

Academic Conduct Procedure

Guidance for Students

Your department has alleged that a piece of work you have submitted for assessment is in breach of the Academic Conduct Policy. **The University takes breaches of the Academic Conduct Policy 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 full details of the process, you should take a moment to read the Academic Conduct Policy and the associated procedure, available on Portal (to <http://portal1.chester.ac.uk/aqs> and click on 'Academic Standards' > 'Academic Conduct')

Stage 1: Allegation

You will have received a letter from your department inviting you to a meeting to discuss the work that has been submitted, along with the 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 considered when deciding to make the 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 your academic department

The meeting with your academic department allows for the allegation to be discussed further and is an opportunity for you to say anything you feel is relevant, to present a defence to the allegation and to put forward any points of mitigation you feel are applicable. You may wish to provide a written response in place of attending the meeting, or you might feel that you do not need to attend the meeting and the process can continue without immediate response from you. You have the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a friend (as long as they are also a current student at the University of Chester) or by a member of Chester Students' Union. Chester Students' Union can also give you advice ahead of the meeting, so you may wish to speak with them before you make a formal response to the allegation. Once the meeting has concluded, the Chair of the Module Assessment Board (or nominee) conducting the meeting will decide whether there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that the work you have submitted has breached the University's Academic Conduct Policy.

Stage 3: Outcome of the meeting

At the end of the meeting, your department will decide, based on all of the evidence available and any information and response you have provided, whether there is sufficient evidence of a breach of the Academic Conduct Policy, on the balance of probabilities.

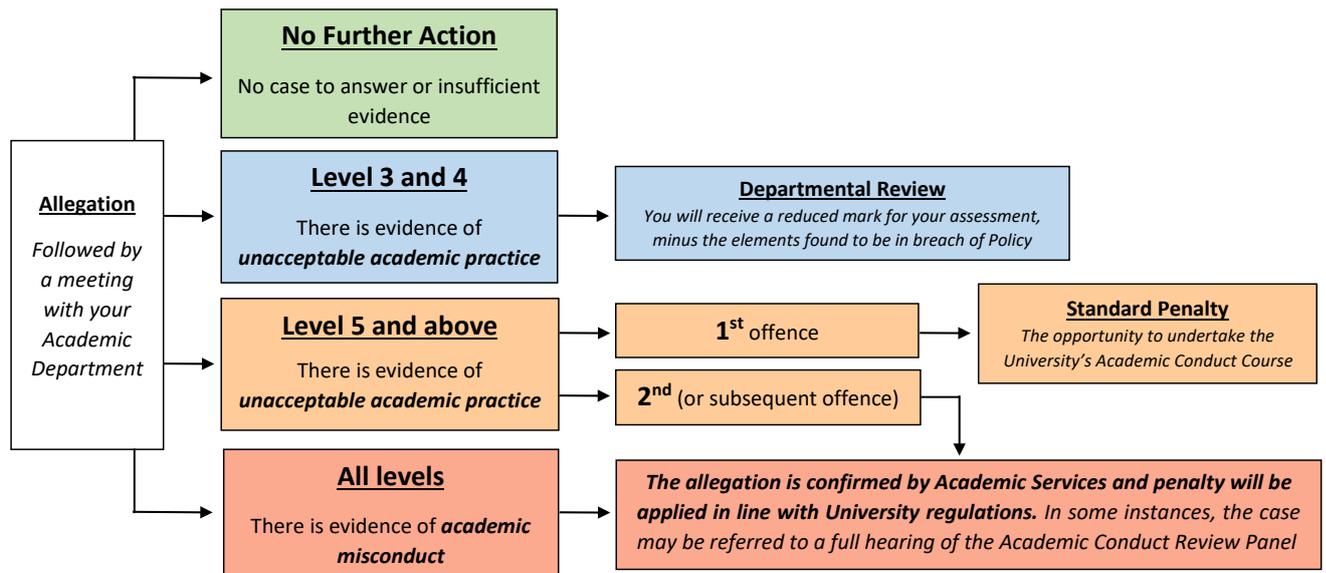
If your department find that a breach of Policy has NOT occurred, then no further action will be taken and you will be issued with a provisional mark in the normal way.

