



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**BUCKINGHAM**

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND  
MISCONDUCT POLICY AND  
PROCEDURES**



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## Introduction and Scope

1. This Policy and Procedures document aims to encourage the development of a learning community at the University of Buckingham in which our students and staff learn from one another whilst conducting themselves with courtesy, integrity, honesty and mutual respect. It has been developed in line with current guidance including that from the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA), Office for Students (OfS) and the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA). Its ethos is pedagogical rather than punitive, seeking to promote understanding of academic integrity and to support students to learn from mistakes, while ensuring fair and proportionate responses to breaches where they occur.
2. The document is divided into two sections:  
**Section A:** sets out the scope, definitions and application of the Policy and the protocols to be applied in all cases.  
**Section B:** outlines the procedures to be followed in all cases of suspected breaches of Academic Integrity.
3. The document outlines the usual timescales. Please note that when 'working days' are referred to, this excludes weekends, bank holidays and University closure days. Note also that timescales will normally only include term dates.
4. Students may obtain advice about Academic Integrity at any point from ASK<sup>1</sup>, the Academic Skills Know-how team.
5. All new students are strongly recommended to attend a training workshop "What is Academic Integrity?" run during their first term of study. This will normally be run by the student's School of Study. The workshop will cover aspects of this Policy and will conclude with a short Quiz on understanding Academic Integrity and Misconduct within the virtual learning environment (VLE).
6. Students will be offered instruction throughout their studies in Academic Integrity and Misconduct. In the interests of fairness and justice, and to protect many students who follow good academic practice, all students must adhere to this Policy and Procedures document regarding Academic Integrity and Misconduct.
7. References within this document to 'invigilated examination' refer to a formally invigilated written or oral test scheduled and supervised on behalf of the University Registry. These should be read in conjunction with the **Examination Rules for Candidates** (Section on Academic Rules and Regulations of the University Handbook<sup>2</sup>).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/student-life/university-facilities/academic-skills/>

<sup>2</sup> Section 3.3 at <https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/about/handbooks/regulations-handbook/>



8. 'Assessments' refer to all forms of work produced by students individually or in groups and submitted/presented to academic staff for formative<sup>3</sup> or summative assessment, as outlined in approved Module<sup>4</sup> Specifications. This may include (but is not restricted to) in-class tests, examinations, essays, reports, term papers, dissertations, individual or group presentations, websites, recorded material or other media. For postgraduate research students, this includes at minimum the thesis submitted for examination. In this policy 'thesis' or 'supervised research' refers to all forms of work presented for consideration of a postgraduate award by research.

## Section A: Definitions, Application and Protocols

### What are Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct?

9. As defined by the International Center of Academic Integrity (ICAI)<sup>5</sup> and echoed by the QAA<sup>6</sup>, Academic Integrity can be defined as a commitment to approaching academic work with **honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage**.
10. Academic Misconduct is a breach of the principles of Academic Integrity. Examples are discussed in the sections below (paragraph 19 onwards).
11. The University undertakes to ensure that students are guided on how to appreciate and uphold the principles of Academic Integrity (as defined above). Therefore, it is the responsibility of all students to engage with both this Policy and the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Quiz on the VLE (see paragraph 5).
12. Students must fully acknowledge that any work submitted is of their own authorship (unless otherwise directed by the assessment rubric). Whenever they present the work of other people or software tools as part of their assessment, or include work they have previously submitted for assessment at the University or elsewhere, this must be fully referenced.

### Promoting and Maintaining Academic Integrity

13. Below are examples of good practice in maintaining Academic Integrity and avoiding Academic Misconduct. These should be taken to embrace the principles noted above of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.

Situation	What does it mean?
<b>Acknowledging all sources of information</b>	Appropriately acknowledging all sources of information drawn upon in the student's own academic work according to the citation and

<sup>3</sup> This policy only applies to formative assessments if they are credit-bearing or required for progression.

<sup>4</sup> Note that 'module' is used throughout this Policy, but the Faculty-appropriate equivalent should be understood where modules are not used (e.g. units, etc.).

<sup>5</sup> <https://academicintegrity.org>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.qaa.ac.uk/membership/membership-areas-of-work/academic-integrity>



	<p>referencing practices of their discipline.</p> <p>*See Appendix 1 for further guidance on acknowledging the use of any generative AI assisted writing tools as a source of information.</p>
<b>Fairness</b>	<p>Never seeking to obtain unfair advantage for either the student or another in any form of academic assessment or examination.</p>
<b>Not to collude</b>	<p>Students must work independently as a rule, including not sharing their own work at any point (before, during or after submission) with other students, unless the assessment guidance specifically allows collaboration with others. Note that if the material is shared with the intention of enabling academic misconduct, both parties may be liable for investigation.</p>
<b>Authorship / Original work</b>	<p>Never obtaining unauthorised and unjustifiable external assistance in the creation of work that a student submits for assessment. This includes (but is not restricted to) the use of another student or ex-student's past submitted assessments, or the inappropriate use of generative AI assisted writing tools. Likewise, students should never pass their assessments or assessment drafts onto other students.</p> <p>*See Appendix 1 for further guidance on the use of any assistive tools (e.g. Grammarly non-Premium) and generative AI assisted writing tools in terms of authorship and originality of work.</p>
<b>Acknowledging re-use of own work</b>	<p>Declaring when students have re-used academic work that they have previously submitted in another academic context and using it only with appropriate citation.</p>
<b>Observing ethical guidelines</b>	<p>Complying with the ethical requirements for any research and other academic work that students undertake, including any institutional and discipline-specific Ethical Guidance.</p>
<b>Responsibility</b>	<p>Complying with and undertaking any research and other academic work responsibly, following all necessary regulatory, legal and professional obligations.</p>



