



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
BUCKINGHAM

MEDICAL SCHOOL

**MB ChB**

**Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedures  
(Including Cheating and Plagiarism)**

## *Introduction*

This policy specifically applies to students in the University of Buckingham Medical School registered on the MB ChB programme. It is based on the University of Buckingham Academic Misconduct policy but specifically refers to Medical School practices and structures.

Students of the University will be offered forms of instruction throughout their studies in many aspects of academic best practice. The MB ChB Student Support Moodle pages contains a guidance document for avoiding academic misconduct. However, in the interests of fairness and justice, and to protect the vast majority of students who adhere to codes of good academic conduct, there must be clear regulations regarding academic misconduct. A Moodle test on the University Academic Misconduct policy is to be completed by all students during the first term of study.

References in these policy and procedure statements to "examination" refer to a formally invigilated written or oral test or Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) scheduled and supervised by the MB ChB Assessment Group. These should be read in conjunction with the MB ChB Regulations and MB ChB Code of Practice for Assessment.

"Coursework" refers to all forms of work produced by students individually or in groups and submitted/presented to academic staff for both formative and summative assessments, as outlined in approved Unit Specifications. This may include in-class tests, essays, reports, term-papers, dissertations, theses, individual or group presentations, websites, material recorded using AV equipment or in other media.

## *1 Policy*

- 1.1 Except where otherwise clearly indicated, students shall be assessed on the basis of their own unassisted and unaided work.
- 1.2 In the interests of fairness and justice, students should be aware that it is University policy to compare all coursework (where feasible) using TurnItIn, against databanks of existing material, to check whether there is a degree of similarity that might arouse suspicions of academic misconduct as defined below.
- 1.3 [see the MB ChB General Regulations and MB ChB Code of Practice for Assessment]  
In any coursework submitted for assessment there must be disclosed full particulars:
  - (i) of all sources of information consulted (which must be distinguished as either primary or secondary); and
  - (ii) of all money paid in respect of its preparation;

In the research for and preparation of coursework a student must not receive any assistance other than:

- (iii) the typing of the student's own manuscript
  - (iv) the obtaining of access to a source of information, including obtaining the opportunity to question a person orally or in writing.
- 1.4 Any student found in breach of the University's regulations relating to examinations and coursework will be deemed to be guilty of academic misconduct and will in most cases be subject to disciplinary proceedings. Academic misconduct includes cheating and plagiarism.
- 1.5 Plagiarism is defined as presenting as one's own the thoughts or writings of others, and may be considered a form of intellectual theft, e.g. copyright infringement.
- 1.6 The following are examples of academic misconduct, cheating, and plagiarism that would normally result in formal investigation of a candidate's performance. The list is not exhaustive and other instances may be considered by the University authorities at their discretion:
- (i) Obtaining unauthorised access to assessment material;
  - (ii) Introduction of unauthorised material into the room used for an examination, OSCE or in-class test;
  - (iii) Collusion or attempted collusion with other persons on assessments that are designed to be done by each student on his or her own;
  - (iv) Copying from another student, with or without that student's permission;
  - (v) Disruptive behaviour during examinations, OSCE or in-class tests;
  - (vi) Impersonation;
  - (vii) Submitting work written by someone else on behalf of the candidate submitting;
  - (viii) Submitting another student's work, whether or not it has been previously submitted by that student;
  - (ix) Submitting work that has been corrected/revised, without the approval of the Student Support Team and Unit Lead in the Medical School, by an individual with a higher level of English language proficiency;
  - (x) Failure to reference or acknowledge sources adequately, in such a way that material authored by others appears to be the candidate's own work, in any portion of work submitted for assessment. Examples include:
    - Presenting substantial extracts from books, articles, theses and other published or unpublished works, such as working papers, seminars and conference papers, internal reports, computer software, internet materials, lecture notes or tapes, without clearly indicating their origin with quotation marks and references in footnotes or bibliography;
    - using very close paraphrasing of sentences or whole paragraphs without due

- acknowledgement in the form of reference to the original work in the text or the footnote;
- quoting directly from a source and consistently failing to insert quotation marks around the quoted passages. In such cases it is not adequate merely to acknowledge the source;
- (xi) The inclusion of irrelevant offensive or obscene material in assessments submitted;
- (xii) The alteration or falsification of any results document, including experimental data, or certificates.

