

Student Guide to the Code of Student Conduct

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What is the Code of Student Conduct and why does it matter?

The University is committed to providing a high-quality teaching, learning and research environment that is conducive to the academic and social well-being of the University community. High standards of conduct are necessary for the benefit of all members of the University and the maintenance of the University's reputation. The [Code of Student Conduct](#) (the Code) is aimed at supporting all students in meeting the standards of behaviour required by the University. It outlines behaviours that are not considered acceptable, and to inform on the action that will be taken when there are concerns about behaviour.

The Code applies to:

- All registered students
- Applicants who have accepted an offer to study
- Conduct on campus, online, on placement, and in certain off-campus situations that affect the University, its community or its reputation

By agreeing to the University's Terms and Conditions when you register each year, you are also agreeing to abide by the Code of Student Conduct.

What is Misconduct?

Within the University, there are two types of misconduct: **Academic Misconduct** and **Non-Academic Misconduct**.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is also known as cheating. All work submitted by you must be your own. The only exception to this is an official group or joint assessment. Academic misconduct occurs when a student gains, or attempts to gain, an unfair academic advantage. Academic misconduct can be unintentional, and standards of academic integrity at GCU may be different from where you have studied before. It is therefore important that you are aware of what is considered by the University to be academic misconduct.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

Plagiarism

Using someone else's work, ideas or words without proper acknowledgement, including self-plagiarism (copying work you have submitted for an earlier assessment).

Collusion

Unauthorised collaboration with others that results in submitted work not being entirely your own. This would include working with a classmate and submitting work that is identical or very similar. This does not include work that you have produced

as part of an official group or joint assessment where there is one assessment submitted on behalf of the group.

Inappropriate Use of AI

Using generative AI tools contrary to assessment instructions or failing to acknowledge AI use where the use of AI is permitted.

Ghostwriting / Contract Cheating

Submitting work produced by another person, an essay-writing service, or another third party.

Falsification

Making up or altering data, references, signatures, research findings or other academic information.

Exam Misconduct

Using unauthorised materials, devices, notes, or receiving assistance during examinations or assessments.

Academic Integrity: What You Should Know

Always:

- Reference your sources correctly
- Complete your own work
- Follow assessment guidance
- Keep drafts and evidence of your work
- Ask for help if unsure about referencing or AI use.

Do not be tempted to seek help from individuals or companies who contact you via social media or other means, offering services to help you with your assessments. Submitting work that is not your own is considered to be cheating and can result in you not being able to get your degree. Ghostwriters have been known to bribe students and contact the University, even after they have completed their studies. Ghostwriters may also use AI to complete work and submit the same work for multiple students. If you are struggling with an assessment, there is always a better way than using AI or a ghostwriter to do it for you. You can:

- Speak to your tutor or module leader
- Visit the [Learning Development Centre](#) and engage with the sessions and resources available there, and
- Contact the [Students' Association Advice Centre](#) for advice.

You are allowed to use proofreaders or basic proofreading software to identify errors and suggest changes to language, grammar, idiom, and structure. **Proofreaders must not make automatic or direct changes to the text, add information, sources or critical argument.**

Please keep ALL original and proofread copies, comments and suggestions as these will be asked for if there are any concerns around academic misconduct in your work.

Non-Academic Misconduct

This is behaviour that negatively affects other people, the University, its community or its reputation. It applies to a student's behaviour on campus and elsewhere. It also applies to conduct online, including social media and via electronic messaging. Examples include:

- Bullying or harassment
- Racism or discrimination
- Gender-based violence (including rape or other sexual crimes, domestic violence, stalking, forced marriage, so-called 'honour' crimes, sexual harassment, coercive or financial control)
- Threatening or abusive behaviour
- Theft, fraud or damage to property
- Misuse of IT systems
- Possession or supply of illegal substances
- Breaching health and safety requirements
- Posting offensive or harmful content online
- Failure to comply with University policies or conduct sanctions

How are concerns about student behaviour raised?

Concerns about student conduct can be raised in a number of ways. Concerns about academic misconduct are normally raised by an academic in the programme team marking a student's work. But they are also raised by fellow students, members of the public or even ghostwriters who have written work for students. Similarly for non-academic misconduct, concerns can be raised by staff, other students, external organisations (such as Police or Social Work) and members of the public. If you have a concern about the behaviour of a student you can report it to studentconduct@gcu.ac.uk or via [Report and Support](#).