## Protocols to Maintain Academic Integrity

14. Except where otherwise clearly indicated in the assessment rubric or marking brief (such as for a group assessment), students will be assessed based on the assumption that they are the sole author of their work, unless acknowledgement is made of sources of support.
15. In the interests of transparency and to ensure fairness, students will be made aware that it is University policy to compare all coursework (where feasible) against databanks of existing material (currently using Turnitin) to check any similarity that might be in breach of Academic Integrity as defined in paragraph 13.
16. Research students must submit their final draft through Turnitin prior to submission to check for potential instance of breach of this policy. Once a student submits a thesis for assessment, the final Turnitin report will be used to help identify potential instances of breach of this policy. See Research Degrees Handbook for more information<sup>7</sup>.

## Breaches of Academic Integrity – Academic Misconduct

17. Any student suspected of being in breach of this Policy may be investigated under this Policy and may be subject to disciplinary proceedings. Such breaches may occur as a result of (but not limited to) unintentional error, negligence, or intentional misconduct.
18. For all academic misconduct investigations, in line with practice elsewhere in the HE sector, and with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator Good Practice Framework (OIA GPF)<sup>8</sup>, the following principles will be adhered to:
  - i The **burden of proof** rests with the University, which must demonstrate, based on the available evidence, that misconduct has occurred. However, where a meeting is convened to determine authorship (a 'viva'), the student is expected to actively demonstrate their understanding and authorship of the work in question. While this does not remove the University's responsibility to reach a fair and evidence-based conclusion, it recognises that the student is best placed to explain and evidence how the work was produced.
  - ii The **standard of proof** used will normally be the balance of probabilities. This means that decisions as to the outcome and/or penalty will be based on whether those investigating, given the evidence available, believe that it is more likely that there has been a breach of the Academic Integrity Policy.
  - iii All types of academic misconduct will be considered under the principle of **strict liability**. This means that whether a student intended to commit an

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<sup>7</sup> Paragraph 5.3.7 at <https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/about/handbooks/research-degrees-handbook/>

<sup>8</sup> [Disciplinary procedures - OIAHE](#)



academic misconduct offence or not, together with whether there are any mitigating circumstances or factors, are not relevant to the decision as to whether misconduct has taken place.

- iv However, both intention (or lack thereof) and any mitigating circumstances or factors may be taken into account in terms of the severity of any penalty applied.

19. The following are examples of circumstances recognised as breaches of Academic Integrity (i.e. Academic Misconduct) that would normally result in formal investigation of a student's performance. **The list is not exhaustive** and other circumstances (such as the specific assessment rubric) may be considered by the University authorities at their discretion. Some breaches may fall into more than one category. Examples are given below.

Type of breach of academic integrity	What does it mean?
<b>Plagiarism</b>	<p>The use of ideas, intellectual property or work of others (including that of another student) without appropriate acknowledgement and/or indication. This action results in presenting someone else's work and/or ideas as the student's own. It may be considered a form of intellectual theft (and is an example of dishonesty), e.g., copyright infringement.</p> <p>Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>i Presenting substantial extracts from books, articles, theses and other published or unpublished works, such as working papers, seminars and conference papers, internal reports, computer software, internet materials, and lecture notes, slides or recordings, without clearly indicating their origin with quotation marks and references in footnotes or bibliography.</li><li>ii Using very close paraphrasing of sentences or whole paragraphs without due acknowledgement in the form of reference to the original work in the text or the footnote.</li><li>iii Quoting directly from a source and consistently failing to insert quotation marks around the quoted passages. In such cases it is not adequate merely to acknowledge the source.</li><li>iv The use of generative AI to produce parts of or complete assessments which are then passed off as the student's own.</li></ul>
<b>Cheating</b>	<p>Any action before, during or after an examination or assessment by which a student seeks to gain unfair advantage or assist another student to do so. This includes the possession or use of unauthorised material or technology during an examination and accessing unseen assessment</p>



