

**2024-25**

Central Film School

## **Academic Misconduct Procedure**

### **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This document outlines the procedures for investigating an allegation of academic misconduct. If an internal Academic Team suspects that you have committed an offence of academic misconduct, or a third party raises concerns with the Academic Team, they will analyse the work in question to assess the extent and nature of the offence, before deciding on the correct course of action.
- 1.2. The School expects all parties to act reasonably and fairly towards each other, and to treat the procedures with respect.

### **2. Communication and Engagement**

- 2.1. Communications concerning the allegation will be sent to your School email account. In the event that an allegation is raised against you as a graduate, the School will contact you using the contact details held on file for you.
- 2.2. Should an allegation of academic misconduct be made against you, you should engage with the communications and procedures associated with the investigation. Non-engagement with the academic misconduct procedures and associated communications may not normally be used as a defence against an allegation of academic misconduct or as grounds in any resultant appeal.

- 2.3. If you have been accused of academic misconduct, you may admit to the charge in the first instance and this will allow the conclusion of the investigation to be expedited and may result in a lesser penalty being applied.

### **3. Confidentiality**

- 3.1. Normally an allegation of academic misconduct and the associated investigation will only be viewed by the members of the Academic Team and, should the allegation progress to Stage 2 or Stage 3, the members of the Academic Misconduct Panel. In certain instances, other members of staff may need sight of all or part of the allegation in order to respond to the points raised within the allegation or your responses to the allegation. You can be reassured that, in such instances, any information disclosed will be treated sensitively and confidentially.

### **4. Detection**

- 4.1. Academic misconduct may be detected in a number of ways, including but not limited to:

4.2. **Questions of fact**

Questions of fact are based on clear evidence that something has, or has more likely than not, taken place. For example, the evidence may show poorly cited or wholly unreferenced use of sources, where work has been previously submitted by you for an earlier assessment, or an advert for a commission placed by you.

4.3. **Detection software**

The School uses detection software as part of Google Classroom to identify potential plagiarism. The Academic Team will scrutinise the work to establish the extent of any concern about academic misconduct, often using active searching online.

4.4. **Academic Integrity Vivas**

Vivas are used to establish whether you have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the submission that you can be determined to be the author.

4.5. **Active searching online**

If an Academic Team suspects that your work is not your own, active searching may help them identify academic misconduct even where detection software has not. In addition, essay mills typically outsource commissioned assessments through legitimate copywriting websites. Academic Teams may

use active searching of copywriting sites to identify where an assessment has been outsourced.

#### 4.6. **Discrepancies with your profile**

Your course team quickly becomes familiar with your style of work and will be able to tell if your work appears inconsistent with your profile. This may be a change in authorial voice (for example, using different or elevated language), stylistic approach, academic performance level, visual language or an unexplained change in content. Suspecting or identifying a discrepancy with your profile is often one of the first signs for an Academic Team that your work might require further investigation under the Academic Misconduct Procedure. The Academic Team may invite you to a viva or proceed directly to a formal stage of investigation.

#### 4.7. **Evidence**

Where an Academic Team makes an allegation of academic misconduct, they are expected to provide evidence to support their concerns. Outcomes of academic misconduct investigations are based on the balance of probabilities: that is, is it more likely than not that the offence occurred?

The types of evidence provided will depend on the nature of the allegation, and may include, but are not limited to:

- reports from detection software (e.g. Google Classroom)
- statements from witnesses to the alleged academic misconduct
- sources from which an assessment is suspected to have been plagiarised
- Academic Integrity Viva reports; and samples of previous work submitted by you.

In some cases, you may be required to prove that you have or have not done something: for example, if two students are accused of collusion, and Student A provides evidence that Student B copied their work, Student B would need to rebut the evidence.

In some cases, you may be asked to provide specific evidence. For example, in an allegation of plagiarism, an Academic Misconduct Panel may ask to see your earlier drafts or research notes. Where you are unable to provide requested evidence, you may be asked to explain its absence.

If you would like the School to consider any mitigating factors in your case, you must provide evidence of these with your response. While mitigating factors will not permit a case to be dismissed without investigation, the panel may consider your evidence of mitigating factors when deciding on a penalty.

