

PROCEDURE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF A VIVA IN CASES OF SUSPECTED ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

PURPOSE

This procedure can be used within the Faculty where there are grounds for concern regarding the authenticity of a student's work.

This may be due to a suspicion that a student has commissioned an assessment from a third party or has had an unacceptable level of third party assistance with the work.

The purpose of a viva in these circumstances is to provide the student with the opportunity, prior to any Academic Misconduct proceedings, to demonstrate that the work is their own and that they have met the learning outcomes.

Preparation

Once the concern has been raised a meeting should be arranged, between the student and the appropriate staff. It is important that staff act **promptly** in these circumstances and that there are **no unreasonable delays**, so as not to disadvantage the student by asking questions about an assessment they completed some time ago.

The student will be invited attend a meeting to discuss their assessment and will be given at least 7 working days' notice of the meeting. A letter will be sent to the Student by post and to their University email account. A standard template must be used, which will be provided by the Conduct & Appeals Unit. The letter will include guidance to them on how the meeting will be run and how they can prepare.

The student may be accompanied by a friend or representative from the Students' Union and contact details for the Students' Union will be included in the invite letter.

The student will be advised to bring with them evidence of the preparatory work completed in advance of their submission. This could include earlier drafts, notes, sources used, tutor comments or formative feedback.

If there is evidence that the student has had any third party assistance with their work (e.g. proof-reader) then they should bring with them the original, un-amended copy of the work to assist staff to assess the extent to which this has impacted on the quality of the work subsequently submitted.

Conduct of the hearing

Present at the meeting will be:

- Module Leader
- Another member of academic staff from the relevant subject area
- A note taker (where notes are not being taken by academic staff)

No member of staff who conducts academic misconduct hearings for the subject area concerned should be involved at this stage.

The meeting will be conducted in a fair, calm and professional manner and all parties will treat each other with respect. Staff will take into consideration that the student may be experiencing stress and/or anxiety. Where this is affecting the student's ability to participate in the meeting they may request a time out. Alternatively staff may suggest this to the student.

At the start of the meeting all participants will introduce themselves and the Faculty academic staff will outline the purpose of the viva, noting that there are grounds for concern regarding the authenticity of the student's work.

The Faculty academic staff should seek to ask questions which provide the student with opportunities to demonstrate that the work is their own. In addition staff should ask questions that will help them assess the extent to which the work submitted is a genuine representation of the student's ability to meet the learning outcomes. This is a matter of academic judgement and the questions asked will reflect the nature of the subject, and the assessment.

The student will be given the opportunity to present any evidence they have brought with them which demonstrates their preparatory work.

An accurate record of the questions asked and the student's responses will be kept either by the academic staff conducting the meeting or by a note taker provided by the Faculty.

Students should be able to give an explanation of the key concepts in their work and provide a reasonable description of how they went about completing the assessment, which sources they used and where they found them.

Students may also be asked about any help or support they received from others.

At the end of the meeting the student should be informed that the outcome of the viva will be confirmed to them in writing within the next 5 working days.

After the hearing

The outcome of the meeting will be one of the following:

1) **No further action required**

Where, based on the academic judgement of the staff involved, the student has demonstrated that the assessment is their own work it should be marked on merit and the student informed in writing, with a copy to their University email account, that no further action will be taken.

2) Further action required

Where, based on the academic judgement of the staff involved, the student has **NOT** demonstrated that the assessment is their own work the matter should be referred to the Conduct and Appeals Unit.

The student should be written to (with a copy to their University email account) confirming that a suspicion of Academic Misconduct has been forwarded to the Conduct and Appeals Unit for further investigation, and that any further queries about this matter should be directed to the Conduct and Appeals Unit, www.wlv.ac.uk/conductandappeals.

Referral to Conduct and Appeals

Staff will provide their relevant Faculty Administrator with the following evidence:

- Faculty Academic Misconduct Front Sheet – indicating the grounds for suspicion and detailing why staff remain dissatisfied after the viva
- Copy of the assessment
- Copy of the notes from the viva

The Faculty Administrator will forward this to the Conduct and Appeals Unit

Allocation of Grades

Once the assessment has been referred to the Conduct and Appeals Unit the grade should be entered on to e:Vision or WOLF as appropriate accompanied by the AM code. This must be done to enable a grade to be entered on to the system following any meeting with the student.

The Conduct and Appeals Unit will review the evidence received from the Faculty and if, in their judgement, there is sufficient evidence to warrant further action a date for a hearing will be agreed with the Faculty.

The case will then be progressed through the procedures specified in the “Regulations and Procedures for the Investigation of Academic Misconduct” document which is available at the Conduct and Appeals website: www.wlv.ac.uk/conductandappeals

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