



Union
Theological
College

Union Theological College Poor Academic Practice

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Union Theological College

Poor Academic Practice

Poor Academic Practice (UG)

Introduction

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Academic Integrity Procedures (Undergraduate). All cases of suspected academic misconduct will be dealt with in a two-stage process, depending on severity.

Step One

The first marker will be responsible for identifying concerns with a piece of work. If the marker feels it would be helpful, they can seek the input of the Programme Coordinator.

Step Two

The case is then referred to the Head of Department. A decision will be made as to whether there is:

- (i) No case to answer.
- (ii) Evidence of poor academic practice (to be dealt with at programme level)
- (iii) Evidence of academic misconduct (to be dealt with at College level)

Step Three

In the case of poor academic practice, the first marker and the Programme Coordinator will meet with the student, explain their concerns and use the meeting as a positive training session for the student. The student will be told that the work will be marked ignoring the material of concern. This is likely to result in a reduced mark, if the material at issue is so extensive as to result in a fail then the normal resit procedures will apply. The mark penalty for poor academic practice will be at the discretion of the Programme Coordinator in consultation with the Head of Department.

The outcome of poor academic practice meetings must be recorded and logged by the Programme Coordinator who will report cases to the Executive Academic Administration. This enables tracking of repeat cases. A note will be placed on the student's record.

Students presenting poor academic practice for a third time, irrespective of the extent of the material at issue, should be referred to a College panel.

Step Four

In the case of academic misconduct, the normal procedures for an Academic Integrity Panel will be followed.



Allocating Cases

A number of factors should be taken into account when judging whether to refer the work to an Academic Integrity Panel.

(1) The Academic Level of the Student

Poor academic practice is reserved for level 4 cases. Any case detected at levels 5 or 6 should be referred to an Academic Integrity Panel.

(2) Nature of the Infringement

Poor academic practice could be inadequate referencing and/or the inclusion of a small amount of unattributed or incorrectly attributed material. There may be evidence that the student made efforts to cite but used incorrect citation practices or displayed lack of originality by submitting coursework containing passages quoted from others, even if cited correctly. Poor academic practice could also include cases where students have misinterpreted the line between collaboration and collusion. It can only be applied to instances which would fall under the category of low level infringement in section 8.2.1 of the Academic Integrity Procedures (undergraduate).

(3) The Proportion of the Assignment Affected

Due to the wide variety of assessments used across modules it is not possible or appropriate to specify percentage matches above which cases should be referred. This is dependent on the nature of the assessments.

(4) Any Previous Recorded Instances

Before making a decision, the experience of the student should be checked with College Administration. Poor academic practice can only be applied to first or second cases. If a student's work is flagged for a third case or subsequent they must be referred to an Academic Integrity Panel. If the Programme Coordinator and the Head of Department deem the offence to be serious enough it should be referred to College Administration to deal with via the Academic Integrity Procedures (Undergraduate).

Note that extenuating circumstances cannot be taken account in mitigation.



Poor Academic Practice Procedures

In the case of poor academic practice, the first marker and the Programme Coordinator will meet with the student, explain their concerns and use the meeting as a positive training session for the student.

1. The student should be contacted and a meeting arranged between the student, the marker and the Programme Coordinator (see appendix 1). Students may bring a supportive friend from within the College (another student). This meeting cannot be held in absentia. If the student does not wish to or is repeatedly unable to attend then the case should be referred to a College Panel.
2. During this meeting, the marker will explain their concerns, the student will have an opportunity to ask questions and discuss their working practices, and the Programme Coordinator will give guidance about processes. A warning concerning the student's future work, and the potential consequences of any reoccurrence, should also be given.
3. The work will be marked, ignoring any material which has been identified as of concern, this is likely to result in a reduced mark. If the material at issue is so extensive as to result in a fail then the normal resit procedures will apply.
4. The student must be sent a written record of the meeting to their College email address (normally within two working days), to briefly outline what was discussed, and to clarify the next steps (see appendix 2).
5. This should be attached to the student record to enable tracking of repeated cases.

If the student contests the finding of Poor Academic Practice the case should be referred to a College Academic Integrity Panel.



Appendix 1

Template Email - Invitation to Poor Academic Practice Meeting

This template can be used as a guide only and can be adapted to suit each specific case as appropriate.

Dear [student]

I am writing to you regarding [coursework title] you submitted for [module code] [module title]. The module convenor and I have concerns about your academic practice on this piece of work. A concerning amount of material has been detected as [being in common with internet sources/being in common with another student/being in common with work you have previously submitted/nor referenced appropriately.] We have found in the past that poor academic practice can lead, albeit unconsciously, to academic misconduct.

Therefore, we want to call it to your attention, so that you are aware of what might be happening and can make changes for the future. Your module tutor [name] and I would like to discuss this work with you in [location time and date]. You are very welcome to bring a friend with you who also attends the College.

Please confirm your attendance or let me know if you are unable to attend and I will try to rearrange an alternative time for you.

Yours sincerely



Appendix 2

Template Email - Outcome of Poor Academic Practice Meeting

This template should be used as a guide only and can be adapted to suit each specific case as appropriate. It should be copied to the Senior Executive Academic Administrator.

Dear [student]

I am writing regarding the [coursework] you submitted for [module code] [module title]. As you know, [module tutor] and I had concerns about your academic practice on this piece of work. Thank you for coming to the meeting to discuss this on [date], we hope you found it useful and that it will help you to review and improve your practices.

It is important to ensure that your work is entirely your own. If you were to submit another piece of work which repeated the same mistake then this may constitute academic misconduct and be dealt with by an Academic Integrity Panel. The penalties for proven cases of academic misconduct are outlined in the Academic Integrity Procedures (Undergraduate).

When undertaking assignments, you should refer to the guidance provided by the programme on how to avoid academic misconduct. You can also talk to any academic staff.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

[Programme Coordinator]