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## Useful Resources & Print-Outs

The following resources are included at the end of this pack:

- Guidelines for Penalties (Taught)
- Chronological Guide to Academic Offence Investigations
- Template Invitation Letter
- Meeting the Student – suggested running order template
- Template Outcome Letter
- Referral to Faculty Form
Introduction

This guidance pack is intended for members of staff of Partner Institutions.

The guidance includes an oversight on how academic offences are identified, investigated and adjudicated, as well as information about how students are supported in how to avoid committing an academic offence.

Students should refer to the Partner Institution for guidance on referencing and plagiarism.

Support from the University of Essex

The Academic Offences Procedures are maintained and reviewed by the University of Essex Student Progress Team.

Partner Institutions are responsible for carrying out initial investigations and adjudicate offences that result in minor penalties being applied. Support is available to Partner Institutions from the Partnerships Manager.

https://www1.essex.ac.uk/partners/contact/
Partnerships Team: partnerships@essex.ac.uk

Useful Links

| Academic Offences Procedures (including Guidelines for Penalties) | www.essex.ac.uk/governance/policies |
| Academic Integrity Webpage for Students | www.essex.ac.uk/see/academic-offence |
| Proofreading Policy | www.essex.ac.uk/proofreading |
Academic Offences: The Basics

- Students are expected to complete assessment with honesty and integrity, and are expected to follow University academic and ethical conventions. A breach of these expectations is regarded to be an academic offence.  
  *See: What is an academic offence on page 5*

- Students are supported in not committing an academic offence through information provided by the Partner Institution.  
  *See: How can I help students to avoid committing academic offences? on page 6*

- The University subscribes to plagiarism detection software (Turnitin). Partner Institutions can use this as a useful tool, but it is not the only way by which concerns can be identified.  
  *See: How are suspected academic offences identified? on page 6*

- Each Partner Institution is responsible for identifying and investigating concerns formally under the Academic Offences Procedures. An appointed nominee for each Department (the ‘Departmental Adjudicator’ can award a range of minor penalties, or can refer serious cases to the Faculty (including Exam Offences). All students must be invited to attend a meeting before a penalty can be awarded.  
  *See: How are academic offences investigated? on page 7*  
  *And: Determining an Academic Offence and the Appropriate Penalty on page 12*  
  *And: Guidance for Submitting a Referral to the Faculty on page 18*

- The most serious cases are referred to an Academic Offences Committee that has the authority to withdraw a student and withhold or rescind a University award. The Departmental Adjudicator has to present their initial findings at the Committee meeting.  
  *See: Guidance for Academic Offences Committee on page 19*

- Students have a right of appeal against any penalty that is applied, but only on specified grounds. Appeals are considered by Faculty Deans and the Initial Adjudicator is required to provide a report. Upheld appeals are referred to Academic Offences Appeals Committee who can amend the original decision as deemed appropriate.  
  *See: Academic Offence Appeals on page 22*

- Boards of Examiners cannot overturn academic offences penalties and guidance is provided to Exam Board Secretaries.  
  *See: Guidance for Boards of Examiners on page 23*
What is an Academic Offence?

The Academic Offences Procedures state that the University, the Students’ Union and the University’s Partner Institutions expect all students:

- to behave with honesty and integrity in relation to coursework, examinations and other assessed work;
- to be familiar and act in accordance with the conventions of academic writing including appropriate referencing of sources and acknowledgement of assistance;
- to show understanding of ethical considerations and be compliant with the relevant University Procedures.

The procedures include some of the most common examples of academic offences (although the list is not exhaustive!). These include:

a. plagiarism, that is, using or copying the work of others (whether written, printed or in any other form) without proper acknowledgement in any assignment, examination or other assessed work;

b. self-plagiarism, that is, using or copying one’s own work that has previously been submitted for assessment, at the University or elsewhere, without proper acknowledgement in any assignment, examination or other assessed work, unless this is explicitly permitted;

c. false authorship, that is the submission of work for assessment that has been written wholly or in part by a third party and presented as one’s own original work;

d. collusion, that is, submitting work produced collaboratively for individual assessment, unless this is explicitly permitted and acknowledged;

e. falsifying data or evidence;

f. unethical academic practice, for example, conducting research without obtaining ethical approval from the University where such approval is required, or the unauthorised use of information that has been confidentially acquired;

g. introducing, or attempting to introduce, any written, printed or electronically accessible information into an examination, other than material explicitly permitted in the instructions for that examination;

h. copying, or attempting to copy, the work of another candidate in an examination;

i. communicating, or attempting to communicate, with another person, other than an invigilator, during an examination.

Formative Assessment

The Academic Offences Procedures do not formally apply to work submitted for formative assessment. How such concerns are addressed are at the Department’s discretion, but it is still important that students that do not meet the expectations above should still be warned in some way, and referred to the relevant support and guidance.

Assisting another student in committing an academic offence

A student suspected of helping another student commit an academic offence may be investigated and dealt with in accordance with the University’s Code of Student Conduct and should be referred to the University Proctor. If you are aware of such a case, please notify the Proctor by emailing studentconduct@essex.ac.uk.
How can I help students to avoid committing academic offences?

It is important that students are dealt with formally when concerns arise, and not just through assignment feedback.

The Academic Offence Procedures include a range of penalties that have minimal or no impact on their recorded marks so handling the concern this way does not automatically mean there are serious implications for the student, but it does ensure that the student is given the full and proper advice, understands the weight of the concern and that there is a record of all the guidance that has been given.

How are suspected academic offences identified?

Academic Offences can be identified at any point that a student is undertaking assessment. For coursework or projects, concerns normally arise at the point at which the work is being marked or after the coursework has been submitted to a similarity checker. Similarly, a concern may arise during a class test or examination following the observations of an invigilator. Sometimes, the concern may be reported by another student or may not become apparent until after a mark has been awarded.

In any case, the general advice is that concerns can arise from anywhere, but should still be reported to the Department’s Academic Offence Officer in all instances, who should then determine how best to proceed under the Academic Offences Procedures, with support from the Partnerships Team as required.
How are academic offences investigated?

