Procedure for Handling Academic Misconduct
# Introduction

1.1 Assessment, in any form, is the means by which the University tests whether a student has achieved the objectives of their programme of study and the standards of an award. It is a fundamental principle that students are assessed fairly and on equal terms. Any attempt by a student to gain unfair advantage over another student in the completion of assessment or to assist someone else to gain an unfair advantage shall be considered as academic misconduct.

1.2 The University has a duty to ensure that the highest academic standards are maintained in the conduct of assessment. The proper discharge of this duty is essential to safeguard both the legitimate interests of students and the University’s reputation. Alleged academic misconduct which threatens the integrity of the University’s assessment procedures and the maintenance of its academic standards is viewed as a serious offence and will be thoroughly investigated.

1.3 The University’s Academic Board delegates Heads of Department and Assessment Disciplinary Committees with the authority to impose penalties on students who are found to have committed acts of academic misconduct in any form of assessment. Such acts may include cheating, plagiarism, collusion or other forms of attempting to gain an unfair advantage shall be considered as academic misconduct.

1.4 In cases of academic misconduct, it is not necessary for intent to be proven. It is sufficient that the particular act has occurred. A case will be considered on the basis of evidence. Where it is suspected that any form of academic misconduct has been committed, all evidence must be collected, collated and, prior to consideration of the case, made available to those hearing the case and to the student. It is the student’s responsibility to provide such evidence to a representative.

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## About this procedure

This Procedure provides an indicative overview of types of misconduct, details mechanisms for investigating misconduct and the penalties that may be applied. It applies to all registered students, including postgraduate researchers (PhD, PhD by Publication (Routes 1&2, PhD by Practice, Professional Doctorates, MPhil, MRes, and MA/MSc/LLM (by research)). Herein the term ‘student’ will be used throughout the procedure, except where the outlined process is only applicable to postgraduate researchers, in which case the term ‘postgraduate researcher’ will be used.

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## Version Control Statement

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<td>Procedure for Handling Academic Misconduct</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Author Name:</td>
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<td>Amendment to sections 4.2-4.7 to reflect updated examination regulations</td>
<td>9 January 2017</td>
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</table>
1.5 Penalties for academic misconduct range from failing a student in part or all of his/her assessment(s), to recommending expulsion of the student in the most extreme cases.

1.6 Where a Professional Statutory or Regulator Body (PSRB) has particular procedures and penalties for academic misconduct, Manchester Met procedures and penalties shall take precedence. Should a programme wish to apply the PSRB regulations regarding academic misconduct, the Programme Leader must request variation through the Academic Quality and Standards Committee and detail this within the Programme Specification.

1.7 Where allegations of academic misconduct are applied to a postgraduate researcher, the University’s Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research will take precedence. The Procedure for Handling Academic Misconduct outlined below will only be initiated once the case has been referred from the Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research.

Definition

2.1 Academic misconduct is defined as any action or omission by a student that has the potential to give an unfair advantage in any assessment. Manchester Met defines academic misconduct under two headings:

• Offences relating to formal written invigilated examinations;
• Offences relating to assessed work other than written examinations. In addition to written coursework this includes: practical work, models, garments, sculptures and artwork, research degree theses, and assessments undertaken in or through Moodle.

2.2 The indicative definitions given below are not intended to constrain or determine the findings of fact by Heads of Department or Assessment Disciplinary Committees and there may be other acts or behaviours that result in a student being penalised through this procedure.

Offences relating to assessed work

3.1 Offences relating to assessed work other than written examinations, many of which will be regarded as plagiarism, include, but are not limited to, the following:

