

CODE OF PRACTICE ON POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES: APPENDIX 1

PROCEDURE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY FOR POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH DEGREES

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) is committed to providing a high quality educational experience for all students, with appropriate academic support, administrative structures and good welfare services and facilities. This procedure is Appendix 1 of an inter-related framework of procedures under the *Code of Practice on Postgraduate Research Degrees*.
- 1.2 This procedure relates to suspected breaches of academic integrity committed by postgraduate research (PGR) students when submitting written work as part of the annual progress monitoring procedures or in the thesis submitted for examination. LSTM expects all students to operate within the ethical code of academic integrity that applies to the wider academic community. PGR students must produce their own work, acknowledge any material that has been included from other sources or as a result of legitimate collaboration, and present their own findings, conclusions or data based on appropriate and ethical practice.
- 1.3 Students are expected to engage fully with the resources and training on academic integrity provided by LSTM and they will be required to confirm in writing that they have read and understood what constitutes a breach of academic integrity and its consequences. The supervisory team is expected to be alert to academic integrity issues in drafts of written work and to counsel students appropriately.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This procedure applies to all current PGR students registered with LSTM, whether based on-site, off-site or split-site, and studying full-time or part-time.
- 2.2 The procedure covers examination of a thesis leading to one of the following awards:
 - Master of Philosophy (MPhil)
 - Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
 - Doctor of Medicine (MD)
- 2.3 The procedure may also be applied to former students of LSTM if a subsequent breach of academic integrity is discovered within a dissertation after the degree has been awarded.

3. Definitions

- 3.1 Definitions of breaches of academic integrity are set out in the *Code of Practice on Academic Integrity*.

4. Suspected Breaches of Academic Integrity during Annual Progress Monitoring

- 4.1 As part of annual progress monitoring, depending on their year of registration, PGR students are required to submit either a project report or a draft chapter of their thesis to a Progress Assessment Panel (PAP).

- 4.2 When it is suspected by the PAP that a breach of academic integrity has taken place in submission of the above work, the Director of Postgraduate Research (DPR) should be informed immediately.
- 4.3 The DPR will consult with the Director of Education, who will determine whether or not the case warrants further investigation. If the Director of Education considers that there is evidence that a breach of academic integrity has taken place, the PAP will be informed and asked to undertake an investigation as part of the annual review meeting.
- 4.4 The student will receive notification of a suspected breach of academic integrity within their written work and that this will be investigated at the PAP meeting. The student will be entitled to be accompanied by another member of LSTM staff (who must not be a member of the supervisory team) or by a friend or supporter.
- 4.5 The PAP will discuss the suspected breach with the student and allow the student to make representations against the allegation. The PAP will determine on the basis of the evidence presented and the representations of the student whether or not a breach of academic integrity has taken place and will report its findings to the DPR.
- 4.6 The DPR will issue a report to the student on what action, if any, will be taken:
 - 4.6.1 In the case of a first offence and subject to the PAP being satisfied that the breach was unintentional (i.e. without intent to deceive), the student will be required to submit a revised piece or work within four weeks of the PAP meeting taking place and a new PAP meeting will be arranged. A first written warning will be issued making clear that any subsequent breach will automatically be classed as intentional.
 - 4.6.2 If the student has previously received a first written warning, the student will be issued with a final written warning making clear that any subsequent breaches will result in a recommendation to terminate the student's registration (Section 5). The student will be required to submit a revised piece or work within four weeks of the PAP meeting taking place and a new PAP meeting will be arranged.
 - 4.6.3 If a student is found to have committed a serious and deliberate attempt to deceive the PAP (e.g. fabrication of data), the PAP may make a recommendation to terminate the student's registration even in the case of a first offence.
- 4.7 The student will not be allowed to proceed to the next year of registration until the PAP is satisfied the written work does not breach the *LSTM Code of Practice on Academic Integrity*.

5. Recommendation to Terminate a Student's Registration

- 5.1 Before submission of the thesis, where a student who has already received a final written warning is found to have committed a further breach of academic integrity or if a student is found to have committed a serious and deliberate attempt to deceive the PAP, the PAP may exceptionally make a recommendation that the student's studies are terminated.
- 5.2 The PAP should provide details of its findings, including any supporting documentation, to the Director of Education. If the Director of Education considers that there are grounds to terminate the student's studies, a meeting of the PGR Academic Integrity Panel will be convened. The Panel will comprise three members of LSTM academic staff at professorial level who have not been involved in supervising or monitoring the

progress of the student concerned and will normally include the Director / Deputy Director of LSTM or a Faculty Dean who will serve as Chair.

