



Code of conduct for the prevention and processing of misconduct in studies at University of Oulu¹

¹ This is an unofficial translation of the document [Ohje vilppitapausten ehkäisemiseen ja käsittelymiseen Oulun yliopistossa](#). Please note that in the event of any discrepancies between the Finnish and English versions, the original Finnish version shall prevail. In the University of Oulu Education Regulations this guideline is referred to as "University of Oulu guidelines for the processing of cases of plagiarism in theses and study attainments".



Contents

1 The instructions' intended use and range of application	3
2 Ethical principles at the university	3
3 Induction into good scientific practice	3
3.1 The responsibility of the university and degree programme for induction into good scientific practice	4
3.2 University of Oulu's guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence	4
3.3 Responsibility of teachers and thesis supervisors for induction into good scientific practice	5
3.4 Student's responsibility for following responsible conduct of research.....	5
4 Violation of good scientific practice	5
5 University measures to prevent plagiarism.....	7
6 General principles of investigating suspected fraud	8
7 The guidelines for teachers, supervisors or exam invigilators in cases of alleged misconduct in studies	8
7.1 The exam invigilator's guidelines for dealing with misconduct in studies during an exam.....	8
7.2 Thesis supervisor's guidelines for dealing with misconduct in studies in a thesis.....	9
7.3 Teachers guidelines for dealing with misconduct in other study attainment assessment situations..	10
7.4. Supervisor's guidelines with cases of alleged misconduct of a dissertation that has been approved or submitted for preliminary examination.....	10
8 Guidelines for students noticing misconduct in studies.....	11
9 Reporting misconduct in studies in a doctoral dissertation undergoing preliminary examination or approved.....	11
10 Investigation of misconduct in studies	11
11 Penalties of misconduct in studies and decision-making.....	12
12 Notifications between faculties or partner universities.....	14
13 Archiving of decisions	14
14 Appeal and the student's legal protection	14
15 Effective date.....	14



1 The instructions' intended use and range of application

The purpose of this instruction is to prevent misconduct (fraud) in studies and provide guidelines for processing cases of misconduct in studies. This instruction applies to all degree students, doctoral researchers and international exchange students at the University of Oulu and, where applicable, to students completing separate studies, open university studies or continuing education. The instructions apply to study attainments completed at the University of Oulu and bachelor's, master's and licentiate's theses. Allegations of violations of the responsible conduct of research concerning the manuscript and partial works of the dissertation summary preceding the pre-examination phase are also handled in accordance with these guidelines.

Instead, cases of misconduct of a doctoral dissertation undergoing preliminary examination or approved are handled in accordance with the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK's guidelines "The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland 2023 (PDF)"².

2 Ethical principles at the university

Academic freedom is a fundamental right of universities and their researchers-teachers and students. At the core of academic activity is freedom of thought. Freedom to study includes the student's right to participate in teaching, plan their studies, make choices related to their studies, learn new things, seek information and educate themselves. A university student has a lot of freedom, but also responsibility. Academic responsibility means, among other things, the obligation to study actively and responsibility for one's own learning and the progress of studies. Completing a degree includes completing courses and accumulating credits, but the student's central goal must be to learn, understand and develop into an expert in their own field. A responsible student does not commit cheating, does not promote the deception of others, acts honestly and gives themselves and their fellow students the opportunity for good learning.

The University of Oulu is committed to complying with the guidelines of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK appointed by the Ministry of Education "The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland 2023 (PDF)"³. The implementation of responsible conduct of research requires that the entire university community commits to the principles of responsible conduct of research. Plagiarism or other cheating in studies by a student does not only offend their teachers and supervisors, but it is an insult to other students, the entire university community and the ethical principles it observes. The University of Oulu has published new ethical principles in 2024⁴.

3 Induction into good scientific practice

Scientific research can be ethically acceptable and reliable, and its results can be reliable only if the study has been carried out in accordance with good scientific practice. Self-regulation of the scientific community is required for applying the guidelines of good scientific practice, and its limits are defined by legislation. Good scientific practice is also part of research organisations' quality system.

