

SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES
Academic Integrity
Procedures and Rules
(Revised 1/8/2007; 9/6/2006)

The University's research, scholarship, teaching, and community service are central to its mission. In order to achieve that mission, it is critical that the highest standards of academic integrity are articulated to all members of the University community: faculty, students, and staff. All members of the community have an expectation to interact in a professional manner in those endeavors that promote and facilitate the university's common mission. Adherence to professional Codes of Ethical Conduct can and does play a central role in the matter.

PREAMBLE

Students, faculty and administrators share responsibility for the determination and preservation of standards of academic integrity. Each must adhere to his/her own personal code of integrity and must be prepared to educate others about the importance of academic integrity, to take reasonable precaution to discourage violations of academic integrity and to adjudicate violations.

For students, education about the importance of academic integrity begins during the admissions process. The centrality of integrity to the academic enterprise is reinforced during new student orientation when students engage in discussion about academic integrity. Specific mention of academic integrity and course-specific guidelines also may be presented in all classes. Programs and instruction about academic integrity guidelines are available throughout students' graduate school career.

Students are expected to uphold standards of academic integrity by taking reasonable precaution in the academic arena. Reasonable precaution involves implementing measures that reduce the opportunities for academic misconduct, but do not inhibit inquiry, create disruption or distraction in the testing environment, or create an atmosphere of mistrust.

The vitality of academic integrity is dependent upon the willingness of community members to confront instances of suspected wrongdoing. Faculties have specific responsibility to address suspected or reported violations as indicated below. All other members of the academic community are expected to report directly and confidentially their suspicion of violation to a faculty member or a dean or to approach suspected violators and to remind them of their obligation to uphold standards of academic integrity. To the extent possible, the identity of individuals reporting academic misconduct will be kept confidential.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

A. Prohibited Conduct.

Academic misconduct is any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

1. Violation of course rules as contained in the course syllabus or other information provided to the student; violation of program regulations as established by departmental committees and made available to students;
2. Providing or receiving information during examinations such as course examinations and candidacy examinations; or the possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during those examinations;
3. Providing or using assistance in the laboratory, on field work, or on a course assignment, unless such assistance has been authorized specifically by the course instructor;
4. Submitting plagiarized work for an academic requirement. Plagiarism is the representation of another's work or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged, word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas;
5. Submitting substantially the same work to satisfy requirements for one course that has been submitted in satisfaction of requirements for another course, without permission of the instructor of the course for which the work is being submitted;
6. Falsification, fabrication, or dishonesty in reporting laboratory and/or research results;
7. Serving as, or enlisting the assistance of a substitute for a student in the taking of examinations;
8. Alteration of grades or marks by a student in an effort to change the earned grade or credit;
9. Alteration of academically-related University forms or records, or unauthorized use of those forms; and
10. Engaging in activities that unfairly place other students at a disadvantage, such as taking, hiding or altering resource material, or manipulating a grading system.
11. Scientific misconduct as described/defined by federal standards or existing university policies is considered a violation of this academic integrity policy. In addition to the process under this and other University policies, appropriate response and handling of scientific misconduct also will be handled in accordance with the prescribed federal guidelines.
12. Professional schools are expected to respond to allegations/violations of academic integrity in the manner prescribed in their policies and procedures and/or this academic integrity policy.

B. Reporting Suspected Violations.

1. If a faculty member suspects or has been advised by a third party that a graduate student is suspected of having violated academic integrity standards, the faculty member shall consult with the Dean of Graduate Studies about the appropriate course of action. Before speaking with the student, the faculty member may also choose to consult with the chair or dean about academic integrity standards.
2. If the faculty member, in consultation with the chair or dean, determines that the evidence is not adequate to charge the student with a violation, the matter will be dropped.
3. In some instances, allegations/violations of this policy may require a joint investigation (e.g., Office of Research Administration (ORA) & the Dean of Graduate Studies investigate professional conduct and scientific misconduct). The ORA will determine the manner in which joint cases are handled.

