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Academic Regulations 7:

Academic Integrity

Research Degrees

2025-2026

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Introduction

- 1 The University is a community bound by, among other things, a culture of Academic Integrity. Students are continually supported and guided in what constitutes Academic Integrity and why this enriches their experience and bestows benefits intrinsically linked to knowledge acquisition, skills development and qualification. Academic misconduct is, in essence, a breach of this norm, and the application of the academic misconduct procedure set out in Academic Regulations 7 primarily protects this culture.
- 2 The academic misconduct procedure is an internal procedure designed to examine why a piece of assessment has been judged to be the result of academic misconduct and why the student believes that this is incorrect. It is not a legal process. Should a student wish to pursue a complaint through legal channels then this matter will be treated separately from the Academic Misconduct Procedures. Letters received from solicitors shall be treated as legal matters. In such cases, the matter will be referred to the University's Governance, Legal and Compliance Office.
- 3 The procedures allow both parties to present their viewpoints. Further information relating to accompaniment and representation can be found in the sections below.
- 4 A finding that academic misconduct has occurred is a judgement based on available evidence, the standard of proof being the balance of probability. What this means is that, on the basis of the evidence, it is more likely than not that academic misconduct has occurred. The supervisory team are therefore required to provide evidence that academic misconduct against the definitions provided in this procedure has taken place. The student is not required to prove that it has not.
- 5 The University views academic misconduct very seriously. Any form of cheating poses a threat to the academic standards of a provider's qualifications, and to the integrity of the qualifications awarded to the vast majority of students who achieve their qualification entirely by legitimate means. Academic Council has delegated to the University Research Degrees Committee (URDC) the authority to impose penalties for academic misconduct that may include the termination of a student's registration and expulsion from the University. The URDC delegates responsibility for progression until students have reached the examination stage to the Faculty Research Degrees Committees (FRDCs). The possible penalties are outlined in Annex A.
- 6 Where a graduate of the University is found to have achieved credit for their award through academic misconduct, the Vice-Chancellor acting on the recommendation of Academic Council may rescind the award.
- 7 These Regulations do not cover matters which have already or are currently being considered by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), a court, or a tribunal. Some types of academic misconduct by research students may also be judged to involve research misconduct of the kinds described in University's Procedures for Dealing with Misconduct in Research (Staff) (AG8), available here.
- 8 Student expenses for attending an Academic Misconduct Hearing will not be reimbursed by the University regardless of the subsequent outcome.

Section 1

Academic Integrity

- 9 Academic integrity means demonstrating honest, moral behaviours when producing academic work. This involves acknowledging the work of others, giving appropriate credit to others where their ideas are presented as part of a students' work and the importance of producing work in the student's own voice. As part of a learning community students share ideas and develop new ones- they need to be able to interpret and present other people's ideas and combine these with their own when producing their work. To achieve this, students need to develop skills of reflection and self-awareness about topics such as fairness, responsibility, and respect in academic practice. For wider issues in research integrity, to which adherence is required, please refer to the UK Research Integrity Office (UKRIO) and the Epigeum module: Research Integrity

Poor Academic Practice

- 10 The University recognises that there is a difference between academic misconduct and poor academic practice. Poor academic practice involves minor breaches of discipline-specific citation and/or referencing conventions that give no discernible advantage. In cases of poor academic practice, the work will be marked/re-marked (if required) according to the relevant award criteria, and students will be directed to the resources available to help them improve their working methods and academic writing to avoid potential breaches of academic integrity. Where similar offenses are repeated after such referral they will be treated as misconduct.

Definition of Academic Misconduct (Breaches of Academic Integrity)

- 11 The University defines academic misconduct (breaches of academic integrity) in assessment as any action by a student that has the potential to give them an unfair advantage or to aid another to gain such an advantage.

A student's intentions are not relevant to whether or not they have committed misconduct. Examples of the types of academic misconduct covered by these procedures are provided below, but this should not be regarded as a definitive list. The University reserves the right to include other types of academic misconduct under this procedure, including research misconduct as defined in document AG8.

