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Guidelines for processing with disciplinary matters

Chalmers policy document

Purpose

These guidelines aim to clarify how to apply the rules and manage disciplinary matters in first and second cycle educational programmes (Undergraduate and Master's level). The document does not replace the Rules of Discipline. The guidelines should help to ensure that the disciplinary procedure is clear and legally compliant and provide support for the ongoing process.

Introduction

The *Rules of Discipline for students at Chalmers tekniska högskola AB* set out the types of behaviours and actions that can lead to disciplinary action at Chalmers. All instances where a student is suspected of an offence or other form of misconduct must be reported to the President without delay. Decisions about disciplinary action are made by the Disciplinary Committee. Appeal decisions are made by Chalmers University Board. The procedure for reporting and dealing with disciplinary matters is set out below.

To prevent attempts to mislead in examinations, it is important that students have access to

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information about how courses are examined and the nature of collaboration that is allowed in examinations. Both students and employees must also be aware of the rules relating to examinations (see *Regulations for planning and conducting first cycle and second cycle courses and examinations*) and rules relating to disciplinary offences and action according to the Rules of Discipline.

The Rules of Discipline apply to students

The Rules of Discipline apply to students at Chalmers. Participants in commissioned educational programmes are not normally considered students. A doctoral student may be the subject of an investigation under the Rules of Discipline if, in the context of their studies, they are suspected of having committed an offence under the above. In the event of any uncertainty, advice must be sought from Chalmers' legal team.

Disciplinary action

The disciplinary measures that Chalmers may take are a warning, suspension from studies for a specific period or expulsion from the university.

The following student behaviours and actions are breaches of the Rules of Discipline and must be reported.

- Misleading (cheating, plagiarism, illicit collaboration, etc.),
- Disruption of Chalmers activities (e.g., teaching or examinations),
- Harassment of other Chalmers students or employees,
- Contravention of regulations or other rules that apply to students.

The limitation period is two years, starting from the date when the offence was committed. Once two years have elapsed, no disciplinary action can be taken.

Expulsion

If a student is guilty of serious criminal activity or presents a danger to themselves or others due to, for example, a mental disorder or substance misuse, expulsion may be considered as a sanction. Decisions about expulsion can be taken by the Disciplinary Committee.

Attempts to mislead in examinations

Plagiarism and illicit collaboration

It can be difficult to judge what constitutes plagiarism. Even where there is evidence, for example from the Urkund system, a person suspecting plagiarism must decide whether there has been an attempt to mislead or whether it is simply the case that the student's performance does not meet the learning objectives. Evidence submitted with a report may require detailed comments from the person reporting the offence so that it is clear what the basis of the suspected plagiarism is.

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If illicit collaboration is suspected, the examiner must decide whether the instructions for the examination were unclear or whether some other factor has led to the student misinterpreting the instructions. If there is any uncertainty about the suspected offence, advice should be sought from the legal section.

Other types of suspected attempts to mislead

Other types of attempts to mislead include the use of illicit examination aids, such as crib sheets, non-permissible notes, or a mobile phone.

If a student is suspected of an attempt to mislead (and the suspicions remain after advice has been received), the President must be notified; see under *Reporting* below.

Student disrupting or preventing teaching

If a student disrupts or prevents teaching, examinations, or any other activity in the context of education at Chalmers, it may be necessary to report their behaviour to the President. This is governed by the *Regulations for Teaching*. If there is any uncertainty about the suspected offence, advice should be sought from the legal section.

- **Harassment**

Under the Swedish Discrimination Act, if the university becomes aware that a student considers themselves to have been the subject of harassment and/or sexual harassment, it must investigate the circumstances around the alleged harassment even if the incident has not been reported. Chalmers has a special process for such situations, *Implementering av process för utredning av kränkningar och trakasserier* (*Process for the investigation of abuse and harassment*, C 2018-1863, in Swedish only). This procedure must be used to address all cases of harassment before the report under the Rules of Discipline is drawn up.

Contravention of regulations or other rules at Chalmers applying to students

If a student contravenes any rules or regulations at Chalmers that apply to students, this must be reported to the President. This may include situations where a student contravenes examination regulations, even if they have not attempted to mislead in the context of the examination in question. Other examples of regulations are the current regulations for classroom exams or on the use of Chalmers' computing or data network resources. If there is any uncertainty as to whether a report should be submitted, advice should be sought from the legal section.

