

### **This is a formal challenge to NTU's statement in the Straits Times Article:**

Before I show all our collated evidence and dispute the misrepresentation NTU has put out, I would just like to update everyone that *NTU has not reached out to us this whole time.*

### **STATEMENT 1: NTU misframes our work as 'non-existent academic references'**

SINGAPORE – The Nanyang Technological University (NTU) has confirmed that three students got zero marks for an assignment after they were found to have used generative artificial intelligence (Gen AI) tools in their work.

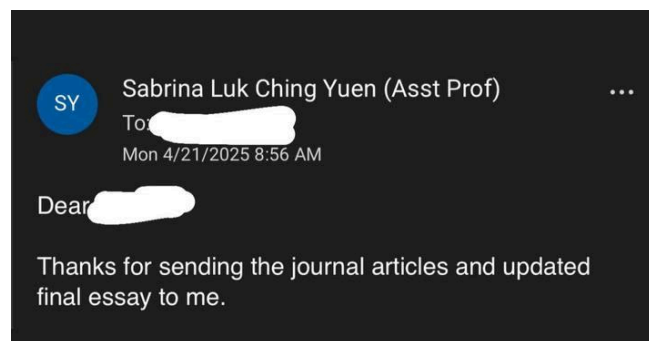
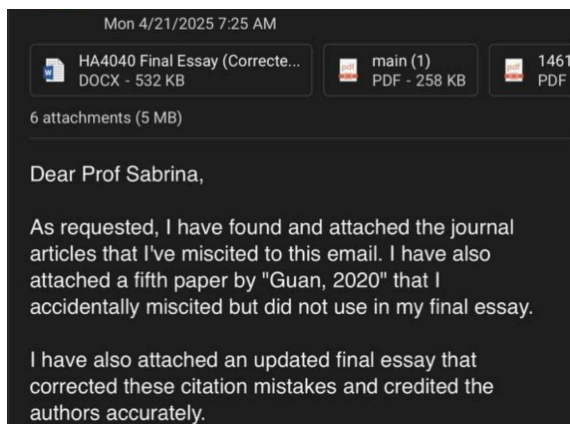
They were penalised for academic misconduct as the assignments contained non-existent academic references and statistics or broken web links, the university said.

This is not true.

All three of us have sent EXISTING references and corrected our typos (e.g. misspelling of titles, or misspelling author names) to Professor Sabrina Luk, which she acknowledged.

FYI: Professor Sabrina Luk's HA4040 Course Syllabus for our module has the following broken web link: "<https://www.ntu.edu.sg/404>" . Does this also constitute academic misconduct, since it's "non-existent"?

### **Screenshots:**



The most widespread coronavirus to date was discovered in Wuhan, China in November 2019, and the disease it causes is named coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The disease is a class of epidemics with human-to-human transmission caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) (Kumar et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021; Rosenthal et al., 2022). The high infectivity

These are the original studies of the in text citation author(s) which is present within the study's references by Hao et al. which was the link I provided.

Kumar: <https://academic.oup.com/mbe/article/38/8/3046/6257226>

Li: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-021-04188-6>

Rosenthal: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-022-06091-0>

[2]

Psychosom Med. Author manuscript; available in PMC: 2022 May 1.

Published in final edited form as: Psychosom Med. 2021 May 1;83(4):358–362. doi: [10.1097/PSY.0000000000000905](https://doi.org/10.1097/PSY.0000000000000905)

The study is published in 2021, I mistakenly cited it as 2022 according to the "Author manuscript; available in PMC: 2022 May 1" instead of 2021 May 1.

[3]

The incorrect heading is due to confusion with another similar article by Reuters:

<https://www.reuters.com/world/china/apartment-fire-chinas-xinjiang-region-kills-10-2022-11-26/>

The choice to not use Reuters was because it was too short and provided limited info.

The source I retrieved information regarding buildings being padlocked and used in my essay eventually is the article from straits times which is the link i cited and provided. The only inaccuracy here is the Title.

