This regulation applies to students at PU sites of delivery and in all UK and international partnerships unless exceptions to regulations have been formally approved.

PLYMOUTH UNIVERSITY

Examination and Academic Offences Regulations
(changes since 2014/15 in bold and underlined)

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1 Introduction

1.1 These regulations apply to everyone enrolled on a Plymouth University award at undergraduate or postgraduate level (including those attending ad hoc or CPD courses whether or not these attract credit and recognised professional CPD hours). This includes students enrolled on Plymouth University awards in partner institutions (detailed arrangements are normally specified as part of the partnership agreement).

1.2 Students enrolled on a Plymouth University research degree who are undertaking taught modules as part of their programme of study will also be subject to these regulations for assessment undertaken on these taught modules. Separate procedures exist for offences involving the thesis or viva voce examination.

1.3 The University reserves the right to apply these regulations in cases where an examination or academic offence is identified after a student has left the University (i.e. to individuals who are not currently enrolled). This may lead to a decision by the University to revoke the award made to the former student.

1.4 Depending on the nature of the offence, cases will be reviewed under the Academic Offences Regulations or the Examination Offences Regulations. Where there is doubt as to which procedure is appropriate advice should be sought from the Complaints and Appeals Office.

1.5 A student cannot have credit awarded for the module/CPD activity in question until any allegation relating to an examination or academic offence is resolved.
1.6 Students and former students must note that conduct of a nature which would be inappropriate in some professions could require additional disciplinary action. Students whose programme leads to professional registration may be referred to the University’s Fitness to Practise Panels and/or other appropriate professional bodies, and may be required to declare any examination or academic offence to the professional body upon registration.

1.7 Students who are alleged to have committed an examination or academic offence are strongly recommended to seek independent advice and support from the Student Union Advice Centre who can be contacted at advice@upsu.com. Students at partner institutions can seek help locally from their Students Unions where such provision is available. If no provision is available locally, students at partner institutions can seek help and advice from Plymouth University Students Union.

1.8 Any dispute as to the interpretation of these regulations shall be referred to the Complaints and Appeals Manager, whose decision in the matter shall be final.

1.9 Partner institutions based overseas should note that, while the principles set out in these regulations will be adhered to at all times, there may be some operational differences in the implementation of the examination and academic offences procedures in these institutions due to logistical constraints.
2. **Examination Offences Regulations**

2.1 These regulations apply to examination offences occurring in formal University examinations (including postgraduate taught course examinations) and in-class tests.

2.2 The regulations normally apply only to those examinations and tests which contribute towards the award of credit or the satisfactory completion of CPD activity (i.e. summative and not formative assessments). On programmes leading to professional registration, alleged offences in formative assessment may also be referred through the full examination offences process and / or Fitness to Practise proceedings.

2.3 Where offences are identified in a formative assessment on all other programmes, these should be drawn to the student’s attention by the module leader and the student advised of the consequences of committing an offence in a summative assessment. Where a Tutor notices that a student has received such advice on a number of occasions, this may trigger a further discussion.

2.4 The University recognises the following (including any attempt to carry out the actions described) as examination offences, regardless of intent:

   a. **Possessing** or using in an examination or test any crib sheet, revision or other notes, books, paper, mobile phone, smart watch or electronic device of any kind other than those specifically permitted in the rubric of the examination paper. The offence lies in the possession of the material and does not depend on whether there was any intention to use the material.

   b. Obtaining access to an unseen examination or test material prior to the start of the examination/test.

   c. Failing to comply with the legitimate instructions of an invigilator or examiner, or with the instructions for candidates (including signage, written instructions, on-line information etc).

   d. Removing from an examination or test any script, paper, working notes or other official stationery (whether or not completed) or any electronic records provided as part of the examination unless specifically authorised by an invigilator or examiner.

   e. Being party to any arrangement where a person fraudulently represents, or intends to represent, a candidate in an examination or test (personation).

   f. Communicating with another student or with any third party, other than an invigilator or examiner whilst in the examination/test room.
g. Copying the work of another student, whether by overlooking their work, asking them for information, or by any other means, or knowingly allow their own work to be copied.

h. Making false declarations in an attempt to obtain either modified assessment provisions or special consideration (e.g. of extenuating circumstances).

i. Attempting to persuade another member of the University (student, staff, or invigilator) to participate in any actions which would be in breach of these regulations.

j. Being party to any arrangement which would constitute a breach of these regulations.

k. Undertake any other activity not described above which could confer an unfair advantage to any candidate(s) taking an examination or test.