- 5.3 The Academic Registrar will convene a meeting of the PGR Academic Integrity Panel according to the following procedures and timelines:
- 5.3.1 The student will be given notice of at least ten working days of the date of the meeting and will be invited to make representation in person. This communication will be sent to the student's LSTM email address and to their home and study addresses recorded in the student information system.
 - 5.3.2 The student has the right to be accompanied by another member of LSTM staff (who must not be a member of the supervisory team) or by a friend or supporter. The student must give the name of any accompanying person to the Academic Registrar at least five working days before the meeting and is responsible for giving the accompanying person details of the meeting and for securing their attendance. Students are not permitted to bring legal representation to the meeting but are entitled to seek legal advice at their own expense and their statements can be compiled on their behalf by persons legally qualified.
 - 5.3.3 The DPR may be invited to attend the PGR Academic Integrity Panel in order to provide information on the background to the student's case, details of the decisions taken and the reasons for the decisions taken but will not play any role in determining the outcome.
 - 5.3.4 If the student does not attend the meeting, the PGR Academic Integrity Panel may proceed in their absence provided the Academic Registrar has made every reasonable effort to inform the student that the meeting is taking place.
- 5.4 All members of the Panel and the student will receive all papers presented at least five working days before the appeal hearing. Tabled papers will not be accepted under normal circumstances.
- 5.5 The PGR Academic Integrity Panel may decide:
- 5.5.1 To overturn the recommendation of the PAP to terminate studies and allow the student one further opportunity to resubmit the work in question. The work will be submitted by a determined deadline and must be free of academic integrity issues.
 - 5.5.2 To uphold the decision of the PAP to terminate the student's studies.
- 5.6 The decision of the PGR Academic Integrity Panel will be formally communicated to the student in writing by the Academic Registrar within ten working days after the meeting. This communication will include information about the student's further right of appeal and will be sent to the student's LSTM email address and to their home and study addresses recorded on the SIS.

6. Suspected Breaches of Academic Integrity in a Thesis Submitted for Examination

- 6.1 Where one of the examiners suspects a candidate of committing a breach of academic integrity in a thesis, they should consult their co-examiner as soon as possible. If the examiners are in agreement that a breach of academic integrity is likely to have taken place, the Director of Postgraduate Research should be informed.
- 6.2 The DPR will consult with the Director of Education, who will determine whether or not the case warrants further investigation. If the Director of Education considers that there

is evidence that a breach of academic integrity has taken place, the student will be informed of the examiners' concerns at least five days before the *viva voce* examination taking place and that this will be discussed at the start of the examination. In the event that the examiners are unable to give five days' notice, the examination will be postponed. The examiners will be made aware of any previous warnings given to the student regarding breaches of academic integrity and this will be taken into account when determining the outcome of the examination.

6.3 Following the *viva voce* examination, the possible outcomes are:

6.3.1 If the examiners are satisfied that no offence has occurred, they will make a recommendation with respect to the award of the degree in line with the *Procedure for Examination of a Research Degree Thesis*.

6.3.2 If the student has not previously received a final warning regarding breaches of academic integrity and the examiners are satisfied that there has been no deliberate attempt to deceive, the thesis will be referred for resubmission.

6.3.3 If the student has previously received a final warning regarding breaches of academic integrity or if the examiners conclude that there has been a serious and deliberate attempt to deceive, the thesis will be failed on the grounds that it does not constitute an original piece of work.

7. Appeal Procedure

7.1 A student who is required to resubmit their thesis or has had their studies terminated on the grounds of a breach of academic integrity may invoke the *Procedure for Appealing against the Outcome of a Research Degree Examination* but only on the grounds that there was a procedural error in conducting the investigation. In constituting the Research Degree Appeals Board to consider the appeal, the Academic Registrar will ensure that there is no overlap in membership with the PGR Academic Integrity Panel constituted in Section 5.2.

8. Revocation of the Degree

8.1 In exceptional cases, after the degree has been awarded and it is found, after investigation, that the thesis contains material constituting a serious breach of academic integrity, LSTM has the right to revoke the degree.