Section 2

Types of Academic Misconduct

- 12 The University recognises the following types of academic misconduct:

Plagiarism (including copying)

- 13 The University defines plagiarism as the act of presenting the work of another person (or people), including work generated by artificial intelligence (AI) tools as one's own without proper acknowledgement. This also includes copying the work of another student or other students.
- 14 The University expects students to take responsibility for the security of their work (i.e. with written work, to ensure that other students do not get access to electronic or hard copy of the work). Failure to keep work secure may allow others to cheat, and could result in an allegation of academic misconduct for students whose work have been copied, particularly if the origin of the work is in doubt.

The University will not accept a lack of understanding of the requirements for acknowledging the work of others and/or content generated by artificial intelligence tools as a legitimate defence for academic misconduct.

In cases where a student resubmits the same plagiarised work for reassessment this is considered a new offence and the procedure as outlined in these regulations must be followed.

Self-Plagiarism

- 15 The University defines self-plagiarism as the act of presenting part or all of a student's work that has been previously submitted to meet the requirements of a different assessment except where the nature of the assessment makes this permissible.

Collusion

- 16 The University defines collusion as the act, by two or more students, of presenting a piece of work jointly without acknowledging the collaboration.

This could include a student who permits or assists another to present work that has been copied or paraphrased from the student's own work.

The University also defines collusion as the act of one student presenting a piece of work as their own independent work when the work was undertaken by a group. With group work, where individual members submit parts of the total assignment, each member of a group must take responsibility for checking the legitimacy of the work submitted in their name. If even part of the work is found to contain academic misconduct, penalties will normally be imposed on all group members equally.

Cheating in an examination venue

- 17 The University defines cheating in research examinations as including:
- taking notes or any unauthorised materials into an examination venue. This includes having notes available in toilets or other areas that may be visited during the examination. If students refuse to comply with instructions if they request to leave the examination venue during the examination (e.g. a toilet visit), this may be considered evidence of attempted academic misconduct.
 - obtaining an advanced copy of a question paper
 - unauthorised communication during an examination (including via telephone or other electronic media)
 - allowing oneself to be impersonated
 - impersonating another candidate.

Fabricating or falsifying data or using without permission another person's work

- 18 The University defines the act of fabrication as the creation of false data or other aspects of research, including documentation and participant consent.
- 19 The University defines the act of falsification as the inappropriate manipulation and/or selection of data, imagery and/or consents.
- 20 Students must acknowledge the contributions of all persons who collaborated in the development, execution or dissemination of the research. They must specify the nature and extent of the contribution in the thesis. They must also obtain permission to use any element of the research that could be credited to another individual.

Misrepresentation

- 21 The University defines the act of misrepresentation as the misrepresentation of data, for example suppression of relevant findings and/or data, or knowingly, recklessly or by gross negligence, presenting a flawed interpretation of data;

Purchasing or Commissioning

- 22 The University defines the act of purchasing or commissioning as either attempting to purchase or purchasing work for an assessment including, for example from the internet, or attempting to commission or commissioning someone else to complete an assessment.

Where students are judged to be aiding others outside the jurisdiction of the University or are acting as an agent for a third party, they will be dealt with under the general disciplinary processes, General Regulations 3: Student Disciplinary Procedure which is available on the University's website and MyKingston.

The University considers the use of copy-editing and proof reading services as a legitimate support to a research student's own endeavours. There are strict rules around what is permitted, which are provided in Annex C.

- 23 These examples of academic misconduct are not exhaustive and the University reserves the right to include other types of cheating under the terms of this procedure, including research misconduct as defined in document AG8.

Section 3

Procedures for Dealing with Academic Misconduct

- 24 The University recognises that students who are new to UK higher education may need some time to learn how to acknowledge sources properly. Therefore, the focus of the University's response to academic misconduct in the first piece of submitted work is to educate students in regard to appropriate academic practice rather than to penalise unacceptable academic practice.

Section 3a outlines the procedure to be followed for assessments before submission of the thesis or dissertation.

Section 3b outlines the procedure to be followed for assessments after submission of the thesis or dissertation.

Consistency of treatment

- 25 The University aims to treat its students consistently across all programmes, but it recognises that some courses lead to both a University qualification and a licence to practise e.g. nursing and teaching. These courses may have specific codes of conduct of professional behaviour which will be clearly communicated to students. Any record of academic misconduct may result in the termination of a student's registration on one of these courses as the University will be unable to confirm students' suitability to practise.