SUBMITTING, EDITING, AND SUBSEQUENT REVISIONS OF THIS DOCUMENT TO THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA DO NOT CONSTITUTE ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT UNDER NTU'S INTEGRITY GUIDELINES.

#### Defence Argument 2: Citation Formatting Errors Do Not Constitute Academic Fraud — Misapplication of "False Citation" Accusation

The second allegation pertains to "false citations" in my bibliography, specifically arising from my use of ChatGPT to generate citation formats. It is true that I used ChatGPT for this purpose, but solely in the capacity of a citation formatter, analogous to commonly used academic tools such as Zotero, Mendeley, or online citation generators. The methodology involved inputting links and source details to format citations in the required referencing style— a practice I have successfully used before, and which is standard among NTU students. This was not an act of content generation, plagiarism, or fabrication, but an administrative formatting task.

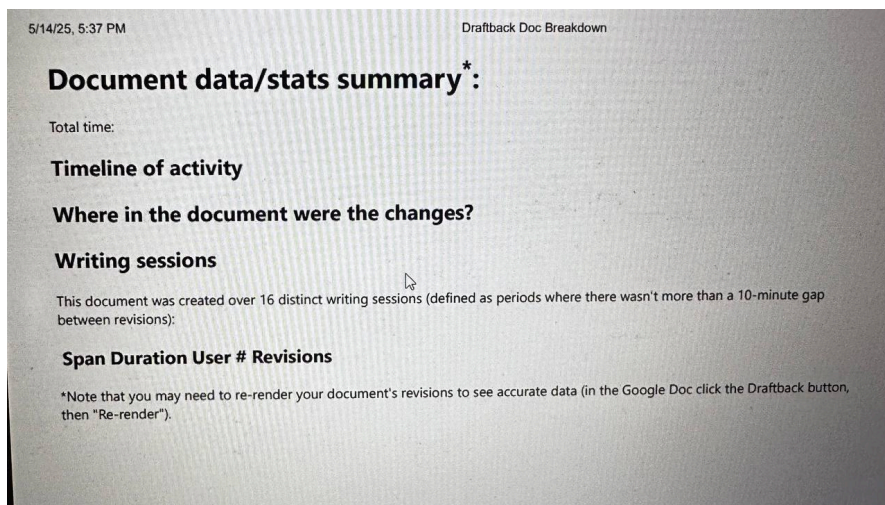
It is undisputed that some errors occurred — specifically, minor titling inaccuracies or link mismatches. However, a thorough examination of the "problematic sources" identified reveals the following:

- Ang, B., & Zhang, X. (2024). How effective is POFMA in battling online falsehoods? "RSIS Commentary", <https://www.rsis.edu.sg>
  - The article's author's and title is correct, ChatGPT messed up the link but the citation is accurate. The true link to this article is: [https://rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/rsis/how-effective-is-pofma-in-battling-online-falsehoods?doing\\_wp\\_cron=1747197627.3240790367126464843750](https://rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/rsis/how-effective-is-pofma-in-battling-online-falsehoods?doing_wp_cron=1747197627.3240790367126464843750)
- Puri, R. (2020). A review of the Aarogya Setu digital contact tracing mobile application of the Government of India in response to COVID-19: A local and international perspective. "SSRN Electronic Journal". <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3679983>
  - Not a fake citation or a fake paper, it has just since been removed from this version of the journal I believe.
  - It can still be accessed from another version at this link: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=3744752](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=3744752)
- National Institutes of Health. (2022). "COVID-19 and misinformation: A systematic review". <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9077350/>
  - This link was titled wrong during the citation generation. But the link and the citation of the source if completely accurate.

- Sahib, Z. (2023). "Information, trust, and health crises: A comparative study of government communication during COVID-19" [Doctoral dissertation, University of Sydney]. University of Sydney Repository. <https://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/handle/2123/33105/ZSahib%20PhD%20Thesis%20%28Final%20Version%29.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>
  - Again, an error in the title. The author, date and link are completely accurate. These titling errors can be made by any citation generator and do not constitute academic fraud.
- De Luca, F. (2021). Framing the virus: Tales of a pandemic: the narration of Covid-19 in the Italian political discourse. "Anglistica AION". <http://www.serena.unina.it/index.php/anglistica-aion/article/download/9792/10256/>
  - It is the right citation. The link does not work because the page is deactivated.

