

Academic Misconduct Panel

Guidance for students on taught programmes

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Academic Misconduct Panel

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1. Introduction

1.1 Who is this guidance for?

This guidance is for students on University of the Built Environment taught programmes who are suspected of academic misconduct. It provides practical advice and guidance on what to expect at the Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP) meeting. It accompanies the more detailed [Academic Misconduct Procedure \(opens new window\)](#) and [Guide to Academic Integrity \(opens new window\)](#).

It does not apply to Postgraduate Research (PGR) students who instead should refer to the [Open University Plagiarism and Research Misconduct Policy – Postgraduate Research Students \(opens new window\)](#).

1.2 What is academic misconduct?

University of the Built Environment defines academic misconduct as cheating, attempts to cheat, plagiarism, collusion and any other attempts to gain an unfair advantage in assessments. Please see the [Guide to Academic Integrity \(opens new window\)](#) and [Academic Misconduct Procedure \(opens new window\)](#) for a more information on what constitutes academic misconduct.

Academic misconduct is a disciplinary offence under the [Terms and Conditions of Contract \(opens new window\)](#).

1.3 Burden of Proof

When investigating cases of academic misconduct, the burden of proof is on University of the Built Environment. This means that it is the University's responsibility to prove that you have committed an offence. You should not have to disprove the allegation, but it is important that you provide the University with any additional information, evidence and/or mitigating factors pertinent to the allegation made, as these will be considered when reviewing your case (see [Section 1.4.1: Before the Meeting](#) below).

University of the Built Environment will use the standard of proof based on the 'balance of probabilities' rather than 'beyond all reasonable doubt'. Evidence indicating that, on balance of probabilities, academic misconduct has occurred will be deemed sufficient evidence for action to be taken.

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1.4 The Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP)

1.4.1 Before the Meeting

You will receive a right to reply letter via email outlining the details of the allegation. You will be asked to respond, in writing, within 7 calendar days of receipt of the letter. You should include any further evidence or mitigating factors relating to your case. Mitigating factors may include (but are not limited to) a disability or mental health issues.

You will be notified of the date and time of the meeting as well as the link to the virtual meeting. You will receive an agenda in advance of the meeting informing you of the structure and format including who will be on the panel.

If I do not respond to the letter, will the meeting still go ahead?

Yes. The investigation will still proceed.

What should I do to prepare?

Review the evidence provided by University of the Built Environment and consider what you think may have led to the allegation of academic misconduct e.g.

- Suspected collusion: could your work be too similar to that of another student? If so, how did this happen?
- Suspected plagiarism: Have you referenced all sources properly?
- Consider the circumstances at the time of completing the assessment. Provide your explanation for what may have gone wrong.
- Ensure that you have submitted your written response to the right to reply letter, including any relevant evidence, within the stated timeframe. If you need more time to complete your response, contact the University in advance of the deadline.
- Confirm whether you will be attending the virtual meeting (this is not a requirement).
- If you are attending, confirm if you would like a member of the Disability and Welfare Team to attend. Notify the University of any additional needs which will need to be accommodated for the meeting.

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- Inform the University if you will be bringing someone with you to the meeting.
- Review the evidence received and submitted again in advance of the meeting so that it is fresh in your mind.

What should I include in my right to reply response?

- Your understanding and awareness of the Academic Misconduct Procedure
- How you went about preparing your assessment
- Any comments you have regarding any matches identified in the Turnitin similarity report (you may find it useful to revisit your submission in the Turnitin link so you can fully investigate your matches). Please use the Understanding the similarity score guidance from Turnitin to help review your similarity score
- If your case is due to a high AI score, any comments you have about any matches the AI report has identified. If you did use AI, further information about how you used AI to assist you in preparing your assessment. This guide to Interpreting your AI Report may be helpful.
- If you have sought any advice regarding any lack of understanding about how to reference your work correctly
- What you understand and feel regarding the issues identified with your submission
- Any mitigating factors you would like the Panel to consider
- Witness Statements can be included as part of your response (please upload as an attachment)
- Your reply should not exceed 1,500 words.

