



Fairfield School of Business

Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure **Bath Spa University (BSU)** Taught Degree Programmes

Version: 2.2

Category: Policies – Registry and Administration (HE)

Owner(s): Registrar

Approved by: The Board of Governors

Access: **Public**

Scope: This Policy applies to all students enrolled on higher education programmes leading to awards from **Bath Spa University** only.

Students enrolled on a higher education programme leading to an award with any other awarding body should consult the appropriate policy, which can be found here:

<https://fsb.ac.uk/policy-hub/>

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1. Academic Misconduct

- 1.1. FSB believes in upholding academic integrity. Students are expected to be honest in their studies, acknowledge the work of others where appropriate, and give credit where they need to appropriately use other people's ideas as part of presenting their own work, using the correct procedures for referencing and attribution.
- 1.2. All students will be assessed on their own ability and that all assessment work submitted must be original. Academic Misconduct is defined as any activity employed by a student which proves to be unfair academically and gives an advantage over others. Academic Misconduct is usually called 'unfair practice' or 'cheating'.
- 1.3. Academic Misconduct is different from Poor Academic Practice, which can be defined as a minor breach of ordinary academic conventions, like poorly attributed or incorrect referencing, or limited over-reliance on reference material, usually resulting from a misunderstanding or lack of confidence in conventions and where there has clearly been no intention to deceive.
- 1.4. Poor academic practice is going to be dealt with as part of the marking and feedback process because it represents a failure to follow assessment and marking criteria.
- 1.5. You are expected to present your own words, your own analysis, and your own arguments in your work. It is acceptable to use the work of others to support arguments and analysis, and tutors will be able to inform you as to what constitutes good practice and give help with conventions such as referencing and the provision of footnotes. If you're in any doubt about what constitutes good practice and what constitutes plagiarism, you are advised to consult your tutors for advice. It is also recommended that you seek advice from the Academic Support Centre of your relevant campus regarding academic writing and referencing.
- 1.6. Where cases of Academic Misconduct are suspected, the school will follow the Academic Misconduct Policy outlined below. Students should be clear that Academic Misconduct is regarded as a very serious offence in higher education. Claims that a student was not aware of the offence or its consequences, or did not understand what constitutes Academic Misconduct, will not be accepted under any circumstances. Academic Misconduct will end in a penalty even when it is unintended or accidental.
- 1.7. Students should remember that an Academic Misconduct case can be opened at any time, even if the student has graduated and is no longer a current student.

2. Plagiarism Detection

- 2.1. FSB is a member of the Turnitin UK Service and uses this service to aid in the detection of Academic Misconduct.
- 2.2. All student work is uploaded to Turnitin, which compares the submission against a database of billions of internet pages, previous student papers and journals (amongst others). Turnitin provides an Originality Report for every submission uploaded, which shows the extent of similarity with other sources.
- 2.3. Plagiarism detection is not limited to the use of Turnitin. Tutors also will look to evidence of the following:
 - Plagiarism from published texts (not necessarily available online)
 - Similarities with the work of other students which can suggest collusion
 - Content that appears to be clearly beyond the known capabilities of a student
 - Work that's expressed through a style which does not match the known writing or language abilities of a student.

3. Types of Academic Misconduct

- 3.1. Academic Misconduct may take a multitude of forms, and therefore the following explains some of the most common types of Academic misconduct. This list isn't definitive; any activity which meets the school's definition of Academic Misconduct may be considered under this policy.
- 3.2. What constitutes appropriate practice: Assessment work will frequently incorporate the thoughts and concepts of others or material generated by GenAI. Utilising such sources is perfectly suitable for showcasing your research abilities and substantiating the narrative or facts you intend to present, provided you properly credit the original writers. It is imperative to utilise proper citations and references for any material included in your assessment, ensuring it is sufficiently paraphrased. Kindly consult Academic Support for further information on reference, including proper citation of sources.
- 3.3. **Plagiarism;** Plagiarism is submitting the work or ideas of somebody else as your own, including plagiarising information from GenAI sources, without appropriate referencing. Examples include, but aren't limited to:

- Copying sections from one or more books / articles / other published sources without acknowledgement of the source(s). It's still plagiarism if you reproduce sections from several sources instead of one
- Excessive dependence upon one or a limited number of sources is plagiarism if the sources are inadequately referenced, whether the original text has been paraphrased.
- Copying from other members while working with a group.
- Submitting your own previous work (in whole or in part) from another course/module, whether this is from a different institution. This is often known as 'self-plagiarism' or 'double counting'.
- Submitting the work of any third party, including students and former students.