2.5 All allegations of examination offences must be dealt with using the University's Examinations Offences Procedures (see sections 3 and 4 below).
3. **Examination Offences Procedures**

3.1 The University reserves the right to refer any case direct to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Pro Vice-Chancellors Teaching and Learning/Student Experience to decide whether immediate suspension or referral to the Fitness to Study procedure is required. The decision on whether to refer the case to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Pro Vice-Chancellors Teaching and Learning/Student Experience will take into account matters including, but not limited to, the severity of the alleged offence or any potential risk to the student’s health or welfare.

3.2 The composition of the University Examination Offences Panel will be as follows:

- Chair or Vice-Chair (nominated by the Pro Vice-Chancellor for Teaching and Learning, and approved by the Vice-Chancellor. For UK Partner College cases, the Chair should be a Faculty Partnership Manager or the Head of UK Partnerships)
- Two academic members (normally drawn from a pool of 12 academic staff, nominated by Deans of Faculty. For UK Partner College cases, the academic members of the Panel should normally be drawn from a Partner College(s) other than the College in which the student under investigation is studying). **If a member of the Partner College is not available, the academic members of the Panel should be drawn from Academic Partnerships**
- Complaints and Appeals Manager or nominee (in attendance in an advisory capacity and to take notes)

The Panel will be considered quorate provided that one academic staff member is present, in addition to the Panel Chair and Complaints and Appeals Manager or nominee.

All members of the Panel will have equal voting rights. A decision will be taken based on the majority vote wherever possible. When required, the Chair shall have the deciding vote.

3.3 The Examinations Office and the Complaints and Appeals Office will provide administrative support for the operation of the Panel.

3.4 A Panel member may not consider the case of a student from their own School or Partner College, or a student they know. Any conflict of interests should be declared to the Complaints and Appeals Office.

3.5 The Examinations Panel will meet monthly. The dates of all meetings for each academic year will be made available to all potential Panel members by the end of the preceding academic year.
3.6 Where a student is suspected of having committed an offence in a formal University examination, the invigilators will follow the process (see https://intranet.plymouth.ac.uk/invig/intranet.htm) to report the incident.

3.7 Where a student is suspected of having committed an offence in an in-class test the invigilators will complete the incident report form, (https://intranet.plymouth.ac.uk/invig/intranet.htm), copying it to the Examinations Office and Faculty Office and, if appropriate, the Academic Partnerships Office, within 5 working days of the date of the test.

3.8 The alleged offence will be investigated by the Examinations Office in liaison with the Complaints Office. If the student is undertaking a taught module whilst enrolled on a research degree, the Graduate School will be informed of the investigation.

3.9 If the Examinations Office completes its investigation and concludes that there is no evidence of an offence being committed, then all records of the allegation will be removed from the student's permanent record at the University and, if appropriate, the partner institution, and the student will be informed of this in writing.

3.10 If the Examinations Office completes its investigation and concludes that there is evidence of an offence having been committed, the Examinations Office will write to the student by recorded delivery (to both term-time and home addresses) and the student’s University email address. The letter will set out the allegation, provide a copy of the evidence that is to be considered and give the student the opportunity to accept or contest the allegation. The student must notify the Examinations Office in writing of their intention to accept or contest the alleged offence normally within 10 working days of the date of the letter/email notifying them of the allegation.

3.11 The Complaints and Appeals Office, in liaison with the Faculty Registrar (or Programme Administration Manager in Academic Partnerships), will establish if there have been any other substantiated academic or examination offences, or if any other work submitted by the student is currently under investigation. This information will not be disclosed to the Examinations Offences Panel until the student has been deemed to have committed an offence and the Panel is considering the penalty to be applied.

