

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING INSTANCES OF CHEATING AT NORD UNIVERSITY

These guidelines shall apply from 01/01/2021 and shall be supplementary provisions to the *“Regulations relating to Studies and Examinations at Nord University”* valid from 01/08/2022. These guidelines were most recently revised on 11/01/2023.

Legal grounds:

Pursuant to Sections 4-7 and 4-8 of the Norwegian Universities and University Colleges Act, any person who intentionally or grossly negligently cheats on an examination may have their examination results annulled and may be excluded from universities and university colleges for up to one year pursuant to the act. Intentional attempts at cheating may be sanctioned accordingly, while intentional contributions to cheating may result in an exclusion for up to one year.

In Section 9-1 of its Regulations relating to Studies and Examinations at Nord University, Nord University has listed circumstances that may be considered cheating in connection with examinations or as part of the programme of study. The list is not exhaustive and other circumstances may be added over time.

The following constitute acts of cheating or attempted cheating:

- a) Having in one's possession examination support materials that are not permitted during an examination. If the examination includes an inspection of examination aids prior to commencement of the examination, this applies correspondingly if non-permitted aids are discovered during the inspection.
- b) Presenting the published or unpublished works of others as one's own.
- c) Presenting one's own earlier work, including work used in an examination or other assessment, without proper source referencing.
- d) Quoting sources or otherwise using sources in written work without proper source referencing.
- e) Unlawful fabrication of data in connection with student work.
- f) Any non-regulation collaboration with other examination candidates or groups.
- g) Acting in violation of specific guidelines for an individual examination.
- h) Unlawfully obtaining access to assessment by, for example, having cheated in terms of completion of compulsory assignments, internal testing, or manipulation of attendance lists for compulsory class participation.

In order to sanction cheating, the objective condition of cheating (that there are actual circumstances that constitute cheating) must be met and the cheating must have been carried out with a sufficient degree of guilt (wilfully or with gross negligence). All students are responsible for familiarising themselves with the applicable regulations, cf. Section 9-1(3) of the Regulations relating to Studies and Examinations at Nord University.

Power of decision:

Pursuant to Section 4-7 of the Norwegian Universities and University Colleges Act, the Board or Appeals Committee shall have the power to decide on sanctions pursuant to the provisions on cheating. At Nord University, all such cases will be addressed by the Appeals Committee. This authority cannot be delegated further. The Appeals Committee may also decide on sanctions pursuant to Section 4-8 of the Norwegian Universities and University Colleges Act.

Cheating on written examinations:

An inspection of permitted aids will be carried out for written examinations. The examination coordinator must be summoned in the event of suspicion of the use of unlawful aids or cheating occurring prior to the examination, when inspecting aids or during the examination.

Procedures:

- The student must not exit the examination premises
- Unlawful aids must be confiscated
- The examination coordinator will speak with the student. This must take place away from the examination premises.
- The student will be given the opportunity to complete the examination should they wish, cf. Section 9-1(4) of the Regulations relating to Studies and Examinations at Nord University.
- The main invigilator must write a memorandum describing the incident.
- The examination coordinator must write a memorandum summarising the information relating to the incident, the examination type, times and other relevant information.
- In the event of suspected or attempted cheating, the examination coordinator must contact the person with academic responsibility for the programme of study concerned and the administrative case officer in the Student Records and Examinations Office.
- In the event that cheating proceedings are initiated, the student will be given the opportunity to participate in a clarification meeting or the opportunity to submit a written statement. If the student has already had a meeting with the examination coordinator, the student will only be invited to another meeting if they or Nord University deem it necessary.
- After meeting with the student, the person with academic responsibility for the programme of study in question and the administrative case officer will jointly determine whether the case will be submitted to the Committee of Student Affairs.
- The answers are submitted for grading as normal but the examination result will be blocked in the FS student system until there is a decision showing that no cheating has taken place, cf. Section 9-1(5) of the Regulations relating to Studies and Examinations at Nord University.

Cheating by plagiarism:

For unsupervised examinations, Nord University uses electronic plagiarism checking to identify concurrence between the text of the work submitted and other sources. All text documents submitted in Inspira are checked. All text documents submitted in Canvas may be checked. The examiner is responsible for checking the results of the plagiarism check and for reading the plagiarism report.

Plagiarism can be defined as presenting the published or unpublished work of others as one's own without satisfactory referencing. Plagiarism is also defined as presenting one's own published or unpublished work as something new without satisfactory referencing.

Nord University must prevent plagiarism. As part of this, students will be given the opportunity to attend training in academic writing and the correct use of citations and source references.

Nevertheless, the student has an independent responsibility to acquire knowledge of academic writing, cf. Section 9-1(3) of the Regulations relating to Studies and Examinations at Nord University.

