**HIGHER EDUCATION**

**(Programmes regulated by the Office for Students)**

**ACADEMIC OFFENCES REGULATIONS**

**1.** **Scope and Purpose**

1.1 These regulations apply to all Higher Education students at Strode College irrespective of the course of study being followed.

1.2 To achieve the level of clarity and transparency required in matters relating to academic offences, these regulations incorporate essential elements of the systems established by University of Plymouth with respect to accredited courses delivered through partner colleges. They have been implemented with the agreement of the University, but apply equally to all taught courses delivered as part of Strode College Higher Education provision.

1.3 The purpose of these regulations is to outline the range of practices that are inadmissible and inappropriate in the context of academic study and the submission of assignments and also to explain the way in which transgression will be handled.

1.4 Strode College reserves the right to apply these regulations in cases where an academic offence is identified after a student has left the College (i.e. to individuals who are not currently enrolled). This may lead to a decision being taken to revoke the award made to the former student.

**2. Academic Offences**

2.1 Strode College is committed to offering the best possible Higher Education provision and therefore always seeks to ensure that awards are given on the basis of merit.

2.2 The College takes all identified or suspected academic offences very seriously. Instances will be investigated thoroughly and fairly, with the student or students concerned being informed promptly of any outcome and actions to be taken.

2.3 Academic offences occur when activity is undertaken, which could confer an unfair advantage to any candidate in assessment be that deliberate or unintentional.

2.4 These regulations apply to offences occurring in formal assessments, which contribute to the award of credit for taught modules/units. Where offences are identified in a formative assessment, these should be drawn to the student’s attention by the Module/Unit Leader or the Programme Manager for the course concerned and the student advised of the consequences of committing an offence in a summative assessment.

2.5 A student cannot have credit awarded for the module/unit in question until any allegation relating to an academic offence is resolved.

2.6 Students should also note that conduct of a nature, which would be inappropriate in some professions, could lead to additional disciplinary action.

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| **Academic offences occur when activity is undertaken which could confer an unfair advantage to any candidate(s) – see the examples below:**   1. **Coursework:** Strode College recognises the following, (including any attempt by a student to carry out the actions described) as academic offences, regardless of intent: 2. Plagiarism, which is copying or paraphrasing of other people’s work or ideas into a submitted assessment without full acknowledgement. More information on plagiarism is available here. 3. Collusion, which is the unauthorised collaboration of students (or others) in producing a submitted assessment. The offence of collusion occurs, if a student copies any part of another student’s work, or allows their own work to be copied. Collusion also occurs, if other people contribute significantly to work that a student submits as their own. 4. Contract cheating, often called ‘ghost writing’, which occurs when another person or people are commissioned or otherwise engaged to undertake an assessment, totally or in part, and the assessment is submitted as the student’s own work. 5. Misrepresenting or fabricating the outcomes and results of research, investigations, or experiments. 6. Making false declarations in an attempt to obtain special consideration in assessment. Examples include falsely claiming a need for modified assessment provision or making false extenuating circumstances claims. 7. The inclusion in an assessment (other than an examination or test) of material, which is identical or substantially similar to material that has already been submitted previously for any other assessment within the College. 8. Persuading or attempting to persuade another member of the College to participate, in any way, in actions which would be in breach of these regulations. 9. Any other activity not described above that could confer an unfair advantage to any candidate. 10. **Examinations**: Strode College recognises the following, including any attempt to carry out the actions as described, as examination offences, regardless of intent: 11. Possessing or using in an examination or test any crib sheet, revision or other notes, books, paper, mobile phone, smart watch or electronic device of any kind other than those specifically permitted in the rubric of the examination paper. The offence lies in the possession of the material and does not depend on whether there was any intention to use the material. 12. Obtaining access to an unseen examination or test material prior to the start of the examination/test. 13. Failing to comply with the legitimate instructions of an invigilator or examiner, or with the instructions for candidates (for example signage, written instructions, on-line information). 14. Removing from an examination or test any script, paper, working notes or other official stationery, whether or not completed, or any electronic records provided as part of the examination unless specifically authorised by an invigilator or examiner. 15. Being party to personation, which is any arrangement where a person fraudulently represents, or intends to represent, a candidate in an examination or test. 16. Communicating with another student or with any third party, other than an invigilator or examiner, whilst in the examination/test room. 17. Copying the work of another student, whether by overlooking their work, asking them for information, or by any other means, or knowingly allowing their own work to be copied. 18. Making false declarations in an attempt to obtain either modified assessment provisions or special consideration (e.g. of extenuating circumstances). 19. Attempting to persuade another member of the University (student, staff, or invigilator) to participate in any actions which would be in breach of these regulations. 20. Being party to any arrangement which would constitute a breach of these regulations. 21. Undertaking any other activity which could confer an unfair advantage to any candidate(s) taking an examination or test. |

**3. Procedures for Academic Offences**

3.1 All allegations of academic offences must be dealt with using the following procedures:

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| **Stage 1**  **Assessment**:  Where a module/unit leader or the tutor responsible for a particular assessment has suspicions of an academic offence having been committed in the submission of an assessed piece of work (summative assessment), this should be reported to the Programme Manager for the course in question without delay. The matter should not be raised directly with the student(s) at this initial stage (although in a formative assessment the tutor may discuss the issue directly: see 2.4 above).  The Programme Manager should convey this concern to the Head of Faculty, Higher Education immediately with details of the suspected offence. If, having reviewed the evidence it is felt that there is a case to be answered, the student(s) concerned should be asked to attend a meeting with the module/unit leader, so that the concern can be outlined formally and potential explanations can be sought.  Should suspicion remain following this discussion, the student(s) will be informed that a letter will be sent setting out the allegation, with a copy of evidence that is to be considered. (see Stage 2)  The date of any meeting related to academic offence and the instigation of the investigation process should be placed on the student’s pro-monitor record.  **Formal Examination** (FdSc Psychology only):  Where an invigilator suspects a candidate of committing an offence, the invigilator will complete an Examination Offences Report Form. This will be submitted to the Strode College Exams Officer who will inform the Head of Faculty, Higher Education. The incident will then be reported directly to the University of Plymouth and the University will commence the academic offences procedures as detailed in the University of Plymouth Regulation AST10.2. |

