

University College Policies on Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity:

49-20 Academic Integrity: <http://www.psu.edu/dept/ufs/policies/47-00.html#49-20>

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner, serving as a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at Penn State. All members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity; respect other students' dignity, rights and property; and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others.

To protect the rights and maintain the trust of honest students and support appropriate behavior, faculty and administrators should regularly communicate high standards of integrity and reinforce them by taking reasonable steps to anticipate and deter acts of dishonesty in all assignments (Senate Policy 44-40: Proctoring of Examinations). At the beginning of each course, it is the responsibility of the instructor to provide students with a statement clarifying the application of University and College academic integrity policies to that course.

University College Committee on Academic Integrity at (*campus*)

Membership*

- Three full-time faculty members--one of whom with tenure will serve as chair for a minimum two -year term.
- Two students in degree status
- Director of Academic Affairs (DAA), serving as an ex-officio, non-voting member and provider of administrative support.

*The minimum acceptable number of voting committee members to hear a case is three. In all cases, faculty must comprise the majority of the members, although not to the exclusion of student representation.

This committee will review and settle all contested cases of academic integrity infractions in which academic sanctions are applied, and will be the final level of review for academic sanctions. Review by the Dean's office will occur only when it is determined that due process was not followed.

University College Guiding Principles and Procedures:

Principles:

Faculty are encouraged to discuss candidly with students issues of integrity in the context of promoting learning, and should make clear verbally and in writing (through their syllabi) expectations regarding academic integrity. A document provided by the English Department is a suggested reference for discussions of plagiarism: (See http://www.courses.psu.edu/engl/engl030_jth/PLAGIARI.html)

Integrity cases will be heard at the campus where the course is being delivered. Students enrolled in other institutions through education abroad or other programs will follow the academic integrity policies in place at that institution.

If at any time during the investigation of an alleged case of academic misconduct, it is determined that a University disciplinary sanction will be pursued, the case will be referred to the campus judicial affairs officer for fact-finding and review.

Procedures:

When academic dishonesty is suspected, the instructor will notify the student of the suspected specific infraction(s) (place, time, manner) and offer to meet to discuss the situation and give the student the opportunity to respond. A drop or withdrawal of the course after this point will be reversed. (Faculty will assign a NG to students charged with an integrity violation if grades are due before disputed cases are heard and resolved.)

At the request of either the faculty member or the student, the meeting between the two will occur in the presence of the campus DAA. The student should have full access to the evidence and have the opportunity to explain his/her behavior.

If there is a meeting--and if after discussion with the student, the instructor chooses to continue with the dishonesty charge--the faculty member will inform the student of the academic sanction he/she is assigning (ranging from a warning to removal from the program). When removal from the student's program is the requested sanction, concurrence by the campus judicial affairs officer, the Dean of the University and the Dean of the student's academic program (if applicable) is required.

If an instructor considers an academic infraction to be of sufficient severity to warrant the investigation of a disciplinary sanction, the instructor should confer whenever possible with the DAA before notifying the student. Cases deemed serious enough for disciplinary review are referred to the campus judicial affairs officer for fact-finding before any process takes place on the academic sanctions. (See: "Disciplinary Sanctions-XF grades" page 4).

The faculty member will give (or send) to the student the University Academic Integrity Form, and the student will choose to either accept the accusation and assigned sanction, or deny the

accusation or assigned sanction and request a review before the College Academic Integrity Committee at the Campus. Both student and instructor will sign the form.

A refusal by the student to sign or return the form will be interpreted as his/her accepting the charge and sanction. No hearing or paper review will be initiated and the academic sanction, with the concurrence of the DAA, may be applied.

If the student does not contest the charge or the sanction, the signed integrity form will be sent by the DAA to the Campus Judicial Affairs Designee for official record keeping. If the student contests the charge or the sanction, the signed integrity form will be sent by the DAA to the student and the Chair of the College committee at the campus.

The student is allowed three business days to decide whether to accept or contest the case. If a student chooses to contest the case, he may change his mind up until 5:00 p.m. of the business day just prior to the day of the hearing.

A faculty member may withdraw the charge at any time.

In contested cases, the DAA will give the student a choice of either a formal hearing or a paper review of the case. A student who has requested a paper review may change his mind at any time *before* a decision by the committee has been reached.

All reasonable attempts must be made to notify the student of the suspected violation. In a case where the student cannot be reached, a letter will be sent to the student's home address, accompanied by the Academic Integrity Form, stating the specific accusation, the sanction, and the end date for the student's reply. If the student does not reply to the letter (by returning to the DAA the signed integrity form) by the end date, no hearing or paper review will be initiated and the academic sanction, with the concurrence of the DAA and committee chair, will be applied.