² [Responsible Conduct of Research \(RCR\)](#) and [The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland 2023](#).

³ [Responsible Conduct of Research \(RCR\)](#) and [The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland 2023](#).

⁴ University of Oulu [Ethical principles](#) in Patio and [Ethical principles of education and processing of misconduct in studies](#) on the For Students website.

In the European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity, good research practices are described in eight contexts: 1) Research Environment, 2) Training, Supervision and Mentoring, 3) Research Procedures, 4) Safeguards, 5) Data Practices and Management, 6) Collaborative Working 7) Publication, and 8) Reviewing, Evaluating and Editing.⁵

3.1 The responsibility of the university and degree programme for induction into good scientific practice

According to the RCR guidelines, the university has the responsibility to ensure that the induction into good scientific practice and research ethics are part of university training⁶.

It is important that students are sufficiently versed in correct reference techniques from the beginning of their studies and consider ethical perspectives in their studies and scientific texts. The person responsible for the degree programme must ensure that:

- the teaching of research integrity is integrated into the curriculum, so that students understand and commit to the principles of good scientific practice.
- new students are introduced to good scientific practice, for example, as part of their orientation.
- the students are familiar with the main points of these guidelines for the prevention and processing of cases of alleged misconduct in studies, and they understand what type of conduct is regarded fraudulent, and which penalties may follow.
- induction into good scientific practice is included in the curriculum, and it outlines instructions for the prevention and handling of cases of misconduct in studies.

3.2 University of Oulu's guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence

The University of Oulu has drawn up guidelines on the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in teaching⁷. The guidelines state, among other things: " AI is a tool that can be utilized in many ways. The University of Oulu considers it important that teachers and students have a shared understanding of what is acceptable, what is prohibited, as well as what constitutes the responsible use of AI to support learning. In the university community, students will receive support towards this goal through study guidance, seminars, methodological studies and during participation in courses."

Within the framework of the AI policies, "the teacher can specify the pedagogically appropriate use of AI in relation to the learning outcomes of an assignment or course. The teacher may use their own judgment to limit or disallow the use of AI. The teacher can require the student to report on which AI application has been used and how. If the teacher has not prepared and communicated specific instructions, these guidelines of the University of Oulu apply."

According to the AI policy, "the student is always personally responsible for the output they submit, and the output produced by AI may not be presented as one's own or as a source. It is the student's responsibility

⁵ [The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland 2023](#), 11.

⁶ [The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland 2023](#), 9.

⁷ [Guidelines for the Use of Artificial Intelligence in Education](#) at the University of Oulu. 2023.

to check with the teacher if anything remains unclear. AI may not be used as a substitute for learning, thinking, information processing and practice."

According to the guidelines, "the use of AI in maturity tests is forbidden".

3.3 Responsibility of teachers and thesis supervisors for induction into good scientific practice

The teachers' and thesis supervisor's role are to support students' learning and the development of scientific thinking in accordance with the ethical academic principles, and to intervene in misconduct in studies whenever detected. Students must be educated on source reference practices relevant to their scientific field from the very beginning of their studies. It is important that the teacher regularly discusses the principles of good scientific practice with the students. The teachers' duty is to acquaint the students with reference practices on their course prior to any written assignments or to supply the students with appropriate guidelines for making references. Special attention shall be given to the guidance of international students, because not all cultures share the same ethical rules as Finland. The students should also be reminded of these instructions⁸ and of the fact that cases of alleged misconduct in studies are investigated without exception.

