

**Guidance for Module Convenor meeting with student for a First Case of collusion or plagiarism**

It is University procedure that the Module Convenor meets with a student where they have a First Case of collusion/plagiarism and have no previous record of academic misconduct. The meeting should be held within 10 working days of marks publication. This is a developmental opportunity intended to promote academic integrity in assessment.

- 1. Review the work before meeting with the student (modules owned by the School only)**
  - Assess nature and extent of collusion or plagiarism.
  - Check relevant course/module documentation to determine whether there is an issue with the assessment.
  
- 2. Discussion with the student**
  - Discuss the case with the student and explain what is wrong with the work – focus on the difference between language and ideas based plagiarism. Explain what is meant by collusion and how the work is the same as another student's, when they were required to work alone.
  - Tell the student the proportion of the work judged to be plagiarised or subject to collusion, and that a mark has only been attributed for sections which are believed to be the student's own work, for plagiarism, or for work that is not the same as another student's work, for collusion.
  - Ask the student to explain how they think this has happened. For a collusion case, speak to the students separately to establish what happened.
  - Is the student inexperienced in good writing practice? Is this a skills issue? Was the assessment task clear in relation to working with others?
  - Was there reasonable support and opportunity to understand the requirements?
  - Explain that a resit will normally be offered if they fail the module.
  
- 3. Try to identify with the student where they went wrong, which might be one or more of:**
  - Failure to take notes and work away from original text.
  - Poor time management, not enough time to 'do good work'.
  - Working together too closely with another student(s).
  - Failure to understand what was required, especially if in a new academic culture.
  - Insufficient, inadequate citation and referencing.
  - Student work directly paraphrased from original source(s). Even with word changes and rearrangement of information, this was simply lifted from the source etc.
  
- 4. Refer the student to the online Academic Practice Workshop**
  - Explain that the online workshop is designed to help them understand the requirements of good academic conduct in assessment.
  - Explain that they will be enrolled and encourage them to attend the online workshop when they receive the notification and encourage them to complete the workshop and all assessments.
  - Explain that they should contact [academicmisconduct@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:academicmisconduct@sussex.ac.uk) if they do not receive an invite.
  - Explain that they will have three attempts to pass the assessments within the online.

**5. Ask the student to confirm which option they will take as set out on the First Case of collusion or plagiarism form (complete the form with the student).**

Explain to the student that if they wish to challenge the allegation the case will be referred to the Academic Misconduct Panel, provided the PAB has not already met.<sup>1</sup> Explain that they should still do the online Academic Practice Workshop. The Module Convenor may schedule the discussion via telephone or video call if necessary. If the PAB has already met, the student is unable to challenge the allegation but may appeal against the PAB decision, where the criteria are met.

For a First Case of collusion, if one student wishes to challenge the impact this has had on their mark for the assessment, the student may refer the case to the Academic Misconduct Panel. All students involved in the case would be invited to the Academic Misconduct Panel but a penalty will not necessarily be given to all students.

If one student in a collusion case has previously had an academic misconduct case, then the case will not be considered as a First Case and will instead be referred to the Academic Misconduct Panel.

Changes to marks cannot be made following discussion with the Module Convenor. The PAB will usually offer a resit where the module has been failed.

**6. Advise the student where they may seek help in the future eg:**

- Academic Advisor and module tutors.
- School mentoring system (where applicable).
- Online sources such as notes from School/Department skills modules (where applicable).
- [Language and academic skills support](#) for international students.
- [Student Centre](#) for non-academic advice or welfare support.
- [Academic misconduct](#) information.
- Skills Hub: [writing and assessment preparation](#), [referencing](#), [academic integrity](#)
- [Academic Integrity videos](#) available via Canvas
- Student Hub: [Health, Support and Wellbeing](#)
- [Disability Support](#)
- [Exceptional circumstances](#) claims process if they are unable to complete assessments due to sudden, temporary and unforeseen circumstances
- Emphasise the need for students to take personal responsibility for seeking relevant help.

**7. Follow up**

- Send a copy of the form to the student, the Investigating Officer and Academic Misconduct team Office (AM).
- Return the evidence file to AM.

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<sup>1</sup> NB: if the candidate chooses to challenge the decision and the allegation is upheld, a penalty may be applied by a Panel.  
Updated December 2023