

Academic Misconduct or Poor Practice?

Warwick distinguishes between academic misconduct and poor academic practice. Academic misconduct is defined as follows:

Academic misconduct are acts or omissions by a student which give or have the potential to give an unfair advantage in an examination or assessment, or might assist someone else to gain an unfair advantage, or an activity likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research. (Regulation 11)

Academic misconduct requires the intention to obtain an unfair advantage, or knowingly engaging in a behaviour that has the potential to give an unfair advantage, irrespective of whether such advantage is actually obtained. (Regulation 11)

Poor academic practice is less serious than academic misconduct, but should be avoided nonetheless:

Poor academic practice is the failure to observe principles of academic integrity. It typically (but not exclusively) occurs when referencing is inadequate, but not in a way suggesting that the student attempted to gain an unfair advantage. (Regulation 11)

Poor academic practice should be used where the extent of plagiarism or other misconduct is limited. It can be used in particular at earlier stages of a student's degree, when they might only have an imperfect understanding of the principles of academic integrity. It can be found, e.g., where a student has referenced the material used but not indicated that it is a verbatim quote. (Guidance on Regulation 11)

There is no penalty for poor academic practice: marks are not deducted, instead work is assessed under the marking criteria (e.g., the University Marking Scales have an implicit expectation in respect of good academic practice). (Regulation 11)

The focus of treating a case as poor academic practice is on the pedagogic function of improving a student's understanding of the principles of academic integrity. The work is to be marked on its merits, i.e., without giving credit for those parts of the text that suffer from academic misconduct.