

Academic Misconduct

This leaflet is for Undergraduate and Postgraduate students and should be read in conjunction with the University's Academic Integrity and Academic Misconduct Policy:

https://www.reading.ac.uk/web/files/qualitysupport/9_Academic_integrity_and_academic_misconduct_final.pdf

What is academic misconduct?

Essentially, academic misconduct is when you fail to give other people credit for their ideas. Either intentionally or unintentionally you are taking advantage of someone else's idea, work or knowledge.

What different types of academic misconduct are there?

Type	Explanation
Plagiarism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plagiarism is defined as taking the work of another person or source, and using it as if it's your own idea and work. This encompasses; ideas, written works, musical compositions, computer programs, survey results, diagrams, graphs, drawings, images and designs, etc. The original sources are intentionally (or unintentionally) hidden from the marker by not referencing the source. Words, phrases and passages taken verbatim from a published work must be in quotation marks and the source acknowledged using the University guidelines. If you want to make use of someone else's published work you may summarise or paraphrase the author's words and you <u>must</u> properly acknowledge the source. Paraphrasing, when the original statement is still identifiable and has no acknowledgement of the source is still plagiarism. Taking a copy of another student's work without their permission and using their words within your own assignment also counts as plagiarism. Self-plagiarism (or double submission) is resubmitting previously submitted work on one or more occasions (without proper acknowledgement of the source). This may take the form of copying either the whole piece of work or part of it. Normally credit will already have been given for this work. In the case of assessments where the incorporation of work from another assessment is permitted, the relevant School will inform students accordingly. Any material in an assignment which has been drawn from another piece of previously submitted work should be clearly indicated with a reference to the assessment and qualification for which the material was previously submitted.
Cheating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any irregular behaviour during an assessment including unauthorised possession of notes, books or a mobile device; attempting to give or receive help in a formal academic exercise or examination; attempting to copy from another student's work. Giving a false excuse for missing a deadline or falsely claiming to have submitted work that is not your own or unauthorised use of the examination paper.
Collusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When a student submits work for an assessment done in collaboration with another person as entirely their own work or collaborates with another student to complete the work which is then submitted as two individual assessments. This does not apply to group projects or assessments which are intended to be produced collaboratively.
Misleading material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusion of data which has been falsely invented or obtained by unfair means, for example; falsifying the results of questionnaires or interviews.
Bribery or paid services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitting work for an assessment which you have purchased from an essay procurement website, another individual or a company. Offering a bribe to a student or member of staff to complete your assessment.
Sabotage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attempting to prevent others from completing their work.

What happens if an allegation of academic misconduct is made against you?

Within the University, there are two different levels at which academic misconduct can be investigated: school level (your department) and university level (Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct).

School level procedures

The relevant School Director for Teaching and Learning (SDTL) will investigate the allegation by inviting you to attend a meeting to discuss the allegation. You should be given notice of the meeting date and information on the specific allegation made against you ahead of the meeting.

You have the right to be accompanied by a 'friend' to the meeting. This must be a current student, a current member of staff, a student officer from RUSU or an adviser from RUSU. Disabled students may also be accompanied by a support worker in addition to a 'friend', as appropriate to their needs.

After the meeting, the SDTL will issue a full report on the allegation including the minutes of the interview, and produce a record of any other cases of academic misconduct involving you.

Potential outcomes: The SDTL will consider the case and will determine the following:

A. That no case of academic misconduct can be established and no further disciplinary action will be taken; (*a warning in respect of future conduct may be placed on your RISIS record*)

B. That a case of academic misconduct has been established*. If a case of academic misconduct is established, and the work contributed to the overall classification or progression, then the SDTL has the power to:

▪ **Impose the following penalties:**

- Admonish the student (a warning placed on your RISIS record);
- Reduce the mark in the relevant assessment;
- Fail the relevant assessment with the normal right to resit;
- Fail the relevant assessment without the right to resit;
- Fail the relevant module with the normal right to resit;
- Fail the relevant module without the normal right to resit.

**If a case of academic misconduct has been established and the assessment is purely formative (i.e. does not contribute to the classification or progression) you will be warned that the practice is not acceptable and it will stay on your student record until you graduate.*

OR

▪ **Refer your case to the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct (SCAM).**

The SDTL will always refer the case if:

- the SDTL views that the appropriate penalty is beyond their remit;
- if the alleged misconduct occurs in a module of special significance (such as a core module);
- if the appropriate penalty might result in professional accreditation being removed; or,
- if the misconduct occurred in a module which is worth more than 40 credits of the students' programme.