I committed the offence, if I admit to this, will I receive a lesser penalty?

The panel will take into consideration remorse shown and admitting the offence at the earliest opportunity (if committed) when determining the penalty.

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Should I attend?

There is no requirement to attend. We understand that our students are busy and it may not be possible to attend the meeting. Many students do not find it necessary to attend the AMP, particularly in minor and straightforward cases. The AMP will consider the response provided in your right to reply letter in your absence. It is ultimately your decision whether you wish to be present for the meeting.

Would University of the Built Environment rearrange the meeting if I am unable to attend?

If there is good reason that you are unable to attend, supported by documentary evidence, the University will endeavour to offer an alternative date for the meeting, where possible, and provided sufficient notice is given.

Can I attend the meeting in person at University of the Built Environment?

AMP meetings are normally held virtually with all panel members joining remotely; however, if you have notified the University of any disabilities or additional needs which would require an in person meeting to allow you to participate fully the University will work to accommodate this.

If I am unable to, or chose not to, attend the meeting, will it go ahead without me?

Yes. The AMP will consider your written response to the right to reply letter in your absence (if received)

1.4.2 At the meeting

What should I expect?

The AMP is the meeting at which an independent panel will review the evidence relating to your academic misconduct case. Normally AMP meetings are conducted virtually.

All the evidence of the case will be reviewed at the meeting, including your written response to the right to reply letter (if received).

You will be invited to attend the meeting in order to put your evidence across and answer any questions from the panel. Once this has occurred, you will leave the meeting so that the panel can deliberate and decide upon the outcome.

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Firstly, the panel will decide if the allegation is 'proven' or 'not proven'. If the case is 'proven', the panel will refer to the penalty matrix outlined in the [Academic Misconduct Procedure \(opens new window\)](#). These range from no penalty to, in the most severe cases of academic misconduct, removal from your programme. Please note that only the panellists and notetaker will be present during these deliberations.

In making their decision, the AMP will consider the:

- evidence provided;
- severity of the offence;
- intent;
- level of study;
- history of having committed the same offence. *

**The panel will normally not be informed of previous cases of academic misconduct until it is established whether there is a current charge.*

The outcome will be communicated to you after the meeting within 5 working days. You should not expect to receive the outcome during the meet.

Will I be questioned directly during the meeting?

This will depend on the nature of the allegation and the specifics of your case, but the AMP may wish to question you directly during the meeting.

The following will usually take place:

- The panel will introduce themselves;
- You will be advised that the meeting will be recorded, and a notetaker is present to record the minutes of the meeting;
- You will be asked to confirm your identity and the identity of anyone that have with you for support;
- The Academic Reviewer will present their findings;
- The panel will then discuss with you your understanding of the offence;
- You will present your right to reply evidence;

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- The panel may ask a range of questions to establish the circumstances surrounding the case.

Can I call my own witness at the meeting?

Yes. Attendance may be via video/conference call or a written statement can be prepared by your witness(es). In all cases, this will need to be agreed with the University in advance of the meeting so that the necessary arrangements can be made and your witness' testimony can be properly considered.

I have been accused alongside other students; will we attend the same meeting?

Yes. For cases of collusion or where academic misconduct is related to group work, all linked cases will be considered at the same AMP meeting and all students involved will have an opportunity to hear and respond to what the other students have raised.

Can I bring someone into the meeting with me?

Yes, you may be accompanied by a friend, family member, someone from your workplace or an independent University of the Built Environment representative for example your Apprenticeship Outcomes Officer or member of the Academic Support and Enhancement team ([see section 1.6: Further Support](#)).

When submitting your right to reply response you will be asked if you would like to bring a guest and if so you will need to provide their name and what their relationship is to you. It would not be expected that you would require legal representation, and this is rarely recommended.

Can others speak on my behalf at the meeting?

If someone accompanies you to the meeting, they will not be able to speak on your behalf. However, if you have a declared disability or additional need which affects your ability to speak at the meeting, it may be agreed in advance of the AMP that the person accompanying you may present information on your behalf.

