

ACADEMIC OFFENCES

Student Advice & Representation Centre Information Sheet

This is designed to be a brief guide on academic offences. The full University Academic Offences Policy and Procedure can be found at <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/quality-manual/assessment/offences.htm>. It is very important to consult this document and seek advice from the Education Worker if you are unsure of any issue: phone 0115 8468736 or email sueducationworker@nottingham.ac.uk.

What is an academic offence?

An academic offence is, generally speaking, any action in which a student has attempted to gain an unpermitted academic advantage. The most common examples of academic offences are plagiarism, cheating in exams and fabricating results or data. It can be, however, anything that gives you an unfair advantage in an assessment.

What happens if I have been accused of an academic offence?

Your School should contact you, and a meeting should be arranged with the Head of School. At this meeting the School should explain exactly what it is they think you have done, and allow you an opportunity to comment. You are entitled to take someone in with you to the meeting; this can be a friend or you can contact the Education Worker to ask them to accompany you. The School will then decide if there is a case against you, and if so, what appropriate action to take.

What do I do if I don't think I've done anything wrong?

You will have a full opportunity to choose plead guilty or not guilty to any offences which you are accused of. You should bear in mind, however, that if you plead not guilty to an offence at School level then it will be passed up to the University Academic Offences Committee for them to consider.

What if it's my second offence?

This will also be passed up to the Academic Offences Committee for them to consider. The University takes academic offences very seriously, and therefore obviously your second offence will be

treated more seriously. You should have been issued a formal written warning after the first offence, explaining that if you committed a second offence your course may be terminated.

What happens at the Academic Offences Committee?

At the Committee, the School will present their case. You are able to attend and you can be accompanied by a friend or the Education Worker. You will then have an opportunity to make a statement. A panel of 2 academic staff and one student representative will hear the case and make a decision after hearing from the School and the student.

If you wish to appeal against a decision of the Academic Offences Committee, you can use the University Council Grievance Procedure, which is found in the Quality Manual.

What if another student is involved?

This can make the issue more complicated. The School should see both students individually and then make a decision based on the facts of the case.

If you feel concerned that another student is involved, you may wish to seek advice from the Education Worker.

What happens if I am found guilty of an academic offence?

If the issue has been dealt with by the School, they have a range of lesser penalties they can apply if they find you guilty, such as giving you a mark of 0 for the piece of work.

The Academic Offences Committee has the power to apply a range of penalties, including terminating your course.

How do I avoid plagiarism?

Your School will have issued you with information at the beginning of your course, which you should refer to. It is very important that you learn how to reference your work correctly. You may wish to seek advice from a tutor if you are unsure; it would certainly be advisable to do this before you submit the piece of work.

For more information on Academic Offences, please contact the Education Worker, Student Advice & Representation Centre, Portland Building, University Park, Nottingham

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Email: sueducationworker@nottingham.ac.uk