What if there is a concern raised about my behaviour?

The University investigates all allegations of inappropriate conduct. Depending on the nature of the concern, there are two routes to respond to student misconduct - Route 1 and Route 2.

Route 1 Misconduct:

Most cases of misconduct are investigated and resolved locally within a student's academic department. This is the most common route for first and second offences of academic

misconduct and some cases of non-academic misconduct. You will be invited to a meeting, normally with your Head of Department or another member of your programme team. This invitation will give you some information of the nature of the concerns about you.

Whilst you can attend a conduct or investigation meeting on your own, you are welcome to bring someone with you to support you. We encourage students to seek support from the Student Advisors in the [Students' Association Advice Centre](#), but students may choose to be accompanied by a family member or a fellow student. Note, whoever is accompanying you cannot answer questions on your behalf. They are there to provide moral support.

At the meeting you will be asked questions and given the opportunity explain the issue from your perspective. You can also submit any evidence you have, either at the meeting or afterwards.

In cases of academic misconduct, you may be required to have a “structured academic engagement” where you will be asked questions in relation to the assessment in question to gain an understanding of your knowledge of what you have written about in your assessment.

Route 2 Misconduct:

Repeat, more complex or serious cases of misconduct are referred to the Student Conduct Committee. Prior to this there will be an investigation, undertaken either in the student's academic department or by Governance and Legal Services or another professional support department. The case is then referred to the Student Conduct Committee for consideration and disposal.

Outcomes of Misconduct Meetings or Student Conduct Meetings

In academic misconduct investigations the following outcomes are possible:

No case to answer: The student has been able to appropriately explain the concerns relating to the assessment and no misconduct has been found.

Poor Academic Practice: Where the alleged misconduct is very slight and down to poor practice, this may be considered to be Poor Academic Practice and no penalty will be applied. The work will be marked however the mark may be lower to reflect the poor practice.

Finding of academic misconduct: This means that the investigation has confirmed to the investigators, on the balance of probabilities and based on their academic judgement, that the student has committed academic misconduct. The penalties are:

- **First offence:** Warning and a requirement to take the [Don't Cheat Yourself](#) online developmental course on academic integrity. The work will be marked, excluding the elements that are considered to be academic misconduct. This may mean that a student could fail the assessment. If the academic misconduct is throughout the

assessment, or is a significant element of the assessment, then a zero mark can be given, and the attempt will be counted. If the student has any attempts remaining at this assessment they can resit. Normally, undergraduate students normally have 3 attempts at an assessment and postgraduate students have 2 attempts, although there may be exceptions to this.

- **Second offence:** The assessment will be given an automatic **zero mark**. Students will also receive a warning and a requirement to take an online developmental course on academic integrity – “[Don’t Cheat Yourself](#)”. This is because there is an expectation that student will have changed their practices and improved their academic integrity following their first offence.
- **Third or further repeat:** Referral to Student Conduct Committee for consideration and penalty. Third or further repeat offences of academic misconduct normally attract a more serious penalty as the student has not demonstrated that they have learned from past instances of academic misconduct.

Depending on the case, very occasionally some first and second offences of academic misconduct may be referred to the Student Conduct Committee for consideration and disposal. This is normally for very serious offences or complex cases.

In non-academic misconduct investigations the following outcomes are possible:

No case to answer: The student has been able to appropriately explain the concerns relating to their behaviour and no misconduct has been found.

Informal resolution: Concerns around the conduct are addressed informally with no formal misconduct recorded. This most commonly happens if the misconduct is low level or if the reporting party does not wish there to be any formal disciplinary action. Informal resolutions will be specific to the case in question, but often include requests around future behaviour. Any breaches will be treated seriously and could result in disciplinary action.

Route 1 Confirmed Non-Academic Misconduct: This is a formal disciplinary outcome. The exact penalty will depend on the case in question but can include a non-contact order, the requirement to undertake training or make an apology to the University.

Route 2: If the penalties available via Route 1 are not considered to be appropriate, or the nature of the conduct is considered to be too serious or is a repeat of past behaviours, the matter will be referred to the Student Conduct Committee for consideration and disposal.

