

Protocol for Module Leaders for the Conduct of Online Interviews where breach of exam integrity is suspected in online and/or proctored examinations.

Module Leaders (Module Owners) reserve the right to follow up with a student by online interview if there is any concern in relation to the integrity of the online and/or proctored examination. This discussion should be regarded as a mini-viva, the purpose of which is to provide an opportunity for the student to demonstrate that the information they provided in their alternative assessment can be consistently presented at interview also. The University has informed students that any breach of exam integrity will be subject to the University's [Procedures for dealing with breaches of Exam Regulations \(QA230\)](#).

The following principles apply to the conduct of online follow-up interviews where there is a concern related to the integrity of material presented in an online and/or proctored examination:

1. Two academic staff members shall participate in each interview, both to be members of the Programme Team/Programme Board and where possible, achieving gender balance.
2. Students shall be given a minimum of 2 days' notice of interview, and shall be permitted to be accompanied by a student colleague of the student's choice or a Students Union representative (but not any other person or body unconnected with the University). This person may not participate in the interview. The primary purpose of this support person is as a support to the student, not to speak on the student's behalf. It is not appropriate for a member of University staff to attend a student interview as the student's support person. The Module Leader should advise the student of their right to be accompanied in advance of the interview.
3. An interview shall normally not exceed 30 minutes in duration.
4. In scheduling interviews, Module Leaders should allow time between interviews for discussion and forming a consensus regarding necessary action, if any.
5. Where possible, the online interview shall be conducted using a University recommended platform and will, where possible, be done with both audio and video to confirm the identity of the student.
6. The interview shall take place during a reasonably sociable hour, normally between 9am to 6pm, recognising different time zones for students.
7. Following the meeting with the student, if Module Leaders believe that the student may be in breach of exam integrity requirements, they must complete the relevant breach of examination regulations [form](#) and send it to the Exam Security Group

(ESG) to examsecuritygroup@nuigalway.ie

Module Leaders must document in their report the reasons for suspecting a student is in breach of regulations along with any supplementary information that supports their suspicion. A summary of the discussion that took place during the interview between the Module Leader and student should also be documented.

8. Module Leaders should be certain that they are acting fairly and objectively and that they have all of the facts prior to referral to the ESG. It will be important to be aware of unconscious bias when conducting interviews with students and manage for same. Unconscious bias training is available [here](#).
9. Module Leaders must advise the student in writing by email, after the initial interview with the student, that they have sent a report of the incident to the examsecuritygroup@nuigalway.ie and that the candidate may be called to an interview by the ESG. If the Module Leader is not taking further action, they should inform the student via their university email.
10. Module Leaders should also inform their Head of Discipline and Head of School/ Programme if a student is being referred to the ESG.
11. The Examination Security Group will then review the suspected breach and investigate in line with the normal procedures outlined in [QA230](#). Should the ESG find that a breach of exam regulations has taken place, the ESG will apply sanctions as outlined in [QA230](#).
12. Timing is critical - ESG decisions must be finalised before the marks return deadline (see dates [here](#)) so Module Leaders need to act quickly. Referrals to the ESG should be made as they are identified, during the marking period (Please note this will be after the Module Leader has had a conversation with the student). The ESG will meet a number of times over the course of the marking period to review cases in batches. The final date for referrals to the ESG, via the Examinations Office can be found [here](#), these are strict deadlines in order to allow for a final meeting of the ESG to review remaining cases.
13. Staff should be mindful that students may record an interview. Recordings shall not be considered by the ESG, and only the formal written documentation arising from the interview will be forwarded to the ESG.
14. In cases where the same breach involving more than 10 students has been identified in a module, it is not a feasible scenario to interview all students individually. In these cases, the Module Leader shall compile the written evidence for the breach for each student and forward to the ESG. The Module Leader shall then present this evidence in a meeting with the ESG.

15. Should the ESG then decide that the cases should be considered by the ESG in cases where the same breach has been identified in a module involving up to and more than 10 students, the ESG will notify the Module Leader. The Module Leader must then notify all affected students via email that their case is being considered to the ESG. This email/letter should include
- details of the breach,
 - inform them that their case is being forwarded to the ESG for consideration and deliberation,
 - include in [QA230](#) as an attachment or a link for student's information,
 - inform them that they have the right to make a written response to their case to the ESG (email any response to examsecuritygroup@nuigalway.ie within three days of receipt of the email), and
 - inform the students that the ESG will follow up with them individually via email with their decision.