

# Academic Integrity

STUDENT AND STAFF PERSPECTIVES



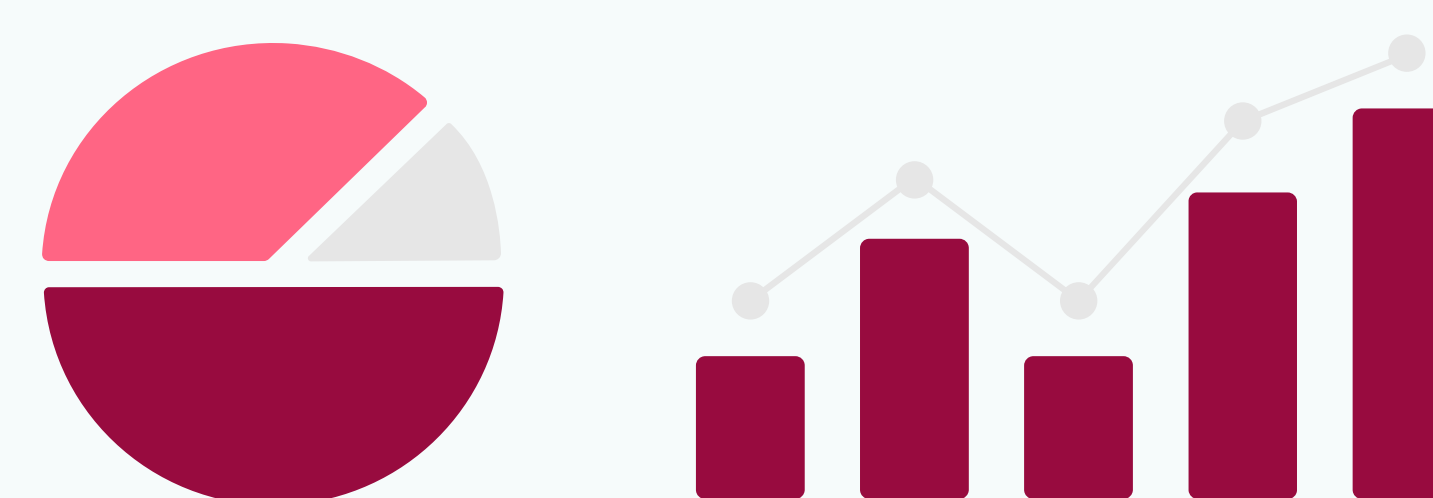
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For more information, visit the  
UCL Digital Assessment Team's Blog

## What we did and why

- Academic integrity is a major theme in discussions with staff. We want to find out more about staff and student perspectives on this.
- We ran three focus groups with 21 students co-designed and co-led by students and three focus groups with 21 staff in January to March 2023. Four main themes emerged.



## Causes of Academic Misconduct

Students and staff raised similar issues including lack of understanding, differences in academic writing skills or academic background, lack of confidence, stress/pressure and competition for grades.

But differed in that staff frequently emphasised language as a cause (for those with English as second language) and, whilst sympathetic, often voiced a general frustration. Students spoke about confusion over terminology and emotional factors.

## Purpose of Assessment

### In response to direct question

Staff and students said the purpose of assessment is to measure progress, test knowledge, establish the level of student performance and for accreditation.



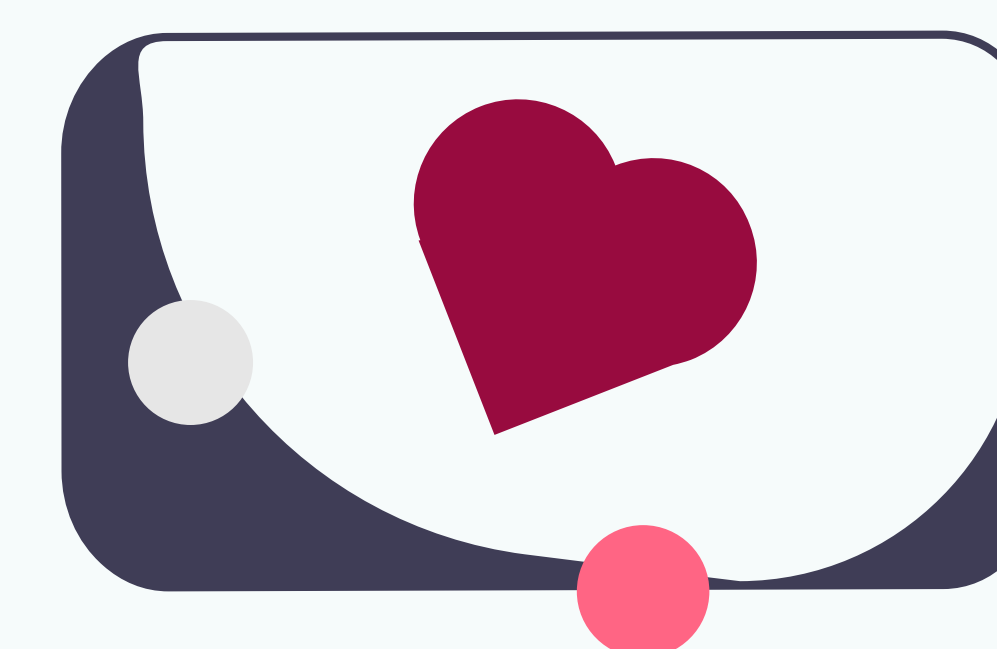
### In conversation

Staff had more nuanced views on assessment e.g. around fostering a 'growth' mindset, assessment literacy, and developing skills relevant to post university.

## Support for Students

### On formative feedback

Staff recognised the importance of formative but said it was often an afterthought and, even if provided, students did not engage. Students cited inconsistency of feedback and non-alignment of formative with final assessment as well as lack of clarity of assessment criteria.



### On understanding academic integrity

Staff and students agreed that a lot of information was available at UCL in this area. Staff felt students needed to take more responsibility for using it but acknowledged that signposting and timing of support could improve. PG students were more self-reliant but UG students wanted more guidance (contextual understanding, direction, clarity on policy). They also cited lack of confidence in asking for help.

## Assessment Design

There was strong support from both groups for rethinking assessment design to address academic misconduct.

Staff and students agreed that assessments should test higher level learning beyond ability to reproduce knowledge and information.

Students tended to see invigilated or proctored exams as a likely assessment design strategy to prevent misconduct although they were also critical of exams as an assessment method.

Staff instead were looking to group work, viva assessments, and diversification more widely, but stressed that regulatory barriers could really hamper efforts to change assessment.

## Conclusion

Key factors in fostering a positive assessment environment that promotes academic integrity are:

- Dialogue between staff and students (more so in light of AI)
- Contextualising, streamlining and clarification of terminology as well as timely provision of support.
- Assessment needs to be thought of holistically (to include assessment for and as learning).

### Staff contacts

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### Poster Design

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