4. First Violations.

- a. If the faculty member and the chair/dean agree that a violation has occurred, and the student agrees that a violation has occurred and the violation is determined to be a First Violation (the university has no record of previous violations by the student of the university's Standards of Conduct), the faculty member may choose to sanction the student with either failure in the work in question or failure in the course. In such cases, the faculty member will be provided with a reporting form signed by both the student and faculty member and placed in the student's official file in the School of Graduate Studies.
- b. The faculty and the chair/dean will refer the case to the Dean of Graduate Studies for possible board action if:
 - i. The student claims not to have violated academic integrity standards or the student disagrees with the sanction imposed by the professor.
 - ii. The faculty member and the chair/dean agree that the seriousness of the first offense warrants presentation to the academic integrity board.
 - iii. The faculty member, after consultation with the Dean of Graduate Studies, prefers to have the academic integrity board investigate or adjudicate the alleged violation, or prefers that the board sanction the student.
 - iv. If the alleged violation is one for which the penalty would be separation from the University (Level Three and Level Four), the dean of the degree-granting School automatically will forward the case to the Dean of Graduate Studies to be heard under the University Academic Policies and Procedures.
5. Subsequent Violations. If the student's file indicates that the student suspected of a violation has been responsible for one or more previous violations of the university's Standards of Conduct, the case will be referred to the Dean of Graduate Studies or for academic integrity board action.
6. Students may continue to participate in a course or research activities until the case has been resolved unless their continued presence poses a risk to the course or research activity. Under no circumstances should a student be offered a choice of either dropping a course or facing disciplinary action.

C. Notice of Charges.

Students shall be notified of University charges in writing, unless a more effective form of notification is deemed appropriate. A hearing will not be scheduled less than forty-eight (48) hours after notification. Charges may be presented in person, by placement in a student's campus mailbox, or by mail to the accused student's local or permanent address on file in the office of the University Registrar. All students are required to maintain accurate and current local and permanent addresses with the University Registrar. Following notification of charges, students are encouraged to and shall be afforded the opportunity to meet with a University official for the purpose of explaining the University judicial process and discussion of the charges. Failure of the accused student to respond to the initiation of charges or schedule a preliminary meeting shall in no way prevent the University from scheduling and conducting a hearing in the absence of the accused student.

D. Notice of Hearing.

If a hearing is to be held, written notification will be provided to the student. The notice may be hand delivered, placed into a student's campus mailbox, or mailed to the last known address of the student, either by certified mail or first class mail, no fewer than ten (10) calendar days prior to the hearing. Unless already provided to the student, the notification will include the charge(s), date, time, and location of the hearing, the designated panel, a statement of the student's rights, and information on the hearing procedures. The accused student may request a postponement for reasonable cause, or a hearing separate from other accused persons. A request for a postponement for reasonable cause must be made in writing, include supporting rationale, and be received by the person sending the hearing notification at least two (2) business days before the scheduled hearing.

E. Academic Integrity Board and Hearing Procedures.

1. Academic Integrity Board. If a suspected violation of academic integrity standards that has been reported is a level 3 or 4 violation, the Dean of Graduate Studies will convene the Academic Integrity Board (AIB). The AIB will meet within thirty (30) days of receiving an alleged level 3 or 4 violation. The AIB is comprised of three students (voting members) appointed by the Graduate Student Senate, two faculty (voting members) from a pool appointed by the Faculty Senate and the Dean of Graduate Studies or her/his designee, who will preside over the proceedings. AIB procedures, and the vote required for the determination of responsibility, and the evidence standard will be the same as those for the University Judicial Board.
2. Hearing Procedures.
 - a. The accused student shall appear before the AIB at the scheduled time and place. The faculty member and the faculty member's chairperson/dean need not appear at the hearing, although each may, with the approval of the Dean of Graduate Studies, attend the hearing and address the AIB.
 - b. The hearing shall be conducted in a university facility and shall be closed to the public. Attendance at hearings is limited to those directly involved or those requested by the Dean or AIB to attend. The Dean or AIB will take reasonable measures to assure an orderly hearing, including removal of persons who impede or disrupt the proceedings.
 - c. Formal rules of evidence shall not apply. The Dean may in her/his absolute discretion, admit or exclude evidence and admit or exclude witnesses during the testimony of other witnesses. In any case in which the charge does not rest exclusively on documentary evidence, the complainant shall be a witness at the hearing.
 - d. The accused student may have an advisor throughout the hearing. The advisor may only counsel the student and may not actively participate in the hearing, unless clarification is needed as determined by the Dean or the AIB. This person should be a member of the university community (current faculty member, administrator, staff member, or student). Any advisor, so

