

Action Plan for Academic Misconduct in Studies

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1. Introduction

1.1 Good scientific practice

Hanken is a research-driven business school that fosters responsible professionals to drive a sustainable future and upholds high quality and integrity in all education and research. Hanken is committed to following the national guidelines for good scientific practice and promotes ethical conduct in teaching and learning.

The procedures for good scientific practice must be introduced and followed throughout the studies. This action plan outlines Hanken's guidelines for handling cases of **academic misconduct and minor violations in connection with study performance**, while misconduct in research is handled according to the process prescribed by the guidelines of the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK).

1.2. Scope and roles

This action plan applies to handling cases of **academic misconduct and minor violations in connection with study attainments completed at Hanken**. It does not apply to misconduct in scientific activities, doctoral theses, dishonesty in the admissions process to Hanken's programmes, or to studies completed outside Hanken.

This action plan applies to the study performances of bachelor's, master's and doctoral students as well as other students within the scope of their study rights (e.g. exchange students, guest students, Open University students and students of the EMBA programme).

The action plan applies to study performances that have not yet been approved, including bachelor's and master's theses. The action plan is also used, where applicable, if academic misconduct is suspected or discovered in an already approved bachelor's or master's thesis. Suspected misconduct in a doctoral or licentiate thesis is handled according to the process of the Doctoral Studies Council. If the suspicion concerns a doctoral thesis that has already been submitted, the matter is handled according to TENK guidelines by Hanken's Research Ethics Committee.

Each teacher is responsible for reacting if there is reason to suspect academic misconduct and for initiating an investigation. The course **examiner** is responsible for the process according to this action plan.

Hanken's Disciplinary Committee deals with serious cases, precedent-setting cases, and cases where the student disputes the examiner's conclusion. The committee promotes consistent practices for sanctions. Teachers may not offer alternative solutions, such as the possibility of supplementing or redoing the assignment, once misconduct is confirmed. To promote equal treatment, all cases of academic misconduct should be reported to the Disciplinary Committee, even if the student admits to misconduct and the performance is directly failed.

1.3 Decision-making and publicity

The Disciplinary Committee makes recommendations but does not make final decisions. The information is confidential and is only shared with the functions that are responsible for handling the case according to this plan. Decisions on the assessment of study performance are made by the assigned examiners.

The Universities Act gives the rector the right to decide on a written caution to a student and the University Board the right to decide on a suspension of a student for a fixed period. As a university, Hanken is subject to the Act on the Openness of Government Activities. This means that decisions on disciplinary action, such as a written caution or suspension, are as a rule public documents that anyone can request to see. The Disciplinary Committee's recommendations are also in principle public, but sensitive personal data is not disclosed.

2. Definitions of academic misconduct and minor violations

2.1 General

Cheating in studies is a dishonest act that violates the principles of honesty and integrity that should prevail at Hanken. Academic misconduct in connection with study attainments can take various forms. Common to the actions is that they aim to give a false impression of the student's own skills or performance.

To ensure that the assessment of learning and competence is reliable, there are rules and guidelines that all students must follow. Teachers are responsible for providing clear instructions on how students should act within their courses, for example regarding the permitted level of AI use (the “traffic light model”). Violating these instructions may constitute academic misconduct. However, there may also be situations where a student, through carelessness, makes a minor deviation from the instructions. Such violations can often be dealt with directly by the teacher through conversation and reprimand.

More serious cases of misconduct must be assessed in accordance with this action plan.

2.2 Academic misconduct / cheating

Academic misconduct in studies can take various forms. Below are examples of common forms, without the list being exhaustive:

- **Plagiarism:** using someone else's work without proper citation, whether through direct copying or paraphrasing. This also includes self-plagiarism, i.e., reusing one's own previous work without referencing it.
- **Fabrication or distortion:** inventing, manipulating, or omitting data, materials, or methods in a way that renders the results false, unfounded, or misleading.
- **Exam cheating:** use of unauthorised aids, sources or communication channels, or accessing or sharing another student's answers during an examination.
- **Unauthorised collaboration:** working together on assignments meant to be completed individually or using a so-called ghostwriter.
- **Unauthorised use of artificial intelligence:** using AI-based tools in violation of the teacher's instructions.
- **Attendance fraud:** giving a false account of one's own or someone else's attendance at teaching or other mandatory activity.
- **Misrepresentation of contribution:** providing a false account of one's own or another person's contribution to a piece of work, such as listing co-authorship without having contributed.