(Further proof sent to both Professor Sabrina and the school. All three of us sent documents, such as the screenshots above, where we corrected our *human* typos, showing that we were willing to learn from our genuine mistakes made)

In the email appeals, I have even included a full timelapse of my essay recorded by Draftback extension, which also has a final report that I had 16 distinct writing sessions:



And yet, NTU chooses to ignore an entire video of my writing process, and dismiss everything as AI-generated.

In all cases, the cited works were genuinely used in my essay. There is no evidence of invented sources, nor instances where material was falsely attributed. These are technical errors in citation formatting, akin to mistakes commonly arising from any citation machine. Such errors, while careless, do not meet the University's own definition of academic fraud, which includes (but is not limited to):

- Cheating (unauthorised material usage),
- Collusion (plagiarising another student's work),
- Falsification of Data (fabricating or altering research data),
- False Citation (citing non-existent sources or attributing material to sources that were never consulted),
- Contract Cheating (outsourcing academic work).

My case does not fall under any of these. Specifically, regarding false citation, the University's policy defines it as "Citing a source that was never utilised or attributing work to a source from which the referenced material was not obtained." This did not occur. Every reference listed was used substantively in my research and writing. The minor errors in titling or linking are administrative mishaps — not acts of deception or academic dishonesty. NTU's own academic integrity policy clearly defines false citation as "Citing a source that was never utilised or attributing work to a source from which the referenced material was not obtained." In my case, every citation listed in my bibliography was genuinely consulted and used in the development of my essay. The errors identified — minor titling inaccuracies and link mismatches — are administrative in nature and do not meet the definition of false citation as intended by NTU policy. Academic fraud implies the deliberate creation of fictitious references or deceptive attribution of work, neither of which occurred. This was a clerical oversight in formatting, not an act of dishonesty. Equating this to academic fraud misrepresents the policy and ignores the necessity of intent and material deception in defining misconduct.

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Furthermore, if this standard of absolute link/title perfection is deemed the threshold for fraud, every student who has ever used Citation Machine, EasyBib, or auto-generated APA references would be liable for academic misconduct if a similar link error occurred. Such an interpretation is unreasonable and inconsistent with precedent.

This situation, therefore, constitutes at most a case of negligent citation proofreading, not academic fraud. Academic misconduct requires an element of intent to deceive, which is wholly absent in this scenario. As such, this charge is a misapplication of the policy and must be reconsidered.

You may argue that the use of ChatGPT is prohibited for the essay, including the bibliography. However, the course policy explicitly prohibits the use of AI tools in the "development or generation of the essay proposal or the long essay." At no point does the policy specify that AI is banned from assisting with clerical tasks such as citation formatting. Bibliographies are a technical component, often handled through automated tools like Zotero, EndNote, or Citation Machine, which perform the exact same function ChatGPT did in my case. If the policy intended to prohibit AI in the entire submission process, including bibliographies, this should have been explicitly stated and applied consistently. The current interpretation unfairly extends the policy beyond its stated scope, retroactively penalising a reasonable and commonly accepted academic practice. I complied fully with the prohibition on using AI to generate the essay content, and my use of AI for formatting does not constitute a breach of the policy's intended meaning.

In one of our appeals, the student even talked about the university's definition of academic fraud, and compared it to her typos, and the fact that she used real sources. However, this document has been ignored by NTU as well.

Overall, for NTU to characterise human typos as 'non-existent citations' is false information and incredibly lazy, as it shows their lack of ability to properly check through student evidence and defend their students, to the extent where they would misrepresent their students just to save their reputation and pin it on their students.

**STATEMENT 2: NTU said we were given the opportunity to present our cases, but all NTU did was to neglect our case.**

All three students, who were enrolled in a module on health, disease outbreaks and politics, were investigated in April. They were given the opportunity to present their cases during a formal review, NTU said on June 22 in response to queries from The Straits Times.

