



Academic Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure

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Academic Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure

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1. Purpose and Scope

This policy describes processes at NSHM (NSHM or 'The Institute') for upholding academic honesty and managing academic misconduct.

Academic honesty is a key value of the Institute, and it expects all staff and students to act with academic honesty when developing, creating, and using information and ideas.

This policy applies to all staff and students of NSHM in all modes of study and in all locations.

NSHM's Academic Code of Conduct is both a description of the Institute's ethical expectations of staff and students' rights and responsibilities as members of a scholarly and learning community. This Code provides clarity related to policy and procedure regarding academic conduct.

2. Objectives

This policy provides:

- strategies to promote academic honesty
- mechanisms to detect plagiarism and cheating
- processes to prevent and manage academic misconduct.

The objective of NSHM in enforcing academic rules is to promote an atmosphere in which scholarly activity and learning can best take place. Such an atmosphere can be maintained only so long as every staff member and student believes that his or her academic competence is being judged fairly and that he or she will not be put at a disadvantage because of someone else's dishonesty. Penalties should be carefully determined so as to be no more and no less than required to maintain the desired atmosphere. In defining violations of this code, the intent is to protect the integrity of the scholarly and educational process.

3. Definitions

Academic Integrity

Demonstrating the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility in all academic endeavours, including preparing and presenting work for assessment as part of program work or research.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct includes cheating, plagiarism, and any other activities in which students or staff may engage which are designed to obtain an unfair advantage for themselves, or to disadvantage other students or staff. It also includes willfully failing to follow proper instructions of examination supervisors, disrupting examinations, or attempting to bribe examiners, assessors, or course coordinators.

Cheating

Cheating involves acting dishonestly in order to gain an unfair advantage, whether for oneself or for another person. Cheating can be perpetrated both by students and staff and can occur with regard to examinations and assessment activities and to research activities. It can include:

- Copying the work of another (whether in an examination, an assessment activity, or a piece of research)
- Colluding with another with the intention to deceive
- Taking unauthorised materials into an examination or using unauthorised materials in the completion of an assessment activity
- Communicating examination or assessment questions, answers, or related information to students who are yet to undertake the same examination or assessment
- Misrepresenting or falsifying information or data.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a broad term used to denote the use of the work of another without sufficient or proper acknowledgement of the original source, whether written, published, or electronic/digital. It includes:

- Presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own
- Failing to attribute or acknowledge direct or partial quotations
- The use of close paraphrasing of ideas or data (without attribution)
- Resubmitting previously assessed and submitted work
- Claiming joint authorship
- Failing to acknowledge properly the work of collaborators
- Assisting others to commit an act of plagiarism, including allowing your own work (whether published or unpublished) to be included in the work of another.

Intentional plagiarism

This is plagiarism which is enacted or committed with the express purpose of deceiving or achieving gain or advantage for oneself or another. Intentional plagiarism is considered to be an act of serious academic misconduct.

Unintentional plagiarism

This is plagiarism which is committed inadvertently as a result of inexperience or ignorance of academic practice.

4. Policy Statement

Academic integrity, honesty, and a respect for knowledge, truth and ethical practices are fundamental to the Institute. These principles are at the core of all academic activity. Dishonest practices contravene academic values, compromise the integrity of research, and devalue the quality of learning. NSHM is

committed to providing an environment of integrity and professionalism that helps to assure each individual of receiving appropriate recognition for his or her work.

All staff and students of NSHM are expected to maintain high standards of academic honesty and integrity. It is the responsibility of staff and students to be aware of the Academic Code of Conduct's contents and to abide by its provisions. The NSHM Academic Board, which is composed of staff and student representatives has jurisdiction over all charges of academic misconduct brought against staff and students.

In all charges of academic misconduct against a staff member or student, the individual is entitled to procedural fairness in any disciplinary proceedings. The Academic Code of Conduct details the guidelines governing disciplinary proceedings. It also articulates the Institute's philosophy of discipline, defines violations of the code, and enumerates penalties applicable under the code.

5. Implementation

The Academic Board and Chief - Academic and Quality Systems are jointly responsible for implementing this policy and for ensuring that mechanisms are in place to safeguard the reputations of the Institute, its staff, students, and graduates.

The Institute:

- expects all staff and students to undertake academic work honestly
- promotes academic honesty by distributing policies and information to all members of its higher education community
- encourages students to engage in ethical learning and scholarship practices
- monitors academic work and applies fair processes to deal with academic misconduct, including plagiarism and cheating.

6. Procedure

6.1 For students

As much as possible, the Institute will use plagiarism detection software or employ other means to detect plagiarism. Staff will be vigilant in detecting plagiarism, and will use academic judgement and fair and transparent processes to determine where plagiarism has occurred, and whether it is intentional or unintentional. Students will be advised at enrolment that these mechanisms, including software, may be used to detect plagiarism, and students will be required to acknowledge their awareness of these practices.

All students are responsible for:

- Acknowledging their understanding of academic honesty and misconduct and for avoiding unethical practices
- Ensuring that their academic work is their own, and for appropriately acknowledging the work and ideas of others.

