ABERDEEN INSTITUTE OF DATA SCIENCE AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AT SCNU STUDENT HANDBOOK

This handbook focuses on aspects of the provision offered at the Aberdeen Institute of Data Science and Artificial Intelligence at SCNU relating to the award of a University of Aberdeen degree.
I hope that this undergraduate student handbook will prove a valuable resource by providing important information for your studies with us. It includes information relating to your University of Aberdeen degree studies so that you are clear about the requirements for your studies with us. Alongside more practical information, the Handbook provides key policy information and provides guidance on where to find academic support. This information in this Handbook will be updated from time to time, and it is important that you refer to the website as this is where you will find all updated information.

It is important to note that for policy information relating to your SCNU degree, you should refer to the information contained within the SCNU Undergraduate Student Handbook.

I hope that you will find this a fruitful and engaging place to study and learn. I hope also that you will greatly enjoy your studies in the Joint Institute and the opportunity this affords you to gain degrees from both SCNU and the University of Aberdeen. I wish you all the best in your endeavours.

PROFESSOR RUTH TAYLOR  
VICE PRINCIPAL EDUCATION  
University of Aberdeen
In 2020, we marked our 525th anniversary and launched Aberdeen 2040, our 20-year statement of strategic purpose. Over the next two decades, we will meet 20 commitments and be a fully inclusive, interdisciplinary, international, and sustainable university.

The Aberdeen Institute, which opened in September 2021, signals our commitment to providing an international education to learners from all around the world and becoming a more diverse and multicultural community.

It is an exciting time to be a student at the UoA - we hope you will embrace the opportunities that come with it as you join our Aberdeen family and become part of the next chapter in our history.

The University of Aberdeen (UoA) is the fifth oldest University in the UK, dating back to 1495. Since then, we have proudly offered our students life-changing opportunities by proving true to our Foundational Purpose of being: ‘open to all and dedicated to the pursuit of truth in the service of others’.

Our vast experience in teaching -- along with our modern, 21st century outlook -- enables us to offer the same great opportunity to you today as we partner with SCNU in the delivery of your degree programmes.

The University of Aberdeen is consistently ranked among the world’s top universities and is ranked 4th in the UK for overall student satisfaction following the National Students Survey (2022). We are proud of our continued success and are committed to creating the best possible student experience for all of our students.
concerning the award of an SCNU degree. You should also refer to the additional definitions may differ at SCNU.

Aberdeen Terminology

Common words can be used in different ways across our two Universities. Below is a list of common words used by Aberdeen and their definitions. Remember that these definitions may differ at SCNU.

- A **degree programme** is the complete curriculum, studied over a minimum of four years, which leads to the award of a Degree. At the Aberdeen Institute, the degrees awarded will be Degrees of Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence, Computing Science or Business Management & Information Systems.

- Each programme is made up of courses, each of which is self-contained and comprised of teaching (including lectures, tutorials, laboratories, and private study) and assessment (such as class tests, group work, essays and examinations).

- Each course is set at a **level**, which roughly aligns to the year of study in which it will be taught. For example, JC1001 and JB1001 are both level one UoA courses delivered at the Aberdeen Institute at SCNU.

- The size of a course is defined in **UoA credits**. Most UoA courses carry 10-20 credits. Formally, 1 UoA credit equates to 10 learning hours, the total amount of time that a student is expected to spend on a course. The British definition of credits is quite different from that used in China, where 1 credit equates to 16 “theoretical” learning hours or 32 “practical” hours. For the purposes of your academic courses, The Aberdeen Institute at SCNU uses the conversion: 1 SCNU credit equates to 5 UoA credits. This is not applicable to the liberal courses you will undertake.

- Each of the programmes offered at the Aberdeen Institute at SCNU is made up of four **programme years**. You will need to achieve a specified number of credits and passes in compulsory courses to allow you to progress from one programme year to the next.

- Each **academic year** begins in September and runs until the following June. Each academic year is comprised of two ‘half-sessions’ or ‘semesters’, each of which is 16 weeks of teaching in length, followed by a period of assessment.