This is NTU over-exaggerating that we were given a proper due process, when said “opportunity to present their cases” is....an email exchange.

In one student’s case, he was not even given an online hearing.

All three of us received the following email from NTU notifying us on the outcome:

After a thorough review of the evidence, it has been determined that your behaviour constituted academic misconduct. Consequently, a zero mark has been assigned to the long essay. This decision has been made in accordance with the University's policies to uphold academic integrity and ensure fairness to all students.

Please note that

1. As you were discovered to have engaged in academic misconduct and had academic sanctions imposed as a result, you will not be permitted to exercise FGO on the course.
2. This incident will be formally recorded in the University's central student academic misconduct register as formal documentation. We strongly urge you to adhere strictly to the requirements of academic integrity standards for students of NTU moving forward.
3. If you do not agree with the penalty imposed, you can appeal to Associate Professor Ye Junjia, School Academic Integrity Officer at [jiye@ntu.edu.sg](mailto:jiye@ntu.edu.sg) in writing within 14 days of receiving the notice of this decision.
4. If you would like assistance in understanding academic expectations or improving your study practices, you are encouraged to reach out to the Student Care Manager, Ms Kayathri d/o Veerapandian at [kayathri.v@ntu.edu.sg](mailto:kayathri.v@ntu.edu.sg) or your academic mentor. They are available to provide support and guidance.

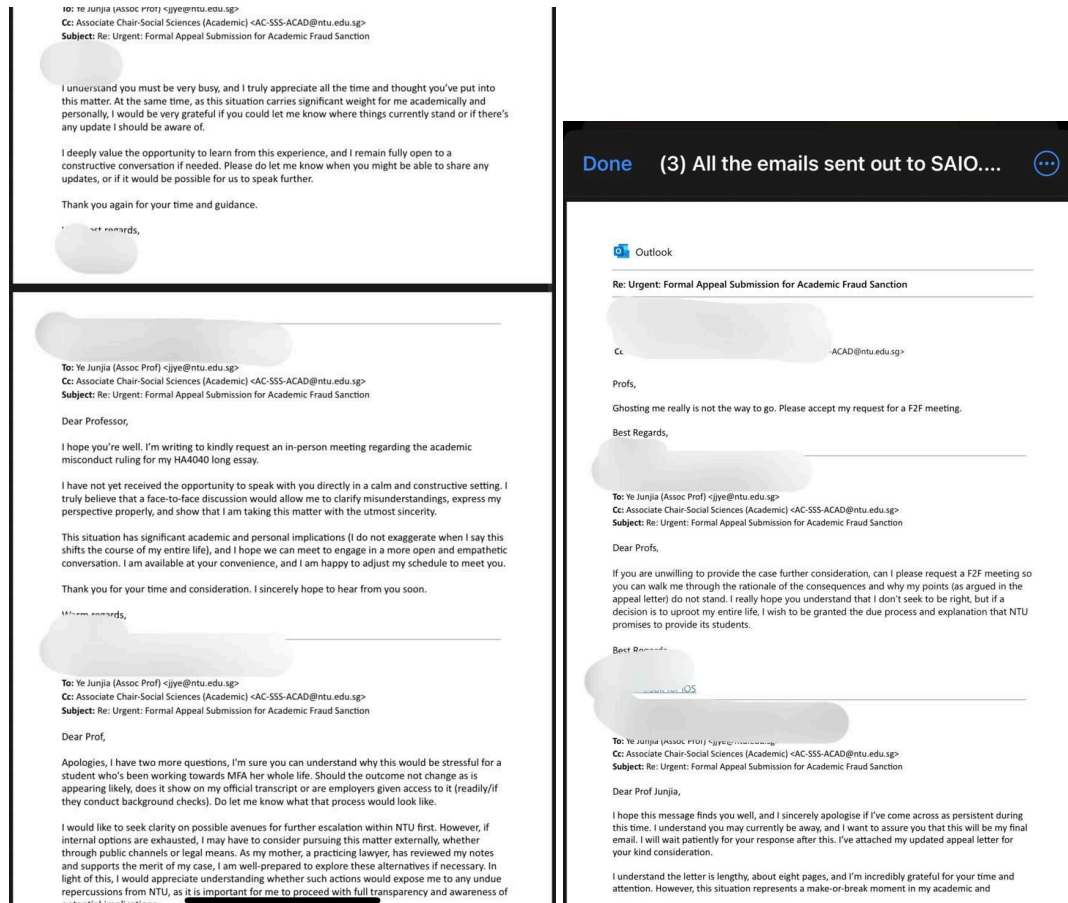
There was not a single in-person meeting scheduled this entire time for us to present our cases in a fair manner, we were just simply struck by this email.

