Document AM01

RVC Student Academic Misconduct Procedures

For all RVC students in undergraduate or taught postgraduate programmes

2024/25

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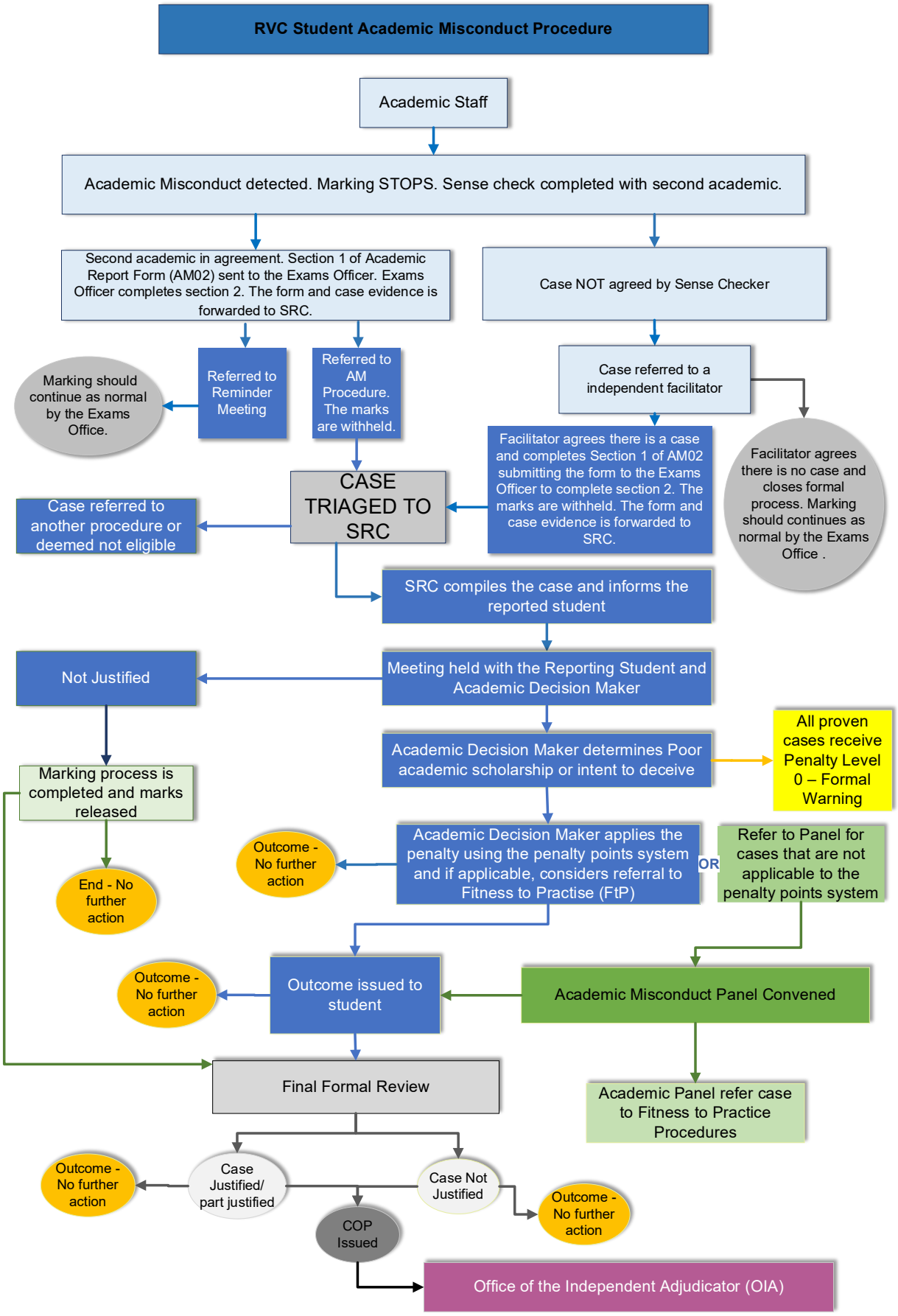
RVC Student Academic Misconduct Procedure
Academic Staff
Academic Misconduct detected. Marking STOPS. Sense check completed with second academic.
Second academic in agreement. Section 1 of Academic Report Form (AM02) sent to the Exams Officer. Exams Officer completes section 2. The form and case evidence is forwarded to SRC.
Case NOT agreed by Sense Checker
Referred to Reminder Meeting
Referred to AM Procedure. The marks are withheld.
Marking should continue as normal by the Exams Office.
Case referred to a independent facilitator
Facilitator agrees there is a case and completes Section 1 of AM02 submitting the form to the Exams Officer to complete section 2. The marks are withheld. The form and case evidence is forwarded to SRC.
Facilitator agrees there is no case and closes formal process. Marking should continues as normal by the Exams Office .
CASE TRIAGED TO SRC
Case referred to another procedure or deemed not eligible
SRC compiles the case and informs the reported student
Not Justified
Meeting held with the Reporting Student and Academic Decision Maker
Academic Decision Maker determines Poor academic scholarship or intent to deceive
All proven cases receive Penalty Level 0 – Formal Warning
Marking process is completed and marks released
End - No further action
Outcome - No further action
Academic Decision Maker applies the penalty using the penalty points system and if applicable, considers referral to Fitness to Practise (FtP)
OR
Refer to Panel for cases that are not applicable to the penalty points system
Outcome - No further action
Outcome issued to student
Academic Misconduct Panel Convened
Final Formal Review
Academic Panel refer case to Fitness to Practice Procedures
Outcome - No further action
Case Justified/ part justified
Case Not Justified
Outcome - No further action
COP Issued
Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)

