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Maynooth University Policy on Academic Misconduct and Academic Integrity

This document sets out the procedures for dealing with cases of academic misconduct or suspected academic misconduct in taught programmes of the University. Academic misconduct includes plagiarism (for example, the use of unacknowledged sources in essays, assignments, or any other form of assessment), cases of personation, or of procurement or purchase of essays or other material written by others. Academic misconduct also includes unauthorised uses of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools or other computer-generated material (i.e., outside the terms of Departmental policies). Cases of academic misconduct or suspected academic misconduct in research degrees are dealt with under the Research Integrity Policy.

Definitions

Plagiarism

Plagiarism involves an attempt to use an element of another person's work, without appropriate acknowledgement in order to gain academic credit. It may include the unacknowledged verbatim reproduction of material and /or unsanctioned collusion but is not limited to these matters; it may also include the unacknowledged adoption of an argumentative structure, or the unacknowledged use of a source or of research materials, including computer code, data, or elements of mathematical formulae in an inappropriate manner.

Note that care must be taken in using external proof-reading services. In courses other than language courses, it may be permissible to have proof reading for spelling and grammar. However, if proof reading extends to changing the content, argument, or structure, this is using the work of others and is considered plagiarism.

The principle is that the content, structure, and argument should be the work of the student. If a student takes the work of another person and modifies it superficially (or uses software to modify it), this remains plagiarism.

Self-plagiarism

Self-plagiarism is the use of one's own previous work in another context without appropriate citation. You may not use your own work created for one assessment for another. Each assessed piece of work towards your degree must be unique.

Collusion

Where an assignment is specifically a group assignment, it is expected that students work together in completion of the assignment. In individual assignments, it is permissible for students to share resource materials, but it is expected that the content and argument of the assignment be the original work of each student.

Academic Integrity

Where a student is required to produce work for assessment, it is expected that the work is the student's own work and is produced in a fair and honest manner. Students are required to be aware of and comply with the subject-specific requirements set by the individual Departments or module leaders on different assessments and need to be aware that these may differ not only by subject but also by assessment.

Breaches of academic integrity include:

- A student falsifies data or information in an assessment.
- A student submits the same content for more than one assessment without appropriate acknowledgement (self-plagiarism).
- Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools or other computer-generated material to complete all or part of an assessment without acknowledgement and outside the terms of Departmental policies or requirements for individual assignments.
- A student gets another person or service to complete all or part of an assessment.
- Using any tools explicitly forbidden by the Department or within the programme.

1. Procedures

- 1.1 Where a marker has reasonable grounds to believe that a case of academic misconduct has been identified, the matter shall be referred to the Head of Department or their nominee with a written report outlining the reasons for suspecting that academic misconduct has been committed.
- 1.2 Where a marker is unclear whether or not a case of misconduct has occurred, but has reasonable grounds for suspicion, the matter may be referred to the Head of Department or their nominee and considered for a verification assessment. (See 1.14).
- 1.3 The Head of Department or their nominee shall make an initial finding as to whether or not academic misconduct has occurred, taking account of factors including, but not confined to, the extent of the academic misconduct, indications of intent to deceive, the student's prior history in this regard, practice within the discipline, and the level at which the student has submitted the work. The Head of Department or their nominee will not take account of extenuating medical or personal circumstances in making a decision.
- 1.4 If the Head of Department or their nominee is the grader who suspects academic misconduct has occurred, they shall delegate responsibility to a nominee in that department to follow the procedures laid down in this policy.
- 1.5 Where the Head of Department or their nominee determines that academic misconduct has not occurred but there are indications of poor academic practice, such as incomplete or poor-quality citation the work shall be awarded a grade that takes account of the poor academic practice, within the overall context of the work as a whole.

