

Quality Assurance Committee

Academic Discipline Update (2024/25)

Date of Meeting: [18/02/2026]

1. Purpose of the Paper

- 1.1 This paper will provide members of the **Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)** with an update on academic misconduct cases across the University.
- 1.2 This paper contains detailed data on academic misconduct cases (*Appendix A refers*) received prior to and during the 2024/25 academic year, in addition to an analysis of emerging trends.
- 1.3 Members of the **Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)** are asked to **discuss** the paper.

2. Previous Consideration by / Further Approval Required

	Board/Committee	Date
Previously considered/approved by		
Further consideration/ approval required by	Student Support & Experience Committee (SSEC)	[12/02/2026]
	Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)	[18/02/2026]
	University Education Committee (UEC)	[24/02/2026]

3. Recommended Action

- 3.1 The **Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)** is invited to **discuss** the paper, in particular the data outlined in *Appendix A*.

4. Overview

- 4.1 The University has in place a [Code of Practice on Student Discipline \(Academic\)](#) (hereafter referred to as ‘the Code’) which defines categories of disciplinary offences and sets out the procedures to be followed in instances of academic misconduct.

4.2 The Code is regularly reviewed as any issues with the current Code are identified, such as the need for new categories of academic misconduct, for example, and in line with recent developments in academic integrity, with the most recent version approved in June 2024 to take account of the importance of PSRB requirements. The version used in 2024/25 was approved by the University Court in June 2024, with its use starting in 2024/25. The Code is currently being reviewed in academic year 2025/26 for implementation in 2026/27.

5. Overview

5.1 DATA AND TRENDS

5.1.1 *Appendix A* provides a detailed analysis of academic misconduct cases since 2020/21. *Tables 1.1* and *1.2* provide high level summary information on academic misconduct cases. *Table 1.1* details the total cases of academic misconduct (and shown as a % of the total student population headcount), and *Table 1.2* provides a summary by type of case (including the percentage increase or decrease on the previous year).

Table 1.1: Academic Misconduct Cases by Academic Year

2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
164	154	288	409	210
0.81%	0.73%	1.28%	1.82%	1.01%

Table 1.2: Academic Misconduct Cases by Type of Misconduct

	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
Plagiarism	54 (-52%)	106 (-52%)	223 (-37%)	356 (+90%)	187 (+27%)
Plagiarism (AI)	69 (+229%)	21 (n/a)			
Collusion	25 (+32%)	19 (-55%)	42 (-7%)	45 (+137%)	19 (+111%)
Cheating	14 (+100%)	7 (-36%)	11 (+450%)	2 (+200%)	0 (-100%)
Contract Cheating	2 (+100%)	1 (-92%)	12 (+100%)	6 (+200%)	2 (-33%)
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0 (no change)	0 (no change)	0 (no change)	0 (-100%)	2 (+100%)

5.1.2 The total number of academic misconduct cases has increased in academic year 2024/25 from those received in academic year 2023/24. Case numbers have returned to a level that was seen before the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the

percentage of the student population with academic misconduct cases is low (0.81%).

5.1.3 The following specific trends are also noted:

- In any year, the majority of cases of academic misconduct relate to plagiarism (whether ‘normal’ plagiarism or use of AI). The number of plagiarism cases related to the use of AI has overtaken that of traditional plagiarism with 69 cases reported for use of AI, compared with 54 standard plagiarism cases. There has been an increase of 229% of plagiarism (AI) related cases. Overall, this is a decrease in the number of plagiarism cases which have been falling since 2021/22.
- Cases of collusion have increased by 32% to 25 cases. Cases of contract cheating, whilst still small in number, have increased by 100% between 2023/24 and 2024/25, from 1 to 2.
- Cases of cheating (as defined in Section 3.5 of the [Code of Practice on Student Discipline \(Academic\)](#)) have doubled to 14 cases, where in the preceding year, there were 7 cases. This can largely be attributed to a return to on-campus exams in some courses.

5.1.4 *Table 2* shows the number of cases split by domicile group as a UK, EU or International Student. The figure in brackets is the percentage against population headcount for that domicile group.

