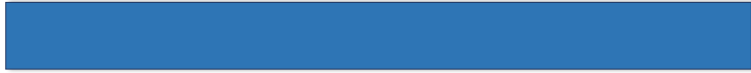


# RVC Student Academic Misconduct Procedures

For all RVC students in

Item	Contents	Page
	Academic misconduct process workflow	3
1	Introduction and purpose	4
2	Definition and examples of academic misconduct	4 - 6
3	General Principles	6 - 8
4	How to report academic misconduct	8 - 9
5	Process timescales	9 – 10
6	Named roles and responsibilities	10 - 11
7	Support and advice for students	11 - 12
8	Confidentiality and record keeping	12 - 13
9	Retention, Deletion and Archiving	13
10	Consideration of fitness to practise	13 - 14
11	Attendance and engagement	14
12	Partnership insurandancee	



## 1. Introduction and purpose

1.1 The RVC is responsible for ensuring all assessments are designed, undertaken, and regulated to ensure they are of an equitable standard for all students.

1.2 Academic misconduct is defined by the Office of Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE) as *“Any action by a student which gives or has the potential to give an unfair advantage in an examination or assessment or might assist someone else to gain an unfair advantage, or any activity likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research.”*

1.3 Any student(s) registered on a programme who have taken an unfair advantage poses a threat to academic standards and those individuals who achieve credits and are awarded qualifications based on legitimate means.

1.4 Allegations of academic misconduct related to students registered on a non-taught postgraduate research programme should be referred to the [Policy and Procedure for Dealing Allegations of Research Misconduct](#).

1.5 All forms of academic misconduct are regarded as academic offences and will be investigated and sanctioned under the [Academic Misconduct Procedures](#) using the [Academic Misconduct Penalty System](#).

1.6 These procedures explain how the RVC considers allegations of academic misconduct in relation to any material or work submitted for assessment.

## 2.

o( )11.2

	to and acknowledge the author or person who originally wrote or produced the work. Paraphrasing, which is the use of other words to express another person's ideas and judgments, is encouraged if the original source is appropriately acknowledged (in a footnote or bracket following the paraphrasing).
Plagiarism example:	Copying and pasting from other sources which can include internet sources, published or unpublished articles, another student's revision material, lecture, or open book article materials.
Self-Plagiarism or text recycling <sup>1</sup>	In-course assignments or pieces of work submitted by a student that references their own material (either in whole or part) are not considered academic misconduct providing the correct methods of paraphrasing and citations are applied. Attempting to gain credit on previously submitted material which has already been summatively assessed is likely to be considered academic misconduct. For example, submitting the same work for two separate summative assignments. The submission of such material will therefore be subject to academic judgment which may result in an investigation under these procedures.

data, evidence, or experimental results.	evidence.
Breaches of Ethics	A breach of ethics or ethical approval which has undermined the integrity of the student's work, the welfare of animals, yourself, or others

- 3.2 The Academic Misconduct Procedure is intended to provide a clear, impartial, transparent, and fair process for dealing with allegations of student misconduct within a reasonable timescale and having due regard to the spirit of natural justice.
- 3.3 Any cases which are complex or raise other issues which are not outlined within these procedures or relate to other RVC procedures should be discussed directly with the Registrar or their nominee before action is taken.
- 3.4 Under this procedure, a reported student who is alleged to have committed an act of academic misconduct will be informed of the details of the alleged offence in writing and will be invited to respond to the allegation(s) through a meeting with an appointed decision maker.

3.5

3.10 In determining a penalty in relation to academic misconduct, the



This is to ensure there is an extra layer of scrutiny before a formal process is initiated.

4.5 If suspected academic misconduct has been agreed then a formal meeting with the reported student is required, section 1 of the Academic Misconduct Report Form must be immediately sent to the relevant exams officer (if known) or [exams@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:exams@rvc.ac.uk). Immediate submission can help to avoid any distress for the reported student related to mark release dates.

