

Academic Misconduct

Definitions

Academic Misconduct refers to any form of academic cheating. The National Film and Television School (the School) takes Academic Misconduct very seriously. Examples of academic misconduct include:

- presenting the work of others as if it were your own including submitting material downloaded from the Internet (plagiarism);
- commissioning another person to produce a piece of work on your behalf (contract cheating)
- colluding with others (including translators, friends or family etc. who work with you unacknowledged) to submit work which is not your own.

Plagiarism is defined as stealing another person's words or ideas and using them as though they were your own. Some examples include:

- writing – e.g. copying from a textbook, journal article, thesis, essay or website without providing adequate reference to the author
- artefacts – e.g. reproducing original artwork, designs, film, sound or performance and presenting them as though they were your own
- data – e.g. copying someone else's programme, database, web page or multimedia presentation without acknowledging the creator.

Students are strongly advised to retain copies of drafts produced while preparing assessed work, as this will be of assistance in demonstrating that the work is their own.

1. Procedure to be adopted in the event of alleged academic misconduct

Where a tutor, or a student, suspects academic misconduct he or she should report the suspicion to the Head of Department in which the work was conducted. The Head of Department will inform the student, in writing, of the allegation of academic misconduct and conduct an investigation including discussing the matter with the student. The Head of Department will consider the results of the investigation. Where the Head of Department concludes that academic misconduct has not taken place, no further action will be taken. Where the Head of Department considers that academic misconduct has taken place he or she will determine one of the following courses of action based upon the severity of the alleged misconduct.

1.1 Minor misconduct

Where the Head of Department considers that a minor breach of the Regulations has taken place, he or she may exercise discretion to address the matter through tutorial advice and support for the student.

1.2 Serious misconduct

Where the Head of Department considers that a serious breach of the Regulations has taken place, he or she will complete a written report and submit it to the Registrar, together with the evidence.

The Registrar will consider the report and evidence and determine an appropriate course of action, based upon the severity of the allegation.

If the Registrar considers that there is insufficient evidence for the case to go forward for further consideration, the student will be informed, in writing, that the case has been closed. The report, evidence and any correspondence in relation to the case will be kept as a record.

If the student had readily admitted to a breach of the Regulations during the investigation phase, the Registrar will make a recommendation to the Sub-Board of Examiners on the severity of the misconduct and an appropriate penalty.

If the student contests an allegation of academic misconduct during the investigation phase or an admitted breach of the Regulations is serious and there is sufficient evidence for an Inquiry Panel to be formed to consider the case, the Registrar will convene an Inquiry Panel Hearing. The Registrar will inform the student in writing, giving details of the arrangements for the Hearing. The letter will include full details of the allegation, including the Head of Department's written report and any evidence to be considered.

1.3 Inquiry Panel Hearing

The membership of the Academic Progress and Appeals Committee (which constitutes the Inquiry Panel) shall be as follows:

- The Director of NFTS (or nominee)
- An external assessor as relevant
- Two heads of department from two different specialisations.

The student will be given at least one week's notice of the Hearing. If, once arrangements have been agreed, the student fails to attend on the agreed time and date, or if the student fails to respond to all reasonable attempts to make arrangements, the Hearing may take place in the absence of the student.

All members of the Inquiry Panel and the student will be sent copies of the Head of Department's report and all papers to be considered not later than one week in advance of the Hearing

The student will be invited to present his/her case before the Inquiry Panel. At the Hearing the student may be accompanied by a Students' Union representative or other member of the School and shall be enabled to call witnesses and produce documents. Any documents presented to the Panel, and the names of any witnesses attending, should be supplied not later than week in advance of the Hearing. The Inquiry Panel shall call the Head of Department and other relevant witnesses to answer questions.

After consideration of all the evidence available, the Inquiry Panel may make one of the following decisions:

Where the Panel is not satisfied that misconduct has taken place, the student will be informed in writing and a copy of the letter kept as a record.

Where the Panel is satisfied that misconduct has taken place, it will make a recommendation to the Sub-Board of Examiners on the severity of the misconduct and an appropriate penalty. Depending on the severity of the academic misconduct the normal recommendation would be referral or failure. The student will be informed in writing and a copy of the letter will be kept as a record.

1.4 Appeal against a finding of academic misconduct

A student may lodge an appeal against a decision made against him or her of academic misconduct. The appeal may be submitted in accordance with the Student Appeals Procedure, except that only the following shall constitute valid grounds for appeal:

- the Panel has demonstrated unfairness or bias in the way it has conducted itself
- the Panel has not followed its regulations and procedures
- a material administrative error has occurred in the finding of misconduct

2. The Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education

Decisions taken under this procedure may be eligible for review by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIA), which is an independent body set up to review student complaints. More information about the OIA can be accessed at <http://www.oiahe.org.uk/>. The OIA can be contacted at 0118 959 9813 or enquiries@oiahe.org.uk. Where applicable, students will be provided with a Completion of Procedures Letter and information about how to apply to the OIA for a review of a decision taken under this procedure.