3.4 Student's responsibility for following responsible conduct of research

According to the University of Oulu Education Regulations⁹, "in his or her studies, the student shall follow the guidelines for teaching and studying at the University of Oulu". The student has the responsibility to find out what type of conduct is desirable and what is regarded as fraudulent. The student's duty is to familiarise him/herself in detail with the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK's guidelines on responsible conduct of research and handling allegations of misconduct in Finland¹⁰, University of Oulu Ethical rules¹¹ and these guidelines carefully. If a student is uncertain of what is acceptable and what fraudulent, he or she must obtain advice from the teacher or tutor teacher.

4 Violation of good scientific practice

Violation of good scientific practice can either be research misconduct or disregard for the responsible conduct of research. In its RI Guidelines, the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK divides misconduct into three subcategories as follows¹²:

- **Fabrication** (sepittäminen) refers to presenting fake observations, research data or results. An example of fabrication is when the observations presented in a publication do not correspond to the methods described.
- **Falsification** (vääristely) means the manipulation of research findings. By falsification of observations, the results of the research are distorted. Deliberate data selection or omission can also result in falsification. Falsification can occur in publications, manuscripts intended for publication, teaching materials and funding applications.

⁸ Code of conduct for the prevention and processing of misconduct in studies at University of Oulu. 2024.

⁹ [University of Oulu Education Regulations](#), section 25. 2022.

¹⁰ [The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland 2023](#).

¹¹ [University of Oulu Ethical rules](#). 2012.

¹² [The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland 2023](#), 17–18.

- **Plagiarism** (plagiointi), or unacknowledged borrowing, means using someone else's work or research ideas without permission or reference. Plagiarism also infringes on the rights of the original authors. Plagiarism can be direct, modified or paraphrased. Plagiarism includes presenting or using as one's own another researcher's text or sections of text, research plans, manuscripts, articles, results, materials, research ideas, observations, programme codes, translations, diagrams, images or other visual material without appropriate reference to the original.

In the academic setting, misconduct in studies means any dishonest activity undertaken by the student to give the wrong impression of either their own or another student's knowledge with the intention of influencing the acceptance of a study attainment and its evaluation. Any kind of misconduct in studies is prohibited, and the University of Oulu takes all unethical and fraudulent activity very seriously. Cases of alleged research misconduct or misconduct in studies are investigated without exception.

Misconduct in studies can be, for instance:

- using notes, source literature or other aids in an exam when their use is not agreed upon
- copying another student's answer in an exam
- copying another student's essay or assignment and presenting it as one's own study attainment
- buying a study attainment from another student or from another third party
- completing a study attainment, such as participating in an exam or completing an assignment, on behalf of another student
- using another student's essay, assignment, thesis or similar written work in one's own studies without appropriate reference to the origins of the information, ideas or methods
- inappropriate copying (plagiarism) of text, video, software code or parts of it, visuals, or a translation received or purchased from another student, the internet or elsewhere
- granting another student the right to use one's own assignment or equivalent knowing that the other student will present it as his/her own
- using a previous study attainment of one's own or parts of it as a basis for new work without a proper source reference or without separate agreement with the teacher ("self plagiarism")
- the omission of used sources
- inflating the source list in order to artificially increase the number of references
- inventing or distorting measurement results or other observations
- failing to complete one's own contribution in pair or group work
- persuading or inciting another person to cheat
- using artificial intelligence to make a credit report without the teacher's permission.

The study attainment can be completed as group work only when permissible according to the teacher's guidelines. If the study attainment has been carried out in a group, this must be clearly identified, as well as reporting what part of the project each student is responsible for.

If, in connection with an alleged case of misconduct in studies, there is reason to believe that more than one student is involved, for instance, a student has presented the work of another student as his/her own with permission from the other student, the matter shall be investigated as a case of alleged misconduct in studies for all parties concerned.



Misconduct in studies may also constitute a criminal offence by law, such as in the case of copyright violation, falsifying a transcript of records, a certificate or any other document, or trading falsified documents. The university may submit the suspected crime to the police for investigation.