- Should you fail to achieve a pass mark for a course at first sitting, you will be asked to undertake a **resit**. Resit assessments are taken by students at specific points in the year.

**Term Dates:**
The Aberdeen Institute at SCNU follows the same semesters as SCNU. Term dates can be found on UoA's webpages here or SCNU's teaching calendar webpage here.

**Communication:**
You will receive a UoA e-mail account when you register. The UoA will use e-mail to communicate with you during term-time. **It is your responsibility** to check your email on a regular (at least weekly) basis and to tidy the contents of your email inbox. You should note that failure to check your email or failure to receive an email due to being over quota or due to non-delivery of an email forwarded to a non-University email account will not be accepted as grounds for appeal.

When communicating with UoA staff, it is important that you identify yourself by including your name and UoA identification number in your email message. Staff will respond to your emails in a timely manner.

**Terms and Conditions**

As part of registration for your UoA degree, you will be required to sign up to our UoA terms and conditions. These include the conditions for use of our Information Technology Services.
THE STRUCTURE OF A UOA DEGREE

Each degree programme delivered by the UoA at the Aberdeen Institute at SCNU has a ‘programme prescription’ associated with it. These programmes have been specifically developed for delivery as part of the Joint Institute. The programme specification is a formal document that defines the structure of the programme and includes an outline of the courses and associated course codes and credits that you will study in each year, for the award of a UoA degree. The prescriptions for the degrees offered at the Joint Institute are available from the links below:

- Degree of Bachelor of Science in Artificial Intelligence
- Degree of Bachelor of Science in Computing Science
- Degree of Bachelor of Science in Business Management and Information Systems

Further information will be provided as you progress through your degree programme.

THE STRUCTURE OF A UOA DEGREE

At the end of a course, you will be awarded a course grade. The approaches the UoA and SCNU take to grading are different. For your UoA courses, your grade will be awarded in accordance with the UoA’s Common Grading Scale (CGS), while SCNU awards scores on a scale of 0 to 100. The table below provides a comparison of UoA and SCNU grading structures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCNU Score</th>
<th>UoA Points</th>
<th>UoA Grade</th>
<th>SCNU</th>
<th>UoA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>97-100</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>A1</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<tr>
<td>94-96</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>A2</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
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<td>91-93</td>
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<td>88-90</td>
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<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-87</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>A5</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81-84</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>B1</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78-80</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76-77</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>B3</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71-74</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68-70</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>12</td>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
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<td>63-64</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>D1</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Pass</td>
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<tr>
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<td>10</td>
<td>D2</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Pass</td>
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<tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>D3</td>
<td>Pass</td>
<td>Pass</td>
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<td>Fail</td>
<td>Weak</td>
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</tr>
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<td>6</td>
<td>E3</td>
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<td>Poor</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>F1</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Poor</td>
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<td>Fail</td>
<td>Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-29</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>G1</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>G2</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>G3</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>NP</td>
<td>Fail</td>
<td>Very Poor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In some circumstances, you may not be awarded a result and a special code will be entered in place of a course result. This can occur in the following instances:

MC: The award of an ‘MC’ means you had medical circumstances which prevented you from completing the course and you can take a resit assessment without penalty.

GC: The award of an ‘GC’ means you had a good cause, or exceptional circumstances which prevented you from completing the course and you can take a resit assessment without penalty.

NP: The award of an ‘NP’ means a failure to complete any or all of the required assessment for a course, without good reason. An ‘NP’ counts as an attempt at a course.

C7: The award of a ‘C7’ means a failure to comply, in the absence of good cause, with the published requirements of the course or programme, and/or a breach of regulations. In other words, you have not completed all compulsory elements of the course, or are no longer able to meet the learning outcomes of the course, (which include elements, such as attendance, submission of assessment) and it is not possible to remedy this in the current academic year.
**Extensions**

For each UoA course, there are processes in place for the consideration of and, where appropriate, granting of extensions for pieces of assessment. To discuss these, you should contact the relevant course coordinator for the course in which you require an extension.