As mentioned on page 5, concerns can arise from anywhere. However, all concerns should be responded to in compliance with the University’s Academic Offence Procedures. Appointed Adjudicators are required to gather and consider any evidence, meet with the student, and to make a decision as to whether an academic offence has been committed, and if so, what penalty to apply.

At the end of this guidance pack, there is a chronological guide to how investigations are carried out that summarises the below in a handy A4 print-out.

Cases are normally initially investigated by a Departmental Adjudicator (at the Partner Institution), who can allocate penalties for minor offences. More serious allegations are referred to a Faculty Adjudicator (usually the Dean, or Deputy Dean of Partnerships), who has additional penalties that they can apply.

The most serious allegations are referred to Academic Offences Committees who have the full array of penalties available to them, including withdrawing a student for academic misconduct, and withholding or rescinding a University award. Some allegations are automatically escalated to the Faculty, such as all allegations of cheating in a formal examination, and all allegations against PGR students.

There are a few key principles that ensure a fair investigation is carried out:

- The student should be given due notice of the investigation and access to any evidence or material, including a Turnitin Similarity Report, or a copy of the alleged source material.
- The student should always be given the opportunity to discuss the allegation before a penalty is applied. The student has the right not to take up this opportunity or may opt to provide a written statement instead.
- Students should be supported throughout the process and given appropriate guidance so as to avoid an academic offence being committed again in the future.
- Only penalties defined in the Academic Offences Procedures can be applied. There should be no “informal warnings” and no alternative penalties.
- An academic offence can be committed even if the student didn’t intend it. An academic offence is not necessarily “cheating” and acts of negligence are still considered academic offences.
Departmental Adjudication

All coursework allegations should be considered by the Head of Department, or someone nominated to undertake this task, referred to as the Departmental Adjudicator. The nominee must be approved to take up this role by the relevant Faculty (for Partner Institutions, the Dean or Deputy Dean of Partnerships). The Departmental Adjudicator should not investigate allegations for modules that they teach on and should also not be the student’s dissertation, thesis or capstone supervisor.

The Departmental Adjudicator would normally follow these steps:

- **Consider whether there is a case to answer to:** If not, then the case can be dismissed and the work can be assessed as normal.

- **Check for Previous Offences:** The Department should check whether the student has had any previous offences.

- **Consider whether the matter is so severe that it needs to be referred to the Faculty:** The Department should consider the apparent severity of the offence and whether the likely penalty would fall within the Departments authority. If not, the case should be referred to the Faculty*. The Guidelines for Penalties may be a useful tool to use here. See also: Submitting a Referral to the Faculty on page 18.

- **Meet with the Student:** Departments arrange their own meetings with students, who must be given 1 weeks’ notice and be provided with any evidence or documentation 1 week in advance. Templates can be provided by the University of Essex.

- **Make a Decision:** The Adjudicator will need to determine whether the allegation is proven and, if so, what penalty. The Adjudicator may also need to determine whether the offence was intentional and may also require the student to get appropriate support. See also: Determining an Academic Offence and the Appropriate Penalty on page 13

- **Send confirmation:** A formal outcome letter should be issued to the student.

*The Faculty may in turn refer the most severe allegations to an Academic Offences Committee. If so, the Departmental Adjudicator will be asked to present their initial investigation and findings.

See Also: Guidance for Academic Offences Committees on page 19
Faculty Adjudication & Academic Offences Committees

The Faculty will adjudicate all serious offences, including all allegations of cheating in an examination and all allegations against a research student. All cases referred to the Faculty are administered by the Partnership Team (unless the Faculty Adjudicator is based at the Partner Institution).

Faculty Adjudicators are required to meet with students before a penalty can be determined, or may decide to refer the matter to an Academic Offences Committee who considers the most serious allegations. Academic Offences Committees are usually chaired by the Dean or Deputy Dean of Partnerships) and have the authority to withdraw a student and/or withhold/rescind a University award.

The documentation should clearly explain the nature and extent of the Department’s concern, but it is possible for the Faculty to ask the Department to attend the meeting to outline their concerns in person.

The Adjudicator or Committee will need to determine whether the allegation is proven and, if so, what penalty. The Adjudicator may also need to determine whether the offence was intentional and may also require the student to get appropriate support.

See also: Determining an Academic Offence and the Appropriate Penalty on page 12

Meeting the Student

As mentioned above, students should always be invited to attend a meeting where an allegation is being made. The student should also be given 1 week’s notice and be provided with any evidence or documentation 1 week in advance.

If a student requests to bring a meeting forward or rearrange to another time, then it is at the discretion of the Adjudicator as to whether this can be facilitated, except for Academic Offence Committees which are at fixed times and will only be rearranged in exceptional cases.

If a student cannot or does not attend the meeting after an invitation has been issued, then the Adjudicator can proceed to make a decision on the basis of the evidence that they already have.

A student is entitled to be accompanied to the meeting by a fellow member of the University (student or staff) or a member of SU Advice. A non-member of the University would not normally be permitted to attend the meeting.

*Remember, meeting a student about an academic offence is not just about making a determination and reprimanding the student. The Adjudicator should take the time to explain the concern and ensure the student is well equipped to ensure that similar incidents are not repeated.*

Letter Templates

Letter templates are available at the end of this document.
Allegations that involve more than one student (Collusion or Copying)

In some cases, it may be necessary to meet with multiple students regarding the same allegation.

**Example 1:** A student’s assignment has been submitted to plagiarism detection software and the report indicates that there is a 70% match with another student who submitted their assignment the day before. Although one student submitted their work first, it is not clear which student copied from the other, or whether they worked together.

**Example 2:** Three students submit work that has a high amount of similarities with each other and it appears that they have colluded.

It is at the discretion of the Adjudicator on how to proceed: either to see the student's together or separately. However, the Adjudicator should bear in mind that the allegation may involve work being stolen, student’s being bullied or some kind of dispute between the two students on how things occurred. Student’s may also dispute the version of events, so seeing student’s separately may make it difficult for the Adjudicator to get a full understanding of what happened.