Section 3a

Allegations made before Submission of the Thesis for Examination

Step 1 – actions by the First Supervisor where academic misconduct occurs for the first time

- 26 Where potential academic misconduct by a research student is identified, including material in draft work that seems to fall within the definition of plagiarism as given in section 2, the First Supervisor will discuss the matter with the student with a view to ascertaining whether academic misconduct has occurred. For cases of possible plagiarism they will ensure that the student has read the Plagiarism Guidelines and the Procedure for dealing with Academic Misconduct in Research Degrees and explain the potential penalties.
- 27 The student will be advised that her/his right to submit the thesis and be examined does not apply in cases where there is evidence of plagiarism or other academic misconduct and that her/his registration may be terminated as a result. The student may be given the opportunity to revise the work.

Step 2– actions by the First Supervisor where academic misconduct occurs for the second time

- 28 Where potential academic misconduct is discovered for a second time, the First Supervisor will advise the student that the evidence will be submitted to the Chair of the FRDC for the Academic Misconduct Procedures to be invoked. If the

supervisory team includes the Chair of the FRDC an alternative committee member will be appointed, in consultation with the Head of School, to review the evidence.

Step 3 – actions by the FRDC

- 29 The Chair of FRDC will determine that either:
- there is insufficient evidence to proceed, in which case they will notify the student and the person making the allegation of the reasons for not holding a hearing. This may include advice to the student about how to avoid such allegations in future
or
 - there is sufficient evidence to proceed to a formal hearing.
- 30 If the Chair of the FRDC judges that a formal hearing is justified, the Faculty Research Student Coordinator will provide the student with:
- a) a copy of these Procedures;
 - b) written details of the allegation. This should include specific reference to the nature of the suspected misconduct;
 - c) advice to contact the Kingston Students' Union Advice Centre. Although Kingston Students' Union officers cannot act as advocates, they may be able to advise on the presentation of the case and may agree to act as an observer at the hearing;
 - d) the date, time and place of the hearing. The University will try to arrange the hearing at a time that is suitable for the student. Normally the hearing will take place within six weeks of the date that the student is formally notified in writing that an allegation has been made.
- 31 Where the evidence of misconduct relates to a group of students, the Chair of the FRDC will judge from the nature of the offence and the numbers involved, whether to hold individual hearings or to call the group together in a single hearing.

Step 4 – actions by the student

- 32 At this stage, the student may decide to admit that the allegation of academic misconduct is justified by providing a written statement. In this case no formal hearing will take place. The URDC will be informed of the academic misconduct and the student's admission when it considers the penalty to be imposed. A copy of the statement provided by the student will be kept on their file.
- 33 If the student wishes to proceed to a formal hearing, they will be asked to confirm attendance and inform the Faculty Research Student Coordinator of the name of any person chosen to accompany the student (see paragraphs 42-44 for further information on accompaniment and representation).
- 34 If the student fails to attend the hearing without a reason that is deemed acceptable by the University, the hearing will proceed on the basis of the evidence available to the panel. This will include any written submission that the student may have made.

Step 5 – formal hearing - actions of the hearing panel

- 35 The panel established to consider the evidence will comprise a minimum of two members of academic staff. One of these will be designated as Chair of the panel. The Chair of the panel will be chosen from a group of staff designated for this purpose by the Faculty and will be independent, i.e will not be directly associated with the student's research or teaching at the University. The panel should normally include at least one member with experience of academic misconduct hearings, and a subject specialist.
- 36 The panel will normally interview:
- the student, who may present documentation and/or supporting evidence.
 - any relevant members of staff (eg. the First Supervisor who will normally present the evidence).
- 37 The panel will decide if:
- there is evidence of academic misconduct. A summary report will be presented to the FRDC, setting out the nature of the allegations and the recommendations of the panel concerning the level of penalty to be imposed (see Annex A: Penalties for Academic Misconduct). The student(s) will be provided with a copy of this report and it will be placed on the student's file.
- or
- there is insufficient evidence of academic misconduct. The process will then be terminated. No report will be kept on the student's file.
- 38 If the panel is unable to reach a consensus view, it shall find in the student's favour and will give the student a statement to this effect.

