



Unsatisfactory Academic Work and Academic Discipline

The present document only concerns *undergraduate Junior Members* of the College. The primary responsibility for monitoring the academic progress of graduate students rests with the relevant University faculty or department, rather than the College. The College updates its procedures for unsatisfactory academic work and academic discipline regularly. The following represents the latest revisions, and replaces all earlier versions. The College reserves the right to make further revisions, which will be communicated to Junior Members.

1. Expectations

The College expects academic study to be undergraduates' main priority. Unless they are prevented by some unforeseeable, urgent cause (usually medical, but including some other personal circumstances) from doing so, in which case they must inform their tutors at once, they must:

- attend all tutorials on time;
- submit all required work by the deadline;
- submit work which is of a level consistent with their ability, in the form required by their tutors, and which they can put their name to as their own work;
- sit all collections as required (usually at the start of term);
- participate actively in tutorials;
- do all preparatory or consolidatory reading, as required;
- attend any meetings arranged by their tutors, including at the end of term for reports;
- carry out any other set academic activities, such as practicals.

Students who are unable to attend a tutorial or submit work by the usual deadline for reasons of religion or belief should speak with their tutors at the earliest opportunity to discuss the provision of alternative arrangements.

2. The Role of the Personal Tutor

An undergraduate's Personal Tutor will be the primary person responsible for ensuring that students meet these commitments. In cases where an undergraduate fails to do so, their Personal Tutor may decide to issue a formal warning. This will be done in writing, copying in the Tutor for Undergraduates and the Academic Administrator. Such a warning will remain in force for a year, after which time it will be considered spent. Any student who in the opinion of their Personal Tutor (if necessary after consultation with other tutors) continues to fail to meet the expectations set out above will be referred to the Tutorial Review Committee.

3. The Tutorial Review Committee

The Tutorial Review Committee (TRC) exists to deal with cases of unsatisfactory academic work or other failures in academic discipline which have persisted beyond the first warning and have been referred by the Personal Tutor. It usually meets in 3rd and 7th week of each

term, as required. The membership of the Committee will normally comprise the Tutor for Undergraduates, the Tutor for Welfare, and two other Fellows. The Academic Administrator will be in attendance. The Personal Tutor of any Junior Member summoned before the Committee (or another Fellow or Lecturer who is able to report on the Junior Member's work) will attend for the interview. The Committee will have the power of co-option. If necessary, it may also make decisions after deliberations outside these meetings and/or by email. Such deliberations would normally only occur after at least one meeting which the Junior Member had been invited to attend in person. They would also proceed in a manner that mirrors, as much as possible, the TRC's activities during its regular meetings, i.e., requesting views and supporting documentation from all parties concerned and weighing each case carefully.

The TRC typically considers a Junior Member's performance, motivations, etc., over a period of time, as well as possible solutions to any problems identified. The basis for the Committee's decisions will be a careful and proportionate inquiry into the relevant academic concerns.

Where the TRC deems it necessary, it may require Junior Members to produce additional work, and/or to attend specific lectures or classes, and/or to sit Special or Penal Collections. Penal Collections are usually preceded by Special Collections, but in cases relating to academic discipline (including academic dishonesty: see the paragraph '**Failures in Academic Discipline: Academic Dishonesty**' below) the TRC may proceed directly to Penal Collections without setting Special Collections first. See further definitions below.

In the event that a Junior Member fails or refuses to comply with a decision of the TRC, the Committee will impose the sanction of suspension (that is, being sent away from the College for a specified period of time) or expulsion (which is permanent), unless it deems that there are reasonable extenuating circumstances. However, any decision by the TRC to suspend or expel a Junior Member is subject to appeal, as set out in section 6 below. If such an appeal is not made, the Junior Member must go out of residence within 48 hours, unless the TRC has granted the Junior Member additional time.

For all meetings of the TRC (and, to the extent appropriate, with other forms of deliberation), the following rules apply:

- (i) The Personal Tutor will be required to submit a written statement outlining the reasons for summoning the Junior Member for interview by the TRC and, in the case of academic dishonesty, supporting evidence to the Academic Administrator by 12 noon one week before the meeting.
- (ii) The Junior Member will be summoned by letter or email, normally at least one week in advance of the meeting. The summons will include the Personal Tutor's written statement providing the reasons for requesting that the Junior Member be interviewed by the Committee and, in the case of academic dishonesty, the evidence being presented to the Committee.
- (iii) The Junior Member will be free to submit evidence and a written statement to the TRC, through the Academic Administrator, by no later than 12 noon two business days before the meeting. Such material will be made available to the Personal Tutor and the TRC by the time of the meeting.
- (iv) At least four members of the TRC will be present throughout the consideration of each case in any one meeting.
- (v) A Junior Member summoned to a meeting of the TRC may be accompanied and supported by another person, for example a member of the JCR Committee, should they wish and provided that, no less than 12 noon two business days before the meeting, they notify the Academic Administrator of the other person's full name and status. Legal representation will not normally be permitted.

