Code of Practice on Plagiarism & Academic Dishonesty

1 Preamble

1.1 Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty are particularly unpleasant forms of intellectual deceit, especially as they are more difficult to detect than the more usual forms of cheating which arise under the tighter security of written examinations. There are greater opportunities and temptations for students to engage in these activities in assessed coursework, whether that be essays, computer programmes, laboratory or practical work or undergraduate and postgraduate dissertations and theses. Therefore prevention is particularly important and demands the active participation of all teaching staff. Where academic dishonesty nevertheless takes place, all parties, both staff and students, should be clear that the University regards it as an extremely serious offence of equal import to cheating in written examinations, and that it will be dealt with accordingly.

1.2 Examples of Academic Dishonesty

Common forms of academic dishonesty are:

(a) collusion - the representation of a piece of unauthorised group work as the work of a single candidate
(b) commissioning - submitting an assignment done by another person as the student’s own work
(c) duplication - the inclusion in coursework of material identical or substantially similar to material which has already been submitted for any other assessment within the University
(d) false declaration - making a false declaration in order to receive special consideration by an Examination Board or to obtain extensions to deadlines or exemption from work
(e) falsification of data - presentation of data in laboratory reports, projects, etc based on work purported to have been carried out by the student, which have been invented, altered or copied by the student
(f) plagiarism - the unacknowledged use of another’s work as if it were one’s own. Examples are:
   (i) inclusion of more than a single phrase from another’s work without the use of quotation marks and acknowledgement of source;
   (ii) summarising another’s work by changing a few words or altering the order of presentation without acknowledgement;
   (iii) copying another’s work;
   (iv) use of another’s ideas without acknowledgement or the presentation of work as if it were one’s own which is substantially the ideas of another.
Note: In cases of plagiarism it is important to try to distinguish between those in which failure to follow standard conventions of citation and ascription indicate ignorance, carelessness and/or ineptitude and those in which there is evidence of dishonesty. Plagiarism is the practice of presenting thoughts, writings or other output of another or others as original, without acknowledgement of their source(s). The key word here is "work". It includes all material whether that is traditional printed text, web based material or resources from another electronic media.

2 Prevention

2.1 All members of staff must explain to their students at the start of session that plagiarism and other kinds of academic dishonesty are unacceptable forms of cheating which will be penalised severely. Such warnings should be repeated during the session and are especially necessary where dissertations, projects or coursework are substantial elements of the curriculum. Every opportunity should be taken to reinforce this message by incorporating it in published material such as course guides and, in the case of postgraduate research students, by its inclusion in the "Code of Practice for Supervised Postgraduate Research".

2.2 The LEU is working to bring together the many aspects of plagiarism related support provided by the University. This will include reference to current central and School policies, staff tuition and guidance for setting assessments, student guidance on plagiarism (comprehensive and online), as well as the safe detection system "Safe Assignment" (detailed further below at 2.5).

2.3 Warnings on plagiarism and other kinds of academic dishonesty should be accompanied by specific advice from departments about what constitutes plagiarism and academic dishonesty: for example, where a particular discipline draws the line between legitimate and illegitimate drawing on acknowledged or unacknowledged sources; what is regarded as acceptable collaboration between students undertaking joint project work; and what is expected of a dissertation or thesis: is it an original contribution to knowledge or a critical survey of published material? Training students to make such fine distinctions is part of the academic process and should be formally and publicly acknowledged as such, especially since some of the cases which arise, stem from genuine ignorance on the part of students who have never received guidance on how to acknowledge sources properly.

2.4 Scrutiny of academic work should be sufficiently arranged to ensure that signs of plagiarism or unacceptable levels of cooperation, whether intentional or not, are detected at an early stage and brought to students' attention through tutorial guidance and in some cases perhaps by written warning. Of equal importance is to try to avoid the situation arising where a student gets so far behind with coursework that he or she succumbs to the temptation to cheat as the only means of catching up. A further essential issue is the need for supervision arrangements for theses and dissertations to be set out clearly. Students should know how the choice of a dissertation subject is made; they should know how much guidance in planning the dissertation will be available to them and what assistance can be expected during the preparation stage. It should be a matter of departmental policy to provide basic instructions about the extent to which primary sources are to be used in essays and dissertations; how and when to use references and what form they should take; the need for full bibliographies and/or lists of sources including those quoted and those which formed part of background reading.
2.5 Plagiarism detection software

The University of Dundee use plagiarism detection software called "Safe Assignment". Each student's submissions are checked for plagiarism using this tool against all internet sources and electronic journals. The plagiarism detection software is accessed by instructors through any module within My Dundee.

3 Procedure at Assessment

3.1 The primary responsibility for detecting plagiarism and academic dishonesty, which admittedly may often be extremely difficult, has to lie with teaching staff, though on occasion it may be detected or substantiated by an external examiner. Where a substantive case is detected, an examiner should proceed within the terms of the regulations governing Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty which provide a graduated set of explicit sanctions to be invoked by Boards of Examiners (1), thus avoiding the commonly extreme reactions of excessive leniency or draconian punishment. Extremely serious cases should be referred by the Board of Examiners (1) to the University Committee on Academic Dishonesty for decision and the results of the assessment should be suspended in those cases until that Committee has made a judgement.

