

- (a) ~~The student shall be awarded CGS G3 for the component of assessment (for example, a written examination or piece of in-course assessment) in which they are found guilty.~~ The student shall be awarded an overall CGS G3 for the course(s) in which academic misconduct occurred. If a resit is permitted, the CGS mark attainable following reassessment will be restricted to a maximum of CGS D3⁴.
- (b) The student shall be expelled from the University. In this case, the outcome shall be ratified by the Principal (or their nominee).

~~Where a student has been found guilty of Plagiarism/Collusion in any component of assessment for more than one course, or more than one component within one course, the student shall be awarded an overall CGS G3 for the course(s).~~

~~6.2.1 If the imposition of a penalty under section 6.2.2 means that the student fails the course and a resit is permitted, the CGS mark attainable following reassessment will be restricted to a maximum of CGS D3.~~

⁴ Please note that this outcome does not apply to postgraduate research degrees.

~~Standard outcome for a subsequent offence of Plagiarism/Collusion in a level 1-5 taught course (also see section 6.4 below)~~

~~6.2.2—Where a student is found guilty of Plagiarism/Collusion in any component of assessment for the second time the student shall be awarded an overall CGS G3 for the course(s) and may be expelled.~~

~~**6.3—Standard outcome for Cheating/Plagiarism/Collusion in Taught Postgraduate Programmes: Dissertation or Elements Contributing one-third or more of the Programme**~~

~~6.3.1—The student shall be awarded CGS G3 for the overall course mark (or the equivalent unit of assessment) in which the assessment of which they are judged to have Cheated/Plagiarised relates.~~

~~6.3.2—No resit examination, re-submission of assessed work or other re-assessment shall be permitted, nor can any other course be substituted for that which has been failed under that section.~~

~~6.3.3—Where a student is judged to have Cheated/Plagiarised/Colluded in any component of assessment for more than one course the student shall be awarded CGS G3 for the course(s) and will usually be expelled.~~

~~**6.4—Standard outcome for students found guilty of contract cheating**~~

~~6.4.1—Students who are found guilty of submitting work that has been partly or wholly undertaken by someone other than themselves (“contract cheating”, as defined in Section 3.4) shall be awarded an overall CGSG3 for the course in question and will usually be expelled from the University.~~

~~**6.5—Standard outcome for students found guilty of any other form of cheating**~~

~~6.5.1—Students who are found guilty of any other form of cheating shall be awarded an overall CGS G3 for the assessment or course in question depending on the severity of the case and may be expelled.~~

~~6.5.2—If the imposition of a penalty under section 6.2.1 means that the student fails the course and a resit is permitted, the CGS mark attainable following reassessment will be restricted to a maximum of CGS D3.~~

~~**6.6—Standard outcome for Research Misconduct**~~

~~6.6.1—The student shall fail the degree in respect of which Research Misconduct is established and shall not be permitted to submit work for this or any other research degree of the University. The student shall be expelled from the University.~~

~~**6.7—Standard outcome for students found guilty of a second offence of academic misconduct**~~

~~6.7.1—Students who are found guilty of more than one instance of academic misconduct of any sort shall usually be expelled. For example, a student who is found guilty of their second case of plagiarism and who is then found guilty of their second case of collusion, or their first case of another form of cheating, shall be expelled from the University.~~

7 UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE GRADUATES

- 7.1 If the penalty imposed in Section 6 means that the graduate's Degree/Diploma/Certificate award is affected the Investigating Officer will decide, in consultation with the relevant School(s) as appropriate, whether a lower award is possible, or whether the award should be rescinded. Also refer to Section 4 of the Policy for Dealing with Allegations of Academic Misconduct Against Graduates of the University.

8 RIGHTS OF APPEAL

- 8.1 A student has the right of appeal against any decision made under this Code using the University's Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals but only if there are valid grounds to appeal. Full details on this process and the grounds on which an appeal can be submitted are available on the University Website by consulting the [University's Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals](#).