4.6 The Exams Officer will populate the remainder of the form and send a copy to The Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct Team ([academicconduct@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:academicconduct@rvc.ac.uk)) who will review and compile the case evidence to ensure all necessary information is collated. The case will be logged and triaged as per the RVC Student Academic Misconduct Procedures.

4.7 Where cases relate to online irregularities or breaches of Exams instructions, the Exams Officer c t [(Of2 (t)-6.7 (udent)4.2 ( A)2 (ppeal)2.6 (s)-2 (,)-6.6 ( C)2.6 (o)10.5 (m)-5.9 (pl)2.6 (ai)2.6 (nt

External Review  
(Independent

	Decision Maker (see above) or the SRC Team if deemed appropriate.
Witness	Any person who is able to offer a first-hand, contemporaneous report of the alleged misconduct, or a subject expert that can provide an informed opinion on matters relating to the case being heard.
Secretary	Person responsible for taking a non-verbatim record of discussion at an investigatory meeting or Panel Hearing. Where deemed appropriate the SRC Team can act as a presenter.

## 7. Support and advice for students

7.1 Students who have been reported for academic misconduct or have concerns about raising a report can approach a range of staff and supporters for advice. Examples are (but not restricted to) listed below:

Academic Tutor

Senior Tutor

Supervisor

Departmental Postgraduate Research (PGR) Advisor

[Research Degrees Officer](#)

[Student Union Representative](#)

Course Director or Academic Head of the Graduate School

Year Leader

[Advice Centre](#)

[Disability Advisor](#)

[RVC Report and Support](#)

[Student Union Representative](#)

[Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Unit](#)

7.2 Reported students are entitled to bring a supporter to any meeting within the procedure.

This person can be:

7.2.1 an RVC staff member

7.2.2 a friend

7.2.3 a relative, or

7.2.4 a representative of the Students' Union or its staff

The person cannot:

7.2.5 be a professional legal representative

7.2.6 have been employed to act on the student's behalf

7.2.7 act in the capacity of a legal advisor

## 8. Confidentiality and record keeping

8.1 Cases of academic misconduct are treated with confidentiality and are not discussed amongst the RVC or wider community. Only key members of staff will be notified such as the Exams Office, the reported student(s) tutor and/or supervisor, and any RVC support services required to provide additional development and support in relation to any post-meeting recommendations or conditions. Where the programme does not offer an academic tutor the Course Director will be notified instead.

8.2 The Academic Board will receive annual reports of anonymised academic misconduct cases including data on the total number of reported case types, outcomes and identified risk and control measures. The RVC will evaluate and audit the academic misconduct cases on an annual basis, along with other forms of feedback, to improve the quality and effectiveness of the RVC's governance, compliance, and service delivery standards.

8.3 Reported students are advised to keep a copy of all correspondence in the event that they are dissatisfied with the academic misconduct outcome and wish to use this information as part of their supporting evidence when making a request for a Final Formal Review or submitting a complaint to the Office of Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE).

8.4 Academic misconduct records are administered centrally by the SRC Team within the Academic Registry. Records of academic misconduct cases are retained for 6 years from the last action taken on the case to enable the RVC to respond to any requests regarding the decision and processes that may be made by the OIA and/or Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.

8.5 To help support the RVC annual evaluation, any reported students who undertake the

academic misconduct process will be invited to complete a [Student Resolution and Compliance Survey](#).

## 9. Retention, Deletion and Archiving

9.1 Data relating to academic misconduct cases is used to:

- 9.1.1 Monitor and analyse management of casework within the required timeframe in order to improve and develop RVC service delivery.
- 9.1.2 Respond to internal audit requirements.
- 9.1.3 Enable the RVC to respond to any requests regarding the decision and process that may be made by the OIA.
- 9.1.4 Conduct the periodic evaluation of cases in relation to FOI Requests.