Step 6 – actions by the FRDC

- 39 The report of the formal hearing will be considered by the FRDC. The Committee will be asked to ratify the recommendations of the formal hearing.
- 40 The outcome of a formal hearing will be reported to the URDC in its capacity as the Programme Assessment Board.
- 41 FRDC should ensure that immediate action is taken to rectify any errors identified as part of the misconduct. It may be appropriate to inform the University Research Ethics Committee and/or, and disciplinary action may be considered, usually through the formal disciplinary procedure.

Section 3b

Allegations made after submission of the thesis for examination

Step 1 – actions by FRDC

- 42 Where potential academic misconduct is reported, the evidence will be referred to the Chair of the FRDC for investigation and submission to the URDC in its capacity as the Programme Assessment Board.

Step 2 – actions by URDC

- 43 The URDC will determine either:
- there is insufficient evidence to proceed and will notify the student that an allegation has been made. The URDC will also notify both the student and the person making the allegation of the reasons for not holding a hearing. This may include advice to the student about how to avoid such allegations in the future.
 - or
 - there is sufficient evidence to proceed to a formal hearing
- 44 If the URDC judges that a formal hearing is justified, the Graduate Research School will provide the student(s) with:
- a) a copy of these Procedures;
 - b) written details of the allegation. This should include specific reference to the nature of the suspected misconduct.
 - c) advice to contact the Kingston Students' Union Advice Centre. Although Kingston Students' Union officers cannot act as advocates, they may be able to advise on the presentation of the case and may agree to act as an observer at the hearing;
 - d) the date, time and place of the hearing. The University will try to arrange the hearing at a time that is suitable for the student. Normally the hearing will take place within six weeks of the date that the student is formally notified in writing that an allegation has been made.
- 45 Where the evidence of misconduct relates to a group of students, the Chair of the FRDC will judge from the nature of the offence and the numbers involved, whether to hold individual hearings or to call the group together in a single hearing.

Step 3 - actions by student

- 46 At this stage, the student may decide to admit that the allegation of academic misconduct is justified by providing a written statement. In this case no formal hearing will take place. The URDC will be informed of the academic misconduct and the student's admission when it considers the penalty to be imposed. A copy of the statement provided by the student will be kept on her/his file.

- 47 If the student wishes to proceed to a formal hearing, they will be asked to confirm attendance and inform the Graduate Research School of the name of any person chosen to accompany the student.
- 48 If the student fails to attend the hearing without a reason that is deemed acceptable by the University, the hearing will proceed on the basis of the evidence available to the panel. This will include any written submission that the student may have made.

Step 4 – formal hearing – actions of the hearing panel

- 49 The panel established to consider the evidence will comprise a minimum of two members of academic staff. One of these will be designated as Chair of the panel. The Chair of the panel will be chosen from a group of staff designated for this purpose by the Faculty and will be independent, i.e will not be directly associated with the student's research or teaching at the University. The panel should normally include at least one member with experience of academic misconduct hearings, and a subject specialist.
- 50 The panel will normally interview:
- the student, who may present documentation and/or supporting evidence and may be accompanied by a friend, family member or Kingston Students' Union staff member
 - any relevant members of staff (eg. Internal examiner who will present the evidence).
- 51 The panel will decide if:
- there is evidence of academic misconduct. A summary report will be presented to the URDC, setting out the nature of the allegations and the recommendations of the panel concerning the level of penalty to be imposed (see Annex A: Penalties for Academic Misconduct). The student(s) will be provided with a copy of this report and it will be placed on the student's file.
- or
- there is insufficient evidence of academic misconduct. The process will then be terminated. No report will be kept on the student's file.
- 52 If the panel is unable to reach a consensus view, it shall find in the student's favour and will give the student a statement to this effect.

Step 5 – actions by URDC

- 53 The report of the formal hearing will be considered by the URDC in its capacity as the Programme Assessment Board. The URDC will be asked to ratify the recommendations of the formal hearing.
- 54 URDC (via the relevant FRDC) should ensure that immediate action is taken to rectify any errors identified as part of the misconduct. It may be appropriate to inform the University Research Ethics Committee and/or, and disciplinary action may be considered, usually through the formal disciplinary procedure.