Where you are struggling to submit assessment on time, please talk to your course coordinator so that they can offer support and guidance.

**Penalties for Late Submission of Coursework**

The UoA has standard penalties for late submission of coursework or parts of coursework. Late submission refers to submission of work after the published deadline without an agreed extension, and in the absence of exceptional circumstances.

Any assessed coursework that is submitted beyond the deadline, without an agreed extension, will be recorded as late and a penalty will be applied as follows:

- Up to 24 hours late, the grade will be deducted by 2 Common Grading Scale (CGS) points.
- For each subsequent day, up to a maximum of seven days total, the grade will be deducted by a further CGS point for each day, or part of a day, up to a maximum of seven days late;
- Over seven days late, a grade of G3 will be awarded.

For work that is up to seven days late, if the assignment was graded above a passing grade but the penalty awarded takes the grade below the pass mark, you will be awarded the minimum passing grade, i.e., D3.

**Feedback on Your Work**

Receiving feedback on your learning is vital to facilitate progress in your studies and will be provided across your UoA courses, in a variety of ways. Feedback methods may include a blend of written and oral comments and evaluations, which will be delivered informally and formally by your tutors, lecturers, and your fellow class members. Benefiting from a variety of feedback channels will enhance your learning achievements.

More formal feedback will be issued by a lecturer or tutor, for example in the form of written or recordings of comments, on the return of a marked assignment. These evaluations of your work are designed to be supportive, with a focus on areas of potential improvement.

Different courses will offer different types of feedback; for example, some courses have more teaching hours and opportunities for oral feedback. Other courses may have a greater focus on independent learning and receiving written comments may be the usual practice.

Feedback will always be provided by your tutor or lecturer on assessments that count towards your final course grade. In such instances, feedback (including the grade) should normally be provided within three weeks. Your School will make it clear when you can expect to receive feedback.

It is important that you pay attention to feedback you receive during your studies. Whether written or oral, feedback is designed to help you progress through your studies and may include recommendations of ways in which you can work towards improving your results. When engaging with your feedback, please approach members of the teaching team for the course including the course coordinator should you feel it would be helpful to discuss their comments, to understand how you could be more successful in your studies. Receiving and acting upon feedback is a fundamental part of the learning process.
Attendance Monitoring

If you attend and complete the work required for a UoA course, you will be considered to have been awarded a ‘Class Certificate’.

Being in possession of a valid Class Certificate for a course entitles you to undertake all assessment for that course and to receive an overall course grade. Class certificates are valid for two years and usually permit a total of three attempts at the required assessment within the two-year period i.e., the first attempt plus up to two resits.

Through non-engagement or a failure to submit course-work, it is possible to lose your class certificate and therefore, your right to undertake assessment. You may hear this referred to as a ‘C7’ or a warning that this may happen, referred to as a ‘C6’.

Your course handbook(s) will provide further information on the attendance requirements for your course:

Plagiarism and Other Forms of Cheating

As part of your degree, you will be expected to read works such as textbooks or research papers written by other people. You must make clear what material or ideas you have taken from other people’s works when you submit work for assessment. You will be given instruction as to how to do this before you submit. It is essential to follow these instructions. If you do not, you may be guilty of a disciplinary offence called plagiarism.

It is expected that any piece of work you submit (be it an individual or group project) has been undertaken by those who submitted it. Including another author’s material in your submission without acknowledging it is plagiarism, a form of cheating defined by the UoA as:

“Plagiarism” is defined by the UoA as the use, without adequate acknowledgment, of the intellectual work of another person in work submitted for assessment. This definition includes the unattributed use of course materials and applies to all types of assessment, including ‘open book’ assessments. A student cannot be found to have committed plagiarism where it can be shown that the student has taken all reasonable care to avoid representing the work of others as his or her own.

Both the UoA and SCNU take plagiarism very seriously and will take action against any student found to have plagiarised. The UoA will, in relation to its courses, refer to the Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic) in such instances. If you are found guilty of plagiarism, a range of penalties may be applied depending on the severity of the plagiarism.