1. Introduction and purpose

1.1 The RVC is responsible for ensuring all assessments are designed, undertaken, and regulated to ensure they are of an equitable standard for all students.

1.2 Academic misconduct is defined by the Office of Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE) as *"Any action by a student which gives or has the potential to give an unfair advantage in an examination or assessment or might assist someone else to gain an unfair advantage, or any activity likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research."*

1.3 Any student(s) registered on a programme who have taken an unfair advantage poses a threat to academic standards and those individuals who achieve credits and are awarded qualifications based on legitimate means.

1.4 Allegations of academic misconduct related to students registered on a non-taught postgraduate research programme should be referred to the Policy and Procedure for Dealing Allegations of Research Misconduct.

1.5 All forms of academic misconduct are regarded as academic offences and will be investigated and sanctioned under the Academic Misconduct Procedures using the Academic Misconduct Penalty System.

1.6 These procedures explain how the RVC considers allegations of academic misconduct in relation to any material or work submitted for assessment.

2. Definitions and examples of academic misconduct

2.1 Categories and definitions of academic misconduct are defined as:

Category	Definition
Plagiarism	Copying and using someone else's work, whether intentionally or unintentionally, as if it were the student's own. Another person's work includes any source that is published or unpublished that has been produced including words, images, diagrams, formulae ideas and judgments, discoveries, and results. Direct quotations (whether extended or short) from published or unpublished work of another person must always be identified. Quotations must accurately refer

	to and acknowledge the author or person who originally wrote or produced the work. Paraphrasing, which is the use of other words to express another person's ideas and judgments, is encouraged if the original source is appropriately acknowledged (in a footnote or bracket following the paraphrasing).
Plagiarism example:	Copying and pasting from other sources which can include internet sources, published or unpublished articles, another student's revision material, lecture, or open book article materials.
Self-Plagiarism or text recycling[1]	In-course assignments or pieces of work submitted by a student that references their own material (either in whole or part) are not considered academic misconduct providing the correct methods of paraphrasing and citations are applied. Attempting to gain credit on previously submitted material which has already been summatively assessed is likely to be considered academic misconduct. For example, submitting the same work for two separate summative assignments. The submission of such material will therefore be subject to academic judgment which may result in an investigation under these procedures.
Mosaic copying or scaffolding	Where key points and structure of another person's work have been used as a scaffold (framework) for your own work without acknowledgment of the original source.
Research misconduct	Research Misconduct includes fabrication; falsification; misrepresentation of data and/or interests and/or involvement; piracy (deliberate exploitation of the ideas of others without their consent); plagiarism and failure to follow accepted procedures or exercise due care in carrying out your responsibilities for i) avoiding unreasonable risk or harm to animals or humans used in research and the environment. ii) the proper handling of privileged or private information on individuals collected during the research.
Falsifying or fabricating results,	Falsifying, fabricating, or manipulating results, data, or evidence by way of changing, omitting or misrepresenting the results, data or

[1] Acceptable self-plagiarism example: Where an introductory piece of work is summatively assessed but also provides extensive feedback for the student and is considered a developmental exercise.

Example 1 - a project outline or grant proposal which then leads to a larger research project report.

