

Section 17C

Nottingham Trent University

Quality Handbook

Part D: Regulations

**Section 17C:
Academic Irregularities**

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PART A INTRODUCTION AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Academic integrity is fundamental to the values promoted by Nottingham Trent University. The University is concerned to ensure that its assessment regulations are fully and fairly implemented and that no student is allowed to gain an advantage unfairly over others.
- 1.2 This document describes the principles and procedures by which the University will manage allegations of academic irregularities.
- 1.3 The Procedure is owned by the Academic Office (AO) and comes under the remit of the Head of Academic Office.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 For the purposes of the Procedure, in this document the following words and phrases have the meaning indicated:

AIAP	Academic Irregularities Appeal Panel
AIPf	Academic Irregularities Penalty framework
AO	Academic Office, the owner of the Procedure
ATL	Academic Team Leader
BOE	Board of Examiners
Convenor	Administrator appointed by the Subject Team Leader on behalf of the Dean of each School to support the work of the School Academic Irregularities Panel (SAIP)
PSRB	Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body
PVC-(A)	The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Academic) is responsible, in liaison with the Vice-Chancellor and other members of the University Executive Team (UET) as appropriate, for executive oversight of efficient and effective development of the University's academic portfolio and supporting systems and frameworks
SAIP	School Academic Irregularities Panel

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3. Principles

The Procedure detailed in Part B is concerned with enhancing consistency of practice across the University in the management of cases of academic irregularity.

In order to emphasise the seriousness of academic irregularities and to meet the University's obligation to make clear to students what constitutes an academic irregularity:

- 3.1 All students are required to accept the University's enrolment conditions, which indicate that they acknowledge that they are bound by all of the University's regulations and procedures;
- 3.2 All students will normally have access to a course handbook where links to this document will be provided;
- 3.3 The Procedure is accessible via the NTU website at:
http://www.ntu.ac.uk/current_students/resources/student_handbook/index.html;
- 3.4 Relevant regulations, including this Procedure, will be drawn to the attention of students by respective Schools at the beginning of the academic year or any other point of entry.
- 3.5 In all cases of alleged academic irregularity, students will be treated as blameless until a case against them has been upheld.
- 3.6 The facts must be established before consideration of the consequences of the alleged incident on a student's performance, assessment or progression.
- 3.7 Whenever a student is asked to attend any meeting investigating an alleged academic irregularity that student will be informed that they have the right to be accompanied. The University does not permit students to be legally represented at the SAIP, except in exceptional circumstances. For the avoidance of doubt, the definition of "exceptional circumstances" in this context is a matter for determination by the University.
- 3.8 A student is entitled to know the nature of the allegation(s) made against him/her (i.e. the type of academic irregularity).
- 3.9 The student's ATL or suitably experienced academic will make an initial decision about the need for a student's alleged academic irregularity to be considered by this Procedure.
- 3.10 The determination of whether an academic irregularity has occurred is a matter to be determined by the SAIP and is not a matter for the BOE to determine.
- 3.11 In all cases the SAIP will come to a decision based upon the evidence presented to it.

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- 3.12 Where the SAIP is satisfied within the Procedure that an academic irregularity has **not** taken place the matter will be considered ended. This decision exonerates any students under investigation and will have no bearing on any future investigations. No documentation relating to the alleged investigations shall be retained on a student's file.
- 3.13 If the SAIP finds within the Procedure that there is evidence that an academic irregularity has taken place it will make recommendations to the BOE regarding which sanction is appropriate based on the University's AIPf (See Appendix 5).
- 3.14 Lack of intent is not an acceptable defence against an allegation of academic irregularity.
- 3.15 The BOE will determine the final sanction to be applied to the individual case based on the recommendations provided by the SAIP, the student's academic profile and any exceptional circumstances brought to the attention of the Board through the Notification of Exceptional Circumstances Procedures (See section 17A of the Academic Handbook).
- 3.16 If an allegation is made after the award of a NTU qualification such allegations may be investigated up to one year after the conferment of that award. If appropriate, the appropriate professional body may need to be informed.
- 3.17 Records must be kept of the Procedure in each case and retained in line with current university retention policy.
- 3.18 The student has a right to appeal under the Academic Irregularities Appeals Procedure (see **Part C**).

4. Good Practice

- 4.1 There is an expectation that Schools will:
- provide students with awareness sessions in relation to academic irregularity;
 - identify at least one person within the School to be a source of information and guidance to academic and administrative colleagues when considering possible academic irregularity cases;
 - develop assessment schemes designed with consideration for the reduction in the risk of academic irregularity.

5. Monitoring and Reporting

All cases of academic irregularity dealt with under the Procedure must be reported by the SAIP convenor or administrator, as appropriate to the AO for central recording and annual reporting purposes.

- 5.1 The AO will produce annual monitoring reports which will be made available to:

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- School Executives - to inform monitoring, reporting and planning processes;
 - The Academic Standards & Quality Committee (ASQC) - to inform University level monitoring, reporting and planning processes.
- 5.2 These annual monitoring reports will detail and make recommendations as appropriate in relation to the following:
- The number of SAIPs held during a standard academic year by School, including a summary by case of:
 - the academic irregularity alleged;
 - the SAIP outcome; and
 - where applicable the penalty recommendation;
 - Those instances by School where a Board of Examiners re-determined the penalty outcome;
 - The number of AIAPs held during a standard academic year by School, including a summary by case of:
 - the academic irregularity alleged;
 - the AIAP outcome; and
 - subsequent action;
 - The internal consistency in the handling of cases;
 - The fairness and consistency in determining recommendations for penalties made by SAIPs.
- 5.3 No monitoring report will identify an individual student.
- 5.4 The AO will provide guidance to the Procedures where required and develop anonymous case histories to support the work of ATLS and members of the SAIP and the AIAP.