The University reserves the right to use originality checking systems, such as Turnitin (see below), which may be externally based, in the interests of improving academic standards when assessing student work.

The UoA also takes other forms of cheating very seriously. These can include collusion, contract cheating and misconduct in an examination. The Code of Practice on Student Discipline (Academic) and Academic Integrity Guide for Students provides further information.

Originality Checking

TurnitinUK is one of a range of originality checking (text matching) applications that compare student assignments with online sources including web pages, databases of reference material, and content previously submitted by other users. These applications make no judgement on whether your work is original or not. They are tools which highlight sections of text that match, or are similar to, other sources, thereby alerting academic staff to potential instances of plagiarism.

TurnitinUK is the most often used originality checking application used by staff at UoA and can be accessed directly through MyAberdeen. There are other applications similar to TurnitinUK, for example SafeAssign. If any or a combination of these are used in any of your courses, you will be made aware of it.

Our Toolkit resource on use of Turnitin provides further information.

Quality Assurance:

The Aberdeen Institute at SCNU uses a range of procedures to ensure that your programme, and the courses which comprise it, meet the high academic standard expected. These procedures include:

- Examination papers are moderated by a second member of staff to ensure that they are clearly written, free of mistakes and commensurate to the standard expected;
- The papers are then sent to an External Examiner who confirms that they are of the expected standard;
- A Meeting of Examiners reviews the marks from all courses to check whether the results for any courses differ significantly from the average and take any appropriate action;
- Major pieces of assessment are independently marked by two members of staff; a moderator reviews the report as well if the two original marks differ;
- The External Examiner is an experienced, senior member of staff from another university who is familiar with the academic standard that should be expected from a degree programme. This ensures that a UoA award is of the same standard as a comparable university in Britain.

Appeals and Complaints

UoA recognises that things may not always go to plan and there may be times that you wish to raise an issue for further discussion or investigation. As such, our Policy and Procedures on Student Appeals and a Complaints Handling Procedure provide frameworks through which you, as a student of the Aberdeen Institute at SCNU, can formalise any concerns you may have about aspects of your UoA experience.
Graduation and Degree Classification

British Universities classify degrees as: First Class, Upper Second Class, Lower Second Class or Third Class. Scottish Universities, including the UoA have a tradition of treating programme years 3 and 4 as ‘honours years’ with strict conditions. Your UoA degree classification will be based on performance across your Honours years; that is programme years 3 and 4.

Further information on exactly how the UoA will calculate your degree outcome will follow as you progress through your studies.

Student Absence

If your studies, assessment or examinations are impacted by ill health or other extenuating circumstances, you are expected to inform both UoA and SCNU by adhering to the SCNU procedures for the notification of student absence. Procedures are available in the SCNU handbook.

Representatives of the UoA and SCNU will work together, in instances of student absence, to ensure support is available to you.

To be able to progress on a UoA degree, you must be able to meet the ‘learning outcomes’ of a course, which means you are expected to attend all classes and submit all coursework. Where you are unable to complete a minimum of 75% of a course and its associated assessment, you will not be able to continue with it, even where you have good reason. UoA staff will discuss your position with you, should a period of absence impact on your studies.

To progress to the next year of your UoA degree programme, you must satisfy requirements as set out by the UoA.
If you have IT issues or difficulties in accessing MyAberdeen, your Student Counsellor will be able to help you to get help from the UoA IT Service Desk.

For pastoral issues, such as illness, financial or personal problems, please contact your Student Counsellor.

Specialist support services including Student Support, AUSA advice, and the Careers and Employability Services are accessible to students virtually.

During your studies it is important to prioritise your physical and mental wellbeing and create a healthy study-life balance. We have a welcoming and supportive community as well as lots of resources to help you do this.

Toolkit is a collection of short “how to” videos accessible on any device. They include walk-throughs, tutorials, course overviews, introductions, software downloads and much more!