Example 2 - submission of an asset or "patch" for larger reflective pieces of work such as a portfolio.

data, evidence, or experimental results.	evidence.
Breaches of Ethics	A breach of ethics or ethical approval which has undermined the integrity of the student's work, the welfare of animals, yourself, or others e.g., carrying out research without appropriate consent.
Cheating or collusion in examinations or other forms of assessment	This may include possession of unauthorised material or technology during an examination or attempting to access unseen assessment materials in advance of an examination. This may also include collaboration or collusion between students during the examination.
Contract cheating	Where others complete work for a student, for example buying essays and/or assessments online.
Failure to follow assessment or exam instructions either online or in person.	Failure to follow published examination instructions and/or the exam integrity commitment whether unintentional or intentional.
Using generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) such as, ChatGPT Chatbots	The use of Chat GPT and other AI sites by students in the preparation of their assessments is not prohibited unless specifically stated within the assessment guidelines for an individual piece of work or has been specifically stated within the Assessment and Award Regulations for a module or year of study. However, if students do use AI sites to prepare their assessments, they must reference them in the same way as any other source materials. If students use ChatGPT or other AI sites outside of these restrictions it will be considered academic misconduct.
Submitting fraudulent mitigating circumstances	Misrepresenting a case of extenuating circumstances to gain a deadline extension or any other advantage in assessment shall be considered as academic misconduct.

3. General principles

3.1 The following principles will be applied to ensure student(s) are treated fairly, appropriately, and transparently and that matters of academic misconduct are dealt with effectively and efficiently in the best interests of the students involved and the RVC.

3.2 The Academic Misconduct Procedure is intended to provide a clear, impartial, transparent, and fair process for dealing with allegations of student misconduct within a reasonable timescale and having due regard to the spirit of natural justice.

3.3 Any cases which are complex or raise other issues which are not outlined within these procedures or relate to other RVC procedures should be discussed directly with the Registrar or their nominee before action is taken.

3.4 Under this procedure, a reported student who is alleged to have committed an act of academic misconduct will be informed of the details of the alleged offence in writing and will be invited to respond to the allegation(s) through a meeting with an appointed decision maker.

3.5 Precautionary measures may be considered and used as neutral measures to safeguard the well-being of the reported student, a placement contractual agreement and the reputation of the RVC if there is an identified risk of the suspected offence from reoccurring. An example of this may be to suspend a reported student's clinical placement if there has been an alleged report of falsifying EMS records.

3.6 All correspondence or notifications concerning proceedings under these procedures will be sent to the student's RVC email address by the Student Resolution and Compliance (SRC) Team from academicconduct@rvc.ac.uk. Any material sent will be deemed to have been received by the reported student unless non-delivery is subsequently proven.

3.7 Conflicts of interest checks are conducted by the SRC Team for all named parties to ensure matters of academic misconduct are considered independently without any real or perceived bias.

3.8 Any related evidence will be shared with the reported student in advance of the meeting or panel hearing; apart from cases where there is an identified risk of breaching information or confidentiality. Where this occurs a member of the Exams Office will be called to the reported student meeting to securely share the evidence, i.e. proctorial video exam footage.

3.9 In cases concerning collusion both parties will be called to participate in the meeting process. Copies of the individual evidence will be shared with each party. However, the comparative example between two cases of collusion will be only shared within the investigation meeting and will be appropriately redacted.

3.10 In determining a penalty in relation to academic misconduct, the intention to deceive will be an important consideration in terms of the outcome.

3.11 None of the proceedings outlined below will be invalidated or postponed by reason of absence (except when advance notification is received, and sufficient reason provided) from any hearing of any party called to attend an investigation.

3.12 Whilst these procedures are underway the reported student may continue to attend classes, undertake examinations and/or continue with clinical placements or laboratory and research activities unless informed otherwise (refer to section 3.13).

3.13 A reported student (i.e. BVetMed Year 4 resitter) may be unable to continue with clinical placements if they have not yet passed or progressed to the next stage of the course due to their grades being withheld under these procedures.

3.14 The Academic Misconduct Banding Penalty System uses the national guidelines and principles on penalties for plagiarism under the AMBeR Plagiarism Reference Tariff.

3.15 If the Case Decision Maker or Academic Misconduct Panel determine there is no case to answer, this will conclude any further action under these procedures. The reported student will be offered a right of appeal irrespective of the determined outcome.

3.16 The reported student will have a right to appeal against decisions taken under this procedure (refer to section 19).