	materials in advance of an examination. For example, this includes the circumvention of proctoring software such as ExamSoft.
<b>Collusion</b>	Working with another student or students in an unauthorised way to create academic work that should be created by a student independently. Sharing the student's own notes or assignment drafts with other students before, during or after submission. Note that if the material is shared with the intention of enabling academic misconduct, both parties may be liable for investigation.
<b>External authorship and/or assistance</b>	<p>Where a student presents work as their own that has been obtained from unauthorised sources including (but not restricted to) other students* and external input such as ghost-writing, use of commercial essay mills,** generative AI assisted writing tools,*** or any other form of contract cheating, whether that input is obtained on a commercial basis or not.</p> <p><i>*Note that the student providing the assignment may be liable for investigation under the University's Disciplinary Procedures.</i></p> <p><i>**Essay mills are companies which offer to write essays or other student assignments in exchange for money. They typically advertise themselves as academic writing services. See paragraph 20 below.</i></p> <p><i>***A generative AI assisted writing tool is a software application that uses artificial intelligence and natural language processing techniques to help writers construct answers and improve their writing. These tools can assist writers with a variety of tasks such as grammar and spelling correction, sentence structure suggestions, and even generating ideas for content. See Appendix 1 for more information.</i></p>
<b>Falsification</b>	Any attempt to knowingly present and/or make use of fictitious or distorted data, evidence, references, experimental results or other material in assignments.
<b>Copying from another student</b>	Copying from another student or ex-student's work, with or without that student's permission.
<b>Personation and Impersonation</b>	Personating by assuming the identity of another or allowing another to assume the identity of the student in order to mislead or deceive. Impersonating by taking the appearance in corporeal form of another.



<b>Submitting work that has been corrected / revised by a third party</b>	Assistance using GenAI or other paraphrasing tools to revise or correct work such that the student’s authorship is no longer clear, and/or the student’s actions are in contravention of the assessment rubric. This does not extend to the appropriate use of grammar and spell-checking software (e.g. Grammarly free, Word to check basic and assist with basic spelling, punctuation, and syntax issues).
<b>Breaching ethical standards</b>	Examples include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Collecting data without first securing formal ethical approval.</li> <li>ii. Collecting data for ethically approved studies without obtaining informed consent from the participants.</li> <li>iii. Falsifying data or fabricating fake data.</li> <li>iv. Breaching participant confidentiality.</li> </ul>

20. Any student found to have used a software or a company (such as Essay Mills) to either, fully or partially, construct the submission of a self-authored assessment may be also considered in breach of Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 ss26-30.<sup>9</sup>

### Self-plagiarism

21. Self-plagiarism is the re-use of work that the student has previously submitted for another assessment, whether at the University of Buckingham or at a different institution, without appropriate citation. Unless expressly permitted in the assignment rubric, self-plagiarism counts as academic misconduct because it misrepresents the novelty of the current work. If students use a previous piece of work or publication in a future piece of work, they should ensure that they properly reference themselves and the extent of such use should not be excessive.

### Breaching ethical standards

22. Ethical standards, particularly in research, are extremely important, and a breach of these standards should be investigated as with any other breach of academic integrity. This is relevant to both postgraduate research students and undergraduate students carrying out research on taught modules. A breach of ethical standards covers failing to comply with ethical obligations when carrying out academic work as set out in any Institutional and discipline-specific Ethical Guidelines, such as failing to obtain free and informed consent. For further information on procedures and penalties, see paragraphs 60-63. Note that different disciplines may apply varying ethical guidelines, for example dependent upon their regulatory bodies. Students should refer to the specific ethics policy/policies within their school/s of study.

### Research students

<sup>9</sup> [Skills and Post-16 Education Act 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)



23. Breaches of Academic Integrity in research include any of the above breaches in relation to examinations, supervised research and coursework including a failure to comply with regulatory, legal and professional obligations such as a breach of confidentiality, infringement of intellectual property rights, failure to take due care for participants in research or of personal data, and abuse of research subjects or materials (including artefacts).

## Section B: Procedures and Penalties

24. This section sets out the procedures and penalties for breaches of Academic Integrity in examinations, coursework, theses and ethical standards.

### Procedures for Breaches of Academic Integrity in Invigilated Examination Rooms<sup>10</sup>

The resulting steps are followed:

<b>Step 1</b>	<p>Where a student is suspected of a breach of Academic Integrity, the invigilator should quietly inform the student at an appropriate time that this is suspected.</p> <p>If a discussion is necessary, or the invigilator suspects that pertinent evidence has been destroyed in the course of the examination, the invigilator should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Ask the student to accompany them from the examination room.</li> <li>ii. Perform appropriate checks and ask the student to hand over unauthorised material found at the desk or on their person.</li> <li>iii. Photograph evidence where the unauthorised material is not removable and then, for example, to wash it off.</li> </ol> <p>The student will then be informed that they are allowed to continue the examination and must remain seated at the end to complete a statement of their account.</p> <p>If appropriate, additional time to compensate for the time lost as a result of the initial enquiry may be given.</p>
<b>Step 2</b>	<p>If unauthorised material is suspected, this will be confiscated and retained for use in the consequent Academic Integrity investigation. The student's examination script will be flagged to the marking team.</p>
<b>Step 3</b>	<p>A written report of the incident will be prepared by the invigilator(s) and submitted to Academic Services (or University of Buckingham Medical School (UBMS) Chief Invigilator in the case of UBMS exams), immediately following the examination, together with any suspected unauthorised material, examination script, any additional evidence and the student's statement.</p>
<b>Step 4</b>	<p>Academic Services (or Chief Invigilator in the case of UBMS Exams) will</p>

<sup>10</sup> This section should be read in conjunction with the University Examination Rules for Candidates at <https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Examination-Rules-for-Candidates.pdf>



	then contact the School Academic Integrity Advocate (SAIA), who will flag the examination script to the marking team and use the evidence listed in Step 3 to initiate an Academic Integrity investigation.
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## Investigation into Breaches of Academic Integrity in Coursework Assessments

### Initial Enquiry

25. Where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion of a breach of Academic Integrity, the marking team, or in the case of postgraduate research, the supervisor or examiners, will pass the case to the School Academic Integrity Advocate (SAIA) to conduct an initial enquiry. This is done by completing Section 1 of the Academic Integrity Form, granting access to the relevant VLE page where the work is submitted and passing any other relevant information to the SAIA.