designated, who is also an attorney-at-law will not be considered to be appearing as counsel.

- e. The accused student may submit a written statement, may invite relevant witnesses to attend, may ask questions of witnesses called by others, and will be notified of potential witnesses to be called. The University may present witnesses as well as question those presented by the accused. The accused student must direct questions to witnesses through the Dean of Graduate Studies.
- f. The accused student may review any evidence that may be introduced prior to the hearing.
- g. In cases requiring special expertise, the Dean or AIB may appoint individuals with appropriate expertise to serve as consultants to the AIB. The consultants may be present and provide information as called upon during the hearing but will not vote.
- h. Students are entitled to a presumption of innocence. Therefore, a student will not be found in violation unless a preponderance of the evidence supports the charge(s).

3. Attendance

Because the most accurate and fair review of the facts can best be accomplished when all parties are present, the accused is expected to attend and participate. If an individual does not choose to attend a hearing, the charges will be reviewed as scheduled on the basis of the information available, and a decision will be made. Although no inference may be drawn against a student for failing to attend a hearing or remaining silent, the hearing will proceed, and the conclusion will be based on the evidence presented. No decision shall be based solely on the failure of the accused student to attend the hearing or answer the charges.

4. Record of Proceedings

A single record consisting of written notes, tape recording, or other method selected by the Dean, will be made of all hearings. Such records will remain the property of the University but will be made available to the accused student for review during the appeal period. A written notice of the decision and, if found in violation, information regarding appeal procedures will be provided to the accused student.

5. Findings

- a. The AIB shall deliberate in private and makes its determinations by a majority vote. The AIB shall make its decision based upon the evidence presented at the hearing.
- b. Should the AIB find the student “not responsible” for a suspected violation, the faculty member and the student will be so informed in writing by the Dean. The faculty member will be asked to evaluate the student’s performance in the assignment in question and to issue a grade based on her or his normal grading practices.

- c. If the AIB determines that the student has committed an academic integrity violation, the Dean of Graduate Studies will so inform the student and all parties in writing. The Dean of Graduate Studies will inform the student of the right to appeal.
- d. The signed report form from a faculty member or the finding of responsibility by the academic integrity board will become part of the student's official file. Students found responsible for a first violation will be required, in addition to any other sanctions imposed, to attend an ethics education program or complete an ethics exercise assigned by the Dean of Graduate Studies.

F. Sanctions

Any violation of academic honesty is a serious offense and is therefore subject to an appropriate penalty. Violations at Case Western Reserve University are classified into four levels according to the nature of the infraction. For each level of violation a corresponding set of sanctions is recommended. **Chairs, deans and hearing panels are not bound by these illustrations, which are intended as general guidelines for the academic community.** Since adherence to a code of conduct can be seen as a function of socialization into the group whose norms are reflected in such a code, culpability may be assessed differentially for those with more and less experience as members of the academic community; thus violations of academic integrity by graduate students will presumably be penalized more severely than violations by first semester first year students. Examples are cited below for each level of violation. These examples are illustrations and are not to be considered all-inclusive.

