
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.

This handbook was published in September 2021 and revised in July 2025. The information contained within it was correct at the point of publication. Where translated versions are made available, the English version remains the primary version. A web-version of the handbook will be maintained and may be updated from time to time. The web version will therefore be the definitive version.





WELCOME

I am delighted to be welcoming you to the Joint Institute between the University of Aberdeen and South China Normal University. Our two universities have enjoyed a long working relationship over many years, and both universities welcome the further deepening of this successful partnership. Data and Artificial Intelligence is one of the University of Aberdeen's key interdisciplinary research challenges in our Aberdeen 2040 strategy, which was launched in 2020 to mark our 525th anniversary. The Aberdeen Institute of Data Science and Artificial Intelligence will align directly with our objectives in this important field. It will support the University's international ambitions to expand our networks and partnerships, as well as extending the reach of our teaching and research globally. I am so pleased that you have chosen to undertake your studies with the Joint Institute.

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 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 JO-ANNE MURRAY
VICE-PRINCIPAL, EDUCATION
University of Aberdeen





CONTENTS

WELCOME 2

About this Student Handbook	2
-----------------------------	---

INTRODUCTION 5

About the University of Aberdeen	5
----------------------------------	---

THE ABERDEEN INSTITUTE AT SCNU 8

Aberdeen Terminology	8
Term Dates	9
Communication	9
Terms and Conditions	9
MyAberdeen	9

THE STRUCTURE OF A UOA DEGREE 10

Grading Scheme	11
Extensions	12
Penalties for Late Submission of Coursework	12
Feedback on Your Work	13
Attendance Monitoring	14
Plagiarism and Other Forms of Cheating	15
Originality Checking	15
Quality Assurance	15
Appeals and Complaints	15

PROGRESSION WITHIN A UOA DEGREE 17

Students' Progress Committee (SPC)	17
Graduation and Degree Classification	17
Student Absence	17
Advice on Your Studies	18



Over the next two decades, we will meet 20 commitments and be a fully inclusive, interdisciplinary, international, and sustainable university.

INTRODUCTION

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 3rd for overall student satisfaction in Scotland and in the top 35 in the UK following the National Student Survey (2025). We are proud of our continued success and are committed to creating the best possible student experience for all of our students.

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 ABERDEEN INSTITUTE AT SCNU

There are three degrees offered at the Aberdeen Institute at SCNU: Artificial Intelligence, Computing Science and Business Management & Information Systems. Each programme leads to the award of a UoA Degree of Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree and is comprised of courses approved by the UoA Senate.

All assessments and teaching designed and/or delivered by the UoA are taught in English. To graduate with a UoA degree, you will have to take additional courses required by the Ministry of Education and South China Normal University (SCNU). These may be taught in Chinese.

This handbook focuses on aspects of the provision offered at the Aberdeen Institute at SCNU that concern the award of a UoA degree. You should also refer to the additional SCNU Student Handbook that explains SCNU regulations concerning the award of an SCNU degree.

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.
- Each course has a **course coordinator**, who is responsible for the administration of the course, including organising the course information, content and assessment.
- 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 terms, 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](#) or SCNU's teaching calendar [webpage](#).

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 e-mail 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](#).

Teaching Delivery

As from the academic year 2025/26, in-country teaching will be on an extended mode of delivery of either ten or twelve weeks per course. UoA academic staff members of the School of Natural and Computing Sciences and Business School will be at the SCNU Nanhai campus over periods of four or five weeks for their course delivery according to the updated teaching plan.

MyAberdeen

MyAberdeen is the UoA's Virtual Learning Environment. This is where you will find learning materials, resources and activities associated with the UoA courses you are studying.

You can log in to MyAberdeen using the 'Quick Links' on the 'For Students' section of the University's web site or by going directly to www.abdn.ac.uk/myaberdeen.

In either case, enter the University username and password which you use to access the University network. Further information on MyAberdeen including video tutorials can be found in [Toolkit](#) or look in the “Key Resources” section once you log on to MyAberdeen. An overview of [‘Using Your Virtual Learning Environment’](#) is also available.

Accessing MyAberdeen

You can access MyAberdeen from most modern web browsers, such as Chrome, Edge, Firefox or Safari. You can check your browser is compatible by using the [Blackboard Browser Checker](#).

Accessing Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams is available via a web browser or as a desktop application. Guidance on getting started with Teams is available on the [Toolkit](#). You may be asked to join a Teams meeting via a link on MyAberdeen, a calendar invite or by accessing Teams directly.

Problems accessing MyAberdeen or Teams

If you have consulted the browser support pages on Blackboard, and the [MyAberdeen/Teams toolkit](#), and you are still experiencing issues, please contact your Student Counsellor with details of your problems, including information about your computer (operating system, browser), the network you are using, and the course(s) where you are experiencing issues.

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.