4. How to report academic misconduct

4.1 Reporting staff members are encouraged to review the Detecting and Reporting Academic Misconduct Guidance on the Learn Staff Hub under the Academic Registry section before submitting any allegations of academic misconduct.

4.2 The assigned marker(s) can be the initial person(s) to raise awareness of potential concerns of academic misconduct, however non-academic staff who suspect exam breaches can also report a case of academic misconduct.

4.3 Where markers have a concern, the marking process should be halted to allow for the correct procedures to be followed and avoid any bias in the marking process.

4.4 All reports of alleged academic misconduct need to complete a preliminary sense check submitted by another academic staff member immediately when the suspicion first occurs.

This is to ensure there is an extra layer of scrutiny before a formal process is initiated.

4.5 If suspected academic misconduct has been agreed then a formal meeting with the reported student is required, section 1 of the Academic Misconduct Report Form must be immediately sent to the relevant exams officer (if known) or exams@rvc.ac.uk. Immediate submission can help to avoid any distress for the reported student related to mark release dates.

4.6 The Exams Officer will populate the remainder of the form and send a copy to The Student Resolution and Compliance Team (academicconduct@rvc.ac.uk) who will review and compile the case evidence to ensure all necessary information is collated. The case will be logged and triaged as per the RVC Student Academic Misconduct Procedures.

4.7 Where cases relate to online irregularities or breaches of Exams instructions, the Exams Officer will forward it to the Head of Examinations or Assessment to populate section 3. If the Head of Examinations or Assessment agrees there is a case to answer they (or their nominee) should complete section 3 on the Academic Report Form and send a copy to The Student Resolution and Compliance Team (academicconduct@rvc.ac.uk).

4.8 Any student wishing to report concerns of academic misconduct will be required to submit their concerns, to the Exams Office (exams@rvc.ac.uk) ideally within 48 hours of when the incident occurred.

5. Process timescale

5.1 Process timescales table:

Process	Action	Maximum expected timescale from when SRC receives the case in full.
Review, triage and arrangement of Case Decision Maker Meeting	Explain the reported allegations, obtain the reported student's right of reply, and communicate an outcome.	From receipt of the full report SRC have 60 days to complete one or more of these processes.
Referral and arrangement of a Panel	Consider cases of a complex or serious nature i.e. intent to deceive or cases that require a group of decision-makers.	
Review	Final Formal Review (internal to RVC)	28 - 45 calendar days

External Review (Independent external review)	Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA)	12 calendar months

*Please visit https://www.oiahe.org.uk/about-us/our-scheme/our-rules/ for further information

5.2 Every effort will be made to adhere to the timescales above but matters of complexity and/or periods of RVC closure or staff absence may require additional time to ensure that the allegation of academic misconduct is considered thoroughly. Where these timescales need to be extended, this will be confirmed in writing to the reported student(s).

5.3 Reported students should support the process by completing procedures in a timely manner adhering to deadlines set for submission of material and attending scheduled meetings. Where deadlines cannot be met, reporting students should notify the SRC Team at the earliest opportunity, providing their reason(s) for any delay.

6. Named roles and responsibilities

Named role	Description of responsibility
Reported student	Student whose case is under an allegation of academic misconduct.
Student Resolution and Compliance (SRC) Team	Team who manages, administers, and collates the academic misconduct casework including gathering of case evidence, providing procedural support and advice for all staff and students.
Decision Maker(s)	Person(s) who are responsible for meeting with the reported student to obtain their right of reply and determine the appropriate actions or sanctions. Decision makers may work alone or collectively when a panel is convened.
Panel	Group of RVC decision makers that are responsible for reviewing, considering, and providing an outcome during a more serious academic misconduct Hearing (banding level 3 – 4).
Presenter	Person responsible for presenting the factual aspects of the case to a Panel or Fitness to Practise Panel; usually the Case

	Decision Maker (see above) or the SRC Team if deemed appropriate.
Witness	Any person who is able to offer a first-hand, contemporaneous report of the alleged misconduct, or a subject expert that can provide an informed opinion on matters relating to the case being heard.
Secretary	Person responsible for taking a non-verbatim record of discussion at an investigatory meeting or Panel Hearing. Where deemed appropriate the SRC Team can act as a presenter.