Procedures:

- Examiners will find the match percentage for plagiarism and the plagiarism report via the student's submission in Inspira or Canvas.
- If the plagiarism report shows that the total match percentage for plagiarism exceeds 20% or individual matches result in more than 10%, the examiner must assess the plagiarism report and the use of sources, source referencing and the reference list. However, a match percentage of less than 20% does not mean that plagiarism has not taken place. The same applies in the event that the examiner suspects plagiarism for other reasons.
- In the event of suspected or attempted cheating, including plagiarism, the examiner must contact the person with academic responsibility for the programme of study in question and the administrative case officer at the Student Records and Examinations Office and together the three of them will determine whether official cheating proceedings will be initiated.
- The examiner will prepare a memorandum in which they summarise the findings from the plagiarism check and highlight the areas of the answer in which text similarity has been found in the plagiarism report and/or other sources.
- In the event that cheating proceedings are initiated, the student will be given the opportunity to participate in a clarification meeting or the opportunity to submit a written statement. After meeting with the student, the examiner, person with academic responsibility for the programme of study in question and the administrative case officer will jointly determine whether the case will be submitted to the Committee of Student Affairs.
- The answers are submitted for grading as normal but the examination result will be blocked in the FS student system until there is a decision showing that no cheating has taken place, cf. Section 9-1(5) of the Regulations relating to Studies and Examinations at Nord University.

Unregulated collaboration:

Certain forms of collaboration between students are permitted during individual home examinations. Such collaboration may include discussion of issues, interpretation of the examination question, or the exchange of ideas regarding literature. Any discussions during the work may also be relevant, but the answer itself must be produced by the individual candidate alone and copying is not permitted.

If two or more answers are essentially very similar in terms of content and structure, language, academic views, any misunderstandings and errors, source referencing etc., this may be evidence of prohibited collaboration, which may be considered cheating or attempted cheating. It is therefore extremely important that students familiarise themselves thoroughly with the boundaries of permitted collaboration for the examination in questions.

Procedures in connection with clarification meetings with students:

If cheating or plagiarism are suspected in relation to written examinations or submitted work, the case must be investigated further in order to determine whether official proceedings need to be implemented. The student will be invited to a meeting with the responsible case officer from the Student Records and Examinations Office, as well as any examiner, lecturer or programme coordinator.

- The student must be made aware of the grounds for suspicion in advance and is given the opportunity to bring a person to the meeting, cf. Section 12 of the Public Administration Act.
- The purpose of the conversation is to provide information about the case and provide the student with the opportunity to give their side of the case.
- Students are called in individually if more than one student is involved.
- Meeting minutes must be recorded and the minutes should, to the extent possible, document what the student says in relation to the matter.
- The minutes must show that the student has received information about their right to legal assistance, cf. Section 4-8(5) of the Norwegian Universities and University Colleges Act, and that this right enters into force after the meeting at which the case is submitted to the Committee of Student Affairs.
- The student is given the opportunity to make a written response to the minutes. The student's response is attached to the case.

Further proceedings:

The programme coordinator and administrative case officer and, if applicable, the examiner in plagiarism cases will determine whether the case will be submitted to the Committee of Student Affairs. If the case is submitted to the Committee of Student Affairs, the student will be informed of the decision in a separate letter, in which they will also be informed of their right to legal assistance pursuant to Section 4-8(5) of the Norwegian Universities and University Colleges Act.

The responsible case officer at the Student Records and Examinations Office is responsible for issuing such advance warnings and for ensuring that the student receives a copy of all appendices to the case. The case officer in question will create an internal memorandum describing the case in connection with submission to the Committee of Student Affairs, explaining the case without making any proposals as to the recommended decision.

The Committee of Student Affairs has an independent duty to investigate and may ask the student, the faculties and the Section for Examinations and Diplomas for further information.

The Committee of Student Affairs will address cheating cases at meetings and will make decisions in accordance with Sections 4-7 and 4-8 of the Norwegian Universities and University Colleges Act. The student will receive a copy of the decision and justification by the Committee of Student Affairs after the meeting.

All sanctions that are issued pursuant to Section 4-8 of the Norwegian Universities and University Colleges Act must be registered in the Register of Excluded Students (REST), cf. Section 4-12 of the Norwegian Universities and University Colleges Act.

Relevant documents in a cheating case:

In addition to the advance notice issued to the student and the submission letter to the Committee of Student Affairs, these may include:

- Memo from the lecturer or examiner
- Memo from the examination coordinator
- Memo from the invigilator

- Plagiarism report
- Confiscated aids
- Information about permitted aids
- Examination question paper with examiner guidelines
- The student's submission
- Invitation to clarification meeting with the student
- Minutes from the meeting with the student, as well as any responses
- Information submitted by the student, alternatively any other communications with the student
- Programme description and course descriptions

The university bears the burden of proof for the conditions of the cheating provisions having been met. The documents that accompany the case to the Committee of Student Affairs will also form the basis for any appeals to the Joint Appeals Committee and any court trials.

The provisions concerning administrative procedures as stipulated in the Norwegian Public Administration Act shall also apply in full. All parties involved are subject to confidentiality requirements pursuant to Section 13 of the Norwegian Public Administration Act.