

University Level (Higher Education)

Cross-College Student Handbook

2019/20



1. Welcome and Introduction from your Student Engagement Officer

Welcome to Exeter College and the start of your University level studies. We hope that you will thoroughly enjoy your experience here with us and we aim to support and guide you through the challenges that are inherent with the undertaking of University level study. Whilst studying at Exeter College you will benefit from the excellent teaching and learning provided opportunities by the staff in college as well as some of the fantastic resources we have available.

My role is to support you as you study here. Whether you have any fantastic ideas that you think could benefit the University Level Student community, or whether you just need some help in accessing resources or support systems to enable you to complete your studies, I will be on hand to help you out.



Your student experience is incredibly important to us; the University Level students at Exeter College are a distinctive group and we want you to feel like you are being effectively supported and that your issues, concerns and voice are valued by the Higher Education Team. Please use this handbook as a guideline for how to approach your student journey, as well as a place to access any support requirements you might have over the course of your time with us.

However, if there is anything that you are unsure about or don't find in this handbook, please feel free to contact me and I will do my best to ensure that you are supported in finding what you need.

We look forward to your time with us and we hope you do as well!

Harry Blandford

Student Engagement Officer

HarryBlandford@exe-coll.ac.uk

1.1 Partner Universities

Your programmes of study are validated by our partner universities, which differ depending on which course you have opted to take. In most cases this means that you are dual registered with those universities and may have access to some of the resources that they offer. Please ask your programme managers what you may be entitled to in terms of extra resources for your course.

1. The Higher Education Team

The Higher Education Team have years of experience between them in working in HE environments and have developed an exceptionally broad base of knowledge that is at your disposal as you navigate through your course. Feel free to drop by if you need anything, or even just to say hello! We are located on the ground floor of the Tower Building on the Hele road site just past the café

Catherine Taylor- Head of Higher Education

- Provides leadership of the Higher Education Team
- Leads on the investigation of complaints and appeals
- Responsible for implementing HE strategy as part of the wider Exeter College plan

Sally Westcott- HE Department Coordinator

- Oversees the coordination and efficient functioning of the HE and Access to HE quality cycles.
- Provide administrative support to the HoHE and other members of the HE department.
- Support for faculties tasked with delivering HE programmes

Amy Cockram- HE Department Administrator

- Assists HEDC in ensuring the effective functioning of the HE department
- Provides admin support to the HE Department

Debs Francis and Hiba Choueiri - Next Steps Southwest Outreach Officer

- Organises and delivers a flexible outreach programme of advice, training and guidance to young people in schools partnered with Next Steps Southwest.
- College lead for all NSSW ambassador employment
- Coordinates with other IOs across Devon, Cornwall and Somerset to raise aspirations and form collaborative partnerships

2. Communication

The HE Team will often have need to communicate with you regarding events, opportunities and news from the wider HE community. We approach communication through a variety of mediums including:

- College email
- College [Centre for University Level Studies Moodle Hub](#)
- HE Study Room notice boards
- University Level e-news letter
- The University Level Studies Student Rep on your programme

In the vast majority of cases our contact with you will be via your College email account. You **MUST** be on top of checking your emails or you are likely to miss important information being conveyed to you. In many cases this will lead to you missing out on vital news, events, dates and opportunities. A great deal of these emails will come from the email address HarryBlandford@exe-coll.ac.uk so keep an eye out!

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Centre for University Level Studies. It features a large orange header with the text 'CENTRE FOR UNIVERSITY LEVEL STUDIES'. Below the header, there are several sections with 'Find Out More' buttons:

- Who are we?**: Find out more about the team that supports you whilst you are studying here.
- Student Ambassadors**: Who are the Student Ambassadors and what do they do?
- New Spaces**: We are consistently trying to improve the spaces you have to study and socialise. The next area that we are focusing on is the University Level Study Area in the CO Building. So watch this space for updates on this imminent change!
- Student Support Services**: Click [here](#) to find out more about local support services that may benefit you. Feeling stressed whilst you study? Follow the link below to a helpful article.

Our periodical HE newsletter comes packed with opportunities, community news and updates from the Centre for University Level Studies!

