

SEM

Plagiarism and Assessment Malpractice (Unfair Means) Policy

Effective September 2018
Next Review Date August 2019

SEM

Purpose/Scope

- To have a policy in place to deal with unfair means: plagiarism, cheating and collusion.
- To ensure that issues are dealt with in an open, fair and effective manner.
- To ensure that SEM provide appropriate deterrents and sanctions to minimise the risk of malpractice.

In the event of any uncertainty about the scope of this procedure or who to contact in the first instance, the Head of Student Services and Administration will be happy to help with any advice or support needed:

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Aims

- To identify and minimise the risk of malpractice of learners.
- To respond to any incident of alleged malpractice promptly and objectively.
- To standardise and record any investigation of malpractice to ensure openness and fairness.
- To impose appropriate penalties and/or sanctions on learners where incidents (or attempted incidents) of malpractice are proven.
- To protect the integrity of this SEM and the qualifications it delivers.

Definitions/Terminology

Learner Malpractice:

Any action by the learner, which has the potential to undermine the integrity and validity of the assessment of their work. (plagiarism, collusion, cheating, etc.)

Plagiarism:

Taking and using another's thoughts, writings, inventions, etc. as one's own.

Minor Acts of Learner Malpractice:

Handled by the assessor by, for example, refusal by the assessor to accept work for marking due to questions with possible plagiarism and learner being made aware of malpractice policy. Learner resubmits work in question.

Major Acts of Learner Malpractice:

Extensive copying/plagiarism, second or subsequent offence, inappropriate for assessor to deal with.

Responsibilities

SEM:

Seeks proactive ways to promote a positive culture that encourages learners to take individual responsibility for their learning and respect the work of others.

Assessor:

Responsible for designing assessment opportunities which limit the opportunity for malpractice and for checking the validity of the learner's work.

Academic Manager:

Required to inform Pearson, RSL, or UCLan (where applicable) of any acts of malpractice.

Academic Management of SEM or their nominees:

Responsible for any investigation into allegations of malpractice.

Procedures

Addressing student malpractice:

SEM will see to minimise student malpractice by:

- Using the induction period and the student handbook to inform learners of the SEM policy on malpractice and the penalties for attempted and actual incidents of malpractice.
- Promoting positive and honest study practices.
- Showing learners the appropriate formats to record cited texts and other materials or information sources.
- Asking learners to declare that their work is their own.
- Asking learners to provide evidence that they have interpreted and synthesised appropriate information and acknowledged any sources used.
- Ensuring assessment procedures are developed which help to reduce and identify malpractice.

Definition of Malpractice/Unfair Means by Students

This list is not exhaustive and SEM at its discretion may consider other instances of malpractice:

- Plagiarism of any nature.
- Collusion by working collaboratively with other learners to produce work that is submitted as individual work.
- Copying (including the use of ICT to aid copying).
- Deliberate destruction of another's work.
- Fabrication of results or evidence.
- False declaration of authenticity in relation to the contents of a portfolio or coursework.
- Impersonation by pretending to be someone else in order to produce the work for another
- Arranging for another to take one's place in an assessment/examination/test.

Dealing with Malpractice/Unfair Means

In order to do this, the SEM will:

- Conduct an investigation in a fair and equitable form commensurate with the nature of the malpractice allegation. Where the offence involves other learners, they will also be involved in the investigation. The Principal will support such an investigation and all personnel linked to the allegation. It will proceed through the following stages:
- The individual will be made fully aware at the earliest opportunity of the nature of the alleged malpractice and of the possible consequences should malpractice be proven.
- The individual will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegations made.
- The individual will be informed of the avenues for appealing against any judgment made.
- All stages of the investigation will be documented.
- Please find further detail on the procedure below.

Procedure Following an Allegation of Unfair Means

- Alleged offences of unfair means will be reported to the Academic Manager for investigation.
- The Academic Manager is the Chair of the Assessment Board for the course being studied by the student.
- The Academic Manager will investigate the matter and will give the student the opportunity to put forward their case. The student may be accompanied by a friend. The procedure is not a formal court process and, therefore, should not be adversarial or overly legalistic, and there is no need for anyone to have formal legal representation. Notwithstanding this provision, a

student may be accompanied by a lawyer, providing the legal representative understands and respects the nature of the hearing, and does not adopt an overly adversarial or legalistic stance.

- The Academic Manager's decision will be based on the facts and on the evidence presented. The standard of proof will be the civil standard of proof which is that 'on a balance of probabilities', the facts of an allegation are more likely than not to have happened. If the student does not attend without good cause, a decision will be made in their absence and a penalty may be imposed.
- If the allegation is found to be proven the Academic Manager acting on behalf of the Assessment Board will implement the appropriate academic penalty in the module and report it to the Assessment Board. In the event of a single offence of unfair means, the appropriate penalty should be 0% for that element of assessment, and an overall fail for the module. The affected elements of the assessment must be resubmitted to the required standard. The mark for the module following resubmission will be restricted to the minimum pass mark.
- Where unfair means is detected for the first time on a reassessment for an already failed module, no further reassessment for the module will be permitted, and the appropriate fail grade will be awarded. In the event of a repeat offence of unfair means (irrespective of whether the repeat offence involves the same form of unfair means) on the same or any other module within the course, the appropriate penalty should be 0% for the module with no opportunity for re-assessment. This penalty does not preclude the student being permitted to retake the module in a subsequent year.
- If the student wishes to appeal against the decision of the Academic Manager, this will be heard under the first stage of the Procedure for Appeals, with the exception that the grounds for an appeal will be as set out in this paragraph. Appeals must be made in writing within 14 days of the hearing. An appeal will only be valid if it is based on the following grounds:
 - That the original hearing was not conducted fairly and/or in accordance with the published procedure;
 - Or that the original decision was unreasonable in all the circumstances.
- If the Academic Manager is of the view that an academic sanction by itself is inadequate, given the nature of the offence, (e.g. where the offence involves theft, falsification, impersonation or bringing the School into disrepute) the matter will be referred for action under the Disciplinary Regulations.
- A hearing under the Disciplinary Regulations cannot change a penalty imposed by the Academic Manager or any decision reached by the Assessment Board. However, the outcome of the hearing will be made available to the Academic Manager and the Chair of the Assessment Board, who may review their decision based on the recommendations made at the hearing.
- Any matter dealt with under either the Academic Regulations or the Disciplinary Regulations which results in a sanction against a student which affects their academic progress will be reported to the Assessment Board.
- Where an allegation of unfair means has been upheld, the School may inform relevant third parties of the nature and outcome of the case, including the relevant Professional, Statutory or Regulatory Body, placement providers or potential employers in the event of a reference request. The student will be informed in the event of any such disclosures.
- Reasonable adjustments will be made where students have mobility or communication problems in order that they may be informed of the process and have the opportunity to present their case, test the evidence, and offer an explanation or mitigation.
- If it is found that there has been malpractice then the Awarding body will be informed where relevant. The Awarding Body will then advise SEM on further action.