Such grounds for suspicion might include notification from the University's detection software (Turnitin) or by other means. Note that due to the current limitations of generative AI detection tools, including the risk of false positives and false negatives, the University does not use such tools within its VLE. Where any AI detection tools are used by academic staff outside the VLE, they will not form the sole basis for referral to an academic integrity investigation.

26. The SAIA will conduct the initial enquiry. As part of this initial enquiry, the SAIA may gather information from the marking or supervisory (for PG research) team.
- i If the initial enquiry is with regard to a potential breach of ethical standards, this enquiry will be completed in collaboration with the Chair of the relevant Ethics Committee.
  - ii In accordance with the OIA's Good Practice Framework on Bias and the Perception of Bias<sup>11</sup>, the SAIA, where possible, should have had no prior involvement in the case (such as being a member of the marking team). Additionally, the SAIA should not be the student's personal tutor, to avoid a potential conflict of interest. In such cases the student's work will normally be passed to a different SAIA. If this is not possible, particularly due to the small size of the University (as acknowledged by the OIA in the above document), then this must be made clear in the case report and the student be made aware of this should the case reach full investigation stage, and appropriate steps taken (e.g. recording the meeting) to minimise any perceived bias.

Depending on the outcome of this initial enquiry, the SAIA will either conclude the case or escalate to a full investigation, normally within two term weeks. Any delays in the investigative procedure will be communicated to the student.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/22rn0kiv/gpf-bias.pdf>



27. A profile of the case which may include the following considerations (noting that this is not an exhaustive list) will be prepared by the SAIA in line with the University's procedures:

#### A The extent of the breach of Academic Integrity

- i if suspected of plagiarism, the amount of text allegedly plagiarised, the closeness to the original text, and the nature of the material allegedly plagiarised (whether purely descriptive or including results, etc.).
- ii if for another reason (e.g. collusion, falsification, inappropriate or unreferenced use of generative AI, other assistive software, and/or third-party assistance), the grounds for suspicion on the part of the marking team.
- iii the weighting of the summative assessment element in which breach of Academic Integrity is alleged, in terms of the overall course assessment.

#### B Student Profile

Due consideration will be given to the following factors, while recognising that they are not necessarily all entirely distinct

- i the stage of the student in their programme.
- ii the number of previous offences (if any). Note that<sup>12</sup> a student's previous academic misconduct record will not normally be relevant to whether they have committed an offence. However, if the student has previously committed the same or a very similar offence then it may be relevant.
- iii the extent of the student's knowledge of the concept of Academic Integrity e.g.
  - attendance at the What Is Academic Integrity workshop.
  - satisfactory completion of the VLE Academic Integrity test.

#### C Intent

- i contravention of invigilated examination rules.
- ii attempt to deceive.
- iii contrition.
- iv Note that mitigating circumstances will not be taken into account in determining whether to refer a case for full investigation, in line with the OIA GPF.

#### Courses of Action

28. Following the above profiling exercise, the SAIA will carry out one of the following courses of action:

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<sup>12</sup> OIA GPF (Disciplinary, paragraph 70)



### *No Breach of Academic Integrity*

29. Where it is decided no breach of Academic Integrity has occurred and all material has been properly presented, no further action will be taken. Work will be marked as normal, and all documentation related to the case will be deleted.

### *Poor Academic Practice*

30. For minor irregularities in presentation of material (e.g. inconsistent referencing, inadequate/excessive paraphrasing, incorrect application of scholarly style), a judgement of **Poor Academic Practice (PAP)** will apply.
31. The investigation will be concluded and the outcome will be communicated to the student (copying marking team, personal tutor and School admin), normally within a period of two term weeks of the case being referred. The case report and other documentation will then be deleted.
32. **PAP** outcomes will not be recorded on the student's file but will be on the School and Central databases.
33. Work will be marked as submitted (taking into account that the grounds for the finding of **PAP**, e.g., poor paraphrasing or referencing is likely to lead to a lower mark in light of the assessment rubric). The student should have an explanatory discussion with their Personal Tutor. It would normally not be appropriate to consider **PAP** where the student has previously received a judgement of **PAP** or breach of Academic Integrity, as the student would be expected to have familiarised themselves with appropriate academic practice.
34. Where a judgement of **PAP** is made on a thesis, the work will be assessed in the light of this judgement by requiring appropriate remedial action be taken before the award is recommended and publication of the thesis occurs.

### *Potential Breach of Academic Integrity*

35. Where the SAIA concludes that a potential breach of Academic Integrity may have been committed, they will call for a full investigation.