3.4. **Impersonation** is submitting work prepared by another person for assessment purposes. Examples include, but aren't limited to:

- Purchasing essays
- Writing an assessment for another student.
- Sitting an examination on behalf of another student

3.5. **Collusion** is the failure to work independently and showing the work off as your own individual effort. Students should note that collusion is different to collaboration, and a few assignments may specify that students should work together and submit joint work. Students should never submit joint work unless it's clearly stated as a requirement in the module's written documentation, and, in such cases, students should seek clarification from their tutors as to the level of collaboration that is acceptable.

3.6. All students implicated during a case of collusion will be considered as having breached Academic Practice, even when one student is believed to possess work copied from another. This is often the result of not adequately securing your work or sharing / showing someone else your work, and this can make you culpable for collusion. Only where students can provide clear proof that their work has been stolen or otherwise acquired without their consent may they be exonerated from the accusation of collusion.

3.7. **Exam misconduct (in person or online);** this refers to a breach of exam regulations to get an unfair advantage.

What is acceptable practice: You must complete any test or examination by yourself unless the assessment brief requires you to complete the assessment with another

student. The assessment brief will clarify the extent of that collaboration and what is expected to be your own work. You may have agreed reasonable adjustments that include being accompanied or supported by another person (e.g. an amanuensis or scribe) or by Generative Artificial Intelligence, but your academic output will remain solely yours.

What is not acceptable practice and is cheating: Cheating in a test or examination is your attempt to gain advantage for you and/or for another student/s and includes, but is not limited to:

- Attempting to acquire or acquiring advance knowledge of the content of an examination or test before it is issued
- Attempting to communicate or communicating with other student/s or other individual (other than an invigilator or member of staff) during the assessment, including through technology and social media
- Attempting to copy, or copying from another student
- Allowing another student to copy or to attempt to copy from you
- Obtaining, or attempting to obtain, any other assistance from another student
- Using, or attempting to gain access to, any material or device not permitted as part of the assessment
- Impersonating another student or allowing another student or any other individual to impersonate you in the assessment
- Refusing to comply with a reasonable request made by a member of staff where they suspect potential cheating
- Any other action that you take with the intention of gaining unfair advantage

3.8. **Falsification;** this means submitting data, observations or other research in assessed work which has been either fabricated or falsified.

What is acceptable practice: It is appropriate to use real information in your assessment (unless your assessment brief specifies that material should be invented – for example, in creative work).

What is not acceptable practice and is falsification of information: Falsification of information is where you include information in your assessment that is not real. This includes but is not limited to:

- Claiming to carry out experiments, observations, interviews, data collection or any other form of research when you have not done so
- Creating false data
- Manipulation and/or selection of data or imagery that creates a false outcome
- Using a GenAI tool that may provide you with false information
- Creating or obtaining information illegally
- Using essay mills (see Contract Cheating) from which the information may not be real
- Falsification will be considered as major misconduct.

3.9. **Contract Cheating;** this is where you engage with another person or organisation to complete part or all your assessment, which you then submit as your own work. The UK Government criminalised 'essay mills' in 2022 and their operations are therefore illegal. If you are approached or becomes aware that another student has used an essay mill, this should be reported anonymously via the Report and Support tool.

What is acceptable practice: The Academic Support service can provide you with support to improve your overall academic skills, including writing and referencing. You are required to complete any assessed piece of work on your own unless the assessment brief requires you to plan or compile a task with another student/s.

What is not acceptable practice and is contract cheating: Contract cheating can take place with or without a formal contract. It includes, but is not limited to:

- Engaging with an essay writing service that you may seek out online or in person, or which may try to contact you online or in person
- Asking another person to contribute to, or undertake in full, an assessment
- This includes but is not limited to asking other students, friends, family, private tutors and copy-editing services
- Using a GenAI tool to create part or all your assessment

Contract cheating will be considered as severe misconduct.

3.10. Using Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

What is acceptable practice: The guidance document provides information on when it can be appropriate to use GenAI to support your learning and assessment as does this policy. As a general principle, GenAI tools may help you form an initial summary to develop your understanding of the assessment topic / brief. GenAI tools used in your research must be cited and referenced as you would any other source of information. Your assessment brief may also provide additional information on how GenAI can be used appropriately or if it may not be used. If in doubt, check with your lecturer.

