

# Academic Malpractice

## A Guide for Students

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### Introduction

It is a serious academic offence to use or attempt to use unfair means to enhance your performance or influence the standard of award obtained. 'Unfair' includes all forms of cheating, including plagiarism, collusion and impersonation.

Offences of this nature may result in your withdrawal from the University.

This document outlines the definitions, procedures and consequences of academic malpractice. They are applicable to the preparation and presentation of all assessed work irrespective of the University's form of assessment for the module.

Full details of what constitutes academic malpractice, the protocol and procedures followed are found in the Academic Regulations [Appendix 8 – Academic Malpractice](#).

Ignorance of the University's procedures or guidelines on referencing is not accepted as a defence for malpractice. We do not distinguish between intentional and unintentional plagiarism ie between deliberate copying and misunderstanding the University's referencing and bibliographic systems. If you are in any doubt as to how to reference material you must seek advice from a member of academic staff.

Advice and guidance on how to avoid common forms of malpractice is available to all students through academic induction processes. We strongly advise you to attend these sessions, as accidental or ignorance of what constitutes academic malpractice is not an accepted excuse for offending.

If you are having difficulty with your studies there are a number of ways you can change your situation, including asking your tutor or other trusted academic for additional help, finding counselling support, or even considering intercalation. There are also opportunities to resubmit where you have failed an assessment.

Please remember, it is **your** responsibility to:

- guard against unauthorised access by others to your work, both before and after assessment
- read this information on academic malpractice and to attend induction sessions so that you are familiar with the guidelines.

Ignorance of the University's guidelines and procedures is not accepted as a defence for malpractice.

### **Definitions of academic malpractice**

We define academic malpractice as 'an attempt to gain an advantage over other students by the use of unfair and/or unacceptable method's.

Please note: the definitions and descriptions below are not exhaustive and the University reserves the right to judge that malpractice has occurred in instances that are not explicitly defined in this document.

Common types of malpractice include:

#### ***Cheating***

This is an infringement of the rules governing conduct in examinations or other time-constrained assessment. It includes:

- communicating with or copying from any other student during an examination except where specifically permitted, for example in-group assessments
- communicating during an examination with any person other than a properly authorised invigilator or another authorised member of staff
- introducing any written or printed material into an examination room, unless the regulations for the module or course assessment explicitly state the examination is open-book
- introducing any electronically stored information into an examination room unless expressly permitted by the regulators for the module or course assessment
- gaining access to any unauthorised material relating to an examination during or before the specified time
- providing or helping to provide in any other way false evidence of knowledge or understanding in examinations

Our invigilators have successfully spotted all the above examples and more.

#### ***Plagiarism***

We define plagiarism as an attempt to pass off someone else's work as your own. This includes the representation of work, written or otherwise, of any other person, including another student, or any institution, as your own work. It may take the form of:

- verbatim copying or insertion of another person's work (published or unpublished and including material freely available in electronic form) without appropriate acknowledgement. This includes incorrect, incomplete or omitted references

- the close paraphrasing of another person's work by simply changing a few words or altering the order of presentation, without appropriate acknowledgement
- unacknowledged quotation of phrases from another person's work
- the deliberate and detailed presentation of another person's concept as your own
- contracting a third party to produce work and submitting it as your own. This includes paid and unpaid contracts and using essay mills.

### ***Self-plagiarism***

This is the offence of submitting the same piece of work for multiple coursework assessments, unless multiple use has been authorised by the module leader.

### ***Collusion***

This offence includes instances where you:

- knowingly submit work as entirely your own work when it was actually undertaken in collaboration with another person without official approval
- collaborate with another student in the completion of work which you intend to submit as your own unaided work
- knowingly permit another student to copy all or part of your work and allow that student to submit it as their own unaided work.

You may think you are helping a friend by sharing your work, but you could **both** be found guilty of malpractice. Protect your work and your friendships by finding other ways to help.