3.12 If the student accepts the allegation, all relevant documentation (including information about any other substantiated examination/academic offences) will be circulated, normally via electronic means, to the members of the Panel to determine the outcome. The Complaints and Appeals Office will be responsible for notifying the student and the Faculty (and the Academic Partnerships Office or Graduate School, if appropriate) of the Panel’s decision.
Where a student is enrolled on a Plymouth University programme in a partner institution, the Programme Administration Manager is responsible for informing the partner institution of the Panel’s decision.

3.13 Where a student confirms in writing their intention to contest the allegation, the Examinations Office will write to the student to confirm:

- The time and the date of the Examination Offences Panel meeting, and confirmation that the student has already been sent all of the evidence to be considered by the Panel (as part of the letter described in 3.11 above). The meeting will normally take place on the main Plymouth University campus in Plymouth. The date of the meeting will be no earlier than 10 working days from the date of the letter from the Examinations Office, to allow the student time and opportunity to collate evidence, arrange for the attendance of witnesses, etc.

- That the student can appear in person. The student may be accompanied by another person of their choosing who may assist the student during the course of the meeting by speaking and asking questions on the student’s behalf. They may take a written record on the student’s behalf. (The use of electronic audio recording equipment will not normally be allowed).

- A student will not be permitted to bring a legal representative to a formal hearing unless the decision of the Panel or Committee is likely to exclude the student from professional registration permanently, without right to appeal, thereby preventing the student from following his or her intended career.

- Alternatively, the student may submit a statement for the Panel to consider if they do not wish to appear in person.

- That the student may call witnesses if they wish. The responsibility for arranging witnesses’ attendance is the student’s. Students will be required to confirm the identity of any witnesses they will be calling to the Examinations Office in advance of the Panel meeting.

- The identity of any witnesses who will be called by the University.

- The membership of the Panel.

3.14 The Panel will consider all of the evidence put before it and will ask questions of both the student and any witnesses relating to the alleged offence in order to establish the facts of the case. The student (or their representative) will have the opportunity to ask questions of any witnesses. If the student chooses not to appear before the Panel then their written statement will be considered by the Panel.
3.15 The Examination Offences Panel will decide as follows:

3.15.1 That the allegation is not substantiated and that no further action is required; in this case, the Complaints and Appeals Office, in liaison with the Faculty Registrar (or Programme Administration Manager in Academic Partnerships), will ensure that all records relating to the allegation are removed from the student’s permanent record at the University (and partner institution if appropriate).

or

3.15.2 That the allegation is substantiated and that one of the following penalties (3.17 - 3.19) will be applied. At this stage, the Panel will be made aware of any previous substantiated offences committed by the student (reference paragraph 3.11 above).

3.16 The tariff below (3.17 - 3.19) specifies the penalties to be imposed. The penalty awarded by the Panel in accordance with the tariff shall be binding upon the Award Assessment Board.

3.17 The penalties that can be imposed are as follows:

3.17.1 No mark penalty will be applied but the offence be recorded on the student’s permanent record and the student be required to undertake appropriate remediation.

3.17.2 A mark of zero will be recorded for the assessment in question.

3.17.3 A mark of zero will be recorded for the element in question.

3.17.4 A mark of zero will be recorded for the module of which the assessment formed a part.

3.17.5 The final aggregate mark for the programme will be reduced by 10%.

3.17.6 A mark of zero be recorded for the module of which the assessment formed a part, the student is barred from taking the module again and must withdraw from the programme.

3.17.7 The Panel may also wish to recommend whether if the student is permitted to resubmit the assessment in question or repeat the module the student should be awarded credit only with zero marks on successful completion.
3.18 A student on a programme leading to registration with a professional body is likely to be required to declare any substantiated offence with that professional body upon registration. The University may also inform the professional body.

3.19 Exceptionally, the Panel may conclude that an offence is so serious that it should be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Pro Vice-Chancellors Teaching and Learning/ Student Experience with the recommendation that the student is excluded from the University and/or partner institution. Where such a referral is made for a student on a Plymouth University programme at a partner institution, the Principal of the partner institution will also be consulted.

