

The University's Academic Regulations: 2025-26

Graduate Academic Integrity Regulations 2025-26

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GI1 General Overview

- GI1.1** These regulations may be invoked against anyone who has left the University with gained credits or has been conferred with an award (i.e. 'graduated') from Edinburgh Napier University where concerns over their academic integrity have now arisen regarding their academic conduct during the programme of study. There is no time limit set as to when these regulations may be invoked.
- GI1.2** Any allegation received regarding breaches of academic integrity will be treated confidentially and will be investigated informally in the first instance to establish whether or not there is a case to answer, before any formal investigation is started.
- GI1.3** The matter will be considered in terms of the relevant definitions of breaches of Academic Integrity Regulations applicable for current students, as set out in sections AI4 and AI5 and Appendix I of those regulations and will be applied to a graduate for the purposes of this process. For the avoidance of doubt, and purposes of this process, these are as follows:
- GI1.4** References to days throughout these regulations shall mean working days (Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday) except where expressly stated otherwise.
- GI1.5** Any issues relating to pastoral care and welfare that arise while addressing an academic integrity breach will be handled with sensitivity and due regard to confidentiality. Staff engaged with disciplinary matters should be aware of the University's Data Protection Code of Practice with particular attention paid to Section 8 (Data Sharing) and Section 19 (References).

GI2 Academic Integrity Regulations

GI2.1 Definition of a breach

A breach of the Academic Integrity Regulations (see section AI4.2) will be considered if it is identified or alleged that the following has occurred whilst a student of the University: -

- An act which, intended or otherwise, offers the potential for any student to gain an unfair advantage in an assessment, including examinations.
- The inclusion of content by a student in their assessment submission which is inappropriately referenced, not referenced at all or not thought to be their own work.
- In the case of Doctoral College students, an act which, intended or otherwise, is not in adherence with the University Code of Research Practice.
- In the case of Doctoral College students, this may pertain to any work produced during the course of the degree, including externally published work, work presented at conference or work submitted for internal review, as well as the behaviour of the student in relation to that work.

GI2.2 Categories of Breaches of Academic Integrity Regulations

Breaches of Academic Integrity Regulations will be taken to include acts of plagiarism (including self-plagiarism), cheating, collusion, falsification or fabrication of data, personation or bribery, use of essay mills and/or ghost

writers, inappropriate use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) content generation or writing assistance tools, all as defined in Appendix I of the Academic Integrity Regulations.

- GI2.3** This process will also be used to consider retrospective allegations regarding the submission of forged or fake documentation and/or information provided by any student as part of their application for a place on a programme they have since gained an award for and may result in the revocation of all or part of the award conferred.
- GI2.4** These regulations may also be used to consider allegations where graduates are suspected to have provided forged or fake documents, such as references or award certificates, to the University or an external organisation after graduation.

GI3 Responsible Officers

- GI3.1** A School Senior Academic Integrity Officer (SAIO) from the relevant School will have responsibility for investigating the allegations of a breach of Academic Integrity Regulations.
- GI3.2** If the SAIO has had direct involvement in the allegation, either as module leader, marker or programme leader, another appropriate independent academic integrity officer will complete the investigation.
- GI3.3** The SAIO or nominee will investigate the allegation relating to a graduate who has completed modules provided by the School or on a programme registered to the School,