## Full Investigation

36. At this stage, the SAIA must inform the student in writing (copying marking team, admin and personal tutor), linking to copy of the latest approved version of this document. The student will be informed that an investigation is taking place and given an opportunity to offer any explanation or mitigation, either in person or in writing. In line with best practice and OIA guidelines<sup>13</sup>, the student should be provided with a copy of the evidence being considered during the case during the

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<sup>13</sup> OIA Good Practice Framework Disciplinary Procedures paragraph 50



investigation before being asked to provide a statement or attend a meeting, so that they can provide a fully informed response.

The student will be given reasonable time to prepare to make representation in person or provide written representation. If the student makes representations in person or on Teams (as opposed to in writing), the default position for full investigation is that the meeting will be recorded. The University relies on the video recording of the meeting as the primary record. Any auto-generated transcript is used only as an aid to clarify points that are difficult to hear on the recording, and is not relied upon as the official record. The student may be accompanied at the meeting by a supporter who should normally be a fellow University of Buckingham student or staff member (academic or professional) unconnected to the matter. Note that the supporter should not take an active role in the investigation.

It is the student's responsibility to engage with the investigation. If the student does not use the opportunity to present their case either through written representation or a meeting, the SAIA will send one reminder. Subsequent failure to engage without satisfactory explanation will result in a closure of the investigatory process, and the SAIA will then make a decision as to outcome with the evidence available at the time.

The SAIA shall conduct the full investigation in consultation with other relevant parties as required. After any formal meeting, but before the investigation is concluded, the student should be informed that they have one final opportunity to provide any further pertinent evidence (including but not limited to additional notes, earlier drafts, etc.).

37. The investigation will normally be concluded, and the result reported to the student, within a period of two term weeks of the case being escalated to full investigation. For cases involving more complex investigations, this may take longer. Any delays in the investigative procedure will be communicated to the student.
38. Where the SAIA has reason to suspect that a piece of work submitted by a student was wholly or in part prepared, researched or written by someone (including generative AI assisted writing tools) other than the student who submitted it – in other words, concerns about authorship – and this has not been disclosed by the student, the following process must take place:
  - i If not already done under paragraph 36 and in line with the OIA GPF guidance, the student will be invited to explain how they conducted and researched their assessment, either in a meeting (recorded) or in writing, so that the SAIA can decide whether a viva and/or written comprehension test is required.
  - ii If the SAIA is not satisfied that the student authored the work they may decide that a formal meeting will be necessary to allow the student an



opportunity to demonstrate authorship of the work in an oral 'viva' and/or a written comprehension test.

39. In accordance with the OIA's Good Practice Framework on Bias and the Perception of Bias<sup>14</sup>, members of the viva/comprehension test panel will, wherever possible, have had no prior involvement in the matter. The panel will normally consist of two SAIA's and a subject expert. Where a suitably qualified subject expert with no prior involvement is available, that person will be invited to prepare and conduct the academic questioning. In cases where, due to the University's size, it is not possible to appoint a subject expert outside the marking team, the Module Leader or another member of the marking team may undertake the questioning role, provided they take no part in determining the outcome. This role will be explained clearly to the student in advance, and appropriate steps taken (e.g. recording of the meeting, presence of a second SAIA) to minimise any perceived bias.

The role of the subject expert is solely to prepare appropriate questions and to conduct or contribute to the questioning in order to assess the student's authorship, ownership and understanding of the work. Their contribution will form one part of the evidence considered by the panel. The subject expert will be asked to express an academic judgment only on whether the student's responses raise clear concerns that they may not be the author of the work. They will not determine whether misconduct has occurred.

The viva/comprehension test will be conducted as soon as is reasonably practical by the Investigating SAIA together with the subject expert (or, where applicable under the provisions above, the Module Leader or other marking team member acting as subject expert). By default, the viva/comprehension test should be held as a face-to-face meeting unless there are exceptional circumstances, but it should be recorded nonetheless. The University relies on the video recording as the primary record. Any auto-generated transcript is used only as an aid to clarify points that are difficult to hear on the recording, and is not relied upon as the official record. If conducted remotely, care should be taken to ensure, to the best of the panel's knowledge, that the student is not being impersonated (the camera must be functioning) or obtaining help or assistance from elsewhere. Examples of such circumstances may be if students have completed their studies and have returned home after the end of term or if the student studies remotely.

40. Although the burden of proof is finally on the University to demonstrate that academic misconduct has occurred, as noted in paragraph 18(i), the student is responsible in such a meeting for demonstrating to the panel's satisfaction their comprehension of the work they have submitted to assist the panel in determining authorship.
41. It is the student's responsibility to attend the viva/comprehension test. Failure to attend without satisfactory explanation will result in an immediate failure of that test,

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<sup>14</sup> <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/media/22rn0kiv/gpf-bias.pdf>



with a resulting presumption that the student is in breach of the regulations relating to Academic Integrity and Misconduct, and application of penalties will be applied as outlined below.

