

Principles for Handling Academic Misconduct at Queen Mary

Queen Mary strives for proportionality in addressing issues of academic integrity and misconduct, and recognises that conversations about integrity issues at a local level helps to a focus on learning and promotes the development of good scholarship.

Procedural fairness is central to any consideration of misconduct. Procedural fairness includes making sure that the process is accessible, inclusive and clear for students to understand and engage with. In practice, this means they should always have adequate information about what evidence or concerns are being considered and a fair opportunity to respond. It also means that decisions should be independent, reasoned, and confidential. Decisions about the appropriate action and outcome will take into account the following:

- It is recognised that assessment and misconduct matters can be stressful for students. A supportive, educational approach is compatible with fairness, quality and standards.
- To ensure quality and standards, all marks awarded must be a true reflections of a student's achievement. Where the integrity of an assessment has been compromised, it is normally expected that the outcome will require resubmission of the student's own work to obtain credit. Penalties which do not require resubmission are normally applied where it is clear that a sufficient proportion of the work can be considered the students own achievement, for example, minor instances of plagiarism in a larger body of the student's own work.
- Outcomes and actions recognise the importance of consistency and clarity, while striving to give due consideration to individual circumstances. To ensure fairness and consistency for all students, decision-makers will provide reasons for any outcome. Where they have decided to vary from the university guidance on outcomes/penalties for any good reason they will include an explanation of the factors considered. Good reasons might include the considerations outlined below.
- Responses should be proportional to the extent and severity of the misconduct.
- Honesty and integrity – the use of paid services or where a student shows no attempt to produce their own work will be treated with the utmost seriousness. A student's response to concerns raised may also be taken into account; for example contrition and reflection may warrant leniency, whereas sustained intention to deceive throughout the case may call for more serious actions.
- Repeated instances – repeated occurrences of misconduct will normally be treated more seriously. Lack of industry or engagement with learning and support which results in repeated misconduct will normally result in escalating outcomes.
- Any relevant accompanying behaviour – actions impacting other members of the Queen Mary community, such as coercion, deceit or falsely implicating an innocent student may be taken into account.
- The effect of the penalty – are the practical implications of a penalty on progression or awards proportionate and appropriate?
- No advantage – all decisions will consider whether or not a student who committed academic misconduct will be advantaged over a student who failed an assessment or module honestly and should attempt to ensure this is not the case.
- The assessment context – this can include expectations about the student's academic experience (eg level of study), and/or the nature and value of the assessment (eg. is it a significant piece of work or milestone, or accounting for a considerable amount of the module or classification).

Outcome Guidance

Type of misconduct	Example misconduct	Commonly applied penalty
Plagiarism/collusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contains plagiarism that warrants resubmission of the assessment • First finding of misconduct by a first-year UG student 	Central Penalty iv / School penalty iii.
Plagiarism/collusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First finding of misconduct by a non-first year UG student • First finding of misconduct by a PG student 	Central Penalty iv or vi / School penalty iii.
Misconduct in invigilated examinations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unauthorised material on person • Having writing on body • Communicating with another student • Failing to follow the instructions of an invigilator • Copying the work of another student 	Central Penalty vi.
Ghost-writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract cheating • The use of websites like Chegg, Bartleby, Course Hero where students actively request their work is completed by a third-party 	Generally misconduct of this kind will incur severe penalties that reflect the nature of the case. Students should expect central penalty vii as a minimum.
Other types of misconduct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraudulent reporting of source material • Falsification of data • Impersonation of another student 	Generally misconduct of this kind will incur severe penalties that reflect the nature of the case. Students should expect central penalty vii as a minimum.
Unauthorised or unacknowledged text manipulation which undermines the integrity of an assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using Generative AI to produce work which is presented as the student's own 	If the misconduct is the result of a lack of industry or engagement with learning, students should expect central penalty vi as a minimum.
A second or subsequent offence of any kind	See above examples	Escalating outcomes, relative to previous penalty. This means usually central penalty vi or above.