The University recommends seeing all students in one meeting and at the same time. Then, before making a decision, the students can be asked to wait outside and then be seen one-by-one. This allows the student to make any statements in confidence and allows the Adjudicator to challenge any discrepancies in the group’s version of events.

Where there are multiple students involved, the Adjudicator should not confirm an outcome to one student ahead of another. The Adjudicator should especially avoid exonerating anyone until they are ready to make a final decision for all of the students that are involved in the case. This can prove particularly problematic should the case end up being referred to the Faculty, who may need to investigate all of the students again.
 Allegations regarding false authorship or personation

Some of the most serious academic offences are ones where students have arranged for someone else to complete their assessment for them, including as some kind of paid service (known as Contract Cheating) or asking someone to sit an examination or class test in their place.

The issue of contract cheating is the most difficult to identify and prove. Suspicions can arise due to a number of reasons:

- The work discusses unexpected topics and uses unusual references, and perhaps doesn’t cover any of the module content or include any references from the reading list or library;
- The writing style, academic standard or use of language is very different/better to what the student normally submits;
- The work is very different to what was discussed with the Supervisor or Lecturer.

Concerns are difficult to identify, particularly when work is being marked anonymously, but there is some guidance on how these cases can be investigated should concerns arise.

Whilst False Authorship is considered a very serious offence and should lead to the matter being referred to the Faculty, it is recommended that in all cases, the Departmental Adjudicator meets with the student first. The Faculty Adjudicator will likely dismiss any such allegation without substantive evidence and the meeting will likely determine whether a referral is necessary.

As with any case, Adjudicators should not be involved in cases for which they are involved in the marking process. Once the case is identified by a marker, the Adjudicator can review the allegation without anonymity and can compare the submission with work submitted by the student previously to look for differences in style or standard.

For cases regarding suspected False Authorship, the University recommends carrying out a viva-style interview with the student. There are a number of principles that should be followed in carrying out this type of investigation:

- The student should be notified in advance that they will be asked questions about the content of their assignment.
- The student should be encouraged to provide their notes or draft copies of their assignment, where possible.
- Questions about the assignment should be prepared in advance and should be set at a level that the author of the assignment should easily be able to answer (For example, you can ask the student what the broad argument of the essay was).
- If needed, the appropriate lecturer should be in attendance at the meeting to comment on the student’s responses. The lecturer should not have any further influence on the Adjudicator’s decision and it is recommended that they leave once the viva-style interview part of the meeting is concluded.
- Minutes or notes should be taken at this kind of meeting. False authorship cases will likely lead to a referral to the Faculty, so it is important that the discussion and viva-style interview is recorded.
Determining an Academic Offence and the Appropriate Penalty

Adjudicators should consider the following when considering the case:

1. Has an Academic Offence been committed?
   
   Remember:
   - Students are expected to submit work with academic integrity and with a full understanding of the University’s academic and ethical conventions.
   - An academic offence is committed even if the student didn’t intend it.
   - The list of academic offences in the procedures is not exhaustive.

2. How severe is the academic offence?
   
   Remember:
   - The scores given on Similarity Reports should be scrutinised and not be taken as read.
   - The Guidelines for Penalties provide “Bands” for the most common types of offences.
   - Consider whether the student is completing a unit of assessment that is early in their studies, or as an outside option.

3. What penalty should be applied? *(See Penalties on page 13 or page 17)*
   
   Remember:
   - Is this the student’s first offence or whether it is a subsequent offence? *(See page 16)*
   - Does the student have any extenuating circumstances or mitigation? Has this been evidenced? *(See page 16)*
   - Adjudicators should not consider a student’s array of marks when determining a penalty.

5. Did the student intentionally cheat?

   *This question only needs asking if the student is on a subject to professional suitability checks on relevant accredited courses, such as Law or a Health related course.*

   The Adjudicator should determine that, on the balance of probabilities:
   - It has been proven that the student intended to cheat;
   - It has been proven that the student did not intend to cheat;
   - It has not been proven whether the student intended to cheat or not.
Penalties for Undergraduate and Postgraduate Taught Students

The following penalties may be applied by:

- Departmental Adjudicators, Faculty Adjudicators and Academic Offences Committees:

**Penalty 1: A formal written warning only;**

No further action is taken when this penalty is applied. The student’s work is assessed in the format that it was submitted. The penalty is kept on record and noted should there be any further academic offences.

**Penalty 2: Resubmit unit of assessment with minor amendments only, as determined by the Adjudicator (such as correct referencing, paraphrasing or striking out), for an uncapped mark.**

The Adjudicator should ensure that the student fully understands the problems with their submission and is well equipped to resubmit the coursework with all concerns addressed. The resubmitted work will be assessed as normal. Should there be further concerns with the resubmission, this should be regarded as a subsequent academic offence.

The deadline for the student to resubmit is at the discretion of the Department, but the standard limit of 1 week should be used as a basis. However, the Department should consider whether the student may benefit from having an individual appointment with a relevant Tutor before resubmitting the assignment.

**Penalty 3: Resubmit unit of assessment with minor amendments only, as determined by the Adjudicator (such as correct referencing, paraphrasing or striking out) for a capped mark.**

The Adjudicator should ensure that the student fully understands the problems with their submission and is well equipped to resubmit the coursework with all concerns addressed. The resubmitted work will be marked as normal, but then the maximum pass mark will be applied afterwards (40.0 for undergraduate students and 50.0 for postgraduate taught students). The capping should not be applied by the marker. Should there be further concerns with the resubmission, this should be regarded as a subsequent academic offence.

The deadline for the student to resubmit is at the discretion of the Department, but the standard limit of 1 week should be used as a basis. However, the Department should consider whether the student may benefit from having an individual appointment with a relevant Tutor before resubmitting the assignment.