3.20 The Secretary to the Panel will report the Panel’s decision to the student, Dean of Faculty or Academic Partnerships, Faculty Registrar (or Programme Administration Manager in Academic Partnerships) and Graduate School (where appropriate) in writing within 5 working days of the date of the Panel’s decision. Where a student is enrolled on a Plymouth University programme in a partner institution, the Programme Administration Manager is responsible for informing the partner institution of the Panel’s decision.

3.21 Substantiated offences will be reported to the Subject Assessment Panel/Award Assessment Board.

4. **Appeal Against the Decision of an Examinations Offences Panel**

4.1 A student may appeal against the decision or penalty imposed by the Examination Offences Panel on the following grounds;

   a) Evidence of administrative error or procedural irregularity which casts doubt on the conclusion of the Panel that an offence has occurred or on the fairness of the penalty imposed;

   b) Where there is new evidence could not reasonably have been made available to the Examinations Offences Panel at the time it made its decision;

   c) Where there is evidence that the Examination Offences Panel acted unfairly or failed to take into account matters which it should have done in reaching its decision.

4.2 Appeals should be submitted in line with the University’s Academic Appeals Procedure available at
4.3 Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Complaints and Appeals Office within 10 working days of the date of the letter notifying the student of the outcome of the Panel hearing.

4.4 Following completion of the University's internal appeals procedures, a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued. A student who remains dissatisfied with the outcome may make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.
5. **Academic Offences Regulations**

5.1 These regulations apply to offences occurring in formal University assessments (excluding formal examinations and in-class tests, which are dealt with under the Examination Offences Regulations).

5.2 These regulations normally apply only to those assessments which contribute towards the award of credit for taught modules or the satisfactory completion of CPD activity (i.e. summative and not formative assessments). On programmes leading to professional registration, alleged offences in formative assessment may also be referred through the full academic offences process and/or Fitness to Practise proceedings.

5.3 Where offences are identified in a formative assessment on all other programmes, these should be drawn to the student’s attention by the module leader and the student advised of the consequences of committing an offence in a summative assessment. Where a Tutor notices that a student has received such advice on a number of occasions, this may trigger a further discussion.

5.4 Academic offences occur when activity is undertaken which could confer an unfair advantage to any candidate(s) in assessment. The University recognises the following (including any attempt to carry out the actions described) as academic offences, regardless of intent:

   a. Copying or paraphrasing of other people’s work or ideas into a submitted assessment without full acknowledgement (plagiarism).

   b. Unauthorised collaboration of students (or others) in a piece of work (collusion).

   c. Making false declarations in an attempt to obtain either modified assessment provisions or special consideration (e.g. of extenuating circumstances).

   d. Persuading another member of the University or partner institution (student, staff, or invigilator) to participate in any way in actions which would be in breach of these regulations.

   e. Misrepresenting research outcomes and results.

   f. Being party to any arrangement which would constitute a breach of these regulations.

   g. The inclusion in a piece of assessed work (other than an examination or test) of material which is identical or substantially similar to material which has already been submitted for any other assessment within the University.
h. Any other activity not described above which could confer an unfair advantage to any candidate(s).

5.5 All allegations of academic offences must be dealt with using the University's Academic Offences Procedures (see sections 6 and 7 below).
6. **Academic Offences Procedures**

6.1 The University reserves the right to refer any case direct to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Pro Vice-Chancellors Teaching and Learning/Student Experience to decide whether immediate suspension or referral to the Fitness to Study procedure is required.

6.2 The composition of the Academic Offences Panel will be as follows:

- Chair or Vice-Chair (normally a member of Faculty. For Partner College cases, the Chair should be a Faculty Partnership Manager or the Head of UK Partnerships)
- Two academic members (normally drawn from a pool of 12 academic staff, nominated by Deans of Faculty. For UK Partner College cases, the academic members of the Panel should normally be drawn from a Partner College(s) other than the College in which the student under investigation is studying). If a member of the Partner College is not available, the academic members of the Panel should be drawn from Academic Partnerships
- Faculty Registrar or nominee (in attendance in an advisory capacity and to take notes).