## *2 Procedures for dealing with academic misconduct in the examination hall*

Where a candidate is suspected of cheating or other academic misconduct the invigilator should quietly inform the candidate that this is suspected. Where it is necessary to engage in a dialogue with the candidate, the invigilator should ask the candidate:

- (i) to leave the room to explain the incident to the invigilator(s); and
  - (ii) whether the candidate wishes to challenge the charge of academic misconduct.
- 2.2 The candidate must be informed by the Chief Invigilator that he/she is allowed to continue the examination, and if appropriate be given additional time to compensate for the time lost as a result of the initial enquiry.
- 2.3. If the use of unauthorised material is suspected, this should be removed and shown to another invigilator. Where there is some doubt about the validity of the material, it should be endorsed by two invigilators and returned to the candidate. The material may continue to be used provided that it is submitted without further amendment by the candidate with the candidate's script. Failure to conform to this will automatically disqualify the script.
- 2.4. A **written report** of the incident should be prepared by the invigilator(s) and submitted to the MB ChB Board of Examiners who may refer this to the MB ChB Concerns Group. The Chair will follow the procedures and sanctions set down in clause 14 of the Examination Rules for Candidates in the University Handbook, reproduced below:

### **14. Cheating and Unfair Practice**

- 14.1 *In an examination conducted by or on behalf of the University, a candidate shall not cheat nor attempt to cheat.*
- 14.2 *Without detracting from the generality of 14.1, a candidate who at any time in the course of such an examination has in his possession material, which is not authorised by or on behalf of the University for use by him in that examination, shall be deemed*

*to be in breach of Rule 14.1, save in the case of a candidate who proves that he never intended to use the relevant material for cheating.*

*14.3 In addition to or in substitution for any other penalty applicable to a breach of the University's statutes, regulations or rules, a candidate's breach of Rule 14.1 shall cause every examination script submitted by him in the Diet, of which the relevant examination forms the whole or a part, to be disregarded by the examiners and shall render him liable to be referred to Fitness to Practise proceedings and expelled from the University.*

*14.4 A candidate shall not bring, nor cause to be brought, into a room in which an examination is to be, or is being conducted, material that has not been authorised.*

*14.5 The terms of Rules 14.1, 14.2, 14.3 and 14.4 shall not give rise to any implication, which would not otherwise occur, nor inhibit the finding of any implication, which would otherwise be found, in other provisions of the University's Statutes, Regulations and Rules.*

### **3 Procedures for dealing with suspected academic misconduct in coursework:**

#### **Initial Inquiry**

3.1 Where there are reasonable grounds for suspicion of poor academic practice or academic misconduct in a piece of coursework, whether through notification from the University's detection software or by any other means, the Marking Team in conjunction with the School Assessment Manager will pass the student's work, originality report and any other relevant information to the MB ChB Concerns Group as an academic concern. The MB ChB Concerns Group will conduct an initial enquiry into the circumstances surrounding the submission, whether formative or summative, and produce a report based on but not limited to the following criteria:

**A the extent of the alleged academic misconduct, e.g.**

- (i) the amount of text allegedly plagiarised.
- (ii) the closeness to the original text.
- (iii) the nature of the material allegedly plagiarised, whether purely descriptive or including results, etc).
- (iv) the weighting of the coursework element in which academic misconduct is alleged, in terms of the overall course assessment.

**B student motivation**

Due consideration should be given to the following factors, while recognising that they are not necessarily all entirely distinct:

- (i) the stage of the student in their programme,
- (ii) the number of previous offences (if any),
- (iii) the extent of the student's knowledge of the concept of academic misconduct e.g. does the Medical School have on file a copy of the MB ChB policy, procedures and sanctions relating to academic misconduct, signed by the student and/or has the student completed the Moodle test on academic misconduct (and if so, what score was recorded)?

3.2 The results of the above profiling exercise will be passed from the MB ChB Concerns Group to the Chair of the MB ChB Academic Misconduct Group, or their nominated deputy, who will recommend to the Chair of the Exam Board one of the following courses of action:

- a) Where it is deemed no academic misconduct is present, and all material has been properly presented no further action will be taken. Work will be marked as normal.
- b) For minor irregularities in presentation of material (e.g inconsistent referencing, inadequate/excessive paraphrasing, incorrect application of scholarly style), a judgement of poor academic practice will apply. Work will be marked in the light of this judgement, and the student will have an explanatory discussion with their Personal Tutor. It would normally not be appropriate to consider a case as poor academic practice where the student has previously received a judgement of poor academic practice or academic misconduct and could therefore be expected to have familiarised themselves with appropriate academic practice.
- c) Where the Chair of the MB ChB Academic Misconduct Group concludes that academic misconduct may have been committed, they shall call for a full investigation by the MB ChB Academic Misconduct Group. The MB ChB Academic Misconduct Group shall follow MB ChB Regulations with regard to cheating and/or plagiarism and conduct a full investigation according to their Code of Practice. The Chair of the MB ChB Academic Misconduct Group shall refer their report to the MB ChB Board of Examiners and to the MB ChB Concerns Group, who may then refer to the MB ChB Fitness to Practise Committee.

3.3 At the end of each assessment period, a record of all cases dealt with under 3.2a and 3.2b above, and their outcomes, signed by the Chair of the Board of Examiners will be submitted by the Assessment Manager to the central Academic Misconduct Officer.