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PART B PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH ACADEMIC IRREGULARITIES

6. Introduction

- 6.1 The Procedure describes the process by which the University shall manage allegations of academic irregularities and must be adhered to where an academic irregularity is suspected. Staff must ensure that they have reasonable grounds to believe that a case of academic irregularity has occurred.
- 6.2 Academic irregularity occurs where a student gains, seeks to gain, or creates the potential to gain, advantage in examinations or assessments including formative assessments contrary to the established conditions under which students' knowledge, abilities or skills are assessed for progression towards or for the conferment of an award. (See Section 15E of the ASQ Handbook - Academic Principles and Policies.) Examples of what may (non-exhaustive list) constitute an academic irregularity can be found in Appendix 1.
- 6.3 Courses operated through collaboration with an NTU partner will be subject to the Procedure. This is unless it is explicitly agreed at validation to adopt other arrangements and this will form part of the approved Collaborative Agreement.

7. Exceptions

- 7.1 The Procedure does not apply to PhD, MPhil, or Phase 2 of the Professional Doctorate. The University has a separate policy in place for investigating and adjudicating on alleged research misconduct. (See Section 17D of the Quality Handbook.)
- 7.2 Validated Centres must develop and operate their own procedures for managing cases of academic irregularity.
- 7.3 The Procedure does not cover misconduct by academic staff; other procedures exist to deal with these matters.

8. Related Procedures

- 8.1 Other procedures that are of relevance to the Procedure and should be considered include:
 - Academic Appeals Procedure;
 - Student Complaints Procedure;
 - Student Code of Behaviour;
 - University/School Codes of Ethics;
 - Suitability criteria set by PSRBs for students undertaking professional courses of study (fitness to practice) where applicable.

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9. Initiating the Academic Irregularities Procedure

- 9.1 Where there is a suspected case of academic irregularity the course leader must:
- Provide a written factual statement indicating clearly the alleged academic irregularity involved (definitions provided in Appendix 1) supported by appropriate evidence;
 - Attach this statement and any supporting evidence (for example Turnitin or other plagiarism software reports) to the work of the student;
 - Forward these documents to the ATL responsible for the provision in question;
 - In the case of a suspected academic irregularity during an examination, assessment or supervised test carried out under examination conditions, see Appendix 2.
- 9.2 The ATL will determine whether there are reasonable grounds at first sight to suggest the student contravened assessment regulations and whether there is a prima facie case for adjudication as a case of academic irregularity.
- 9.3 In making this decision the ATL shall:
- 9.4 Draw a distinction between poor academic practice and academic irregularities; and
- 9.5 Be aware of the range of academic irregularities (see Appendix 1); and
- 9.6 Have available any materials relating to the alleged academic irregularity, for example coursework, examination scripts, documents notifying that an incident is suspected; and
- 9.7 Discuss the circumstances with relevant staff members, as appropriate.
- 9.8 At this stage there is no requirement to inform the student(s) that an investigation into possible academic irregularities is underway.
- 9.9 The ATL should determine the outcome normally within 5 working days of the alleged academic irregularity being reported to them (B4.1).
- 9.10 If the ATL decides that there **are no reasonable grounds** for adjudication as a case of academic irregularity the matter is ended. All record of the allegation of academic irregularity shall be removed. The work may be referred to the course team for action as an example of poor academic practice.
- 9.11 If the ATL decides that there **are reasonable grounds** to suggest that there is a case for adjudication as a case of academic irregularity the ATL must notify the SAIP convenor so that the matter can be considered by the SAIP.

10. The School Academic Irregularities Panel

- 10.1 The purpose of the SAIP is:
- To review all written and oral information provided by both the student and School representatives;

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- Determine on the balance of probabilities whether an academic irregularity has occurred;
- If upheld, report the recommended penalty (using the AIPF) to the BOE;

11. Membership

11.1 The membership of the SAIP will be determined and confirmed by the Dean of School and comprise:

- An ATL or suitably experienced academic (who must not be the student's ATL or Chair of the Board of Examiners concerned) as Chair;
- At least two other academics taken from a register chosen by the Dean. Neither should have direct involvement with the module, student or their course, including the relevant BOE;
- An administrator to take minutes and record decisions.

12. Convening the School Academic Irregularities Panel

12.1 The Convenor shall arrange a meeting of the SAIP and will be responsible for the timely circulation of an invitation letter and all relevant documentation to the student, Academic Team representatives, other attendees and Panel members. The convenor is also responsible for communicating the outcomes of the SAIP to the student, BOE and AO.

12.2 All parties should be given a minimum of 10 working days' notice of the SAIP.

12.3 At this stage, the student may decide to admit to the academic irregularity. This should be done in writing to the Chair via the SAIP Convenor. In such cases the student is not required, but may still choose to attend the SAIP. This should be confirmed by the student in writing to the Chair via the SAIP Convenor. The SAIP shall convene to agree a recommendation on penalty (using the AIPf) which shall be notified in writing to the BOE.

12.4 The student can normally bring only one person in support. This person may be, for example, a friend, partner, parent or Student Advice Centre representative. The University does not permit students to be legally represented at the SAIP, except in exceptional circumstances. For the avoidance of doubt, the definition of "exceptional circumstances" in this context is a matter for determination by the University.

