

**Code of Practice on Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct**

Approved by the Academic Regulations Committee

Reviewed 3rd December 2020



## **1. Principles**

- 1.1 An overriding principle will be fair, appropriate and considered handling of any Plagiarism or Academic Misconduct case.
- 1.2 Plagiarism is the act of a student claiming as his or her own, intentionally or by omission, work which was not done by that student. For the purpose of this Code of Practice this includes auto-plagiarism and fabricating evidence, results or data as well as copying work done by others and cheating in examinations.
- 1.3 Plagiarism may arise in a number of differing ways within an academic context, including the copying of the work of another student, the reproduction of course materials, notes or data, the cutting and pasting of material derived from the Internet and the direct transcription of the contents of a textbook or journal. It may include adaptation of existing texts.
- 1.4 Plagiarism also includes a student deliberately claiming to have done work submitted by the student for assessment which was never undertaken by that student, including the buying of essays and fabrication of data. This constitutes a deliberate attempt to deceive the marker.
- 1.5 In each School the Head of Department will be the first point of contact for staff within the School where plagiarism is suspected or detected. Where a case requires further intervention the Deputy Dean will be contacted. Serious cases will require consultation with the Executive Dean.

## **2. Guidance and Prevention**

- 2.1 UCB will ensure that students have access to the appropriate levels of support, counselling and advice and that staff receive regular briefings and support.
- 2.2 UCB will publish written guidance to students as to what constitutes effective academic writing and UCB's referencing guidelines.
- 2.3 It is responsibility of each individual student to ensure that referencing conventions used in the University are understood and acted upon at all times.
- 2.4 Schools will support students to develop appropriate referencing skills throughout the duration of their studies.
- 2.5 For hard copy submissions UCB will use assignment frontispieces within which students certify that the submitted work is their own work. For online submissions the virtual learning environment (Canvas) incorporates a declaration on all module sites regarding student ownership of work being submitted in accordance with this Code of Practice.

### **3. Detection of Plagiarism**

- 3.1 UCB reserves the right to use all legitimate means at its disposal to detect plagiarism where it arises. All submitted work will be liable to scrutiny in order to identify any plagiarised element.
- 3.2 Plagiarism will consider the 'balance of probability' whether plagiarism has occurred and its extent before forming a judgement and deciding an appropriate course of action.

### **4. Process for dealing with suspected Plagiarism**

- 4.1 Where a member of staff considers that a student's work contains unattributed material, that member of staff should notify the Head of Department of their findings. Where further intervention is required, the Head of Department will discuss the case with the Deputy Dean
- 4.2 The student will be invited in writing to meet with the Head of Department or Deputy Dean, setting out the fact they are suspected of plagiarism.
- 4.3 At the meeting, the Head of Department or Deputy Dean will go through the suspected plagiarism concerns with the student. The student will be invited to respond, explaining how they believe that the suspected plagiarism may have taken place and, if necessary, to refute the allegation.
- 4.4 Where a student does not attend a meeting, the Head of Department/ Deputy Dean, may use an appropriate means of communicating with the student in lieu of a meeting, in order to obtain a detailed response concerning the allegation of plagiarism.
- 4.5 If a student does not respond to the request, the Head of Department/or Deputy Dean will make a judgement as to whether they believe plagiarism has taken on the balance of probabilities. A written record of the decision should be made, setting out the grounds on which this decision was taken.
- 4.6 Should the Head of Department or Deputy Dean be satisfied that plagiarism has taken place, whether knowingly or unknowingly, they should then assign it a category. A number of factors will be taken into account in this categorisation, including;
- a) the academic level of the student;
  - b) the proportion of the assignment affected; and
  - c) any previous recorded instance of plagiarism by that student;
  - d) The wider circumstances around the submission;
  - e) Any relevant evidence presented

### **5. Categorising Plagiarism**

5.1 The suspected plagiarism should be placed into one of the following categories based on the exercise of academic judgement and experience. In selecting a category, consideration should be made of whether there is a reasonable expectation that the student should have learned the appropriate referencing skills and received sufficient guidance with regard to the attribution of source material.

## **5.2 Poor Academic Practice**

5.2.1 Poor academic practice would be considered as not following appropriate academic conventions. This may particularly apply to students who may not yet be familiar with the requirements of Higher Education level assessment.

5.2.2 This category would include any first offence amounting to inadequate referencing.

5.2.3 This category will consider whether factors of wellbeing and state of mind contributed to the identified poor practice.

## **5.3 Process for dealing with Poor Academic Practice**

5.3.1 Where poor academic practice has been determined, the Head of Department should ensure the student is aware of the nature and extent of the poor academic practice and has been given appropriate support and guidance how to avoid this in future. A record should be kept by the Head of Department, but no further measures shall be taken.

5.3.2 A copy of the notification of the outcome should be forwarded to the Examinations Unit to ensure that the student's records are amended accordingly and a note will be added to the Student's Dashboard record.

5.3.3 Where students state of mind was a contributing factor, the student will be directed towards internal support.

## **5.4 Moderate Plagiarism**

5.4.1 Moderate plagiarism is most likely to arise from a failure to follow guidelines on what is regarded as a student's own work, ignoring conventions and acceptable academic practice.

5.4.2 This category includes collusion, auto plagiarism (submission of an assignment identical or closely related to one submitted at an earlier point and for which a mark has been received) or a moderate inclusion of un-attributed or incorrectly attributed copying. It also includes repeated poor academic practice.