3.2 In the case of a report to a Board of Examiners (1) in the context of Regulation 3(2) it is incumbent upon the Convener of the Board (1) to inform the candidate in writing of the allegation and to provide an opportunity for the candidate to respond to that allegation prior to any penalty being considered by the Board. Thereafter if a penalty is imposed under the terms of Regulation 4(1) the Convener (1) must inform the candidate of that penalty and the reasons for it and copy the letter to the Academic Secretary. If the candidate is aggrieved by the decision taken, it is open to him or her to request a review of the action taken by the Board of Examiners (1) by the University Committee on Academic Dishonesty. Such a request should be made in writing to the Academic Secretary stating the reasons for the request.

3.3 If a Board of Examiners (1) refers a serious and substantial case of academic dishonesty (in the context of Regulation 3(3)) to the University Committee on Academic Dishonesty under the terms of Regulation 4(2), the Convener of the Board (1) should simply inform the student concerned in writing that that action has been taken and that he or she will be contacted by the Academic Secretary in due course with information on the procedure to be followed by the University Committee in its investigation.

4 Senate Committee on Academic Dishonesty

4.1 The Senate has established a Committee comprising senior members of Senate and the Students' Assessor to investigate serious cases of academic dishonesty. The Committee may recommend to the Senatus that the award of a degree or other qualification be refused and further recommend the exclusion of a student from the University (2)
UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

REGULATIONS GOVERNING PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

(Note: these Regulations apply to all undergraduate and postgraduate degrees, diplomas and certificates)

1 The University's degrees and other academic awards are granted in recognition of a candidate's personal achievement.

2 Any action on the part of a candidate which involves plagiarism (defined as the unacknowledged use of another's work as if it were one's own exemplified by copying from a source without acknowledgement of its origin) or other form of academic dishonesty, in work which may be assessed as part of the requirements for an academic award, will be regarded as a serious offence.

3 Where a substantive case of academic dishonesty or plagiarism is detected by an examiner, a written or oral report shall be made to the Board of Examiners concerned, along with one of the following recommendations:

(1) that the examiner is satisfied that the matter should be noted but requires no further action by the Board because it involves no more than a single lapse or a very few minor lapses which have been taken into account in the examiner's assessment of the work; or

(2) that the nature of the academic dishonesty is such that in the examiner's opinion it is appropriate to reduce the candidate's mark for the work in question by a specified amount to reflect the examiner's assessment of the extent of the cheating; or

(3) that the nature of the academic dishonesty is such that in the examiner's opinion it is appropriate to reduce the academic rating of a candidate's whole module by a specified amount to reflect the examiner's assessment of the extent or seriousness of the cheating; or

(4) that the nature of the academic dishonesty, and/or its extent, is so significant that the examiner is unable to penalise the work or the module adequately by a reduction in marks either by way of Regulation 3(2) or Regulation 3(3) above and that the Board of Examiners should consider it as a serious case of cheating.

4(1) In the case of a recommendation from an examiner in terms of Regulation 3(2) the Board of Examiners has the discretion to adjust the marks and results up to the point where the academic rating for the piece of work in question is reduced to zero with whatever consequences would normally follow from such performance, including loss of class in the case of honours examinations, or failure in the case of other examinations.

4(2) In the case of a recommendation from an examiner in terms of Regulation 3(3) the Board of Examiners has discretion to adjust the marks and results up to the point where the academic rating for the candidate's whole module is reduced to zero with whatever consequences would normally
follow from such performance, including loss of class in the case of honours examination, or failure in the case of other examinations.

4(3) For the avoidance of doubt a Board of Examiners\(^{(1)}\) also has power to make an adjustment to marks and results by way of penalty in terms of Regulation 4(2) where the recommendation from the examiner is in terms of Regulation 3(2)

Where a Board of Examiners\(^{(1)}\) believes the extent of the dishonesty in terms of Regulation 3(4) to be such that sanction over and above the disallowance of the piece of work or the module is appropriate, a detailed report of the circumstances of the offence should be sent to the Academic Secretary who will arrange for it to be considered along with his recommendation concerning the subsequent action which might be taken by the University Committee on Academic Dishonesty. In such a case, any decision by the Board of Examiners\(^{(1)}\) concerning that particular student shall be suspended pending the decision of the Committee.

4(4) The decision of the Committee on Academic Dishonesty shall be final except in those cases where the Committee believes refusal to award a degree or other qualification or exclusion from the University is appropriate. In such cases the Committee shall make a recommendation to the Senate.

October 2006

\(^{(1)}\) or the head of department or Dean of School in cases where academic dishonesty or plagiarism is detected in coursework undertaken during the academic year. This is to ensure that matters may be dealt with expeditiously in the interests of the students concerned rather than having to wait for the annual meeting of the Board of Examiners in June.

\(^{(2)}\) Any such decision of the Senatus is subject to the provision of Statute 9(5)(b).