12.5 Normally, a maximum of two School representatives should attend the SAIP meeting if required to provide evidence.

12.6 The student may submit a written statement concerning the alleged academic irregularity and may submit witness statements. The student shall provide any such statements to the SAIP via the Convenor to be received not less than 5 working days prior to the date of the SAIP meeting

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- 12.7 The student and School may bring witnesses to provide evidence at the SAIP meeting. Details of any witnesses must be provided in writing to the SAIP Convenor by the student/School at least 5 working days before the SAIP meeting date. If a request to bring a witness is received outside of this timeframe, agreement that they may attend the SAIP is at the discretion of the Chair of the Panel.
- 12.8 If either the student or the staff representatives in attendance wish to present additional written information, it should be made available to all parties at least 5 working days before the SAIP meets. If additional written information is introduced after this deadline or at the SAIP meeting it will be at the discretion of the Chair whether it is accepted. If additional written information is introduced at the SAIP and accepted, all parties should be given an appropriate period of time to read the information during a recess to the SAIP meeting.
- 12.9 If either the student or the staff representatives are unable (or fail) to attend the SAIP meeting, without giving a valid reason, the Chair of the SAIP shall have the discretion to conduct the meeting based on the written information made available. If a valid reason for non-attendance is provided it is at the discretion of the Chair of the Panel whether the meeting is rescheduled or proceeds.

13. The conduct of the School Academic Irregularities Panel.

- 13.1 The SAIP shall conduct the meeting in accordance with the Procedure outlined in Appendix 4.
- 13.2 The SAIP shall consider the written materials submitted and during the meeting, the Panel may seek clarification of the student, staff representatives and witnesses as appropriate and shall come to a decision on the basis of all the evidence provided.
- 13.3 On completion of the representations the Panel will conduct their deliberations in private, deciding if the allegation should be upheld or not.
- 13.4 If the allegation is **not upheld** the student must be informed in writing within 1 working day of the panel meeting, and be provided with a copy of the minutes from the meeting within 5 working days of the panel meeting. SAIP attendees (excluding witnesses), the course leader, ATL and Chairs of BOEs shall also be informed of the outcome, within the same timeframe.
- 13.5 If the SAIP decides that the allegation **is upheld** the student must be informed in writing of the recommendation to be made to the BOE within 1 working day of the panel meeting, and be provided with a copy of the minutes from the meeting within 5 working days of the panel meeting. SAIP attendees (excluding witnesses), the course leader and ATL should also be informed of the outcome, within the same timeframe.
- 13.6 If the SAIP decides that the allegation **is upheld** it must make a recommendation to the Board of Examiners in writing detailing the appropriate penalty based on the University's AIPf.

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13.7 Where an academic irregularity comes to light at or after a BOE has met and within one year of a student's assessment, the Procedure shall comprise:

- Consideration by the ATL in accordance with subsection B4;
- A SAIP in accordance with the arrangements detailed in subsection B5, B6 and Appendix 4;
- A reconvened BOE, as soon as practicable following the receipt by the Chair of the BOE of a report from the SAIP.

14. Report to the Board of Examiners

14.1 In all cases where academic irregularity that have been upheld by a SAIP, the Chair of the BOE will receive a copy of the SAIP minutes and written recommendations of any penalty to be applied to the student. The BOE will normally enact the recommendations of the SAIP and deviation is exceptional; reasons must be carefully minuted. The BOE will consider the recommendation taking into account the student's assessed marks, and either agree or re-determine the recommended penalty. BOEs may take the outcomes of exceptional circumstance considerations into account when considering the penalty recommendations issued by SAIPs. The outcome of the BOE's decision will be sent to the student in line with standard BOE outcome notification timescales.

14.2 If the BOE re-determines the SAIP recommendation regarding penalty, this will be reported (using a relevant minute extract detailing the full reasons for the re-determination) to the Chair of the relevant SAIP and AO for monitoring and reporting purposes.

PART C ACADEMIC IRREGULARITIES – APPEALS PROCEDURE: RIGHT OF APPEAL IN CASES OF ACADEMIC IRREGULARITY

15. Grounds for Appeal

- 15.1 If an allegation of academic irregularity has been upheld by the SAIP the student will be informed in the outcome letter that they have the right to appeal under **Part C**.
- 15.2 If the student wishes to contest the decision of the SAIP they are entitled to submit an Academic Irregularities Appeal on the following grounds only:
- That new and relevant material or evidence has become available which was not previously available for consideration by the SAIP; or
 - That there was a material procedural error at the SAIP meeting; or
 - That the decision of the SAIP was irrational and unreasonable.
- 15.3 There are no other grounds on which an Academic Irregularities Appeal will be considered.
- 15.4 If the student wishes to submit an Academic Irregularities Appeal against the decision of the SAIP, they must do so in writing to the PVC-Academic (or nominee) via email to REG.AcademicMisconduct@ntu.ac.uk, within 10 working days from the date on the letter notifying them of the SAIP decision, detailing the reasons for the Academic Irregularities Appeal and stating the grounds on which the Appeal is being made.
- 15.5 If the Academic Irregularities Appeal against the decision of the SAIP is being made on the grounds that new and relevant material or evidence has become available, the student must submit that evidence as part of the Appeal submission via email to REG.AcademicMisconduct@ntu.ac.uk.
- 15.6 The PVC-Academic (or nominee) shall consider whether the Academic Irregularities Appeal against the decision of the SAIP has been made on one or more of the permitted grounds.
- 15.7 If the PVC-Academic (or nominee) decides that the Academic Irregularities Appeal against the decision of the SAIP is not within one or more of the permitted grounds for appeal or has been received out of time the student shall be informed in writing within 10 working days of the appeal submission being received by the AO. The student shall be informed that the Academic Irregularities Appeal has been rejected on that basis, and that the original outcome remains unchanged. Such a decision by the PVC-Academic (or nominee) is final and there is no further right of appeal regarding academic irregularities within the University's procedures.