9.2 Case Decision Makers, or Panel members who obtain copies of records before and during an academic misconduct reported student meeting and/or Hearing will be sent an automated reminder to delete and/or shred any papers and/or documented evidence related to either process.

9.3 This will include double deleting any copies saved in download folders and deleted folders. Access will also be removed from the created OneDrive folder where case documents are securely stored.

## 10. Consideration of fitness to practise

10.1 Where a reported student is studying towards a qualification as a registered veterinary nurse or a veterinary surgeon and this procedure has established that the reported student had used unfair means or shown an intent to deceive or a significant failure of due care in research or clinical practice, a decision will be made by a decision maker or the panel to refer the case to the Fitness to Practise Procedure.

10.2 Cases referred based on justified allegations of intent to deceive will automatically be e8.2 (us)8.9 372

the concluded outcome under the Fitness to Practise Procedures. The remit of the membership is to determine whether there are any Fitness to Practise concerns which have derived from the justified allegations.

10.4 The Case Decision Makers or Panel (or their nominee) will be required to act as the Presenter and present the justified allegations to a Fitness to Practise Panel.

## 11 Attendance and engagement

11.1 Reported students are expected to fully engage with the Academic Misconduct proceedings. This includes responding to requests for information and attending hearings and meetings scheduled under this procedure. Whilst the RVC will make every effort to minimise any inconvenience or disruption to reported students in the scheduling of meetings or their timetabled teaching, this may not always be possible.

11.2 Approval of non-attendance is only permitted in exceptional circumstances (e.g. medical grounds). If approval is granted, the hearing will be postponed only once with the intention of rescheduling at the earliest available opportunity.

11.3 Where there is a requirement to delay or suspend the conclusion of an Academic Misconduct Outcome, the reported student's marks will remain withheld until the Academic Misconduct Procedures are completed. This may impact upon their ability to progress as per the Assessment and Award Regulations.

11.4 If a reported student is unable to attend any meeting or hearing under this procedure, or the SRC Team observes repetitive (more than twice) non-engagement with procedural communications and/or timescales, the SRC Team, case decision maker and/ or Chair of the academic misconduct panel may agree that the allegation be considered in the reported student's absence on the basis of the evidence available at the time of the meeting or hearing.

11.5 For cases where a reported student withdraws from the RVC whilst an academic misconduct investigation is ongoing, the academic misconduct case will be concluded in the reported student's absence to finalise the proceedings for record-keeping purposes.

## 12 Partner institutions

- 12.1 To provide educational and other student experiences, the RVC may partner with other Higher Education Providers (HEP) or organisations. Examples of these include joint and franchised degree programmes and partnerships with veterinary practices providing clinical training.
- 12.2 In most cases the partnership institution who is responsible as the awarding body will exercise their academic misconduct procedures and internal procedures. The last action taken within the internal procedures should also decide whether it is deemed necessary to





Check the reported student's understanding of scholarship, referencing processes, exam preparation or technique and/or proper conduct of research as appropriate.

15.5 The decision maker will be guided by a structured set of questions applied to all academic misconduct meetings to ensure there is a consistent level of enquiry for all reported students.

15.6 The decision maker may ask the reported student to provide additional information and/or evidence to support their claims.

15.7 A notetaker will be present from the SRC Team to take a record of discussion. The reported student will have an opportunity to respond with any comments using a Record of Interview Sign Off Sheet once the notes have been approved by the Decision Maker.

15.8 After consideration of the circumstances the reported student's work the decision maker(s) will determine whether the incident represents:

15.8.3 the case is unproven and no further action under the procedures.

or

12-6.6 h.7728

- a mark of zero if the piece of work is too greatly affected to apply a common grading scheme mark.

15.11 Redaction should only be completed by the decision maker(s).

15.12 In either case, no higher penalty other than the award of zero for the piece of work concerned can be recommended by the decision maker(s).

