

STUDENT GUIDANCE: REFERRAL TO THE PRO VICE-CHANCELLOR (PVC)

The Academic Misconduct Panel has considered all the evidence relating to your case and has decided that, on the balance of probabilities, you have committed a 'grave' academic offence. As the offence is either very serious, or is a repeat major offence, the Panel has asked the PVC to consider which penalty to impose.

My outcome letter from the Panel says my case has been referred to the PVC for the penalty to be imposed. What does this mean?

A Royal Holloway degree represents the high academic standards for which the University is known. To ensure that standards are maintained, all assessments are carefully marked using robust marking methods designed to accurately record students' understanding and achievements.

Academic integrity is an important part of this reputation and as such is taken very seriously by the University. Students who obtain, or seek to obtain, an unfair advantage in their assessments and are in breach of the Regulations that govern the assessments will therefore be subject to investigation. If an academic offence is proven, an appropriate penalty will be imposed.

The University recognises that sometimes students exercise poor judgement, or lack understanding of good scholarly practice, and that this can result in academic misconduct. The Academic Misconduct Panel process ensures that each case is thoroughly considered and that students are provided with learning opportunities to help avoid future offences.

When is a case referred to the PVC for a penalty?

When a student has committed a particularly serious offence (even if it is a first offence), or has committed several serious offences, the PVC will be asked to make a decision as to an appropriate penalty to impose. Repeat offences are more serious because students who have been through the academic misconduct process are expected to learn from their errors to ensure they do not commit further offences. These offences attract a penalty at the more severe end of the scale. This is also true for academic offences which are considered grave, or which demonstrate a clear intent by the student to cheat, such as commissioning,

How will my case be dealt with?

The PVC, or a senior member of academic staff nominated by the PVC, will determine an appropriate penalty. This decision will be based on the offence committed, taking into account the number and type of any previous offences, and any mitigating circumstances disclosed. The University recognises the impact that a penalty may have on a student's academic record, such as their ability to complete their programme or pursue their chosen career and this will be taken into account when reaching a decision.

What happens now?

You will receive a letter from a senior member of the Academic Investigations team who will inform you that they have received the Panel's referral of your case to the PVC. They will invite you to provide any further information and evidence about your circumstances that you would like the PVC to consider alongside the documents that were considered by the Academic Misconduct Panel. This is your opportunity to make the PVC aware of any mitigating circumstances which affected you at the time the offence occurred. Please ensure that you provide evidence of your circumstances.

You have **7 calendar days** to submit this information and evidence.

Before responding to the letter please review the information and guidance available on the [Student Intranet](#). The [Students Union Advice Centre](#) can also help you to prepare your response.

How is my case presented to the PVC?

A Senior Academic Investigations officer who has not been previously involved in the case will compile a report for the PVC, or their nominee, to consider.

The report will outline the full details of the case under consideration, including any response you have submitted. The report will also detail any previous academic offences, including the nature of the offences and any penalties imposed. Details of the approach the University takes to offences of a similar nature are also outlined in the report, together with a summary of any aggravating or mitigating factors to be taken into account.

The Academic Investigations Officer will consider your academic record and ensure that the PVC is aware of any potential impact of the penalty, including factors such as the weighting of the assessment and the potential impact of a penalty on the overall module mark. If your ability to resit and/or complete your degree may be affected, this will be highlighted.

The PVC or their nominee will be asked to select from the range of penalties available, ensuring that the impact on you is proportionate to the offence committed, and in line with penalties applied on other similar cases.

For details of the penalties available to the PVC or their nominee, please read section 7(7) of the Regulations on Academic Misconduct.

When will I find out the decision of the PVC, or their nominee?

It can take some weeks for all of the information to be investigated and for the report to be compiled. The PVC or their nominee may have a considerable amount of information to assess before they are able to make a decision, and this will also depend on their workload. We aim to let you know the outcome of an PVC referral within a month and you will receive an email with a letter that details the penalty applied, and the reason for the decision.

How and when will my penalty be applied?

Your School will be informed of the penalty decision at the same time you are informed. Your mark will be uploaded to Moodle (or via the usual process) and the School Administration team will ensure the penalty is correctly applied.

You should allow at least 7 days for your marks and record to be amended following the release of your outcome letter. If your record has not been amended after this time, please contact your School Helpdesk directly.

Where the penalty imposed is at the most severe end of the scale and the PVC has decided that a student cannot continue on their intended programme, or that their registration is discontinued, the Chair of the Department Assessment Board (DAB) will be asked to consider

the student's record. The outcome will be recorded by the DAB and the record will be closed. If the student is eligible for an Exit Award, this will be issued.

Can I appeal the decision made by the PVC, or their nominee?

It is important to be clear that you cannot appeal the decision of the PVC, or their nominee, that an offence of academic misconduct has occurred, since this is a matter of academic judgement. However, you can appeal against the penalty imposed under the Regulations on Academic Misconduct and you can appeal a procedural irregularity in the application of the Regulations. This means that you cannot challenge the decision made by the panel in determining that you committed an offence, but you can appeal against the severity of the penalty imposed and if the consideration of your case was conducted in accordance with the Regulations.

There are three possible grounds on which you can appeal against the penalty:

1. that there is evidence of a failure to follow the procedures set out in these regulations which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of the decision (***'procedural irregularity'***);
2. that fresh evidence can be presented which you could not with reasonable diligence have disclosed before the decision was made and which might cause reasonable doubt as to the fairness of that decision (***'fresh evidence'***);
3. that the decision was perverse given the evidence which was available at the time.

You must be able to demonstrate that you meet one of these grounds for your appeal to be upheld.

To submit an appeal for consideration, you are advised to read the information provided on the student intranet: [Make an academic appeal - Royal Holloway Student Intranet](#). You will need to submit the online form located on these pages with all your supporting evidence. **You must submit your appeal within 15 working days of the outcome being sent to you.**

Your appeal will be assigned to an investigating officer with no previous involvement in the case who will review the information you have presented and gather all the information regarding your panel meeting. The officer will write to a PVC who has not previously been involved, outlining the details of case and ask them to decide whether you meet the grounds of appeal. The PVC or their nominee, will have a number of options available to them if they determine that you meet the ground of appeal.

They can decide:

- (a) to amend or set aside the decision;
- (b) to set aside the original decision and refer the case back for reconsideration ;
- (c) to confirm the decision;
- (d) to convene an Appeals Committee

If you are considering submitting an appeal against your penalty, you are strongly advised to seek advice from both the SU Advice Centre and your Personal tutor. They will help you to determine if you are likely to meet the grounds of appeal. Unfortunately, it can take some time to investigate each case thoroughly and you should allow for around 2 months for your appeal to be considered by the Academic Investigations team.



ACADEMIC SUPPORT

[Academic Regulations](#)

[SS1001: Academic Integrity](#) - Moodle course

[CeDAS](#) - Academic skills, including referencing and how to avoid plagiarism

[Library](#) - guidance and advice on referencing

Your Personal Tutor – contact your School Helpdesk for more info



WELLBEING SUPPORT

[Students Union Advice Centre](#) – independent advice about the case and support at the meeting

[Wellbeing Service](#) - can provide emotional support

[Disability & Neurodiversity Services](#) – register for support with any long term conditions or a specific learning difficulty