

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Introduction

Students in The Graduate School are expected to conduct their academic work, scholarship, research, teaching and other professional responsibilities with the highest standard of academic integrity. Academic misconduct is a serious matter for graduate students committed to scholarly pursuits.

It is each student's responsibility to be aware of all rules and policies applicable to their program. All students registered for classes at Northwestern must adhere to the University's standards of academic integrity. The Graduate School's procedures, described here, operate within the broader Northwestern policy framework (<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/principles.html>) detailed on the academic integrity page of the Office of the Provost's website (<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/>), which includes *Academic Integrity: A Basic Guide*, a resource containing essential information and a section on how to avoid plagiarism.

In addition to the University's standards of academic integrity, students in The Graduate School:

- must be aware of and comply with Northwestern University policies and procedures regarding responsible conduct of research (<https://www.researchintegrity.northwestern.edu/research-misconduct/>)
- must adhere to standards of academic integrity in completion of academic milestones including, but not limited to, master's thesis, PhD qualifying exams, PhD prospectus, PhD dissertation, and carrying out of other academic requirements and responsibilities

Procedures

The exact procedures depend on whether the alleged academic misconduct occurred in a class and if so, which school oversees the class.

I. Initiation of a Complaint

A. Any case of alleged academic misconduct involving a student in The Graduate School (TGS) should be reported by the complainant (course instructor, faculty member involved in graduate education, other party) to the appropriate school contact (<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/counseling-and-contacts.html>). Suspected cases of academic integrity violations related to a class should be reported to the course instructor or the contact of the school that offers the course. If, for example, the course is offered in the McCormick School of Engineering, whether an undergraduate or graduate level course, the matter will be referred to the contact for the McCormick School of Engineering for investigation into the allegations.

Allegations of academic misconduct not related to a class (including, but not limited to, qualifying exams, prospectus, master's thesis, dissertation) or related to classes overseen by The Graduate School will be adjudicated by the Associate Dean for Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Programs in The Graduate School (the Associate Dean).

Reports of academic misconduct must be made in writing no later than 1 month from the date of the alleged incident, or within 1 month of the date the reporting individual becomes aware of the alleged incident. Once a matter has been referred to the Associate Dean, it may not be

withdrawn without approval, nor may the complainant resolve the case independently.

The appropriate school contact (<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/counseling-and-contacts.html>) will review the report and decide whether to bring a charge. The review may include statements from the complainant, statements and/or supporting materials from the instructor or Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), and electronic searches of plagiarism resources, websites, and other databases. Students charged with an academic integrity violation may not change their registration or grading basis in a course in which a charge is pending, or in which a finding of an academic integrity violation has been made.

B. If the appropriate school contact determines that there is cause for further investigation, they shall provide the student with written notice of: the facts and evidence underlying the charge of academic misconduct; the standards said to have been violated; and the procedure by which the accuracy of the charge will be determined. The exact process depends on which school is responsible for the investigation (<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/>). The remainder of this page addresses TGS's procedures.

C. The student will have reasonable time, if requested, within which to prepare a response to the charge. When alleged academic misconduct is investigated by The Graduate School, the Associate Dean will notify the student/former student in writing by email of the nature of the concern that has arisen. Ordinarily, an initial meeting with the Associate Dean will take place within 7 business days of receiving written notice of the charge to discuss the case and present any relevant materials or statements.

D. If the student does not schedule a meeting to take place within 7 business days, the Associate Dean may decide whether there was sufficient evidence of academic misconduct. The Associate Dean may, at their discretion, grant reasonable requests for an extension of this deadline.

II. Meeting with the Associate Dean

A. The Associate Dean has the authority to determine whether there was sufficient evidence of academic misconduct.

B. In meeting with the student, the Associate Dean will describe the allegation and detail the evidence provided by the complainant. At this initial meeting, the student may decline to discuss the matter and/or request that the Associate Dean defer making a determination until after a subsequent meeting between the student and Associate Dean, at which time the student may present other relevant information or evidence. This second meeting must be requested at the initial meeting and must be scheduled for a time within 7 business days of the initial meeting.

