

University College Cork

Plagiarism Policy

1 Plagiarism - Definition

1.1 Plagiarism is the presentation of work for credit without appropriate attribution. Whether done **deliberately or inadvertently, it is unacceptable**, since it is an attempt to claim credit for work previously submitted by you and/or not done by you and fails to give credit for the work as appropriate. Plagiarism applies not just to text but applies to any other format such as graphics, tables, formulae, or any representation of ideas in print, electronic or any other media, in addition to computer software and algorithms. Whether deliberate or inadvertent (as in the case of carelessness or poor academic discipline) plagiarism undermines scholarship, is a form of academic misconduct, and conflicts with the ethos of the University. The University takes any form of plagiarism very seriously and plagiarism is subject to disciplinary procedures set out below (Breach of University Examination Regulations and Proceduresⁱ – Section 10)

2 Types of plagiarism

2.1 The preparation of any work to be presented as part of an assessment, examination, research or scholarly submission, can draw on previous works or ideas of yours or others. It is imperative that this work is fully acknowledged following the standard referencing practice within the particular discipline. If in doubt, contact your School or Department for further discipline-specific information. Guidance is also available from sources including the UCC library, e.g. <https://libguides.ucc.ie/academicintegrity>.

2.2 Self-plagiarism, the presentation of work previously submitted by a candidate in a different context without citing that it was previously presented, is treated in the same way as any other form of plagiarism.

2.3 In some cases, particularly in the professional academic arena, plagiarism may also be a **breach of copyright**, which may expose the copier to civil and/or criminal proceedings if within the timeframe of the copyright. Plagiarism may also relate to unpublished material, such as the notes of others, which may not be covered by copyright. There is no expiry date on plagiarism: inappropriate use of material which is no longer subject to copyright may also constitute plagiarism.

2.4 **Collusion**, where work is permitted to be copied/presented without appropriate attribution, is a form of plagiarism by both parties. Collusion also applies where a joint effort is presented by an individual without due recognition of the input of others.

3 Best practice

3.1 Acknowledgement of the influence of **all** sources quoted directly and/or not quoted directly must be made at the appropriate point throughout the work. The discipline-specific citation, referencing, credit and/or acknowledgement requirements must be applied in all submitted material. At a minimum a clear indication as to when any material is being quoted directly (e.g. by enclosing it in quotation marks [“ ”] in the case of text) must be provided in addition to a citation of the source.

3.2 Each School/Department may have **additional** plagiarism policies which identify any cultural, technical or other issues that may arise within a particular discipline and each School/Department shall inform students of the plagiarism policy through lecture(s), handbooks, hand-outs, the web, etc.

3.3 Prior to submitting any piece of work, each student will be required to complete an online self-certification form which confirms the student is aware of his/her obligations regarding plagiarism.

4 Procedures, penalties and appeal

4.1 All essays, dissertations, projects, portfolios or other forms of academic submission, to include all forms of research results howsoever presented for evaluation, may be checked for plagiarism. Where a University electronic system, supervisor, examiner, invigilator or other (including External Examiner) suspects plagiarism during an invigilated or non-invigilated examination or assessment, then they will consult their Head of School/ Department or nominee in the first instance.

4.2 If the Head of School/ Department or nominee determines that the allegation does not amount to plagiarism, this will be notified to the student.

4.3 If the Head of School/ Department or nominee suspects that plagiarism has occurred, the Head of School/ Department or nominee will inform the student, in writing, of the allegation and prior findings, if any, of plagiarism and provide the student with an opportunity to provide an explanation (Personal Statement). The Head of School/ Department or nominee will consider the allegation, Personal Statement (if provided) and any information available, including the student's examination records, to take one of the following options:

Option A:

The Head of School/ Department or nominee will immediately make a full report in writing to the Student Records and Examinations Officer, in which case the procedures for Breach of Examination Regulations and Procedures will be invokedⁱ. The process, as set out in Section 10, below, will apply.