- (vi) A Junior Member summoned to appear before the TRC must attend. If a Junior Member fails to attend, the TRC is entitled to consider the case in their absence.
- (vii) At the meeting, the Personal Tutor will be asked to outline the reasons why they have referred the Junior Member to the Committee and to present any relevant evidence. The Junior Member will be invited to respond, and is entitled to question or challenge any evidence presented by the Personal Tutor.
- (viii) The Personal Tutor and the Junior Member will usually be asked to leave the room while the TRC deliberates. The Committee will decide what course of action should be taken on the basis of the evidence and arguments submitted to it and the Junior Member's previous academic record.
- (ix) Any decision and the reasons for it will be communicated in writing by the Tutor for Undergraduates to the Junior Member and their Personal Tutor.
- (x) Any member of the TRC who has a conflict of interest with regard to a case in front of the Committee must absent himself or herself from any consideration of that case. Similarly, any member of the TRC who is the Personal Tutor or who has taught or expects to teach the Junior Member must absent himself or herself before the decision is discussed and reached by the Committee.

4. Further Definitions: General

The term **unsatisfactory work** will normally cover the following:

- Failure to attend all tutorials, classes or other required academic engagements, except where permission has been sought and obtained in advance from the tutor concerned, or where there are adequate medical grounds;
- Failure to produce work for tutorials, classes, etc. regularly, as required by the tutor;
- Failure to perform adequately in collections;
- Failure to produce work of a standard appropriate to the Junior Member's particular academic level.

In addition, **academic honesty** is held to be fundamental to intellectual growth and scholarly inquiry. All members of an academic community must be confident that each person finds, develops, and presents information and ideas responsibly and honourably. It is expected that all members of the College work, at all times, in a manner that respects and upholds these principles. Failure to do so may breach the College's standards for academic discipline. In particular:

- **Plagiarism.** Degree-level study will of course involve reading and drawing on published (and occasionally unpublished) academic work by others. It is good practice to cite that work in footnotes or in another way that makes clear the sources used. Plagiarism, however, which means presenting others' work as one's own without acknowledgment, is completely unacceptable. All students must make sure they fully understand what constitutes plagiarism by reading the University's (very full) [guidance on plagiarism](#). Students should also consult their course handbook and subject tutors for specific advice. Any instances of plagiarism will be treated as matters of academic discipline (see ***Academic Dishonesty***, below). If proven, they will be dealt with severely, and in extreme cases may lead to a Junior Member being expelled.
- **Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI).** It can sometimes be appropriate to use AI to support your learning, but you should not do so without the explicit approval of your tutors and you should also consult your course handbook for specific guidance. All students must make sure they acquaint themselves with the University's [guidance on the use of generative AI tools](#), and they should remember that AI cannot be used as

a replacement for critical thinking or the development of evidence-based arguments. Any use of AI (if permitted) should be clearly acknowledged, and you should be aware that using AI can quickly constitute plagiarism, cases of which will be dealt with as outlined above and in more detail below. Students are reminded that they are expected to work out their own ideas, develop their own writing style and defend their own arguments.

The first step in addressing unsatisfactory work will usually be for tutors to draw the attention of the Junior Member to any inadequacies of their work and to discuss with them its causes and possible remedies. If the problems persist, the Personal Tutor has it in their power to issue a formal warning, as described above. If this is deemed to have had no or insufficient effect, the Personal Tutor will inform the Junior Member that they are being referred to the TRC. By contrast, in a situation involving a suspected failure of academic honesty, the Personal Tutor may refer the matter to the TRC immediately. In all cases, the composition, powers and procedures of the TRC are as described above.

4.1. Special Collections

Where the TRC, having summoned and interviewed a Junior Member, considers that their academic performance is sufficiently poor it will set Special Collections, and may make provision for subsequent Penal Collections in the event that the performance in the Special Collections is inadequate. The Special Collections, which may be marked internally or externally, are set with the requirement that the Junior Member achieve a mark commensurate with their academic potential as judged by the Committee. If such a mark is not achieved, a Penal Collection or Collections will normally follow. It will be made clear to the Junior Member at this stage that failure in these Penal Collections is likely to result in expulsion from the College.

4.2. Penal Collections

If Penal Collections are set, the normal requirement will be the attainment of an Upper Second-Class mark; such collections will be marked by an assessor external to the College, to whom the Junior Member's identity is not disclosed. If this assessor judges that the collection does not merit the pass mark which has been set, the script will be sent to a second external assessor, to whom neither the Junior Member's identity nor the result of the initial marking will be disclosed.

If the Junior Member *achieves* the marks required, the Committee will inform the Junior Member through the Tutor for Undergraduates. If the Penal Collections were set for reasons of unsatisfactory academic work, the Committee may judge that the Junior Member no longer requires regular review by the Committee (see '**Monitoring by the TRC**', below). If the Penal Collections were set for reasons of academic dishonesty, it will be open to the Committee to require the Junior Member to sit Penal Collections again, without a prior set of Special Collections, should their work cause dissatisfaction on any future occasion.

