

Ethical Guidelines for Studies

South-Eastern Finland
University of Applied Sciences

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1 PURPOSE

For South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences, it is a priority to ensure the progress of studies and the wellbeing of and social interaction between students. Fairness, equality, and non-discrimination are essential qualities of ethically sustainable operations.

The purpose of the ethical guidelines is to advance equal treatment and eliminate barriers that might hinder it. Ethical guidelines are an essential part of Xamk's study guidance system and they support students' learning and wellbeing.

The guidelines aim at preventing misconduct and promoting zero tolerance at Xamk with regard to inappropriate behaviour, bullying and harassment. In addition, the guidelines present instructions on ethical academic study.

The ethical guidelines for studies are appended to the Xamk Degree Regulations.

2 SCOPE

The ethical guidelines apply to all students and concern all study-related situations.

3 LEGAL BASIS OF THE GUIDELINES

These guidelines are based on the following acts:

- Universities of Applied Sciences Act (932/2014)
- Occupational Safety and Health Act (738/2002).

4 XAMK'S ETHICAL PRINCIPLES AND THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

Xamk's [ethical principles](#) are applied to all operations. Every single member of the Xamk community has the responsibility for their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others. Social interaction and the aspiration to achieve good, balanced results are essential qualities in all day-to-day operations at Xamk. Xamk aims to provide students not only with professional competence but also with skills that help them become responsible citizens.

Responsible students know their rights and obligations, are committed to their studies, and take responsibility for their learning.

The student has the right to:

- be treated in a fair and equal manner
- be heard and respected
- learn to set objectives and act accordingly in order to achieve them

- develop their learning capabilities
- learn to act in a responsible and interactive manner independently as well as in a group
- learn work-related social interaction skills during their studies
- participate in an active and responsible manner in learning situations and promote the learning of others
- participate in activities that support the achievement of study-related objectives
- support others and be supported
- become an expert in their field of study
- a safe and peaceful studying environment

The student has the obligation to:

- follow the code of conduct and regulations that have been approved by Xamk
- follow the [guidelines on the publicity of teaching](#) in remote teaching
- contribute to the creation of a safe learning environment
- be honest and diligent in their studies and in all related assignments, presentations, and evaluation
- apply ethically sustainable methods of data search, practical training, thesis writing and evaluation, and produce data and content in an open manner (see [TENK 2023, 11–15](#))
- take appropriate notice of other students and teachers during classroom practice, practical training and thesis writing process, as well as when completing assignments and giving feedback on the operation of Xamk
- ensure that all written assignments and the thesis are planned and written in compliance with the given requirements and standards (see [TENK 2023, 11–15](#))
- observe that in group assignments, the distribution of responsibilities and workload is agreed between all group members
- appropriately respond to any misconduct they notice
- comply with all regulations and instructions during studies, practical training, and in cooperation with businesses or organisations concerning, for example, confidentiality and transparency, data security, business secrets and business ideas

5 ETHICAL ACADEMIC GUIDELINES

5.1 Good research practices

All studies at Xamk must comply with the [guidelines for the responsible conduct of research](#) published by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK), which took effect on 15 March 2023. The objective of the guidelines is to promote good research practices and to prevent violations thereof in all organisations that conduct research as well as research, development, and innovation (RDI) projects, such as universities, universities of applied sciences, and research institutes.

The good research practices described in the guidelines must also be complied with in UAS studies, as well as bachelor's and master's theses and research and development projects

at universities of applied sciences. (TENK 2023). However, allegations of research integrity violations in UAS studies and theses are not handled by the procedures in the guidelines published by TENK, with the exception of so-called scientific theses, with the thesis being part of an RDI project managed by the higher education institution. On matters related to research ethics, assistance and counselling is provided by the Research Ethics Adviser of the South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences.

The Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (Arene) has prepared [Ethical recommendations for thesis writing at universities of applied sciences](#), last updated on 18 February 2025. The recommendations discuss the rights, obligations and responsibilities of participants in the thesis process from a research ethical point of view. They are based on legislation and the scientific community's international and national research ethics principles, policies, and recommendations.

5.2 Basic principles concerning the use of artificial intelligence and language models in studies

The following basic principles have been outlined at Xamk concerning the use of artificial intelligence and language models in studies:

1. Students must be provided with guidelines, rules, and principles concerning the use of artificial intelligence and language models.
2. The use of artificial intelligence and language models is, in principle, allowed, taking into account the rules concerning plagiarism.
3. When planning assignments for students to hand in, teachers must, in the future, ensure that the assignments cannot be passed with texts produced solely by artificial intelligence.
4. Students are ultimately always responsible for the contents and ethical standards of the assignments they submit.
5. A teacher may make an exception to principles 2 and 3 for a single assignment or course with justification.