- 1.6 Where the Head of Department or their nominee finds that, on balance of probability, academic misconduct has occurred, they shall consult the Registrar's Office, informing the Registrar of the finding by email (registrar@mu.ie), and requesting any information on previous findings in relation to the student. Should prior findings exist, the procedures in 1.12 and 1.13 shall apply.
- 1.7 Where the Head of Department or their nominee finds that, on balance of probability, academic misconduct has occurred, a meeting with the student shall be convened to inform the student of the finding.
- 1.8 The student shall be advised of the determination by the Head of Department or their nominee and of the consequences that may unfold and that a response should be received by the Head of Department from the student within ten working days from the date the determination was confirmed.
- 1.9 The student shall be advised that failure or refusal to respond within the designated period of time, or failure or refusal to attend for any meeting requested by the Head of Department, will result in the matter being referred to the Academic Discipline Board in like manner as if the student had chosen not to accept the findings of the report.
- 1.10 Where the student chooses not to accept the findings of the report, the matter shall be referred to the Academic Discipline Board together with all relevant documentation and reports.
- 1.11 Where the student accepts the findings of the report, the student shall be asked to sign the report. The Head of Department shall then countersign the report. The Head of Department will then give the work a mark of 0. The student will be allowed to redo the assignment before a designated deadline prior to the next Examination Board meeting, if it is practical to do so. The mark for the resubmitted work will be capped at the pass mark (normally 40%). A record shall be kept in the Department of the incident, and this shall be forwarded to the Registrar's Office.
- 1.12 In the case of a second or subsequent finding of academic misconduct in relation to a student, the matter is automatically referred to the Academic Discipline Board by the Registrar's Office, who shall notify the student that the matter has been brought to its attention.
- 1.13 A "second or subsequent finding" in this regard may refer to findings made in the current academic year or in previous academic years, and it may refer to findings made by more than one Department.

Verification assessment

- 1.14 Where the Head of Department or their nominee suspect that a breach of academic integrity may have occurred, but has insufficient evidence to make a determination, they may seek to verify the authenticity of the work through an additional verification assessment. This may be a viva-voce examination, or an alternative assessment, as determined by the Department. If the student is unwilling to cooperate with this verification assessment, the result for the module may be withheld. Following the verification assessment, the Department may decide to:

- a) Allow the result to stand.
 - b) Adjust the result for the module to reflect the performance demonstrated by the student in the verification assessment.
 - c) Set a mark of zero and allow the student to re-sit, in line with normal resit arrangements.
 - d) Set a mark of zero and allow the student to re-sit, but with a cap on the resit mark.
 - e) Refer the case to the Academic Discipline Board.
- Where a result is amended downwards following a verification assessment, the Registrar's office will be notified, and a record of the modification will be retained.

Retrospective retraction

- 1.15 If a concern about the authenticity of work submitted for assessment arises after the award of a qualification, the University may examine the concern. Where the university considers that there is sufficient evidence that the integrity of the award is compromised, Academic Council may approve a retrospective retraction of the award.

Retention of records

- 1.16 Records of academic integrity issues are normally held in the Registrar's office for 6 years following the end of the academic year in which the incident occurred and are then deleted. The retention time may be extended in cases where a student continues to be a student of the university for more than 6 years, or in cases where there is an ongoing dispute relating to the findings.

2. Academic Discipline Board

- 2.1 The Academic Discipline Board ("The Board") is a Board of Academic Council. Its membership shall be as follows:
- (a) Chair: from the membership of Academic Council. Elected by Academic Council for a three-year term.
 - (b) 2 Members from the Faculty of Arts, Celtic Studies and Philosophy. Both to be elected by the Faculty for a three-year term, but normally staggered one year apart.
 - (c) 2 Members from the Faculty of Social Sciences. Both to be elected by the Faculty for a three-year term, but normally staggered one year apart.
 - (d) 2 Members from the Faculty of Science and Engineering. Both to be elected by the Faculty for a three-year term, but normally staggered one year apart.
 - (e) President of the Students' Union. One-year term.
 - (f) External member, preferably with a legal qualification. Nominated by the President. Indefinite term of office.

The Administrative Officer of Academic Council will also be in attendance.

All elected members will be eligible for re-election. Members of the Examination Appeals Board will not be eligible for election for membership of the Academic Discipline Board.

2.2 Where a matter of suspected academic misconduct is referred to the Academic Discipline Board for any reason, the Board shall invite submissions in writing from both the student and the Department. It may then opt to make a finding based on these submissions, in which case it will make one of three findings:

- (a) Reject the finding of academic misconduct; in such a case, no formal record is kept of the original allegation.
- (b) Find incorrect citation or other academic irregularities, and request that the Department re-mark the student's work accordingly.
- (c) Confirm the finding of academic misconduct.