APPENDIX A

Examples of Academic Misconduct

The most common types of academic misconduct are listed below, with fuller definitions and student support resources provided on the University's Academic Integrity webpage. Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and any conduct reasonably considered to amount to academic misconduct as decided by the Head of School on a case-by-case basis may be investigated under this Code.

Plagiarism

"Plagiarism" is defined by the University as the use, without adequate acknowledgment, of the intellectual work of another person in work submitted for assessment. This definition includes the unattributed use of course materials and applies to all types of assessment, including 'open book' assessments. A student cannot be found to have committed plagiarism where it can be shown that the student has taken all reasonable care to avoid representing the work of others as their own.

"Self-plagiarism" is defined as the duplication of work for assessment by submitting coursework containing material identical, or substantially similar, to material which has already been submitted by the same student for any other assessment, including those submitted in other courses or programmes of study, unless authorised to do so (e.g. resubmission/resit).

Plagiarism in the form of academic misconduct does not include poor academic writing practice unless this encompasses the intention to deceive.

Collusion

"Collusion" is defined as collaboration between students in an assignment that has not been authorised by the course coordinator. It does not refer to authorised group work that is assessed by a single group report.

Contract cheating

"Contract cheating" is an umbrella term to denote the submission of work by a student that has been produced by someone other than that student with the intention to deceive. This can be achieved through having another person, or commercial service, produce work that is subsequently submitted for an assessment, whether that person/commercial service is paid or not.

Misuse of Artificial Intelligence

Misuse of Artificial Intelligence is defined as the unauthorised or unacknowledged use of artificial intelligence tools to generate content for work submitted for assessment, unless explicit permission / guidance has been given to use them as part of the assessment method. Using GenAI tools such as ChatGPT to generate material for work submitted for assessment, without any form of editing or acknowledgement, or by not following the assessment guidelines fully, may constitute as academic misconduct.

Data and source falsification

Data or source falsification involves the intentional fabrication, falsification, alteration or misrepresentation of data, sources, results or other outputs or aspects of research, including documentation and participant consent, as if they were real, to support desired outcomes or conclusions.

Research Misconduct

In a research setting, any conduct described in the “Definition of Unacceptable Research Conduct”, as part of the Research Governance Handbook, Section 4.2.1, unless already covered by the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Non-Academic), would be considered Research Misconduct. This may include the fabrication, falsification, plagiarism or deception in proposing, carrying out or reporting results of research, or deliberate, dangerous or negligent deviations from accepted practices in carrying out research, for example in not adhering to ethical guidelines.

Other examples of academic misconduct may include, but are not limited to:

- Use of unauthorised material to complete an assessment (e.g. use of notes or digital devices in exam settings). This also applies to the possession of mobile phones and/or any other devices on one's person during an exam where it is suspected the device has not been switched off and has been used;
- Copying from another student when under examination conditions;
- Talking to another student when under examination conditions;
- Removing an examination book from an examination room;
- Completing invigilated assessments outside the designated invigilated venue (i.e. from home)
- Impersonating another candidate in relation to any assessment;
- Permitting another person to impersonate oneself in relation to any assessment;
- Making assessment material available for another student to use to deceive, either at this Institution or at any other education establishment.

APPENDIX [BA](#)

~~Preliminary~~ [School-level](#) Meetings and Discipline Hearings

1 Procedure when arranging a meeting/Discipline Hearing under this Code

- 1.1 The student who is the subject of action under this Code shall be informed in writing of any allegations made against ~~him or her~~ [them](#) and the date, time and location of the proposed meeting/Discipline Hearing. Such meetings will be held in the appropriate way, whether on-campus or online. [For School-level meetings, Normally](#) notice of at least five working days shall [normally](#) be given of any meeting that requires the student's attendance. [For Discipline Hearings, notice of at least five working days during teaching time \(ten working days outside teaching time\) shall be given, unless the prior agreement with the student has been reached.](#)
- 1.2 The student shall be provided a copy of this Code and any other relevant Codes of Practice as part of the initial communication regarding the meeting/Discipline Hearing. The student shall also be provided with copies of all written submissions which are to be considered at the hearing.
- 1.3 The student shall be invited to respond in writing to allegations but shall not be required to do so.
- 1.4 The student shall be required to confirm that they will attend the hearing on the specified date/time and provide details of any witnesses they wish to be present at the meeting/Discipline Hearing.