2.3 Minor violations

Minor violation refers to minor deviations from given instructions or rules. Minor violations occur due to ignorance, negligence or carelessness and without the intent to cheat. When the teacher discovers and together with the examiner assesses that such a situation is in question, it should be pointed out to the student and used as an opportunity for guidance and support, so that the student can correct his or her working methods and avoid similar mistakes in the future.

2.4 Special cases

When suspicion of academic misconduct is raised in a **master's thesis submitted for assessment** the matter is first handled by the Disciplinary Committee and then proceeds to evaluation by the Education Council.

In **group work or theses written in pairs** it can be difficult to clearly distinguish each individual's contribution. However, each student is expected to be able to account for their own contribution, if requested.

In **group work**, the responsibility can be considered individually if each student's contribution can be clearly identified. In such cases, participants who are not guilty of misconduct can be approved, even if someone in the group is failed due to cheating. If individual contributions cannot be clarified, all members are considered collectively responsible.

Theses written in pairs are generally assessed as a whole, and the authors bear collective responsibility for ensuring that the work adheres to good academic practice. If it can be established that only one of the students is guilty of academic misconduct, the other may, after special consideration, be allowed to continue with their part of the work.

3. Suspicion of academic misconduct

When a teacher suspects misconduct in a study performance, the situation must be handled in a uniform and fair manner, ensuring due process and safeguarding the student's rights. A teacher who is not the examiner of the course must involve the responsible examiner in cases of suspected misconduct.

The parties are expected to treat each other objectively and respectfully.

3.1 For exam supervisors

- If a student is caught cheating during an exam, you as an exam supervisor may **interrupt** the student's exam and must **report** the incident in writing to the course examiner.
- If you, as a supervisor, suspect a student of cheating, you must, even if you have not interrupted the exam, **report** the incident in writing to the course examiner.
- Once you have reported the incident, the examiner assumes responsibility for further handling in accordance with this action plan.

3.2 For examiners

- **Clarify the circumstances:** Give the student the opportunity to explain orally or in writing and let them take part of relevant documentation (e.g. similarity report).
- **Minor violation:** If the issue concerns a minor deviation due to carelessness or lack of knowledge that does not significantly affect the assessment, point out the deficiency, provide guidance, and briefly document the case. No formal misconduct process is initiated.
- **If the student admits to misconduct:** Decide on the assessment and report the case to the Disciplinary Committee.
- **Formal handling:** The case always proceeds to formal handling (section 4) if:
 - the student denies the misconduct,

- the suspicion remains or is deemed to be more serious, or
- the misconduct concerns a bachelor's or master's thesis.

3.3 For students

- **Right to respond to allegations:** If you are suspected of academic misconduct, you always have the right to be presented with and respond to the accusations.
- **Right to rely on evidence:** You have the right to provide any written explanations or evidence of your working process (notes, version history, how you used aids, etc.). You are expected to be able to present the documentation within 48 hours of being informed of the suspicion.
- **If you admit to misconduct:** The examiner will decide on the assessment and report it to the Disciplinary Committee.
- **Formal handling:** The case always proceeds to formal handling (section 4) if:
 - you dispute the misconduct,
 - the suspicion remains or is deemed to be more serious, or
 - the misconduct concerns a bachelor's or master's thesis.

4. Formal handling of suspected academic misconduct

If the student admits to academic misconduct, no formal hearing needs to be arranged. In this case, the examiner decides on the assessment and reports the case to the Disciplinary Committee. If the student denies the misconduct, they are summoned to a hearing.