GI4 Investigation by Senior Academic Integrity Officer (SAIO) – Process

- GI4.1** The SAIO (or nominee) should review the information which has been provided alleging the academic misconduct, identify the modules against which misconduct is alleged and obtain from the School in which the module is registered the following information where available:
- i) Assessment brief or any other relevant information e.g. marking rubric
 - ii) Copies of the submitted piece(s) of work (assuming extant); and in line with the University retention policy.
 - iii) Any appropriate evidence for example, however not limited to, evidence from Academic Writer/Essay Mill
- GI4.2** The SAIO (or nominee) will review all the information available within 15 working days and conclude whether or not there is a valid case to answer.
- GI4.3** If it is judged that there is no valid case to answer, the matter will be closed and any material pertaining to the allegations will be destroyed.
- GI4.4** If the SAIO (or nominee) decides that there is a valid case to answer, the SAIO (or nominee) will notify the officer responsible for the management of academic integrity. The case will be discussed with the Vice Principal (Learning & Teaching) and on agreement to proceed with the case, the responsible officer will inform the SAIO (or nominee) who will then write to inform the graduate of the allegation and notify that an investigation is being carried out. This will include details of a meeting which the graduate shall be entitled to attend to respond to the allegation. All reasonable attempts to interview or obtain evidence and statements from other relevant parties should be made ahead of this meeting.
- GI4.5** All communications will be sent by email and recorded delivery to the last known postal or email addresses held by the University for the graduate. If it is believed that the graduate is no longer present at these addresses,

reasonable efforts will be made to obtain a current email address by which they can be contacted. If, having made reasonable efforts to contact the graduate, it has not proved possible to obtain an address for them, the process under these regulations may continue.

GI4.6 The graduate will be given at least 10 working days' notice of the meeting to investigate the allegation. The graduate will only be offered another date if they contact the SAIO (or nominee) in advance to request an alternative arrangement. If necessary, the meeting will take place in the absence of the graduate. If the graduate cannot reasonably attend, written evidence will be accepted.

GI4.7 The graduate may decline to engage in the University's processes, as is their right to do so. However, the investigation and process will continue in their absence and they should be aware a decision may be made that affects their award from the University.

GI4.8 Based on the outcome of the investigation, the SAIO (or nominee) may rule that the matter:

- i) does not constitute a breach of Academic Integrity Regulations
- ii) constitutes a breach of Academic Integrity Regulations and will then refer the case for action by the University Academic Integrity Panel.

GI4.9 The SAIO (or nominee) will notify the graduate of the outcome of the investigation, if contact details of the graduate are known.

GI5 Referral to University Academic Integrity Panel

GI5.1 An SAIO (or nominee) having considered the details of the initial investigation and determined that the matter constitutes a breach of Academic Integrity Regulations shall refer the case for action to the

University Academic Integrity Panel.

GI5.2 The senior officer responsible for the administration of academic integrity cases or their nominee will organise the University Academic Integrity Panel.

GI5.3 The University Academic Integrity Panel will hear the allegation as soon as reasonably practicable.

GI6 Constitution of University Academic Integrity Panel

GI6.1 The University Academic Integrity Panel will comprise the Vice Principal (Learning & Teaching) or their nominee as Convenor; one Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) and one student member (or elected student sabbatical officer) nominated by the ENSA President. The Convenor may co-opt one subject specialist member of academic staff nominated by the relevant Dean of School if appropriate. None of the Panel should come from the same School as the graduate against whom the allegations have been made and had no direct or previous involvement with the graduate concerned

GI6.2 A panel involving a Doctoral College graduate should always be attended by someone from the Academic Committee of the Doctoral College to advise the panel as necessary on research degree policy and regulations.

GI6.3 The senior officer responsible for administering academic integrity or their nominee shall act as clerk and keep a record of proceedings.

GI7 University Academic Integrity Panel Hearing

- GI7.1** The graduate will be notified of the University Academic Integrity Panel Hearing no less than ten working days in advance of the Hearing and shall be entitled to attend the Hearing, accompanied by a person who can provide support and guidance to the graduate, but who must not have been involved in the matter under investigation. The University must be notified in advance of the identity of any such accompanying person.
- GI7.2** Prior to the Hearing, the graduate will be provided with the basis for the allegation and, where appropriate, copies of any documentary evidence.
- GI7.3** The graduate may call witnesses on their behalf and submit relevant evidence provided the intention to do so is notified to the officer responsible for the administration of academic integrity cases or their nominee at least 48 hours in advance of the Hearing.
- GI7.4** The Panel will receive and consider a report of the current investigation (including any evidence) and, for context, any information about previous academic integrity cases that involved the graduate during their study at the University. The graduate will be invited to comment on the presented report and evidence. If the graduate refutes the allegations, they will be invited to present evidence in support of this.
- GI7.5** The graduate shall have the opportunity to put any relevant extenuating circumstances to the Panel, although the primary focus of the Hearing shall be on establishing whether or not there were academic integrity issues during the graduate's studies.
- GI7.6** Failure by the graduate to attend at the time specified, except for a written reason acceptable to the Convenor of the Panel, will not preclude the Panel from considering the allegation and reaching a decision.