Table 2: Academic Misconduct Cases by Domicile

Domicile	2024/25	2023/24	2022/23	2021/22	2020/21
UK	68 (0.50%)	57 (0.42%)	68 (0.49%)	87 (0.62%)	54 (0.41%)
EU	6 (0.70%)	3 (0.25%)	12 (0.71%)	37 (1.68%)	22 (0.79%)
Intern'l	90 (1.54%)	94 (1.49%)	208 (3.07%)	285 (4.58%)	134 (2.81%)

5.1.5 Most significantly, *Table 2* shows that the number of cases for international students has fallen again, though it remains the cohort with the highest proportion of cases, while the UK cohort has increased. As a proportion of the total cases in 2024/25, international students make up 54.88% of all cases and UK students make up 41.46%.

5.1.6 For the first time in academic year 2024/25, data has been gathered according to whether a student might have come from a country deemed global north or south. Through partnership working with AUSA, a defined list of global north and south countries has been compiled, and it has been recorded against each case centrally on the database. The data shows that 52.44% of cases (86) were from global south countries, while 47.56% (78) were from global north countries.

5.1.7 The University has increased its support of students, particularly in relation to academic integrity, across academic year 2024/25. Most notably, this support includes:

- The University's [Student Learning Service \(SLS\)](#) includes contextualised focus on academic integrity in assessments, including use of GenAI, in its academic skills 1-1 sessions and workshops and in its online academic skills resources (Achieve and Achieve+). Students are also directed to the University webpages for current Student Guidance and Resources on the use of GenAI in Education, through targeted social media campaigns by the Experience, Engagement and Wellbeing teams, which have increased student awareness of academic integrity.
- The SLS/Centre for Academic Development (CAD) [infographic on Academic Integrity](#), includes plagiarism (including self-plagiarism and misuse of GenAI tools), collusion, contract cheating and data falsification. This infographic is designed for students, and for staff to use in course materials.
- CAD piloted an institutional course template in the University's VLE, MyAberdeen, with six academic Schools, which embedded academic integrity resources for students, including guidance on the use of GenAI.
- In collaboration, CAD and the Toolkit team developed a suite of videos on academic integrity, designed to help students avoid the pitfalls of plagiarism, including self-plagiarism, GenAI, collusion, contract cheating, and data falsification. These videos can be accessed on the updated Toolkit for students, Academic Integrity & Referencing (Digital Skills Toolkit).
- CAD has also been providing opportunities for staff to engage in discussions around the importance of authentic assessment; including why it is better to redesign assessment to 'design out' opportunities for academic misconduct. These opportunities include discussion panels, the Micro-Credentials course delivered in preparation for the start of teaching, Learning and Teaching Network sessions, and UG and PGT programmatic reviews of assessment undertaken in the Transforming the Experience of Students through Assessment (TESTA) project.

5.1.8 Members of the **Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)** are invited to **discuss** the paper, in particular the data outlined in Appendix A.

6. Further Information

6.1 Further information is available from Emma Tough (Head of Academic Policy & Quality, e.tough@abdn.ac.uk) or Liam Dyker (Academic Policy & Quality Manager, liam.dyker2@abdn.ac.uk).

Date Paper Was Written: **[05/01/2026]**

Freedom of Information/Confidentiality Status

Open

ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE REPORTING DATA (2024/2025)

	Academic Year 2024/2025	Academic Year 2023/2024	Academic Year 2022/2023	Academic Year 2021/2022	Academic Year 2020/2021
Student Population (Date)	20,155 (04/2025)	21,074 (04/2024)	22,446 (04/2023)	22,457 (04/2022)	20,701 (04/2021)
Total Cases (% of Student Pop'n)	164 (0.81%)	154 (0.73%)	288 (1.28%)	409 (1.82%)	210 (1.01%)
Type of Case					
Plagiarism	54 (-52%)	106 (-52%)	223 (-37%)	356 (+90%)	187 (+27%)
Plagiarism (AI)	69 (+229%)	21 (n/a)			
Collusion	25 (+32%)	19 (-55%)	42 (-7%)	45 (+137%)	19 (+111%)
Cheating	14 (+100%)	7 (-36%)	11 (+450%)	2 (+200%)	0 (-100%)
Contract Cheating	2 (+100%)	1 (-92%)	12 (+100%)	6 (+200%)	2 (-33%)
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0 (no change)	0 (no change)	0 (no change)	0 (-100%)	2 (+100%)
Cases by School					
Biological Sciences (Total)	17	25	20	61	28
Plagiarism	13	25	17	50	28
Collusion	2	0	3	10	0
Cheating	2	0	0	0	0
Contract Cheating	0	0	0	1	0
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0	0
Business (Total)	8	14	48	126	21
Plagiarism	1	11	44	112	21
Collusion	5	0	0	11	0
Cheating	2	2	3	1	0
Contract Cheating	0	1	1	2	0
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0	0
Business (Qatar) (Total)	0	7	52	34	43
Plagiarism	0	5	49	34	40
Collusion	0	2	3	0	2
Cheating	0	0	0	0	0
Contract Cheating	0	0	0	0	1
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0	0
Business (SCNU) (Total)	2				
Plagiarism	1				