## **5.5 Process for dealing with Moderate Plagiarism**

5.5.1 Where moderate plagiarism has been determined, the Head of Department or Deputy Dean should ensure that the student is aware of the nature and extent of the poor academic practice and has been given appropriate support and guidance how to avoid this in future. The Head of Department or Deputy Dean should determine the

appropriate outcome as under 5.5.5 below.

5.5.2 The Head of Department or Deputy Dean should inform the student in writing of the outcome and a record will be added to the Student's Dashboard record.

5.5.3 A copy of the notification of the outcome should be forwarded to the Examinations Unit to ensure that the student's records are amended accordingly and that it is added to the central record of academic misconduct.

5.5.4 Where a student's circumstances were a contributing factor, the student will be directed towards support.

5.5.5 Where a case of moderate plagiarism has been determined. The mark obtained in the assessment may be downwardly adjusted to an appropriate level (reflecting the actual contribution of the student) and reported to the Examinations Officer.

## **5.6 Serious Plagiarism**

5.6.1 Serious plagiarism arises from deliberate attempts to deceive.

5.6.2 This category includes using significant unattributed material, clear intention of deception or repeated moderate plagiarism.

5.6.3 Serious plagiarism also includes any use of material obtained from a website or other source that involves a commercial transaction and the production of academic work by a third party for gain.

## **5.7 Process for dealing with Serious Plagiarism**

5.7.1 Where serious plagiarism is suspected the Deputy Dean will inform the Executive Dean who will carry out an initial review of the information collated and will determine whether further action is required.

5.7.2 The student should be informed of the next stage of the process. This should indicate the potential consequences of plagiarism and invite the student to attend. The student may be accompanied by a 'friend' if they wish (i.e. another member of UCB or a representative from the Guild of Students).

5.7.3 Where a student does not wish, or is unable, to attend a Plagiarism Panel, the Executive Dean may use an appropriate means of communicating with the Student in order to obtain a detailed response concerning the allegation of plagiarism.

5.7.4 If a student refuses or is unable to attend a Plagiarism Panel, the Panel will make a judgement as to whether they believe plagiarism has taken place in the absence of the student. A written record of the decision should be made, setting out the grounds on which this decision was taken.

5.7.5 If the outcome of the Plagiarism Panel is that it does not conclude that the student has committed plagiarism, no further action is taken.

5.7.6 If the outcome of the Plagiarism Panel is that it concludes that the student has committed moderate plagiarism, a penalty shall be imposed as under 5.7.9 of this Code of Practice.

5.7.7 If the outcome of the Plagiarism Panel is that it concludes that the student has committed serious plagiarism, a penalty shall be imposed as under 5.7.9 of this Code of Practice.

5.7.8 The outcome will be communicated to the relevant academic departments and the Examinations Unit who will record and take action as appropriate.

5.7.9 Where a student has committed serious plagiarism, penalties could include, but not be limited to:

- failure of a module
- disciplinary suspension for a period of one or two semesters
- recommendation for expulsion

If the outcome of the Plagiarism Panel is that it concludes that the student has committed such serious plagiarism that expulsion should be considered, the matter will be forwarded to the Executive Director of Engagement, Employability and E-Learning for action under the Disciplinary Code.

## **6. Right to Appeal**

A student may appeal the penalty imposed for plagiarism on grounds of the appearance of new evidence or procedural irregularity. Any such appeal must be submitted to the Assessment Appeals Committee of the Academic Board within five working days of receipt of the notification of the outcome of the plagiarism decision.

## **7. Cheating in an examination**

7.1 Students must ensure that they do not engage in any form of cheating in connection with the examination. UCB treats any form of cheating under examination conditions as an extremely serious matter.

7.2 Cheating in an examination occurs when a student seeks to improve their performance in an examination by accessing, or attempting to access material not listed on the front of the examination paper (the rubric).

7.3 Where a student is suspected of cheating or has been caught cheating in an examination, the invigilator will confiscate any unauthorised materials and complete an Examination Incident Report form.

7.4 The student is permitted to finish the examination.

7.5 The Examination Incident Report form together with any confiscated materials and the student's question and answer papers are brought to the attention of the Deputy Registrar. The Deputy Registrar then notifies the appropriate, Head of Department.

- 7.6 The student must be invited in writing to meet with the Head of Department, setting out the fact they are suspected of cheating in an examination.
- 7.7 Factors which may have contributed to the state of mind of the student will be considered to facilitate directed support.
- 7.8 At the meeting, the Head of Department present should go through the incident with the student, establishing why this is regarded as a possible case of cheating in an examination. The student should be invited to respond, explaining how he or she believes that the suspected case of cheating in an examination may have taken place and, if necessary, to refute the allegation.
- 7.9 Where cheating in an examination has been determined, the Head of Department should determine an appropriate penalty as under 10.11 below.
- 7.10 The Head of Department should inform the student in writing of the outcome and a record will be added to the Student's Dashboard record.
- 7.11 Where a case of cheating in an examination has been determined to have occurred, one of the following penalties shall be applied (the penalty will be mindful of the student's personal circumstances at that time which may have contributed to the case):
- a) The student will be deemed to have failed the examination.
  - b) A penalty commensurate with serious plagiarism if appropriate.