I would also like to bring up the fact that throughout NTU’s statement to the press, they did not acknowledge, nor apologise for the fact that we have been ghosted by the school for two months.



### Screenshots of NTU ghosting us:

1. A string of emails one of us sent to NTU's academic integrity officer, Professor Ye Junjia who simply said she sided with Professor Sabrina over email, without giving us an explanation as to why we committed academic fraud.



As seen in the emails above, the professor did not even reply, in spite of the urgency of the matter and proof that we did not use Generative AI.

2. In an email exchange with the School of Social Sciences Dean, he did not look through the evidence, and just concluded with seeking University welfare services:

I understand this may not be the outcome you had hoped for, but as an institution, NTU is committed to maintaining academic integrity and fairness in all assessments.

If you require any support, please do reach out to the School's Student Care Manager Ms Kayathri d/o Veerapandian at [kayathri.v@ntu.edu.sg](mailto:kayathri.v@ntu.edu.sg).

Best,  
Joseph  
Dean, HASS

(his response)

3. We have been ghosted by the NTU President as well, without a response.

Recently, I was accused by Professor Sabrina Luk of using AI in my work, which led to a hard zero being awarded to me for the assignment. I want to note that I was accused of AI usage in my writing not because of NTU's Turnitin detector, but because of several human errors I made in my work.

I fully acknowledge the University's serious stance against AI use in academic work, and I understand the importance of upholding academic integrity. However, I would like to emphasize that, throughout my three years as an undergraduate student, I have always approached my studies with the utmost honesty and dedication.

Attached to this email, I have included a detailed case file with all the relevant evidence I have gathered in support of my innocence. I'm puzzled why my appeal did not go through, even though I showed proof of my writing and editing process, along with my drafts. There was no reasoning provided by the school, which made me feel neglected by the lack of transparency.

4. One of us has called Prof Junjia (SAIO in charge of the investigation) and Prof Chia Wai Mun (Prof supplementing investigation), even visiting the school and their offices several times, but each time they were either "not in" or "on holiday". We have also attempted to call them several times, but to no avail.

Therefore, it is not right for NTU to defend themselves and claim that we were given the chance to 'present our cases'.

**STATEMENT 3: NTU is aware that I used a citation sorter, and yet, it states to the press that I used an “AI powered essay writing service” to mispaint the situation.**