• unacknowledged incorporation of another person’s work;
• unacknowledged summarising of another person’s work;
• unacknowledged and/or unauthorised use of the ideas of another person;
• copying the work of another person with or without that person’s knowledge or agreement and presenting it as one’s own;
• the representation of another person’s work, without acknowledgement of the source, as one’s own;
• the presentation of data in reports, projects, research degree theses etc based on experimental work falsely purported to have been carried out by the student, falsified data or data obtained by unfair means;
• the submission as entirely his/her own of collaborative work;
• the completion of work with another person which is intended to be submitted as a candidate’s own unaided work;
• actions which enable another student to access / copy all or part of his / her own work and to submit it as that student’s own unaided work;
• the use of third parties and/or websites to attempt to buy assessments or answers to questions set;
• gaining access to any unauthorised material relating to an assessment prior to the release date of such information;
• using materials created by others and passed off as the student’s own, including all forms of contract cheating, such as the use and running of, or participation in, auction sites and essay mills;
• the inclusion in coursework of any material which is identical or similar to material which has already been submitted for any other assessment within the University or elsewhere, for example, submitting the same piece of coursework for two different units;
• the provision of falsified information that has the potential to give a student an unfair advantage.

Offences relating to formal invigilated examinations

4.1 Offences relating to formal invigilated examinations may include, but are not limited to, the following:

• non-compliance with examination regulations;
• copying or attempting to copy from any other candidate during an examination;
• communicating during an examination with any person other than the invigilator(s) or other authorised members of staff except insofar as the examination regulations may specifically permit this, e.g. in group assessments;
• introducing into the examination room or being in possession of any written or printed material(s) or any electronically stored information unless expressly permitted by the examination and/or assessment regulations;
• being in possession of, or obtaining access to, a copy of an examination question paper in advance of the date and time for its authorised release (this covers both ‘seen’ and ‘unseen’ papers);
• disruptive behaviour in an examination;
• being party to personation, where an individual assumes the identity of another person with intent to deceive, for example, by sitting or attempting to sit an examination or test in the place of the student who should be sitting it;
• continuing to write after the invigilator has announced the end of the examination;
• the provision of falsified information that has the potential to give a student an unfair advantage.

Examination Regulations

4.2 A schedule of formal, timed examinations, which will show the date and time and location of each examination, will be published at least 15 working days before the date of any examination shown in the schedule other than in exceptional circumstances (including, but not limited to, examinations being rescheduled due to evacuation, late acceptance of Appeals, etc.). Students shall be responsible for ensuring that they are aware of the assessment requirements for the programme on which they are registered, including the timing, location and venue of any invigilated examinations.
Candidates for invigilated examinations:

- shall be present at least ten minutes prior to the starting time of examinations;
- shall be admitted to the examination room upon instruction by the invigilator(s) and may enter at any time during the first thirty minutes of the examination;
- shall not be permitted to enter the examination room after the first thirty minutes of the examination;
- shall not leave the examination room during the first thirty minutes of the examination or the last fifteen minutes of the examination except in an emergency;
- shall present their student card;
- shall comply with any notices and/or instructions issued prior to, at the commencement of and/or during an examination relevant to their conduct;
- Shall comply with any instructions given to them during the course of the examination(s) by the invigilator(s);
- shall not remove any item of examination stationery from the examination room, except for the examination question paper. Where it is not permitted to remove the question paper this shall be explicitly stated on the front page;
- shall not use any stationery other than that issued specifically for the purpose of the examination, or which they have been instructed to bring with them and is stored in a transparent pencil case only;
- shall not bring to or use in an examination any form or type of calculator, computer, tablet, smartphone or smartwatch, except such as has been specifically permitted for the examination;
- shall not use any unauthorised book, dictionary, manuscript or other aid;
- shall not communicate with other students during the course of the examination;
- shall not access any cases, bags, book or personal belongings which are not permitted for the examination, and shall place these in an area specified for this purpose by the invigilator(s);
- shall not take any food or drink except for bottled water into examinations;
- shall ensure all telephones or other communication devices are switched off and are expressly prohibited from keeping them on their person or accessing them in any way during the examination.

The timing of invigilated examinations shall be by a clock or clocks visible to the examination candidates and the invigilator(s); alternative arrangements shall be made for students whose disability makes this impractical.

Should it be necessary to evacuate the examination room for whatever reason, candidates shall do so upon the instruction of the invigilators at the time and shall leave all examination papers, scripts, answer books, equipment and any other material related to the examination on their desks or examination work areas. They shall also leave any personal belongings deposited in the area specified unless instructed otherwise by the invigilators, and they shall assemble in such place and in such manner as the invigilators shall instruct and without communicating with each other in any way on the subject of the examination.