**Penalty 4: Mark of zero to be given for the unit of assessment, reassessment available to the Board of Examiners.**

The student is given a mark of zero for the assignment which is then submitted to the Board of Examiners. If the student passes the module, then no further action will be required. If the student fails the module, then they will be eligible for reassessment in line with any other students. Claims of extenuating circumstances submitted to the Board of Examiners will be considered alongside the Academic Offence penalty, but uncapped reassessment will not normally be available.
The following penalties may be applied by:

- Faculty Adjudicators and Academic Offences Committees
- Not Departmental Adjudicators

**Penalty 5: Mark of zero to be given for the unit of assessment, with no resubmission or reassessment permitted.**

The student is given a mark of zero for the assignment which is then submitted to the Board of Examiners. If the student passes the module, then no further action will be required. If the student fails the module, then they can only be reassessed in the non-offending aspect of the module.

The following penalties may be applied by:

- Academic Offences Committees only
- Not Departmental Adjudicators or Faculty Adjudicators

**Penalty 6: Mark of zero to be awarded for the module, with no resubmission or reassessment permitted;**

The student is given a mark of zero for the module and this is submitted to the Board of Examiners. The student may be able to carry the failed credits if the module is not core, and if the student is not carrying more than 30 credits overall. Otherwise, the student will not be able to proceed to the next stage of the course.

**Penalty 7: No longer eligible for full award: Mark of zero to be awarded for the module with no resubmission or reassessment permitted and the student may complete currently enrolled credits for an exit award only;**

The student is given a mark of zero for the module and can continue on the current stage of their course towards an exit award only. The student will not be able to proceed to the next stage of their studies or enrol on any new modules, and will not be eligible to achieve the full award for their course.

**Penalty 8: Required to withdraw immediately and no longer eligible for full award: A mark of zero to be awarded for the module no resubmission or reassessment permitted and the Examination Board to be invited to consider the student only for an exit award on the basis of credits already achieved;**

The student is immediately withdrawn, is awarded a mark of zero for the module and is not eligible for the full award for their course. The student’s marks are submitted to the Board of Examiners at the earliest opportunity, to be considered for a lesser award.

**Penalty 9: Required to withdraw immediately with no qualification awarded: A mark of zero to be awarded for the module no resubmission or reassessment permitted and the Examination Board to be invited to ratify credits that have already been achieved for recording purposes.**

The student is immediately withdrawn, is awarded a mark of zero for the module and is not eligible for any kind of award from the University. The student’s marks are submitted to the Board of Examiners at the earliest opportunity for the ratification of credits only.
Further Implications, Requirements & Considerations

Students with an academic offence may be prevented from receiving professional accreditation or being referred to a Professional Suitability Group for courses subject to the University’s Fitness to Practise procedures. The academic implications to a student’s marks may also restrict a student from meeting the terms of their scholarship or being able to study abroad or on a work placement.

On each occasion, the student will be notified separately as part of the relevant process or procedure, and this should not be part of the Adjudicator’s consideration when determining a penalty.
Subsequent Offences

A subsequent academic offence will generally result in a more severe penalty, particularly when the student has made little or no attempt to understand the University’s academic conventions since the first or previous offence.

The guidelines for Penalties state:

- Where a student is found to have committed successive offences at Band A, or where one of the offences is Band B, it would normally be appropriate for Penalty 4 to be considered the minimum available penalty;

- Where the student has been found to have committed successive offences at Band B or higher, or where one of the offences is Band C, it would normally be appropriate for Penalty 7 to be considered the minimum available penalty;

The only occasions when the penalty need not necessarily be escalated (or escalated so severely) are where the Adjudicator has deemed that:

- The academic offence is of a different nature
  AND/OR
- there was no intent to deceive in either offence;
  AND/OR
- the student has made a suitable effort to resolve all and any concern(s) that arose following their previous academic offence(s)
  AND/OR
- there are exceptional extenuating circumstances in the latest academic offence.

Offences should only be regarded as “subsequent” after an investigation has been completed and a student has then proceeded to commit a further academic offence. Where allegations arise in close proximity, or there is any overlap in the investigation, then the allegations should all be regarded as first offences.

Extenuating Circumstances

Adjudicators have discretion to reduce penalties if the student has valid extenuating circumstances or can provide some form of mitigation.

If the student has claimed extenuating circumstances, but the Adjudicator wishes to see evidence of this before accepting the claim, then it is sometimes appropriate to allocate a penalty on the basis of evidence not being received, and then amending this if acceptable evidence is provided by a later deadline.
Penalties for Postgraduate Research Students

Departmental Adjudicators cannot award penalties for PGR students.

However, for research students where the form of assessment is more akin to taught assessment (as determined by the Adjudicator or Academic Offences Committee), a penalty from those available for Postgraduate Taught students may be applied.

For allegations that have occurred prior to the student’s submission for final assessment, the following penalties may be applied by Faculty Adjudicators and Academic Offences Committees only:

- Penalty 1: A formal written warning only;
- Penalty 2: Specified section of submission to be referenced correctly, rewritten or removed, and resubmitted for assessment.

For allegations that have occurred prior to submission for the student’s final assessment, the following penalties may be applied by Academic Offences Committees only:

- Penalty 3: No longer eligible for full award: the student’s registration shall be downgraded and they will be considered for a lesser award only.
- Penalty 4: Required to withdraw with no qualification awarded.

For allegations that have occurred after the submission of the student’s final assessment, the following penalties may be applied by Academic Offences Committees only:

- Penalty 1: Formal written warning only;
- Penalty 2: The Examiners shall be instructed to consider the non-plagiarised sections of the final submission, for the degree for which it has been submitted;
- Penalty 3: No longer eligible for full award: The Examiners shall be instructed to consider the non-plagiarised sections of the final submission for a lesser award only;
- Penalty 4: Required to withdraw with no qualification awarded.
Guidance for Submitting a Referral to the Faculty

If the Department determine that the allegation is so severe that the most appropriate penalty is outside of their authority, then the matter will need to be referred to the Faculty Adjudicator. Similarly, all allegations against Postgraduate Research students should be referred.

The Departmental Adjudicator will need to complete the Academic Offences Referral Form and provide as much information as could be expected. The form should also be supported by extensive documentary evidence that substantiates the allegation.