The use of AI-generated text as part of written work is not allowed without appropriate references to the original, verified sources. Artificial intelligence may not be used to produce the final version of a written assignment. AI-generated text may not be presented as written by the student themselves. AI-generated text is not to be referenced directly nor directly quoted. It can be used if it is adapted, using one's own words and, as mentioned before, with appropriate references.

6 MISCONDUCT

The procedures followed at Xamk with regard to the assessment of studies are presented in the Xamk degree regulations. Passing a course, an assignment or an examination requires an appropriate demonstration of competence as well as of ethically sustainable practices.

In scientific activities, misconduct is classified into three categories, which are fabrication, falsification, and plagiarism.

Misconduct is any breach of the examination regulations, a plagiarised assignment, and deceptive conduct with regard to practical training, work placement or thesis, or deceptive conduct related to one's studies. AI use that does not comply with the AI guidelines valid at the time of the study attainment may also be considered misconduct, which is why students are required to disclose the use of AI transparently.

Misconduct is always considered a punishable offence against the academic community. There will be consequences for a student who is found guilty of any form of misconduct.

6.1 Breach of examination regulations

A breach of the examination regulations will include:

- the introduction into the examination room or examinarium of any written or electronic materials that are not specifically permitted for that examination
- any attempt to confer, collaborate or communicate with any other candidate during the period of the examination
- any breach of the rules of an examinarium
- any other deceptive conduct that aims to affect one's own performance or the performance of other candidates during, before or after the period of an examination
- an act or behaviour that disturbs the performance of other candidates
- plagiarism or doing the test under a false name, or impersonating another student, in a sit-at-home or online examination.

6.2 Plagiarism in assignments

Plagiarism is any unauthorised copying or reproduction of materials to be used in an assignment or report paper made for a particular course. Plagiarism is also the use or representation of a text or assignment made by someone else, or any part of such text or assignment, as one's own. Plagiarism can be direct, modified or paraphrased (see [TENK 2023, 17](#)). Violations of good research practices also include self-plagiarism. Self-plagiarism means, for example, presenting the same results again while giving the impression that they have not been presented before. References to your own previous work must be made the same way as to publications by other authors.

Specific instructions on how to credit the original source of information, place source references in the body text, and compose lists of references are presented in Xamk's thesis and other writing guidelines: [Writing instructions \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

Xamk uses an online anti-plagiarism service that checks a student's texts against the texts of others in order to detect any plagiarised content in assignments and thesis papers. In addition to this, we have drafted instructions on how to avoid plagiarism for students.

6.3 Deceptive conduct concerning theses

The guidelines on plagiarism and the use of AI presented in the previous section (6.2) also apply to theses. [The Ethical recommendations for thesis writing at universities of applied sciences](#), issued by Arene (the Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences), promote good academic practices and prevent academic dishonesty in the thesis process. All universities of applied sciences are committed to these recommendations.

Since the guidelines published by TENK are no longer applied to UAS theses, South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences has its own process for investigating allegations of research integrity violations and misconduct concerning theses. This process is described in section 7.2.

6.4 Deceptive conduct during practical training or work placement

In terms of practical training, the following is deemed fraudulent activity: Fabricating documents related to practical training, i.e., presenting falsified, concocted, or altered observations, recordings or work schedules and similar, presenting another student's assignments as one's own or having another student complete one's assignment. Also, negligence concerning the general laws and regulations to which the field of business and workplace are subject can be considered deceptive conduct.

6.5 Other deceptive conduct

Deceptive conduct also includes the sale, distribution, or purchase of assignments or other materials that are the result of someone's studies and the act of having someone else complete one's assignment or produce any materials required for a particular course. Neglecting to do one's own part or taking credit for work done by another group member in group assignments is also considered misconduct. In group assignments, another member of the group may also report a possible suspicion of misconduct to the teacher responsible for the assessment. When assessing the consequences of misconduct concerning group assignments, essential factors include whether the entire group, part of the group, or only a single member of the group is guilty of misconduct and whether other members of the group have had an actual possibility to notice or interfere in the misconduct. A student acting without regard to good scientific practices (see TENK 2023) is also considered misconduct.

7 INVESTIGATION AND CONSEQUENCES OF MISCONDUCT

7.1 Witnessing and reporting of misconduct

Allegation of misconduct is a serious matter. All allegations of misconduct are carefully investigated.

If an examination supervisor suspects that a student has breached the examination regulations, the student is immediately removed from the examination room. The supervisor states in the student's examination paper that the student is suspected of having breached the examination regulations and has been removed from the examination room. The supervisor then reports the incident to the person who will assess the student's performance in the examination.