Violations of good research practices that do not constitute research misconduct are referred to as **disregard for good research practices** according to the established practice in Finland. Whether the disregard for good research practices is serious enough to be classified as an RI violation is assessed on a case-by-case basis in the RI process. Examples of disregard for responsible conduct of research are:

- Inadequate documentation and storage of research results and data
- Inadequate or inappropriate references to previous results
- Exaggerating or changing one's research achievements or merits e.g. in a CV or its translation or a list of publications
- Self-plagiarism, i.e. republishing one's own work without reference to the original publication
- Inappropriate interfering with the RI process or harassment of those involved in the RI process.

The RI Guidelines present more examples of disregard for responsible conduct of research.¹³

5 University measures to prevent plagiarism

To prevent plagiarism cases, the University of Oulu uses the Turnitin plagiarism detection system¹⁴. The Turnitin system is a system for checking the originality of a text. The service compares written texts with an extensive database consisting of published materials, Internet sources, theses produced by students and other documents. The system looks for similarities between the text and the sources in the database. Undergraduate students or doctoral researchers can use the Turnitin system to check for plagiarism on texts for which they hold the copyright. The student can see the Turnitin report of their own work either in Laturi system or Moodle online learning environment. Plagiarism detection always requires the consent of the author of the text. No other party, e.g. teacher or supervisor, cannot submit assignments or student work for plagiarism detection without permission. The Turnitin system can also be used, for example, to review assignments. The University of Oulu Graduate School (UniOGS) recommends that doctoral researchers review their dissertation manuscript using the Turnitin system in Moodle.

If an undergraduate student or doctoral researcher refuses the Turnitin plagiarism check, the teacher conducts the examination without the Turnitin system, for example by using search engines and comparing the thesis with other written sources.

Faculty or degree programmes may also use or acquire other tools they need to carry out plagiarism checks, such as investigating software plagiarism. The faculty must conduct a data protection impact assessment of the tool before using the programme. It is the responsibility of the faculty or degree programme to draw up instructions for students and staff on how to use the tool and how to handle the results obtained. In this case, too, the principles of this document must be followed in the handling of cases of fraud.

¹³ [The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland 2023](#), 19.

¹⁴ See [Turnitin](#) instructions from the intranet Patio.

6 General principles of investigating suspected fraud

At the University of Oulu, cases of alleged misconduct in studies are always investigated. The investigation complies with the principles of the Administrative Procedure Act (434/2003), which lays down provisions on the foundations of good administration and principles of disqualification. The central procedural factors affecting legal protection are:

- fairness and impartiality of the process
- the hearing of all parties
- the expertise and speed of the process.

When investigating alleged misconduct in studies, it is important to ensure that each phase of the procedure is thoroughly documented and that all parties' right of access to data and other procedural rights are respected. All individuals processing cases of alleged misconduct in studies are under contractual liability and responsible for ensuring that the information will be treated confidentially. The request for clarification, the memorandum of the hearing and the decision of the Dean of Education recommend using ready-made templates, which can be found on the Patio [Processing of misconduct in studies](#) page. All persons handling fraud cases are responsible for their official duties and are responsible for ensuring that information is handled confidentially. If a party to proceedings does not have a sufficient grasp of Finnish or Swedish, the working language used with him or her will also be used in the investigation, such as in the hearings and documents.

7 The guidelines for teachers, supervisors or exam invigilators in cases of alleged misconduct in studies

7.1 The exam invigilator's guidelines for dealing with misconduct in studies during an exam

If an exam invigilator notices a case of misconduct or an attempt to cheat during an exam, such as a discussion, giving assistance to another student, copying another student's answers or handing over one's exam paper to another student, or if the invigilator detects the use of technical aids, he or she must intervene immediately. The exam invigilator can choose between two options depending on the situation: 1) giving a verbal warning or 2) discontinuing the exam.

1. A verbal warning can be given, for example, if the exam invigilator notices a student's attempt to discuss with another student. The invigilator may ask the students to end the conversation and indicate that the student must comply with the rules of exam situations. The invigilator may also move the involved students further apart in the exam hall.

