

## UNACCEPTABLE ACADEMIC PRACTICE (UAP) IN UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS

It is in your own interests to read this document in conjunction with the Regulation on Unacceptable Academic Practice (UAP Regulation) - <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/regulations/uap/>. **In the case of any dispute over the information in this document, the information as set out in the *Regulation on Unacceptable Academic Practice* shall take precedence.** Though this document is solely concerned with UAP in examination conditions, this is only part of a larger Regulation and it is important that students acquaint themselves with the whole Regulation.

You will no doubt be aware that cheating in examinations can seriously jeopardise your hopes of attaining a degree. Cheating – known officially as Unacceptable Academic Practice – is not only against University Regulations, but the penalties associated with it can be substantial. For instance, UAP may blight your intended career. In selected subjects, confirmed UAP during university examinations has to be notified to professional bodies. In your own interests, you need to understand what might be involved.

Two points particularly worthy of emphasis are:

- As section 2.2(iv) of the Regulation indicates, ‘unauthorised information’ is unauthorised regardless of whether the materials involved are of relevance to the subject matter of the examination in question. *There is no proof required that any information uncovered has to be capable of being used in the examination in question or in particular questions appearing within that examination. So, for example, information written on the palm of a hand has to be neither relevant, nor even totally decipherable by the examination staff.*
- The Regulation (section 2.1) is clear that UAP can occur regardless of a student’s intent. *Any allegation does not have to prove that the suspected person intended to use the ‘unauthorised information’ – in other words, only actual possession is required. Thus, for example, mere possession of any unauthorised electronic device, including a mobile telephone, is enough for due process to be invoked.*

The reasons for students feeling that they intentionally need to commit UAP are complex and varied – concerned, for example, with lack of confidence inability to perform well in examinations, health or personal problems, peer, family or cultural pressures, and/or financial pressures. Whatever the reasons, the consequences of being found guilty will be the same. If you do feel under pressure and are worried that you will not do well, the right thing to do is to seek advice and support from academic or support staff to help you do well. Cheating will only make a difficult situation much worse. Students are entitled to expect the University to make every effort to deter, detect and penalise anyone who seeks to gain an advantage over others through unfair means. The purpose of this document is to ensure that all students understand how the University does this, and to leave students in no doubt as to what is unacceptable.

### **1. What in reality constitutes Unacceptable Academic Practice and what the examination staff will be looking for**

In addition to the examples quoted in Section 2.2(iv) of the UAP Regulation, students should be aware of some of the things that have led to allegations of UAP being made against examination candidates :

- Notes written or printed onto small pieces of paper – typical ‘crib notes’. This is the most common type of UAP. Possession alone is enough, but students are often also caught consulting the crib notes;

- Notes written onto allowed ancillary equipment – rulers, pencil cases, spectacle cases, calculator covers or backs, writing tools, student ID cards;
- Notes written into permitted texts that students bring into the examination hall;
- Notes imprinted into ‘white spaces’ or on the covers of permitted texts that students bring into the examination hall;
- Notes written on paper, turned-down page corners, or post-it notes which may be permitted in texts that students bring into the examination hall;
- Notes written onto ‘body parts’ – most frequently hands, fingers and lower arms;
- Notes or numerical prompts written into the memory of a calculator;
- Possession in examination room of mobile telephones and other small electronic devices, including smart watches;
- Notes written into memory areas of any kind on mobile telephones, iPods, iPads, smart watches or other small electronic devices (further information on electronic devices is below under point 3);
- Acronyms or *aides memoir* written or hidden on/in any of the above;
- Illegal electronic communication with other people outside examination hall;
- Unauthorised additional information on permitted photographs or images;
- Unauthorised additional information in/on permitted bibliographies;
- Unauthorised additional information on sheets of paper hidden within permitted texts;
- Unauthorised retention in the examination hall of ‘revision notes’ or ‘revision cards’;
- Notes secreted about the person and consulted in visits to toilets;
- Notes secreted in advance inside toilet cubicles;
- Unauthorised accessing of Internet during any examination;
- Entering exam room quickly, checking exam paper and then returning to cloakroom to consult notes before other candidates seated;
- Intercommunication between candidates, usually pairs or groups of co-examinees;
- Complete pre-written answers brought into examination and used to replace inner parts of examination booklets;
- Commencing writing in examination answer book prior to examination staff indicating that the examination is starting;
- Continuing writing in examination answer book after you have been told to stop writing at the end of the examination;
- Failing to follow verbal instructions given by examination staff, on any matter, but particularly in relation to the commencement and the termination of the examination;
- Impersonating another candidate.

University Invigilators are continuously and actively on the lookout for all of these. Please note that this list of examples is not exclusive and any unauthorised materials or communications would be considered as UAP.

## **2. Definition of an Electronic Device in relation to UAP in an Examination**

Students should carefully read the UAP Regulation 2.2 (iv) on what the University considers to be an electronic device - <https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/regulations/uap/>.

However, there will be several instances where some electronic devices do not fall within this category:

- electronic calculators specifically allowed in AU examinations – students will be advised when this is permitted;
- activity/heart-rate/fitness trackers of only the most basic type - for example the most basic ‘fitbits’ - that might monitor, record, store and display human body parameters, possibly even

warn of external notifications, ONLY. If there is any doubt, these devices will be removed while clarification of their capabilities is sought;

- particular electronic devices sanctioned by Student Support Services for an individual Individual Exam Requirement student (such as an electronic dictionary, Thesaurus or magnifier).

### **3. What will happen if UAP is suspected?**

Once the Assistant Superintendents of Examinations, and the University Invigilators working with them in each of the examination venues, suspect UAP, they are advised to go through a defined procedure as far as practicable :

- Once examination staff are reasonably certain that a case of UAP is in progress, they will step in and advise the student of their suspicions, at the same time securing any evidence which may exist. This is done as quietly as possible bearing in mind the circumstances and the inevitable disruption for other students in the examination hall.
- The student will be advised that they are being reported to the Chair of the relevant Examination Board (through the Assistant Registrar (Examinations)), with a case of UAP being alleged against them. The student will also normally be advised that they may continue the examination without prejudice, but failure to give such a warning will not prejudice subsequent proceedings.
- In exceptional cases, a student may be temporarily removed from the examination hall to minimise disruption or to briefly question them. Extra time will then be allowed for the student to complete the examination but failure to allow this does not constitute grounds for appeal.
- Though many students against whom UAP is alleged may wish to speak with examination staff at the end of their examination, there is usually little more that can be said at that point, as the matter will be reported to the Chair of the relevant Examination Board (through the Assistant Registrar (Examinations)) for further consideration.
- The Assistant Registrar (Examinations) will :
  - i. Collect together all the existing and necessary evidence;
  - ii. Receive reports from the relevant examination staff;
  - iii. Summarise the allegations for the benefit of the Chair of an Examination Board.
- Alleged cases will be dealt with by the Chair of the relevant Examination Board, in consultation with the University's Academic Registry and in line with the UAP Regulation.
- Students are advised to contact the Chair of the relevant Departmental Examination Board should they have any questions about the process.

### **4. What happens next ?**

Further guidance on the process followed can be found in the Regulation, guiding students on the particular categories of UAP; how the process of investigating and evaluated alleged UAP will proceed; and how the penalties (<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/academic-registry/handbook/taught-schemes/uap-points/#d.en.194056>) associated with various levels of UAP are applied.