2.3 Where the Board confirms a finding of academic misconduct, it may:

- (a) Award a mark of zero in the assignment, allowing resubmission in the current academic year, with or without a cap on the mark that can be awarded on resubmission.
- (b) Award a mark of zero for the full module, allowing resubmission in the current academic year, with or without a cap on the mark for the assignment or the module that can be awarded on resubmission.
- (c) Award a mark of zero in the assignment, allowing resubmission in a subsequent academic year, with or without a cap on the mark that can be awarded on resubmission.
- (d) Award a mark of zero for the full module, allowing resubmission in a subsequent academic year, with or without a cap on the mark for the assignment or the module that can be awarded on resubmission.
- (e) Recommend to the Registrar that the student be suspended from the University for a fixed period.
- (f) Recommend to the Registrar that the student be expelled from the University.

2.4 In making its decision, the Board may take account of factors including, but not confined to, the extent of the academic misconduct, indications of intent to deceive, the student's prior history in this regard, practice within the discipline, and the level at which the student has submitted the work. Instances of academic misconduct among postgraduate research students will be treated as being particularly serious. The Board will not take into account extenuating medical or personal circumstances in making its decision.

3. Oral Hearing

- 3.1 The student will be offered the opportunity to attend an oral hearing before the Academic Discipline Board, except in the case of appeals from examination discipline matters, which will be in writing.
- 3.2 The request for an oral hearing shall be in the prescribed form set out in the schedule attaching hereto. The student shall be advised of this entitlement at the time submissions are invited to be lodged with the Board. Submissions together with the form requesting an oral hearing should be lodged in the Academic Council Office not later than fourteen days from the date of the Board's communication.
- 3.3 The Board shall fix a date and appoint the venue for any oral hearings.
- 3.4 The Board shall convene an oral hearing in all cases where having regard to all reports, documents, and written submissions there is a *prima facie* indication of one of the following being applied:
 - (a) Award a mark of zero for the assignment or for the full module whether or not the Board determines the work can be resubmitted in the current academic year or that the mark is capped on resubmission, at a pass mark or at some other level as deemed appropriate by the Board.
 - (b) Recommend to the Registrar that the student be suspended from the University for a fixed period.
 - (c) Recommend to the Registrar that the student be expelled from the University.
- 3.5 The Board shall furnish the student with copies of the report of the Head of Department and other documentation provided by the Head, along with guidelines on rights to representation and an indication of the format of the hearing.
- 3.6 The oral hearing shall be in the form of oral submissions made by or on behalf of the student and by the Head of Department or their nominee.
- 3.7 The student shall be entitled to have representation of not more than two persons present on his\her behalf. The cost of such representation shall be borne by the student. No costs shall be awarded by the Board.
- 3.8 For the purposes of any oral hearing the composition of the Academic Discipline Board shall be as follows:
 - (a) Chair.
 - (b) President of the Students' Union, or his or her nominee, as agreed with the Chair.
 - (c) The external member of the Academic Discipline Board.
 - (d) Two other members of the Academic Discipline Board, at least one of whom shall be from the relevant Faculty.

- 3.9 Where the student fails to appear for any oral hearing the Academic Discipline Board may make a decision in the student's absence.

4. Procedures of the Academic Discipline Board

- 4.1. A meeting of the Academic Discipline Board ("The Board" hereafter) will be deemed to be quorate when three members are present. Members will declare any relevant conflicts of interest at the beginning of a meeting. A conflict of interest should be considered to exist in cases where a member of the board (i) has a personal connection with the student (relative, friend), (ii) teaches the module concerned, (iii) has been involved in consideration of this case at a prior stage, or (iv) where the board member believes that they have had sufficient prior contact with the student to constitute a conflict of interest. In the event of a conflict of interest arising in relation to the Chair, the Board will select another member to function as Acting Chair for the relevant portion of the meeting. All meetings will be minuted.
- 4.2. The proceedings before the Board shall be heard in private. The Board shall be entitled to determine the procedures to be adopted by it in investigating and adjudicating upon the issues placed before it. Such procedures shall be designed to ensure a fair hearing of the student and shall be in accordance with the rules of constitutional and natural justice.
- 4.3. The Board shall at any time be entitled to seek further information from either the student or the Head of Department. The Board may request the attendance of any person to give evidence before it, irrespective of whether such person is produced as a witness by either party. The Board may also request any person, whether witness or otherwise, to make available any documents or other evidence which it wishes to consider irrespective of whether either party request the production of such documents or evidence.
- 4.4. The Decision of the Board whether based on written submission only or on an oral hearing, shall be communicated in writing by the Chair to the Registrar who will inform the parties involved and which shall be signed by at least one member of the Board.
- 4.5. A Decision of the Board on the merits shall contain a summary of the issues to be determined and reply thereto and shall also contain a summary of any oral or written submissions or evidence considered by the Board, a decision shall also set out the findings of fact reached and the reasons for the Decision with any disciplinary measures that maybe imposed.
- 4.6. The Board shall be entitled to adjourn the consideration of the issues placed before it from time to time. Where an oral hearing is adjourned the same members of the Board shall sit at the resumed hearing. Should the period in office of any member or members of the Board expire or cease (including by resignation or otherwise) when an oral hearing has been commenced but not completed notwithstanding any other provision contained herein such member shall continue to be a member of the Board for the purpose only of completing the determination of the issues the subject matter of the hearing until such hearing has been completed.