7. Support and advice for students

7.1 Students who have been reported for academic misconduct or have concerns about raising a report can approach a range of staff and supporters for advice. Examples are (but not restricted to) listed below:

- Academic Tutor
- Senior Tutor
- Supervisor
- Departmental Postgraduate Research (PGR) Advisor
- Research Degrees Officer
- Student Union Representative
- Course Director or Academic Head of the Graduate School
- Year Leader
- Advice Centre
- Disability Advisor
- RVC Report and Support
- Student Union Representative
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Unit

7.2 Reported students are entitled to bring a supporter to any meeting within the procedure.

This person can be:

7.2.1 an RVC staff member

7.2.2 a friend

7.2.3 a relative, or

7.2.4 a representative of the Students' Union or its staff

The person cannot:

7.2.5 be a professional legal representative

7.2.6 have been employed to act on the student's behalf

7.2.7 act in the capacity of a legal advisor

8. Confidentiality and record keeping

8.1 Cases of academic misconduct are treated with confidentiality and are not discussed amongst the RVC or wider community. Only key members of staff will be notified such as the Exams Office, the reported student(s) tutor and/or supervisor, and any RVC support services required to provide additional development and support in relation to any post-meeting recommendations or conditions. Where the programme does not offer an academic tutor the Course Director will be notified instead.

8.2 The Academic Board will receive annual reports of anonymised academic misconduct cases including data on the total number of reported case types, outcomes and identified risk and control measures. The RVC will evaluate and audit the academic misconduct cases on an annual basis, along with other forms of feedback, to improve the quality and effectiveness of the RVC's governance, compliance, and service delivery standards.

8.3 Reported students are advised to keep a copy of all correspondence in the event that they are dissatisfied with the academic misconduct outcome and wish to use this information as part of their supporting evidence when making a request for a Final Formal Review or submitting a complaint to the Office of Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE).

8.4 Academic misconduct records are administered centrally by the SRC Team within the Academic Registry. Records of academic misconduct cases are retained for 6 years from the last action taken on the case to enable the RVC to respond to any requests regarding the decision and processes that may be made by the OIA and/or Freedom of Information (FOI) requests.

8.5 To help support the RVC annual evaluation, any reported students who undertake the

academic misconduct process will be invited to complete a Student Resolution and Compliance Survey.

9. Retention, Deletion and Archiving

9.1 Data relating to academic misconduct cases is used to:

9.1.1 Monitor and analyse management of casework within the required timeframe in order to improve and develop RVC service delivery.

9.1.2 Respond to internal audit requirements.

9.1.3 Enable the RVC to respond to any requests regarding the decision and process that may be made by the OIA.

9.1.4 Conduct the periodic evaluation of cases in relation to FOI Requests.

9.2 Case Decision Makers, or Panel members who obtain copies of records before and during an academic misconduct reported student meeting and/or Hearing will be sent an automated reminder to delete and/or shred any papers and/or documented evidence related to either process.

9.3 This will include double deleting any copies saved in download folders and deleted folders. Access will also be removed from the created OneDrive folder where case documents are securely stored.

10. Consideration of fitness to practise

10.1 Where a reported student is studying towards a qualification as a registered veterinary nurse or a veterinary surgeon and this procedure has established that the reported student had used unfair means or shown an intent to deceive or a significant failure of due care in research or clinical practice, a decision will be made by a decision maker or the panel to refer the case to the Fitness to Practise Procedure.

10.2 Cases referred based on justified allegations of intent to deceive will automatically be referred to the named reviewer under the Fitness to Practise Procedures to review if considerations of Fitness to Practise are required.

10.3 Where this happens, the Fitness to Practise Procedures will not be required to re-evaluate

the concluded outcome under the Fitness to Practise Procedures. The remit of the membership is to determine whether there are any Fitness to Practise concerns which have derived from the justified allegations.

10.4 The Case Decision Makers or Panel (or their nominee) will be required to act as the Presenter and present the justified allegations to a Fitness to Practise Panel.

11 Attendance and engagement

11.1 Reported students are expected to fully engage with the Academic Misconduct proceedings. This includes responding to requests for information and attending hearings and meetings scheduled under this procedure. Whilst the RVC will make every effort to minimise any inconvenience or disruption to reported students in the scheduling of meetings or their timetabled teaching, this may not always be possible.

11.2 Approval of non-attendance is only permitted in exceptional circumstances (e.g. medical grounds). If approval is granted, the hearing will be postponed **only once** with the intention of rescheduling at the earliest available opportunity.

11.3 Where there is a requirement to delay or suspend the conclusion of an Academic Misconduct Outcome, the reported student's marks will remain withheld until the Academic Misconduct Procedures are completed. This may impact upon their ability to progress as per the Assessment and Award Regulations.