What is not acceptable practice and is misuse of GenAI: Misuse of GenAI is where you use one or more GenAI tools to give you an unfair advantage in your assessment and undermines your learning process. The following examples of misuse of GenAI include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarising information from GenAI sources without appropriate
- referencing (see also the definition of plagiarism)
- Using a GenAI tool to generate all or part of your assessment (see also the
- definition of contract cheating) and not developing your own academic voice
- Using a GenAI tool to improve the standard of your assessment beyond
- your own competence. This includes for example, the style of your usual
- written English, or using it to generate coding
- Falsifying information resulting from the GenAI tool you use (see also the
- definition of falsification)
- Using new features of GenAI to gain an unfair advantage

4. Penalties for Academic Misconduct

4.1. Where an accusation of unfair practice has been substantiated to the satisfaction of the Academic Misconduct Panel, the accusation is claimed to be established. In determining the acceptable penalty, the Academic Misconduct Panel will usually consider the following:

- The degree of deception involved
- Whether the student has been subject to a previous accusation of Academic Misconduct
- The level of Academic misconduct
- The extent of the Academic Misconduct
- Any admission and/or explanation by the student of the Academic Misconduct.

- 4.2. It is possible that additional factors could also be considered when determining the appropriate penalty if these are deemed relevant by the Academic Misconduct Panel.
- 4.3. Students should remember that an established accusation of Academic Misconduct may result in severe consequences for the career prospects of a student on a course which has a particular focus on honesty, integrity, and ethical behaviour.
- 4.4. The following table of categories shows the penalties available to the Academic Misconduct Panel. As many variables are taken into consideration by the Panel when determining an appropriate penalty, it isn't possible to provide a definitive list of offences and the penalty these will incur. The following table is therefore intended to provide an indicative estimation only:

Category	Action regarding progression	Action re mark	Counted for classification	Record on transcript	Notes (these to be used as a guide only)
N/A	None	No action taken	N/A	N/A	No evidence of academic misconduct, student exonerated.
0	None	Student notified of Category 0 penalty, but no action taken against any assessment item or module	No	No	Unwitting offence. Evidence of academic misconduct, but clear that this was not substantial and was unintended (first offence).
1	None	Assessment capped at pass mark	No	No	Unwitting offence. Evidence of academic misconduct, but clear that this was not substantial and was unintended (second offence or high level of study).
2	Fail assessment	Assessment capped at pass mark	No	No	Evidence of very minor infringement.
3	Fail assessment	Module capped at pass mark	No	No	Evidence of very minor infringement (second offence); evidence of minor to moderate infringement (first offence).

4	Fail module, may retake	Module capped at pass mark	Yes	Yes	Evidence of minor to moderate infringement (second offence); evidence of serious infringement (first offence).
5	Fail module, may retake	Module capped at zero	Yes	Yes	Evidence of serious infringement (second offence). Can also be used for repeat offenders in lower categories.
6	Fail module	No right to retake module	n/a	Yes	Evidence of very serious infringement with clear attempt to deceive.
7	Fail course	Dismissal from University	n/a	n/a	Gross misconduct.

Table 1: Penalties for Academic Misconduct

5. Indicative level of offence

Indicative Level of Offence	Example	Indicative penalty category
Minor	Poor referencing	0-1
	Very minor plagiarism	
Moderate	Repeated minor misconduct	2-5
	Substantial portions of directly copied / unreferenced text	
Severe	Stealing a test paper	6-7
	Purchasing essays	
	Falsifying research data	

Table 2: Indicative Levels of Offence

- 5.1. Students should note that at Penalty Category 4 and above, the results will include a permanent record on the student's transcript, and therefore the requirement that any capped mark (which may be zero) must count for classification purposes (above Level 4).
- 5.2. Students should remember that, if the module to which an academic Misconduct penalty has been applied is subsequently failed, the penalty will be carried over and will apply to whatever module is added to a student's record because of the failed module.

Students should remember that instances of very severe Academic Misconduct may additionally lead to disciplinary action.

6. Guidance for Handling Poor Academic Practice and Academic Misconduct

The following procedure outlines the steps for identifying and managing cases of poor academic practice and academic misconduct, ensuring that all concerns are addressed fairly and consistently.

6.1. **Identification of Potential Academic Integrity Issue:**

The first step is to identify any potential issue regarding academic integrity. This may be flagged by a tutor, marker, module leader or through automated tools such as Turnitin, among other methods.

6.2. **Course Coordinator Review:**

Once a potential issue is identified, the course coordinator will review the case to determine whether it constitutes a major or minor breach of academic integrity.

6.3. **Determination of Offence Severity:**

If the issue is identified as a **severe offence**, it will be classified as a suspected **academic misconduct**.

