

Union Theological College

Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures (Undergraduate)

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1. Academic Integrity

The College expects that all its members, both staff and students, adhere to the principles of Academic Integrity defined as a commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.

The College's Academic Integrity Policy links to this procedure document and should be read alongside the procedure document. This policy can be found on the College website. This document also makes reference to the undergraduate handbook available to students on the VLE.

The College and St Mary's University Twickenham take allegations of academic misconduct extremely seriously since such acts:

- threaten the credibility, integrity and standards of the College and of the University's awards if students gain credit for work which is not their own;
- cast doubt on a student's commitment and responsibility to their learning as well as their personal integrity;
- represent an unfair advantage over other students.

It will be regarded as academic misconduct for any candidate to commit an act whereby he or she seeks to obtain for himself/herself, or for another candidate, an unfair advantage. Academic misconduct shall be taken to include the acts defined in Section 8 below, and will attract the penalties correspondingly set out in this section and in Appendix A. All references in these Regulations to academic misconduct will be taken as acts that fall within the definitions set out in Section 8.

2. Consequences of breaching regulations on Academic Integrity

Students should be aware that the consequences of a finding of academic misconduct can be severe and could result in their programme of study being terminated.

3. Extenuating Circumstances.

A student may not present extenuating circumstances in mitigation of any type of academic misconduct.

4. Application of penalties in the case of multiple referrals

In cases where a student has multiple referrals at the same time they will be treated as one case. Where a student has had a first finding of academic misconduct and, subsequent to that finding, has been referred for a second time that will be treated as a second case.

Any further referrals (either singular or multiple), at any subsequent stage of study will be considered a Third offence and the Third finding penalty will be applied (programme termination).

5. Consequences of Programme Termination

Any student whose programme of study has been terminated by the St Mary's University Undergraduate Examinations Board on the recommendation of the Programme Examination Board due to a finding of academic misconduct will not be accepted on to another programme of the College.

6. Penalties

The Penalties for breaches of the Regulations relating to Academic Integrity are as set-out below. They will be applied in strict accordance with the nature of the academic misconduct or breach of the regulations that has been found, and the number of previous findings. These penalties will only be applied by a formally constituted panel.

7. Post-graduation Revocation of Degrees

The College may recommend to St Mary's University College that a degree be revoked. In such cases, the University reserves the right to revoke a degree or other award if it is found that a student has committed an act or acts of academic misconduct either during their time as a student of the College or if an act of academic

misconduct has been committed following graduation. This includes circumstances where a graduate has aided acts of plagiarism/collusion by other students either at the College or at another educational Institution. The evidence associated with such cases will be investigated and reviewed by a formally constituted Academic Integrity Panel.

8. Possible infringements and Penalties for breaches of Academic Integrity Regulations

8.1 Poor academic practice vs academic misconduct

The College draws a distinction between poor academic practice and academic misconduct. The prior experience(s) of the student, their level of experience at the College (e.g. the level of study) and the degree to which they have had opportunities to learn about and practice the principles of good academic practice can be drawn upon when making such a distinction.

8.1.1 This item (8.1.1) outlines the process followed in cases of suspected academic misconduct or poor academic practice:

Step One

The assessment marker will be responsible for identifying concerns with a piece of work. If the marker feels it would be helpful, they can seek the input of the Programme Coordinator.

Step Two

Once a concern is raised, the case is then referred to the Vice Principal. A decision will be made as to whether there is:

- (i) No case to answer.
- (ii) Evidence of poor academic practice (to be dealt with at programme level) (This outcome is reserved for level 4 only.)
- (iii) Evidence of academic misconduct (to be dealt with at College level)

If Vice Principal finds there is no case to answer. The student will not be made aware of the initial concern raised. In all other outcomes, the student will then be informed of the process.

Step Three

In the case of poor academic practice, the marker and the Programme Coordinator will meet with the student. At this meeting, they will explain the concern(s) raised and the evidence of poor academic practice. The meeting will be a positive training session for the student. (See item 8.1.2)

The outcome of poor academic practice meetings must be recorded and logged by the Programme Coordinator who will report cases to the Executive Academic Administration. This enables tracking of repeat cases. A note will be placed on the student's record.

Students presenting poor academic practice for a third time, irrespective of the extent of the material at issue, should be referred to the Academic Integrity Panel.

Step Four

In the case of academic misconduct, the normal procedures for the Academic Integrity Panel (item 9) will be followed.

8.1.2. Poor Academic Practice Procedure

In the case of poor academic practice, the marker and the Programme Coordinator will meet with the student.