11.4 If a reported student is unable to attend any meeting or hearing under this procedure, or the SRC Team observes repetitive (more than twice) non-engagement with procedural communications and/or timescales, the SRC Team, case decision maker and/ or Chair of the academic misconduct panel may agree that the allegation be considered in the reported student's absence on the basis of the evidence available at the time of the meeting or hearing.

11.5 For cases where a reported student withdraws from the RVC whilst an academic misconduct investigation is ongoing, the academic misconduct case will be concluded in the reported student's absence to finalise the proceedings for record-keeping purposes.

12 Partner institutions

12.1 To provide educational and other student experiences, the RVC may partner with other Higher Education Providers (HEP) or organisations. Examples of these include joint and franchised degree programmes and partnerships with veterinary practices providing clinical training.

12.2 In most cases the partnership institution who is responsible as the awarding body will exercise their academic misconduct procedures and internal procedures. The last action taken within the internal procedures should also decide whether it is deemed necessary to inform the teaching body partnership of the outcome; this may include informing the supervisor or tutor within the teaching body institute.

13 Reasonable adjustments

13.1 The RVC encourages reported students to disclose, at the earliest opportunity, any disabilities, learning differences or personal circumstances that may require the RVC to make reasonable adjustments to Academic Misconduct processes so that the RVC has sufficient time to consider these requests and implement any agreed adjustments. Request can be submitted in writing to academicconduct@rvc.ac.uk.

13.2 Reasonable adjustment may include providing information in different formats, providing additional breaks during meetings, or conducting meetings via videoconferencing (for example where reported students are working/carers and unable to travel).

13.3 At the RVC's discretion, by way of making reasonable adjustments, the student may also be entitled to bring a health professional, support worker or disability advisor.

13.4 Other reasonable adjustments such as allowing the postponement of a hearing based on medical reasons (refer to section 11).

14 Collation of evidence

14.1 The SRC Team are responsible for collating all the necessary information to ensure the case presented within the Academic Misconduct Form is supported by a reasonable level of evidence. The Exams Office will also be responsible for submitting any necessary information to prove there is a case to answer.

14.2 This should compromise of any evidence which provides a full understanding of the case, under consideration for example, obtaining the Learn Logs of any suspicious activity during an exam or ensuring all papers related to a plagiarism or collusion case are gathered.

14.3 Providing there is no breach of confidentiality or GDPR all evidence and the circumstances of the allegations will be shared with the reported student.

14.4 If there are reasons for redactions or sharing evidence securely within the reported student meeting setting only, the reported student will be notified and provided with a rationale to why the precautionary approach is necessary.

14.5 Once the case is compiled, a copy with be shared with the appointed decision maker and reported student using a secured One Drive folder.

15 Decision maker process

15.1 The SRC Team is responsible for compiling the case of evidence and appointing the decision maker. The decision maker will undertake an assessment of the case and where required, apply a sanction based on the information obtained. The decision maker will be selected from a pool of externally and internally trained staff members.

15.2 No more than two decision makers can be appointed to attend a reported student meeting. One academic staff member can be replaced with a staff member from professional services where it is deemed necessary or that the relevant expertise is required.

15.3 The reported student will be formally notified of the alleged academic misconduct from the SRC Team and will be provided with any evidence to support the allegations providing it is allowable to do so prior to the decision maker meeting.

15.4 The role of the decision maker is to:

- review the reported documentation prior to the reported student meeting.
- meet with the reported student to fully understand the nature and details of the allegation being made.
- Explore any lines of question to verify the reported student knowledge and response to the allegations.

- Check the reported student's understanding of scholarship, referencing processes, exam preparation or technique and/or proper conduct of research as appropriate.

15.5 The decision maker will be guided by a structured set of questions applied to all academic misconduct meetings to ensure there is a consistent level of enquiry for all reported students.

15.6 The decision maker may ask the reported student to provide additional information and/or evidence to support their claims.

15.7 A notetaker will be present from the SRC Team to take a record of discussion. The reported student will have an opportunity to respond with any comments using a Record of Interview Sign Off Sheet once the notes have been approved by the Decision Maker.

15.8 After consideration of the circumstances the reported student's work the decision maker(s) will determine whether the incident represents:

15.8.3 the case is unproven and no further action under the procedures.

or

15.8.1 nothing more than poor scholarship or research practice

or

15.8.2 demonstrates intent to deceive.

15.9 If the case is determined as unproven at this stage, the case is considered closed with no further action under the procedures the student will be informed within 48hrs of the decision.