If the issue is identified as a **minor offence**, it will be classified as **poor academic practice**.

6.4. **Action for Poor Academic Practice:**

If the issue is deemed poor academic practice, the course coordinator will email the student to inform them of the concern. The student will be advised to contact their tutor to discuss the matter further.

6.5. **Action for Suspected Academic Misconduct:**

If the issue is suspected academic misconduct, the course coordinator will proceed with the following actions:

I - Complete the Academic Misconduct Accusation Form to formally document the suspicion.

II - Email the student to notify them of the suspected violation, attaching the Turnitin report and a copy of the Academic Misconduct Policy. The student will be asked to provide a written response within **10 working days**.

The Academic Team Leader and the marker must be copied in this communication.

III - The student will be required to schedule a meeting with the module tutor(s) to discuss the matter. It is recommended that at least two staff members should be present at the meeting, and a written record of the meeting must be taken.

IV - Request a report and any supporting evidence from the tutor(s) regarding the suspected violation.

6.6. Course Coordinator Review and Interview:

After receiving the necessary reports and evidence, the course coordinator will review the statements and invite the student for an interview to further discuss the case.

6.7. Outcome for Poor Academic Practice:

If the case is determined to be poor academic practice rather than academic misconduct, the course coordinator will send the student a formal outcome notification.

6.8. Outcome for Suspected Academic Misconduct:

If the case is confirmed as suspected academic misconduct, the course coordinator will submit the following documentation to Bath Spa University through the FSB BSU Programme Leader and Exams Officer:

I - The **completed Academic Misconduct Accusation Form**.

II - The **student's assignment** in question (Turnitin Report).

III - Any written records from the meeting with the tutor(s).

The FSB Registry and Examinations Team should be copied when submitting the documents.

6.9. Academic Misconduct Panel:

Completed forms and supporting evidence will be reviewed by Bath Spa University and cross-referenced to a student's level of study. The academic school will decide if the evidence shows that:

- **The concern is a case of poor academic practice** (e.g. unacknowledged quotations or inconsistent referencing, inadequate referencing/excessive paraphrasing). In such instances, a meeting between the academic school or nominated contact and the student will be scheduled (in person or online), the

concerns will be discussed, and support will be put in place tailored to the student's specific circumstances.

- **The concern goes beyond poor academic practice, and the evidence suggests that possible academic misconduct may have occurred.** Minor academic misconduct includes poor referencing and minor plagiarism by using unreferenced sources including GenAI. Major academic misconduct includes, but are not limited to, using substantial sections of unreferenced text or other sources including from GenAI, collusion with another student, contract cheating including use of GenAI, cheating in a test or examination, falsifying data including through GenAI, or breaching ethical requirements. The University will contact you by email if there is evidence of potential academic misconduct. You will be provided with a summary of the concern and the supporting evidence that has been compiled to date. The Deputy Academic Registrar (or nominee) will initially review the concern to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to reach an appropriate outcome, or if the case should proceed to a full Panel meeting

6.10. Notification of Outcome to Student:

The outcome of the academic misconduct panel will be communicated to the student within five working days.

This procedure ensures that all academic integrity issues are handled systematically, fairly, and in accordance with the guidelines set by Bath Spa University and Fairfield School of Business. The process is designed to maintain the high academic standards expected of our students while ensuring transparency and due process.

7. Review

- 7.1. The student may wish to appeal against the decision of the panel. Further detail can be found in the Appeal Policy and Procedure for Bath Spa University Programmes. You can find this here: <https://fsb.ac.uk/policy-hub/>



Version Tracking:

Version	Author / revisions by	Changes summary	Approved by:	Date
1.0	Original approved version adapted from BSU policy Dean of Learning and Teaching	-	Board of Governors	Jun 2021
1.1	Dean of Learning and Teaching Quality Team	Reformatted – pagination and version control – minor changes.	Board of Governors	Sep 2022
1.2	Dean of Learning and Teaching Quality Team	Annual review and update, minor changes.	Board of Governors	Sep 2023
2.0	Dean of Learning and Teaching Quality Team	BSU-specific version differentiated from other awarding bodies.	Board of Governors	Sep 2024
2.1	Registry Quality Team	Addition of process chart in Appendix 8 Reviewed in September 2025 – no changes; review date extended.	Board of Governors	Mar 2025 Sep 2025
2.2	Registry; Programme Leader; Dean of School	Process now covered in separate document. Addition of content on Generative AI.	Board of Governors	Jun 2026

Date of next review: September 2027