## 5. Stage 1: Minor offence

- 5.1. A minor offence is an offence of academic misconduct that the Academic Team judges to be minor in terms of proportion, level and context, and may be signified by (but not limited to) the following:
- Lack of appropriate of citation or referencing, beyond what would normally be considered as poor academic practice
  - Inappropriate levels of collaboration with another student
  - Incorrect behaviour in an examination or on set assessment
- 5.2. The following allegations cannot be considered at Stage 1, and must be dealt with at Stage 2 of the academic misconduct process, as appropriate to the severity of the allegation:
- Any allegation when you are studying at Level 6 (final year of an undergraduate course) or above
  - Any allegation of collusion
  - An allegation of commissioning (contract cheating)
  - Any further allegation when you have already received a warning at Stage 1
- 5.3. The Academic Team may judge a first allegation that constitutes misconduct in a small proportion of work to be a serious offence in respect of level, context and/or intent, and may refer the investigation to Stage 2.
- 5.4. If an allegation of a second minor offence is raised before you have received the letter of warning concerning a first offence at Stage 1, the second allegation will be dealt with at Stage 1 and not escalated to Stage 2.
- 5.5. If an Academic tutor suspects that a Stage 1 academic misconduct offence has occurred, they must notify the Academic Team and address the matter with you. You will be required to attend a viva with your Academic Team and your Course Leader where they will:
- Explain the situation and discuss their concerns with you
  - invite you to explain what you think has happened
  - advise how to avoid such occurrences in the future;
- 5.6. If the Academic Team considers that an offence is proven, or you admit the offence, they will also:
- inform you that a note, stating that there was a proven academic offence, will be added to your student record.
  - confirm that your work will be marked with the affected section(s) disregarded. Should this result in a failing mark, you will be set a reassessment as per reassessment procedures. If you are already on

your final attempt at this assessment, this can result in overall failure of the module, and potentially the end of your enrolment on the course.

- 5.7. You will receive a letter of warning from your Course Leader, normally within ten (10) working days of your meeting. The letter will be sent to your student email address. The Student Services Team will be copied into this letter, so that a note can be made on your student record.
- 5.8. Non-attendance at the viva may not be used by you as mitigation of any further offence(s). A lack of engagement with the viva will not be viewed favourably by the Academic Misconduct Panel in the event that a further allegation be proven against you.
- 5.9. If on meeting with you, the Academic Team determines that the allegation is unproven, you will receive a letter to your School email account to confirm that no further action will be taken.
- 5.10. If, on meeting with you, the Academic Team is unable to determine if an offence is proven or not, or more information comes to light which requires further investigation, they may escalate the case to Stage 2.

## **6. Stage 2: Major offence**

- 6.1. When determining whether an allegation should be made at Stage 2, your Academic Team will take into account the severity of the case, including the proportion of work affected in an assessment, and/or your level of study. Allegations will be entered directly at Stage 2 if you have a previous, proven case at Stage 1, or you are studying at Level 6, or the allegation is one of collusion or commissioning (contract cheating).
- 6.2. Stage 2 offences will be considered by an Academic Misconduct Panel (AMP).
- 6.3. If more than one major offence occurs concurrently and Stage 2 processes were incomplete when the subsequent case/s were identified, the offences may be considered as a whole. This decision is to be made at the discretion of the AMP.

## **7. Stage 2 Investigation**

- 7.1. The Academic Team will produce an Academic Misconduct report. The report will indicate the extent and nature of the alleged offence under investigation. The report will be forwarded to the Head of School, along with copies of the following as applicable to the nature of the allegation:
  - The relevant assessment brief(s)

- Module Descriptors
  - Detection software report(s)
  - The alleged source(s) identified
  - Details of your reasonable adjustments, attendance monitoring, etc. as appropriate
  - Any other documentation that the academic team believes to be relevant to the case.
- 7.2. Your Course Leader or Head of School will contact you via your School email account and will invite you to a meeting with the Assessment Misconduct Panel.
- 7.3. The AMP members shall comprise of at least 3 of the following:
- Head of School (Chair)
  - Course Leader
  - Module Leader
  - Members of the Student Services Team
  - Members of the Senior Management Team
- 7.4. The AMP will consider the evidence provided in the meeting before reaching a decision about the appropriate penalty. Within five (5) working days of the decision being made, your Course Leader will send you an email via your School email account with details of the penalty. The Academic Team and your personal tutor will also be informed of the outcome. Where there are implications for your marks or progression, the appropriate Exam Boards shall also be notified of the decision.
- 7.5. Admitting the allegation allows the conclusion of the investigation to be expedited and may result in a lesser penalty being applied, depending on the nature of the offence. If you wish to admit the allegation, you should do this prior or within the meeting with the AMP.
- 7.6. In the case of your absence at the AMP, the meeting will proceed with discussing the evidence and has the authority to come to a conclusion and outcome including any penalties in your absence
- 7.7. You may be accompanied in the AMP meeting by one other person if you wish. That person must be one of the following:
- Another student who is currently enrolled on a course at the School;
  - A representative from the Student Council
  - An accessibility or academic support worker.
- 7.8. If you are bringing another person with you, you must inform your Course Leader or Head of School of their full name and status with at least one (1) working day in advance of the meeting.