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16. Consideration of Appeals

- 16.1 If the PVC-Academic (or nominee) decides that the Academic Irregularities Appeal against the decision of the SAIP does satisfy one or more of the permitted grounds, the Appeal shall be considered by the AIAP.
- 16.2 The AIAP hearing shall be convened by AO within 20 working days of the PVC-Academic (or nominee) determining that there are grounds for an appeal.

17. Academic Irregularities Appeal Panel - Composition

- 17.1 The AIAP shall comprise three members. Two of the Panel members shall be University staff nominated by the Head of Academic Office, of whom one shall act as Chair. The Panel Chair shall be a Dean of School or other suitably senior and experienced member of staff. The third panel member shall be a representative of the Students' Union Executive.
- 17.2 Persons who have been affected by, or involved in dealing with the alleged academic irregularity, including members of the SAIP, shall not be eligible to serve on the AIAP.
- 17.3 A nominated member of AO staff shall act as Secretary to the AIAP for administrative purposes, including the handling of formal communications between parties involved in the AIAP hearing.

18. Academic Irregularities Appeal Hearing - Preparatory Steps

- 18.1 The student shall be given at least 10 working days written notice of the AIAP hearing and shall be provided with a copy of the record taken at the SAIP and any report that the SAIP may have prepared for the AIAP hearing.
- 18.2 If the student cannot attend the AIAP hearing due to illness or other mitigating circumstances, they must inform the Chair of the AIAP as soon as possible. Supporting evidence, such as a medical note, will be required. In such circumstances, the Chair of the AIAP may decide to re-schedule the AIAP hearing or decide to proceed in the student's absence.

19. Conduct of the Academic Irregularities Appeal Hearing

- 19.1 At the AIAP hearing the student may be accompanied or represented by one other person. This person may be, for example, a friend, partner, parent or Student Advice Centre representative. The University does not permit students to be legally represented at the AIAP except in exceptional circumstances. For the avoidance of doubt, the definition of "exceptional circumstances" in this context is a matter for determination by the University.
- 19.2 The student must inform the Chair of the AIAP of the name and capacity of any person accompanying them to the AIAP hearing at least 5 working days before the AIAP hearing.

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- 19.3 The AIAP hearing shall not be a re-run of the original case but a review of the original decision based on the grounds of the Academic Irregularities Appeal that the student submitted. The student will present the grounds on which the Academic Irregularities Appeal is based to the AIAP. A representative of the SAIP will present the grounds on which their decision was based.
- 19.4 The Chair of the AIAP shall have the discretion to allow the introduction of new evidence during the AIAP hearing.
- 19.5 The Secretary to the AIAP shall take formal notes of the proceedings.

20. Academic Irregularities Appeal Outcomes

- 20.1 The AIAP has the power to uphold the original decision of the SAIP, overturn or amend the original decision or order a re-convening of the SAIP.
- 20.2 The Chair of the AIAP shall inform the relevant ATL, Chair of the SAIP and the student of the Panel's decision (including the rationale for that decision) in writing within 5 working days of the AIAP hearing.
- 20.3 The decision of the AIAP is final and there is no further right of appeal regarding the academic irregularity case in question within the University's procedures.
- 20.4 If the Student is not satisfied with the outcome of the University's procedures he/she is entitled to contact the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education who operates an independent student complaints scheme (<http://www.oiahe.org.uk>).

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Appendix 1: Types of academic irregularity

Nottingham Trent University considers that the committing of an academic irregularity, whether deliberately or accidentally is wrong. **The Academic Irregularities policy seeks to ensure that this principle is defended and upheld for the benefit of former, current and future students.** The policy is nested within a balanced institutional approach which also seeks to develop good academic practices, including:

- Supporting students in understanding what constitutes an academic irregularity;
- Supporting students in developing skills to avoid academic irregularities;
- Supporting students in developing their academic writing skills;
- The design of assessment activities that reduce the opportunities for academic irregularities.
- Academic Irregularity includes but is not limited to the following:

Cheating, this includes:

- Communicating with another candidate during an examination or assessment, except if the assessment regulations specially permit this, e.g. group assessments;
- Communicating during an examination with anyone other than the authorised invigilator or another authorised member of staff. This includes oral, written or any other electronic means of communication;
- Introducing any written or printed materials into the examination room, unless expressly permitted;
- Gaining access to unauthorised material relating to an examination before or during the exam;
- Obtaining a copy of an 'unseen' written examination paper in advance of the date and time for its authorised release.

In the context of the above the term 'examination' is deemed to include 'phase tests' or any other tests carried out under examination conditions.

Plagiarism, which includes:

The incorporation of material derived from the work (published or unpublished) of another, by unacknowledged quotation, paraphrased imitation or other device in any work submitted for progression towards or for the completion of an award, which in any way suggests that it is the student's original own work. Such work may include printed material in textbooks, journals and material accessible electronically for example from web pages.