University level procedures

The Student Appeals and Misconduct Officer will invite you (usually by email) to attend a hearing with the Standing Committee on Academic Misconduct (SCAM). The SCAM will investigate the allegation by interviewing you in the hearing and reviewing any evidence submitted by yourself and/or the School in relation to the allegation.

You may attend your SCAM hearing either in person or by telephone. If attendance is not possible, you may make a written submission to support your case. A RUSU Adviser can give you further guidance on how to write a written submission if needed.

You have the right to be accompanied by a 'friend' to the hearing. This must be a current student, a current member of staff, a student officer from RUSU or an adviser from RUSU. Disabled Students may also be accompanied by a Support Worker in addition to a 'friend', as appropriate to their needs.

In addition to you, the relevant SDTL is expected to attend the hearing. The SCAM also has the power to call any witnesses it wishes, whether requested by the student or SDTL or not. If you would like to request that a witness attends your hearing, make sure to discuss this with a RUSU Adviser.

After the hearing the SCAM will deliberate in private and you will be informed of the outcome by the Student Appeals and Misconduct Officer (usually by email). You will also be sent the minutes of the hearing within 5 working days.

- **Potential outcomes:** The SCAM will consider the case and will determine the following:
 - A. That no case of academic misconduct can be established and no further disciplinary action will be taken; *(a warning in respect of future conduct may be placed on your RISIS record)*
 - B. That a case of academic misconduct has been established. If a case of academic misconduct is established, the SCAM has the power to impose the following penalties:
 - Admonish the student (a warning placed on your RISIS record);
 - Reduce the mark in the relevant assessment;
 - Fail the relevant assessment with the normal right to resit;
 - Fail the relevant assessment without the right to resit;
 - Fail the relevant module with the normal right to resit;
 - Fail the relevant module without the normal right to resit.
 - Fail any module with the right to resit;
 - Fail any module without the right to resit;
 - Fail any module(s) and cap the classification of the award;
 - Fail a Part;
 - Terminate the student's registration retaining eligibility for a lesser award;
 - Terminate the student's registration without eligibility for a lesser award.

Can I appeal my academic misconduct penalty?

All students have the right to appeal against a penalty that has been imposed on them for academic misconduct.

- To appeal against a decision made by an **SDTL**, you will need to submit a statement outlining your reasons for appeal to studentappeals@reading.ac.uk **within five working days** from being informed of the penalty in writing. Your appeal will then be considered by the SCAM, who you will be invited to attend an appeal hearing with to discuss your appeal further.
- To appeal against a decision made by the **SCAM**, you will need to submit a statement outlining your reasons for appeal to studentappeals@reading.ac.uk **within five working days** from receiving the formal outcome letter. Your appeal will then be considered by the Student

Appeals Committee, who you will be invited to attend an appeal hearing with to discuss your appeal further.

In order to submit an appeal, you will need to try and demonstrate one or more of the following grounds. If you think have other grounds on which to appeal, discuss this with a RUSU Adviser:

- There was a procedural irregularity, prejudice or bias in the investigation and/or decision-making of the SDTL or SCAM;
- The decision of the SDTL or SCAM was not fair or reasonable given circumstances and/or the evidence presented;
- The decision was based on a demonstrable error of fact;
- You have new evidence which you were unable to provide earlier in the process for a valid reason that could materially affect the SDTL or SCAM's decision.

You will need to provide a clear and detailed account of why you are appealing your academic misconduct penalty and provide any supporting documentation (if possible) regarding the ground(s) on which you are appealing.

RUSU Advice

An Academic Adviser can support you through the academic misconduct process, help you understand the University processes, attend meetings with you relating to the matter as a 'friend', explain the outcome of the case and help you to appeal your penalty. If you wish to get in touch with an Academic Adviser, please see our contact details below.

Contact us by email at advice@rusu.co.uk, or visit us in the RUSU building.

You can book an appointment or attend a drop-in session. Drop in runs during term time on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday (11.00am-1.30pm) and Wednesday (2pm-4.30pm)