Guide to the AKU Student Code of Conduct

PART A: THE STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT:

1) What is the *Student Code of Conduct* and why is it important?

The Student Code of Conduct sets the standards for how AKU students learn, work, and interact—on campus, online, and at AKU-related events and venues. It protects a safe, respectful, and ethical learning environment so everyone can succeed. This guide provides a high-level summary of the *Student Code of Conduct (SCC)*, however students must familiarize themselves with the full contents of the *SCC*.

2) Whom does the Student Code of Conduct apply to?

- All AKU students in every programme and location, including postgraduate medical education (PGME) trainees and visiting students.
- Students remain accountable when representing AKU off-campus (e.g., clinics, fieldwork, conferences) and in virtual spaces connected to AKU.

3) Where and when does the *Student Code of Conduct apply?*

- On AKU/AKUH property, including hostels and learning spaces.
- At AKU-sponsored or AKU-related activities—on site, off site, or online (classes, labs, simulations, placements, conferences, student society events).
- When using AKU information systems or networks (e.g., LMS, email, Wi-Fi, devices).
- When conduct off-campus or online harms safety, learning, or AKU's legitimate interests.

4) What are your core responsibilities as AKU students?

- *Respect and inclusion*: Treat others with dignity. No bullying, harassment, discrimination, hate speech, or intimidation.
- *Safety and wellbeing*: Protect health, safety, and property. Follow hostel/residence rules and reasonable directions of authorized staff.
- *Honesty and integrity*: Be truthful in academics, research, and interactions. Do not forge, falsify, or misrepresent information or identity.
- *Confidentiality and privacy*: Safeguard sensitive information about patients, research participants, peers, and staff.
- *Responsible expression*: You can debate ideas—but personal attacks, harassment, and incitement to harm are not acceptable.
- *Professional conduct in placements*: Follow site rules, ethics approvals, and supervisors' instructions; protect patient and client confidentiality.

5) What non-academic behaviour is not allowed?

These behaviours harm people, property, and the learning environment.

- Harassment, sexual harassment, bullying (including online), ragging/hazing, threats, stalking, or violence.
- Theft, vandalism, or damage to property; unauthorized entry into restricted areas.
- Possession or use of weapons, illegal drugs, or alcohol where prohibited (including hostels/campus where banned).
- Fraud or deception (including identity fraud and false official statements).
- Misuse of AKU's name, logo, or brand; pretending to speak for AKU without authorization.
- Rallies, demonstrations, fundraising, or inviting dignitaries connected to AKU without prior written permission from the appropriate office.
- Contacting regulators or authorities in an official AKU capacity without authorization.

6) What rules apply to hostel and field settings?

- Follow hostel or residence rules, including quiet hours and guest rules where applicable.
- In clinics, hospitals, labs, and field sites, follow site instructions, safety rules, and professional norms at all times.

7) Does the SCC apply to expression, association, and respectful debate?

AKU supports free inquiry and respectful debate. You can organize, discuss, and advocate on issues within the law and AKU's policies. However, intimidation, harassment, incitement to violence, and activities that disrupt teaching, research, or care are not acceptable. Some activities on or connected to campus require prior permission to ensure safety and coordination (see SCC Section 7).

8) What academic conduct is covered?

Academic integrity means your work is genuinely your own (or properly credited) and you follow the rules set by your instructor or programme.

- *Use of AI and tools*: Only use artificial intelligence or other assistive tools if your instructor explicitly allows it for that assignment, and cite/use as required.
- *Plagiarism*: Do not copy words, ideas, or data without proper citation. Paraphrasing still requires credit.
- *Unauthorized collaboration*: Group work is allowed only when your instructor says so. Otherwise, complete and submit your own work.
- *Re-using your own work*: Get permission before submitting the same or similar work in more than one course ("self-plagiarism").
- *Cheating*: No copying, using banned aids, getting unauthorized help, or sharing exam content.
- *Document integrity*: Do not forge signatures, alter transcripts, falsify attendance, or misrepresent identity.

Research integrity protects the credibility of AKU's scholarship and the public trust.

- No fabrication or falsification of data, methods, images, or results.
- Give proper authorship credit; do not add "ghost" or "gift" authors, and do not deny legitimate contributors.
- Manage conflicts of interest and intellectual property appropriately.
- Follow ethics approvals and protocols for humans, animals, and data; store and share data responsibly.
- Use research funds appropriately and keep accurate records.
- Respect confidentiality in peer review and grant or manuscript handling.

9) What are my Digital and Information & Communications Technology (ICT) responsibilities?

Using AKU's networks and systems is a privilege that comes with responsibilities.

- *Protect accounts*: Use strong passwords; do not share credentials or leave devices unlocked.
- *No unauthorized access*: Do not bypass security, access others' files, or attempt to "hack" systems.
- *No impersonation or misuse*: Do not send spam, malware, phishing, or use pirated software.
- *Respect content standards*: Do not access or distribute illegal or inappropriate material via AKU systems.
- *Class recordings and materials*: Do not share restricted materials externally without permission.
- *Plagiarism-detection software*: Instructors may use it if disclosed in the syllabus. Your work remains your intellectual property and privacy must be respected.
- *Bring-Your-Own-Device (BYOD)*: Personal devices used for AKU work must follow basic security (updates, passcodes, encryption where applicable).