If a student suspects another student of having breached the examination regulations, they must immediately inform an examination supervisor. If the alleged breach of the examination regulations occurs in an examinarium where electronic examinations are sat, the examinarium master user must be informed via Xinfo after the examination. If the breach of the examination regulations is detected only after the examination, the person who will assess the student's performance in the examination must be informed.

An alleged breach of the examination regulations occurring in an examinarium can be viewed and investigated later by means of a visual recording. Investigation is initiated either by the teacher who will assess the student's performance in the examination or the student who detects the alleged breach of the examination regulations.

With regard to theses, a misconduct investigation may also be initiated after a decision on the approval of the thesis has been made if the suspicion of misconduct only arises at this point. With theses, the misconduct investigation must, however, be initiated within five years from when the decision was made.

7.2 Handling of misconduct

The investigation of and hearings related to misconduct are confidential. The handling of misconduct allegations must be carried out without unreasonable delay, and the student has the right to be aware of its progress in all its stages. The student has the right to be heard during the handling of the matter. The student's legal protection is guaranteed in all stages of the process.

If a student is suspected of misconduct (breach of the examination regulations, plagiarism in an assignment, deceptive conduct in practical training, work placement or thesis, or other deceptive conduct), the teacher who will assess the student's performance or supervise the student's thesis will first bring up the matter with the student and request the student to provide their account of the situation. If it is clear from the student's account that no misconduct has occurred or that the student has not acted with intent to deceive but that the student's actions have been due to, for example, carelessness or ignorance (e.g., incorrect referencing), the matter may be resolved by the teacher unless the student presents a demand to be heard. If the discussion with the student proves to be inconclusive or confirms the suspicion of intent, the teacher who will assess the student's performance or supervise the student's thesis will report the alleged misconduct to the Director of Education without delay.

With regard to theses, the Director of Education begins an investigation of the thesis after the alleged misconduct has been reported. In the case of a thesis that has already been approved, the misconduct investigation must be initiated no later than five years from when the decision was made. The investigation is conducted by two independent persons, of whom at least one has hard skills in the field of the thesis, and one has academic writing skills. They can also receive guidance in questions related to research ethics from the chairperson or another member of the ethics committee as necessary. A report is drafted about the results of the investigation, including a justified conclusion on whether or not misconduct is considered to have occurred. If it is considered that misconduct has occurred, a description of the type and severity of the misconduct is also presented, along with recommendations on how its consequences can be repaired and on possible disciplinary actions. The investigation is carried out before a hearing is organised, and the results are

presented during the hearing. The ethics committee will also be notified of the results of the investigation.

If the suspicion of misconduct arises only after the study attainment has been approved, the severity and wilfulness of the act must be carefully weighed against the time passed since the thesis was approved and the effects of the misconduct investigation on the student's legal protection. If the misconduct was not exceptionally severe and the deceptive conduct was not wilful, the matter must be decided in favour of the student, because the error was not noticed at the revision stage.

If a student is suspected of misconduct, the student, the possible examination supervisor, and the teacher who will assess the student's performance or supervise the student's thesis must be heard before any disciplinary actions are taken. A verbal or written response may be given at the hearing. The hearing may be waived only if the situation has been completely resolved, for example, by the student having admitted to misconduct and not having presented a demand to be heard. At the hearing, the perspective of student guidance is essential, and a written memo must be produced. With regard to theses, the report on the results of the investigation is added as an attachment to the memo. The student has the right to be accompanied at the hearing by a support person who must not be a member of Xamk staff. If necessary, a member of the ethics committee may also be invited to the hearing to provide guidance on questions related to research ethics. A formal written invitation (the template may be downloaded from [Dynasty](#)) to the hearing is sent to the student without delay. At the same time, the Director of Education requests an administrative coordinator to open the case in the case management system. All documents related to the case in question are stored in this location.

The process of completing and assessing the particular assignment or course will be suspended for the period of time it takes to verify or dismiss the alleged case of misconduct. The student's performance will not be disqualified until the act of misconduct has been verified.

If the allegation of misconduct proves to be groundless, the Director of Education will declare the case dismissed and the handling is ceased. The student suspected of misconduct and the person who first reported this misconduct will be notified of the decision. If the reported allegation of misconduct proves to be intentionally false, the consequences will be determined by the Director of Education.

7.3 Consequences of misconduct

A reported and verified misconduct results in disciplinary actions. The Director of Education provides the CEO/President and the administrative coordinator with the memo of the hearing and their proposal as to how to proceed with the disciplinary actions. Based on this, the CEO/President is obliged to present their decision on the consequences of misconduct within 30 days.

The exam or other assignment where the misconduct has been detected is considered failed and must be redone within the re-attempt limits. In the case of a thesis that has already been approved, annulment of the approval decision may be sought in accordance with section 117 of the Administrative Judicial Procedure Act (808/2019), provided that the prerequisites for the annulment are met. However, before this, the student has the possibility

to revise their thesis so that it meets the criteria of an approved thesis, in which case annulment of the decision will not be sought.

