

# POLICY ON ACADEMIC MALPRACTICES AND PLAGIARISM FOR STUDENTS

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## 1. Introduction

UPES is committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, fairness, and academic excellence. Academic Malpractice—whether intentional or unintentional—undermines the learning process and compromises the value of academic credentials. This policy outlines definitions, procedures, and penalties related to academic misconduct by students, ensuring due process, fairness, and transparency.

## 2. Definitions

**Academic Malpractice:** Any deliberate or unintentional action that compromises the integrity of teaching, learning, and research processes. This includes, but is not limited to:

- **Plagiarism:** Presenting someone else's work, data, ideas, or words as your own without proper citation (including AI-generated content).
- **Cheating:** Use of unauthorised materials, devices, or assistance during assessments or assignments.
- **Unauthorised Collaboration:** Joint submission or cooperation where independent work is expected.
- **Fabrication/Falsification:** Inventing or altering data or results in assignments, projects, or dissertations.
- **Tampering:** Altering evaluated answer sheets, reports, or digital records.
- **Forgery:** Faking official documents (e.g., certificates, transcripts).
- **Misrepresentation:** False claims in resumes, applications, or academic records.
- **Digital Misconduct:** Using unauthorised digital tools, impersonation, or AI tools like ChatGPT without disclosure.
- **Non-compliance with Assessment Guidelines:** Disregarding examination protocols, assignment instructions, or conduct rules.
- **Repeat Offence:** Any recurrence of previous misconduct

## 3. Policy Statement

UPES views any breach of academic integrity as a serious offence. The University endeavours to handle all instances of academic misconduct consistently, fairly, and in a manner that upholds pedagogical goals and the spirit of ethical scholarship. This policy provides a framework for identifying, reporting, and adjudicating cases of academic malpractice.

## 4. Objectives

### 1. Faculty Empowerment:

Grant individual instructors the authority to address academic misconduct within their courses by offering guidance and imposing penalties, except in cases involving centralised examinations (such as mid- and end-term exams).

### 2. Centralised Examination Governance:

In cases relating to centrally administered examinations, the Examination Disciplinary Committee (EDC) will review and decide on appropriate actions.

### 3. Record-Keeping:

Ensure that a centralised system tracks academic misconduct cases to identify repeat offenders and administer consistent penalties.

### 4. Student Rights and Fairness:

Protect students' rights during the investigative and hearing processes while underscoring the importance of academic integrity.

## 5. Roles and Responsibilities

### A. Instructors

- Instructors handle minor instances of misconduct within their courses, particularly for non-centralised assessments.
- Instructors may counsel or impose appropriate penalties—ranging from mark deductions to assigning an F grade—where a student admits wrongdoing.
- In such cases, the instructor will notify the Examination Disciplinary Committee (EDC), which in turn updates the Controller of Examinations for record-keeping.

### B. Examination Disciplinary Committee (EDC)

- Formed by the Vice-Chancellor to review and act upon misconduct in centrally administered examinations (mid- and end-term).
- Maintains a centralised database of all reported cases.
- Constitutes members as follows:
  1. Dean/Director of a Constituent School or nominee – Chairperson
  2. Course Coordinator – Member
  3. Controller of Examinations or nominee – Member Secretary

### C. Invigilators and Control Room Supervisors

- Report instances of unfair means in writing, along with supporting documents, to the EDC whenever dishonesty is suspected in a centrally administered exam.

## 6. Procedures

### 1. Reporting and Verification

- Faculty or exam personnel submit written reports of misconduct to the EDC.
- The EDC verifies whether the implicated student has any previous record of misconduct.

### 2. In-Course Penalty or Escalation

- Faculty members may opt to meet with the student, propose an in-course penalty (for continuous assessment), or directly escalate the matter to the EDC.
- If the student acknowledges misconduct in writing, the penalty is finalised, and no further appeals are entertained.

### 3. EDC Review

- If there is a prior record of misconduct or if the alleged violation occurs in a centralised exam, the EDC investigates.
- Where any EDC member is directly involved in a case, they must recuse themselves from participating in the hearing or deliberations.

### 4. Group Cases

- If multiple students are implicated in the same incident, the EDC may address the entire group in a single hearing.

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5. Hearing and Evidence

- Both parties (the student and the accusing faculty/complainant) have an opportunity to present arguments and review evidence.
- The Chairperson of the EDC may call additional witnesses as required.

6. Decision and Communication

- The EDC typically communicates its decision within three working days of the hearing.
- Students receive an official notification outlining the outcome, penalties, and appeal procedures.

7. Appeal Process

- The student has the right to appeal the EDC's decision to the Vice-Chancellor within ten days of receiving the verdict.
- The Vice-Chancellor's decision is final and binding on all parties.

8. Post-Appeal Announcement

- Once appeals (if any) are concluded, the Controller of Examination announces the outcome and notifies the concerned parties, including the Head of the Department/Cluster where the student is enrolled.

9. Record Management

- The Office of the Controller of Examinations retains records of EDC actions, meeting minutes, and notifications.
- A student found guilty in a course cannot withdraw from that course. If a withdrawal was requested before a final decision, penalties may still include receiving an F grade.

**7. Enforcement and Accountability**

- Students found guilty of academic malpractice are subject to penalties determined by the EDC or the faculty, as appropriate.
- Penalties may range from grade reductions and re-assessment to more severe actions such as suspension, academic probation, or expulsion, depending on the gravity and recurrence of the offence.
- Repeat offences or aggravated misconduct may incur stronger disciplinary measures.

**9. Use of AI Tools and Digital Assistance**

Students must declare any AI-assisted or digital tools used in completing academic work. Undisclosed or inappropriate use will be treated as plagiarism or unauthorised assistance

**8. Review and Revisions**

UPES will periodically review this policy to ensure it remains effective, fair, and up-to-date with evolving academic standards and legal requirements. Revisions may be introduced based on feedback from stakeholders or changes in regulatory frameworks, and will be applicable from the date of approval.

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## 9. Conclusion

This policy aims to preserve the University's reputation for academic rigour and integrity. By outlining clear procedures, responsibilities, and potential consequences, UPES seeks to foster an environment in which honest scholarship flourishes, and students, faculty, and staff alike uphold the principles of academic excellence.

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