6.1.1 Submitting Assignments

All student assignments are subject to this policy, and when students submit any piece of work they must:

- declare that the work is their own individual work, or of a group of which they are a member
- acknowledge that disciplinary processes may result in cases of academic misconduct such as plagiarism or cheating
- permit the Institute to subject the academic work to internal or external plagiarism detection mechanisms.

All student assessment cover sheets will contain the following wording:

'Academic work submitted may be subjected to plagiarism-detection mechanisms. Copies of students' work may be retained for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in the future. I declare that this is my own work'.

6.1.2 Electronic Assignment Submission Tool

NSHM will use an electronic assignment submission tool. The tool will provide staff with:

- a record of the exact submission time an assignment is uploaded
- an originality report indicating the percentage of the work that is an exact match of existing materials within the electronic assignment submission tool database

If students are required to use the electronic assignment submission tool:

- Staff will set up the electronic assignment submission tool for the assignment
- the assignment may be visible from the start of trimester or appear within the course just prior to the due date

When students submit an assignment:

- The electronic assignment submission will generate an originality report

For resubmissions, the student will need to wait 24 hours from the production of the first report to receive a subsequent report

6.1.3 Penalties for Student Academic Misconduct

When assessing an incident of apparent academic misconduct, staff must consider relevant factors to determine the level of misconduct and the seriousness of the academic misconduct, such as:

- The knowledge and experience of the student
- The type of misconduct
- Whether the misconduct was intentional or unintentional
- Whether similar misconduct has occurred before.

Academic misconduct may be divided into three categories.

1. Level 1 – Minor

The conduct is assessed as unintentional and a result of lack of knowledge or experience. Examples include plagiarism of less than 10 per cent of the assessment due to poor referencing and using paraphrasing that is too close to the original, or copying a few sentences without referencing.

2. Level 2 – Moderate

The conduct is assessed as either intentional or unintentional but it is acknowledged that the student should have demonstrated knowledge and experience sufficient to understand academic

misconduct. Examples include plagiarism of between 10-25 per cent of an assessment item, and colluding with other students and submitting work as individual rather than group work.

3. Level 3 – Major or serious

The conduct is assessed as intentional and constituting a serious and substantial breach. Examples include but are not limited to cheating in examinations, plagiarism of more than 25 per cent of an assessment item, particularly in a thesis, or fabricating or falsifying data in a thesis.

6.1.4 Penalties

Any penalty for academic misconduct should be imposed in accordance with the assessed level of the offence as described above. In particular, it should consider evidence of intent.

Responsibility for making determinations regarding academic misconduct lies with:

- Level 1 – Course Coordinator (in conjunction with the lecturer and/or tutor)
- Level 2 – Chief - Academic and Quality Systems
- Level 3 – Academic Board

The penalties that may be imposed for findings of academic misconduct include:

- A warning
- Requirement for the student to undertake learning support or counselling
- Resubmission of the assessment item or undertaking supplementary assessment, with maximum achievement of a pass grade
- Requirement to undertake another form of examination, which has improved integrity
- Reduction in the marks allocated to the relevant assessment component consistent with the level of academic misconduct
- A mark of zero allocated to the assessment item
- A fail grade applied to the course, with the option to re-enrol at a future date
- Exclusion from the program with an option to re-enrol at a future date to be determined by the Chief - Academic and Quality Systems.
- Withdrawal of a conferred award.

6.1.5 The Process for Imposing Penalties

Staff who believe an incident of academic misconduct has occurred must undertake the following process:

- The lecturer, tutor or marker refers the alleged misconduct to the Level 1 decision-maker in the first instance, to determine the scope of misconduct, together with any evidence, such as the relevant assignment.
- The issue is referred upwards where necessary until the most appropriate decision-maker has been involved.
- The student's record is checked to determine whether there have been any other instances of academic misconduct recorded.
- The decision-maker conducts an initial investigation of the allegation.
- The student is invited to attend a meeting to discuss the issue and may bring a support person. In the event this meeting is not held, the relevant decision-maker drafts and sends a letter formally notifying the student of his/her concern in writing, asking the student to respond to the allegation within 14 days.

- The Chief - Academic and Quality Systems receives a copy of all correspondence regarding the alleged misconduct.
- If the student does not respond within the 14-day timeframe, the decision-maker will decide on whether a penalty will be imposed, defines the penalty, and determines whether any other action is required.
- A formal notice of the decision is sent to the student together with information outlining their right to appeal the decision.
- Copies of the notice and subsequent actions are recorded on the student's file and assessments are adjusted accordingly, where relevant.

6.1.6 Appeals

A student who has been assessed as having committed an act of academic misconduct can appeal against a penalty in the following ways:

- Submit a written appeal to the Chief - Academic and Quality Systems (Level 1) or Academic Board (Level 2 or 3), depending on the level of the academic misconduct.
- If an appeal to the Chief - Academic and Quality Systems is unsuccessful, a student may make a further appeal, in writing, to the Academic Board.
- If a student is still unhappy with the decision, he or she may make a final appeal to an external third party as described in the Student Grievance Policy and Procedure.