The invigilators shall at all times have the authority and discretion to instruct examination candidates in such a way as they may deem appropriate having regard for the safety of the candidates under the circumstances prevailing at the time.

There shall be a minimum of two invigilators present for the duration of an invigilated examination at which multiple students are sitting, and in addition there shall be present at the commencement of the examination such staff as may be necessary for the purpose of verifying the accuracy of the examination question paper(s) and for issuing, orally or otherwise, any instruction with regard to any apparent error therein.

Invigilators shall have the authority to exclude from any examination a candidate whose conduct in the opinion of the invigilator warrants this and to refer the matter to the Assessment Disciplinary Committee.

Absence from invigilated examinations

Students who fail to attend any examination or assessment must produce at the earliest opportunity evidence detailing the reasons for the absence, in line with the Procedure for Consideration of Exceptional Factors.

Developmental Engagement

For students undertaking study at level 3 or level 4, where academic misconduct is not extensive and is a first offence, the programme leader will meet with the student to inform him / her of the details of the academic malpractice that may have occurred. The student will be strongly advised to have a representative present at the meeting - normally an advisor from the Students’ Union Advice Centre. Prior to the meeting, the student will be informed of the nature of the issue and provided with supporting information.

The student will be notified that if academic malpractice occurs in the future it will be dealt with through a formal meeting with the Head of Department or Assessment Disciplinary Committee and penalties will be imposed. As the meeting with the programme leader is developmental in nature, students should be advised how to avoid malpractice in the future, or should be referred to the Student Support Officer for further support with assignment completion. The programme leader must complete a Developmental Engagement Record which will outline the advice given, and be signed by both the student and programme leader. A copy should be given to the student and a copy retained for filing. A log of such meetings will be maintained in order to take appropriate action if further offences occur and provide the basis for reporting on this procedure across the University.

Formal Meetings with the Head of Department

Heads of Department have authority on behalf of Academic Board to impose penalties for academic misconduct. The Head of Department will meet with the student to consider the case. In the case of a student undertaking a Combined Honours course it shall be the Head of the Department that owns the course. The unit leader, and where appropriate the Chief Invigilator of the examination, shall normally be present to explain the allegation in detail.

Prior to the meeting with the Head of Department, the student whose case is being considered shall be notified in
writing of the following:

- the alleged grounds on which academic misconduct is thought to have occurred;
- the time, date and place fixed for the meeting which shall be held to consider the allegation, and a direction to be present at the meeting. The student shall be given a least 5 working days’ notice of the meeting, which will be extended only in exceptional circumstances. If a student does not attend the meeting, the case shall proceed;
- the right to be accompanied/represented at the meeting by a person of his/her choice;
- the content of any documentation intended to be used or referred to in the meeting.

5.5 Heads of Department considering cases of academic misconduct are required to:

- determine the facts of the case before them;
- consider any pleas in mitigation;
- in cases where it is established that, on the balance of probability, an offence has been committed, use the relevant tariff to confirm the penalty that shall be applied;
- maintain a report of the proceedings.

5.6 Heads of Faculty SAS shall ensure that all offences dealt with under these tariffs are formally recorded and decisions are reported to the Assessment Board and to the Deputy Registrar and Academic Secretary (or nominee).

5.7 Following publication of the decision of the Assessment Board, Students retain the normal rights of appeal under the Academic Appeals.

Procedure.

Assessment Disciplinary Committee

6.1 Where an allegation of academic misconduct falls outside the remit of a formal meeting with the Head of Department, the matter shall be investigated and determined by an Assessment Disciplinary Committee (ADC). As outlined above, in the case of research misconduct by postgraduate researchers an ADC will only be convened following referral from the University’s Procedure for the Investigation of Research Misconduct.

Membership of the Assessment Disciplinary Committee

6.2 The Assessment Disciplinary Committee shall, as a normal minimum, comprise:

- Dean of Faculty concerned, who shall be Chair*;
- Two Principal Lecturers or Heads of Department of the faculty concerned who are not involved with the teaching/supervision or assessment of the student whose case is before the Committee;
- One student nominated by the Students’ Union who, shall not be from the same programme as the student whose case is before the Committee.