If your department find that a breach of Policy HAS occurred, then the case will be forwarded to Academic Services who will confirm the allegation and apply any relevant penalty, in line with the regulations. Your department will not be able to advise you on what any penalty might be, as this will depend on a number of factors, including (but not limited to) the nature of the allegation, your response, your level of study and whether you have been found to have breached the Academic Conduct Policy in the past.



In some instances, the case may be referred to a full hearing of the Academic Conduct Review Panel, who will make the final decision. If this happens, Academic Services will be able to provide you with further details.

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



Departmental Review (Level 3 or 4 only)

If the department believe there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that your work breaches the Academic Conduct Policy by means of unacceptable academic practice, you will still be entitled to a mark. However, the marker will disregard all of the elements of your work that are in breach of the Academic Conduct Policy and the provisional mark you receive will be based only on the remainder. Therefore, you should expect the mark to be much lower than it would otherwise have been.

If you disagree with the department's findings, you might be able to request an independent review. To do this, you must normally have attended the meeting with the department to discuss the allegation and you must have good reason for disagreeing; it is not acceptable to say that the department were mistaken without having a compelling reason. You should contact the Student Casework Team in Academic Services by emailing academicconduct@chester.ac.uk if you want to request an independent review.

Standard Penalty (Level 5 and above)

If the department finds that there is evidence to show that you have breached the Academic Conduct Policy at Level 5 or above, to be eligible for a standard penalty:

1. The suspected breach of the Academic Conduct Policy must be one of unacceptable academic practice only and sufficient evidence of this must be presented by your academic department,



2. You must not have previously breached the Academic Conduct Policy at Level 5 or higher; and
3. You must be entitled to a further reassessment attempt (i.e. it must not be your final attempt at the assessment).

If any of these do not apply or if there is any doubt, your case will not be eligible for the standard penalty.

If you are eligible, your case will be reviewed by Academic Services to confirm the allegation and apply the standard penalty. You will be given the opportunity to complete the online Academic Conduct Course within 14 days. You will receive an email to your University of Chester account with further details.

If you successfully complete and pass the test at the end of the Academic Conduct Course, you will be entitled to a provisional mark for the work you have submitted. However, the marker will disregard all of the elements of your work that are in breach of the Academic Conduct Policy and the provisional mark you receive will be based only on the remainder. Therefore, you should expect the mark to be much lower than it would otherwise have been.

It will always be in your best interests to engage with the Academic Conduct Course and attempt the test. Failure to either successfully complete or engage with the course would result in you receiving a mark of zero for the piece of work or entire module respectively.

All other allegations (All Levels)

If the matter cannot be resolved through a departmental review or a standard penalty, Academic Services will determine the relevant penalty, based on the regulations. Any penalty will vary depending on a number of factors, including, but not limited to, level of study, the nature of the allegation, what you have said during the meeting, any previous recorded offences.

What if I disagree with the allegation? Can I appeal?

If you disagree that the work you have submitted is in breach of Policy, your opportunity to explain why you disagree and present a defence to the allegation is during the meeting with your academic department. This can then be considered by your academic department before a decision is made.

The decision that a piece of work is in breach of Policy is an academic judgement. Students are not permitted to appeal on the basis of disagreement with an academic judgement or on the grounds that they feel the department is mistaken in its decision.

If your work is found to be in breach of Policy, the outcome letter you will receive will outline the grounds on which you can appeal and the timeframes for doing so.

In some circumstances, a case might be referred to a full hearing of the Academic Conduct Review Panel. This can be for a variety of reasons, but will normally be where the allegation is unclear, unusually complex or in some instances where the allegation is exceptionally serious. If this happens, Academic Services will contact you with further information.

For independent advice and guidance on any of the University's procedures, it is recommended that you speak with Chester Students' Union. For further details, you should visit <https://www.chestersu.com/advice>.