2. If the student, despite receiving a verbal notice, does not comply with the exam rules, or if the invigilator notices an obvious case of misconduct or an attempt to cheat, the invigilator may ask the student to leave the exam hall, and his or her exam will not be completed. The student is obliged to return his or her exam papers and prove his or her identity. The invigilator shall inform the student that he or she will be contacted to clarify the matter. If there is reason to suspect that several students have committed misconduct in studies together, such as a student showing his/her answers to another student, all students involved will be removed from the exam hall, and the matter will be investigated as a case of alleged misconduct in studies for all parties involved.

3. If the invigilator is a different person than the course teacher, he or she will mark the alleged misconduct in studies on the student's exam answer paper and the student list. The invigilator shall also write his or her



name and contact details on the participant list of the exam. The exam response shall then be submitted to the person in charge of the course / examiner as usual.

4. The invigilator shall write a report of the alleged misconduct in studies and the reasons for discontinuing the exam within one week from the alleged misconduct and submit it to the course person in charge of the course/examiner. The invigilator shall write his/her name and contact information on the report. The invigilator shall also mention any other possible witnesses, such as another invigilator or another student participating in the exam.

5. The person in charge of the course/ examiner shall submit the allegation to the Education Dean for investigation. The person in charge of the course shall not analyse the matter further with the student. If the person in charge of the course has anything to add to the processing of the case which is not apparent from the invigilator's report, he or she can also provide his/her own report to the Education Dean in addition to the invigilator's report. The person in charge of the course shall submit the case of alleged misconduct in studies for investigation within a week from the date when he or she has become aware of the suspicion. The study attainment's assessment is deferred until the Education Dean has investigated the matter.

7.2 Thesis supervisor's guidelines for dealing with misconduct in studies in a thesis

If a thesis supervisor suspects misconduct in studies before the completion of the work, he or she can consider two possible options depending on the case 1) giving a verbal warning or 2) documenting the alleged misconduct in studies and submitting it for investigation.

In cases of alleged minor misconduct in studies, for example, when the student has left a source reference unmarked, the instructor can give a verbal warning to the student and guide him/her to work in accordance with the principles of good scientific practice. In such cases, the instructor uses mainly instructive methods.

In allegations of a more serious misconduct in studies, the supervisor documents the proof he or she has relating to the case. For instance, in cases of plagiarism, the teacher clarifies in detail which source the student has used and points out the similarities between the student's text and the source material. The thesis supervisor will submit the case of alleged misconduct in studies as well as the related report to the Education Dean for investigation. The supervisor shall not investigate the matter further with the student. The supervisor shall submit the case of alleged misconduct in studies for Education Dean investigation within a week from the date when he or she has become aware of the suspicion. The supervisor informs the student that he or she will be contacted in relation with the matter.

If the case of alleged misconduct in studies arises after the thesis evaluation process has started, in other words, after the thesis has been submitted for evaluation via Laturi system, the nominated pre-examiners or examiners shall write a statement presenting the case of misconduct in studies. The thesis supervisor shall submit their statement to the Education Dean, and the thesis assessment will be discontinued until the case of alleged misconduct in studies has been investigated. The thesis supervisor shall also inform the Chairperson and Secretary of the Degree Programme Committee about the case of alleged misconduct in studies as soon as he or she becomes aware of it, because at this point, the work is already in Laturi, and there is a risk that it will be approved in the next meeting if information regarding the allegation does not arrive on time.

7.3 Teachers guidelines for dealing with misconduct in other study attainment assessment situations

If the teacher suspects misconduct in any study attainment assessment situation, for example, in a written assignment, in the situation of an electronic examination or an exam taken in any other manner, the teacher can consider two possible options depending on the case 1) giving a verbal warning or 2) documenting the alleged misconduct in study attainment assessment situation and submitting it for investigation.