- 4.7. Decisions of the Board shall be by a simple majority of the members present.
- 4.8. A Department, when making its submission to the Board may, if it wishes, make a recommendation as to the penalty it deems appropriate for the case under consideration. However, the Board is in no way bound to apply such penalty.
- 4.9. The Board in its absolute discretion shall be entitled to hold an oral hearing to decide the appropriate disciplinary measure to be imposed notwithstanding that the issue giving rise to such disciplinary measure was determined without an oral hearing.
- 4.10. No Decision of the Board shall take effect until the time for lodging an appeal from the said Decision has expired. The lodgement of an appeal in respect of all or a part of the Decision of the Board shall operate as a stay on the said Decision until the said appeal has been finally determined by the Appeals Board.
- 4.11. The Decision of the Board shall be recorded by the Registrar's Office in all cases where the Board has confirmed a finding of academic misconduct.
- 4.12. In cases involving postgraduate research, the Research Committee will also be notified by the Registrar. In such cases, it may be necessary to make the matter public.

5. Appeals of examination discipline decisions

- 5.1 Breaches of the examination regulations are normally considered as part of the examination process, and penalties are imposed following breaches of the examination regulations. A student on whom a penalty is imposed following a breach of examination regulations may appeal this decision to the Academic Discipline Board.
- 5.2 A student may make the appeal in writing, within 14 days of notification of the decision, setting out the basis for the appeal. The appeal is in writing only, and no oral hearing is anticipated.
- 5.3 The Academic Discipline Board, in hearing appeals, will consider (i) whether there is sufficient evidence to support the decision, and (ii) whether the penalty imposed is consistent with the normal practice.

6. The Academic Appeals Board

- 6.1. Either the student or the Head of Department shall be entitled to appeal any Decision of the board to the Academic Appeals Board ("The Appeals Board").
- 6.2. The Appeals Board shall be composed of five members (to be nominated by the President).
- 6.3. Decisions of the Appeals Board shall be a simple majority of the members present.

- 6.4. An appeal to the Appeals Board shall be in writing on an appeal form as set out in Schedule Two attached hereto. Such appeal form shall be lodged with the Appeals Board not later than fourteen days from the date of the Decision which is subject of the appeal.
- 5.5. The appeal form shall state whether all or a portion of the original Decision is being appealed and shall, if appropriate, specify the portion of the Decision which is being appealed. The appeal form shall also set out the grounds upon which the Decision or a portion of the Decision is being appealed.
- 6.6. A copy of the appeal form shall be sent as soon as possible to the other party by the Administrative Officer. Such other party shall be entitled to lodge a reply to the said appeal within fourteen days of its receipt. Such reply shall be on a form as set out in Schedule Three attaching hereto. A copy of the said reply shall be sent as soon as possible to the appellant by the Administrative Officer. If the respondent wishes to oppose the said appeal the reply shall state the grounds upon which the appeal is opposed.
- 6.7. The procedures of the Appeals Board shall be designed to ensure a fair hearing of the appeal and shall be in accordance with the rules of constitutional and natural justice. Appeals shall be decided solely on the basis of the matter contained in the Decision of the Board, any documents considered by the Board and the grounds of appeal and reply lodged in respect of the appeal. Where an appeal has taken place by means of an oral hearing the Appeals Board shall also have regard to the oral submissions of the appellant and the respondent. The Appeals Board shall not be entitled to consider evidence which was not considered by the Board unless in exceptional cases it decides that consideration of such evidence is necessary to prevent a miscarriage of justice and such evidence was not available at the time of the hearing before the Board.
- 6.8. The student shall be entitled to have representation before the Appeals Board of not more than two persons present on his or her behalf. The cost of such representation shall be borne by the student. No costs shall be awarded by the Appeals Board.
- 6.9. The Appeals Board shall have power either to allow or reject the appeal either in whole or in part and to vary the Decision of the Appeals Board as necessary in accordance with the terms of its Decision. The Appeals Board shall have power to impose any disciplinary measure which could be imposed by the Board. The Appeals Board shall have power to refer the matter at issue back to the Board to be re-heard by it in accordance with any directions of the Appeals Board.
- 6.10. Save as otherwise provided herein the Appeals Board in hearing an appeal shall have the same powers as were vested in the Board while hearing the matter at issue at first instance.
- 6.11. A Decision of the Appeals Board shall be in writing and shall be signed by a member of the Appeals Board. Such Decision shall contain a summary of the submissions made by the appellant and the respondent, the matters considered by the Appeal Board and the reasons why the Appeals Board reached its decision.