For postgraduate researchers the ADC shall also include:

- The Chair of the Research Degrees Committee
- A Head of Faculty Research Degrees

* In exceptional circumstances, a Dean may nominate a Head of Department, or in the case of PGRs, the Chair of RDC, as chair. This should not be the Head from the student’s ‘home’ Department.

6.3 The relevant Head of Faculty SAS (or nominee), or the Graduate School Manager in the case of PGRs, shall attend the panel meeting to advise on regulatory and procedural matters and shall be responsible for the official record of the panel meeting, a copy of which shall be sent to the student and members of the panel simultaneously.

The Process

6.4 A student whose case is to be considered by the Assessment Disciplinary Committee shall be notified in writing.

6.5 If, at the time appointed for the meeting, a student does not appear, the panel may proceed to hear the case if it is satisfied that proper notice of the meeting has been given to the student, and there are no grounds for believing that the student might have good reason for not attending; otherwise the meeting shall be adjourned and a new date shall be set. If it is decided to deal with the case in the absence of the student, no additional material shall be introduced which is not contained or referred to in the particulars notified to the student.

6.6 In determining the facts of the case, the following stages are involved in the sequence indicated:

- the finding of the primary facts of the case;
- the hearing of any pleas in mitigation;
- the finding of secondary facts, i.e., the reaching of a conclusion or conclusions which, in the judgement of the committee, can reasonably be drawn from the primary facts;
- in cases where it has been established that an offence has been committed, report to the relevant Assessment Board as to the penalty/penalties which have been determined.

6.7 In the case of Research Misconduct by postgraduate researchers, the primary facts of the case will normally be established by the Procedure for the Investigation of Misconduct in Research, either through a preliminary investigation or through the full procedure. However, the Assessment Disciplinary Committee will have the opportunity to question the outcomes of this earlier procedure.

6.8 Using the evidence before it, an Assessment Disciplinary Committee will normally determine whether on the balance of probabilities an offence has been committed. In cases where it has been established that an offence has been committed and the Assessment Disciplinary Committee has decided not to recommend expulsion or further disciplinary proceedings, then it can recommend that no penalty be applied if it considers there are valid reasons for so doing. The recommendations shall take account of the Committee’s view of any evidence submitted in mitigation by the student or on his/her behalf.

Recording of Academic Disciplinary Committees

6.9 Heads of Faculty SAS, or Graduate School Manager, shall ensure that all cases considered by Assessment Disciplinary Committees are formally recorded and decisions are reported on the marks schedule to the Assessment Board or to the University and relevant Faculty Research Degree Committee. The report shall include the following:
• a list of those present as members of the Committee;
• a list of the servicing officer(s);
• a list of any other persons present for whatever purpose which shall be specified;
• the name of the student whose case was before the Committee;
• a clear and unambiguous statement of the charge(s) against the student, which should be identical to that issued to the student previously;
• a list of any items, documents or reports (which may be oral or in some other form) submitted by the student and staff members;
• a clear and unambiguous statement as to the finding of facts by the Committee, both primary and secondary, and a declaration as to whether the student is found to have committed the offence relating to the alleged charge(s);
• a full account and list of any items, documents or reports made in mitigation to the Committee by or on behalf of the student;
• a statement as to whether or not the plea(s) in mitigation is/are accepted or otherwise by the Committee and the weight attached thereto;
• the recommendation of the Committee made in the light of its findings and in the light of any mitigating plea(s) made and considered – these must be fully detailed together with the view/decision of the committee on the validity and degree of acceptability thereof;
• a statement confirming that a student can, on specific grounds that are set out in the Assessment Regulations, appeal against the penalties imposed following publication of the decision of the Assessment Board;
• the signature of the Chair approving the report as accurate in every respect.

Communication to Assessment Boards

7.1 Assessment Boards must not attempt to reconsider a case that has been already determined by an Assessment Disciplinary Committee or by a Head of Department. The function of the Assessment Board in such cases is to implement the recommendation, having regard for any applicable regulations.