Accompaniment and Representation

- 55 A student may wish to seek advice from the Kingston Students' Union however, this is an internal procedure and it is appropriate for students to represent themselves with any necessary support which is permitted as follows:

Accompaniment

- 56 Students invited to attend a hearing may be accompanied by one friend, family member, officer or staff member from the Kingston Students' Union Advice Centre, or a Trade Union or professional association staff member, if applicable. The individual accompanying is not permitted to make representations, or ask or answer questions on behalf of the student.

Representation

- 57 Representation by any third party will only be permitted where there is a compelling reason, for example, ill health and/or disability and if considered necessary by the Academic Registrar (whose decision is final). In such circumstances, the student must provide signed written consent for the representation.

Allegations raised by a Third Party

- 58 The University encourages anyone to come forward and provide information related to any incidents where Academic Integrity is believed to have been breached.
- 59 Any allegations of academic misconduct raised to the University are taken seriously and will be investigated in accordance with the University's academic misconduct procedures. To ensure a thorough investigation, the University will request any evidence and information that can be provided in relation to the alleged misconduct. All information will be confidential and used solely for the purpose of investigating the matter raised. In accordance with the principles of natural justice, the student will be provided with access to any information and evidence provided should the case be brought before an Academic Misconduct Panel. If no information or evidence is provided the matter will not be investigated and will be considered closed.
- 60 Details of the status or outcome of a case will not be shared with the third party due to data protection.
- 61 Where a third party has concerns pertaining to the work of a student they should contact Academic Registry in the first instance academicregistry@kingston.ac.uk
- 62 Reports which are felt to be frivolous or vexatious may not be considered and may be addressed under the University's Student Behaviour and Conduct Procedure if raised by a student.

Anonymity

- 63 The University wishes to support anyone in raising concerns where Academic Integrity is believed to have been breached. However it may not be possible or conducive to an investigation for allegations or matters raised to be considered

anonymously. In the principle of natural justice, information or evidence will be provided to a student for any case brought to a panel under our procedures. All matters will be treated sensitively and the University will endeavour to suitably redact information provided where appropriate.

- 64 The Academic Registrar may, in exceptional cases, allow for evidence to be redacted or withheld from the accused student where there are compelling reasons. These justifications must be carefully considered in light of the principle of natural justice. Compelling grounds for redaction or withholding of evidence include but are not limited to, ensuring the personal safety of individuals involved, safeguarding the privacy of sensitive personal information, and preventing any potential harm to the well-being of the third party, the accused student, or other relevant parties. The Academic Registrar's decision in this respect is final.

Section 4

Penalties and Appeals

Penalties

- 65 The penalties in Annex A have been determined on the basis of the following principles:
- no student should gain any advantage over another as a result of academic misconduct
 - for students found guilty of collusion, all students implicated in the case should normally receive the same penalty
 - for students found guilty of plagiarism or using unattributed group work, all those involved will normally receive the same penalty
- 66 While students may face challenging circumstances that may affect their academic performance, it is important to note that mitigating circumstances cannot excuse academic misconduct. However, there may be exceptional cases where mitigating circumstances may be taken into account when considering academic misconduct penalties. For instance, if a student was suffering from a severe medical condition that significantly impacted their mental or physical health, and that condition directly led to the academic misconduct.
- 67 The URDC in its capacity as the Programme Assessment Board has authority delegated from the Academic Council to make a judgement on the penalty to be imposed and this judgement is final and not subject to appeal.
- 68 The academic misconduct penalties apply to a student's registration at the University, not to the award the student is registered for.

Concurrent offences

- 69 Concurrent offences of academic misconduct will be considered to be repeat offences. Penalties for second, repeat and concurrent offences arising before submission of the work for examination are set out in Annex A.
- 70 In exceptional circumstances General Regulations 3: Student Disciplinary Procedure will apply where academic misconduct has brought the good name of the University into disrepute or criminal proceedings are involved or where that misconduct constitutes any other breach of the University's Regulations.

