

PROCEDURE OF THE OPEN UNIVERSITY FOR THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDIES IN CASES OF CHEATING

These instructions have been drawn up by taking into account the Regulations on Degrees and the Protection of Students' Rights at the University of Helsinki, Rector's Decision No 172/2011 (11 November 2011) and the decision of the Board of the Open University (10 October 2017) on the procedure to be followed if a student is suspected of cheating and plagiarism. These instructions determine the Open University's administrative procedure for the assessment of studies in cases of cheating, and supersede the previous instructions of January 2012. The new procedure will be effective as of the beginning of 2018.

Procedure in cases of suspected cheating and plagiarism

Examination cheating and other types of academic cheating as well as plagiarism are defined in Rector's Decision No 172/2011. The person (e.g., a course teacher or examination invigilator) who suspects a student of disturbance, cheating or plagiarism must promptly notify the student of the suspicion and ask him or her to provide an explanation.

If the suspicion proves to be unfounded, the procedure will be terminated and the decision announced to the suspected student.

Cheating and disturbances in examinations:

- The packet of materials for examination invigilators contains a form for reporting alleged cheating and disturbances in examinations.
- The University's examination service must immediately bring the matter to the attention of the person responsible for the studies in question.
- Based on the information supplied on the form, the responsible person must request the student to provide an explanation without delay, no later than the week following the examination.
- Having reviewed the student's explanation and other documents, the person responsible for the studies and the teacher of the relevant course must decide whether the cheating was intentional or unintentional.

Plagiarism:

- When a teacher suspects a student of plagiarism, he or she must ask the student for a written explanation, based on which the teacher must decide whether the plagiarism was intentional or unintentional.
- If the student admits to plagiarism or provides an inadequate explanation, the teacher must report the matter to the person responsible for the studies in question.

Consequences of substantiated cheating or plagiarism

If there is reason to assume that a student is guilty of intentional cheating or plagiarism, the Open University applies the following procedure:

- The teacher or the person responsible for the studies must present in writing the grounds for the suspicion of cheating or plagiarism and ask the student for a written explanation. The teacher must also report the suspicion to the person responsible for the studies.
- If the student admits to cheating or the cheating is considered to be otherwise sufficiently substantiated, the student will be deemed to have failed the course or examination on the grounds of cheating. The teacher decides whether to fail the student in the course or examination.
- If the teacher or the person responsible for the studies consider the cheating to be deliberate or recurrent, they must take the matter and the related statements to the director of department. The director must decide whether the student will lose the right to complete the course or examination in question.
- If the student denies having cheated or is dissatisfied with the decision made, the teacher or the person responsible for the studies must take the matter to the director of department for decision.

In addition to receiving the written statements, the director of department may, if necessary, hold a hearing, of which minutes must be taken. The hearing must be attended by the student, the student's support person (if any), the teacher who raised the suspicion, the person responsible for the studies and the director of department.