7.2 All cases shall be reported to the Deputy Registrar and Academic Secretary (or nominee) who will prepare a report of the number and manner of cases dealt with annually for the Academic Quality and Standards Committee, paying particular regard to equality issues.

7.3 The student shall be given a copy of the Assessment Disciplinary Committee report and shall be informed that s/he may appeal the decision using the Academic Appeals Procedure.

7.4 The report of the Assessment Disciplinary Committee shall be retained on the student’s record, in accordance with Manchester Met’s Record Retention and Disposal Schedule.

Penalties for Academic Misconduct

8.1 Re-assessments in units that are failed as a consequence of academic misconduct shall be capped at 40% for undergraduate courses and at 50% for Level 7 of Integrated Master’s or taught postgraduate programmes, subject to the number of re-assessment opportunities permitted under the Assessment Regulations not being exceeded. Where serious academic misconduct is found to have occurred, a student may be excluded from the University.

Academic misconduct in multiple assessments

8.2 Where there is evidence of assessment misconduct in multiple assignments that were submitted at the same time, or that were submitted prior to a developmental engagement, this type of misconduct shall be treated as a single occurrence.

Offences relating to assessed work other than written examinations

8.3 In all cases, suspected incidents of academic misconduct will be investigated by the academic member of staff marking the assignment. If, having reviewed the evidence, there is no case to answer, no record of academic misconduct will be reported on the mark sheet or on the student’s record. However, if having gathered the documentation relating to the case, there is evidence that a student has committed acts of academic misconduct, the full set of documentation must be referred to the relevant programme leader. Documentation must include the relevant assignment (annotated if appropriate), an indication of where misconduct is believed to have occurred and additional evidence to support the case for misconduct.

8.4 The following tariff of penalties shall be applied to students found to have committed acts of academic misconduct in assessed work other than examinations. The tariff indicates the appropriate level of engagement, which will depend on the severity of the offence and the potential penalty that may be imposed.

Students on Level 3 or 4 of Undergraduate Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of misconduct</th>
<th>Penalty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First offence where the plagiarism or collusion does not represent more than 20% of the element of assessment</td>
<td>Assignment marked and no cap applied (Type of engagement: Developmental Engagement);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First offence where the plagiarism or collusion is greater than 20% of the element of assessment</td>
<td>Written warning and a mark of 0 - with no opportunity to rework assessment - for the element carried forward (Type of engagement: Formal Meeting with Head of Department);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second offence of any degree in any unit within the same programme of study</td>
<td>Further written warning and a mark of 0 - with no opportunity to rework assessment - for the element carried forward (Type of engagement: Formal Meeting with Head of Department);</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any subsequent offence anywhere within the same programme of study</td>
<td>Mark of 0 for all units the student has taken so far at that level, and imposition of a 40% cap on unit marks in all further units taken at that level (Type of engagement: Formal Meeting with Head of Department);</td>
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### Students on Taught Postgraduate Programmes

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<tr>
<th>Type of misconduct</th>
<th>Penalty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First offence at any academic level where the plagiarism or collusion does not represent more than 20% of the element of assessment</td>
<td>Assessment element mark capped at 40% (Type of engagement: Formal Meeting with Head of Department)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First offence at any academic level where the plagiarism or collusion represents more than 20% of the element of assessment</td>
<td>Mark of 0 for the element of assessment (Type of engagement: Formal Meeting with Head of Department)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any subsequent academic misconduct</td>
<td>Student deemed to have failed the programme (Type of engagement: Assessment Disciplinary Committee)</td>
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### Students on Undergraduate Programme of study

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<tr>
<th>Type of Misconduct</th>
<th>Penalty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First offence</td>
<td>Written warning and mark of 0 - with no opportunity to rework assessment - for the assessment being undertaken at the time of the misconduct carried forward (Type of engagement: Formal Meeting with Head of Department);</td>
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<tr>
<td>Any second offence within the same programme of study</td>
<td>Unit mark of 0 (Type of engagement: Formal Meeting with Head of Department);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any subsequent offence within the same programme of study</td>
<td>Mark of 0 for all units undertaken at that level, and imposition of a 40% cap on unit marks in all further units to be taken at that level (Type of engagement: Formal Meeting with Head of Department or the Assessment Disciplinary Committee where the offence may result in expulsion from the programme).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Students on Taught Postgraduate Programmes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of misconduct</th>
<th>Penalty</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First offence</td>
<td>Mark of 0 for unit in which academic misconduct occurred must be resubmitted and passed. Both the element and unit marks shall be capped at 50% (Type of engagement: Formal Meeting with Head of Department);</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any subsequent academic misconduct</td>
<td>Student deemed to have failed the programme (Type of engagement: Assessment Disciplinary Committee);</td>
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</table>