15.10 In the case of poor scholarship or research practice the mark awarded will be proportionate to the quality of the work and the extent of the work affected. This could result in:

- Discount the plagiarised section by the use of redaction and return the piece of work back to the Exams Office to finalise the marking process.
- Applying a mark in accordance with the applicable Common Grading Scheme.

- a mark of zero if the piece of work is too greatly affected to apply a common grading scheme mark.

15.11 Redaction should only be completed by the decision maker(s).

15.12 In either case, no higher penalty other than the award of zero for the piece of work concerned can be recommended by the decision maker(s).

15.13 A decision maker may decide to escalate a case to an Academic Misconduct Panel where consideration of a higher sanction is required.

15.14 In cases of intent to deceive, a mark of zero will be awarded as a **minimum** penalty. This will automatically initiate considerations of Fitness to Practise (refer to section 10) where a reported student is studying towards a qualification as a registered veterinary nurse or a veterinary surgeon.

15.15 The reported student will be directed to sources of advice and support on how to improve their work as a standard practice following the meeting.

15.16 The reported student will receive a letter confirming the outcome within 7 calendar days after the decision maker meeting by the SRC Team. Should there be any unforeseen delay, then reason for this will be made clear to the reported student, and they will be provided with revised outcome date.

15.17 Reported students should make a decision on whether they consider the outcome to be reasonable and proportionate once they have been provided with marks. Students may appeal the outcome, based on the allowable grounds available under section 19.

15.18 Where consequences of failure are a direct result of the outcome following an Academic Misconduct sanction the Assessment and Awards Regulations will determined whether the reported student is permitted to resit, resubmit, or repeat the failed component. In cases where the consequences of failure are exhausted, and the reported student is subsequently withdrawn from the programme, the reported student will be referred to the RVC Student Appeals Procedure.

15.19 In any case where a reported student decides to request a Final Formal Review and has been simultaneously withdrawn from the programme the RVC Student Appeals

Procedures will be halted until the determined outcome from the Final Formal Review and an adjustment of timescales will be permitted.

16 Panel process

16.1 The Panel's role is to consider cases where the allegations against the reported student have concluded:

16.1.1 The reported student case has confirmed intent to deceive and outcome higher than a mark of zero needs to be considered by a group of decision makers.

16.1.2 If the case is complex and requires a group of decision makers to consider the mitigating and aggravating circumstances, they may be permitted to reach a proportionate and appropriate outcome which falls outside of the Academic Misconduct Penalty System.

16.2 The responsibility of the Panel will be to understand and question the facts to determine an outcome.

16.3 Composition of the Panel:

16.3.1 Chair appointed by the SRC Team

16.3.2 One Academic who can be a course director, or year leader, from a course different to that being studied by the reported student.

16.3.3 One Academic who has expertise in the case being considered; this role can be fulfilled by either an academic or a professional service staff member depending on the case requirements.

or

16.3.4 For Research Degree Students: An expert in the subject area who is independent of the reported student and their project. (This might be a person external to the RVC).

and

16.3.5 A nominee of the RVC Student Union President for (i) their independence from the reported student whose case is being considered (ii) their understanding of

the principles at stake and (iii) the broad context of the study of the reported student whose case is being considered.

16.4 The SRC Team or their nominee will act as the secretary to the Panel. The quorum shall have three panel members.

16.5 The RVC Student Union member of the panel can be omitted from the panel membership at the request of the reported student whose case is being considered. Where this occurs, the quorum must remain with three people.

16.6 No case evidence will be shared with the RVC Student Union member until the SRC Team receives confirmation whether the reported student would like to omit the RVCSU representative from the hearing.

16.7 The Panel and the reported student will be presented with the case evidence no less than 14 calendar days before the meeting.

16.8 Any member of the Panel discovering, on reading the papers, that they are connected to the case will declare their discovery to the SRC Team who will be required to appoint an alternative panel member.

16.9 The reported students will be allowed to make a written response to the papers if they wish. This response should be submitted no later than one week before the meeting. Exceptionally, later submissions will require the permission of the SRC Team before they can be accepted.

16.10 The Panel will hold the hearing in the presence of the reported student. The meeting will be recorded under the supervision of the notetaker.

16.11 Panel hearings will be held in person as a general practice. The reported student may attend remotely, provided the arrangement is deemed suitable by the Chair.

16.12 The reported student has the right to be accompanied by a supporter. The reported student must notify the SRC Team of the name and status of the supporter in advance of the meeting. The supporter may not be a member of the relevant Board of Examiners or Research Degrees Committee.