10) How can I get help and raise concerns?
- If you are unsure whether something is permitted, ask your instructor, programme head, or Student Affairs.
- If you experience or witness harmful behaviour, you can seek confidential support from counselling services or Student Affairs.
- Good-faith reports are encouraged; retaliation against someone who seeks help or raises a concern is not acceptable.

11) Are my privacy and records protected?
- AKU aims to protect your privacy and handle information responsibly.
- Certain outcomes under the Code may be noted on internal records to support safety and academic integrity. These records are handled in line with AKU policy and applicable law.

12) What may happen if I do something not allowed under the *Student Code of Conduct*?

Consequences depend on the facts and severity. Possible outcomes include education or counselling, warnings, loss of privileges, grade impacts for academic issues, restitution for damage, suspension, or expulsion. The next section of this guide summarises how decisions are made or appealed.

13) What are some examples of do versus don't?

- Do: Cite your sources and follow the assignment rules—including any rules about AI tools.
- Do: Keep patient and client information confidential in placements and coursework.
- Do: Use your own AKU account and lock your device; report suspicious emails.
- Do: Cite others' research when the idea is not your own and comply with your ethics protocol and the consent of research participants, if needed.
- Don't: Share exam questions, buy or sell assignments, or submit others' work as your own.
- Don't: Submit the same piece of work for assessment in different courses.
- Don't: Bully, harass, or demean people online or in person—even as a "joke".
- Don't: Use AKU's brand, organize a rally, or invite dignitaries on AKU's behalf without written permission.
- Don't: Make up research data or alter research images.

This guide summarizes policy expectations only. For official definitions and the full policy text, consult the *Student Code of Conduct* (September 2025).

PART B: STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT – GUIDE TO PROCEDURES

This summary is provided for clarity only; the official Student Code of Conduct and associated Procedures and letters you receive during any disciplinary process control the exact steps and timelines. Also see the Student Code of Conduct – Disciplinary Procedures Flow Charts

1) How does a case start and where does it go?

A case can begin when a concern is reported by a faculty or staff member, another student, a placement site, security, or through AKU's online channels, including safe disclosure. AKU first checks for immediate safety needs, then routes the matter to the right track: academic, non-academic, or research.

- Emergencies: Call campus security or local emergency services. Safety comes first.
- Triage: AKU may apply short-term restrictions (for example, no-contact directions or access limits) while facts are reviewed.
- Where does it go?
  • Academic concerns → usually handled first by the course instructor/programme director; serious or repeat cases go to a faculty-level committee (often called the Dean's Discipline Committee).

• Non-academic concerns → reviewed by the Vice-Provost Students (VPSD) delegate; serious cases go to a Vice-Provost Students Discipline Committee.

• Research concerns → supervisor/Principal Investigator (PI) completes an initial review; serious/repeat or externally submitted cases go to the Academic Discipline Committee (ADC) with notice to the Research Office and/or appropriate ethics committee.

2) What are my rights and supports throughout any procedure?

- Clear written notice of what is alleged and which procedure/track applies.
- A chance to tell your side and share evidence before a decision is made.
- Ability to bring a support person to any meeting where I have a right to be heard (see your notice for details).
- To receive a written decision that explains the outcome and next steps.
- To appeal to the body named in the decision letter, within the stated timeline (where appeals apply).
- Access to confidential supports (e.g., counselling, Student Affairs).
- Protection from retaliation for raising concerns in good faith.

3) What are the common procedural steps across non-academic, academic, and research discipline procedures?

1. Report received → AKU reviews if the report falls under the *Student Code of Conduct* and identifies any urgent safety issues.
2. Notice to student → You receive a written summary of concerns, your rights, and next steps.
3. Student response → You may submit a written statement and/or meet with the decision-maker. Make sure to provide evidence of any mitigating circumstances, such as health issues.
4. Fact-gathering → The decision-maker may collect syllabi, emails, device logs, witness statements, placement feedback, and/or research records.
5. Decision → Based on the balance of probabilities (more likely than not), the decision-maker decides whether misconduct occurred.
6. Outcome letter → You get the result in writing, including rationale and any outcomes.
7. Appeal (if available) → Follow the instructions and deadline in your decision letter. The appeal body looks at whether the decision was fair, reasonable, and supported by the information.

Typical timeframes are communicated in your letters and may vary with complexity. If you need more time due to medical or other significant reasons, ask in writing before the deadline.

4) Procedure A — Academic Misconduct (course-level or first occurrence)
Who leads

- Usually your course instructor or the relevant programme director.