1.4.3 After the meeting

A record will be kept of the meeting and made available to you. This will include:

- the date of the meeting;
- who attended;

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- a brief summary of the proceedings;
- the decision(s) taken (with reasons);
- the penalty applied (if any).

What are the potential outcomes?

Firstly, a decision will have been at the AMP regarding whether academic misconduct has occurred. If it was determined that an offence has been committed, the AMP will have also decided upon the penalty to be applied, in line with the penalty matrix outlined in the [Academic Misconduct Procedure \(opens new window\)](#).

1.5 What are my rights?

Sufficient notice

- Once you receive formal notification of the suspected academic misconduct via the right to reply letter email, you are given 7 calendar days to respond. If you need more time to complete your response, contact the University in advance of the deadline.

Clear information

It is important that you fully understand any allegations of Academic Misconduct made against you. University of the Built Environment will endeavour to present all the information regarding the accusation as clearly as possible. You will be informed in writing of what you have been accused of and why. If anything is not clear to you about the allegation or the process independent support is available (see [Section 1.6: Further support](#)).

Reasonable adjustments

If you have a declared disability the University will endeavour to ensure that information is available to you in appropriate formats, and that any reasonable adjustments are made to the proceedings to accommodate your needs. The University will also take your disability into consideration when making decisions upon your case.

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Fair hearing

University of the Built Environment will ensure that the procedure is applied fairly and consistently. Decisions on your case will be made by a fully trained and unbiased panel comprised of staff completely independent from your case.

Right to reply

You will have the right to reply to the allegation made against you and present your account of events. Upon your receipt of the details of the allegation, you will be invited to prepare a written statement of no more than 1,500 words to present any mitigating factors and any other evidence that would be useful for the investigation. You will be given 7 calendar days to prepare your response. You also have the right to attend the AMP meeting.

A timely decision

You will receive written notification of the outcome within 5 working days of the Academic Misconduct Panel Meeting. The whole process from the start of the investigation to the issuing of the outcome will not normally exceed 60 calendar days. Indicative timeframes are provided below:

- ⇒ Assessment is submitted
- ⇒ Potential misconduct is flagged to investigator and initial investigation is conducted (14 calendar days)
- ⇒ Academic Reviewer conducts review (14 calendar days from investigator referral)
- ⇒ Right to reply letter emailed and Panel meeting is arranged (up to 21 calendar days from AR referral)
- ⇒ Outcome is received in writing (within 5 working days of the Panel meeting)

Confidentiality

Information about your academic misconduct case will only be disclosed to those involved in investigating or deciding upon it. If it is deemed that you have committed academic misconduct, this will be recorded on your academic record (the University's individual record for each student) for that piece of assessment and the Board of Examiners will be made aware.

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If you are an apprentice, the appropriate member(s) of the apprenticeship support team (for example, your Apprenticeship Outcomes Officer (AOO)) will be made aware of any investigations of academic misconduct so that they are able to provide additional support and guidance in relation to the apprenticeship (for example, through your progress reviews). Your line manager will also be informed if you have been invited to respond to an academic misconduct investigation and they will be made aware of the outcome.

For cases of suspected collusion, it is important that both parties are aware of all evidence being presented to the panel, including the other student's right to reply and relevant Turnitin similarity reports. Sensitive personal information will be redacted.

University of the Built Environment may be required to inform relevant Professional Statutory and Accrediting Bodies about cases of academic misconduct.

The University strictly adheres to the UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018 when dealing with sensitive personal information (or special categories of personal data under UK GDPR).

Right to appeal

Once a decision has been reached by the AMP and communicated to you in writing, you have the right to appeal that decision under the [University of the Built Environment Appeals Procedure \(opens new window\)](#).

1.6 Further support

Please see the [Student Hub \(opens new window\)](#) section of the VLE for your academic support services and resources or contact the Student Advice team via [Student Central \(opens new window\)](#) if you have any queries or would like further information.