3. The Handbook

The purpose of this handbook is to provide you with an overview of essential information you may need to access as an Exeter College Student. The information in this guide should be read in conjunction with your course specific teaching and learning guide (accessible via Moodle). While your course guide may contain reference to some of the processes and services that are offered by the college, this resource should be consulted for more in-depth explanation and contacts.

4. Expectations

As adult students undertaking a University Level qualification, we understand that you have certain expectations of what the College will be providing to you and we will deliver on those expectations to the best of our abilities. However, we also have expectations of our students that we have set out to ensure that there is transparency in what we consider to be fair and necessary in order for you to succeed here. As well as the Student contract, we also have a [code of conduct](#) that outlines some of our responsibilities to each other as members of the university level community.

The following is drawn from the [University Level Student Contract](#) (accessible in full on Moodle):

The College will provide you with education services (including teaching, learning and, where applicable, research opportunities, programme materials, resources, facilities, support, administration, enrolment, assessment, placement and other services) and related activities, which the College considers appropriate for your programme. Details such as timetables and venues will be provided to you on or after your enrolment as a student.

In return:

You will need to participate fully in your programme. This will include attending and taking part in teaching, learning and/or research events included in your programme, meeting regularly with your programme and/or supervisory team as appropriate, making proper use of all resources available, and preparing and submitting assessed work on time.

Some programmes, modules or units may require a specific level of attendance. You must comply with such requirements in order to progress with the programme or to obtain the appropriate award or qualification. Alternatively, you may be subject to attendance requirements specified by an employer, a professional or regulatory body or other party.

Provided that you successfully fulfil the requirements of your programme, pay your fees and meet your obligations as a student as set out in this contract you will be granted your appropriate award or qualification. You shall furthermore be entitled to attend the College's annual Graduation Ceremony.

If your record of academic engagement is considered unsatisfactory, you may be invited to a meeting to discuss how this issue can be addressed. If you do not attend the meeting (or any subsequent meetings arranged to deal with this) without good reason the College may withdraw you from the programme.

5. Finance and Funding

5.1 Student Finance

The vast majority of student finance is delivered by Student Finance England. We hope that by now you're all in receipt of your loans, but if you would like some more information about how loans are repaid or how decisions are made on your level of funding please see the [UCAS Student Finance England FAQ page](#). Unfortunately we do not offer any other bursaries to support your studies, there is an expectation that students arrive in a financial condition that would allow them to obtain the right equipment and be able to travel to and from their site without additional funding.

If you have any questions about finance before you arrive and enrol at Exeter College please contact our HE advisor (Adultadvice@exe-coll.ac.uk). After you have enrolled please contact HarryBlandford@exe-coll.ac.uk for advice.



5.2 Hardship Fund

We appreciate that sometimes there can be serious financial impacts on you as a student, which may cause a shortfall in the funds available to you. If you feel that you need access to an emergency funding source you can apply to the Higher Education Office to be assessed for a Hardship Fund loan. The assessment requires that you supply us with a few items of documentation and details of your expenditure. Please note that this fund is only available during the academic year and cannot tide you over for summer. If you think you need to access this loan, or for more information, please contact HEOffice@exe-coll.ac.uk

6. Wellbeing and support

6.1 DSA and learning support

As of this year we have a dedicated Disable Student Allowance Supervisor to assist students with additional needs and support them through the process of accessing additional advice and guidance with regards to assessment and funding claims. Carmen Dix will act as the point of contact for students who have a DSA award and are receiving support from a provider other than Exeter College and as the coordinator for the day to day support package of HE DSA students to help everything run as smoothly as possible.

She is always happy to have an informal chat or receive any feedback you might have, so please don't hesitate to contact her if you feel that you might need her advice.

Contact

Carmen Dix:

Email: dsa@exe-coll.ac.uk

Call or text: 07897113062

6.2 HE Counselling service

At Greystone House we operate an educational counselling model, which is designed to support you to be in college and succeed and achieve in your studies. This doesn't replace any support from other specialist services or advice from your GP, but it does give you the chance to meet 1:1 with our specialist Access to HE and HE counsellor and share any issues that might be troubling you. To book an appointment, please contact Greystone House on 01392 400449 or drop in to their reception desk.