42. A written record of the outcome of the viva/comprehension test will be prepared by the panel and added to the evidence. The viva/comprehension test should not be the sole determinant in the outcome of the investigation but considered alongside all other evidence. After the viva/comprehension test, but before the investigation is concluded, the student should be informed that they have one final opportunity to provide any further pertinent evidence as to authorship (including but not limited to additional notes, earlier drafts, etc.). A record of all cases and their outcomes will be submitted by the SAIA to Academic Services (via email using [caia@buckingham.ac.uk](mailto:caia@buckingham.ac.uk)) to add to the central database, and for collecting management information on breaches of Academic Integrity for subsequent analysis. Cases in which no breaches were found will be anonymised.
43. In reaching a decision the investigating SAIA should consult with a second SAIA (though as per paragraph 26(ii) this should not be a member of the marking team or the student's personal tutor, if possible). At any point the investigating SAIA may seek advice from SAIA's in other schools or the Academic Integrity Leads. All pertinent evidence should be taken into account when determining the outcome of the investigation.

### Course of Action after Full Investigation

#### *No Breach of Academic Integrity*

44. Where it is decided no breach of Academic Integrity has occurred and all material has been properly presented, no further action will be taken. Work will be marked as normal, and all documentation related to the case will be deleted. The student will be informed, normally within a period of two term weeks, and the marking team, personal tutor and School admin will be copied in.

#### *Poor Academic Practice*

45. For minor irregularities in presentation of material (e.g. inconsistent referencing, inadequate/excessive paraphrasing, incorrect application of scholarly style), a judgement of **Poor Academic Practice (PAP)** will apply.
46. The investigation will be concluded and the outcome will be emailed to the student (copying marking team, personal tutor and School admin), normally within a period of two term weeks of the case being referred. The case report and other documentation will then be deleted.
47. **PAP** outcomes will not be recorded on the student's file but will be on the School and Central databases.
48. Work will be marked as submitted (taking into account that the grounds for the



finding of **PAP**, e.g., poor paraphrasing or referencing is likely to lead to a lower mark in light of the assessment rubric). The student should have an explanatory discussion with their Personal Tutor. It would normally not be appropriate to consider **PAP** where the student has previously received a judgement of **PAP** or breach of Academic Integrity, as the student would be expected to have familiarised themselves with appropriate academic practice.

49. Where a judgement of **PAP** is made on a thesis, the work will be assessed in the light of this judgement by requiring appropriate remedial action be taken before the award is recommended and publication of the thesis occurs.

#### *Breach of Academic Integrity*

50. Where it is decided that there has been a breach of Academic Integrity, a judgement of **Academic Misconduct** will apply. The investigating SAIA will close the case and a second SAIA will confirm the finding by countersigning the case report form. When determining the penalty, the SAIA(s) will apply the principle of starting with the least severe penalty and working upwards until a proportionate outcome is identified. A brief rationale will be recorded explaining the factors that led to the chosen penalty; this rationale should make clear why a less severe penalty would not have been proportionate in the circumstances. Note that additional information, such as the existence of previous instances of academic misconduct, and any mitigating circumstances, which were not taken into account in determining whether academic misconduct has taken place, may be pertinent to the decision as to which penalty is applied. If the SAIA team cannot agree on the penalty, the case will be passed to a third SAIA, who will also countersign the form, and the majority decision will be accepted.
51. In a case of disputed authorship without classic plagiarism, Penalty A will not normally be applicable as it not possible to highlight which specific sections should be rewritten.
52. At level 3 and 4 only (prelims), Penalty B may be applied. This is similar to Penalty C in that the student must resubmit or resit the assessment, but their second attempt will not be capped at a bare pass mark. This penalty should not be used for any modules counting towards the final degree class.
53. When applying Penalty E or above, the decision must be made by a panel of a minimum of three adjudicators selected by the SAIA. The panel is likely to be formed of the School Lead SAIA, the Programme Director or Head of School and the relevant Module Lead.
54. Penalties A to F will be communicated to the student via the SAIA.
55. When applying penalty G, following the panel decision, the SAIA will submit the decision to Academic Services. Academic Services will seek approval for penalty G from the Chair of Senate. Academic Services will communicate the outcome of Penalty G to the student.



56. The investigation will typically be concluded and the result reported to the student and the penalty that has been applied (copying marking team, School admin, CAIA and personal tutor), within a period of two term weeks of the case being escalated to full investigation. Brief rationale for the penalty decided upon should be included in the outcome email to the student as well as in the case report. For cases involving more complex investigations, this may take longer. Any delays in the investigative procedure will be communicated to the student.

### Penalties for Breach of Academic Integrity in Assessments

57. Where it is decided that there has been a breach of Academic Integrity, a judgement of **Academic Misconduct** will apply. The student will be penalised as noted below. The penalty will take into account the extent, gravity and nature of the breach and be in line with similar cases recorded by the University or elsewhere in the sector.

<b>A</b>	The material judged to have breached academic integrity will be disregarded, and a grade will be awarded on the remainder of the work. The student will be informed, and a record will be entered on the student's file.
<b>B</b>	<b>[See paragraph 52].</b> Award of zero for the assessment. There will be a requirement to resubmit the module assessment ( <b>provided the General Regulations<sup>15</sup> permit another attempt</b> ), and this will be marked for Honours. For coursework, the resubmission deadline will be set by the relevant School of Study. For exams, the student will be required to resit at the next available opportunity. The student will be informed, and a record will be entered on the student's file.
<b>C</b>	Award of zero for the assessment. There will be a requirement to resubmit the module assessment ( <b>provided the General Regulations permit another attempt</b> ), and the maximum grade that can be awarded for this assessment will be the minimum pass mark. For coursework, the resubmission deadline will be set by the relevant School of Study. For exams, the student will be required to resit at the next available opportunity. The student will be informed, and a record will be entered on the student's file. Note: For MBChB students, the 'next available opportunity' for a main exam would be the 'Qualifying Exam' (QE). If the Academic Misconduct occurs within a QE, then Penalty 'E', as defined below, will be applied.
<b>D</b>	Award of zero for the entire module. There will be a requirement to retake all elements of the module and the maximum grade that can be awarded for the module will be the minimum pass mark. The student will be informed, and a record will be entered on the student's file.
<b>E</b>	Failure of all modules taken in the Stage. Students may retake all modules in the Stage at the next available opportunity for a capped pass mark.

