

In recent months, the number of allegations of breaches of the Academic Integrity Policy (the Policy) which require an Academic Integrity Review Panel (the Panel) have increased substantially. In parallel to this, the availability of academic staff required to fulfil the independence requirements of the Panel has decreased. Whilst we hope that this is a short-term problem, in order not to unduly delay students, this new process has been developed. It is intended to preserve the key elements of the Policy, whilst allowing cases to be expedited in specific circumstances.

1. Scope

- 1.1. This Annex sets out a time limited amendment to the current Academic Integrity Procedures. In the first instance, it is intended that it shall apply from 1 February 2022 until 31 August 2022.
- 1.2. The Annex amends Part F of the Academic Integrity Procedures alone. However, the consideration of cases and the application of penalties under this annex may alter the meaning of other elements of the procedure. Where this happens, the procedures will be interpreted in such a way as to maintain the consistency of approach.
- 1.3. The Annex provides a Chair of the Panel power to evaluate cases (detailed in 2.1) and decide the outcome on behalf of the Panel in conjunction with advice from AQS.
- 1.4. This Annex does not impact the definitions or penalties of the Academic Integrity Procedure. Nor does this Annex impact the right of a student for their case to be heard at a full Panel.
- 1.5. This Annex provides for the Chair of the Panel to evaluate a case presented by an academic department and, where the student has signalled that they agree with the findings made on behalf of the Chair of the Module Assessment Board, apply an appropriate penalty.

2. Determination of Case Eligibility for Chair Evaluation

- 2.1. Once a case file has been received by AQS, the Quality Manager, or nominee, will decide whether the student and case is eligible for consideration by Chair Evaluation. Eligibility will be confirmed where all of the following criteria are met:
 - 2.1.1. The case would normally have been considered by the Panel;
 - 2.1.2. The student has accepted the allegation by signature (or by default);
 - 2.1.3. The case does not contain an allegation of commissioning or cheating in an exam;
 - 2.1.4. The student would have further assessment attempts should a penalty be imposed.
- 2.2. Where one, or more of the criteria in 2.1 are not met, the case will be referred for a full hearing and Part F of the procedure will apply as normal.

3. Chair Evaluation of an Academic Integrity Case

- 3.1. The Chair will only consider cases that meet the criteria given in 2.1.
- 3.2. The Chair Evaluation meeting will consist of a Chair of the Panel, and the Quality Manager or nominee present to give procedural advice.

- 3.3. The Chair must declare any conflicts of interest. In the event of a conflict being identified, the case will either be deferred to the next available meeting or scheduled for a hearing by the Panel (whichever is sooner).
 - 3.4. A student whose case has been referred for Chair Evaluation will not have the right to attend the meeting.
 - 3.5. The Chair will review the case file and before deciding an outcome must satisfy itself that:
 - 3.5.1. The allegation that the student's work has breached the Academic Integrity Policy has been proven on the balance of probability through the submission of sufficient evidence; and
 - 3.5.2. There are no further questions required of either the student or department to come to a decision.
 - 3.6. Where the Chair satisfies itself in relation to all of the points in 3.5, it will act on behalf of the Chair of the Module Assessment Board and authorise a penalty in accordance with section 4 of this annex.
 - 3.7. Where the Chair cannot satisfy itself in relation to any of the points in 3.5, it will refer the matter to a full hearing of the Panel and Part F of the procedure will apply as normal.
 - 3.8. Where the recommended penalty would leave the student without any further assessment opportunity, that penalty will not be imposed, and the Chair will refer the case to a full hearing of the Panel.
 - 3.9. Cases that are referred to a full hearing of the Panel, for any reason, will be considered according to Part F of the procedure alone. At the hearing, no reference will be made to any deliberations or provisional findings made during the Chair Evaluation process and nor will any details of the same be disclosed to the Panel at any stage.
 - 3.10. The Chair's decision on whether a piece of work is in breach of the Academic Integrity Policy is an academic judgment.
 - 3.11. The Chair's decision will be communicated to the student via their University of Chester email address, normally within 14 days. The student will receive an explanation for the Chair's decision.
 - 3.12. The Deputy Registrar and the Chair of the Module Assessment Board will be notified as soon as possible, normally within 7 days of the Chair's decision being made.
4. Application of Penalties
 - 4.1. The Chair will have access to all penalties that are available the Panel as set out in Part F of the procedure with the exception of those that result in a student's programme of study at the University being terminated.
 - 4.2. The Chair, having regard to advice from AQS will impose a penalty as per the guidance and regulations given in Part F of the procedures. If they are unable to do so, for any reason, the

case will be referred for a full hearing by the Panel.

- 4.3. The Chair will provide the reason(s) for the penalty imposed to be communicated to the student.
 - 4.4. Where the chosen penalty would leave the student without any further assessment opportunity, the case will be referred to a full hearing of the Panel.
5. Contesting the Outcome of a Chair Evaluation meeting.
- 5.1. A student is entitled to appeal to on the grounds of a procedural or administrative irregularity in the conduct of this procedure. Appeals must be submitted in accordance with Handbook F, Section 10.
 - 5.2. A student may not appeal against the final decision that piece of work is in breach of the Academic Integrity Policy solely on the ground of a disagreement with that decision.
 - 5.3. A student may appeal against the penalty imposed only if they can demonstrate that it is not consistent with the procedure or is otherwise manifestly unreasonable. Appeals based solely on the ground of a disagreement with the penalty decision are unlikely to be admissible.