Please remember that the case may be referred on to an Academic Offences Committee, so the form will likely be read by fellow colleagues from other Departments who will have limited understanding of your Department’s area of academic interest. Similarly, due to the severity of the case, it is important that the allegation is substantiated in full and that all documentation is fully annotated.

A typical referral regarding a severe case of plagiarism would include:

- A completed referral form
- A plagiarism detection software similarity report
- An annotated copy of the student’s assignment
- An annotated copy(s) of the alleged source material
- Any other relevant documentation or correspondence

The annotations should be cross-referenced to demonstrate where the material in the student’s assignment is similar with the alleged source material, so that it is clear for Committee Members that will receive it. This can be done by hand or electronically, like these two examples:

Example 1:

![Example 1 Image]

Example 2:

![Example 2 Image]
Guidance for Academic Offences Committees

Academic Offences Committees are held to consider individual allegations of academic offences. Committees have the authority to withdraw students and withhold any qualifications, and will only be required for the most serious allegations.

Memberships & Roles

Committee Members: Each Committee is made up of 3 people: the Chair and two committee members that cannot be from the student’s own department and are required to have had no previous involvement with the case. The Committee are collectively responsible for deciding whether an allegation of an academic offence has been proven, and what the relevant penalty should be.

Chair: The Chair is normally the Dean or the Deputy Dean of Partnerships.

The Chair will lead the meeting, ensure the order or proceedings are followed and, with the support of the secretary, ensure that the Academic Offences Procedures are adhered to.

Departmental Representative: The Departmental Representative is responsible for presenting the allegation to the Committee and is expected to have full knowledge of the case. By default, this is normally the person that has investigated the allegation and made the decision to refer the case to the Faculty.

Secretary: The Secretary will be someone from the Partnerships Team and will be in attendance to ensure the Academic Offences Procedures are complied with, and can provide guidance on this to anyone in attendance. The Secretary will also take a record of the meeting and will provide the student and Department with a formal outcome letter. If the Chair is the Faculty Adjudicator from the Partner Institution, then the Partner Institution would be responsible for administrative arrangements of the Committee.

Student & Representation: The Student is invited to attend but does not have to. If the student does attend, then they may also be accompanied by another member of the University (student or staff) or the Students’ Union. If the student does not attend, then they may submit a written statement and/or any of their own evidence in advance of the committee meeting. Students may not send a representative in their stead.

What Happens at the Meeting?

The Secretary will ensure that everyone is aware of the date, time and location of the Committee meeting, and will have disseminated any relevant documentation or material in advance. The Department or Office (for examination offences) that is raising the concern will have been required to provide documentation outlining the allegation in advance of the meeting. This will include a referral form that gives a summary of the concern, a copy of the student’s assignment or exam paper, and any other documentation deemed relevant.

The Student and Departmental Representative are required to wait outside the Committee room and should not enter until they are invited to do so. The Departmental Representative is only present during the meeting at the same time that the student should be, and this is also required even if the student does not attend the meeting.

During the meeting, the Chair will ensure that the running order is followed. A copy of the running order of the meeting is included as part of this guidance pack. The Departmental Representative will present the allegation, and the Student will be given an opportunity to respond. The Committee members will be able to ask questions to the Department and the Student. The Department may also suggest questions to the Committee, but may not ask them of the student directly. A list of sample questions is also included in this guidance pack.
The Departmental Presentation

The Departmental Representative is responsible for presenting the allegation to the Committee members from the Department's point of view, and is therefore expected to be familiar with the case and the Department's initial investigation.

The Departmental Representative should present the case as clearly as possible, using the evidence to substantiate the allegation. For example, if the allegation relates to plagiarism within a coursework assignment, the Departmental Representative should direct the Committee to examples of where text in the assignment has been “matched” to other published material. The Representative should also ensure that they are familiar with the paperwork presented to the Committee in advance of the meeting, particularly if they are not the person that carried out the initial investigation.

The Departmental Representative is not a member of the Committee and should not ask the student any questions directly or contribute to any of the decision making discussions. Any questions that the Departmental Representative wishes to ask to the student in order to clarify their own presentation should be directed to the Chair of the Committee, who will decide whether it is appropriate. Similarly, the Departmental Representative should refrain from giving personal opinions or making suggestions as to how the panel deal with the allegation.

Other Procedural Requirements

It is important that the student is advised of their right of appeal at the end of the meeting; however it should be made clear that the penalty could be made more severe as well as less severe by the Appeal Committee. Therefore students need to think carefully and seek appropriate advice from the SU Advice Centre before appealing.

If the panel feels that further information or advice is needed before a decision can be taken, it is possible to adjourn the meeting. Decisions should not be finalised unless full information is available and the Chair is satisfied that the decision is appropriate.

In some instances, meetings will take place with students via video-conferencing or Skype; the meeting procedures remain the same. Students are instructed to provide a written statement in case there are any technical issues that prevent a connection being made.
Useful Questions for a Committee to ask a Student

The following list of questions may be useful to ask the student during the Academic Offences Committee proceedings. Note that this is an indicative list only – Panel Members are welcome to pose other questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ How did you undertake your research for your work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ What correspondence have you had with your tutor/supervisor about your work?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Are there any extenuating circumstances that you wish to make the Panel aware of?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Do you think you have made this type of error in any other work?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plagiarism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Are you aware of referencing conventions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ What training have you had in the department in relation to referencing?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Why didn’t you include references in your work?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examinations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Are you aware that it is an offence to bring unauthorised material into exams?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Why did you bring this material into the exam?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Did you hear the Invigilator’s announcement asking students to check their pockets/personal belongings for unauthorised materials?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Why didn’t you check your belongings when asked to by the Invigilator?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Why didn’t you alert the Invigilator when you realised that you had this material on you?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Collusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>▪ Did you work together on this assignment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Did you get help on this assignment?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Can you explain why the wording in these two assignments/examinations is the same?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ Did anyone else have access to your computer whilst you were working on this?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▪ How did you go about researching this? What books did you use?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
    Did you use any online translation software when
Academic Offence Appeals

Students have the right to submit an appeal against a penalty within ten working days of the date on which the final decision was confirmed to the student in writing. Students are required to download the appeals form (https://www1.essex.ac.uk/students/exams-and-coursework/academic-offences.aspx) and email it to appeals@essex.ac.uk, and are strongly advised to discuss their appeal with SU Advice before they submit it.