16.13 After interviewing all parties concerned with the case and considering all evidence, the Panel will make its decision in private. This session will not be recorded, but summary notes will be taken by the note taker.

16.14 The decision making process or the Panel should be completed within 20 calendar days from the report being received in full by the SRC Team. The combined process should take no longer than 60 calendar days.

17. Panel outcome

17.1 The Panel will decide the outcome based on the balance of probability (whether something is more likely than not to have occurred) taking appropriate care to follow the OIA's principles of natural justice: *"Decision makers must come to matters without bias or a reasonable perception of bias; each party must have a fair hearing; the process must be completed without delay; and decision makers must make reasonable decisions and give reasons for those decisions."*

17.2 Post-meeting deliberation will be limited to the Panel and secretary. Notes will be taken but Panel discussion will not be recorded.

17.3 The main consideration under 'Panel' discussion will be to:

- Review, consider and determine the allegations made against the reported student.
- Determine the seriousness of any offences which are proven.
- Apply a sanction with consideration to any relevant aggravating and mitigating factors.
- Consideration of referral to other procedures i.e., Fitness to Practise Procedures.

17.4 The Panel may impose one or more sanctions, taking into account the specific allegations, the particular features of the case, the relevant mitigation brought forward and in certain cases any impact statement provided by the reporting student.

17.5 Possible outcomes available to the Panel some of which are set out within the Academic Misconduct Banding System:

- Formal warning
- Mandatory actions such as in-person invigilation.
- Assignment awarded 0% marks - resubmission permitted but mark capped as per the Assessment and Award Regulations.

- Module awarded 0%
- Suspension from the programme of study and requirement to retake, resit and resubmit an assessment or module in whole or part.
- Withdraw the reported student with credits retained or removed.
- Revoke an award from within 6 months of graduation.

17.6 An informal outcome of the Panel can be delivered to the reported student within 48 hrs of the outcome being decided. The reported student can choose to have the outcome delivered in writing, verbally either in person or online.

17.7 The formal written outcome will then be delivered to the reported student within 7 calendar days.

18. Reconsidering the same offence

18.1 Any previous offences of academic misconduct will be disclosed to the Decision Maker by the SRC Team if the most recent case is concluded as justified.

18.2 Disclosure of any previous offences will be actioned before the point of applying a sanction to avoid any perception of bias against the case.

18.3 The RVC will consider the below factors to determine whether or not it is proportionate to reconsider the same offence:

18.3.1 The length of time that has elapsed and the effect of this on the reliability of any evidence to be considered.

18.3.2 Whether the previous offence is of a similar severity.

18.3.3 The impact on the reported student of undergoing a second academic misconduct process.

18.3.4 Whether leaving the matter unaddressed would impact matters of fitness to practise.

19. Final Formal Review (Internal)

19.1 The reported student can request a Final Formal Review if they have grounds to believe:

19.1.1 There is new evidence that could not have been, or for good reason was not, made

available at the time of the hearing.

19.1.2 Evidence can be produced of significant procedural error made during the formal complaints process.

19.1.3 Any remedy or outcome proposed as a resolution is manifestly unreasonable.

19.2 Students requesting a Final Formal Review must complete and submit a Final Formal Request Form to the Student Resolution and Compliance Team at ffr@rvc.ac.uk **within 14 calendar days** of the formal academic misconduct outcome. Full details and process are outlined in the Final Formal Review Procedures.

19.3 Should the reported student decide to appeal the outcome under the Final Formal Review Procedures, the academic misconduct case is considered still open until the determination of the internal review stage.

20. Completion of procedures

20.1 If the RVC determines that an review is unjustified under section 19, or that a case is not permitted to proceed under their procedures, the RVC will provide a Completion of Procedures Letter to the student. This letter will include an explanation of the decision reached.

20.2 A Completion of Procedures (CoP) letter is required should the student wish to advance a complaint with the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA) for Higher Education regarding the disciplinary procedure. The RVC will usually only issue a Completion of Procedures letter once the disciplinary procedure has concluded and a final decision has been provided to the student.

21. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

21.1 Students who are dissatisfied with the outcome of a Final Formal Review can apply to the OIA for an independent review. Requests for OIA review must be made no later than 12 months after the Final Formal Review decision.

21.3 Further guidance on submitting a complaint to the OIA and the OIA Complaint Form can also be found on the OIA's website: https://www.oiahe.org.uk/students/can-you-complain-to-us/.