

UNACCEPTABLE ACADEMIC PRACTICE (UAP) IN UNIVERSITY EXAMINATIONS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Please 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.** This document is solely concerned with UAP in examination conditions, and is only relevant to a small part of the larger Regulation.

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 in the ability 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. Committing a UAP 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.

1.1 WHAT IS UNACCEPTABLE ACADEMIC PRACTICE (UAP)?

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 :

- Written notes on small pieces of paper; on ancillary equipment such as pencil cases, rulers, etc; on permitted texts brought into the exam hall; on hands or arms. Possession alone is enough, but students are often also caught consulting these notes;
- Possession in the examination room of mobile telephones and other small electronic devices, including smart watches, which students have failed to surrender and place in the tray provided;
- Notes written into memory areas of any kind of electronic device not surrendered (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, permitted bibliographies, on sheets of paper hidden within permitted texts;
- Unauthorised accessing of Internet during any examination;
- Intercommunication between candidates, usually pairs or groups of co-examinees;
- 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 written or 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.

1.2 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).

1.3 WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF A 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 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 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.
- Alleged cases will be dealt with by the Assistant Registrar (Examinations) or by a Faculty Panel, in consultation with the University's Academic Registry and in line with the UAP Regulation.
- Students are advised to contact their department should they have any questions about the process.
- Evidence will need to be retained, but some personal possessions, such as a mobile phone or smart watch, will be returned to the student as soon as is possible. The student will be notified by e-mail and will need to collect it from the Assistant Registrar (Examinations). It will not be possible to return it immediately after the exam, but every effort will be made to ensure it is returned on the same day.

1.4 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.

CBB

October 2022