An appeal can be submitted on the following grounds only:

- that there is material evidence now available, which could not have reasonably been made available to the Initial Adjudicator;
- that the Initial Adjudicator departed from the provisions of the Academic Offences Procedures;
- that the facts set out in the findings of the Initial Adjudicator do not warrant the resolution that there was an academic offence as charged;
- that the penalty imposed by the Initial Adjudicator was unreasonable having regard to all the circumstances of the case.

Initial Report

Upon receipt of an appeal, the Adjudicator that determined the penalty (referred to as the Initial Adjudicator) is asked to provide a short report on how they reached the decision that they did. If the Adjudicator was an Academic Offences Committee, then the Chair of the Committee will be asked to provide the report.

Academic Offences Appeals Committee

The appeal is then considered by a Dean who has had no previous involvement in the case. The Dean will determine whether the student has valid grounds. If so, the Dean will refer the matter to an Academic Offences Appeals Committee.

An Appeals Committee shall operate in a very similar way to an Academic Offences Committee and has the authority to change the penalty or determine that an academic offence has not been proven. The original Departmental Adjudicator and (if the case was referred to the Faculty) the Initial Adjudicator will be asked to present their initial findings and investigation to the Appeals Committee before a final decision is made.
Applying the Penalties at the Boards

The allocation of Penalties 3 to 9 will have an impact on how student’s academic progress is considered by a Board of Examiners meeting.

Boards are responsible for confirming whether a student is eligible to proceed, whether reassessment is available and, if so, by what method. However, some academic offence penalties outright prohibit a student from continuing with their studies whilst others limit reassessment from being available. Boards cannot overrule academic offence decisions, and penalties should continue to apply, even when the student is doing reassessment.

Academic Offence penalties cannot be overruled by the Board of Examiners, particular when assessment strategies are applied. For example, when a module is assessed by the best coursework marks (“Best 4 of 5”, or a “Max Rule”) then the offending unit of assessment must be included in the mark and cannot be discounted. For Departmental Administration Staff, these rules will have automatically been applied by COR, as long as the element of coursework has had the relevant Academic Offence codes entered.

Boards also need to bear this in mind when considering extenuating circumstances claims in order to ensure fair attention is given to a student’s claim, but that an academic offence penalty is not completely overruled.

Guidance for Exam Board Secretaries

More extensive guidance, including checklists and specific instructions for interpreting each penalty, Partnerships Manager.
GUIDELINES FOR PENALTIES (UNDERGRADUATE AND POSTGRADUATE TAUGHT)

The Bands presented below are guidelines only, whilst the Penalties are fixed. Adjudicators should always take the evidence with which they have been provided, including any extenuating circumstances, into account.

**Band A – Minor Offence / Unacceptable Academic Practice**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Suggested Penalty:</th>
<th>Penalty 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Coursework:**
- The academic offence relates to a failure to understand or apply the University’s academic conventions in regards to proper referencing and acknowledging source material, but where an attempt to do so has been made.
- The student is completing a unit of assessment that is early in their studies, or has no previous experience of the particular referencing style (including self-plagiarism), and there has been a failure to understand the University’s academic conventions.

**Examination:**
- The student is found to have contravened the rules of the examination as a result of human error or a misunderstanding, and it is agreed that they have not gained an unfair advantage.

**Band B – Intermediate Offence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Suggested Penalty:</th>
<th>Penalty 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Coursework:**
- A significant portion of the work submitted by a student is not original text and has not been referenced properly, either where the student has made no attempt to acknowledge the source material, or where the student would reasonably be expected to have a full understanding of the academic conventions.
- The work submitted includes references that are false or incongruous, (ie it appears that the student has not consulted works to which reference is made) but the concern does not relate to false authorship.

**Examination:**
- The student is found to have contravened the rules of the examination by introducing and/or attempting to access a small amount of material to aid their attempt at the examination.
- The student is found to have had access to the internet or to have communicated with someone other than an invigilator during an examination.

**Band C – Severe Offence**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Maximum Suggested Penalty:</th>
<th>Penalty 9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Coursework:**
- The majority of the work submitted by the student is not original or has not been referenced properly, either where the student has made no attempt to acknowledge the source material, or where the student would reasonably be expected to have a full understanding of the academic conventions.
- The student has submitted work that has been written or created by a third party, either wholly or in part.

**Examination:**
- The student is found to have contravened the rules of the examination by introducing and/or attempting to access a significant amount of material to aid their attempt at the examination.
- The student is found to have accessed the internet, or communicated with someone other than an invigilator during an examination, about the content of the module.
- The student has arranged for the examination to be attempted by a third party on their behalf.

Penalties available to Departments (coursework only), Faculties and Academic Offence Committees:

- **Penalty 1:** A formal written warning only
- **Penalty 2:** Resubmit unit of assessment with minor amendments only, as determined by the Adjudicator (such as correct referencing, paraphrasing or striking out), for an uncapped mark.
- **Penalty 3:** Resubmit unit of assessment with minor amendments only, as determined by the Adjudicator (such as correct referencing, paraphrasing or striking out), for a capped mark.
- **Penalty 4:** Mark of zero to be given for the unit of assessment, with reassessment available to the Board of Examiners.

Penalties available to Faculties and Academic Offence Committees only

- **Penalty 5:** Mark of zero to be given for the unit of assessment, with no resubmission or reassessment permitted.