1. You receive a notice describing the concern (e.g., plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, exam rules).
2. You may submit a response and/or meet the instructor. Bring any citations, drafts, emails, or permissions that support your case.
3. The instructor reviews materials (including any plagiarism-checking report if used and disclosed in the syllabus).
4. Decision is made and sent to you in writing with reasons and any academic outcome (e.g., resubmission, grade impact, fail on assignment, educational requirement).
5. Appeal route (if available) is stated in your letter—this is commonly to a faculty-level body (e.g., Dean's Discipline Committee). Follow the deadline and format stated.

What to prepare

- Your own explanation, drafts with timestamps, notes, lab books, communications with instructors, and any permissions or collaboration instructions. Provide any evidence of mitigating circumstances.

5) Procedure B — Serious or Repeat Academic Misconduct (faculty-level)

Who leads

- A faculty-level committee (often the Dean's Discipline Committee).

Summary of Steps

6. Formal notice explains the specific allegations and provides a time to respond.
7. You submit a written statement and evidence; you may be invited to a meeting to answer questions.
8. The committee reviews all materials and may ask for additional information, including from the instructor, programme, or registrar's office.
9. Decision letter explains findings and outcomes (which could include course-level outcomes, programme-level conditions, or suspension for serious misconduct).
10. Appeal: Your letter names the appeal body and deadline. Follow those instructions exactly.

6) Procedure C — Non-Academic Misconduct (standard track)

Who leads

- The Vice-Provost Students' (VPSD) delegate.

Summary of steps

1. You receive a notice describing the concern (e.g., harassment, property damage, unauthorized activities).
2. You can share your account and evidence (screenshots, messages, witness names).
3. The VPSD delegate may meet with you and others involved to understand what happened.
4. A decision letter explains whether misconduct occurred and the outcomes (e.g., warning, educational remedies, restitution, loss of privileges).
5. Appeal: Your letter will indicate the appeal body and deadline.

- If safety risks are identified, temporary measures (e.g., no-contact orders) can be put in place while the matter is reviewed.

7) Procedure D — Serious Non-Academic Misconduct (committee track)

Who leads

- A VPSD Committee (or similarly named student conduct committee).

Summary of steps

1. Formal notice of the allegations and possible outcomes; interim measures may apply for safety.
2. You may provide a written response and meet with the committee. You can bring a support person or legal representative where permitted.
3. The committee reviews evidence, may hear from witnesses, and decides on the balance of probabilities.
4. Decision letter explains findings and any outcomes (which may include suspension or, in very serious cases, expulsion).
5. Appeal: The appeal body and deadline are stated in your letter; read and follow those directions carefully.

8) Procedure E — Research Misconduct

Who leads

- Initial review by your supervisor/PI or programme research lead; serious/repeat or externally-submitted cases go directly to the Academic Discipline Committee (ADC) with notice to the Research Office.

Summary of steps

6. You receive a notice describing the research concerns (e.g., fabrication/falsification, plagiarism in manuscripts, authorship disputes, ethics non-compliance).
7. You provide a response and relevant research materials: raw data, lab notebooks, protocols, approvals, version history of figures or manuscripts.
8. If handled by a supervisor/PI initially, they make a decision or refer the case to the ADC for a full review.
9. Where the ADC is involved, it reviews evidence, may request additional materials or meetings, and decides whether misconduct occurred.
10. A written decision explains the findings and outcomes (e.g., corrections/retractions, authorship changes, training, supervision changes, or programme-level outcomes).
11. Appeal: ADC decisions are typically appealable to the Board of Student Appeals (BSA); your decision letter confirms the route and deadline.

Good practices

- Keep complete, dated research records and raw data.
- Retain earlier figure/manuscript versions to show how analyses evolved.
- Disclose conflicts of interest and authorship contributions early and in writing.

9) Evidence, timelines, and records (what to expect)

- Evidence can include course materials, emails, device or platform logs, placement feedback, witness statements, lab notebooks, datasets, and plagiarism-check reports (when disclosed in syllabi).
- Decisions use the 'balance of probabilities' standard—more likely than not.
- Typical timelines are given in your letters; complex cases can take longer. You can request an extension before a deadline if you have good reasons (e.g., medical).
- Some outcomes are recorded internally by the relevant office to identify repeat issues and support student safety and academic integrity. Records are handled in line with AKU policy and applicable law.

10) Using this guide with the flowcharts

- Match the headings here (Procedures A–E) to the titles on each flowchart.
- Follow the numbered 'Common steps' (Section 3) alongside each flowchart box for quick orientation.
- Your notice and decision letters always take precedence if there is any difference.

11) Quick prep checklist before any meeting

- Read the notice carefully—what is alleged and which procedure applies?
- Write your own account while details are fresh. Attach dates and times.
- Collect documents: drafts, emails, messages, lab books, data, syllabi, policies, permissions.
- List potential witnesses and what they can speak to.
- Decide on a support person and notify the organizer if required by the letter.
- Prepare questions you want to ask (about process, timelines, or confidentiality).

This guide is for clarity only. For official definitions, authorities, and exact steps, please refer to the Student Code of Conduct (September 2025) and the instructions in your letters.