### ***Falsifying data or material***

This includes:

- falsifying the data or material presented in reports or any other assessment
- falsely claiming to have undertaken experimental or experiential work, or obtaining such data by unfair means
- fabricating references or a bibliography

Remember: you are taught by subject matter experts with years of experience. They can often recognise false information at a glance.

### ***Impersonation***

This is defined as the assumption of another person's identity with intent to deceive. For example, pretending to be someone else in order to gain academic advantage.

### ***Ethical malpractice***

These are issues which contravene the University's governance and regulations on research ethics. Ethical approval for undergraduate or postgraduate submissions may be subject to referral to a malpractice panel for issues such as:

- evasion of ethical responsibilities
- failure to gain ethical approval
- ethical misconduct caused by careless and irresponsible research practice

Please see [www.edgehill.ac.uk/research/governance/](http://www.edgehill.ac.uk/research/governance/) for more information.

### **Other forms of academic malpractice**

Apart from the definitions outlined above, the University does not hold an exhaustive list of every type of academic malpractice. However, examples of other types of malpractice include:

- attempting to obtain special consideration by offering or receiving inducements or favours (that is, bribery)
- providing false information in your application for exceptional mitigating circumstances, repeat year, academic appeal or any similar application for dispensation
- ensuring the non-availability of books or journal articles in the University Library by removing the relevant article or chapter from the material, or by deliberately misfiling them so that other students cannot find them

You should not need to resort to these or any other dishonest academic practices. If you are having difficulties with your studies, there are a number of ways we can support you.

Please talk to your personal tutor or departmental contact for advice on where you can acquire study skills or any other support you might need.

### **Overview of malpractice procedures**

Academic malpractice is classified in four stages:

- Naïve
- First minor
- First major
- Grave

Classification is a matter of academic judgement and is informed by the following guidelines:

Classification	Example
<b>Naïve</b>	Inappropriate referencing (unacceptable under the University's referencing policy) as a result of misunderstanding referencing requirements or carelessness. <b>Please note:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This classification is only applicable to first year undergraduates, stage one students or those studying modules on a stand-alone basis</li><li>• A second naïve act will be considered as a first minor offence</li></ul>
First or subsequent: <b>Minor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unattributed graphic images</li><li>• Several sentences of direct copying without acknowledgment of the source</li><li>• Inappropriate paraphrasing</li><li>• Poor referencing</li></ul>

Classification	Example
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unattributed quotations</li> <li>• Incorrect or incomplete citations</li> <li>• Subsequent/second naïve act</li> </ul>
First or subsequent: <b>Major</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copying multiple paragraphs in full without acknowledging the source</li> <li>• Copying some of the work of a fellow student with or without their knowledge or consent</li> </ul>
First or subsequent: <b>Grave</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking an essay or multiple essays from the Internet without revealing the source</li> <li>• Copying much of the work of a fellow student with or without their knowledge or consent</li> <li>• Contracting a third party to produce work and submitting it as your own. This includes paid and unpaid contracts and using essay mills</li> <li>• Any form of cheating in a formal examination</li> </ul>

The procedures followed for each classification of malpractice are outlined in diagram below.

Full details of the procedures please see the [Academic Regulations Appendix 8 - Academic Malpractice](#).

Please note: if you are on a postgraduate research programme, you are subject to the malpractice procedures outlined in the [Research Degree Regulations, Schedule B](#)