15.13 A decision maker may decide to escalate a case to an Academic Misconduct Panel where consideration of a higher sanction is required.

15.14 In cases of intent to deceive, a mark of zero will be awarded as a minimum penalty. This will automatically initiate considerations of Fitness to Practise (refer to section 10) where a reported student is studying towards a qualification as a registered veterinary nurse or a veterinary surgeon.

15.15 The reported student will be directed to sources of advice and support on how to improve their work as a standard practice following the meeting.

15.16 The reported student will receive a letter confirming the outcome within 7 calendar days after the decision maker meeting by the SRC Team. Should there be any unforeseen delay, then reason for this will be made clear to the reported student, and they will be provided with revised outcome date.

15.17 Reported students should make a decision on whether they consider the outcome to be reasonable and proportionate once they have been provided with marks. Students may appeal the outcome, based on the allowable grounds available under section 19.

15.18 Where consequences of failure are a direct result of the outcome following an Academic Misconduct sanction the Assessment and Awards Regulations will determine whether the reported student is permitted to resit, resubmit, or repeat the failed component. In cases where the consequences of failure are exhausted, and the reported student is subsequently withdrawn from the programme, the reported student will be referred to the RVC Student Appeals Procedure.

15.19 In any case where a reported student decides to request a Final Formal Review and has been simultaneously withdrawn from the programme the RVC Student Appeals



the principles at stake and (iii) the broad context of the study of the reported student whose case is being considered.

16.

16.13 After interviewing all parties concerned with the case and considering all evidence, the Panel will make its decision in private. This session will not be recorded, but summary notes will be taken by the note taker.

16.14 The decision making process of the Panel should be completed within 20 calendar days from the report being received in full by the SRC Team. The combined process should take no longer than 60 calendar days.

## 17. Panel outcome

17.1 The Panel will decide the outcome based on the balance of probability (whether something is more likely than not to have occurred) taking appropriate care to follow the OIA's principles of natural justice: *“Decision makers must come to matters without bias or a reasonable perception of bias; each party must have a fair hearing; the process must be completed without delay; and decision makers must make reasonable decisions and give reasons for those decisions.”*

17.2 Post-meeting deliberation will be limited to the Panel and secretary. Notes will be taken but Panel discussion will not be recorded.

17.3 The main consideration under 'Panel' discussion will be to

Module awarded 0%

Suspension from the programme of study and requirement to retake, resit and resubmit an assessment or module in whole or part.

Withdraw the reported

available at the time of the hearing.

19.1.2 Evidence can be produced of significant procedural error made during the formal complaints process.

19.1.3 Any remedy or outcome proposed as a resolution is manifestly unreasonable.

19.2 Students requesting a Final Formal Review must complete and submit a [Final Formal Request Form](#) to the Student Appeals, Complaints and Conduct team at [ffr@rvc.ac.uk](mailto:ffr@rvc.ac.uk) within 14 calendar days of the formal academic misconduct outcome. Full details and process are outlined in the [Final Formal Review Procedures](#).

19.3 Should the reported student decide to appeal the outcome under the Final Formal Review Procedures, the academic misconduct case is considered still open until the determination of the internal review stage.

## 20. Completion of procedures

20.1 If the RVC determines that an review is unjustified under section 19, or that a case is not permitted to proceed under their procedures, the RVC will provide a Completion of Procedures Letter to the student. This letter will include an explanation of the decision reached.

20.2 A Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter is required should the student wish to advance a complaint with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education regarding the disciplinary procedure. The RVC will usually only issue a Completion of Procedures letter once the disciplinary procedure has concluded and a final decision has been provided to the student.

## 21. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

21.1 Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of a Final Formal Review can apply to the OIA for an independent review. Requests for OIA review must be made no later than 12 months after the Final Formal Review decision.

21.3 Further guidance on submitting a complaint to the OIA and the OIA Complaint Form can also be found on the OIA's website: <https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/can-you-complain-to-us/>.