

Faculty of Science and Engineering

Summary Disciplinary Panels (Academic)

Summary Disciplinary Panels comprise of a Chair, an academic member of staff from the student's Department or discipline area, and a Professional Support member of staff.

Responsibility of the Chair

- Ensure familiarity with case documentation before the Panel hearing.
- Ensure familiarity with the [Academic Malpractice Procedure](#), the [Summary Disciplinary Panel Procedure](#), and the [Guidance on Applying Student Discipline Penalties](#).
- Agree or clarify procedure with Panel members before student is admitted (particulars of the case must not be discussed before the student is present).

During the Panel

- Introduce Panel members and ask for anyone accompanying the student to introduce him/herself.
- Check that all those present have received the paperwork in advance of the hearing.
- Check the student's understanding of why they have been invited to the Summary Disciplinary Panel (*e.g. Student has been referred for an allegation of plagiarism/collusion, it will be considered at School/Dept level because it is a first offence, etc....*)
- Explain the purpose of the hearing:
 1. to consider whether or not the student has committed an act of academic malpractice
 2. if the student is in breach of the regulation, to consider the seriousness of the offence and to set an appropriate penalty
- If a Case Presenter is in attendance, the allegation will first be outlined by them followed by an opportunity by both the SDP and the student to ask questions. If a Case Presenter is not in attendance, the SDP Chair will draw attention to the information that forms the allegation against the student.
- Establish whether the student is happy to proceed and/or whether there are any circumstances that might affect their ability to take part in the hearing. Explain that the student can take a break at any time if need be.

- Ask the student if they understand what academic malpractice (plagiarism) is and if they have received information about this in handbooks, seminars/tutorials, Blackboard units, etc.
- If the student has submitted a written statement ask him/her if he/she wishes to inform the Panel of anything else not contained in the written statement.
- Allow the student the opportunity to present their response to the allegation, after which the SDP and any Case Presenter may ask questions of the student.
- The Panel can ask relevant questions they may have about the work in question. (How did he/she put the piece of work together? What source material did he/she use and how did he/she use it etc.).
- If a witness has been invited to attend they will usually be brought into the hearing to make a statement and to be asked questions. The witness will then be asked to leave the room but may be required to wait until the end of the hearing in case further clarification from them is needed.
- Ascertain from the student any explanation in mitigation. Were any circumstances brought to the attention of the School at the time via a request for mitigation/extension? Has the student provided any supporting documentary evidence?
- If necessary, the Chair should clarify whether or not the student admits to an act of academic malpractice.
- Ask the Panel members if they have any further questions.
- Ask the student if s/he has anything to add.
- Ask Student (and anyone accompanying them) to leave the meeting and wait outside whilst the Panel consider the case.
- Panel discusses case and decides outcome/penalties etc.
- Student (and anyone accompanying them) should be called back into the room to hear the outcome, and advised that a written outcome will be sent within ten working days.

If the offence is admitted or proven, the Panel will apply the most appropriate penalty from the following:

Penalties for academic malpractice

1.1. A reprimand and warning about future behaviour.

1.2. A requirement upon the student to apologise for the misconduct to those who may have been affected by it.

1.3. A requirement for the student to undertake appropriate training related to the misconduct.

1.4. For any penalty available to be deferred and only imposed should any future breach of the Regulation occur.

1.5. The examining authority will be informed the mark for the piece of work or assessment should be reduced to a specified mark.

1.6. A recorded mark of zero for the examination paper or other assessed work in which unfair practice occurred. Should a re-assessment/resubmission opportunity be available this will, if passed, be capped at the lowest compensatable pass mark.

1.7. A recorded mark of zero for the course unit(s) in which the unfair practice occurred. Should a re-assessment/resubmission opportunity be available it will, if passed, be capped at the lowest compensatable pass mark.

The Chair should ensure that each penalty is given consideration.

The Chair should ensure that the Panel takes the following factors into consideration when deciding on an appropriate penalty:

- The student's level of study and time spent at the University; the more advanced the student, the more aggravated the offence.
- The scale of the offence; the more work or people affected, the more aggravated the offence.
- The student's previous history; a subsequent offence, when a student has already been through a formal disciplinary process in the past, is more serious than a first offence. *Note: where a student is known to have committed an offence during a previous programme of study, the later offence will not be viewed as a subsequent one, but the student having been through the disciplinary process before may be an aggravating factor in setting a penalty.*
- Whether the student exhibited any intent to deceive, such as in a piece of academic work or in the hearing itself. These are aggravating factors.
- Whether the student has shown any remorse, contrition, or insight. These may mitigate any penalty applied
- Whether the student has been open and transparent e.g. in accepting the allegation.
- Whether there any other mitigating factors of a personal nature that have been established by the student.
- The effect of the penalty on the student's intended progression on their programme.

In applying penalties the Panel must ensure that it is fully aware of the impact of the penalty on the student's ability to progress/final degree result and intended career if appropriate, and that it is proportionate to the offence committed. If the panel needs more information, a decision on the case can be postponed.

Ask the student (and anyone accompanying him/her) to return and inform him/her:

- of the outcome (i.e. penalty to be applied and any other factors pertinent to the outcome)

- that plagiarism is taken extremely seriously and that serious penalties could be applied if the student were to commit further acts of academic malpractice

Meeting concluded.

Responsibility of the Academic Panel member

- Ensure familiarity with case documentation before the Panel hearing.
- Have knowledge of the programme or subject area.
- Understand and be able to advise Panel on the effect any proposed penalty imposed would have on the student's academic progress.
- Is not the person who made the allegation of academic malpractice.

Responsibility of the Professional Support Panel member

- Ensure familiarity with case documentation before the Panel hearing.
- Provide administrative support and advice on procedures/regulations during the Panel meeting.
- Provide Panel with advice on penalties.
- Prepare the report which must include a summary of the meeting, the outcome arrived at, and any advice issued.
- Prepare the outcome letter informing the student of the Panel's decision, including any advice issued.

Relevant Regulations / Guidelines

- [Academic Malpractice Procedure](#)
- [Procedure for Summary Disciplinary Panels](#)
- [Guidance on Applying Student Discipline Penalties](#)
- The University's [Teaching and Learning Support Office](#)
- [Conduct & Discipline of Students Regulation XVII](#)
- [Faculty guidance on academic malpractice](#)