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| **Stage 2**  If there is an admission of guilt in the discussion with the student at Stage 1, or should the investigation conclude that an academic offence may have been committed, the following action should ensue. | |
| **University of Plymouth programmes:**  *Please also read the University of Plymouth Examinations and Academic Offences regulations available on the University’s website.*  Academic Partnerships (AP), the section of the University that deals with external partners, should be informed of all allegations of academic offences following suitable investigation.  Using a template letter provided by University of Plymouth, the Head of Faculty, Higher Education will write to the student(s) concerned. The letter will set out the allegation, provide an annotated copy of the evidence that is to be considered and give the student the opportunity to accept or contest the allegation.  Within 5 days of the date of the letter from the Head of Faculty, Higher Education, the student is required to submit a Response Proforma, stating their intention to accept or contest the alleged offence.  A copy of all documentation will also be submitted to the University of Plymouth via a secure portal (SharePoint) to comply with General Data Protection Regulations 2018. | **Other Strode College HE programmes:**  The Deputy Principal, Curriculum and Quality, should be informed that this formal process is being conducted.  The student(s) concerned will receive a letter confirming the allegation. This will be accompanied by a copy of documentation relevant to the allegation. The student(s) will be given the opportunity to accept or contest the allegation via a Student Response Pro-forma. The Student Response Pro-forma must be submitted within 5 working days of the date of the letter. If the Pro-Forma is not received, it will be assumed the student has accepted the allegation and the formal process will move to the next stage.  If the student accepts the allegation, an Academic Offence Panel will be convened circa 10 college days after the date by which the Student Response Pro-forma should be returned. All relevant documentation will be reviewed by the Academic Offence Panel and a decision with appropriate outcomes will be conveyed to the student in writing within 5 working days of the Academic Offences Panel meeting.  Where a student intends to contest the allegation, the student will receive a letter confirming the date of the Academic Offences Panel. The Panel will be convened circa 10 days from the date the Pro Forma is received to enable the student to collate evidence and arrange attendance of witnesses etc.  The Academic Offences Panel will consist of a minimum of three members from the College Management Team. Usually, the Head of Faculty, Higher Education will be a member of the Panel and take the role of Chair. |
| An Academic Offences Panel will be convened by AP consisting of appropriate staff members of the University and/or Strode College.  If the student accepts the allegation, a formal meeting of the Panel may not be held, although the Chair will ensure that a decision with appropriate outcomes is conveyed to the student in writing via their University of Plymouth student email address.  Where a student has confirmed their intention to contest the allegation on their Response Proforma, the Academic Offences Panel will sir to consider the allegation.  The student concerned will be given 5 working days’ notice of the date, time and location of the Panel and has the right to attend in person should they indicate their wish to do so. The student may choose to be accompanied by a representative and/or witness at the meeting or, alternatively, if they prefer not to attend, may submit a written statement. | The student will be advised to attend the meeting in person and informed that they may be accompanied by a representative and/or witnesses if so wished. The identity of any witness must be confirmed to the Senior HE Administrator, no less than 5 days before the date of the Panel meeting.  Alternatively, the student may decide to submit a written statement no less than 5 working days before the Panel meeting. |
| The Academic Offences Panel will decide:   * that the allegation is not substantiated and that no further action is required (all mention of the allegation should be removed from the student’s record) * that the allegation is substantiated and ensure that a suitable sanction is applied with consideration of previous offences (offence recorded / remark assessment with plagiarised sections removed/ zero mark for assessment / module/unit / aggregate mark reduction etc)   The outcome of the Panel will be communicated officially to the student(s) concerned. University of Plymouth students will receive notification of the outcome via their University of Plymouth student email address. A student studying a course validated by the Pearson will receive a letter from Strode College, sent to the home address registered on the College’s records. | |

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| **Stage 3**  If the student does not consider the outcome of the Academic Offences Panel to be appropriate, they may decide to appeal against the decision or penalty imposed on the following grounds:   1. Evidence of procedural irregularity which casts doubt on the conclusion of the Panel that an offence has occurred or on the fairness of the penalty imposed; 2. Where there is new evidence which could not reasonably have been made available to the Academic Offences Panel at the time it made its decision; 3. Where there is evidence that the Academic Offences Panel acted unfairly or failed to take into account matters which it should have done in reaching its decision;   Appeals must be submitted in writing within 10 working days of the date of the letter setting out the decision of the Panel and should be made to Strode College or University of Plymouth depending on the academic offences procedure followed above. In all cases the College must be kept fully informed.  Appeals dealt with by University of Plymouth must be submitted in line with the University’s Appeals Procedure available through the University website.  The matter will be reviewed again by the College and/or the University as appropriate and a final and conclusive letter sent to the student. If still not considered to be satisfactory, the student would be able to present their case directly to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator [OIA]. |

4. **Response Time**

4.1 The time periods set out in this procedure are for guidance and may be subject to extension, particularly if the processing of an investigation into an alleged academic offence coincides with a holiday period.

4.2 If the response time needs to be extended for any reason, the student will be notified via their Strode College student email address.