Examples of plagiarism include:

- a. The inclusion in a candidate's work of a single phrase from another person's work without the use of quotation marks or acknowledgement of the source;

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- b. The summarising of another person's work by simply changing words or altering the order of presentation, without acknowledgement;
- c. Copying the work of another candidate, with or without their consent or agreement. If copied with the agreement of the other candidate both parties are guilty of Academic Irregularity;
- d. Self-plagiarism.

Collusion:

Is an understanding or agreement between two or more people to intentionally cooperate to gain an unfair advantage in assessment and may include:

- a. Unauthorised and unacknowledged joint authorship in an assessment task;
- b. Unauthorised and unacknowledged copying or use of material prepared by another person for use in assessment.

Note

- The University encourages students to share ideas and exchange reference material prior to each student writing up their own personal presentation of an assessed piece of work. Some course teams may stipulate an assessment as "assessed group work". Where this is the case, course teams will indicate the criteria and manner in which work is assessed and the way in which individual marks are ascribed to members of the group.

Falsifying Data:

The presentation of data in laboratory report and projects, based on experimental work passed off as having been carried out by the candidate when it has not been, or it has been obtained by unfair means. This also included falsifying survey data.

Personation:

Personation or impersonation is the assumption by one person of the identity of another person with the intent to deceive, or to gain unfair advantage.

Examples include:

- a. One person assumes the identity of a candidate, with the intention of gaining unfair advantage for that candidate;
- b. The candidate is knowingly and willingly impersonated by another with the intention of gaining unfair advantage for the person personated.

Contract cheating:

Where a student commissions or seeks to commission another party (either paid or unpaid) to complete a coursework or an assignment on their behalf. Contract cheating is

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considered to be an example of 'unreasonable conduct' and increases the severity of the academic irregularity penalty.

Dishonest Practice:

The use of any form of dishonest academic practice not identified within the above. Including the use of others, whether paid or not, to write or rewrite assignments for a student even if the person providing such a service describes it as 'proof-reading'.

Poor academic practice:

Work which is not considered as an academic irregularity as understood within this Procedure but is regarded as poor academic practice. For example: the inclusion of text from other sources with inadequate attribution. If identified, the student should be encouraged to develop a more careful and appropriate approach to their academic coursework.

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Appendix 2: Academic Irregularities – examinations

Where a member of staff who is invigilating or otherwise overseeing an examination, assessment or supervised test carried out under examination conditions has reasonable grounds to suspect that an academic irregularity is occurring, or is reliably informed by any other person that an academic irregularity is suspected, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to:

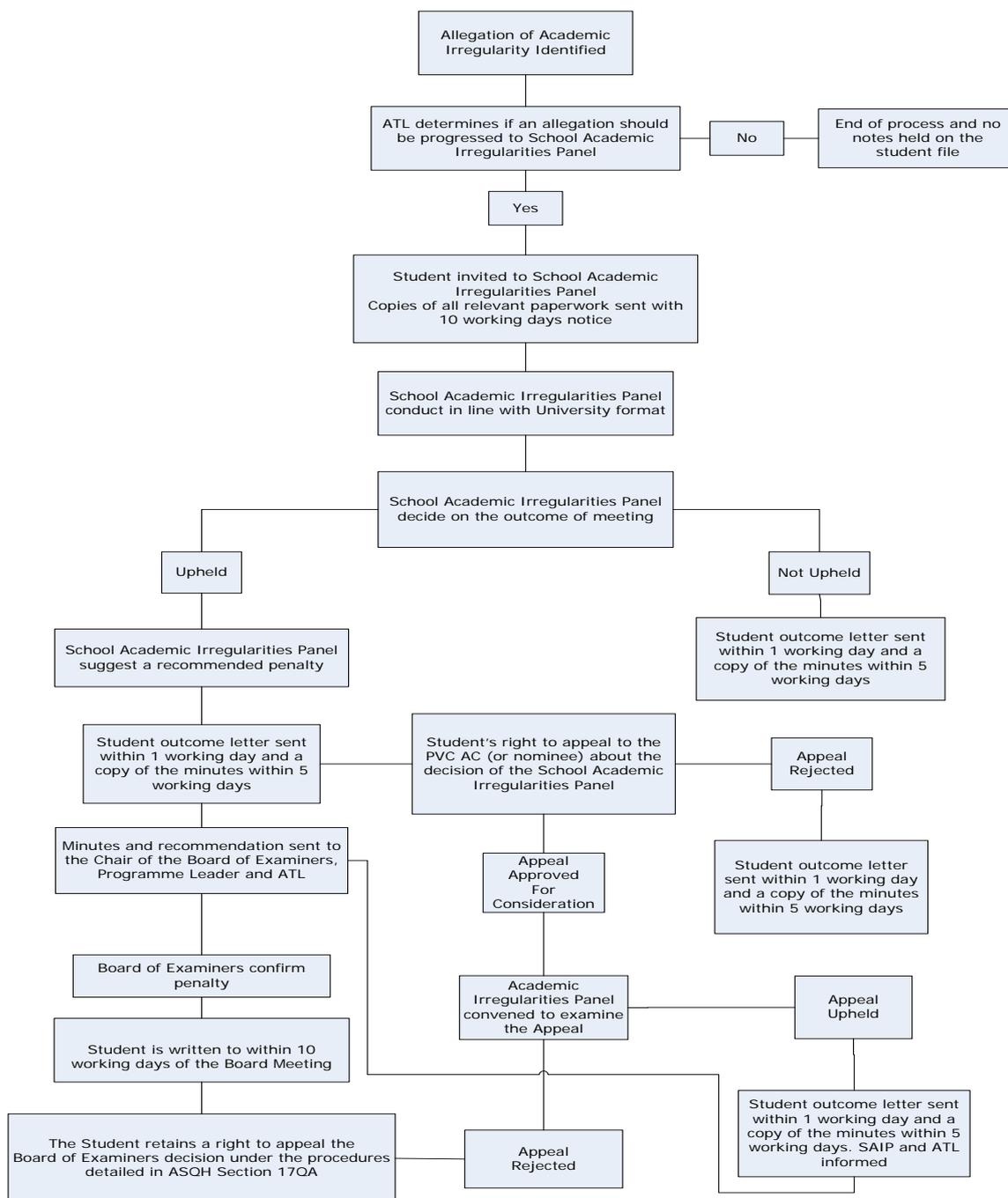
- a. Immediately bring to the student's attention the suspicion of academic irregularity;
- b. Ensure that the student is prevented from further committing the alleged academic irregularity of which they are suspected, including the confiscation of any relevant evidence (for example, any authorised material);
- c. Permit the student to complete the examination or assessment; (However, if the candidate persists with the irregularity they shall be expelled from the room. If such action is necessary, care will be taken to ensure that the inconvenience and disruption to other candidates is minimised.);
- d. Attach to the student's completed work a statement detailing the circumstances relating to the incident including a note of the work completed before, and the time when, the academic irregularity was suspected;
- e. Without delay submit a written statement on the incident to the:
 - Subject Administration Team Leader;
 - course and module leader;
 - ATL;
 - Dean.