#### *4 Procedures for dealing with suspected academic misconduct in coursework: Full Investigation*

- 4.1 At this stage (3.2c above) the MB ChB Academic Misconduct Group must inform the student in writing, attaching a copy of the latest approved version of this document. The student will be informed that their academic concern has been referred to the MB ChB Academic Misconduct Group and an investigation is taking place. The student will be given an opportunity to offer any explanation or mitigation. The results of this enquiry will be passed to the MB ChB Academic Misconduct Group along with the case profile and materials outline in 3.1 a.) and b.) above.
- 4.2 The MB ChB Academic Misconduct Group shall conduct a full investigation under these regulations and will make a written submission, on the balance of probabilities, whether academic misconduct has taken place, to the MB ChB Board of Examiners and the MB ChB Concerns Group for any recommendation to referral to Fitness to Practise proceedings.
- 4.3 Where the MB ChB Academic Misconduct Group has reason to suspect that a piece of work submitted by a student was wholly or in part prepared or researched or written by someone other than the student who submitted it, and this has not been disclosed by the student, they may, on consultation with the Chair of the Board of Examiners, call for the student to defend the work in an unseen test of comprehension. The unseen test of comprehension will be conducted as soon as is reasonably practical by a panel of examiners selected by the Board of Examiners or its Chair. The burden of proof in such an unseen test of comprehension will be upon the student to demonstrate to the Examination Committee's satisfaction his/her full comprehension of the work s/he has submitted. It is the student's responsibility to appear for the unseen test of comprehension. Failure to appear without satisfactory explanation will result in an immediate failure of that test, with a resulting presumption that the student is in breach of the regulations relating to academic misconduct and application of sanctions as outlined below. A written record of the outcome of the comprehension test will be prepared by the Assessment Manager and submitted to the Concerns Group and Chair of the Board of Examiners.
- 4.4 After examining the available evidence, the Chair of the Board of Examiners, in consultation with the MB ChB Academic Misconduct Group, will report accordingly to the candidate as to the finding of the full investigation, and the sanction (if any) that has been applied under Section 5 of this procedure.
- 4.5 At the end of each assessment period, a record of all cases dealt by full investigation and their outcomes, signed by the Chair of the Board of Examiners will be submitted by the

Examinations Officer to the central Academic Misconduct Officer for collecting management information on academic misconduct for subsequent analysis.

## 5 Outcomes of the Full Investigation

- 5.1 Where it is deemed no academic misconduct is present, and all material has been properly presented, no further action will be taken. Work will be marked as normal.
- 5.2 For minor irregularities in presentation of material (e.g. inconsistent referencing, inadequate/excessive paraphrasing, incorrect application of scholarly style), a judgement of poor academic practice will apply. Work will be marked in the light of this judgement, and the student will have an explanatory discussion with their Personal Tutor. It would not be appropriate to consider a case as poor academic practice where the student has previously received a judgement of poor academic practice or academic misconduct and could therefore be expected to have familiarised themselves with appropriate academic practice.
- 5.3 Where it is deemed that there has been a breach of the above policy, a judgement of academic misconduct will apply. The student will be sanctioned in line with the following tariff of penalties, according to the extent, gravity and nature of the case, and in line with such precedents as may be established from case history as recorded by the University and, as required, with reference to practice elsewhere in the sector. The Chair of the MB ChB Concerns Group will receive a copy of the investigation report along with the applied sanctions and may then refer to the student to MB ChB Fitness to Practise proceedings.

### Sanctions

- A. The material deemed to have been plagiarised will be disregarded, and a grade will be awarded on the remainder of the work. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*
- B. The items in which plagiarised work was discovered will be required to be resubmitted, it being understood that the maximum grade that can be awarded for the element(s) of work so resubmitted will be the minimum passing grade. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*
- C. Award of unsatisfactory grade for the coursework element of the Unit. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*
- D. Award of zero for the Student Selected Component. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*
- E. Failure of the programme; expulsion from the university. For the MB ChB programme, most sanctions will result in expulsion from the programme in accordance with the MB ChB Regulations and Fitness to Practise Proceedings, with the award of the MB ChB exit degree

where appropriate. *The student will be informed and a record will be entered on the student's file.*

## 6 Appeals

- 6.1 Appeals will only be considered where a judgement of academic misconduct has been given following the process of full investigation.
- 6.2 If the candidate wishes to appeal s/he may submit an appeal, in writing normally within twenty eight days of the date of presumed receipt of the formal communication referred to in 4.4. The letter of appeal must state all of the grounds upon which the appeal is based.
- 6.3 MB ChB students must appeal through the same body that imposed the sanction. All designated members of the Appeals process shall have access to all materials from the case and be able to question any relevant parties in making a decision on the appeal.
- 6.4 The candidate will be given an opportunity to make representations at any stage of the appeal process either in person or in writing. If the candidate makes representations in person, s/he may be accompanied by a friend.
- 6.5 The decision of the Appeals Panel shall be final and shall be communicated to all the relevant parties and to the next meeting of Examinations Senate.
- 6.6 Advice concerning the application of the above procedures either during or after their application may be sought from the Registrar.

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