1. Level One Violations

Level One Violations may occur because of inexperience or lack of knowledge of principles of academic integrity on the part of the students committing the violation. These violations often involve a small fraction of the total coursework, are not extensive, and/or occur on a minor assignment. Cases involving Level One Violations may be handled within the individual college/ school in which the individual is a candidate for a degree (e.g., MSASS Doctoral Program Executive Committee). Examples of Level One violations include but are not limited to:

- a. Working with another student on a laboratory or other homework assignment when such work is prohibited; or
- b. Failure to footnote, reference, or give proper acknowledgment in an extremely limited section of an assignment.

Recommended sanctions for Level One Violations are listed below; one of these may be chosen in each case:

- a. Required attendance in a non-credit workshop or seminar on ethics or related subjects;
- b. An assigned paper or research project on a relevant topic;
- c. A make-up assignment at a more difficult level than the original assignment;
or
- d. A recommendation to the instructor that no credit be given for the original assignment.

Records of students who commit Level One Violations will be maintained in the respective Chair's/Dean's Office until graduation. A copy of the complaint and its resolution will be placed in the student's official graduate file in the School of Graduate Studies.

2. Level Two Violations

Level Two Violations are characterized by dishonesty of a more serious character or by conduct that affects a more significant aspect or portion of the course work. Cases involving Level Two Violations may be handled within the college/school in which the student is a candidate for a degree, or in the case of a student who is not a candidate for a degree, by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Examples of Level Two Violations include, but are not limited to:

- a. Quoting directly or paraphrasing, to a moderate extent, without acknowledging the source;
- b. Submitting the same work or major portions thereof to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without permission from the instructor;
- c. Using data or interpretative material for a laboratory report without acknowledging the sources or the collaborators; or
- d. Receiving assistance from others, such as research, statistical, computer programming, or field data collection help that constitutes an essential element in the undertaking without acknowledging such assistance in a paper, examination or project.

The recommended sanction for Level Two Violations is disciplinary probation. In cases of academic dishonesty involving out-of-class assignment, the schools, in consultation with the Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, may recommend a failing grade for the assignment involved and the grade in the course will be determined in the normal manner. However, cheating on a take-home final examination would normally carry a recommended penalty that the faculty member fails the student in the course, as well as disciplinary probation.

Records of students who commit Level Two offenses will be maintained in the respective Chair's/Dean's Office. A copy of the complaint and its resolution will be placed in the student's official graduate file.

3. Level Three Violations

Level Three Violations are those that go beyond Level One or Two and that, in the opinion of the Dean of Graduate Studies require adjudication at the university level. Level Three Violations include dishonesty that affects a major or essential portion of work done to meet course requirements, involves premeditation, or is preceded by one or more violations at Levels One and Two. Cases involving Level Three Violations are heard under the School of Graduate Studies Academic Integrity Policies and Rules. Examples of Level Three Violations include but are not limited to:

- a. Copying on examinations;

- b. Plagiarizing major portions of a written assignment;
- c. Acting to facilitate copying during an exam;
- d. Using prohibited materials, e.g., books, notes, or calculators during an examination;
- e. Collaborating before an exam to develop methods of exchanging information and implementation thereof;
- f. Altering examinations for the purposes of re-grading;
- g. Acquiring or distributing an examination from unauthorized sources prior to the examination;
- h. Presenting the work of another as one's own;
- i. Using purchased term paper or other materials;
- j. Removing posted or reserved material, or preventing other students from having access to it;
- k. Fabricating data by inventing or deliberately altering material (this includes citing "sources" that are not, in fact, sources); or
- l. Using unethical or improper means of acquiring data.

The sanction typically to be sought for all Level Three Violations or repeated violations of Level One and Two offenses is a minimum of a one semester suspension from the University.