Counselling for Access to HE and University Level Studies Students

6.3 Extenuating Circumstances

We appreciate that sometimes not everything goes to plan, and you find yourself unable to meet an assignment deadline. In such a situation we may be able to accommodate you under the extenuating circumstances procedures. Usually extenuating circumstances can be considered for medical issues, unexpected emergencies, bereavement or other serious circumstances which impact your ability to work and study. The most important thing is that you tell us as soon as you possibly can and are able to provide some evidence so that your application for extenuating circumstances can be considered. There is a strict 10 working day deadline after the assignment deadline to apply, so you must keep to this.

There are some situations which we do not consider to be valid grounds for extenuating circumstances. For example: equipment failure, you had an appointment at the time of hand in, unspecified or very minor illness (cough, cold etc.)

We cannot consider retrospective applications for extenuating circumstances

We often find that applications for extenuating circumstances come to us well after the assignment deadline has passed. Unfortunately even if the reason is valid, late applications will not be accepted.

If you feel that you need to apply for consideration under the extenuating circumstances procedures then the best way to make sure that the process is being handled and your application is being considered, is to contact the HE Office so we can pass you the forms and advise you on next steps.

For assistance contact:

- HEOffice@exe-coll.ac.uk
- HarryBlandford@exe-coll.ac.uk

6.4 Long term ill health

In some cases, students will have an ongoing health condition that is likely to impact their ability to study more than once over the course of their programme. To prevent the added stress of having to continuously reapply for extenuating circumstances, we may ask you to fill in the '**long term ill health form**'. This form should be used in order to inform your Faculty of Long Term Health Condition affecting your studies and assessments. Long Term Health Condition encompasses medical conditions which:

- Are persistent, often lasting for more than three months, and often life-long
- Cannot be solved in a short time, or which will recur regardless of action, or which need to be managed on a long-term basis
- Are a long-term or permanent illness that often results in some type of disability and which may require you to seek help with various activities
- Can be managed but can 'flare-up'

If this is the case, then we would urge you to contact us as soon as possible to get the form and supply us with evidence so that the paperwork is already in place in the unfortunate event that a flare up does occur.

6.5 Fitness to study

In some exceptional cases there may be cause to question a student's fitness to study. As University Level students, some of our partner universities will have their own fitness to study policies which may be referred to but they will be largely similar to our own.

Fitness to study is a process put in place when concerns emerge that a student's health, wellbeing or behaviour and the impact that it is having on their ability to enjoy, achieve and succeed on their course at the College. Tutors will lead on this process and it may involve a series of meetings and monitoring of conditions to support you through any period of difficulty which may be affecting you.

The final stage of this process in some circumstances is to require you to interrupt your studies to allow you to focus on your own wellbeing and get the support you need without the additional stress and distraction of pursuing your University Level course. You will then be given a review date to see if your condition has improved and whether you are well enough to return to the College.

7. Facilities and resources

Exeter College has seven award winning learning centres to support you with your studies. Wifi is accessible college wide and each learning centre is equipped with PCs, laptops which you can borrow, study desks, books, journals and DVDs, access to e-books, e-resources and the library catalogue and equipment to support accessibility.

Several of the sites you may be studying at have a quiet study area specifically for all university level students, fully equipped with study desks and open use PCs. The study rooms have comfortable chairs and tables providing space for both individual and group study.

In the Centre for Creative Industries your specialist curriculum is supported by a fully digital TV studio, three Apple Mac suites, a broad range of media equipment (including HDV cameras, digital stills and audio equipment), specialist staff and a shop with basic stationery and art supplies.