## Overview of academic malpractice procedures

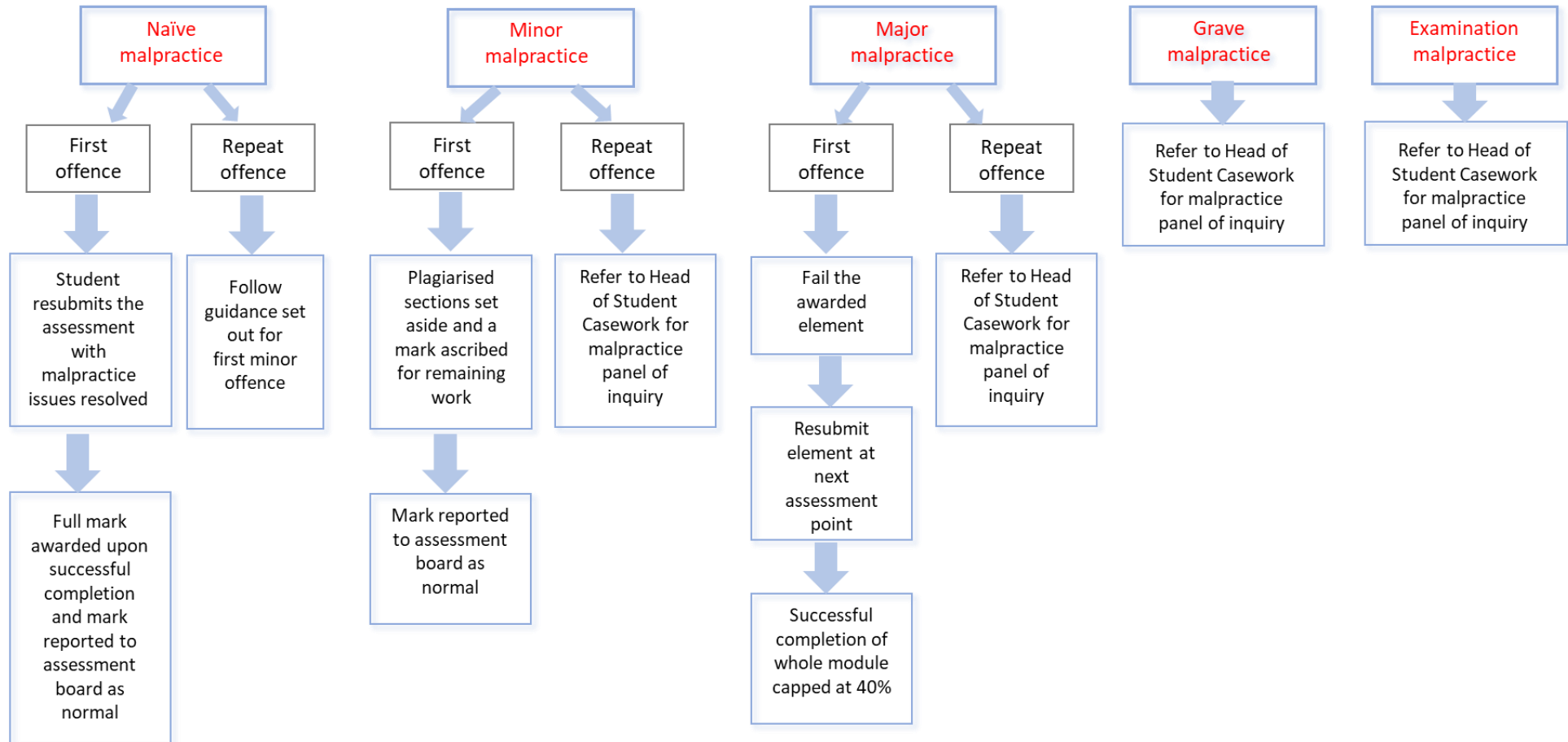


Figure 1: Overview of academic malpractice procedures

## **Appeals**

You can appeal against the outcome of a malpractice panel of enquiry. The appeal must meet the University's standard grounds for appeal and be submitted within the deadline outlined in the letter confirming the decision of the panel.

The University's grounds for appeal are:

- procedural irregularity in the process
- bias or perception of bias
- exceptional mitigating circumstances where the details were, for good reason, previously unavailable to the appropriate assessment board or panel of enquiry

Disagreement with a decision made by a panel of enquiry does not, of itself, constitute grounds for appeal.

Full details of the appeals process are found in the [Academic Regulations Appendix 22 – Academic Appeals](#).