In cases of alleged minor misconduct, for example, when the student has left a source reference unmarked, the teacher can give a verbal warning to the student and guide him/her to work in accordance with the principles of good scientific practice. In such cases, the teacher uses mainly instructive methods.

In allegations of more serious misconduct in studies, the teacher submits the case to the Education Dean. The teacher documents the proof he or she has of the case of alleged misconduct in studies. For instance, in cases of plagiarism, the teacher clarifies in detail which source the student has used and points out the similarities between the student's text and the source material. The teacher shall also inform the student of the allegation at the latest when the exam results should be published. At the same time, the teacher shall notify the student that he or she will be contacted to clarify the situation, and that the decision regarding the passing of the exam is deferred until the Education Dean has examined the matter. The teacher shall not analyse the matter further with the student. The teacher shall submit the case of alleged misconduct in studies to the Education Dean for investigation within a week from the date when he or she has become aware of the suspicion.

If the allegation of misconduct in studies arises relating to an exam written in the electronic examination room (Examinarium), the teacher may request to see the video recording of the exam situation in question. If the teacher detects misconduct in the recording, he or she shall submit the case to the Education Dean as described above.

If, in connection with an alleged case of misconduct in studies, there is reason to believe that more than one student is involved, for instance, a student has presented the work of another student as his/her own with permission from the other student, the matter shall be investigated as a case of alleged misconduct in studies for all parties concerned.

7.4. Supervisor's guidelines with cases of alleged misconduct of a dissertation that has been approved or submitted for preliminary examination

The Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK's RI Guidelines¹⁵ are applied to doctoral dissertations that have been approved or submitted for preliminary examination. Suspicion of a violation of the responsible conduct of research in a doctoral dissertation submitted for preliminary examination is always investigated in accordance with the RI process defined by TENK.

¹⁵ [The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland 2023](#), 23.



If cheating is suspected in a doctoral dissertation submitted for preliminary examination, the supervisor or other person suspecting cheating must report the cheating in writing to the rector. The rector makes the decision whether to initiate an investigation.

If a suspicion of cheating related to a doctoral dissertation is detected during the review phase, the review process is immediately suspended. The examination will be discontinued even if the doctoral candidate has already been granted permission to defend the doctoral dissertation in the Doctoral Programme Committee. The rector decides to suspend the inspection process.

It is the duty of the preliminary examiner and opponent to report any problems of research integrity they observe to the director of the Graduate School to interrupt the review process.

Suspected RI violations of dissertation manuscripts prior to the pre-review phase are handled in accordance with section 7.2 "Thesis supervisor's guidelines for dealing with misconduct in studies in a thesis" of these instructions.

8 Guidelines for students noticing misconduct in studies

If the student discovers or suspects that another student is guilty of misconduct in studies, he or she can report it to the person in charge of the course or exam invigilator, or if the course teacher is not known, to the Education Dean of his or her own faculty or a leading educational specialist. The report cannot be made anonymously but will always be treated as confidential. Anonymous reports will not be investigated. If necessary, further details will be requested from the student regarding the other student's alleged misconduct in studies.

Instructions and a form for reporting misconduct in studies can be found on the website Ethical principles of education and processing of misconduct in studies¹⁶.

9 Reporting misconduct in studies in a doctoral dissertation undergoing preliminary examination or approved

Cases of misconduct of a doctoral dissertation that is undergoing preliminary examination or approved are reported to the rector using the Notification form for an alleged RI violation¹⁷, and they are processed by The Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK's "The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland 2023".¹⁸

10 Investigation of misconduct in studies

The investigation of misconduct in studies takes place in the faculty to which the alleged misconduct relates. The alleged misconduct in studies is investigated by the Education Dean. The leading educational specialist assists the Education Dean in the investigation of the case. The Education Dean can appoint a team for investigating the case of alleged misconduct in studies. The Education Dean serves as the

¹⁶ University of Oulu [Ethical principles of education and processing of misconduct in studies](#) website.