2 Representation

- 2.1 The student may be accompanied or represented at any meeting/Discipline Hearing by one person of ~~his or her~~ [their](#) choice. The Head of School/Investigating Officer has the discretion to permit additional persons to accompany the student at any meeting/ Discipline Hearing, though the student must request this, [and provide details of anyone accompanying them,](#) in advance.
- 2.2 Where a student is alleged to have committed an offence under this Code with another individual, that individual may not accompany the student at any meeting/Discipline Hearing connected with the offence. That other individual may, however, be called as a witness at the meeting by either the Head of School/Investigating Officer or the student to which the meeting/Discipline Hearing relates.
- 2.3 The University will not provide legal or other representation for students subject to proceedings under this Code. Students can seek independent advice on the application of this Code, and obtain representation at a meeting/Discipline Hearing, from Aberdeen University Students' Association.

3 Extenuating or Mitigating Circumstances

- 3.1 The University Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals and Complaints stipulates that if a student believes that a medical condition or other personal circumstances have affected their performance in an assessment they must notify the Head(s) of the relevant School(s) in writing, not more than seven days after the date of submission of the assessment or exam concerned.
- 3.2 Where a student has not given notice of extenuating or mitigating circumstances within the required timescale, they cannot be accepted as evidence under this Code unless permitted by the Head of School after a satisfactory explanation for the delay in providing the information is given.
- 3.3 Medical or extenuating circumstances which have not been raised prior to a Discipline Hearing will not normally be accepted as evidence. If raised for the first time after the [Preliminary-School-level](#) Investigation has taken place it will be at the Investigating Officer's discretion as to whether it is necessary for the Discipline Hearing to be adjourned and the evidence referred back to the Head of School to decide whether there are

grounds on which to accept the late notification. The Head of School will make this decision having regard to the

expected timescale for submission of such evidence and the reason for this delay. Their decision will be final. Once this decision has been taken, if the Head of School decides the case still requires further investigation under this Code, a new Discipline Hearing shall be arranged in accordance with this Code.

4 Determination of a case in the absence of the student

- 4.1 Where a student cannot attend an initial meeting/Discipline Hearing, as an alternative, they can either ask for it to be rescheduled (one change only is permitted), select another person to represent ~~him or her~~them, or submit further representations in writing, but shall not be required to do so. Where a student elects to select another person to represent ~~him or her~~them, written notification of this must be submitted to the School and/or Registry no later than two working days prior to the date of the hearing.

Meetings are permitted via MS Teams video calling or similar. Where the cost of an overseas teleconference carries a fee, the cost shall be borne by the student whose conduct is under scrutiny.

- 4.2 Where a student cannot attend an initial interview or hearing and requests that the interview or hearing be deferred to allow ~~him/her~~them to attend in person, the student cannot subsequently use the impact which the deferral of the interview or hearing may have on their academic performance as grounds for an appeal or complaint.
- 4.3 In the event that an initial interview or hearing is deferred at the request of the student the interview or hearing must be rescheduled to take place on a date normally within 6 weeks of the date originally notified to the student. If the student is unable to attend the rescheduled interview or hearing, the case will be considered, and a decision reached in the absence of the student. Under the terms of paragraph 4.1 the student can either select another person to represent ~~him or her~~them or submit further representations in writing.
- 4.4 Where a student has not informed the School/Registry in advance that they are unable to attend a meeting/Discipline Hearing, or is a no show, and has not asked for the meeting to be rescheduled will have their case considered, and a decision reached in the absence of the student.