Penalties available to Academic Offence Committees only

- **Penalty 6:** Mark of zero to be awarded for the module, with no resubmission or reassessment permitted;
- **Penalty 7:** No longer eligible for full award - Mark of zero to be awarded for the module with no resubmission or reassessment permitted and the student may complete currently enrolled credits for an exit award only;
- **Penalty 8:** Required to withdraw immediately and no longer eligible for full award - A mark of zero to be awarded for the module no resubmission or reassessment permitted and the Examination Board to be invited to consider the student only for an exit award on the basis of credits already achieved;
- **Penalty 9:** Required to withdraw immediately with no qualification awarded: A mark of zero to be awarded for the module no resubmission or reassessment permitted and the Examination Board to be invited to ratify credits that have already been achieved for recording purposes.
Subsequent Offences

Escalation of Penalties
A subsequent academic offence will generally result in a more severe penalty, particularly when the student has made little or no attempt to understand the University’s academic conventions since the first or previous offence.

- Where a student is found to have committed successive offences at Band A, or where one of the offences is Band B, it would normally be appropriate for Penalty 4 to be considered the minimum available penalty;

- Where the student has been found to have committed successive offences at Band B or higher, or where one of the offences is Band C, it would normally be appropriate for Penalty 7 to be considered the minimum available penalty;

Exceptions
The only occasions when the penalty need not necessarily be escalated (or escalated so severely) are where the Adjudicator has deemed that:

- The academic offence is of a different nature
  AND/OR
- there was no intent to deceive in either offence;
  AND/OR
- the student has made a suitable effort to resolve all and any concern(s) that arose following their previous academic offence(s)
  AND/OR
- there are exceptional extenuating circumstances in the latest academic offence.

Further information:
Academic offences and academic integrity Code of Student Conduct
The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA)
Chronological Guide for Dealing with an Academic Offence

1. Academic Offence Identified

Evidence is accumulated to see whether a case is answerable. If a case appears to be legitimate, it is reported to the Departmental Adjudicator. If it is not, then the unit of assessment is marked on its merits with no marks deducted.

2. Department checks previous offences

The Department checks whether or not the student has been found guilty of any previous academic offences.

3. Departmental Adjudicator Reviews Case & Preps Paperwork

The Departmental Adjudicator will give initial consideration as to whether the case should be dealt with internally, or escalated to the Faculty Adjudicator.

In any case, the documentation will need preparing for sending to either the student or as part of the referral to the Faculty.

Referral to the Faculty

The Departmental Adjudicator should complete the Referral Form and send it to the Partnerships Manager via email, along with all of the necessary documentation. The Departmental Adjudicator should also send to the student a notification that the case has been referred.

4. Adjudicator Meets with the Student

If the Departmental Adjudicator is able to deal with the alleged offence then a meeting should be arranged with the student. The student should be sent notification of the meeting AND the documentation at least 1 week in advance.

If the student has notified the Departmental Adjudicator that they are unable to attend the meeting, then an alternative meeting time should be arranged. In the event of the student being absent from the meeting without prior notification, then a decision can be made by the Adjudicator in their absence.

It is recommended that a member of administrative staff is in attendance to take notes of the meeting.

Cases Referred to the Faculty

The student meets with the Faculty Adjudicator or an Academic Offences Committee instead. It may be necessary for the Departmental Adjudicator to attend the meeting in order to present the initial findings from their investigation.

5. Student Notified Of Outcome and Documentation Recorded

The Department confirms the decision to the student in writing and a note is made on student’s file.

Cases Referred to the Faculty

The Partnerships Manager will administer the Faculty or Committee meetings and ensure the Department are informed of the final decision, and that all of the paperwork has been recorded.
Dear [Name],

I am writing to inform you of an allegation suspecting you of having committed an academic offence for your coursework in [Module Code & Title] by way of [Choose an item]. If proven, this would constitute a breach of University regulations. I would therefore like to see you to discuss this allegation.

The meeting has been arranged for [Time on Date at Location]. The details of the concern are outlined in the attached documentation.

Please click here for guidance about our Academic Offence Procedures, including what to expect from the meeting and more information about your rights.

You have the right to be accompanied to the meeting by a fellow student of the University of Essex, a member of staff or a member of the SU Advice Centre.

If you are unable to attend this appointment, please notify [Name], by emailing [Email Address] or by calling [Phone Number] as soon as possible. If you do not attend the appointment, then a decision will be made in your absence and you will be notified in writing. If you cannot attend, you may submit a written statement alongside any of your own documentary evidence, which can be taken into consideration. Please send this via email as soon as possible, and no later than 1 day before the date of meeting.

Should you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards,
**Academic Offences Meeting**

**Example Running Order**

Reminder: A student may be accompanied by a fellow member of the University (student or staff) or the Students’ Union. They are not entitled to be accompanied by a non-member, such as family.

1. Introductions

2. Check that the student:
   - received the **documentation** in advance of the meeting;
   - is aware of their right to **representation**;

3. **Explain** the allegation to the student and answer any questions they may have

4. Ask the student to respond to the allegation, including any points of **mitigation** they wish to raise, and ask any questions that may be relevant.

5. If required, ask the student to leave the room whilst you complete your deliberations

Once all the facts have been gathered, you can now consider:

- whether an academic offence has taken place;
- the severity of the academic offence;
- the penalty that should be applied;

If the student is subject to fitness to practice, or it is required that the academic offence be reported to a professional accreditor, then you should also consider whether the evidence suggests that the academic offence was intentional or not.

Please ensure that a record is taken of how the final decision is reached and that this is noted in the outcome letter alongside the details of the discussion with the student.

6. The student is informed of the final decision OR notifies them of the next steps and when to expect an outcome, if it is reasonable to give a timeframe.

7. The student is informed of their **right of appeal**.

*If you are seeing more than one student at a time, the Student Progress Team recommend that points 1-4 be completed with all students present, and that point 4 is then repeated privately for each individual student before a final decision is made. This is to ensure that individual students are given the opportunity to disclose any information that they previously did not feel comfortable doing so.*
PRID: Type or Paste
02 March 2018
Copy to:

Sent by email

Dear Type or Paste

I am writing to formally inform you of my decision in regards to the allegation that you had committed an academic offence in Module Code and Title.

You attended a meeting with me on Click here to enter a date.