¹⁷ [Notification form for an alleged RI violation](#)/ TENK in [HTK-loukkausepäilyn ilmoituslomake](#)

¹⁸ [The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland 2023](#).

Chairman of the team. Any suspicions of cheating on the doctoral dissertation are investigated before the preliminary examination by the director of the graduate school or a working group appointed by him/her.

The Education Dean acquaints him or herself with the written documentation relating to the case of alleged misconduct in studies. At his or her own discretion, the Education Dean organises a hearing of the student in question by 1) requesting a written response from the student or 2) arranging a verbal hearing. It is recommended that primarily the student's hearing is done in writing. If the investigation of misconduct or the student himself/herself requires it, it is possible to organize an oral hearing in addition to a written hearing. The student must be clearly informed of what he or she is suspected of. For example, the Education Dean submits the material supporting the case or a synopsis of it to the student. The request for a written or verbal hearing shall be submitted to the student in writing, such as in an email, within two weeks after the material relating to the allegation has arrived for investigation.

It is recommended that the person in charge of the course and a leading education specialist are present at the verbal hearing alongside the Education Dean and the student. A memorandum is drawn up about the hearing, demonstrating whether the student disputes the alleged misconduct in studies or admits to it, as well as listing other points made during the hearing. If a compromise cannot be reached, all parties present at the hearing have a right for their disagreement to be stated in the memorandum. Each of those present shall sign the memorandum, thus confirming that it corresponds to the discussion taking place at the hearing.

The hearing is an opportunity given to the student to provide his/her own response to the issues raised. The matter can be resolved without the student's report, if he or she fails to provide the requested written reply within a reasonable time frame allocated in advance or does not arrive at the verbal hearing and has not notified of a legitimate and acceptable reason for the transfer of the hearing to another date.

The investigation of misconduct in studies can also be started after the decision of a study attainment has already been made, in case suspicion arises only at this stage. Also in these cases, misconduct may lead to the adjustment of the earlier decision and to disciplinary action. Allegations of misconduct in studies relating to theses of doctoral degrees, shall be investigated according to the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK's RI Guidelines when the thesis has already been accepted. According to the University of Oulu Education Regulations, the decision to accept a thesis can be annulled on the grounds specified in the Administrative Procedure Act. The appropriate procedures for dealing with the matter should be clarified with the university's lawyer before initiating the investigation of misconduct in studies.

Suspicious of RI violations concerning doctoral dissertation manuscripts prior to the pre-examination phase are dealt with in section "7.2. Thesis supervisor's guidelines for dealing with misconduct in studies in a thesis" in accordance with the thesis. TENK's RI Guidelines are applied to doctoral dissertations that have been approved or submitted for preliminary examination. Suspicious of violations of responsible conduct of research in an approved doctoral dissertation or a doctoral dissertation submitted for preliminary examination are always investigated in accordance with the RI process defined by TENK¹⁹.

11 Penalties of misconduct in studies and decision-making

After examining the case, the Education Dean decides whether misconduct in studies has taken place or whether the allegations will be dropped when it is not possible to prove that misconduct in studies has

¹⁹ [The Finnish Code of Conduct for Research Integrity and Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Research Integrity in Finland 2023.](#)

taken place. A written decision shall specify which factors have contributed to the conclusion. If there is no sufficient evidence of misconduct in studies, the allegation will be dropped, and the Education Dean will inform the student in question as well as the teacher making the claim. In such cases, the original study attainment shall be graded.

Proved misconduct in studies always leads to the rejection of the study attainment. If misconduct in studies has been noticed in a specific part of a study attainment, the Education Dean decides at his/her discretion whether the study attainment will be rejected as a whole or only partially. The rejection of a study attainment is not a disciplinary sanction but is based on the fact that misconduct in studies has made it impossible to assess the student's skills in the study attainment in which the misconduct has been committed. The Education Dean makes the decision regarding the rejection of a study attainment. After the rejection of a study attainment, the student must agree with the Education Dean on how to earn the missing credit. The Education Dean may also delegate the negotiations about repeating or replacing the failed study attainment to the teacher.