### Students on Postgraduate Research Programmes

Please note that in most cases, academic misconduct by postgraduate research students will be treated as serious given the level of study.
### Mitigation

9.1 When considering any case of academic misconduct the student will be invited to submit a plea of mitigation, which they may either submit prior to or at the commencement of a formal hearing. Such a plea will be regarded as an admission of Academic Misconduct. Exceptional Factors submitted as mitigation after a meeting has taken place will not be considered.

9.2 Where a student admits misconduct prior to a formal hearing, the meeting shall not normally be convened. In such cases, the Head of Department or Chair of Assessment Disciplinary Committee will consider the matter and impose an appropriate penalty. If a student submits a plea of mitigation prior to a developmental engagement that engagement will still take place, as its purpose is developmental and supportive.

9.3 It is incumbent upon Chairs of Assessment Disciplinary Committees or Heads of Department to consider whether or not a particular penalty should be applied or lessened in the light of any statement of mitigation submitted by a student and/or any other factors deemed relevant. Heads of Department or Chairs of Assessment Disciplinary Committees will normally be guided by the University’s Policy and Procedure for Consideration of Exceptional Factors when considering pleas of mitigation. It should be noted, however, that most circumstances that result in Exceptional Factors being approved for a student will not provide sufficient basis for a plea of mitigation to an Assessment Disciplinary Committee.

### Expulsion of Students

10.1 A student may be excluded from the University for academic reasons. Where, having examined the case before it, the finding of the Assessment Disciplinary Committee is that the student should be excluded from the programme, the Chair of the ADC shall send a letter to the student informing them of the decision and that they may appeal the decision using the Academic Appeals Procedure.

10.2 Where a student is expelled for academic reasons, his/her enrolment with the University (or any partner institution delivering the programme) shall be cancelled. Expelled students may not transfer to another academic programme within the University, or return to study on the original programme.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>First offence or moderate plagiarism</td>
<td>Where moderate plagiarism has been found to have occurred within the research thesis, the postgraduate researcher may submit their thesis for the original qualification with the offending section/data removed within 20 working days of the written notification from the University. The Chair of RDC will decide whether any further work should be undertaken, and may instruct that limited additional work can be carried out, for example, to finish sentences that have been left incomplete due to the removal of plagiarised sections. Submission of the revised thesis will not be considered an additional submission.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Any subsequent or serious academic misconduct</td>
<td>Student deemed to have failed the programmes (Type of engagement: Assessment Disciplinary Committee),</td>
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</tbody>
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Additional Information

This Procedure forms part of the University’s regulatory framework. Other institutional Policies and Procedures that relate to Assessment include:

- Undergraduate Assessment Regulations
- Taught Postgraduate Assessment Regulations
- Procedure for Addressing Academic Misconduct
- Procedure for Consideration of Exceptional Factors
- Procedure for Academic Appeals and Review of Assessment-Related Matters
- Student Complaints Procedure
- Assessment Arrangements for Disabled Students
- Procedure for the Suspension and Expulsion of Students on the Grounds of Professional Unsuitability

Support and Guidance

Further support and guidance in relation to these Assessment Regulations is available from the following locations:

Assessment Regulations Website
www.mmu.ac.uk/assessment-regulations

Student Hubs
www.mmu.ac.uk/students/hubs

Faculty Student Support Officers
www.mmu.ac.uk/sas/studentservices/student-support-officers.php

Students’ Union Advice Centre
www.theunionmmu.org/your-advice-centre
Tel: 0161 247 6533
Email: s.u.advice@mmu.ac.uk