Appeals

- 71 A student can use the procedures set out in Academic Regulations 9: Academic Appeals (Research Degrees) to request a review of an outcome in relation to Academic Misconduct either following the Academic Misconduct Panel or following the final decision of URDC if there is evidence that the procedure was not followed.
- 72 A student cannot appeal against the penalty imposed by the URDC.

Annex A: Penalties for academic misconduct in Research Degrees

Note:

- The University reserves the right to terminate the registration of any student for academic misconduct.
- The academic misconduct penalties apply to a student's registration at the University, not to the award the student is registered for.

ALLEGATION ARISING **BEFORE** SUBMISSION OF THE THESIS FOR FINAL EXAMINATION

Module Level	Type of academic misconduct	1st offence:	2nd, repeat or concurrent offence:
7/8	Plagiarism or collusion	Opportunity to revise the work. Additional learning support will be provided. Progression delayed until improved work is developed and submitted.	Termination of registration
7/8	Other types of academic misconduct	Opportunity to revise the work. Additional learning support will be provided. Progression delayed until improved work is developed and submitted.	Termination of registration

ALLEGATION ARISING **AFTER** SUBMISSION OF THE THESIS FOR FINAL EXAMINATION

Module Level	Type of academic misconduct	1st offence:	2nd, repeat or concurrent offence:
7/8	Plagiarism or collusion	Termination of registration. In cases of poor academic practice, this will be addressed as part of the examination process.	Termination of registration
7/8	Other types of academic misconduct	Termination of registration	Termination of registration

Annex B

Sample Letter informing student of allegations

<Student's Contact Address>

<Date>

Kingston Student ID:

Route:

Level:

Dear <Name>

<Research Degree Title>

It has been noted that you may have committed academic misconduct as there appears to be evidence of < type of academic misconduct > in the < type of assessment > for the above module.

details of the alleged offence, including:

- - reference to annotated extracts of relevant coursework,
- - indication of source material, or
- - other details relevant to the nature of the assessment and allegation e.g. notes found on student during an examination and the invigilators report

In accordance with Academic Regulations 7: Academic Misconduct (Research Degrees), a copy of which is enclosed, you are required to attend a formal hearing to discuss this matter unless you wish to acknowledge in writing that the academic misconduct did take place.

If you choose to admit the academic misconduct in writing, then you will be excused attendance at the formal hearing and a penalty will be determined by the assessment board in line with the enclosed procedures. To take this option, please complete and return the form below to your Faculty Research Administrator (if pre-submission of thesis) or Graduate Research School (if thesis is being examined). **The form must be returned within one week of the date of this letter.**

If we do not receive the completed form within one week of the date of this letter you will be contacted by us with a date and time for the formal hearing. You should note that failure to attend the meeting without good reason will remove the right to a hearing and the matter will be referred to the Faculty Research Degrees Committee/University Research Degrees Committee for a decision on the penalty.

You should contact the Kingston Students' Union Advice Centre (see www.kingstonstudents.net or email support@kingston.ac.uk) and you may bring a staff member of the Kingston Students' Union, a friend or family member with you as an observer. You should give a copy of the enclosed Academic Regulations 7: Academic Misconduct (Research Degrees) to this person as guidance on their role.

Please note that neither mitigating circumstances nor lack of intent are acceptable defences against an allegation of academic misconduct and cannot be used to mitigate any penalties.

Yours sincerely

<Name of administrator>

<Role: e.g field administrator>

Enc:- Academic Misconduct Procedures - Academic Regulations 7: Academic Misconduct (Research Degrees)
(Extracts of coursework or other evidence if appropriate)

Return portion to be completed by the student

Name _____

ID _____

Module _____

Assessment _____

I have read and understood the regulations. I do not wish to attend a formal hearing and accept that the academic misconduct took place. I understand that the assessment board will decide on the appropriate penalty.

Signed _____ Date _____

To be returned to your Faculty Research Administrator (if pre-submission of thesis) or Graduate Research School (if thesis is being examined) **within one week of the date of this letter**

Annex C: Statement on editorial help for students' work: guidance for students, supervisors and examiners

This guidance is now published as a standalone Academic Guidance document (see Academic Guidance 2) from [Policies and regulations | Kingston University London](#)