Option B:

Exercise discretion to pursue the matter without reference to the Student Records and Examination Officer, in which case the Head or nominee will determine the appropriate penalty (if any), which will not exceed assigning a mark of zero in the piece of work to which the offence relates. For the avoidance of doubt, this provision relates to the mark allocated to the **full piece of work** concerned and not the section or part deemed to have been in breach of examination regulations. No sanction from a Head of School/Department or nominee may be extended beyond the result for the piece of work concerned. For the

absence of doubt, where a sanction results in a FAIL judgement for the module, capping will be applied to marks achieved at the Supplemental Examination.

Option C: Remote Examination:

Exercise discretion to pursue the matter without reference to the Student Records and Examination Officer, in which case the Head or nominee will determine the appropriate penalty (if any), which will not normally exceed assigning a mark of zero in the section(s) or part(s) of work to which the offence relates. No sanction from a Head of School/Department or nominee may normally be extended beyond the result for the piece of work concerned. In **exceptional circumstances only**, the severity of the matter may warrant sanction across all section(s) or part(s) of the work submitted for assessment. For the avoidance of doubt - where a sanction results in a FAIL judgement for the module, capping will be applied to marks achieved at the Supplemental Examination.

Appeal

Students have a right of appeal, where they believe that they have been treated unfairly by the plagiarism procedures. Such appeals are dealt with through the standard UCC Examination Appeals process (*Section 19. Guide to Examinations and Assessment for Staff and Students*)

5 Outcome

5.1 The Head of School/Department or nominee may determine the appropriate outcome of the breach can be dealt with under Option B or Option C above and make a determination. Should a sanction be imposed, the student, having been informed, may choose either:

(i) to **accept the outcome** as a final decision, in which case a summary reportⁱⁱ of the circumstances of the case and level of penalty exacted will be lodged by the Head of School/Department or nominee with the Student Records and Examination Officer. Details of the alleged breach and the determination may be retained and may be considered by the University in the event of a further allegation of breach of the examination guidelines and/or student rules

or

(ii) Confirm within seven [7] days of the determination under Option B or Option C that they **do not agree** to same. In the event that the student does not agree with the determination of the Head of School/Department or nominee under Option B or Option C, above, the allegation will be referred to the Student Records and Examination Officer.

5.2 Whether Option A, Option B or Option C is taken, copies of all relevant documentation will be made available to the student.

6 Plagiarism at Postgraduate level

6.1 Plagiarism at postgraduate level 5.1 Theses/dissertations, subject to External Examination, may be failed where significant plagiarism is detected by an External Examiner. Postgraduates have a right of appeal against such decisions by External Examiners.

10. Breach of Examination Regulations and Procedures

10.1 Definition

- 10.1.1 Cheating means an attempt to benefit oneself, or another, by deceit or fraud or other breach of the examination regulations and procedures. Such breaches also include personation, collusion and plagiarism.
- 10.1.2 Any communication between students and Internal or External Examiners outside of normal Examiner-student interaction is prohibited and will be considered a serious breach of examination regulations.

10.2 Process – Stage 1

- 10.2.1 Where, during an invigilated examination, an Invigilator suspects a student of cheating, the Senior Invigilator, or at least one other Invigilator, will be informed and asked to confirm their suspicions. The student will be approached and questioned. Any unauthorised material or electronic devices will be confiscated. Unauthorised material written or appearing on the candidate's person will be transcribed by the invigilator and countersigned by the candidate. Mobile phones are not permitted in examination halls.
- 10.2.2 The student will be informed that a report will be made to the Student Records and Examinations Officer. The student will be allowed to finish the examination. Any confiscated items will be retained by the Student Records and Examinations Officer or Nominee until the process has completed. Results of the associated examination will be withheld until the process has completed.
- 10.2.3 Alternatively, an Examiner, who, when marking examination scripts, suspects that cheating has taken place will consult the Head of School/Department or nominee. If the Head or nominee considers that there is evidence that cheating has occurred, he/she will make a written report to the Student Records and Examinations Officer.
- 10.2.4 Copies of all relevant documentation to be considered by the Student Records and Examinations Officer or Nominee shall be made available to the student to include any prior outcomes of alleged breaches of the Exam Regulations.
- 10.2.5 Where a report is made to the Student Records and Examinations Officer or Nominee, the student will be contacted by the Student Records and Examinations Officer or Nominee at the earliest possible time subject always to consideration by the Student Records and Examinations Officer or Nominee of the examination period. The student will be invited to submit a written statement of events (Personal Statement) within a stipulated timeframe as advised by the Student Records and Examinations Officer or Nominee.
- 10.2.6 The Student Records and Examinations Officer or Nominee may also request, where appropriate, a report from the Head of the relevant School/Department.
- 10.2.7 All reports relating to a suspected case of a breach of examination regulation will be considered in the first instance by the Student Records and Examinations Officer or Nominee and the Head of the Relevant College or Nominee.