OR

You were invited to attend a meeting with me on Click here to enter a date but you did not attend and did not provide a written statement for consideration. As such, I have made a decision in your absence.

OR

You were invited to attend a meeting with me on Click here to enter a date. You did not attend the meeting, but you did provide a written statement for consideration.

Please include a summary of the allegation, the student’s response (if given, and including any extenuating circumstances) and what led you to making your decision.

I have decided not to uphold the allegation. As such, it has been dismissed and no further action will be taken under the Academic Offence Procedures.

This decision will be logged on your student record, and a copy of this letter will be kept on your student file.

Advice & Guidance
You may wish to visit our webpage for further advice and guidance about academic offences and how to avoid them, which includes information.

OR

I have decided that the allegation of Choose an item. has been proven and I am issuing you with Penalty 1 from the Academic Offences Procedures: a formal written warning only.

Right of Appeal and Declaring Other Academic Offences
You have the right to appeal against this penalty within five working days of the date of this letter. If you wish to appeal, please refer to Section E of the Academic Offences Procedures.

You are asked to consider whether you may have committed any similar offences in any work you have already submitted to date and notify us if you think you have. If you do not declare an offence which is later detected, this may be treated as a subsequent offence and may receive a more severe penalty.

OR

I have decided that the allegation of Choose an item. has been proven. As a result, I am issuing you with Penalty 2 from the Academic Offences Procedures: Resubmit the unit of assessment with minor amendments only for an uncapped mark.
As a result of this penalty, you must now resubmit the piece of work. Please outline the instructions for correcting the work (references, paraphrasing or striking out), as well as when and how the work should be submitted.

Upon resubmission, the assignment will be marked and assessed as normal. Failure to resubmit the unit of assessment by the given deadline will result in a mark of zero being awarded.

Right of Appeal and Declaring Other Academic Offences
You have the right to appeal against this penalty within five working days of the date of this letter. If you wish to appeal, please refer to Section E of the Academic Offences Procedures.

You are asked to consider whether you may have committed any similar offences in any work you have already submitted to date and notify us if you think you have. If you do not declare an offence which is later detected, this may be treated as a subsequent offence and may receive a more severe penalty.

OR

I have decided that the allegation of Choose an item has been proven. As a result, I am issuing you with Penalty 3 from the Academic Offences Procedures: Resubmit unit of assessment with minor amendments only for a capped mark.

As a result of this penalty, you must now resubmit the piece of work. Please outline the instructions for correcting the work (references, paraphrasing or striking out), as well as when and how the work should be submitted.

Upon resubmission, the assignment will be marked as normal. However, should the assignment be deemed to have passed, a capped mark of 40.0 will be formally recorded for this assignment only.

Right of Appeal and Declaring Other Academic Offences
You have the right to appeal against this penalty within five working days of the date of this letter. If you wish to appeal, please refer to Section E of the Academic Offences Procedures.

You are asked to consider whether you may have committed any similar offences in any work you have already submitted to date and notify us if you think you have. If you do not declare an offence which is later detected, this may be treated as a subsequent offence and may receive a more severe penalty.

OR

I have decided that the allegation of Choose an item has been proven. As a result, I am issuing you with Penalty 4 from the Academic Offences Procedures: Mark of zero to be given for the unit of assessment, with reassessment available to the Board of Examiners for the maximum of a capped pass mark for the module.

As a result of this penalty, a mark of zero will be recorded for this unit of assessment, and the standard rules of assessment will continue to apply. If you fail the module, then the Board of Examiners will consider you for reassessment as normal, and the module will be capped at the pass mark of 40.0.

Right of Appeal and Declaring Other Academic Offences
You have the right to appeal against this penalty within five working days of the date of this letter. If you wish to appeal, please refer to Section E of the Academic Offences Procedures.

You are asked to consider whether you may have committed any similar offences in any work you have already submitted to date and notify us if you think you have. If you do not declare an offence which is later detected, this may be treated as a subsequent offence and may receive a more severe penalty.
OR

I have decided to refer the allegation to the Faculty for further consideration. I have made this decision due to the severity of the allegation.

The Partnerships Team will be in touch soon to explain what will happen next. In the meantime, please click here for information and guidance about how this matter will be taken forward under the University's Academic Offence Procedures.

If you would like to contact the Partnerships Team, please email partnerships@essex.ac.uk.

Kind regards
**Academic Offence: Referral to Faculty**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name (Surname, First name)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student Registration Number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department / School of Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course Title</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stage / Level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Previous Offences?</strong> Please check with the Registry.</td>
<td>Choose an item.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date of Previous:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Module:</strong></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| **Module code and Title**         |  |
| **Module Status**                 | **Credit Value:** |

| **Unit of Assessment Number and Title** |  |
| **Expected Referencing Style**       |  |
| **Date of submission:** Click here to enter a date | **Percentage of Module Mark** |

| **Nature of Allegation**            |  |
| **Approximate % of plagiarism (if applicable)** |  |

**Details of the meeting with the student (if one has taken place)**

| **Date of Departmental Meeting:** | Click here to enter a date |
| **Names of those in attendance:** |  |

Please provide a summary of the discussion that took place, including any extenuating circumstances presented by the student and what advice was given.
### Details of the Allegation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please provide details of the allegation here:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please explain the reason why the decision been taken to refer this:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Evidence Required by the Faculty

Please submit a copy of the student’s work along with a copy of the alleged source material. Both copies must be annotated and cross-referenced to demonstrate the concern to the Faculty.

You may also submit a copy of the Plagiarism Report from either Turnitin or Ephorus, any written statement provided to you by the student and any other material that may be relevant.

Please be aware that, if the paperwork provided is deemed unsatisfactory, it may be returned to the Department by the Faculty with a request for clarification or completion.

### Please tick as appropriate (other documents can also be provided):

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annotated copy of student’s assignment</td>
<td>Letter to student confirming AO referral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annotated copy of alleged source material</td>
<td>Plagiarism report (Turnitin and/or Ephorus)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of HoD / Departmental Adjudicator</th>
</tr>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date of Referral</th>
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