**Title: Academic Misconduct Committee, Report for 2008-09**

## Origin: Dr Mark Hollingsworth, Chris Dunbobbin, Programme Quality and Teaching Partnerships Office

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This report includes details of all major cases, and all minor cases *where an allegation of misconduct was upheld,* in the academic year 2008-09 (including SAP 2009).

**1. Membership of Committee**

The Academic Misconduct Committee (AMC) during 2008-09 was composed as follows:

Dr M Harrison (Chair)

Dr DR Twigg

Dr J Aldridge

D Goss

**2. Incidence and Type of Academic Misconduct (Appendix I)**

In total there were 261 cases of Academic Misconduct (AM) in 2008-09. 173 of these cases were plagiarism-related (including collusion and/or inappropriate collaboration with other students). The remaining 88 cases related to offences which took place in examination halls.

The overall number of AM cases has been on an upward trend in each of the last two years (the total for 2008-09 is 55 more than that for 2007-08, and 114 more than that for 2006-07). The increase in the number cases in 2008-09 is mainly attributable to:

1. A greater number of minor offence exam hall cases (i.e. technical breaches of exam hall rules, where there was no apparent intent to obtain an unfair advantage and no such advantage actually obtained, i.e. students found with prohibited material which was irrelevant to the exam being sat). Invigilators were encouraged to report all such cases, so that students could be issued with a formal reprimand and warned as to their future conduct.
2. An increase in the number of major and minor plagiarism-related cases. The number of such cases fluctuates from year to year, but the overall increase across the previous two years, particularly in relation to minor case, appears to reflect a more widespread use of Turnitin by a greater number of academic departments, resulting in more cases coming to light.

##### 2.1 Examination Hall AM

As above, there was an increase in the overall number of examination hall offences, as compared to 2007-08 (88 compared to 65).

As in previous years, the most common forms of examination hall AM were: Notes written in a dictionary, on a pencil/calculator-case, or on a hand; Possession of crib notes; and Possession of an inappropriate calculator or other programmable device (Mp3 player, mobile telephone etc).

2.2 Plagiarism and other forms of AM

As above, there was an increase in the number of plagiarism-related cases of AM as compared to 2007-08 (173 compared to 141). Cases were dealt with as major or minor offences, depending on their perceived seriousness. Most cases involved candidates submitting, as their own work, un-referenced material from published (internet, textbook etc) or unpublished (other students’ work) sources.

**3. Analysis of Penalties Imposed for Academic Misconduct (Appendix II)**

In 2008-09 (as in previous years) the penalty most commonly imposed was the reduction of marks in the module in which AM was found. This penalty was imposed in 67% of cases (70% of minor offences, and 23% of major offences). Most of the remaining cases resulted in the issue of a formal reprimand (24.9% of the total). The AMC also used its powers to withdraw reassessment rights (in 8 cases), and to put a cap on a reassessment mark (in a further 8 cases).

**4. Appeals**

In 2008-09, there were 8 appeals against penalties imposed for minor offences, and 12 against penalties imposed for major offences.

Of the appeals against minor offences, 7 were dismissed, and one was dealt with by way of a waiver of general regulations on the part of the Academic Registrar.

Of the appeals relating to major offences, 10 were dismissed. In the other 2 cases the AMAC received additional information which led it to amend the penalty initially imposed by the AMC.