

Staff Guidance – Affirmation Meetings

The purpose of an Affirmation Meeting is to establish whether a student holds the knowledge that they have presented in work submitted for assessment (whether as continuous assessment or in an examination). It should be used only where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that this is not the case. The meeting is restricted to the piece of work in question and should not be used as an assessment of the student's capabilities or as the basis of a remarking of the original assessment. The possible outcomes of an Affirmation Meeting are for the Face Value mark to proceed to the Board of Examiners unchanged, or for a potential case of Academic Misconduct to be considered against the student.

An affirmation meeting should be conducted in a similar manner to a preliminary meeting with the School Academic Misconduct Officer as described in [Academic Misconduct Investigation Procedures](#). Information obtained at an affirmation meeting can then be considered by a School Academic Misconduct Officer (SAMO) or a College Academic Misconduct Officer (CAMO) as part of any investigation which may arise from this process.

Students must be informed in advance that they may be invited for an Affirmation Meeting following the submission of any piece of assessment at the University. Students must also be made aware that information obtained during an affirmation meeting could be used as evidence in an Academic Misconduct referral.

Process:

If there is reasonable doubt that a piece of work submitted for assessment is not the student's own work, further enquiry may be required to establish whether academic misconduct has occurred. An affirmation meeting with the student in question may be convened to discuss the piece of work and the process by which it was completed.

A decision to affirm should be made before marks are released and the meeting should take place as soon as possible. Anonymity of the student should be preserved until the decision to affirm has been made. The School Academic Misconduct Officer should be consulted when making the decision to affirm.

When an affirmation meeting is required, the student should be given clear information about the reason for affirmation, what they should expect at the meeting and the relevant procedural information (e.g. who may attend, possible outcomes etc.).

The meeting should be chaired by the Course Organiser or an appointed representative with specialist subject knowledge. Another member of academic staff and a note-taker should also be in attendance. The student may be accompanied by another member of the University community for support e.g. their Student adviser or an Academic Adviser from the Students' Association. Students should be made aware that a report of the meeting will be written and recorded, that they will be asked to confirm the accuracy of that report and that this may be shared with the School Academic Misconduct Officer.

Meetings should not be accusatory in nature and the scope of the meeting is restricted to the piece of work in question and the process by which it was completed by the student.

Following affirmation, a draft report of the meeting should be sent to the student for comment. The draft report should not include details of any recommendations or penalties.

If, following affirmation, the panel concludes that there is sufficient evidence to launch a formal academic misconduct investigation, an [Academic Misconduct Report Form](#) should be

completed and referred to the SAMO. The form should be accompanied by a copy of the meeting report to assist the SAMO in determining the outcome and/or refer the case to the CAMO. The SAMO does not need to re-interview the student if the report contains sufficient information for them to make a decision.

If it is deemed that there is no case to answer, the Board of Examiners should be made aware that an affirmation meeting took place and that the mark is secure.

If further information is required regarding the affirmation process, you should seek advice from your School Academic Misconduct Officer who will be able to answer any questions about the process and assist in establishing whether an affirmation meeting is required.

Academic Services, October 2020