The report shall include the name of any witnesses and any explanation given by the student at the time of the incident. Where appropriate the report shall be accompanied by the relevant evidence and countersigned, with comments, by the senior invigilator.

The ATL will then arrange for the conduct of a SAIP as described in subsections B4 & B5 and summarised in Appendix 4.

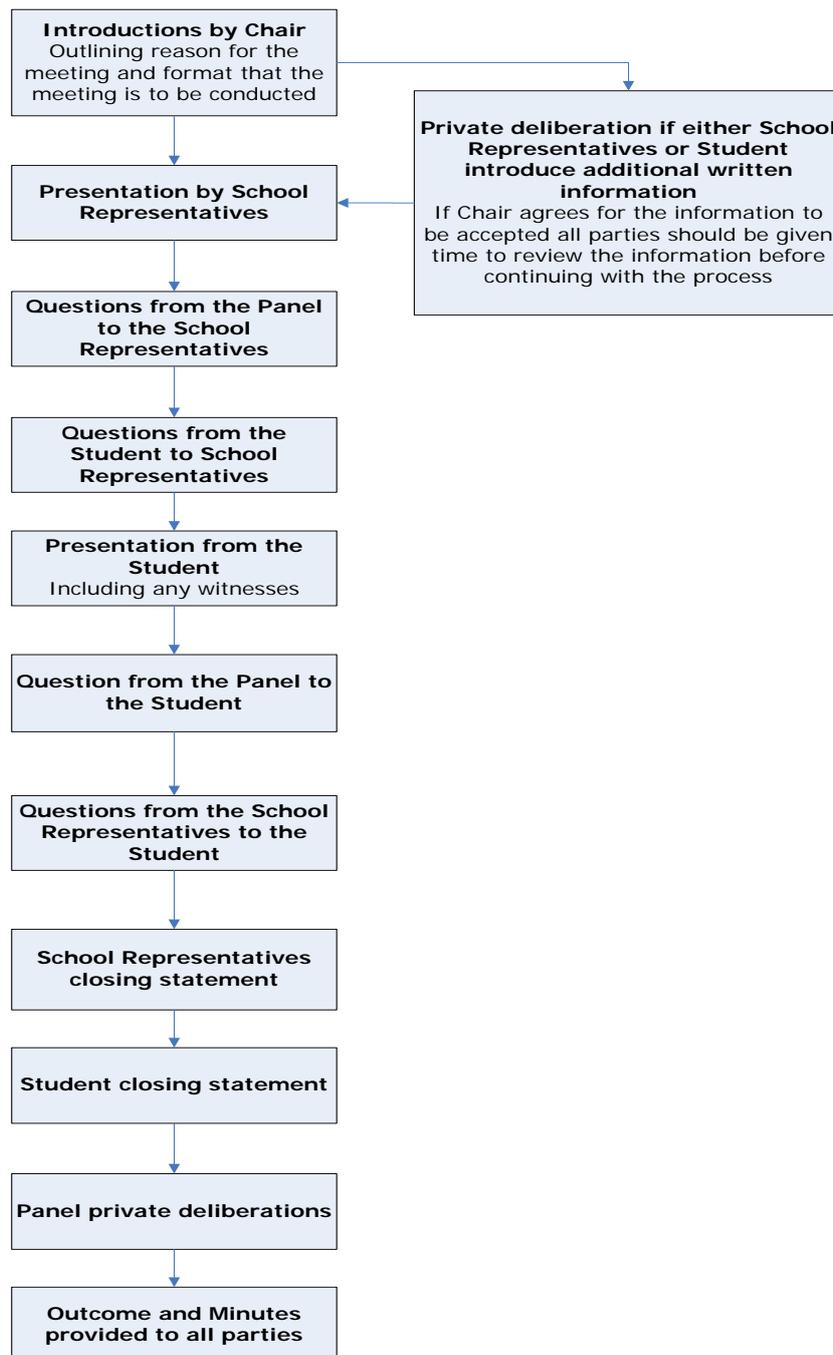
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Appendix 3: Flowchart for Academic Irregularities process