4. Level Four Violations

Level Four Violations represent the most serious breaches of intellectual honesty. Such cases are heard under the School of Graduate Studies Academic Integrity Policies and Rules. Examples of Level Four Violations include but are not limited to:

- a. All academic infractions committed after return from suspension for a previous academic integrity violation;
- b. Infractions of academic honesty in ways similar to criminal activity (such as forging a grade form, stealing an examination from a professor or from a university office, buying an examination, or falsifying a transcript to secure entry into the University or change the record work done at the University);
- c. Having a substitute take an examination or taking an examination for someone else;
- d. Fabrication of evidence, falsification of data, quoting directly or paraphrasing without acknowledging the source, and/or presenting the ideas of another as one's own within a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, in scholarly articles submitted to referred journals, or in other work represented as one's own as a graduate student; or
- e. Sabotaging another student's work through actions designed to prevent the student from successfully completing an assignment.

The typical sanction for all Level Four Violations and a repeat infraction at Level Three is permanent expulsion from the university. In addition, faculty members retain the right to fail the student, place a letter in the student's permanent graduate file, which is not removed upon graduation or other action as deemed appropriate by the Dean of Graduate Studies. Such cases are heard under the School of Graduate Studies Academic Integrity Policies and Rules. Notation of

“academic disciplinary separation” and notification will be placed on a student’s official record in the School of Graduate Studies.

G. Appeal Process

1. Right to Appeal

A student found in violation has the right to appeal the original decision. An appeal of a decision must be submitted in writing and postmarked or hand delivered to the Provost or the Provost’s designee, within ten (10) calendar days after the date on which written notice of the decision is sent to the student. Each student shall be limited to one appeal. The decision of the appeal officer is final.

2. Grounds for Appeal

An appeal may be based only upon one or more of the following grounds:

- a. Procedural error;
- b. Misapplication or misinterpretation of the rule alleged to have been violated;
- c. Findings of facts not supported by a preponderance of evidence;
- d. Discovery of substantial new facts that were unavailable at the time of the hearing; or
- e. That the disciplinary sanction imposed is grossly disproportionate to the violation committed.

3. Appeal Proceedings

- a. The appeal officer shall dismiss the appeal if the appeal is not based upon one or more of the grounds set forth in Section (B) above.
- b. The appeal officer may decide the appeal based upon a review of the record.
- c. The appeal officer may request additional written information or an oral presentation from any relevant person(s) and then decide the appeal based upon the enhanced record.

4. Possible Dispositions by the Appeal Officer

The appeal officer may, after a review of the record, uphold the original sanction, dismiss the original sanction, or impose a lesser sanction. An appeal officer may also remand the case to the original hearing body or refer the case to a new hearing officer or panel to be reheard. If possible, the new hearing officer or panel should be different from the one that originally decided the case. If a case is reheard by a hearing officer or panel, the sanction imposed can be greater than that imposed at the original hearing.

5. Minor Deviations from Procedure

A student and hearing officer may agree in advance to minor deviations from procedure. Such deviations are not then subject to appeal. Other minor deviations are acceptable as long as such deviations are not found upon appeal to be unreasonably harmful to the student.

H. VIOLATIONS REPORTED AFTER VOLUNTARY WITHDRAWAL OR ACADEMIC SEPARATION

Suspected violations of academic integrity standards reported after a student voluntarily withdraws or is academically separated will be investigated and adjudicated. A student who withdraws or is academically separated during the investigation and adjudication of a suspected violation may be asked to appear at a hearing or, if the student fails to appear, have her/his case heard *in absentia*. If the student is found responsible for a violation, sanctions can be imposed.

I. VIOLATIONS REPORTED AFTER GRADUATION

In the event that a suspected violation of academic integrity standards is reported after graduation, the Dean for Graduate Studies will make a determination as to the feasibility of investigation and adjudication. Graduation will not preempt investigation or adjudication of a suspected violation when those processes are feasible. If a student is found responsible for a violation and the sanction imposed makes the student ineligible to earn her or his degree, the degree may be revoked.

J. MAINTENANCE OF RECORDS

Violations of academic integrity standards are considered violations of the university's Standards of Conduct and will be recorded in the student's official file in the School of Graduate Studies.