6.2 For Staff

Staff at the Institute are responsible for:

- maintaining the highest ethical standards in the conduct of research and scholarly activities, and within the guidelines of the Academic Freedom and Ethical Conduct Policy.
- promoting academic integrity and honesty.
- monitoring and detecting academic misconduct.
- reporting academic misconduct to a more senior member of academic staff.

6.2.1 Staff Academic Misconduct

Any allegations of staff academic misconduct must be reported promptly, in the first instance to the Chief - Academic and Quality Systems. If the Chief - Academic and Quality Systems determines that there may be a case to answer of academic misconduct, then the matter is referred to the Human Resources (HR) manager, together with a written report on the alleged misconduct. A member of the HR staff (not the manager) will be designated as "Staff Integrity Officer" and that person's name and contact details will be published on the Institute's intranet (internal website). This role, reporting directly to the HR manager, offers an alternative route for allegations and a mechanism for transparency in any cases directly involving the Chief - Academic and Quality Systems or equivalent executive staff.

6.2.2 Process

Upon receipt of a complaint about staff academic misconduct, from either the Chief - Academic and Quality Systems or an appropriate authority with NSHM, the HR manager must commence an investigation of the matter and may appoint other people to assist with the investigation. The investigation will include the following steps:

- The staff member is notified in writing of the allegations made against them, including any evidence, and allowed 14 days to respond, including providing evidence to answer the allegation.

- The HR manager arranges a meeting (referred to here as the Misconduct Panel) to be held between the staff member, the HR manager, the Chief - Academic and Quality Systems (or the Executive Council in any case directly involving the Chief - Academic and Quality Systems), and another member of the Academic Board. The staff member may bring a representative who is not a practising lawyer or barrister.
- The Misconduct Panel considers all relevant factors to determine the existence, level, and seriousness of the academic misconduct, such as:
 - Whether there is a case to answer;
 - The nature of the alleged misconduct;
 - The knowledge and experience of the staff member;
 - Whether the alleged misconduct was intentional or unintentional;
 - Whether the alleged misconduct has occurred and been proven before.

The HR manager must ensure that any new information is promptly provided to all parties for consideration and response. On completion of the investigation, the HR manager prepares a report to the Academic Board outlining:

- the findings of the Misconduct Panel
- any evidence provided
- any conclusions
- any recommendations.

The Chief - Academic and Quality Systems considers the report and may: Make a Positive Finding (misconduct not proven) and take no further action, or

- Request further information from any of the parties and continue its deliberations, or
- Make an Adverse Finding and recommend disciplinary action
- Report to the Academic Board.

6.2.3 Appeals

The staff member may appeal against any adverse finding as outlined in the Staff Grievance Management Policy and Procedure.

7. Responsibilities

NSHM has the responsibility to:

1. ensure NSHM staff and students are aware of the policies and procedures regarding academic misconduct and plagiarism;
2. provide training for academic staff regarding the detection of plagiarism and other academic misconduct, and appropriate ways to deal with academic misconduct;
3. inform students of NSHM's policies and procedures regarding academic misconduct and plagiarism regardless of the student's stage of study;
4. provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate that they are capable of producing the work that they have submitted, if a question arises concerning the authorship of a submitted task;
5. provide instructions for staff and students on how to avoid plagiarism and collusion and how to provide appropriate acknowledgement of academic sources; and
6. ensure all investigations of alleged academic misconduct by staff and students are to be conducted with close regard for procedural fairness. The processes prescribed in this policy for

the hearing of allegations provide staff and students with opportunities to respond to allegations and, on specified grounds, to appeal disciplinary decisions.

Staff and students have the responsibility to:

1. read, understand and respect NSHM's policies and procedures regarding plagiarism, collusion, cheating and other forms of academic misconduct;
2. acquire the knowledge and skills to ensure that they are able to use the appropriate academic conventions in their field of work and/or study;
3. ensure they give due acknowledgement in work presented for assessment to any research and ideas obtained from others; and
4. avoid any action or behavior that may give them an academic advantage to which they are not entitled or which will bring NSHM's academic processes into disrepute.

Staff and students have the right to:

1. be made aware of NSHM's policies and procedures regarding academic misconduct and the penalties that will be imposed for proven academic misconduct;
2. be made aware of the appropriate academic conventions in their field of work and/or study; and
3. respond to allegations of plagiarism, cheating, collusion and other academic misconduct.

8. Confidentiality

All matters relating to academic misconduct including any "sensitive" or personal information presented shall be treated in confidence by those involved in any academic misconduct matter. All academic misconduct forms, appeal forms and evidence will be kept confidential. NSHM will maintain full and comprehensive records, minutes of meetings, and details of decisions. Records and details of academic misconduct must be retained for a period of five years. All such records must be kept strictly confidential and separate to a staff or student's general file or records.

9. Review

NSHM uses a three-year review cycle from commencement or date of last review.

10. Accountabilities and Responsibilities

The Academic Board is responsible for reviewing and approving this policy.

The policy is to be implemented via induction and training of staff and distribution to students and the Institute's higher education community via its website and other publications.