The Panel will be considered quorate provided that one academic staff member is present, in addition to the Panel Chair and Faculty Registrar or nominee.

All members of the Panel will have equal voting rights. A decision will be taken based on the majority vote wherever possible. When required, the Chair shall have the deciding vote.

6.3 The Faculty/Academic Partnerships will provide administrative support for the operation of the Panel.

6.4 Panel Chairs and the pool of academic members of Faculty Panels will be determined by the Dean and notified to the Complaints and Appeals Office by the Faculty Registrar (or Programme Administration Manager in Academic Partnerships) each year.

6.5 The Academic Offences Panel will meet monthly. The dates of all meetings for each academic year will be made available to all potential Panel members by the end of the preceding academic year.

6.6 Where a student is suspected of having committed an assessment offence the module leader will investigate the alleged offence in consultation with the Faculty Registrar (or Programme Administration Manager in Academic Partnerships). If the student is undertaking a taught module whilst registered for a research degree, the Faculty Registrar will inform the Graduate School.
6.7 If the Module Leader completes the investigation and concludes that there is no evidence of an offence being committed, then all records of the allegation will be removed from the student’s permanent record.

6.8 If the Module Leader completes the investigation and concludes that there is evidence to suggest of an academic offence being committed, the Faculty Registrar (or HE Co-ordinator or equivalent in Academic Partnerships) will write to the student by recorded delivery (to both term-time and home address) and the student’s University email address. The letter will set out the allegation, provide a copy of the evidence that is to be considered and give the student the opportunity to accept or contest the allegation. The student should notify the Faculty Registrar (or Programme Administration Manager in Academic Partnerships) in writing of their intention to accept or contest the alleged offence normally within 10 working days of the date of the letter/email notifying them of the allegation.

6.9 If the student accepts the allegation, all relevant documentation (including information about any previous proven examination/academic offences) will be circulated, normally via electronic means, to the members of the Panel who will determine the outcome of the case. A formal meeting of the Panel will not normally be held. The Chair of the Panel will be responsible for notifying the Faculty Registrar (or Programme Administration Manager in Academic Partnerships) of the outcome. The Faculty Registrar (or Programme Administration Manager in Academic Partnerships) will then write to the student to confirm the Panel’s decision and will report the outcome and penalty imposed to the Complaints and Appeals Office.

6.10 Where a student confirms in writing their intention to contest the allegation, the Faculty Registrar (or Programme Administration Manager in Academic Partnerships) will write to the student to confirm:

- The time and the date of the Academic Offences Panel meeting and confirmation that the student has already been sent all of the evidence to be considered by the Panel (as part of the letter described in 6.8 above). The meeting will normally take place on the main Plymouth University campus in Plymouth. The date of the meeting will be no earlier than 10 working days from the date of the letter from the Faculty Registrar (or Programme Administration Manager in Academic Partnerships), to allow the student time and opportunity to collate evidence, arrange for the attendance of witnesses, etc.

- That the student can appear in person. The student may be accompanied by another person of their choosing who may assist the student during the course of the meeting by speaking and asking questions on the student’s behalf. They may take a written record on the student’s behalf. (The use of electronic audio recording equipment will not normally be allowed).
• **A student will not be permitted to bring a legal representative to a formal hearing unless the decision of the Panel or Committee is likely to exclude the student from professional registration permanently, without right to appeal, thereby preventing the student from following his or her intended career.**

• Alternatively, the student may submit a statement for the Panel to consider if they do not wish to appear in person.

• That the student may call witnesses if they wish. The responsibility for arranging witnesses’ attendance is the student’s. Students will be required to confirm the identity of any witnesses they will be calling to the Faculty Registrar (or Programme Administration Manager in Academic Partnerships) in advance of the Panel meeting.

• The identity of any witnesses who will be called by the University.

• The membership of the Panel.

6.11 The Faculty Registrar (or Programme Administration Manager in Academic Partnerships), in liaison with academic staff, will establish if there have been any other substantiated offences, or if any other work submitted by the student is currently under investigation. This information will not be disclosed to the Academic Offences Panel until the student has been deemed to have committed an offence and the Panel is considering the penalty to be applied.