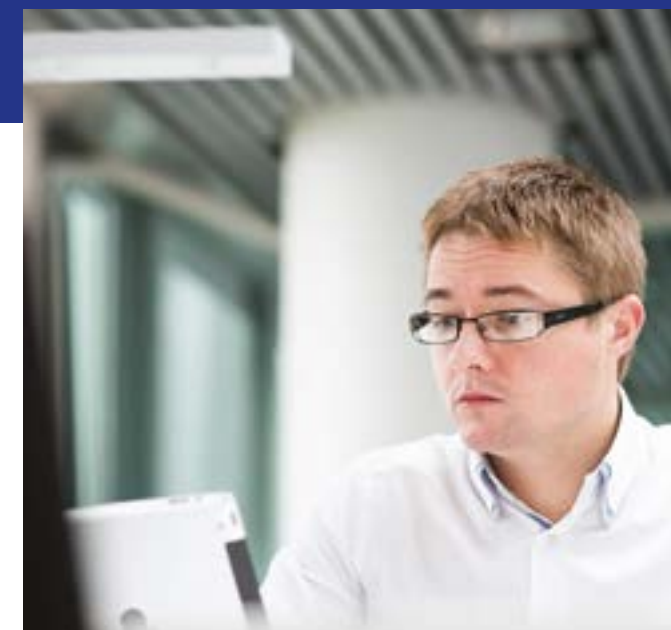
Grading Schemes

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.

SCNU Score	UoA Points	UoA Grade	SCNU	UoA
97-100	22	A1	Excellent	Excellent
94-96	21	A2	Excellent	
91-93	20	A3	Excellent	
88-90	19	A4	Excellent	
85-87	18	A5	Good	
81-84	17	B1	Good	Very Good
78-80	16	B2	Good	
75-77	15	B3	Fair	
71-74	14	C1	Fair	Good
68-70	13	C2	Fair	
65-67	12	C3	Pass	
63-64	11	D1	Pass	Pass
61-62	10	D2	Pass	
60	9	D3	Pass	
55-59	8	E1	Fail	Weak
50-54	7	E2	Fail	
45-49	6	E3	Fail	
40-44	5	F1	Fail	Poor
35-39	4	F2	Fail	
30-34	3	F3	Fail	
22-29	2	G1	Fail	Very Poor
15-21	1	G2	Fail	
0-14	0	G3	Fail	
0	0	NP	Fail	

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, agreed extensions will be for the shortest reasonable time to allow you to complete your assignment while minimising impact on your subsequent studies, and will usually not exceed seven calendar days, according to the [Extensions Policy](#).

You should apply for extensions via the Absence Reporting and Extension Request Tool on the Student Hub or, where you are unable to access the Student Hub, the extension request should be sent directly to the School concerned. In some instances, an alternative tool may be used. Where this is the case, you should follow the procedures outlined in the course documentation.

The policy includes indicative and non-exhaustive lists of circumstances that may or may not be considered mitigation for an extension, but you should be aware that each request will be judged on its own merit.

A list of support services available to you is included in the policy and you are encouraged to contact the relevant service for further 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.

If the assignment is submitted after feedback on that work has already been provided to the class, that assignment cannot be graded and so the assignment will be given G3.

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.

Plagiarism also covers 'self-plagiarism'. This occurs when you submit an assignment containing materials identical or very similar to work that you have previously submitted for another assessment, whether at this university or another. Plagiarism also includes the use of generative artificial intelligence tools (GenAI) to generate content without appropriate acknowledgment of the source.

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, misconduct in an examination, and data falsification. [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.



To progress to the next year of your UoA degree programme, you must satisfy requirements as set out by the UoA.



PROGRESSION WITHIN A UOA DEGREE

To progress to the next year of your UoA degree programme, you must satisfy requirements as set out by the UoA. These are available in detail [here](#), however, in summary, for progression from programme year 1 to programme year 2 you must:

- Achieve no less than 75% of the credit point total required;
- Achieve all courses designated as compulsory for your degree.

For progression from programme year 2 to programme year 3, you must:

- Achieve no less than 100% of the credit point total required at Levels 1 and 2;
- Achieve all courses designated as compulsory for your degree, including successful completion of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) to the required level as stipulated by the UoA (or approved equivalent).

For progression from programme year 3 to programme year 4, you must:

- Achieve no less than 100% of the credit point total required at Level 3.

Students' Progress Committee (SPC)

If you do not meet the requirements as set out to progress within the UoA degree, you will have the opportunity to have your case considered by the Students' Progress Committee (SPC). The SPC for the Aberdeen Institute at SCNU will be comprised of both UoA and SCNU staff.

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.

Degree classification will be based on performance across the Honours programme. Only courses coded at Levels 3 and 4 will count towards degree classification. This will be split 50:50 (50% weighted for Level 3 courses, and 50% for Level 4 courses).

Your degree will be determined on the basis of the Grade Point Average (GPA) system. [The Code of Practice on Assessment \(Undergraduate\)](#).

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.



ADVICE ON YOUR STUDIES

You may need support and guidance for a variety of different academic, non-academic or wellbeing issues during your studies. Your first point of contact for any concerns should be your Student Counsellor at SCNU. They will be able to help and will guide you to the relevant support at UoA.

If you have an academic issue with a particular course, whether taught by a member of staff from SCNU or UoA, in the first instance, your course coordinator or teaching buddy will be the key point of contact.

Where you want to discuss issues surrounding your programme of study, you should go in the first instance to the Student Counsellor at SCNU and then if needed the UoA Vice Dean. To best help you, the UoA Vice Dean may refer you on to further UoA staff, such as Retention Officers, Registry Officers, School Office staff, or Student Support.

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.

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!