The instructor and student will forward all relevant documentation to the DAA, who will send it to the chair of the College Academic Integrity Committee at the campus. The student and faculty member will receive, from the DAA, this documentation no later than five business days prior to the hearing or paper review, which will occur as soon as practical, but not later than five weeks after the submission of the signed integrity form.

If the faculty chair of the committee is the faculty member charging a student with an integrity violation, then the faculty chair of a nearby campus will be asked to substitute as chair of the integrity committee. Prior to the hearing, the student will be asked by the DAA if he or she feels that any member of the committee may be sufficiently biased to hinder impartiality. If yes, and if the DAA finds the student's concern sufficient, the committee member(s) may be excused. A minimum of three committee members are required to hear a case, with faculty representing the majority. (Note: merely knowing the committee member, having been in class with him/her, or having received a poor grade from him/her is not considered, in itself, reason for excluding any committee member for reason of suspected impartiality.)

Hearing Protocol

The Committee chair directs the hearing, rules on procedures, and ensures that questioning is objective, evidence is relevant, standards are enforced, and confidentiality maintained.

At the hearing, the student will be allowed to explain behaviors and submitted evidence. The instructor will articulate his/her accusations and assigned sanction. The committee may question both parties.

Both the student and faculty member may question witnesses and the evidence. To maximize confidentiality, any and all witnesses will be present at the hearing only during their questioning.

The committee chair will maintain order and reasonable time limits to this questioning.

No recording devices will be allowed for anyone attending any part of the hearing.

Neither parents nor attorneys are allowed at the hearing; however, the student has a right to the presence during the hearing of a faculty, staff, or student advisor from Penn State.

At the close of the hearing, the chair of the committee will notify the student and the faculty member of the date by which a decision will be made. The decision should be made in a reasonable timeframe, but not later than two weeks after the hearing.

The standard of proof for finding a student responsible will be based on presented evidence--is it reasonable to draw a supported and clear conclusion, based on the existing relevant and admissible evidence, that a code or conduct violation occurred?

Following the hearing, the committee will examine all evidence/testimony and decide whether, by majority vote, the student was in violation and if the assigned sanction is appropriate per College guidelines. At this time the committee will be advised by the DAA of any prior integrity violations on record for the student...prior integrity infractions may be used in determining the sanction to be applied. The committee may; a) maintain the sanction, b) increase the sanction, or c) decrease the sanction. If the student is not found responsible for academic dishonesty, all incident records are destroyed.

The chair of the committee will write the final report to include the accusation, a summary of accepted testimony and evidence leading to the decision as supported by fact-finding, and the committee's decisions, sanctions and rationales. The DAA will send the report to the student and the faculty member with copy to the campus judicial affairs designee.

Disciplinary Sanctions--XF Grades

An "XF" grade is a formal University disciplinary sanction that indicates on the student's transcript that failure in a course was due to a serious act of academic dishonesty and misconduct. Examples of such misconduct include, but are not limited to, stealing exams from an instructor's office, stealing another student's paper, paying a student to take an exam, or repeated instances of integrity violations. In cases when University disciplinary sanctions are recommended (including the assignment of an "XF" grade) the case will be referred to the campus judicial affairs officer. To assign an "XF," the instructor, the College academic integrity committee at the campus, the DAA, and Judicial Affairs must concur that this penalty is appropriate. XF sanctions are applied and removed only by the Office of Judicial Affairs. The College's recommended length of time for an XF grade to remain on a student's transcript is one year from graduation.

If at any time during the investigation of an alleged case of academic misconduct it is determined that a University disciplinary sanction should be applied, the case will be referred to the campus judicial affairs officer at that time and before any final action takes place on the academic sanction. If grades are due while disciplinary sanctions are under review, the instructor will assign a grade of DF until any action is taken.

For each student case forwarded to the Office of Judicial Affairs with a recommendation for an XF, the College (faculty member, campus Academic Integrity Committee, and Office of the Dean, will determine the conditions under which Judicial Affairs may remove the X in an XF grade.

Reporting and Record Keeping

Reports of all cases investigated by committees, including all evidence gathered for the hearing, will be sent by DAAs to the Judicial Affairs designee at the campus. (Any duplicate copies of evidence must be destroyed.) It is critical that faculty report to the DAA all applied sanctions, including those that are not contested by students. Thus, the records of all cases reviewed by committee and all non-contested academic sanctions applied by faculty will be sent to the campus judicial affairs designee for record keeping. Judicial Affairs alone will be responsible for central record keeping of all academic dishonesty cases. These records are confidential and kept for seven years, or in accordance with University guidelines concerning students' educational records.