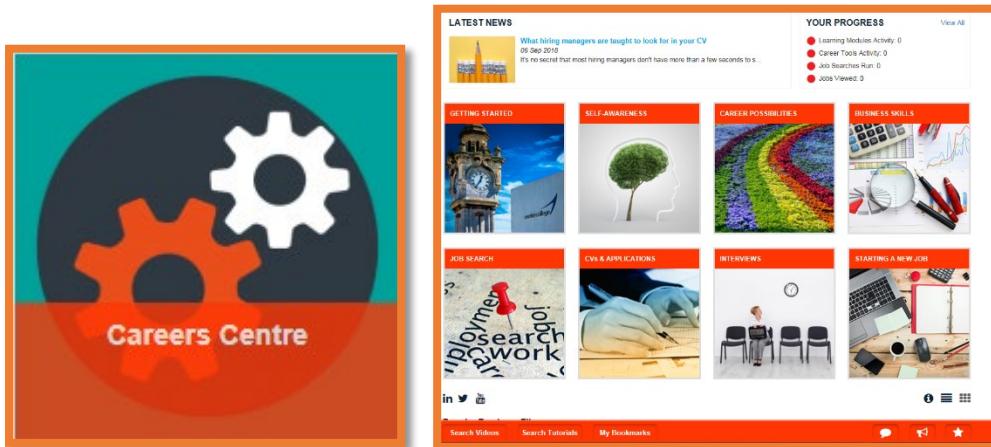
7.1 Borrowing items

As a University Level student you can borrow up to 10 items at a time from the LRCs. You must show your ID card to do so. You are also eligible to borrow books from other libraries if you wish through our inter-library loans service. Please contact an IDP for details.

In addition, several of the LRCs have laptops that are available for HE students to book out to work on. Visit your LRC and check in with them for details of extra resources!

8. Careers centre

Our new online careers platform is a resource designed to allow you to access information, advice and guidance about how to take the next steps in making yourself more confident, more prepared and ultimately more employable. The system includes articles, online tutorials and workshops that will help you set yourself up for the best possible begin your search for graduate level employment! The Careers Centre can be accessed through the [University Level hub on Moodle](#).



The best way to get to grips with it is to just get stuck in and start reading! Whatever your future career options may be, there are resources for you to access.

9. Student Reps

As a student representative you have the opportunity to affect real change at Exeter College. We rely on the voice of students to tell us where we can be better and what we are doing well so that we can continually improve your student experience. Representatives for each course are elected at the beginning of each academic year, so if this sounds like the kind of responsibility you would like to take up you should speak to your tutor or contact HarryBlandford@exe-coll.ac.uk for more details.

All Student reps will receive two comprehensive training sessions that cover their responsibilities as well as how to be an effective partner in consultation, cascading information to their groups and ensuring that the views of their peers are heard at our Student Voice forums, as well throughout the year.



10. Student voice

The Student Voice is one of the greatest tools we have at our disposal in order to facilitate real, positive change in partnership with our University Level student community. We are committed to the ongoing improvement of our services, but we won't know what you want unless you tell us!

There are many opportunities for the student voice to be heard within an academic year. Student Reps will be invited to share your views at regular faculty and the termly HE Student Voice meetings. Your feedback will be gathered and fed back through the community voice updates to the College's Governors.

We want you to feel like your feedback is being taken seriously and that it is being acted upon. At the second Student Voice meeting we will present a 'You said, we did' action plan that explains what is being done to act upon your wishes. Unfortunately for operational reasons, not everything is feasible, but we will always be transparent about why.



Some of the examples of ongoing changes made as a result of previous student's feedback include: the appointment to the Board of Governors of an HE Student Governor to represent the interests and experience of University Level Students; the appointment of a DSA Supervisor to provide specific assistance to Students with additional needs; refurbishment of HE study areas and the establishment of HE specific slots with the counselling services located at Greystone House.

Some dates for the diary:

- Autumn term Student Voice Forum- October 31st 2019
- Spring term Student Voice Forum- 25th February 2020

Both SVFs will take place in the Boardroom of the Tower Building on the Hele Road site. More information will be passed on closer to the time

11. Student Ambassadors

Becoming a student ambassador allows you to earn while you learn in a job that's flexible enough to fit around your studies while also allowing you to influence young people who are interested in HE with your positive and authentic view of Exeter College student life. The work ambassadors undertake involves promoting Exeter College by providing information, advice and guidance through a variety of public facing events.

The ambassador scheme is ideal for you if:

- You feel positive about HE and want to share your enthusiasm with prospective students.
- Like to work with young people and want to help them in making the important decision to enter a HE course.
- Want flexible work that will fit around your study.
- Want to enhance your employability by developing a skillset that will show you have the ability to adapt to different job roles and grow your confidence in dealing with members of the public.