- 10.2.8 The student will be invited to a meeting to discuss the matter by the SREO. Where the Head of College is a member of the School/Department responsible for the examination in question, the Deputy President & Registrar may nominate another Head of College to attend this meeting. A student may bring another person to this meeting to provide support but not to advocate or make representation on the student's behalf.
- 10.2.9 In the event that a student cannot attend the meeting, a decision will be made based on the invigilator report, the transcribed or confiscated material, electronic device and personal statement submitted by the student (if any).
- 10.2.10 If a student attends the meeting, a decision will be made based on **all** the information provided to the Student Records and Examinations Officer or Nominee to include the student's examination records, the Invigilator Report, the transcribed or confiscated material/electronic device and Personal Statement submitted by the student (if any) and the any additional information provided by the student at the meeting.
- 10.2.11 Considering all information, where it is considered that there is no case to answer, the matter will end there and the Student Records and Examinations Officer or Nominee will inform the student and where relevant, the Head of School/Department.
- 10.2.12 Where it is considered by the Student Records and Examinations Officer or Nominee and the Head of College or Nominee on the information to hand that there is a case to answer, there are two options:
- (i) The Student Records and Examinations Officer or Nominee and the Head of College or Nominee may decide to apply a penalty of either:
 - a. Applying a reduction in marks of no more than 15% for the examination or assignment concerned
 - b. Assigning a mark of zero for the examination/assessment concerned
 - (ii) They may refer the matter to the Deputy President and Registrar or Nominee to consider the allegation.
- The student and the relevant Head of School/Department will be notified in writing of the referral and will be provided with a copy of all documentation to be considered.

Where a student is unaccepting of the proposed penalty, they may request that the matter is considered by the Deputy President and Registrar or Nominee and the Chair of the Student Discipline Committee or Nominee.

Where a matter is referred to the Deputy President or Nominee and the Chair of the Student Discipline Committee or Nominee and where it is concluded that cheating has occurred, an appropriate academic penalty will be determined. The penalty may include one or more of the following penalties outlined in Section 10.4 (below) .

Process – Stage 2

10.2.12 Where referred to the Deputy President and Registrar or Nominee and the Chairperson of the Student Discipline Committee or Nominee will meet and consider all relevant information. The student may be invited to present an explanation in writing (Supplemental Personal Statement) or in person. A student may bring another person to this meeting to provide support but not to advocate or to make representation on that student's behalf.

10.3 Determination

10.3.1 Where, following a meeting and/or submission of Personal Statement under section 10.2.13 above, it is concluded that a breach of the examination regulations has occurred the Chairperson of the Student Discipline Committee or nominee and the Deputy President & Registrar or Nominee can:

- (a) determine an appropriate penalty from those listed in Section 10.4 below; or
- (b) where they are of view that the misconduct is of such serious nature as to require referral to the Student Disciplinary Committee under of the Student Rules, they will make a full report in writing to the Chairperson of the Student Discipline Committee.
- (c) The Deputy President or Nominee will notify the relevant Head of School/Department and the student in writing of the outcome of Stage 2 of this process (and, in the case, of (a), notify of the student of the right to appeal pursuant to Section 10.5 below). A student is not permitted to appeal a decision to refer the matter to the Student Discipline Committee.