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Appendix 4: School Academic Irregularities Panel procedure



Appendix 5: Academic Irregularities penalty framework

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Nottingham Trent University considers that the committing of an academic irregularity, whether deliberately or accidentally is wrong. The Academic Irregularities Procedure seeks to ensure that this principle is defended and upheld for the benefit of former, current and future students.
- 1.2 The Procedure includes an Academic Irregularities Penalty framework (AIPf) to be used across the institution in cases where allegations of academic irregularity are investigated and upheld.
- 1.3 The AIPf builds upon the work of the School Academic Misconduct Groups (AMGs) which were operational until the development of the revised Academic Irregularities Procedure, approved by ASQC in 2010 for implementation in the academic session 2011-12.
- 1.4 The AIPf draws upon developments and best practice in the sector, specifically aspects of the Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) commissioned Academic Misconduct Benchmarking Research (AMBeR) project and the resulting study proposing a national tariff for the application of penalties for student plagiarism in HE¹.

2. Principles informing the Academic Irregularities Penalty framework

- 2.1 The AIPf seeks to drive transparency, fairness and consistency of practice.
- 2.2 The AIPf is designed to apply to all forms of academic irregularities.
- 2.3 The AIPf is designed to include some flexibility to accommodate more complicated cases.
- 2.4 As a general principal the SAIP may take into account the fact that a student admits to the academic irregularity in question in determining the recommended penalty to be applied. The reasons given should be minuted.
- 2.5 Boards of Examiners (BOE) are sovereign. The BOE considers the penalty recommendation made by the SAIP and will take into account the student's assessed marks in determining the recommended penalty to be applied.

Note: In certain disciplines, because of the nature of the course, similar decisions may have a very different effect; this should also inform the decision making process of the BOE.

¹ Benchmark Plagiarism Tariff: A benchmark tariff for application of penalties for student plagiarism in higher education (2010) P Tennant & G Rowell (Plagiarismadvice.org)

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- 2.6 The penalty recommended by the SAIP and the penalty applied by the BOE shall both be recorded and reported to the course leader, SAIP and Academic Office (AO) for monitoring and reporting purposes.
- 2.7 Where applicable, students will be directed to appropriate sources of academic support.

3. AIPf - Underpinning considerations

3.1 The AIPf reflects the following significant considerations:

- The number of previous offences;

Note - this is only relevant in determining the recommendation on penalty. It is not a factor used to determine whether a student has committed an academic irregularity

- The extent and amount of the academic irregularity;

Note - the AIPf incorporates a mixed definition of extent and amount that seeks to reflect semi-quantitative measures

- The stage of the student in their course;

Note – The framework seeks to reflect the expectation regarding standards at differing levels of study in line with the NTU qualifications framework

- There may be circumstances when a particular case and set of circumstances do not easily fit within the AIPf. On the basis of unique situations, the SAIP reserves the right to make recommendations to the BOE which vary from those within the AIPf since it is impossible to pre-judge every situation which might occur;

Note - where SAIPs do this, the specific reasons for the decision they make should be very carefully minuted and made available to the BOE.

- PSRB requirements may require adjustments to the AIPf for some courses. These adjustments to the AIPf should be approved by the relevant SASQC and communicated to all staff and students.

3.2 The AIPf reflects the following additional considerations:

- The credit value of the work.

4. AIPf - Definitions

4.1 **Small:** Where the material used without acknowledgement or produced with collusion comprises:

- Typically a few complete sentences or lines of text up to half a page or equivalent;
- Where there would be a significant amount of the student's own work / analysis if the copied materials were removed.

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- 4.2 **Substantial:** Where the material used without acknowledgment or produced with collusion is of an amount greater than “small”, as defined above. This would include cases where:
- The majority, but not all, of the piece of work is a “patchwork” of copied material(s);
 - The material forms a substantive part of the work;
 - Where there would be little left of the student’s own work/analysis if the copied materials were removed.
- 4.3 **Unreasonable conduct:** Where the case is such that no reasonable person would have deemed it academically appropriate. For example, where the entirety of the work is copied from one or a few sources with little or no further input from the student; work is taken into an examination or test for the purpose of copying and gaining unfair advantage; impersonation; submitting bought essays or solutions (contract cheating).