You will also be eligible to work for our partners Next Steps South West who promote routes into Higher Education in schools that have high proportions of learners from backgrounds that don't traditionally access University Level Study.

We will be recruiting for Student Ambassador roles soon, so please keep an eye out for emails and the newsletter with details on how to apply! In the meantime there is some information, including a full job description, posted on [Moodle](#).

12. Complaints and appeals

12.1 Complaints procedure

We fully appreciate that sometimes we don't get it completely right, so we would like to clearly lay out what your avenues of redress would be in those cases. Whatever your complaint is, it will be handled objectively, professionally and confidentially by the Higher Education Team. Throughout the procedure the SEO will be your primary contact for updates and to support you with anything you might need while investigation or consideration is taking place. For full details of the process of lodging a complaint, please contact HEOffice@exe-coll.ac.uk.

Stage 1- informal resolution

Where possible, we do try to seek an informal resolution to conflicts and complaints from students. This will be a meeting with the SEO (contactable at HarryBlandford@exe-coll.ac.uk) to determine the nature of your complaint and whether it is something that can be solved without having to escalate a complaint to formal investigation.

Stage 2- Formal Complaint

If during the informal meeting you decide that your complaint is something you would like on formal record and investigated by the department we will ask you to complete a complaints form detailing your grievance. This form will be escalated to the Head of HE, who will be responsible for investigating your complaint and writing you a formal response letter. If you would like a formal meeting to take place to further develop your case you are more than welcome to bring someone for support, but please note, they can take no part in proceedings and must be there in a supportive capacity only.

Stage 3- Partner review

If after the formal response you still aren't satisfied with the outcome of your complaint it will be escalated to a panel from the partner institution that validates your course for an independent review of the evidence and the investigation. Their response will be communicated back to you with their understanding of the situation as well as their decision on the outcome.

Stage 4- Office of the Independent Adjudicator

You will be able to submit your complaint to the [Office of the Independent Adjudicator](#) to be considered and ruled on. The OIA is an independent organisation which will be able to act as a neutral party in deciding on the outcome of your complaint. They will have the final say on what manner of redress, if any, will be taken.

12.2 Appeals procedure

If you do not agree with an assessment decision that has been made we also have an appeals process in place for you to access. In the first instance we always ask that you please attempt to resolve this informally with the assessor and ask for an explanation of feedback and how they have arrived at the decision to award you a particular grade. Your grade may then be independently verified. If you are still not in agreement the matter will be referred to the Head of HE or Head of Faculty to consider.

Please note that the procedure is in place to examine the processes and methods of how the grade was awarded, not to challenge the academic judgement of assessors. In most cases the piece of work will be independently verified or second marked before being passed onto a verifier from the awarding body or institution that validates your course.