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/General-Academic-Regulations.pdf>



	The student will be informed, and a record will be entered on the student's file. Note: For MBChB students, a 'Stage' is the whole academic year. In line with the General Medical Council (GMC) general regulations there is a requirement to maintain currency of knowledge so a retaken year must be with attendance and full fees.
<b>F</b>	Lesser final award (e.g. Pass degree). The student will be informed, and a record will be entered on the student's file.
<b>G</b>	Failure of the programme, resulting in expulsion from the University. The student will be informed, and a record will be entered on the student's file.

58. Any repeat upheld offences can be expected to result in a higher penalty and may result in the application of Penalty G.
59. Academic Services reserves the right to require any student with a record of Academic Misconduct to sit further examinations in an invigilated examination room, where the summative assessment would otherwise take another format.

### Penalties for Breach of Ethical Standards

60. Where it is decided that there has been a breach of Ethical Standards, a judgement of **Academic Misconduct** will apply. The student will be penalised as noted below. The penalty will take into account the extent, gravity and nature of the breach, and be in line with similar cases recorded by the University or elsewhere in the sector.
61. The student must **always** write a reflective piece (suggested 200-400 words) acknowledging why their actions breached academic integrity standards and how they will ensure the same issues do not occur again. This must be submitted to the School or Faculty Chair of Ethics and the investigating SAIA before the mark for the relevant assignment is released to the student. If the Chair of Ethics and SAIA are not satisfied that the student fully understands the issues, the student will be asked to rewrite their reflective piece. This reflective piece should normally be written and submitted within two term weeks.
62. Any data collected during the period of breach must be assessed by the School Ethics Committee and dealt with appropriately. This may include destruction of data, which will have consequences on the admissibility of the student's work.
63. In addition, a penalty listed in paragraph 57 may be applied if appropriate. Any repeat upheld offences can be expected to result in a higher penalty and may result in automatic expulsion.

Note: In the case of medical students at UBMS, any breach of this policy will be



reported to the UBMS Concerns Group. All medical students on the MB ChB programme should note that this may be reportable to the General Medical Council (GMC), which may, in turn, result in a Fitness to Practise concern being filed in accordance with the need for all medical students to adhere to the professional and ethical standards at all times, as defined by the GMC within Good Medical Practice Professional Standards<sup>16</sup>.

### Penalties for Breach of Academic Integrity in a Postgraduate Research Theses

64. Where it is decided that there has been a breach of Academic Integrity, a judgement of **Academic Misconduct** will apply. The student will be penalised as noted below. The penalty will take into account the extent, gravity and nature of the breach, and be in line with similar cases recorded by the University or elsewhere in the sector.

<b>C</b>	That the thesis be revised and re-submitted for the degree for which it was submitted. At Masters level, the revised thesis would be restricted to a capped passed mark. An oral examination would normally be held. The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.
<b>F</b>	Lesser exit award The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.
<b>G</b>	Failure of the programme, resulting in expulsion from the University. The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.

65. Any repeat upheld offences can be expected to result in a higher penalty and may result in automatic expulsion.

### Appeals

66. Appeals will be considered where a penalty has been applied for a breach of Academic Integrity occurring in summative assessments, theses and invigilated examinations.

### Grounds of Appeal

67. Appeals may be made on one or both of the following grounds:
- i Procedural irregularity in the conduct of the Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy and Procedures.
  - ii New evidence to show that academic misconduct has not taken place is made available with a valid reason as to why it was not disclosed at the time of investigation.

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.gmc-uk.org/professional-standards/professional-standards-for-doctors/good-medical-practice/>



The student may appeal against **either** the finding of academic misconduct, **or** the specific penalty applied, which should link back to the rationale provided by the SAIA (see paragraph 50).

Mitigating Circumstances are not normally grounds for appeal under this policy, unless the student experienced mitigating circumstances that for good reason could not be disclosed at an earlier stage in the process. However, they should not be considered in appeals against the finding of academic misconduct, only against the severity of the penalty (see paragraph 18 iii on strict liability).