5. The University Academic Irregularity Penalty framework (AIPf)

5.1 Academic Irregularity Penalty framework¹ Undergraduate students (Level 4-6)

Characteristics of case		Recommended penalty	Category
7	Level 1: This is the first time the student has committed academic irregularity ² . The extent of academic irregularity is a relatively 'small' proportion or is of 'limited significance'.	The grade for the assessment ³ is reduced to a maximum of the pass mark. If the learning outcomes have not been met, the assessment is referred and capped at the pass grade.	Recorded as UG Category 7 in the report to BOE and AO
6	Levels 2 and 3: This is the first time the student has committed an academic irregularity. The extent of academic irregularity is a relatively 'small' proportion or is of 'limited significance'.	The assessment grade is reduced to the pass grade. If necessary, the assessment is referred to provide the student with an opportunity to meet the learning outcomes of the module and the assessment grade is capped at the pass grade.	Recorded as UG Category 6 in the report to BOE and AO
5	Level 1: This is the first time the student has committed academic irregularity. The extent of academic irregularity is 'substantial'.	The assessment grade is reduced to zero ³ . If necessary, the assessment is referred to provide the student with an opportunity to meet the learning outcomes. The assessment grade remains zero. ⁴	Recorded as UG Category 5 in the report to BOE and AO
4	Level 1: This is the first time the student has committed 'unreasonable conduct' All Levels: The second case of academic irregularity. The extent of both cases is relatively 'small' or of limited significance. Levels 2 & 3: First offence where the extent of academic irregularity is 'substantial'.	The element grade is reduced to zero ³ . Other element grades remain unchanged. If necessary, the assessment is referred to provide the student with an opportunity to meet the learning outcomes. The element grade remains zero ⁴	Recorded as UG Category 4 in the report to BOE and AO
3	All Levels: The second case of academic irregularity, of which only one is 'substantial'. All Levels: The third case of academic irregularity. All cases are 'small' with only 1 at Level 3. Level 2: This is the second case of academic irregularity. Both cases are 'substantial'. Levels 2 & 3: The first case of academic irregularity which involves 'unreasonable' conduct.	The module grade is recorded as zero ⁴ . If necessary, the assessment is referred to provide the student with the opportunity to meet the learning outcomes. The module grade remains zero ⁴ .	Recorded as UG Category 3 in the report to BOE and AO
2	Level 3: Second case of 'substantial' academic irregularity with the previous one being at Level 2.	Maximum of Ordinary degree is awarded at Examination Board	Recorded as UG Major Category 2 in the report to BOE and AO

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1	<p>This is the third case of academic irregularity at any level, where one is at least 'substantial'.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>This is the second case of academic irregularity at any level and it involves 'unreasonable conduct'.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>This is the second case of academic irregularity at Level 3 of which one is at least 'substantial' or involves 'unreasonable conduct'.</p>	No award given or studies terminated	Recorded as UG Category 1 in the report to BOE and AO
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¹ The AIPF applies to all forms of academic irregularity. Examples of what may (non-exhaustive list) constitute an academic irregularity can be found at Appendix 1

² The severity of academic irregularity penalties increases in line with the number of cases on a student's record. However, at Level 1 when a case of academic irregularity occurs before the outcome of a first case is known to the student, it shall be considered part of the same case. This allowance may not be applied for unreasonable conduct.

³ An element sets out the type of assessment method used to assess an aspect of the module's outcomes and is detailed on the module.

⁴ Though the transcript may show the element grade or module grade as having been 'failed' the credit points can still be awarded.

5.2 Academic Irregularity Penalty framework¹ M Level (Level 7)

Characteristics of case		Recommended penalty	Category
5	This is the first time the student has committed academic irregularity ² . The extent of academic irregularity is a relatively 'small' proportion or is of 'limited significance'.	The grade for the assessment ³ is reduced to the pass grade. If necessary, the assessment is referred to provide the student with an opportunity to meet the learning outcomes. The component is capped at the pass grade.	Recorded as PG Category 5 in the report to BOE and AO
4	This is the first time the student has committed academic irregularity. The extent of academic irregularity is 'substantial'.	The assessment grade is reduced to zero ³ . If necessary, the assessment is referred to provide the student with an opportunity to meet the learning outcomes. The assessment grade remains at zero. ⁴	Recorded as PG Category 4 ⁵ in the report to BOE and AO
3	The second case of academic irregularity. The extent of both cases is relatively 'small' or of limited significance. The first case of academic irregularity and involves 'unreasonable' conduct.	The element grade is reduced to zero ³ . Other element grades remain unchanged. If necessary, the assessment is referred to provide the student with an opportunity to meet the learning outcomes. The element grade remains at zero. ⁴	Recorded as PG Category 3 in the report to BOE and AO
2	The second case of academic irregularity, of which one is 'substantial'.	The module grade is recorded as zero ⁴ . If necessary, the assessment element is referred to provide the student with the opportunity to meet the learning outcomes. The module grade remains at zero ⁴ .	Recorded as PG Category 2 in the report to BOE and AO
1	This is the second case of 'substantial' academic irregularity. Or This is the second case of academic irregularity and it involves 'unreasonable conduct'.	Maximum award of PGDip or studies terminated Or Studies terminated and appropriate award given.	Recorded as PG Category 1 in the report to BOE and AO

¹ The AIPf applies to all forms of academic irregularity. Examples of what may (non-exhaustive list) constitute an academic irregularity can be found at Appendix 1

² The severity of academic irregularity penalties increases in line with the number of cases on a student's record. However, at Level 1 when a case of academic irregularity occurs before the outcome of a first case is known to the student, it shall be considered part of the same case. This allowance may not be applied for unreasonable conduct.

³ An element sets out the type of assessment method used to assess an aspect of a module's outcomes and is detailed on the module specification.

⁴ Though the transcript may show the element grade or module grade as having been 'failed' the credit points can still be awarded.

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Policy Owner
Academic Office/Head of Academic Office

Change History		
Date	Version	Details of Change
19/12/10	1.0	Significant revision of existing policy
25/02/11	1.1	Amended format and content following feedback
02/03/11	1.2	Final amendments by Chair of Working Group.
22/03/11	1.3	Post ASQC Minor amendments
16/10/12	2	Amendments to UG AIPf due to introduction of Grade Based Assessment (GBA) marking scheme and rename of Academic Office to Academic Registry
22/09/14	3	Amendments to AIPf and Academic Registry changed to Academic Office

Equality Impact Assessment		
Date	Version	Completed by
02/03/11	1.0	CASQ on behalf of AO during policy development
		Submitted to Equality & Diversity Team post approval- ASQC March 2011