

How to deal with suspicion of cheating

A guide for UiB staff



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The paragraph "Use of Ephorus" was replaced with "Use of text recognition applications" 3 May 2017



UNIVERSITY OF BERGEN

Ethics and academic integrity are important focus areas at UiB. This brochure provides employees with a brief description of procedures and who is responsible for what in cases involving suspicion of cheating.

“The fundamental values relating to academic activities at UiB are openness, verifiability, scientific integrity and critical discussion.”

UiB's pillars

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What is cheating?

Cheating is a serious breach of trust in relation to fellow students, the university and society. The university is obliged to react to cheating and attempts to cheat in all aspects of academic activities.

Examples of cheating
Not referring to sources
Referring to fake sources
Not marking text from other sources as citations (plagiarism)
Finding a paper online or in other sources and presenting it as one's own.
Submitting a paper previously used by another person or by the student him/herself in another exam or assignment
Submitting a paper that wholly or partly has been prepared by a different person than the student himself/herself
Breaking the rules for collaboration and working together
Using support materials that are not allowed (for example pieces of paper containing subject-related information, mobile phones, smart watches)
Including non-permitted subject matter in permitted support materials
Having access to support materials that are not permitted (even though they are not used)
Complicity in cheating
Signs of cheating/plagiarism
Changes of style in text
Text seems familiar/have read it before
Mixture of citation styles, lack of citations/references
Sources in the bibliography that have not been cited
Odd formatting and changes in format/style
Great variation in academic quality in the text

On suspicion of cheating in the submission of written work, it is important to consider:

- Scope of text similarity
- Lack of references
- Lack of a list of references
- How close to the source the written text is
- If attempts have been made to conceal the possible cheating

Recurring incidences of cheating count against the student.

A large proportion of text cheating is discovered using electronic text control (Ephorus).

If you are uncertain whether or not there are reasonable grounds for suspicion of cheating, you should present the documentation to the academic and administrative management of the department or centre.

Use of text recognition applications

UiB uses text recognition applications to search for plagiarism. The application checks electronically submitted papers. Other documents may be uploaded as reference text (rights/permission needed). The system searches papers and compares them with online texts and texts submitted to UiB and checked by Ephorus or Urkund. The generated reports must be reviewed, and it will be up to the individual to consider whether there is reason to suspect the student for cheating or not. Ephorus is replaced with Urkund. Contact urkund@uib.no for user account and information.

Roles, procedures and documentation

Invigilators in the examination premises

The invigilators check the examination premises before and during examinations. Support materials are sometimes found on the candidates' desks. In recent years mobile phones in particular have become a frequent problem. If an invigilator suspects cheating at a written examination, the chief invigilator must be notified. The chief invigilator records the course of events, takes care of any documentation, informs the Division of Student Affairs, and then writes a report on what took place. The candidate may complete the examination, but is informed that the Division of Student Affairs will submit the report to the faculty in question, who is responsible for investigating the case and taking it to the Appeals Committee.

Tutors and examiners

Cheating can occur in all student work that is subject to assessment. When a suspicion of cheating arises, it is important to immediately safeguard the basis for the suspicion as documentation for the further reporting and case processing.

See figure on page 8.

The documentation is presented to the course supervisor and administrative manager. At the same time the assessment process must proceed as normally as possible for all of the other students.

Based on the aforementioned documentation, the student is informed in writing of the suspicion, and is invited to an interview with the department.

If the suspicion of cheating is upheld, the case is transferred to the faculty for further processing.

The student's rights

While the department/faculty investigate whether there is cause to initiate a case on grounds of cheating, the student is entitled to access case documents, to explain himself/herself, and to provide his/her opinion in writing and orally, but the student is under no obligation to make statements. It is important that the student is made aware of this. The student may also use legal counsel or other assistance, but any costs at this stage will not be covered by the University.

When the faculty has transferred the case to the Appeals Committee, the student is entitled to use legal counsel (lawyer) at the cost of the University. The student is entitled to access to the case documents and to comment on the case in writing. The student may also request a meeting with the Committee's secretary. If the student is found guilty of cheating, he/she may appeal to the national "Felles klagenemnd for studentsaker" (Joint Appeals Committee for Student Affairs) within three weeks.

