

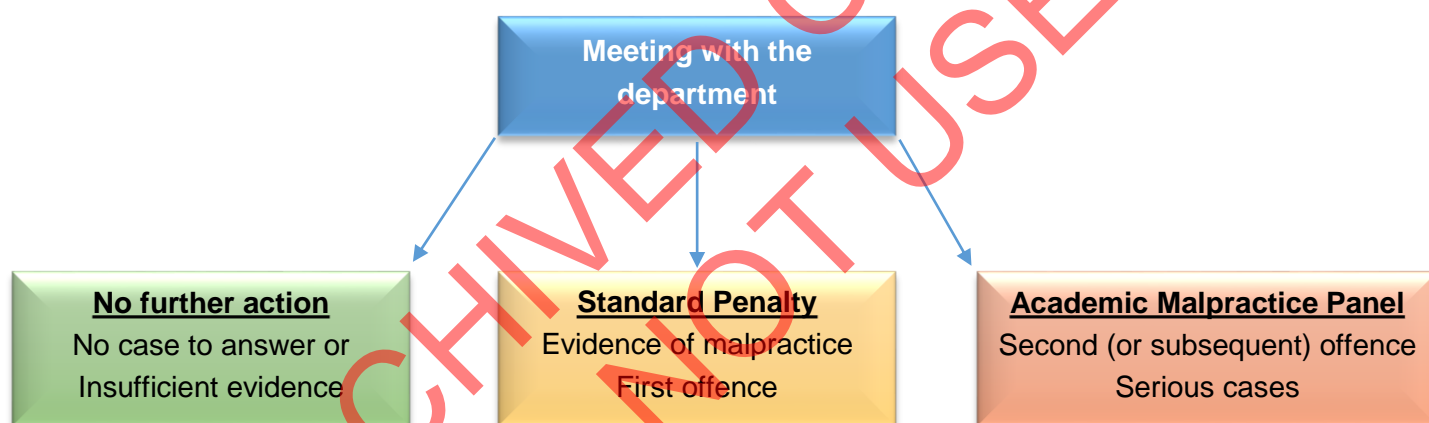
Academic Malpractice Procedures

Guidance for Students

Your department has made an allegation of academic malpractice in relation to a piece of work that you have submitted for assessment. **The University takes the occurrence of academic malpractice very seriously and you should now try to engage with us positively to resolve the matter.**

This guide briefly explains what happens now and what the possible outcomes might be. However, for the full detail of the process, you should take a moment to read the *Procedures Governing the Occurrence of Academic Malpractice* which is available on the academic malpractice pages on Portal (go to <http://portal.chester.ac.uk/aqss> and click on 'Academic Malpractice').

The diagram below shows the possible outcomes following your meeting with the department. Which of these outcomes will apply in your case will depend on a number of factors which are explained later in this guidance.



Stage 1: receiving an allegation of academic malpractice

You will have received a letter from your department inviting you to a meeting to discuss the allegation of academic malpractice that has been made about a piece of work that you have submitted. Along with that letter, you will have received a form which gives details of the allegation and a copy of all of the evidence that the department has used when deciding to make that allegation. **YOU MUST READ ALL OF THE INFORMATION CAREFULLY.** If you do not understand anything, you should ask the department to clarify.

Stage 2: meeting with the department

The meeting is an opportunity for the department to explain the allegation to you and for you to say anything that you feel is relevant. You might also want to make a written response to the allegation that can be discussed during the meeting. You have the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend (as long as they are also a member of the University). The Students' Union can also give you advice if you need it and you may want to speak to them after the meeting, before you make a formal response to the allegation.

Stage 3: judging whether academic malpractice has occurred

During the meeting, the department representative will make an academic judgement on whether they believe that there is evidence that academic malpractice has taken place. If they decide that it has, you will then have the opportunity to state whether you want to accept or contest that finding or want more time to think about your decision. The decision you make at this point helps to determine what the next steps will be.

If you do not attend the meeting with the department, or if you want more time to think about whether or not to accept the department's finding, you will have 7 days following the date of the meeting in which to do this. If you fail to respond, it might be assumed that you are accepting the finding and any subsequent penalty.

Stage 4: Standard Penalty or Academic Malpractice Panel

If the department find that there is evidence of academic malpractice in your work, the case will be referred to the Student Affairs team in Academic Quality Support Services. An administrative check will be carried out to decide whether a standard penalty can be considered or whether the case needs to be heard by an Academic Malpractice Panel.

If the department finds that there is evidence of academic malpractice, to be eligible for a standard penalty:

1. The allegation made must be one of plagiarism or incorporating material previously submitted for credit (e.g. submitting the same, or very similar work twice);
2. You must have accepted the allegation;
3. It must be your first offence of academic malpractice;
4. You must be in position in which the regulations allow a reassessment; and
5. (at Level 7) less than half of the work must have been affected by the malpractice.

