

Assessment, Progression and Awarding: Taught Programmes Handbook

Annex K – Sharing of Examination Papers or Questions Investigation Guidance

1 General Principles

1.1 The act of posting online or otherwise seeking to distribute an examination/paper (even where an individual can be identified) is not in itself an Academic Conduct offence. Where there is no evidence that the individual student has benefited from this act (for example, the kind of evidence listed below in 2.1), then the case should be treated as a disciplinary offence. Where a student is suspected of gaining an advantage, then a potential Academic Conduct Offence should be investigated.

2 Investigation potential Academic Conduct Offence

2.1 When undertaking the marking of the examination/question, the department will need to ensure they are vigilant in reviewing examination scripts for evidence of the following:

- a) Collusion (students with the same or similar answers where this cannot reasonably be a coincidence).
- b) Plagiarism (if the website to which a paper/question has been posted also allows the posting of answers, and students have used this content in completing their assessment).
- c) Unusually high marks bearing in mind the marks profile of the cohort/individuals.

2.2 If there is evidence of a) or b) for individual students, then this should be managed through the Academic Conduct Procedures. Please see Chapter 12 of the Assessment, Progression and Awarding Handbook.

2.3 Where there is evidence of c), in the case of individual student, this will require further investigation before this can be referred to the Academic Conduct Procedures. Departments should refer to the viva process in the first instance. Please see Chapter 5 of the Assessment, Progression and Awarding Handbook.

2.4 Where there is evidence of any of the above across a cohort (or a large percentage of the cohort), then it may not be appropriate to refer these cases through the Academic Conduct Procedures. In this case, the department should scrutinise the marks for this assessment carefully at the APAC and record any concerns or actions. It is recommended that this is done in all cases where it is known that the examination paper

or question have been shared online. Where scaling is deemed to be an appropriate course of action, please refer to separate Scaling Guidance (Annex G).