If the Junior Member *fails* to achieve the required marks in the Penal Collections (after double blind external marking as described above), the Tutor for Undergraduates will inform the Junior Member of this and summon them to a further meeting of the TRC, at which the results of the Penal Collections will be reviewed. The Junior Member will be asked to explain to the Committee (whether orally or in writing) any mitigating circumstances. The TRC will then decide what penalty to impose. The normal penalty for failure in Penal Collections is expulsion. The Tutor for Undergraduates will inform the Junior Member, in writing, of the Committee's decision. Any penalty is subject to appeal, as set out below.

4.3. Unsatisfactory Work: Failure in University (i.e. 'Public') Examinations

The University imposes the rule that 'no candidate shall be admitted to examination for a Final Honour School without having first either passed or been exempted from the First Public Examination'. Grounds for exemption are considered by the Proctors of the University. Pursuant to this rule, on being notified that a Junior Member of the College has failed all or part of the First Public Examination, the Governing Body will inform the Junior Member by letter that they are required to pass the Examination at the second attempt. This second attempt must take place on the next occasion on which it is possible to sit the Examination, unless grounds for waiving this rule, such as illness, are established by the Personal Tutor of the Junior Member concerned. Junior Members who fail to pass the First Public Examination in two attempts are automatically expelled. Any appeal against expulsion, for example on the grounds of persistent disabling illness, will be considered by a special meeting of the TRC summoned before the beginning of the following Term. NB: permission to sit for a third attempt requires dispensation by the University's Education Committee. Junior Members who fail to pass the Second Public Examination, or any part of such an examination required for progression, automatically go out of Residence until the period of the resits and are reported to the Governing Body.

4.4. Failures in Academic Discipline: Academic Dishonesty

For matters of plagiarism (including inappropriate use of AI) and other cases of academic dishonesty, the TRC has at its disposal a number of disciplinary remediations, none of which necessarily requires that it precede or succeed another. These may include, but not be limited to: requiring a Junior Member to resubmit material to be checked for plagiarism, either by computer or by an assessor (who can be internal or external to the College); setting Special Collections (see above); setting Penal Collections (see above), or, in cases of severe breach of academic discipline, expulsion. Penal Collections need not be preceded by Special Collections and expulsion need not be preceded by Penal Collections.

5. Monitoring by the TRC

Once a Junior Member has been referred to the TRC for any cause, their case will normally be monitored at each meeting of the TRC until it judges that the work has improved to the extent that the Junior Member may be removed from the list of those whose work is regularly reviewed or until the Junior Member has left the College. A Junior Member whose work is under regular review may be required to appear before the TRC at any of its meetings. Whenever this happens, the Junior Member will be summoned by letter or email. The TRC will inform the Governing Body, at its next meeting, of the interviews undertaken and of the Committee's decisions and proposals for future action.

A Junior Member whose work is being monitored by the TRC must seek the advice of their Personal Tutor and consult the Committee before taking on a time-consuming extra-curricular commitment.

6. Appeals

In the event that the TRC decides that a Junior Member should be suspended (that is, sent away from the College for a specified period of time) or expelled, they will have the right of appeal against the decision. An Appeals Panel will be constituted for this purpose, consisting of four people appointed by the Governing Body, one of whom will serve as Chair. No

member of TRC will also be a member of the Appeals Panel, but the Tutor for Undergraduates will attend to outline the case.

The Junior Member may exercise this right by writing to the Provost within five working days of the communication of the decision by TRC, stating the basis of the appeal. The Tutor for Undergraduates will present the evidence and arguments of the TRC to the Appeals Panel, whether orally or in writing. The Junior Member will be entitled to present evidence and arguments to the Panel, whether orally or in writing. Both the Junior Member and the Tutor for Undergraduates will be given an opportunity to respond to the materials put forward by the other. The Junior Member may be accompanied and supported by another person, provided that, no less than two business days before the meeting, the Junior Member notifies the Tutor for Undergraduates of the person's full name and status. Legal representation will not normally be permitted. After the case has been heard and all representations made, the Tutor for Undergraduates, the Junior Member and anyone accompanying them will withdraw from the meeting to allow the members of the Appeals Panel to deliberate in private and come to a decision.

The Junior Member will be permitted to remain in residence until this process is completed. The Appeal Panel's decision concerning the appeal — and the reasons for that decision — will be communicated in writing to the Junior Member by the Provost or by the Chair of the Panel. Where an appeal is rejected, the Junior Member will be required to go out of residence immediately.

7. Student Support

Junior Members who are subject to disciplinary proceedings under this policy have a number of sources of support they can access. These include the College's welfare team and the relevant JCR and Oxford SU officers.

The College is a member of the Conference of Colleges Appeal Tribunal and has signed up to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Student Complaints (www.oiahe.org.uk). The above procedure does not affect the Junior Member's right to appeal to these bodies.

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