Disciplinary actions are described in Chapter 9.

8 HARASSMENT AND INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

Inappropriate behaviour and harassment are not accepted in any of Xamk's premises or learning environments. Members of the higher education community must not harm or endanger their own safety or health or that of others and must follow the safety and security instructions issued by the university of applied sciences.

Pursuant to the applicable legislation (Universities of Applied Sciences Act 932/2014, section 31; Occupational Safety and Health Act 738/2002, section 28), Xamk has the obligation to intervene in any harassment brought to its attention occurring on its premises or learning environments. Members of the higher education community should actively monitor for harassment and take initiative to address it. If students notice harassment or inappropriate treatment, they are also expected to discuss their observations with the relevant parties and escalate the matter if necessary.

8.1 Definition and forms of harassment and inappropriate behaviour

Definition

The terms *harassment* and *inappropriate treatment* refer to serious negative behaviour which is persistent or repeated. Sometimes a one-off situation can also be so serious that it requires intervention. The experience of harassment arises when a victim of negative behaviour feels defenceless or unable to control the situation.

Forms of negative behaviour include

- violating personal integrity (such as shouting, threatening verbally or in writing, assaulting, direct violence, gender-based harassment, sexual harassment)
- questioning reputation or status (such as spreading false information, speaking ill of someone, ridiculing, humiliating, or mocking)
- continuous unjustified criticism or hindering another person's studies
- personal criticism
- isolating a person from the community (not talking to and prohibiting others from talking to the person in question, not greeting or listening, restricting the expression of opinion or constantly interrupting the person's speech, isolating the person to work separately from others)
- non-verbal messages (such as facial expressions, gestures).

Harassment or inappropriate treatment does not mean

- relevant decisions and instructions concerning studies and learning assignments
- joint discussion of the problems of the higher education community, even if it includes issues causing uncertainty, anxiety or other negative emotions - a justified warning or punishment issued to a person.

8.2 Responding to inappropriate behaviour

If a student feels that they have been subject to inappropriate behaviour, they should first raise an issue with the person whose behaviour they regard as inappropriate. The issue can also be raised with any person responsible for organising the situation in which the inappropriate behaviour took place. An issue concerning inappropriate behaviour can also be raised by someone who has not been personally subject to it. The Student Union has appointed harassment advisers whom students can contact if they have been subject to or witnessed inappropriate behaviour.

If the inappropriate behaviour persists after the issue has been raised, the person subject to this inappropriate behaviour should contact a member of staff who will bring the matter to the attention of the Head of Security and Safety. Victims of inappropriate behaviour can also report the matter through Xamk's digital [incident reporting system Falcony](#), where you can make reports either anonymously or by using your name. The necessary investigations will be conducted, and the follow-up measures will be decided under the leadership of the Head of Security and Safety.

In order to guarantee the legal security of the parties, documentation of what has happened will be initiated as soon as the staff are informed of the matter.

During practical training or work placement, the rules set by the provider of the training or work placement are followed in addition to these guidelines.

9 DISCIPLINARY ACTION AND APPEAL PROCEDURES CONCERNING MISCONDUCT AND INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

If a student is found guilty of misconduct or has violated the rules and regulations of Xamk, the CEO/President can issue a warning to the student.

The Xamk Board of Directors may temporarily suspend the student – for no more than 12 months. A student can be temporarily suspended if

- they have repeated an offence of misconduct, inappropriate behaviour or violation of the rules and regulations of Xamk, or
- the nature or circumstances of their first offence of misconduct or violating the rules and regulations of Xamk provide sufficient reason for temporary suspension.

Before issuing a warning or temporary suspension, the student must be heard.

During the period of temporary suspension, the student is not allowed to participate in lessons, lectures, and examinations, and they cannot have credits registered in their transcript of records.

Disciplinary actions will be stated in the student's transcript of records for the duration of their studies. If a disciplinary action is taken with an exchange or double-degree student, the student's home university will be informed.

In the case of a thesis that has already been approved, annulment of the approval decision may be sought in accordance with section 117 of the Administrative Judicial Procedure Act (808/2019). The annulment is sought on the CEO/President's initiative.

The student has the right to lodge an appeal against their temporary suspension with the Administrative Court of Eastern Finland. The student also has the right to lodge an appeal with the above-mentioned court against the warning issued by the CEO/President. If a course has been fully or partly failed, the student is entitled to request a rectification from the Board of Examiners.

10 REVIEW OF PROCEDURES AND AVAILABILITY OF ETHICAL GUIDELINES

The Education Services Unit reviews the ethical guidelines every time the Degree Regulations are updated.

Students are informed about the ethical guidelines on Lux at the beginning of each semester.