GI8 University Academic Integrity Panel Hearing Outcome

GI8.1 At the conclusion of the Hearing the University Academic Integrity Panel will reach one of two outcomes as detailed below:

- i) The allegation is not upheld and no further action will be taken.
- ii) The allegation is upheld and a penalty will be imposed as outlined in Section GI8.2

GI8.2 Formal Penalties:

- i) Partial revocation of an award in relation to the part of the award obtained through proven unfair means. If no award given, removal of credits obtained through proven unfair means
- ii) Recommendation that the award be revoked by Academic Board.

GI8.3 The Vice Principal of Learning & Teaching will be notified of the decision and the relevant details regarding the case and will provide approval on behalf of the Convenor of Academic Board. The outcome of the Hearing will be sent by the Clerk to the graduate no later than 5 working days following approval by the Convenor of Academic Board providing details of the right to a Formal Review.

GI8.4 Where a decision is taken to revoke an award, this shall not be actioned by the University until the right to Formal Review has been exercised or timed out in line with the timescales outlined in this policy.

GI9 Right of Formal Review to the Principal

GI9.1 The graduate may request a Formal Review against the final decision, in writing or email within 10 working days of receipt of the final decision, to the Officer responsible for administering academic integrity who will arrange a Formal Review to be carried out by the Principal.

GI9.2 The appeal process is not a re-hearing of the original case, therefore the appeal may only be made on the following grounds:

- i) There was a procedural irregularity in the conduct of the investigation and/or any hearings which materially influenced the outcome; or
- ii) New evidence is now available which might have caused the Academic Integrity Panel to reach a different conclusion, but could not have been made available at the time of the Hearing.

GI9.3 The Principal upon receiving the Formal Review will consider if it meets the valid grounds as set out in GI9.2. This may include reviewing documents, hearing from the Academic Integrity Panel convenor; with each case considered on its own circumstances whilst being mindful it is not a re-hearing.

GI9.4 Thereafter the Principal will consider the evidence submitted and provide a written (via email) response outlining the outcome of the Formal Review. The possible outcomes are:

- i) Formal Review upheld – may review or set aside the penalty imposed
- ii) Formal Review not upheld

GI9.5 The outcome of the Formal Review will be sent to the graduate no later than 20 working days after receipt of the Formal Review.

GI9.6 The decision of the Principal will be final.

GI9.7 Where a decision to revoke an award has been upheld at Formal Review by the Principal, this action will be undertaken at this point in the policy with appropriate changes being made to the University's official records. Action may also require notification to external parties, such as the Home Office, for international students due to the implications for graduate visas.

GI10 Independent External Review

The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) is the final stage for complaints about public services in Scotland. This includes any dissatisfaction following the completion of a university's internal procedures. If you remain dissatisfied with a university or co-operative after fully engaging with an internal procedure, you can ask the SPSO to look into the matter.

The SPSO cannot normally look at matters:

- that have not fully exhausted the university's specific procedure to deal with the matter, or
- that have been or are being considered in a court of law.

The SPSOs contact details are:

Office Address: SPSO
Bridgeside House,
99 McDonald Road Edinburgh,
EH7 4NS
(please make an appointment in advance)

Freepost: Freepost SPSO

Freephone: 0800 377 7330

Online contact: www.spsso.org.uk/contact-us

Website: www.spsso.org.uk