	Academic Year 2024/2025	Academic Year 2023/2024	Academic Year 2022/2023	Academic Year 2021/2022	Academic Year 2020/2021
Collusion	0				
Cheating	1				
Contract Cheating	0				
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0				
DHPA (Total)	15	5	8	8	3
Plagiarism	15	5	6	8	3
Collusion	0	0	2	0	0
Cheating	0	0	0	0	0
Contract Cheating	0	0	0	0	0
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0	0
Education (Total)	6	1	0	2	2
Plagiarism	5	1	0	2	2
Collusion	0	0	0	0	0
Cheating	1	0	0	0	0
Contract Cheating	0	0	0	0	0
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0	0
Engineering (Total)	17	19	25	23	46
Plagiarism	10	9	10	19	40
Collusion	5	9	10	4	5
Cheating	2	1	3	0	0
Contract Cheating	0	0	2	0	1
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0	0
Geosciences (Total)	0	0	0	2	6
Plagiarism	0	0	0	1	2
Collusion	0	0	0	0	4
Cheating	0	0	0	0	0
Contract Cheating	0	0	0	1	0
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0	0
Law (Total)	4	2	2	4	0
Plagiarism	2	2	2	4	0
Collusion	0	0	0	0	0
Cheating	0	0	0	0	0
Contract Cheating	2	0	0	0	0
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0	0
Law (Qatar) (Total)	0	0	1	1	5

	Academic Year 2024/2025	Academic Year 2023/2024	Academic Year 2022/2023	Academic Year 2021/2022	Academic Year 2020/2021
Plagiarism	0	0	1	1	5
Collusion	0	0	0	0	0
Cheating	0	0	0	0	0
Contract Cheating	0	0	0	0	0
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0	0
LLMVC (Total)	30	19	23	37	17
Plagiarism	29	19	17	36	15
Collusion	0	0	1	1	0
Cheating	1	0	1	0	0
Contract Cheating	0	0	4	0	0
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0	2
LLMVC (Qatar) (Total)	2				
Plagiarism	2				
Collusion	0				
Cheating	0				
Contract Cheating	0				
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0				
MMSN (Total)	26	5	9	9	4
Plagiarism	21	4	4	9	2
Collusion	2	0	3	0	2
Cheating	3	1	2	0	0
Contract Cheating	0	0	0	0	0
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0	0
MMSN (Qatar) (Total)	1				
Plagiarism	1				
Collusion	0				
Cheating	0				
Contract Cheating	0				
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0				
NCS (Total)	25	22	10	46	18
Plagiarism	12	12	4	24	12
Collusion	11	8	6	19	6
Cheating	2	2	0	1	0
Contract Cheating	0	0	0	2	0
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0	0

	Academic Year 2024/2025	Academic Year 2023/2024	Academic Year 2022/2023	Academic Year 2021/2022	Academic Year 2020/2021
NCS (Qatar) (Total)	0	0	10	2	
Plagiarism	0	0	0	2	
Collusion	0	0	8	0	
Cheating	0	0	2	0	
Contract Cheating	0	0	0	0	
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0	
NCS (SCNU) (Total)	2	0	9		
Plagiarism	2	0	0		
Collusion	0	0	4		
Cheating	0	0	0		
Contract Cheating	0	0	5		
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0		
Psychology (Total)	0	8	24	18	0
Plagiarism	0	8	22	18	0
Collusion	0	0	2	0	0
Cheating	0	0	0	0	0
Contract Cheating	0	0	0	0	0
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0	0
Social Science (Total)	8	22	44	34	17
Plagiarism	8	22	44	34	17
Collusion	0	0	0	0	0
Cheating	0	0	0	0	0
Contract Cheating	0	0	0	0	0
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0	0
Social Science (Qatar) (Total)	1	5	3	2	
Plagiarism	1	5	3	2	
Collusion	0	0	0	0	
Cheating	0	0	0	0	
Contract Cheating	0	0	0	0	
Ethics / Research Misconduct	0	0	0	0	
Cases by Nationality					
UK	68	57	68	87	54
EU	6	3	12	37	22
International	90	94	208	285	134