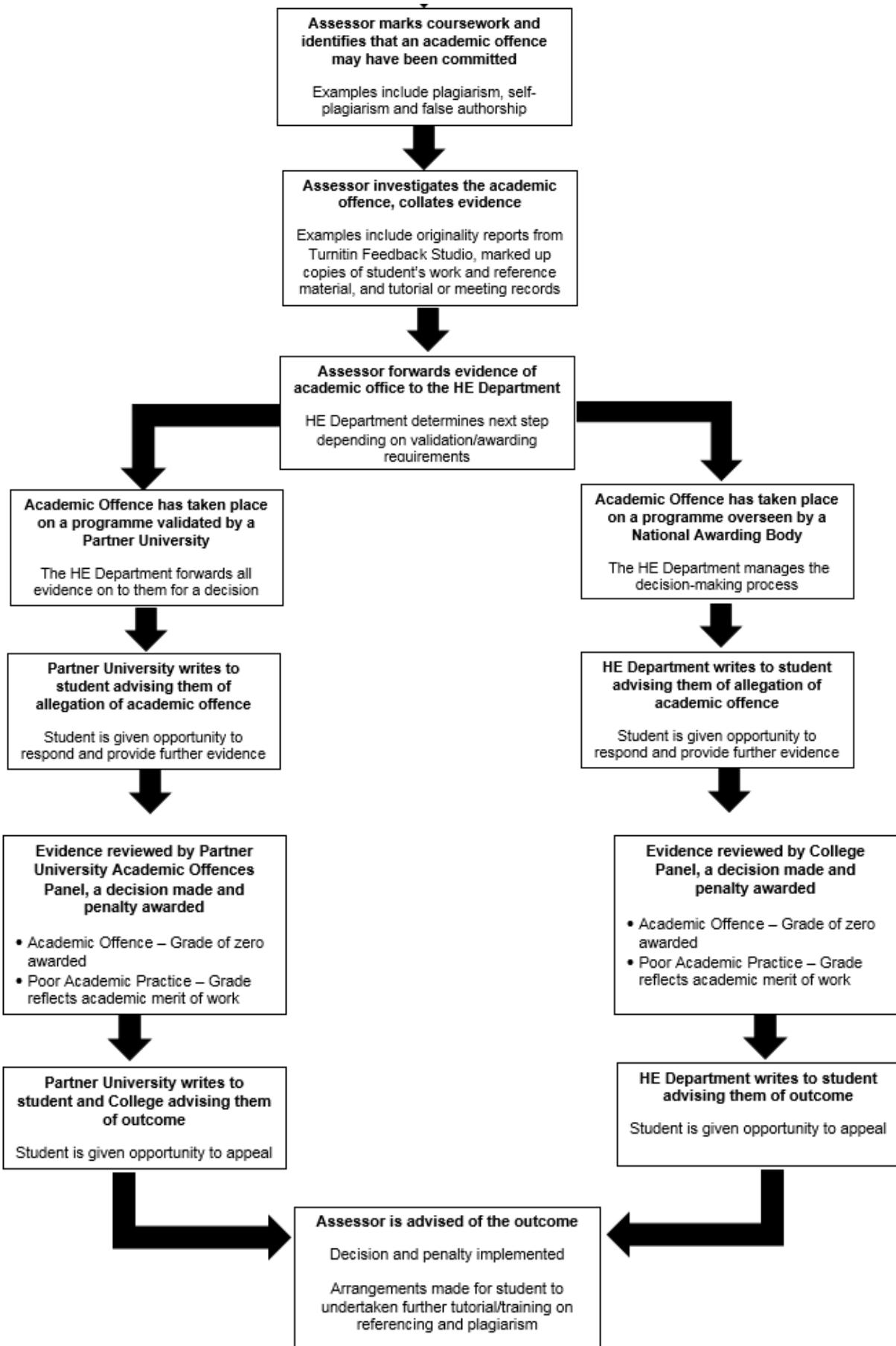
You will also be able to access the appeals process after the decision of the award board which come at the end of each academic year. The appeals process in this instance will always be communicated to you by letter along with your transcript after the conclusion of academic boards.

13. Academic offenses

The College uses Turnitin Feedback Studio to assist in identifying where students are using work that is not their own and to provide feedback to help them improve their academic writing. If an assessor suspects that plagiarism has been committed they will notify the student and submit the work and evidence to the HE Department. The case will be reviewed by a screening committee from the College or from the partner university, depending on who validates, franchises or awards the programme. This panel will determine whether an academic offence has been committed or if it is a case of poor academic practice in relation to citation and referencing.

Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and can result in you receiving a zero grade for an assessment and consequently failing a module or unit. It is essential that you correctly reference your work. Help and advice on how to avoid plagiarism and use the appropriate referencing system can be found on the [LRC portal page](#).

Please see the flowchart on the next page for a visual representation of the process of determining academic offences.



A final note...

All of us in the HE team hope that you enjoy yourself, achieve and succeed over the course of your programme but want to remind you again that University Level study comes with great challenges. As a team, we are here to support you and want to assure you that we will be here to help if you reach out to us.

Whether you have some fantastic ideas that you want to take forward, or you are struggling and need a helping hand, you can always check in with us. We can't do anything (good or bad) if communication isn't a two way street.

We look forward to working with you!

Contact:

- HE Office: HEOffice@exe-coll.ac.uk or 01392 400249
- Harry Blandford (SEO): HarryBlandford@exe-coll.ac.uk or 01392 400511