The standard penalties are the minimum penalties available. These will result in either failing the assessment component in question or failing the module. The penalty applied will depend on your level of study and whether more or less than half of the piece of work has been affected by malpractice. A standard penalty can only be given if, having failed the piece of work or the module, you would normally be entitled to a reassessment. If there is any doubt, the case must be heard by an Academic Malpractice Panel.

If a standard penalty is authorised, AQSS will write to you to confirm the outcome and the matter will be closed.

Academic Malpractice Panel

If the matter cannot be resolved through a standard penalty, it will be referred to a hearing of the Academic Malpractice Panel. AQSS will write to you to give you the date and time of the hearing and you will be invited to attend and/or make a written submission.

If you would normally have been eligible for a standard penalty, but you want to contest the allegation, the case will need to be heard by an Academic Malpractice Panel. **However, if the case is proven, the penalty must be no worse than the standard penalty.**

University Academic Malpractice Panel

Guidance for Students

Having received an allegation of academic malpractice from your department in relation to a piece of work that you have submitted for assessment, the matter has now been referred to the University Academic Malpractice Panel for consideration.

This guidance is intended to briefly explain what happens during the Panel and what the possible outcomes are. However, for full details of the process, you should refer to the *Procedures Governing the Occurrence of Academic Malpractice* which is available on the academic malpractice pages on Portal (go to <http://portal.chester.ac.uk> and click on 'Academic Malpractice').

Attending the Panel hearing

You will have received a letter telling you the time and location of the meeting. You should respond to that letter by the deadline provided and tell us if you want to attend the meeting or not. If you do want to attend, you have the right to be accompanied. The letter gives you details of who is permitted to accompany you.

If you are attending the meeting, you should arrive in good time and wait in the reception area or other designated waiting area of the building until someone comes to collect you. The Panel will not wait for you. If you are not at the waiting area in time, the hearing will normally go ahead in your absence.

If you do not attend, the Panel are not allowed to draw any conclusions from that and they must come to a decision based only on the information they receive from the department.

During the Panel

The Panel will consist of three members of academic staff, one of whom will be a senior member of staff who will Chair the meeting. There will be a Student Affairs Officer present who is not a member of the Panel, but who advises the Panel on the regulations and a Secretary who will take the minutes. Your department may also send a representative to explain the case to the Panel.

The hearing will normally be recorded. At the start of the meeting, the Student Affairs Officer will read out your student number so that the case can be identified on the recording. The Chair will introduce the members of the Panel and all other people in the room.

If your department has sent a representative, the Chair will normally ask them to outline the case and explain what steps the department takes to support students in avoiding academic malpractice. You will then be asked if you want to make any remarks of your own. The Panel might then want to ask you some questions about the work that has been presented.

The Panel understand that attending this type of meeting is stressful. The purpose of the Panel's questions are not to catch you out or to make you feel bad, but rather to

enable them to understand what has happened in order to arrive at an outcome that is proper and fair. If there is anything that is said at the hearing that you don't understand or that you would like clarification of, please let the Chair know.

The hearing is an opportunity for you for you to do the following:

1. If you disagree that you have engaged in academic malpractice, to explain why you think that is.
2. If you agree that there is evidence of academic malpractice present in your work, to explain what you have learned from the case to avoid a reoccurrence in future. You might also want to explain how you think it occurred in the first place. The Panel cannot take into account whether or not you intended to engage in academic malpractice, but it might consider what you say when deciding an appropriate penalty.

After the hearing

At the end of the hearing you will be advised that the outcome will be sent to you in writing (by email and post) within 10 working days. The Panel will then meet in private to decide what the outcome will be.

Outcomes

The detail here is a guide only, the Panel has full discretion in the decisions that it makes. The possible decisions are given in the *Procedures Governing the Occurrence of Academic Malpractice*.

When you receive the email/letter advising you of the outcome, the Panel's decisions will always be in 2 parts. Both parts must be read together:

Part 1 – decision(s) on each allegation

The Panel must decide whether or not academic malpractice has occurred in each of the pieces of work presented to it:

- If academic malpractice has not occurred or if there is insufficient evidence, there will be no penalty and the mark for that piece of work must be released in the normal way
- If less than half of the piece of work has been affected by academic malpractice, you will normally fail that component of assessment
- If more than half of the piece of work has been affected by academic malpractice, you will normally fail all components of assessment in that module.

If the Panel finds that there is evidence of academic malpractice present in your work it must impose a Part 1 penalty. This must happen irrespective of whether or not you intended to engage in malpractice and of any personal or other circumstances that might have affected you. As such, these are the minimum penalties available.

Part 2 – decisions on the case overall

The Panel will then look at the case overall and decide whether or not to apply an additional penalty. Additional penalties are normally applied if you have been found guilty of academic malpractice in the past or if the case is particularly serious.

The additional penalties vary in their severity. The least severe of these penalties would be to have all marks at a particular level of study capped. The most severe would be to have your studies terminated. There is a guidance document that is given to the Academic Malpractice panel which helps them to determine a penalty that is fair and consistent. You should receive a copy of that along with your invitation letter.

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