10.4 Penalties

10.4.1 Where it is concluded that cheating has occurred, the Deputy President or Nominee and the Chair of the Student Discipline Committee or Nominee will determine an appropriate academic penalty. The penalty may include one or more of the following:

- (i) Assigning a reduction in marks of no more than 15% for the examination or assessment concerned
 - (ii) Assigning a mark of zero for the particular examination/assessment concerned
 - (iii) Assigning a mark of zero for the module of which the examination/assessment was a component part
 - (iv) In addition to i. – iii. above, if deemed appropriate, the student may be referred to the Student Discipline Committee for consideration
- (a) For the avoidance of doubt, the Student Discipline Committee will consider the matter in accordance with the Student Rules and, if deemed appropriate, may impose any penalty it sees fits in accordance with the Student Rules.

10.4.2 Examination Results will be withheld by the University pending the outcome of alleged breaches of Examinations Regulations and Procedures.

10.4.3 Should the Deputy President or Nominee and the Chairperson of the Student Discipline Committee or Nominee determine that the allegation does not amount to a breach of the Examination Regulations, this will be notified to the student and no record of the allegation will be made on the student's academic transcript.

10.5 Appeal

- 10.5.1 The student has a right of appeal the determination, and penalty imposed pursuant to Section 10.4 (above) within two weeks of the date of posting of the relevant outcome letter. Such appeals are dealt with through the standard UCC Examination Appeals process (see: Section 20
<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/academicsecretariat/policies/examinations/GuidetoExams-PGResearchAppealsupdate2021.pdf>).

Appendix A - Reporting template

Local sanction arising from Plagiarism in a Formal Written Examination Setting

[Student name and address]

[Date]

Formal [Plagiarism/Collusion] Procedures

Assignment: [Module code(s) and title]

Programme/Year:

Student Number:

Dear [student name],

As you are aware, formal [Plagiarism/Collusion] procedures* have been followed in respect of the coursework you submitted in full/part assessment of module(s) [module code(s) and title(s)]. Module [code] is a [X] credit module assessed by [breakdown of assessment types and mark allocation for each][Repeat as required for all modules].

In module [code], [explanation as to why breach of examination regulations was suspected, e.g. very high Turnitin score ('very high' thresholds are discipline-specific); identical assignment to that of another student; etc.] [Repeat as required for all modules].

A meeting was held on [date] with [Head of Departmental/School, other representative] in the [location]. Here, you were asked to explain the suspected breach of examination regulations. Following consideration of your explanation, the following decision has been made in this case:

You are required to [e.g. resubmit the assignment(s), subject to a penalty of X%. The deadline for re-submission is 17:00 on [date]].

If, by signing the declaration, below, you accept this penalty, this letter will be sent to UCC's Student Records and Examinations Officer. By accepting this penalty, please note that you are undertaking not to engage in further instances of plagiarism during your studies at UCC. If you do not agree with this penalty and do not sign the letter by 17:00 on [Date], the matter will be referred to the Student Records and Examinations Officer as a Suspected Breach of Examination Regulations**.

Please note, in this instance, the matter [will/will not] be reported to the Student Discipline Committee.

Sincerely,

[Head of Department or other appropriate representative]

I, _____, hereby accept the penalty assigned in relation to module(s)
[code(s) and title(s)] Date: _____

c.c. [Departmental contact(s) as appropriate]

Mr Seamus Murphy, Student Records and Examinations Office, UCC (examcompliance@ucc.ie)

*Section 9.4:

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/recordsandexaminations/documents/GuidetoExaminationsandAssessmentApril2019.pdf>

**Section 9.4.3, Option B

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/recordsandexaminations/documents/GuidetoExaminationsandAssessmentApril2019.pdf>

Appendix B - Reporting template

Local sanction arising from Plagiarism in a Remote Examination Setting

[Student name and address]

[Date]

Formal [Plagiarism/Collusion] Procedures

Assignment: [Module code(s) and title]

Programme/Year:

Student Number:

Dear [student name],

As you are aware, formal [Plagiarism/Collusion] procedures* have been followed in respect of the coursework/examination you submitted in full/part assessment of module(s) [module code(s) and title(s)]. Module [code] is a [X] credit module assessed by [breakdown of assessment types and mark allocation for each] [Repeat as required for all modules].

