Academic Misconduct in Law Examinations 2020

As specified in the applicable Form and Conduct Notice, Law examinations in 2020 will be conducted on an open book basis, and there will be no restrictions on referring during the assessment to books and other materials, whether on paper, online, or in computer files. The purpose of this document is to provide guidance as to how questions of academic misconduct will be approached in these circumstances.

1. Definition and handling of academic misconduct

It its Rules of Behaviour for Registered Students and Formerly Registered Students, the University defines academic misconduct as follows:

‘Academic misconduct’ is gaining or attempting to gain, or helping others to gain or attempt to gain, an unfair academic advantage in formal University assessment, or any activity likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research. It includes being in possession of unauthorised materials or electronic devices during an examination, including recording or communication devices or devices that can store data, even where Registered Students are unaware that such materials or devices are unauthorised, have no intention of using them, or are unaware that they have them in their possession. Academic misconduct also includes:

- **Plagiarism**: using someone else’s ideas, words, data, or other material produced by them without acknowledgement;
- **Self-plagiarism**: using the Registered Student’s own ideas, words, data or other material produced by them and submitted for formal assessment at this University or another institution, or for publication elsewhere, without acknowledgement, unless expressly permitted by the assessment;
- **Contract cheating**: contracting a third party to provide work, which is then used or submitted as part of a formal assessment as though it is the Registered Student’s own work;
- **Collusion**: working with others and using the ideas or words of this joint work without acknowledgment, as though it is the Registered Student’s own work, or allowing others to use the ideas or words of joint work without acknowledgment;
- **Impersonating someone or being impersonated** in an examination or arranging for someone to impersonate someone else by sitting their examination;
- **Fabrication, falsification or misrepresentation** of data, results or other outputs or aspects of research, including documentation and participant consent, or presenting or recording such data, etc, as if they were real; or
- **Failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations** in carrying out research. This includes failure to follow agreed protocol if this failure results in unreasonable risk or harm to humans, other sentient beings or the environment, and facilitating of misconduct in research by collusion in, or concealment of, such actions by others. It includes any plan or conspiracy to attempt to do any of these things.

Cases of alleged academic misconduct will be handled under the University’s Student Discipline Procedure.

For the above, see:

[https://www.plagiarism.admin.cam.ac.uk/definition](https://www.plagiarism.admin.cam.ac.uk/definition)

For the University's Student Discipline Procedure, see:

[https://www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/student-discipline](https://www.studentcomplaints.admin.cam.ac.uk/student-discipline)
2. Discipline Regulation 7

Regulation 7 of the University’s general regulations for discipline provides that ‘No member of the University shall assist a candidate in any form of academic misconduct against the Rules of Behaviour for Registered Students and Formerly Registered Students.’

For Discipline Regulation 7 see:
https://www.admin.cam.ac.uk/univ/so/2019/chapter02-section20.html

3. Rule 8 of the Rules for the Conduct of Examinations

Rule 8 of the rules for the conduct of examinations made by the University’s Examination and Assessment Committee provides that ‘No candidate shall communicate with another candidate during an examination session.’

For Rule 8 see:

4. Academic misconduct in Law examinations 2020

Discipline Regulation 7 applies to Law examinations in 2020.

Rule 8 of the rules for the conduct of examinations made by the University’s Examination and Assessment Committee applies to Law examinations in 2020, and for the purpose of these examinations, and only for that purpose, is interpreted to mean that no candidate shall communicate with another candidate in relation to matters falling within the syllabus of a particular paper, or in relation to questions or answers in the examination, during the 24-hour examination in that paper.

The definition of academic misconduct in the University’s Rules of Behaviour for Registered and Formerly Registered Students likewise applies to Law examinations in 2020, insofar as it is relevant to the academic nature of the examination in question (for example, fabrication of data would be irrelevant to answers which did not refer to research data). The Faculty may subject examination answers to plagiarism detection software, and, as appropriate, conduct vivas, as means of detection or investigation of academic misconduct in relation to Law examinations in 2020.

In the detection or investigation of academic misconduct Examiners will exercise careful judgement in light of the circumstances in which Law examinations are being taken in 2020, and in light of the nature of that which is alleged to amount to academic misconduct. This exercise of judgement will take account of the fact that until late March 2020 students were preparing for examinations which were expected to closed book, or, in the case of many papers in the LLM Examination, with more limited open-book provision than that which will now pertain. This might include, for example, taking account of the fact that students preparing for closed book examinations might to some degree study together and thus form similar sets of notes on particular points, which notes will now be available for reference during the assessment in Law examinations in 2020.