Proven misconduct in studies will also lead to the rejection of the submitted thesis. The decision to fail a study attainment is made by the Education Dean. Before proceeding with the thesis, the student must clarify to the instructor how he or she will correct his/her work in such a way that it no longer relies on misconduct in studies.

If the Education Dean deems the student guilty of misconduct in studies requiring disciplinary action, he or she shall inform the Rector about the misconduct in studies for possible legally defined disciplinary action. The Education Dean shall submit a written decision to the Rector, indicating which factors have influenced the conclusion and including the rest of the written documentation relating to the incident.

The actual disciplinary measures are laid down in Section 45 of the Universities Act (558 / 2009):

The Universities Act, Section 45

Disciplinary action

A student who is guilty of infringement of the university's teaching or research activities or has otherwise violated university order, may be given a written warning or be suspended from the university for a fixed period of one year at most, depending on the seriousness of the misconduct. The decision on a warning to be issued to a student is made by the Rector of the University, whereas the decision on a fixed-period suspension shall be made by the University Board of Directors. Before making the decision, the student must be verifiably informed of which offence he or she is being accused of and given an opportunity to be heard in the matter.

Depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, the Rector shall decide about giving a warning to the student, or to propose the student's temporary dismissal to the University Board. The decision to temporary suspension is made by the University Board. The student can be suspended for a maximum of one year.

In the case of a doctoral candidate engaging in proven misconduct in studies, it is regarded as a breach of the obligations listed in the Employment Contracts Act, Chapter 3, Section 1. In accordance with the Employment Contracts Act, Chapter 7, Sections 1 and 2, misconduct in studies is regarded as termination grounds related to the employee's person. Alternatively, when the misconduct in studies is regarded as such a serious violation of obligations or non-conformity that the employer cannot be reasonably expected to continue the contractual relationship even for the period of notice, the sanctions shall be decided in accordance with Section 1 of Chapter 8 of the Employment Contracts Act.

12 Notifications between faculties or partner universities

If a student's misconduct in studies is investigated and proven in a faculty other than the faculty in which the student has a study right leading to a degree, the Education Dean of the student's own faculty shall be informed about the decision. The same applies when the student has parallel study rights leading to a degree in more than one faculty.

In the case of an international exchange student, his/her home university shall also be informed about misconduct in studies. All new exchange and joint degree contracts shall acknowledge the obligation of the partner universities to inform each other about proven cases of misconduct in studies or by other means ensure that the incoming exchange students or joint degree students are aware of the agreed procedures. The Education Dean will notify the international mobility services of Oulu University about the decisions regarding exchange students' misconduct in studies. International services notify the partner universities about such cases in a centralised manner, and so it suffices that the Education Dean informs the International Services about the matter. The Dean of Education submits misconduct in studies decisions concerning joint degree students to the partner universities for information.

13 Archiving of decisions

Decisions made by the Rector, the Education Dean or the University Board of Directors as well as other documents relating to cases of misconduct in studies will be archived to the university's central archive. Decisions are to be kept permanently. This is to ensure that decisions regarding misconduct in studies and the arguments leading to such decisions can be found in one place.

14 Appeal and the student's legal protection

The student whose study attainment is rejected based on misconduct in studies can submit a request for rectification within 14 days of receipt of the decision to the University Board of Examiners, if he or she is dissatisfied with the decision.

A written decision regarding a disciplinary issue shall specify what factors have contributed to the conclusion. The student shall be verifiably informed about the decision, and he or she shall have the right to appeal about the disciplinary decision to administrative court. A decision regarding a student's temporary suspension may be enforced regardless of appeal, unless otherwise ordered by the university or administrative court.

15 Effective date

This decision enters into force 1 August 2024.

Jouko Niinimäki
Rector, University of Oulu

Essi Kiuru
Administrative Director, University of Oulu