7. Miscellaneous

- 7.1. The Academic Discipline Board and the Academic Appeals Board shall be entitled to consider and adjudicate upon a matter at issue or an appeal as the case may be notwithstanding that either party fails to make any representations in accordance with the provisions contained herein or fails to participate in any oral hearing in respect of such matter at issue or appeal.

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SCHEDULE ONE

Ref. No. _____
(For Office Use)

REQUEST TO THE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE BOARD FOR AN ORAL HEARING

Please refer to the Maynooth University Policy on Academic Misconduct and Academic Integrity (s. 3.2) prior to completion of this form.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____ **Student Number:** _____

Names of representatives who will attend the hearing with you (limit of two persons), and their relationship to you:

1. _____

2. _____

Date of Examination/Assessment: _____
(e.g., 1st Semester, 2nd Semester or throughout academic year)

Course: _____ **Year:** _____
(e.g., BA, BSc, MA) (e.g., 1st year, 2nd year, etc.)

Department/School: _____

| Module Code | Module Name |
|-------------|-------------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please complete your submission below and/or attach documentation you wish to bring to the attention of the Academic Discipline Board.

**Please note this completed form must be lodged with the Academic Council Office
(academic.council@mu.ie) not later than 14 days
from the date of the communication from the Academic Discipline Board.**

SCHEDULE TWO

Ref. No. _____
(For Office Use)

APPEAL OF DECISION MADE BY THE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE BOARD

Please refer to the Maynooth University Policy on Academic Misconduct and
Academic Integrity (s. 5.4)
prior to completion of this form.

This form should be completed by the student or Head of Department and lodged with
the Academic Appeals Board not later than 14 days from the date of the decision by
the Academic Discipline Board.

Name: _____

Address or Department/School: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Student Number (if applicable): _____

Date of decision of the Academic Discipline Board: _____

Course: _____ **Year:** _____
(e.g., BA, BSc, MA) (e.g., 1st year, 2nd year, etc.)

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please complete your submission on the following page and/or attach documentation
you wish to bring to the attention of the Academic Appeals Board.

Please complete your submission below and/or attach documentation you wish to bring to the attention of the Academic Appeals Board.

Please note this completed form must be lodged with the Academic Council Office (academic.council@mu.ie) not later than 14 days from the date of the decision of the Academic Discipline Board.

SCHEDULE THREE

Ref. No. _____
(For Office Use)

REPLY TO APPEAL OF DECISION MADE BY THE ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE BOARD

Please refer to the Maynooth University Policy on Academic Misconduct and Academic Integrity (s. 5.6) prior to completion of this form.

This form should be completed by the student or Head of Department and lodged with the Academic Appeals Board not later than 14 days from the date of receipt of the appeal of the decision made by the Academic Discipline Board.

Name: _____

Address or Department/School: _____

Phone: _____ **Email:** _____

Student Number (if applicable): _____

Date of decision of the Academic Discipline Board: _____

Course: _____ **Year:** _____
(e.g., BA, BSc, MA) (e.g., 1st year, 2nd year, etc.)

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Please complete your submission on the following page and/or attach documentation you wish to bring to the attention of the Academic Appeals Board.

Please complete your submission below and/or attach documentation you wish to bring to the attention of the Academic Appeals Board.

Please note this completed form must be lodged with the Academic Council Office (academic.council@mu.ie) not later than 14 days from the date of the decision of the Academic Discipline Board.