- 7.9. Where two or more students are accused of collusion, all students will normally attend the same AMP.
- 7.10. During the meeting, the AMP will consider the evidence and will question you to obtain a clearer understanding of your methodology, understanding of academic integrity and any other relevant issues.
- 7.11. The AMP may question the Academic Team to gain a clearer understanding of the information provided to students regarding academic integrity within the course, the clarity of the brief and any other factors the AMP deems relevant to their decision.

## **8. Stage 2 Outcomes**

- 8.1. The AMP will decide one of the following outcomes:
  - Unproven – no further action. The allegation will be removed from your academic record; or
  - Proven - the panel will determine an appropriate penalty as defined below.
- 8.2. In some circumstances, the AMP may find that the evidence proves that Academic Misconduct has occurred under a different category to that originally alleged. For example, a meeting to investigate an allegation of collusion against two students, may find that the case is unproven against one and that the case against the other is one of plagiarism.
- 8.3. The Chair of the AMP will approve a report of the meeting, with clear reasons for the decisions reached and penalties imposed. Within ten (10) working days of the meeting, you will receive an email via your School email account with the outcome of the AMP meeting, a copy of the report, any relevant paperwork, and information about the Appeals Policy and Procedure. Where there are implications for your marks or progression, the appropriate Exam Boards shall also be notified of the decision.
- 8.4. An Exam Board cannot overturn the decision of an AMP.

## **9. Stage 2 Penalties**

- 9.1. The AMP will decide an appropriate penalty based on the following considerations:
  - History: whether a previous case has been proven against you
  - Amount/extent of the offence, e.g. how much of an assessment is suspected to be not your own work
  - Level of study/how long you have been a student at the School

- Value of assignment, e.g. was the task summative or formative, was it a final dissertation, etc.
- Evidence of deliberate intent to deceive
- Your response to the allegation.
- In some circumstances, the AMP may also take into account evidence of any mitigating circumstances that you have provided.

9.2. In the event that Stage 2 academic misconduct is proven and depending on the severity, level and context of the offence, one of the following penalties will be issued by the AMP:

- Referral back to Stage 1 of the procedure with the corresponding penalties;
- Failure in the assessment concerned (a mark/grade of 1). If this is your first attempt of the assessment, you will receive a reassessment opportunity for a capped mark in the assessment affected
- Failure in the assessment concerned (a mark/grade of 1) and a capped mark applied to the module as a whole. If this is your first attempt of the assessment, you will receive a reassessment opportunity for a capped mark in the assessment affected
- Failure in the assessment concerned (a mark/grade of 1) and a capped mark applied to the module as a whole and a capped mark applied to all other modules in the study block or level, as determined by the Panel. If this is your first attempt of the assessment, you will receive a reassessment opportunity for a capped mark in the assessment affected
- Failure in the assessment tasks concerned (a mark/grade of 1) and termination of study with no further opportunity for reassessment.

9.3. Failure due to proven academic misconduct can result in you exceeding the maximum number of trailing CATS and, therefore, result in you not being able to proceed at your next or current level of study.

9.4. The offence will be logged on your student record and may be disclosed as part of any academic or work references as requested.

## **10. How academic misconduct applies to graduates**

10.1. If you have graduated and an allegation of academic misconduct is made against you for work submitted as part of the degree for which you were enrolled, the School may investigate the allegation under the terms of this procedure.

10.2. In the case of academic misconduct being proven against a graduate, the following penalties may be applied:

- A reduction in the class of degree awarded; or



- Revocation of the original award; or
  - A marking penalty or re-marking of the work with the plagiarised section removed, recognising that this may result in a reduction in the class of degree awarded or revocation of the original award.
- 10.3. A proven offence will be logged on your student record and the outcome and any penalties applied may be included in any future employment or academic references.

## **11. Graduation**

- 11.1. The School does not permit students with outstanding allegations of academic misconduct to attend the graduation ceremonies. You will not be able to attend the ceremonies until any investigation has been concluded. Should a penalty be applied as a result of a case, you will normally need to complete the required actions before you are eligible to attend any graduation ceremony; as a result, your graduation may be deferred until the following academic year.

## **12. Right of appeal**

- 12.1. You have a right to appeal against the decisions taken and/or the penalties imposed through the Academic Misconduct Procedures. Any appeal should be made using the [Academic Appeals Procedure](#). You should submit your appeal within twenty (20) working days of the date the outcome was sent to you. Appeals received outside of the deadline will not normally be accepted.
- 12.2. There are two grounds for appeal:
- There were extenuating circumstances affecting you which you were unwilling or unable to divulge to your course team or the AMP at the time they made their decision
  - There were procedural irregularities in the conduct of the investigation
- 12.3. You may not appeal on the grounds of non-engagement with, or non-attendance at, any stage in the process for which you were provided with the required notice and communications.

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