APPENDIX BC

Procedure at a Discipline Hearing

1. The Investigating Officer will outline the procedures to be followed, after which the witness(es) ~~will~~ may be asked to leave until called to give evidence.
2. The Investigating Officer will then outline the nature of the allegation(s) against the student and confirm with them that they understand their meaning. ~~invite the student to state whether they admit or deny the allegation(s).~~
3. The Investigating Officer will invite the Head of the School to make a statement on behalf of the School. The Head of School making the allegation of Academic Misconduct may, at this stage, present supporting evidence to the Investigating Officer. Supporting evidence may include oral testimony of witnesses or previously submitted written evidence.
4. The Investigating Officer will invite the student to state whether they admit or deny the allegation(s) and will then ask ~~invite the student~~ them to make a statement in response to the Head of School and the allegation made against them.
5. The student and/or the student's representative may, at this stage, present supporting evidence to the Investigating Officer. Evidence may include oral evidence of witnesses or written submissions.
6. The student and/or their representative will be invited to address questions through the Investigating Officer to any witness(es) on their statement(s) and on their written submissions at the time they give their evidence to the Discipline Hearing after which they shall be asked to leave until formally dismissed by the Investigating Officer or the Clerk.
7. The Investigating Officer will take the opportunity to seek clarification on any points raised.
8. The student and/or their representative will be invited to give a concluding statement.
9. When all statements have been made, all witnesses heard and all questioning completed, all persons present other than the Investigating Officer and the Clerk must leave the ~~room~~ meeting. The Clerk remains with the Investigating Officer solely for the purpose of recording the Investigating Officer's decision and takes no part in the decision-making process.
10. The Investigating Officer will consider the evidence and reach a decision, which will be communicated to the student in writing, normally within five working days.
11. Where the Investigating Officer feels the need to obtain additional supporting evidence or clarification from another party, the normal decision-making framework may be delayed. The student will be advised of any delay and, where possible, the student will be advised of this at the end of the Discipline Hearing.
12. Having reviewed any additional evidence or clarification the Investigating Officer can decide to issue his final decision through the Clerk or can ask for the Discipline Hearing to be reconvened as soon as possible to present his or her findings and reach a final decision.

APPENDIX **DE**

Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Body (PSRB) Frameworks

University of Aberdeen

Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic)

PGT Policy Review TFG Meeting 4

Date of meeting: 01/12/2025

Present: Jason Bohan (Chair), Shannon Babbie (Education), Lyn Batchelor (Qatar), Mungo Brown (PGT Student Rep), Sandie Cleland (Psychology), Leone Craig (MMSN), Robert Findlay (Registry), Ines Graca (Engineering), Vasilis Louca (SBS), Megan Nicolson (Engineering), Piotr Niewiadomski (Geosciences, QAC), Georgina Rolfe (SU Advice), Samuel Seymour (AUSA VP Education), Jenna Stuart (Online Education), Ezel Tabur (Social Science), Patricia Živković (Law), and Isabella Fausti (Clerk).

Apologies: Chloe Alexander (CAD), Briony Livingston (Immigration Compliance), Lyn Magee (Engineering), Louise McKenzie (Business), Alex Menshykov (Engineering, QAC), Jemma Murdoch (Student Support), Emma Percy (DHPA), Julie Timms (NCS), and Jakub Zbrzenzy (DHPA).

Consultation meeting 1: University Investigating Officers and Students' Union Advice Colleagues

Date of meeting: 15/01/2026

Present: Jason Bohan (Chair), Euan Bain (Engineering), John Barrow (MMSN), Meredith Craig (SU Advice), Peter Henderson (NCS), Kirsty Kiezebrink (MMSN), Michelle Pinard (SBS), Georgina Rolfe (SU Advice), and Isabella Fausti (Clerk).

Consultation meeting 2: School and CAD colleagues

Date of meeting: 27/01/2026

Present: Jason Bohan (Chair), Tim Baker (MMSN), Nigel Beacham (NCS), Colin Christie (Education), Davide Dionisi (Engineering), Jacqui Hutchison (Psychology), John Lamb (Business), Heidi Mehrkens (DHPA), Sara Preston (CAD), Mary Pryor (CAD), Arlene Ray (MMSN), Charlaine Simpson (Education), Kaye Taylor (Psychology), Jennifer Walklate (Social Science), Marius Wenzel (SBS), and Isabella Fausti (Clerk).