6.12 Written statements will be submitted to the Faculty Registrar (or Programme Administration Manager in Academic Partnerships) by the student and any other relevant parties. These papers together with any additional information will be circulated to the Academic Offences Panel, and the student no later than 5 working days before the Panel meeting.

6.13 During the meeting, the student will have the opportunity to present their case. The student’s representative may also speak on their behalf.

6.14 The Panel will consider all of the evidence put before it and will ask questions of both the student and any witnesses relating to the alleged offence in order to establish the facts of the case. The student (or their representative) will have the opportunity to ask questions of any witnesses. If the student chooses not to appear before the Panel then their written statement will be considered by the Panel.

6.15 The Module Leader should be available at the time of the Panel meeting, should the Panel require clarification on any points of fact.
6.16 The Academic Offences Panel will decide as follows:

6.16.1 That the allegation is not substantiated and that no further action is required; in this case, the Faculty Registrar (or Programme Administration Manager in Academic Partnerships) will ensure that all records relating to the allegation are removed from the student's record at the University (and partner institution if appropriate).

or

6.16.2 That the allegation is substantiated and that one of the following penalties (6.17 - 6.18) will be applied. At this stage, the Panel will be made aware of any previous proven offences committed by the student.

6.17 The penalties that can be imposed are as follows:

6.17.1 No mark penalty will be applied but the offence be recorded on the student’s permanent record and the student be required to undertake appropriate remediation.

6.17.2 A mark of zero will be recorded for the assessment in question.

6.17.3 A mark of zero will be recorded for the element.

6.17.4 A mark of zero will be recorded for the module of which the assessment formed a part.

6.17.5 The final aggregate mark for the programme will be reduced by 10%.

6.17.6 A mark of zero be recorded for the module of which the assessment formed a part, the student is barred from taking the module again and must withdraw from the programme.

6.17.7 The Panel may also wish to recommend whether if the student is permitted to resubmit the assessment in question or repeat the module the student should be awarded credit only with zero marks on successful completion

6.18 A student on a programme leading to registration with a professional body is likely to be required to declare any substantiated offence with that professional body upon registration. The University may also inform the professional body about the offence.
6.19 Exceptionally, the Panel may conclude that an offence is so serious that it should be referred to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor or Pro Vice-Chancellors Teaching and Learning/ Student Experience with the recommendation that the student is excluded from the University and/or partner institution. Where such a referral is made for a student on a Plymouth University programme at a partner institution, the Principal of the partner institution will also be consulted.

6.20 The Faculty Registrar (or Programme Administration Manager in Academic Partnerships) will report the Panel's decision to the student, the School (and the partner institution or Graduate School if appropriate) in writing within 5 working days of the date of the Panel's decision.

7. Appeal Against the Decision of an Academic Offences Panel

7.1 A student may appeal against the decision or penalty imposed by the Academic Offences Panel on the following grounds;

a) Evidence of administrative error or procedural irregularity which casts doubt on the conclusion of the Panel that an offence has occurred or on the fairness of the penalty imposed;

b) Where there is new evidence which for good reason was not available to the Academic Offences Panel at the time it made its decision;

c) Where there is evidence that the Academic Offences Panel acted unfairly or failed to take into account matters which it should have done in reaching its decision.

7.2 Appeals must be submitted in line with the University’s Academic Appeals Procedure available at:

https://www.plymouth.ac.uk/student-life/your-studies/essential-information/regulations

7.3 Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Complaints and Appeals Office within 10 working days of the date of the letter notifying the student of the outcome of the Panel hearing.

7.4 Following completion of the University's internal appeals procedure, a Completion of Procedures letter will be issued. A student who remains dissatisfied with the outcome may make a complaint to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.
Summary of any amendments: A student will not be permitted to bring a legal representative to a formal hearing unless the decision of the Panel or Committee is likely to exclude the student from professional registration permanently, without right to appeal, thereby preventing the student from following his or her intended career.

Document objectives: To describe the University’s regulations and procedures for dealing with academic and examination offences, 2015-16.

Intended Recipients: Students and staff

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