1. The student should be contacted and a meeting arranged between the student, the marker and the Programme Coordinator. Students may bring a supportive friend from within the College (another student) or a student representative. This meeting cannot be held in absentia. If the student does not wish to or is repeatedly unable to attend then the case should be referred to the Academic Integrity Panel.
2. During this meeting, the marker will explain the concerns, the student will have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss their working practices, and the Programme Coordinator will give guidance about processes. A warning concerning the student's future work, and the potential consequences of any reoccurrence, should also be given.
3. The work will be marked, ignoring any material which has been identified as of concern, this may result in a reduced mark. If the material at issue is so extensive as to result in a fail then the normal resit procedures will apply. The mark penalty for poor academic practice will be at the discretion of the Programme Coordinator in consultation with the Head of Department.
4. The outcome of poor academic practice meetings must be recorded and logged by the Programme Coordinator who will report cases to the Executive Academic Administration. This enables tracking of repeat cases. A note will be placed on the student's record.

If the student contests the finding of Poor Academic Practice the case should be referred to the College Academic Integrity Panel.

8.2 Possible infringements

The College recognises that infringements of these regulations may take many different forms. Therefore, the following infringements are identified to assist the Panel in making judgments and imposing the most appropriate penalties. The summary is intended to ensure consistency in the application of penalties and to ensure that no student is unfairly penalised. Infringements are classified as 'Low', 'Medium' or 'High' level – with the three 'levels' indicating the seriousness of the breach. Example infringements are given below.

8.2.1 Low level infringements

- Use of sources without quotation marks but referenced in the bibliography.
- Copying from sources without referencing appropriately.
- Submission of the student's own previously or simultaneously assessed work for another assessment, whether previously/simultaneously submitted to the College or another institution (i.e. self-plagiarism).
- Collusion i.e. two or more students having worked together inappropriately on an assessment to jointly produce work that is intended as an independent submission according to the requirements of the assessment.
- Obtaining an unfair advantage for another student by allowing them to copy one's own work and present it as their own.

8.2.2 Medium level infringements

- For a formal timed assessment (including class tests), introducing into the examination room any unauthorised materials such as manuscripts, printed text, books, dictionaries, self-produced crib sheets, calculators and other electronic devices such as mobile phones. This includes use of any such materials when outside the examination room for any reason during the period of the examination.
- Contracting another source to produce work which is presented as the student's own.
- Breach of ethics or ethical procedures committed as part of any research, survey, investigative activity, data gathering or other information gathering work as part of an assessment or other part of the programme of study, or committed as part of any activity not sanctioned by the programme.

- Use of another person's copyrighted materials, intellectual property or ideas presented inappropriately as the student's own.
- Falsification/fabrication of research or practical work data, results (including those of interviews) and other outputs in an assessment.
- Obtaining, or seeking to obtain, questions in advance of a formal timed assessment, including from someone who has already seen the questions, whether for oneself or on behalf of another student.

8.2.3 High level infringements

- Knowingly allowing another person to impersonate oneself in a formal timed assessment, submission of coursework, or other aspect of the programme of study.
- Impersonating another student in a formal timed assessment, submission of coursework, or other aspect of the programme of study.
- Bribing or attempting to bribe a person thought to have an influence on an assessment outcome.

8.3 Escalation of penalties

The College recognises that not all instances of academic misconduct are of equal seriousness and the penalties are reflective of this fact.

8.3.1 Low level instances will be penalised in the following way:

- For a first finding, the work will be awarded a mark of zero for the assessment and given the opportunity for a right of resit, although the resit will be capped at the pass mark.
- For a second finding, the work will be awarded a mark of zero for the assessment and given the opportunity for a right of resit, although the resit will be capped at the pass mark.
- For a third finding, the student will have their programme terminated.

8.3.2 Medium level instances will be penalised in the following way:

- For a first finding, the work will be awarded a mark of zero for the assessment and given the opportunity for a right of resit, although the resit will be capped at the pass mark¹.
- For a second finding, the student will have their programme terminated.

8.3.3 High level instances will be penalised in the following way:

- For a first finding, the student will have their programme terminated.

The penalties are indicative and each panel will consider the specifics of the case and the extent of the material the student has used inappropriately in making its judgement.

9. Academic Integrity Panel

Where a case of academic misconduct is suspected, the Vice Principal will initiate an investigation. The student (or students in the case of collusion) will be interviewed by the Vice Principal and Programme Coordinator. The Vice Principal will decide if the case should be submitted to Academic Integrity Panel.

The Academic Integrity Panel is a function of the Internal Exam Board. The Internal Exam Board will meet to consider a suspected case of academic misconduct. The Vice Principal will not sit on the Internal Board as a member in an Academic Integrity Panel meeting but may present evidence to the Board. The student will be requested to attend the Panel meeting and will be permitted to bring another individual for support but not representation. The Internal Exam Board may dismiss the case or may apply a penalty. The student will receive a written report of the decision with reasons, no later than ten working days following the meeting.

¹ The sole exception being breaches of ethics, where the panel will have greater flexibility to determine the most appropriate penalty, which will be consistent with the severity of the breach. For example, in cases where a breach causes actual harm to research participants, the panel may determine that programme termination is the most appropriate penalty.

