

Guidance for staff: Conduct during discussion with student regarding on-line examination

If academic misconduct is suspected in an on-line examination mode (CEX, DEX, MCQ) by a marker it should be referred to the Module Convenor. If the Module Convenor concurs, as per standard process, the Module Convenor (and marker) will compile an Evidence File to be sent to the School Investigating Officer, who will determine whether there is a case to answer.

In compiling evidence, the marker and Module Convenor should try to identify sources from which the work (or parts of it) are thought to have been taken, and then have a live discussion with the student.

The invitation to this discussion should be sent by the module convenor, marker or another member of faculty, using the standardised e-mail template. The Guidance for Students on the discussion should be sent with the invitation.

The person conducting the discussion should keep notes as to how the student responds to questions. After the discussion, these notes should then be sent to the student to confirm that they are a fair and accurate reflection of the discussion. The student will have 48 hours to respond, if they wish. These notes will be provided to the Investigating Officer for the Academic Misconduct coversheet along with any comments received from the student. Where there is disagreement the student's comments regarding the difference of understanding should be included in the notes provided to the Investigating Officer. Should any such comments be received after 48 hours, the student will be advised that they can be included in their statement for the panel, where the case is referred to an Academic Misconduct Panel.

If the Investigating Officer determines that there is sufficient evidence and a case to answer, this will be referred to SAO as Major Misconduct in an exam. A case may be referred to SAO, where there is sufficient evidence, where the student declined to take part in a discussion with the module convenor, marker or other member of faculty.

Outline of discussion with student:

- This discussion will normally be conducted by the module convenor, marker or another member of faculty and should last no more than 15 minutes.
- Exceptionally, both the module convenor (or marker or other member of faculty) and Investigating Officer may be present but the student will need to be informed of this in advance).
- The student will be permitted to have a trusted person (e.g. friend, family member) present with them during the discussion for support; this person should be an observer and support for the student, not an active participant in the discussion. Similarly, the student may request for a member of the Students' Union Advocacy team, a Student Support Unit advisor (where receiving support from SSU) or other member of University support services to be included in the on-line meeting in the same support capacity.

- The discussion will not be recorded.
- The discussion should begin with an explanation of why a suspicion of academic misconduct has been raised and emphasise to the student that this meeting is an opportunity to discuss the student's process of undertaking the exam in a no-judgement way. No decision will be made in this meeting.
- Different assessment tasks will suggest different types of question, but it is suggested that the person leading the discussion should begin by asking the student to explain how they prepared in advance of the exam and how the work was produced during the exam.
- The student's answers will suggest other questions and the following are indicative of questions that could be considered:
 - a) If the work incorporates a bibliography, or reference list, which includes sources that were not mentioned during the module's delivery, where and how did the student find these? Or, if a bibliography/references were not required, why did they include these in their exam answer paper?
 - b) If the work employs elaborate vocabulary, is the student able to offer adequate definitions of individual words/phrases and why they used these in their exam answer paper? (Note: this is not a VIVA)
 - c) If the work includes ideas and theories that were not mentioned during the module's delivery, is the student able to explain where they came across these? (Note: this is not a VIVA)
 - d) If the work includes unexpected material, for example, material that is very advanced for the module, that does not answer the question/s asked or that is from a published source, is the student able to explain why they have included the material?
 - e) If the work includes text that is the same as another students, is the student able to explain how this occurred?
 - f)
 - The student must be asked, at an appropriate point in the discussion, whether they agree that misconduct has occurred.
- The discussion is not an academic assessment of the student's work.
- The discussion should end by advising the student that notes from the discussion will be sent to them for agreement and that these notes will be made available to the Investigating Officer to help them to determine whether there is a case to consider. The Module Convenor does not make this decision. The possible outcomes should be noted:
 - If the student has agreed that misconduct occurred, then the case should be referred to the Investigating Officer for confirmation and referral to SSRO. If the student has not previously had a misconduct case then the case will be considered by a delegated panel and the student will not be invited to attend an Academic Misconduct Panel. A penalty of 0 will be applied to the assessment. (If the case relates to collusion in an exam and the other student/s do not accept, all students will need to go to Panel).

- If the student has agreed that misconduct occurred, then the case should be referred to the Investigating Officer for confirmation and referral to SSRO. If the student has previously had a misconduct case then the case will be considered by an Academic Misconduct Panel and the student will be invited to attend a panel.
 - If the student does not agree that misconduct has occurred, and the Investigating Officer determines that there is a case, then the student will be invited to an Academic Misconduct Panel.
 - If the student does not agree that misconduct has occurred, and the Investigating Officer determines that there is insufficient evidence then a No Case will be confirmed.
- At the end of the discussion the member of staff conducting it should remind the student that they can access support from the Student Centre, Student Support Unit (where relevant) or the Students' Union Advocacy Team. The contact details for these will be included in the invitation to the student.
 - If you have urgent concerns regarding the welfare of a student, please refer to guidance here: [Student Centre : University of Sussex : University of Sussex](#)

The Examination and Assessment Regulations include a chapter on [Academic Misconduct](#). They are published at:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/adqe/standards/examsandassessment>

Information for students on academic misconduct is available via the [Student Hub](#).

Resources to support students with academic integrity in assessment is provided on the [Skills Hub](#).