4.1 For examiners

- **Hearing:** The student is invited to a hearing by the examiner. The hearing will primarily take place in person on site. Alternatively, the hearing can be conducted via Teams. Only if an oral hearing is not possible may the student submit a written statement instead.
- **Support person:** The student must be informed of their right to bring a support person, for example from the student union or student association.
- **Participants:** The Head of Subject or Department or, if needed, the Director of Education and Digital Services, chairs the hearing. Witnesses may be heard and other necessary investigations conducted. As a rule, the amanuensis also attends the hearing as secretary. Minutes of the hearing must be recorded.
- **Report:** The examiner prepares a written report on the case and makes a decision regarding the assessment of the study performance.
- **Submission:** Regardless of whether the student admits or denies the misconduct, the report must be submitted to the Disciplinary Committee and shared with the student.
- **Assessment:** The examiner decides whether the performance is approved (suspicions cleared) or failed (misconduct confirmed). The examiner may also request the Disciplinary Committee's statement in the case or express their opinion on the severity of misconduct and any further consequences.

4.2 For students

- **Hearing:** The examiner will invite you to a hearing, which will primarily be held in person on site and secondarily via Teams. Only if an oral hearing is not possible may you submit a written statement instead. You have the right to present any evidence of your working

process (notes, version history, how you used tools, etc.). You can admit or deny misconduct. You are expected to be able to present your documentation within 48 hours of being informed of the suspicion.

- **Support person:** You have the right to bring a support person of your choice to the hearing. The hearing is chaired by the Head of Subject or Department or, if needed, the Director of Education and Digital Services, and a report is submitted to the Disciplinary Committee.
- **Decision:** The examiner will inform you of their decision regarding the approval or failing of the performance, and whether they will request the Disciplinary Committee to consider the case.

4.3 The Disciplinary Committee's handling

The Disciplinary Committee will review the written report of the suspected cases of academic misconduct and request additional investigation or responses as needed. If a caution or suspension is considered, the student shall be given the opportunity to be heard by the committee. The Disciplinary Committee does not make decisions but makes recommendations on sanctions and may propose a caution or suspension. The Disciplinary Committee will keep records of the cases handled and statistics on all reported cases of misconduct.

5. Repercussions

The consequence must always be proportionate to the nature and severity of the academic misconduct. Minor deviations can be handled through guidance, while confirmed cases of academic misconduct lead to disciplinary actions in accordance with this plan and the Universities Act.

5.1 Failed performance

A study performance found to involve academic misconduct is always failed in its entirety. Even if the cheating concerns performance in a part of a course, the entire course is considered failed and must be retaken at the next regular course offering.

- **Exams:** A student who has failed an exam due to cheating loses his or her right to retake the exam and must retake the whole course at the next regular course occasion.
- **Group assignments:** If academic misconduct is discovered in a group assignment, responsibility may be assessed individually, provided that it is possible to clearly delimit each student's contribution. If this is not possible, the entire group is considered responsible.
- **Theses:** If a thesis has been failed due to misconduct, a revised version of the same work may not be resubmitted for assessment.
- **Theses written in pairs:** If a thesis has been written in pairs and it can be established that only one of the students has been guilty of misconduct, the other may be allowed to continue with his or her part of the work after special consideration.
- **Exchange students and cooperation students:** If an exchange student or other visiting student is found guilty of academic misconduct, the home university can be notified of the misconduct and the disciplinary action taken.

5.2 Written warning

The Rector may, following a recommendation from the Disciplinary Committee, decide to issue a student a written caution in accordance with the Universities Act. Before a decision is made, the student must be given the opportunity to be heard by the disciplinary committee.

5.3 Suspension from studies

The Board may, following a proposal from the Rector, decide to suspend a student for a fixed period of time, up to a maximum of one year, in accordance with the Universities Act. See the Board's guidelines ([link](#)). Before a decision is made, the student must be given the opportunity to be heard by the Disciplinary Committee.

5.4 Remedies

A request for reconsideration of a decision to fail a study performance due to academic misconduct may be submitted to the Board of Appeals within 14 days in the manner specified in the Administrative Procedures Act.

A decision regarding a warning or suspension under section 45 of the Universities Act may be appealed to the Helsinki Administrative Court.

	Examiner	Disciplinary Committee	Rector	Board
Minor misconduct, negligence, mistake	Guidance, opportunity to redo			
Ascertained misconduct	Failed study performance	Notified		
Academic misconduct in thesis, other serious or precedent-setting cases	Referred to the Disciplinary Committee	Recommends consequence/s	May issue a written warning	
Severe or repeated misconduct			May propose suspension for a fixed period	May decide on suspension for a fixed period