Examples of non-extenuating circumstances when dealing with cheating	
Attempts at cheating	The Colleges and Universities Act equates cheating and attempted cheating.
The student's situation	The demands are strict for everyone. Practice in the past indicates that one does not take the student's background into consideration.
The student was unaware of the rules	The University is responsible for providing information on applicable regulations and making relevant information readily available. However, on the basis of an appeal case from the University of Oslo, the Ministry has stated: "In exam and test situations strict requirements apply to students. Each student is responsible for familiarising him/herself before an exam with what support materials are permitted and with the guidelines for their use."
Assignment work vs. examinations	All written work that is produced and submitted by the student is subject to the same requirements with regard to academic integrity and the use of sources.

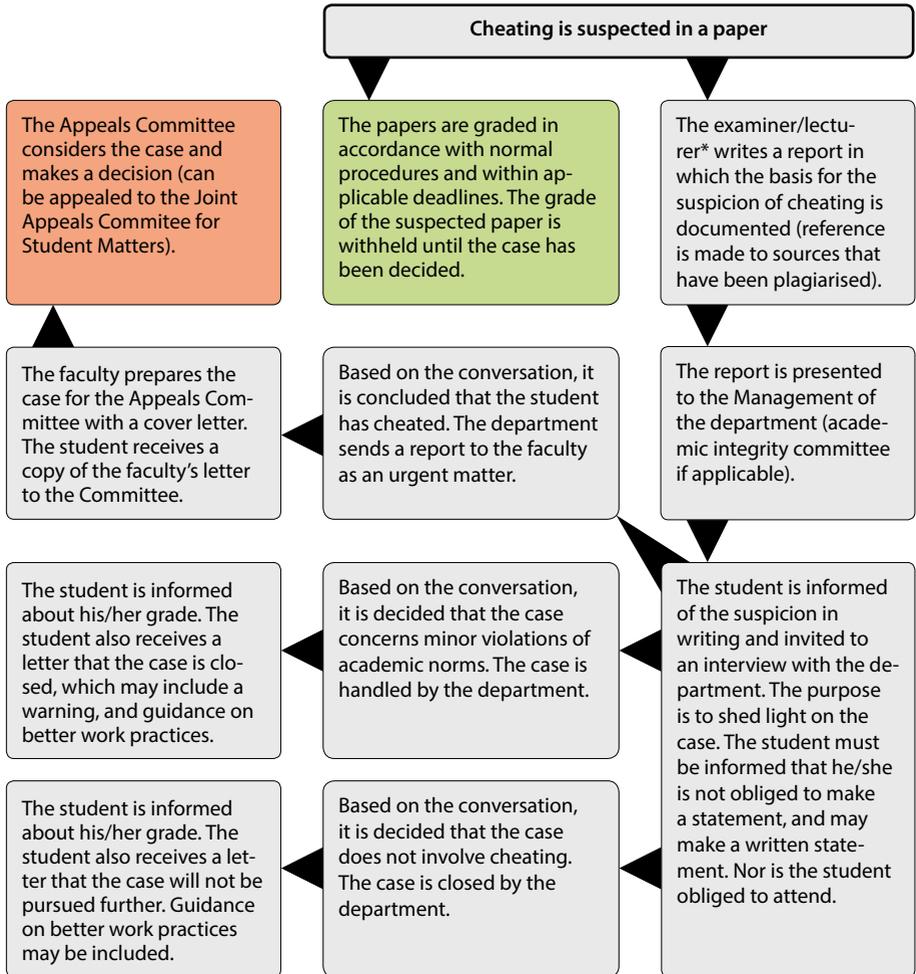
The University Appeals Committee

Pursuant to the Colleges and Universities Act, Section 5-1, the university must have an appeals committee. The appeals committee consists of five persons: two university tutors, two students and a chairman (whose qualifications satisfies the minimum requirements for an appeals court judge). The committee meets approximately once monthly and deals with cases of cheating, among other things. When it has been established that cheating has occurred, the appeals committee is authorized to annul the student's examination, and approval of compulsory activities and courses. It may also decide to bar the student from UiB and from taking examinations at all universities and university colleges in Norway for up to two semesters. Annulment of examinations has no period of limitation.¹ Cheating may thus be brought up and processed with an aim of annulment, even though the cheating happened some time ago, and the student has left the university. If an annulment decision is made, any diplomas or grade transcripts must be returned to the university.²

1 Colleges and Universities Act, Section 4–7 no. 4

2 Colleges and Universities Act, Section 4–7 no. 5

Flowchart for cases of plagiarism



* The term lecturer refers to everyone who is in contact with students in a teaching context.