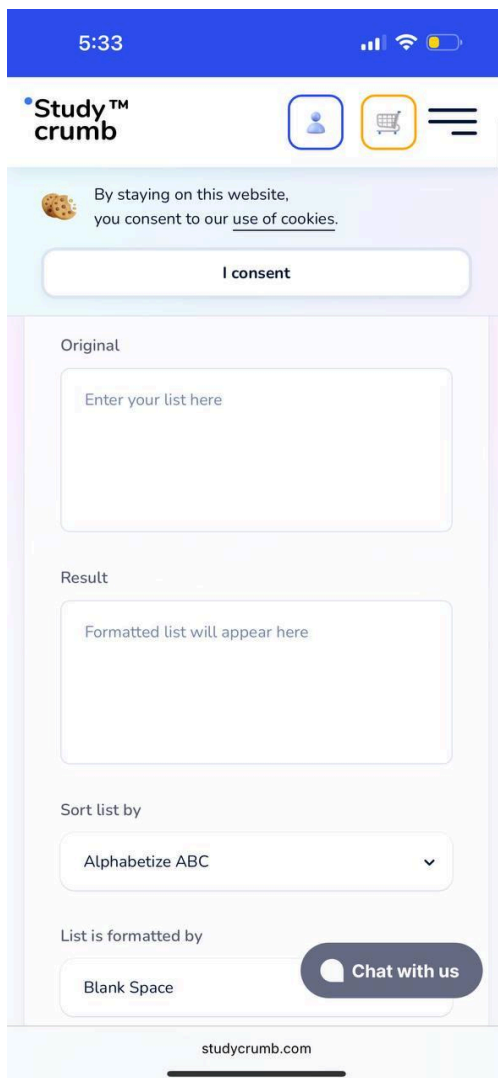
third claimed to be unaware that the platform they used - which markets itself as an AI-powered essay writing service - fell under that category, it said.

*Screenshot of NTU knowing that what I used was a citation sorter:*

on the long essay. However, when you were asked by her to email the soft copies of some studies cited by you in the long essay, you admitted using Studycrumb to organize the references. Studycrumb is based on AI and machine learning algorithms. On 24 April 2025, Assistant Professor

(The above is an email from NTU school of social sciences)





The above is the website I've used, where one can plainly see that there's no Gen AI tools. It's literally a website to arrange citations in A-Z.

The reason why I used the website, and you can try this as well, is because if you google 'citation sorter A-Z', this is one of the top results.

Therefore, NTU intentionally misrepresented my case to villainise students, instead of acknowledging that a citation sorter is a form of technology that existed way before GenAI. This shows that NTU is willing to throw students under the bus just to evade accountability.

**STATEMENT 4: Professor Sabrina Luk has never prohibited the usage of GenAI in citations/the bibliography**

A spokesperson from NTU's School of Social Sciences said the course's instructor – whom ST understands is Assistant Professor Sabrina Luk – had “explicitly prohibited” the use of AI tools for written assignments throughout the semester.

*This is the slide she presented in class:*

Deadline and word count	
Essay proposal	Long essay
Deadline: 11:59 p.m. March 11, 2025 (Tuesday, Week 8)	Deadline: 11:59 p.m. April 18, 2025 (Friday, Week 13)
Word count: 1,000 words (excludes references and appendix)	Word count: 3,000 words (excludes references and appendix)
Please submit the soft copy of your essay proposal via Turnitin.	Please submit the soft copy of your essay via Turnitin.
<div>[1] Late papers will be penalized by having five points deducted for every day it is late. [2] Plagiarism is a disciplinary offence. Any student who commits the offence is liable to disciplinary action. [3] The use of ChatGPT and other AI tools are not allowed in the development or generation of the essay proposal or the long essay. You will receive a zero mark for the assignment if you are caught using ChatGPT and other AI tools for writing assignments.</div>	

It states that ‘the use of ChatGPT and other AI tools are (is – her grammar is wrong here) not allowed in the DEVELOPMENT or GENERATION of the essay.’

Note that in our cases, we were allowed for our citations, but not for our entire essay content itself. Therefore, we would like to challenge NTU's statement that the professor ‘explicitly prohibited’ AI tools.

It is deeply unethical for an institution like NTU, entrusted with the responsibility of protecting its students, to mischaracterise legitimate student concerns and grievances, effectively **distorting the truth to protect its own image**.

Instead of providing transparent and empathetic support, the university has demonstrated a troubling pattern of institutional neglect, including failing to acknowledge its own shortcomings and outright ignoring students who sought accountability from upper management.

Such actions not only betray the trust students place in the university but also perpetuate a culture where vulnerability is met with silence, systemic failures are ignored, and students feel punished for speaking up.

We would like to end off with one final challenge for NTU:

Please check every student essay ever in the history of essays submitted under NTU's system, did everyone else do their citations perfectly?

Even Singapore's legal system is based upon the consistency between judgments and due process, so why is NTU exempt from it?