

UCC Plagiarism Policy

1. Introduction

1.1 Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's work as your own without appropriate attribution. Whether done deliberately or inadvertently, it is unacceptable, since it is an attempt to claim credit for work not done by you and fails to give credit for the work of others. Plagiarism applies not just to text, but to 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; it is subject to disciplinary procedures as laid out on pages 4-6 below (*Breach of Examination Regulations and Procedures* – Section 10 of www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/recordsandexaminations/documents/GuidetoExamsApril2019.pdf)

2.0 Types of Plagiarism

2.1 Preparation of any work to be presented as part of an assessment, examination or other research or scholarly submission, can draw on the previous work or ideas of others. It is imperative, however, that this work is fully acknowledged, following the standard referencing practice within the particular discipline.

2.2 **Self-plagiarism**, the presentation of work previously submitted 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 will also be a **breach of copyright**, which can expose the copier to civil or even criminal legal proceedings if within the timeframe of the copyright. Plagiarism also relates to unpublished material, such as the notes of others, which may not be covered by copyright. There is no expiry date on plagiarism.

2.4 **Collusion**, where work is permitted to be copied, 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 At a minimum, 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 citation of the source. Acknowledgement of the influence of other sources, even when they are not quoted directly must also be made. Acknowledgements must be provided at the appropriate point throughout the work. The discipline-specific citation, referencing, credit and/or acknowledgement requirements must be applied in all submitted material.

3.2 School/Departmental plagiarism policies should identify any cultural, technical or other issues that may arise within a particular discipline.

3.3 Each School/Department is responsible for informing students of the plagiarism policy through lecture(s), handbooks, hand-outs, the web, etc.

3.4 Each School/Department should provide adequate training early in the academic programme, reiterated at the beginning of each academic year, on plagiarism, collusion, and the specific best practice expectations, to include definition and explanation of standard referencing conventions, for submitted work. Work submitted to Schools/Departments should have a declaration, signed by the student, that all submitted work is wholly their own work.

4. Procedures and penalties

4.1 All essays, dissertations, projects, portfolios or other forms of academic submission for evaluation will be checked for plagiarism. Where a supervisor or examiner suspects plagiarism during a non-invigilated examination or assessment, then s/he will consult their Head of School/ Department or nominee in the first instance.

4.2 If the Head of the School/ Department or nominee suspects that an offence has occurred, the Head or nominee will inform the student, in writing, of the allegation and provide the student with reasonable opportunity to provide an explanation, following which the Head or nominee has the choice of two options:

Option A: 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 invoked. The process – as defined below (*Breach of Examination Regulations and Procedures - LINK*) 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.

Should a penalty be imposed, the student, having been informed of the penalty, may choose either:

- i. to accept the penalty as a final decision, in which case a summary report of the circumstances of the case and level of penalty exacted will be lodged by the Head or nominee with the Student Records and Examination Officer.

or

- ii. to have the matter considered by the Student Records and Examinations Officer, thereby invoking the Breach of Examination Regulations process, whereupon the Head or nominee will make a full report in writing to the Student Records and Examinations Officer. The process as defined on pages 4-6 below (Section 10 of www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/recordsandexaminations/documents/GuidetoExamsApril2019.pdf) will apply.

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

4.3 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 of www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/recordsandexaminations/documents/GuidetoExamsApril2019.pdf).

5. 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.

Extract: Guide to Examinations and Assessment for Staff and Students

www.ucc.ie/en/media/support/recordsandexaminations/documents/GuidetoExamsApril2019.pdf

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, the Student Records and Examinations Officer or Nominee will 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 also be provided with a copy of all documentation to be considered.

Process – Stage 2

- 10.2.13 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 10.4.1 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.
- 10.3.2 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 mark of zero for the particular examination concerned
- ii. Assigning a mark of zero for the module of which the examination was a component part
- iii. Setting aside all or part of the overall examination while permitting the student to take the examination again at the next available formal repeat session

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 to appeal the determination, and penalty imposed pursuant to Section 10.3 (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 19).