# What to expect from academic misconduct hearings

## School Boards

### *How you will find out you have been called to the Board*

You will receive an email from the convenor usually **within 5 working days** of the proposed meeting date. The email will tell you who is going to be on the panel, the reason why the Board has been called, and when and where the meeting will be held. You can request the meeting to be held on Microsoft Teams if you prefer.

### *Who will be there*

There will be a panel of at least 2 members of academic staff from your School, including the convenor. There will also be another member of staff to take notes on the meeting, but they will not be involved with making decisions about your case, and they will not be invited to speak or ask questions. You may also request that certain staff should not be on the Board, provided you present valid reasons for this. You need to do this **no later than 2 working days** after receiving your email inviting you to the Board meeting.

You can be accompanied by a member of the University if you would like. This is someone who is a current student or member of staff at the University of St Andrews, or a Sabbatical Officer or member of staff from the Students’ Association. You might choose a good friend, a member of staff from Student Services, or a member of staff from the Advocacy & Advice Service. They can help you understand proceedings, and may, with yours and the Board’s consent, speak in your place by reading out your pre-prepared statement. Whoever accompanies you is not there to be a defence lawyer, they are there to be a friendly face in the room. They will not be questioned by the Board, nor will they give evidence or character testimony at the meeting.

### *How you can prepare*

It depends on what evidence you have and what you feel comfortable sharing, but this could include: any materials you used when preparing for the assignment, medical evidence (appointment letters, diagnosis evidence, prescriptions etc), and any evidence of meetings with Student Services in connection with your circumstances. If there will be any time delay in getting this evidence, you should email the convenor to let them know what evidence you intend to submit, and that you are waiting to get hold of it.

Submit this evidence once you have it before the meeting, and label it clearly, e.g. 1) Internet history 2) Doctors letter [date] etc.

You could write a statement which you can submit with your evidence, and/or read from when you are asked to talk through what happened. Some people find this a useful way to collect their thoughts ahead of time when they are calmer, but it’s entirely up to you. You could even just write a few bullet points to help you remember the key things you would like to say during the meeting. If relevant to your situation, you could explain any extenuating circumstances or other personal difficulties that affected you at the time of your assignment/exam.

You don’t need to wear formal clothes for these meetings, just clothes that you feel comfortable and confident in.

### *The meeting itself*

The convenor will welcome everyone to the meeting, ask everyone to introduce themselves, and they will briefly outline why the meeting has been called. They will then invite the Academic Misconduct Officer (AMO) for your School to speak.

The AMO will present the case, and present the evidence they have which they will send to you ahead of time. The evidence you receive will depend on your case, but may include a Turnitin report in cases of plagiarism, or an exam script in cases of aiding and abetting in an exam. They may also have a short report which they prepared when they considered if there was possible academic misconduct in your piece of academic work. The Board will also ask questions of the AMO so that they can understand their perspective better.

The convenor will then invite you to speak. This is where you can present your side of things, present any evidence of your own, and challenge any of the evidence the AMO presents. It's always best to be as honest as you feel comfortable with.

The panel will then ask you questions about what happened. Exact questions will depend on your case. For example, in cases of potential plagiarism, they may ask you about particular sections of your piece of work if there is high similarity with another piece of work, or if it seems like you have not used quotation marks properly. You should try, as far as you can, to answer these questions calmly and respectfully, and the panel should treat you with the same respect.

General questions across different types of cases may include things like:

* How did you prepare for your assignment/exam?
* How confident were you about the assignment/exam?
* Who did you ask for help when you had difficulties/concerns?
* Do you understand why you have been called to this Board?
* Do you understand what [plagiarism/coercion/false citation etc] is?

Both you and the AMO will be able to make a closing statement, where you can summarise your key points and reiterate anything you feel is important for the Board to understand about your situation.

At this stage, you, your representative, and the AMO will leave, and the panel will discuss your case and what outcome they feel is most appropriate. The convenor of the Board will usually email you **within 5 working days** to tell you the outcome of the meeting, and any sanctions the Board have decided to give you.

## University Boards

### *How you will find out you have been called to the Board*

You will receive an email from the convenor usually **within 5 working days** of the proposed meeting date. The email will tell you who is going to attend on the Board, the reason why the Board has been called, and when and where the meeting will be held. You can request the meeting to be held on Microsoft Teams if you prefer.

### *Who will be there*

There will be at least 3 experienced members of academic staff on the Board, including the convenor. The Board should be gender balanced and include staff from 2 or more Faculties. Your School will not be represented on the Board, however, your School’s AMO will attend to present the case for your School (though they will not be involved in decision making). There will also be another member of staff to take notes on the meeting, but they will not be involved with making decisions about your case, and they will not be invited to speak or ask questions. You may also request that certain staff should not be on the Board, provided you present valid reasons for this. You need to do this **no later than 2 working days** after receiving your email inviting you to the Board meeting.

You can be accompanied by a member of the University if you would like. This is someone who is a current student or member of staff at the University of St Andrews, or a Sabbatical Officer or member of staff from the Students’ Association. You might choose a good friend, a member of staff from Student Services, or a member of staff from the Advocacy & Advice Service. They can help you understand proceedings, and may, with yours and the Board’s consent, speak in your place by reading out your pre-prepared statement. Whoever accompanies you is not there to be a defence lawyer, they are there to be a friendly face in the room. They will not be questioned by the Board, nor will they give evidence or character testimony at the meeting.

### *How you can prepare*

It depends on what evidence you have and what you feel comfortable sharing, but this could include: any materials you used when preparing for the assignment, medical evidence (appointment letters, diagnosis evidence, prescriptions etc), and any evidence of meetings with Student Services in connection with your circumstances. If there will be any time delay in getting this evidence, you should email the convenor to let them know what evidence you intend to submit, and that you are waiting to get hold of it.

Submit this evidence once you have it before the meeting, and label it clearly, e.g. 1) Internet history, 2) Doctors letter [date] etc.

You could also want to write a statement which you can submit with your evidence, and/or read from when you are asked to talk through what happened. Some people find this a useful way to collect their thoughts ahead of time when they are calmer, but it’s entirely up to you. You could even just write a few bullet points to help you remember the key things you would like to say during the meeting. If relevant to your situation, you could explain any extenuating circumstances or other personal difficulties that affected you at the time of your assignment/exam.

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Both you and the AMO your School will be able to make a closing statement, where you can summarise your key points and reiterate anything you feel is important for the Board to understand about your situation.

At this stage, you, your representative, and the AMO from your School will leave, and the panel will discuss your case and what outcome they feel is most appropriate. The convenor of the Board will usually email you **within 5 working days** to tell you the outcome of the meeting, and any sanctions the Board have decided to give you.