C. After reviewing evidence and the statements made by the student in the meeting, the Associate Dean shall inform the student in a written statement of decision on whether there was sufficient evidence of academic misconduct, and the sanction. Any finding of academic misconduct must be supported by a brief description of both the process used to come to that determination and the evidence supporting the finding. Except in cross-school cases, the statement will include the sanction to be imposed.

III. Sanctions

Sanctions will be imposed by the school in which the student is enrolled. (Note: For dual degree students, sanctions will be jointly decided by the

relevant administrators in the applicable schools.) More information about possible sanctions (as well as grade modifications by the instructor) (<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/principles.html#sanctions>) can be found in the relevant section of the academic integrity policy on the Office of the Provost's website.

IV. School-Level Appeal

A. The Associate Dean's finding of violation and/or school-level sanctions imposed as a result of the violation may be appealed to an ad hoc faculty committee by the student filing a written notice of appeal within 10 business days of the Associate Dean's written statement of decision. Grades modified by the course instructor following a finding of violation may not be appealed.

B. The written notice of appeal must state what is being appealed (whether the finding that a violation occurred, the sanction imposed, or both) and must describe in detail the grounds for the appeal. The appeal should specifically outline what parts of the written record are incorrect or reasons why the findings or sanction(s) are inappropriate.

C. If appealing the finding, the student must follow the appeal process of the school that determined there was academic misconduct. If appealing the sanction, the student must follow the appeal process of the school that applied the sanction. (See Cross-School Cases below.)

D. Appeals to The Graduate School will be reviewed by an ad hoc faculty committee with whom the student may meet, if requested. The intent of The Graduate School's appeals process may be to reassess whether academic misconduct occurred and/or whether the sanction was commensurate with the finding. Generally, implementation of sanctions will be suspended until all appeals made by the student have been exhausted. If no appeal is filed within 10 business days of the initial notification, the decision shall become final and will be implemented at the conclusion of the appeal period.

Following its review and meeting, The Graduate School's ad hoc faculty appeal committee may sustain or reverse the finding of the Associate Dean and may, if finding of a violation stands, sustain or modify the sanction(s). The student will be informed of the committee's decision in writing.

V. Provost Review

A. Final review of an unsuccessful appeal may be requested in writing by the student within 10 business days, by the Provost or an advisory committee designated by the Provost. The Provost will review unsuccessful appeals only after a finding and a sanction have been issued. Bases for review (<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/principles.html#student-rights>) can be found in the relevant section of the academic integrity policy on the Office of the Provost's website.

VI. Cross-School Cases

A. When a student who is enrolled in another school is suspected of an academic integrity violation in a TGS course, the authority of TGS will extend only to determining whether there was sufficient evidence of a violation of academic integrity. Any finding of violation will be referred to the relevant administrator of the school in which the student is enrolled for imposition of a sanction.

B. When a student who is enrolled in TGS has been found in violation of academic integrity in a course based in another school, the Associate Dean will contact the student in writing to request a meeting to take place

within 7 business days, at which the student may present any evidence of mitigating circumstances, but not regarding the finding of violation. If the student does not schedule an appointment within the allotted time, the Associate Dean may determine a sanction based on the available information. (*Note: This applies only when imposition of a sanction more severe than a letter of reprimand and warning is under consideration.*)

C. The Associate Dean will inform the student in writing of a sanction to be imposed and of the student's right to appeal that sanction within the school.

D. In a cross-school case, an appeal of a *finding of violation* will take place in the school in which the course is based (i.e., the school in which the finding of violation was made). An appeal of a *sanction* imposed by the school in which the student is enrolled should take place in that school (i.e., the school that has imposed the sanction). A sanction will not be determined until the appeal process of the finding has been completed.

VII. School-Specific Considerations

A. Academic misconduct findings and sanctions by The Graduate School do not preclude a student's academic program from taking additional actions they may deem warranted consistent with their published program policies.

B. All references to the Associate Dean in these procedures include the Associate Dean's proxy if circumstances prevent the Associate Dean from participating.