10. Academic Appeal

Following the imposition of a Penalty by the College, a student has the right to submit an appeal against any penalty in accordance with the College's Appeals Procedures.

11. Programme Termination by University Examination Board

A decision to terminate a student's programme of study may only be taken by the St Mary's University Undergraduate Examination Board in the following circumstances:

1. on the recommendation of the Programme Examination Board where a student has failed a core module and no further retakes are granted;
2. where a student has undertaken no assessment for a particular semester or where there is negligible achievement, or where all right of resit has been exhausted and where no evidence of extenuating circumstances has been presented;
3. where they have not completed a programme within the timescales permitted in the Programme of Study Regulations;
4. where an offence of Academic Misconduct has been committed for which programme termination is the penalty;
5. where an offence of Academic Misconduct has been committed for which the penalty does not permit the resitting of a substantive assessment on a core module.
6. When making decisions regarding termination, the St Mary's University Undergraduate Examination Board will consider the whole of a student's profile.
7. Decisions to terminate a student's programme may be rescinded by the Chair of the University Examination Board acting on delegated authority of the Board where extenuating circumstances are presented which the student was not able to reveal previously for valid and evidenced reason(s). Such actions will be reported to the next meeting of the appropriate St Mary's University Undergraduate Examination Board.

Appendix A

The Penalties that may be applied by an Academic Integrity Panel are as set out below.

	Level	Case	First finding	Second finding	Third finding
1	Low	Use of sources without quotation marks but referenced in the bibliography.	A mark of zero for the assessment with a right of resit. Resit capped at pass mark.	A mark of zero for the assessment with a right of resit. Resit capped at pass mark.	Programme termination*
2	Low	Submission of the student's own previously or simultaneously assessed work for another assessment, whether previously/simultaneously submitted to the College or another institution (i.e. self-plagiarism).	A mark of zero for the assessment with a right of resit. Resit capped at pass mark.	A mark of zero for the assessment with a right of resit. Resit capped at pass mark.	Programme termination*
3	Low	Collusion i.e. two or more students having worked together inappropriately on an assessment to jointly produce work that is intended as an independent submission	A mark of zero for the assessment with a right of resit. Resit	A mark of zero for the assessment with a right of resit. Resit	Programme termination*

		according to the requirements of the assessment.	capped at pass mark.	capped at pass mark.	
4	Low	Obtaining an unfair advantage for another student by allowing them to copy one's own work and present it as their own. (Note: Where it is not possible for the Panel to determine which student produced the original work, both students will be penalised.)	Finding of academic misconduct with no penalty.	A mark of zero for the assessment with a right of resit. Resit capped at pass mark.	Programme termination*
5	Low	Copying from sources without referencing appropriately	A mark of zero for the assessment with a right of resit. Resit capped at pass mark.	A mark of zero for the assessment with a right of resit. Resit capped at pass mark.	Programme termination*
6	Medium	For a formal timed assessment, introducing into the examination room any unauthorised materials such as manuscripts, printed text, books, dictionaries, self-produced crib sheets, calculators and other electronic devices such as mobile phones, and any other	A mark of zero for the assessment with a right of resit. Resit capped at pass mark.	Programme termination*	N/A

		materials excluded by the regulations. This includes use of any such materials when outside the examination room for any reason during the period of the examination.			
7	Medium	Contracting another source to produce work which is presented as the student's own (this includes use of contract cheating services/sites).	A mark of zero for the assessment with a right of resit. Resit capped at pass mark.	Programme termination*	N/A
8	Medium	Breach of ethics or ethical procedures committed as part of any research, survey, investigative activity, data gathering or other information gathering work as part of an assessment or other part of the programme of study, or committed as part of any activity not sanctioned by the programme.	The panel may exercise its discretion based on the severity of the breach.	Programme termination*	N/A
9	Medium	Use of another person's copyrighted materials, intellectual property or ideas presented inappropriately as the student's own.	A mark of zero for the assessment with a right of resit. Resit	Programme termination*	N/A

			capped at pass mark.		
10	Medium	Falsification/fabrication of research or practical work data, results (including those of interviews) and other output in an assessment.	A mark of zero for the assessment with a right of resit. Resit capped at pass mark.	Programme termination*	N/A
11	Medium	Obtaining, or seeking to obtain, questions in advance of a formal timed assessment, including from someone who has already seen the questions, whether for oneself or on behalf of another student.	A mark of zero for the entire module with a right of retake of the module. Retake of module capped at pass mark.	Programme termination*	N/A
13	High	Knowingly allowing another person to impersonate oneself in a formal timed assessment, submission of coursework, or other aspect of the programme of study.	Programme termination*	N/A	N/A

14	High	Impersonating another student in a formal timed assessment, submission of coursework, or other aspect of the programme of study.	Programme termination*	N/A	N/A
15	High	Bribing or attempting to bribe a person thought to have an influence on an assessment outcome.	Programme termination*	N/A	N/A

*Recommendation to St Mary's University Undergraduate Examination Board