### Appeals Procedure

68. Students may submit an appeal using the Academic Integrity Appeals Form<sup>17</sup> as soon as possible and not normally later than one week after the notification of the finding. Any relevant evidence in support of the appeal must accompany the student's submission and students must state all of the grounds upon which the appeal is based. The Appeals Form and accompanying evidence should be emailed to [CAIA@buckingham.ac.uk](mailto:CAIA@buckingham.ac.uk).
69. The appeal paperwork will be screened by an Academic Services Representative who will check the appeal is fit for consideration, to ensure that:
- i The Academic Integrity Appeals Policy and Procedure is applicable; and
  - ii That the Academic Integrity Appeals Form is suitably completed, citing as its basis, any of the grounds as listed above in Paragraph 67; and
  - iii That the appeal has been submitted in time.
- Ineligible appeals may be directed to a more appropriate procedure or dismissed completely with sign off by a senior Academic Services representative.
70. Appeal paperwork meeting the screening criteria will be considered by a Review Panel consisting of an Independent Dean from another School and an Academic Services Representative. The Review Panel will check the eligibility of the appeal to ensure that:
- i Any of the grounds as listed above in Paragraph 67 are met; and
  - ii That appropriate evidence has been provided to support the appeal.
71. Following receipt of the documentation, the Review Panel will assess the documentation and will seek additional information if necessary. The Review Panel will have access to all materials from the case and be able to question the SAIA and other relevant parties in making a decision on the appeal. The function of the Review Panel is to review the decision in a timely manner and, in the interest of fairness to the student, to ensure that appropriate procedures have been followed.
72. The student should expect an outcome two term weeks after they have submitted

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<sup>17</sup> Downloadable from 3.4b at <https://www.buckingham.ac.uk/about/handbooks/regulations-handbook/>



their appeal. Any delays in the procedure will be communicated to the student.

73. The student may be given an opportunity to make representations at any stage of the appeal process either in person or in writing. If they make representations in person, they may be accompanied by a supporter such as a fellow student, member of staff or member of the Students' Union unconnected to the matter.
74. If the decision of the Panel supports the original decision, then no further approval is required and the decision is considered final. The outcome will be communicated to the student (and the student's Head of School or Programme Director) by the Independent Dean.
75. If the decision of the Panel is to uphold the appeal (and thereby overturns the original decision), the paperwork must be forwarded to the Chair of Examination Senate or nominee for a final decision. The outcome of the appeal will be communicated to the student (and the student's Head of School or Programme Director) by the Chair of Examination Senate or nominee.
76. Copies of the correspondence must be forwarded immediately to Academic Services once proceedings have concluded for the purposes of maintaining the student record.
77. A Completion of Procedures letter will be issued by Academic Services if the appeal is dismissed, once the student's case has exhausted the University's procedures. The letter will summarise the outcome of the appeal and inform the student of his/her right to request a review of their case by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator. The letter will be issued within 28 days of procedures being completed.
78. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA) runs an independent scheme to review student appeals and complaints once all internal procedures have been completed. The University is a member of this scheme. If the student is unhappy with the outcome they may be able to ask the OIA to review their appeal. Students can find more information about making a complaint to the OIA, what the OIA can and cannot look at, and what actions it can take, at the following link: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students>.
79. Advice concerning the application of the above procedures either during or after their application may be sought from Academic Services.



## Appendix 1: Guidance on Maintaining Good Academic Integrity in the Use of Generative AI Assisted Writing Tools

The University recognises the educational value of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools when used appropriately. To ensure fairness and uphold academic standards, students **must** follow the guidance below when using such tools. **Unless explicitly prohibited in the assessment brief or rubric, students should assume that the use of GenAI in summative assignments is permitted, but only in line with the general guidance below.** Always check the assessment rubric if unsure.

AI detectors are not used within the University's VLEs. If any are used by staff elsewhere, their results will never be used on their own to refer a case for academic misconduct investigation (see paragraph 25).

### Acceptable and Unacceptable Uses

Typical acceptable uses (unless explicitly prohibited in the assessment brief or rubric):

- Generating ideas or outlines for a topic
- Summarising lecture notes for revision
- Improving grammar or clarity of **self-written** text
- Brainstorming structure or key points

Unacceptable uses (unless explicitly authorised in the assessment brief or rubric):

- Using GenAI to write whole sections of an assignment
- Copying and pasting material directly from GenAI
- Paraphrasing source material using AI to avoid citation
- Generating citations or references that were not read/verified
- Submitting AI-generated images or code as original work

### Acknowledgement and Declaration

Any use of GenAI must be acknowledged. For short assignments, include a declaration at the end of the document. For longer assessments such as dissertations or projects, this should be in the methodology or appendix section.

Sample declarations:

"I used ChatGPT (OpenAI) on 10 January 2025 to brainstorm possible essay structures. No AI-generated content has been included verbatim in the final submission."

"Sections of this report (as noted) were generated with the assistance of Microsoft Copilot on 2 March 2025. Prompts and outputs are included in Appendix 2."

### Referencing AI Tools

Where AI-generated content is included, cite the tool using your discipline's standard referencing style. Example (Harvard): OpenAI. (2025). Response generated using ChatGPT on [date] via <https://chat.openai.com>



### **Authorial Accountability**

Students may be asked to demonstrate their understanding of submitted work, especially where GenAI use is suspected. This may include an oral discussion or authorship viva.

### **Definitions and Support**

GenAI tools include, but are not limited to: ChatGPT, Microsoft Copilot, Gemini, Claude, and similar large language model-based systems.

For further guidance, consult your module leader or personal tutor. A detailed student guide to AI use is available on the Academic Integrity section of the University website.