	Academic Year 2024/2025	Academic Year 2023/2024	Academic Year 2022/2023	Academic Year 2021/2022	Academic Year 2020/2021
Cases by Global North vs South					
North	78				
South	86				
Cases by Gender					
Male	80	86	161	212	127
Female	83	68	127	197	83
Not Recorded	1	0	0	0	0
Cases by Age					
17-21	63	67	111	148	74
22-30	80	65	111	179	83
30+	21	22	66	82	53
Cases by Programme Year					
UG 1	19	25	38	57	26
UG 2	18	30	54	42	33
UG 3	24	28	61	52	33
UG 4	26	6	12	25	17
UG 5	1	0	1	2	2
PGT	74	62	117	231	97
PGR / Graduated	2	3	5	0	2
Cases by Mode of Study					
Full-Time	148	144	271	392	178
Part-Time	13	10	15	6	16
Online	3	0	1	11	16
Graduated	0	0	1	0	0

Cases by Type, Level and Nationality													
	Undergraduate = 88			Postgraduate Taught = 75			Postgraduate Research = 1			Graduate (PGR) = 0			Total
	UK	EU	Int	UK	EU	Int	UK	EU	Int	UK	EU	Int	
Plagiarism	22	3	11	1	0	16	0	0	1	0	0	0	54
Plagiarism (AI)	31	2	3	5	1	27	0	0	0	0	0	0	69
Collusion	6	0	2	1	0	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	25
Cheating	2	0	6	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	14
Contract Cheating	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Ethics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	61	5	22	7	1	67	0	0	1	0	0	0	164

Not Proven x1

2023/24	Undergraduate = 89			Postgraduate Taught = 62			Postgraduate Research = 3			Graduate (PGR) = 0			Total
	UK	EU	Int	UK	EU	Int	UK	EU	Int	UK	EU	Int	
Plagiarism	41	3	22	5	0	34	0	0	1	0	0	0	106
Plagiarism (AI)	5	0	4	0	0	11	0	0	2	0	0	0	22
Collusion	4	0	7	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0	0	19
Cheating	2	0	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Contract Cheating	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Ethics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	52	3	34	5	0	57	0	0	3	0	0	0	154

Expelled x1; Not Proven x7

2022/23	Undergraduate = 166			Postgraduate Taught = 117			Postgraduate Research = 4			Graduate (PGR) = 1			Total
	UK	EU	Int	UK	EU	Int	UK	EU	Int	UK	EU	Int	
Plagiarism	56	10	55	4	1	92	0	0	4	0	0	1	223
Collusion	6	1	22	1	0	12	0	0	0	0	0	0	42
Cheating	1	0	8	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	11
Contract Cheating	0	0	7	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	12
Ethics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	63	11	92	5	1	111	0	0	4	0	0	1	288

Ongoing x1; Expelled x5; Not Proven x8

2021/22	Undergraduate = 178			Postgraduate Taught = 231			Postgraduate Research = 0			Graduate (PGR) = 0			Total
	UK	EU	Int	UK	EU	Int	UK	EU	Int	UK	EU	Int	
Plagiarism	78	26	58	4	3	187	0	0	0	0	0	0	356
Collusion	3	8	2	1	0	31	0	0	0	0	0	0	45
Cheating	0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Contract Cheating	1	0	1	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Ethics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	82	34	62	5	3	223	0	0	0	0	0	0	409

Expelled x7; Not Proven x1

2020/21	Undergraduate = 111			Postgraduate Taught = 97			Postgraduate Research = 2			Graduate (PGR) = 0			Total
	UK	EU	Int	UK	EU	Int	UK	EU	Int	UK	EU	Int	
Plagiarism	50	15	30	2	3	87	0	0	0	0	0	0	187
Collusion	2	2	10	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	19
Cheating	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Contract Cheating	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Ethics	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
Total	52	18	41	2	3	92	0	1	1	0	0	0	210

Expelled x1