Suspected offences

All Chalmers employees are obliged to report any suspicion of cheating or any other breach of the Rules of Discipline. The suspicion must be able to be objectively justified. However, even a suspicion for which there is very little factual evidence may be sufficient for the incident to be reported. Note

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that it is only in connection with an examination that an attempt to mislead can give rise to disciplinary action, i.e., not in connection with submission of a draft or similar document.

Disciplinary matters at Chalmers are dealt with by the legal section. The student will be provided with support throughout the process from Chalmers' "student ombud" (*studerandeombud*).

Reporting

Where someone is suspected of committing an offence that breaches the Rules of Discipline, the President must be notified without delay. A report of any incident must be sent to the records manager, ideally in electronic form via email. The records manager then forwards the case to a designated case officer.

There is no set format for the report. The template on Chalmers' intranet can be used to help produce a report.

The report must include the following:

- The name and personal identity number of the student,
- The relevant study programme or course, plus course description and syllabus,
- The date of the offence,
- The details of the person reporting the offence – name, role, and contact details,
- A detailed account of the case and the suspected offence, and the reasons for the suspicion,
- Relevant documents – e.g., copies of exam questions, copies of original texts and extracts from Urkund in cases of suspected plagiarism, and other documents that may constitute evidence in the case,
- Other information or documents that may be relevant,
- A clear explanation of how the evidence supports the report,
- Any need for an English-speaking interpreter.

If the matter relates to a course or programme taught in English and the student does not speak Swedish, we recommend that the report is written in English. If an interpreter is needed, you should note this in your report. The Disciplinary Committee's proceedings are always held in Swedish, with an English interpreter where required.

Until a decision has been taken in the case, the student may continue to participate in teaching, examinations or other activity related to their education. Grading for any examination will not be submitted until a decision has been taken in the case.

Following submission of a report

The case officer dealing with the matter must notify the student and the student counsel of the report and the student is given the opportunity to express a view on it. The Chair of the Disciplinary Committee then decides if the matter is to be referred to the committee or if no further action is to

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be taken. If the matter is referred to the Disciplinary Committee, the student, the examiner and, where relevant, the person reporting the offence are given the opportunity to take part in the meeting of the committee. The Disciplinary Committee meets approximately once a month during the semesters. If they wish, the student may bring another person to the meeting to support them. A decision is made at the meeting and the student is immediately informed of the decision if present. A student must always be informed of the decision in writing, irrespective of whether they are present.

Disciplinary Committee decisions

The Disciplinary Committee can decide to either take no action, issue a warning, or suspend the student from their studies. A suspension usually comes into force at the end of the appeal period. The case officer must immediately communicate the decision to the student concerned, the person reporting the offence and the relevant examiner. When the appeal period has ended and the decision is to be put into effect, the case officer must inform Ladok, the relevant student guidance counsellor and the Swedish Board of Student Finance (CSN). The student's Head of Programme and relevant examiners within the suspension period will be informed via the Ladok system. The examiners must in turn inform course teaching staff.

A student who has been found to have contravened the Rules of Discipline and has been suspended may not take part in course activities during the suspension period. This means that access cards, computer accounts and other authorisations for Chalmers systems will cease to function during the suspension period.

What does a suspension mean?

A student cannot consider themselves as a student while suspended, and Chalmers also does not have the same obligations towards the student during the suspension period. This means, for example, that lecturers must not make adjustments because of a suspension, for example by assigning a lab group or handing out course material before the start of the course. Neither must an examiner arrange a customised examination for a student because of their suspension. However, there is nothing to prevent a student from studying separately on their own, away from Chalmers' premises. Before and after the suspension period, a student has the same rights and obligations as other students.

During their suspension, a student will not have access to system support, for example Ladok, learning platforms or other IT resources. However, the student may register for exams or make scheduled course choices in relation to courses outside the suspension period as they need to be able to resume their studies once their suspension has ended. The student will need to contact the Student Centre for help with this.

Related policy documents

- *Rules of Discipline for students at Chalmers tekniska högskola AB*

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- *Regulations for planning and conducting first cycle and second cycle courses and examinations*
- *Appointment regulation for teaching and research faculty*
- *Appointment regulation for first cycle and second cycle education (Undergraduate and Master's education) at Chalmers*
- *Regulations for Teaching*

Document validity

Document applies until further notice.