



University of Essex

ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Frequently Asked Questions

Help and Support

If you have an academic offence allegation made against, help and support is available to you.

Students' Union

SU Advice can help you get a better understanding of the Academic Offence Procedures, and also help you understand your rights and prepare your response.

[Click here to contact SU Advice](#)

Student Services Hub

The Hub can direct you to the Student Progress Team that can advise you on the Academic Offence Procedures, or to any other relevant support and wellbeing services that may be required.

[Click here to contact your Student Services Hub](#)

Online

Use the links to read the full [Academic Offence Procedures](#) or complete the online course on [Academic Integrity & Plagiarism](#).

What is an academic offence?

As a student, you are expected to make an honest attempt at being assessed, and to act in accordance with the University's conventions of academic writing and ethical considerations. If you do not fulfil these requirements, you may be charged with having committed an academic offence.

Examples of academic offences include:

- **Plagiarism (copying or using other people's work without proper referencing).**
- **Cheating in exams.**
- **Purchasing a pre-written essay for assessment.**
- **Falsifying data or evidence.**
- **Carrying out research without any necessary ethical approval.**

You can commit an offence even if you have no intention of cheating, so you must be vigilant when submitting work for assessment. It is your responsibility to ensure that you are familiar with the principles of academic integrity. You can learn more about this by completing the online course on [Academic Integrity & Plagiarism](#).

I have been accused of committing an academic offence. What do I do?

Alleged academic offences are required to be formally investigated by your Department, School or Centre. If you have received an email about an allegation or asking you to attend a meeting, this is because a concern has been raised about work that you have submitted for and it is being investigated.

You will be invited to a meeting either with your Department, with the Faculty or with an Academic Offences Committee who will discuss the concern with you and to give you the opportunity to respond. Notification of the meeting will be sent to you at least 1 week in advance, along with a copy of the evidence. You should follow the instructions in the invitation and confirm your attendance as soon as possible.

On the day of the meeting, you should arrive at the time on your invitation to ensure you are seen. Make sure you know the location of the room or use [Find Your Way](#) to find it.

If you would like support in preparing for the meeting, or need other advice about what you need to do, you contact [SU Advice](#).

What happens at the meeting? Can I take someone with me? What should I do if I can't attend?

You will meet with an adjudicator, either from your Department, School or Centre, from the Faculty or with an Academic Offences Committee. During the meeting, the details of the concern will be explained to you, and you will be able to ask any questions you need to in order to ensure you fully understand the allegation.

You will then be given an opportunity to respond to the allegation and can present any explanation, defence or mitigation. You will also likely be asked questions about your response. Once the discussion is complete, the decision will be confirmed to you, either immediately and/or after the meeting in writing.

You can bring someone with you to the meeting, but they must be a member of the University of Essex. This means they must be either a current student or staff member here, or a member of [SU Advice](#). Unfortunately you cannot ask a family member, friend or other person, unless they fall into the above categories.

Meetings are not normally rearranged and should take precedence over other appointments. If you cannot attend the meeting, you may submit a written statement for consideration, along with any evidence. [SU Advice](#) are able to help you prepare your statement should you need.

What penalties could be applied? Are there other implications?

The Adjudicator will first decide whether an academic offence has been proven or not, but the penalties for proven academic offences can have serious implications on your continuing studies. The full range of penalties can be found in the [penalty guidelines](#) of the Academic Offences Procedures.

If an academic offence is proven against you, then you will be informed of the penalty and you can find out what implications this may have on your academic progress. You may be prevented from applying for certain placements for Study Abroad or Work Placement, and you may have your University scholarship or bursary cancelled. If you receive professional accreditation as part of your course (such as holding a Qualifying Law Degree), then relevant professional bodies may be informed of any academic offences, and this may affect your status. Students who are subject to the [Fitness to Practise](#) Procedures may also be referred to other University authorities to be handled in accordance with these separate procedures.

As well as having a formal penalty applied, you may be told to complete the online [Academic Integrity and Plagiarism course](#) AND/OR to attend an Academic Integrity Tutorial provided by the [Talent Development Centre](#) or by your Department. In such cases, completion and attendance is compulsory.

Can I appeal against a decision made against me?

Students have the right to appeal against any formal decision made. However, there are very strict grounds upon which an appeal can be made. These are given in full in the [Academic Offences Procedures](#).

If you wish to submit an appeal, you must do so within 5 working days of you receiving the written confirmation of the outcome of the investigation. Please download the [appeals form](#) (.doc) and send it as an email attachment to appeals@essex.ac.uk.

We would strongly advise you to contact the [SU Advice](#) for further advice on submitting a formal appeal.