In module [code], a suspected breach of examination regulations was detected because [state reason - very high Turnitin score ('very high' thresholds are discipline-specific); identical assignment to that of another student; etc.] [Repeat as required for all modules].

The [Head of Department/School, other representative] contacted you by email on [date], where you were asked to provide an explanation as to the suspected breach of examination regulations. You were offered an online meeting to discuss the matter, which was held on [date], with [Head of Departmental/School, other representative] [record here whether the student availed of the offer to participate in this online meeting]. Following consideration of your explanation, the following decision has been made in this case:

[Give penalty for piece of examination work in question – e.g. *You are required to resubmit the assignment(s)/submit a new assignment, subject to a penalty of X%. The deadline for re-submission is 17:00 on [date]]. Or - The submitted work will be penalised by X%.*]

If you accept this penalty, please send an email reply to that effect no later than 17:00 on [Date] stating: "I, _____, hereby accept the penalty assigned in relation to module(s) [code(s) and title(s)]"

Your email, appended to this report, will be sent to UCC's Student Records and Examinations Officer and the matter closed. By accepting this penalty, please note that you are undertaking not to engage in further instances of plagiarism during your studies at UCC.

In this instance, the matter [will/will not] be reported to the Student Discipline Committee.

If you do not agree with this penalty, please reply to this email no later than 17:00 on [Date]. If you do not respond as requested by [Date], it will be regarded as non-acceptance of this penalty. In both instances, the matter will then be referred to the Student Records and Examinations Officer as a Suspected Breach of Examination Regulations**.

Sincerely,

[Head of Department or other appropriate representative]

c.c. [Departmental contact(s) as appropriate]

Mr Seamus Murphy Student Records and Examinations Office, UCC (examcompliance@ucc.ie)

*For information on UCC plagiarism policy, see:

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/recordsandexaminations/documents/UCCPlagiarismPolicy-November2017.pdf>

**The *Guide to Examinations and Assessment for Staff and Students* can be found at:

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/recordsandexaminations/documents/GuidetoExaminationsandAssessmentApril2019.pdf>

UCC Plagiarism Policy - Document Review and Approval

Subject Matter Experts/ Committee	Document version	Month(s) Reviewed	Comment on updates	Date Approved
SREO/Academic Development and Standards Committee (ADSC), Academic Board (AB)	Pre-2017	November 2017	Editorial revision of text in line with revision of Guide to Examinations for Staff and Students	November 2017
Academic Leadership Forum (ALF)	V2.0	May 2020	Addition of text to include provision for sanction of an element of a submission in a remote examination setting rather than the entirety of the submission	May 2020
Dr Siobhán Cusack & Mr Daniel Blackshields; Examinations Business Continuity Planning Group	V3.0	February 2021	Addition of text to allow provision – in exceptional circumstances only - for sanction of the entirety of a submission in a remote examination setting, in addition to the provision for sanction of an element of a submission.	March 2021
Dr Siobhán Cusack, Mr Paul O'Donovan & Prof. Paul Callanan	V4.0	April 2021	Amendment of process to allow for application of penalty during stage 1 of the process (Section 10.2) by the Head of SREO and Head of College (or their nominees) in cases where a clear case of Plagiarism has been identified or where plagiarism has been admitted by the student.	

ⁱ <https://www.ucc.ie/en/exams/procedures-regulations/> Guide to Examinations and Assessment for Staff and Students, Section 10.

ⁱⁱ Reporting Template – Plagiarism, local sanction, at Formal Written Examination (Appendix A) or Remote Examination (Appendix B)