The full list of penalties available at Route 1 and Route 2 is outlined in Part 1, section 3 of the [Code of Student Conduct](#).

What happens if I am referred to the Student Conduct Committee?

You will receive an email from the Student Conduct mailbox studentconduct@gcu.ac.uk giving you the date, time and venue for the meeting. Meetings for Glasgow based students are normally held in person, on campus. Meetings for GCU London students are normally held on Teams although the student will be required to come onto campus for the meeting so that support is available for them. The email will also give you a link to a Teams SharePoint site that has all the information about your case including the allegations against you. **It is important you read this very carefully.** The Student Conduct Committee will have around 4 to 6 members present, one of whom must be a student. All cases are considered on a confidential basis.

Please confirm you will attend the Student Conduct meeting. If you are unable to attend for a genuine reason it *may* be rescheduled. This is at the discretion of the Student Conduct Team and the Chair of the Student Conduct Committee. If you do not attend, the case can be heard in your absence.

You will be given a chance to submit a statement and evidence in response to the allegations against you which should be submitted this within the stated timescale.

The University strongly encourages all students who attend the Student Conduct Committee to engage with the Student Advisors in the [Students' Association Advice Centre](#). They can help you prepare your statement and attend the meeting with you. If you prefer, a family member or friend may accompany you instead. Anyone accompanying you cannot answer question on your behalf, but they may ask questions. Student conduct is an internal University matter and not a legal matter, and lawyers are not normally permitted to accompany a student to the Student Conduct Committee.

At the meeting you will be asked questions by the Committee members and given an opportunity to respond to the allegations against you.

You will be asked to leave the meeting whilst the Committee considers all the evidence. In most cases you will be invited back into the meeting to receive the Committee's decision verbally. In some cases, the Committee may need further time or information before reaching a decision, in which case you will be told this at the time, and you will receive the outcome in writing at a later date.

There are a range of penalties available to the Student Conduct Committee including suspension and expulsion for the most serious instances of student misconduct. It can also withdraw degrees from students after graduation if it is found they have cheated during their degree. The full list of penalties can be found [here in the Code of Student Conduct](#).

Appeals Against a Misconduct Finding

Students are entitled to appeal Route 1 and Route 2 outcomes following conclusion of the investigation. Your formal student conduct outcome notification will inform you of how to submit an appeal and the timescale you have to do it. The grounds for appeal are:

- evidence becomes available which was not available, or could not reasonably have been made available, at the time of the original decision
- the decision was wholly unreasonable in light of the evidence available at the time the case was heard, or
- there was a procedural irregularity which was prejudicial to the student.

You must submit all relevant information at the time of making an appeal.

Appeals can be made via the Student Conduct Appeal Form and you will be given a link to this.

Protective Suspension

The University may place a student on a Protective Suspension where there is a concern about:

- Safety and wellbeing of a student or the wider University community
- Serious misconduct allegations, including criminal charges or conviction
- Risks to the University community or reputation

A protective suspension is not a disciplinary finding and will be reviewed regularly. Protective suspensions will normally remain in place until a conduct investigation is completed or until a criminal justice process is concluded, and the Student Conduct Committee has had the chance to consider the matter. In some circumstances a student may be permitted limited engagement with their programme, such as submission of assessments, during a protective suspension.

Support Available

Students can seek support from:

- [GCU Students' Association Advice Centre](#)
- Student Wellbeing Services – [Glasgow](#) and [GCU London](#)
- [Learning Development Centres](#)
- [Report and Support](#) (for harassment, discrimination, bullying or gender-based violence concerns)

Top 10 Tips for Staying Within the Code

1. Submit your own work.
2. Reference correctly.
3. Follow assessment and AI guidance.
4. Treat everyone with respect.
5. Think carefully before posting online.
6. Follow University regulations and policies.
7. Respect University property.
8. Attend meetings and engage with investigations if contacted.
9. Seek support early if you are struggling.
10. When in doubt, ask for advice.

Remember: The vast majority of students never encounter the conduct process.

Understanding the Code, acting with integrity, and treating others with respect are the best ways to ensure a positive and successful experience at GCU.