

Academic Integrity
Washington State University
A Reference Guide for Faculty



Academic Integrity at Washington State University
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Office of Student Conduct
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Academic integrity is the cornerstone of higher education. Integrity is a core value of Washington State University and reflected in the institutional strategic plan. All members of the university community share responsibility for maintaining and promoting the principles of integrity in all activities and academic integrity, honest scholarship.



The classroom is not only a place for learning a subject but also learning a culture that upholds and promotes academic integrity. By placing the needed value on academic integrity in the classroom we help facilitate a culture of scholarship and integrity at WSU.

The policies defining academic dishonesty and the review and sanction process is an educational opportunity for students to understand that academic integrity violations are not simply against the rules, but against the greater philosophy of higher education.

The Faculty Manual II.E. Faculty Responsibilities Related to Student Academic Integrity outlines the process to be followed when there is an alleged academic integrity violation, the Office of Student Conduct facilitates the process and aims to promote personal responsibility. Students are informed and expected to have a clear understanding of the Standards of Conduct for Students and to live and work within the perimeters defined by a scholarly community. The goal of the process is to empower students to take pride in their individual work and add a greater value to their personal educational career at WSU.

This reference manual is designed to: 1) clearly define academic integrity violations and offer sample language for documents; 2) assist faculty with reporting and protocol procedures; and finally 3) provide clarity on the appeal process that is governed by the faculty and the Faculty Manual and facilitated by the Office of Student Conduct; 4) clarify the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.



Definitions of Academic Integrity Violations (WAC 504-26-010)

The following definitions include the various types of academic dishonesty in which a student at WSU can be held responsible for violating. These definitions are found in the [Standards of Conduct for Students](#) (WAC 504-26-010).

Cheating

Use of unauthorized materials in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations, or giving or receiving unauthorized assistance by any means, including talking, copying information from another student, using electronic devices, or taking an examination for another student.

Unauthorized Sources

Use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments.

Stealing Tests

Acquisition or possession of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the university faculty or staff when acquired without the permission of the university faculty or staff member.

Fabrication

Fabrication is the intentional invention or counterfeiting of information in the course of an academic activity. Fabrication includes, but is not limited to:

counterfeiting data, research results, information, or procedures with inadequate foundation in fact; counterfeiting a record of internship or practicum experiences; submitting a false excuse for absence or tardiness or a false explanation for failing to complete a class requirement or scheduled examination at the appointed date and time.

Unfair Advantage

Engaging in any behavior for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.

Scientific Misconduct

Falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, or other forms of dishonesty in scientific and scholarly research are prohibited. Complaints and inquiries involving cases of scientific misconduct are managed according to the University's policy for responding to allegations of scientific misconduct. A finding of scientific misconduct is subject to sanctions by the Office of

Student Conduct. The policy for responding to allegations of scientific misconduct may be reviewed by contacting the vice provost for research.

Collaboration

Unless otherwise explicitly stated by the faculty member or outlined in the syllabus, the expectation is that all academic work be conducted on an individual basis.

Unauthorized Knowledge

Intentionally obtaining unauthorized knowledge of examination materials.

Plagiarism

Presenting the information, ideas, or phrasing of another person as the student's own work without proper acknowledgement of the source. This includes submitting a commercially prepared paper or research project or submitting for academic credit any work done by someone else. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of

Definitions continued...

Syllabus Statements

another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

Multiple Submission

Unauthorized multiple submission of the same work.

Sabotage

The sabotage of others' work.

Records

Tampering with or falsifying records.



It is helpful if you clarify academic and behavioral expectations at the beginning of the semester and reach an agreement with students on standards for classroom conduct. The syllabus represents that agreement. When establishing guidelines for behavior in your course, *it is important that you only articulate the standards you are willing to enforce*. You have broad authority to manage your classroom, so exercise that authority with compassion and self-restraint. Apply standards fairly and consistently, as students will recognize and resent perceived unfairness.

Emphasizing the importance of academic integrity in the course syllabus will assist you in addressing it on the first day of class. Information should specify what academic behaviors are prohibited, how you will manage academic integrity violations, and any consequences that may result. *For example, the syllabus should indicate whether certain resources (i.e., past exams, etc.) are unauthorized materials, and a violation of the academic integrity policies.*

The following is the University's syllabus statement:

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of higher education. As such, all members of the university community share responsibility for maintaining and promoting the principles of integrity in all activities, including academic integrity and honest scholarship. Academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course. Students who violate WSU's Academic Integrity Policy (identified in Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 504-26-010(3) and -404) will receive [insert academic sanction (e.g., fail the course, fail the assignment, etc.)], will not have the option to withdraw from the course pending an appeal, and will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct.

Cheating includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration as defined in the Standards of Conduct for Students, WAC 504-26-010(3). You need to read and understand all of the definitions of cheating: <http://app.leg.wa.gov/WAC/default.aspx?cite=504-26-010>. If you have any questions about what is and is

not allowed in this course, you should ask course instructors before proceeding.

If you wish to appeal a faculty member's decision relating to academic integrity, please use the form available at conduct.wsu.edu.

Addressing a Violation: The Initial Hearing

When you believe a violation has occurred in your classroom it is important to address the violation in the following manner:

- 1) Assemble the evidence, including: the offending work, statements by any witnesses, and original sources if plagiarism is alleged. The standard of proof in academic integrity matters is “preponderance of evidence” (more likely than not).
- 2) Notify the student about your concerns privately as soon as possible and provide a date, time, and place for a face-to-face meeting to discuss the situation. This can be scheduled via e-mail.
- 3) Show the evidence to the student and allow him or her to respond. This meeting is your chance to provide a learning opportunity for the student and the student’s opportunity to respond in a responsible manner. Notify the student that you are required to report the incident to the Office of Student Conduct and you will provide the student with a written summary of the meeting, academic sanction, and appeal process.
- 4) Provide the student with the written statement (email is acceptable) outlining the evidence, summarize your meeting with the student including the academic sanction, and notify the student of the 21 day appeal period. Notify the

student in writing of the academic sanction you will assign in keeping with your statement included in your syllabus (for example, assigning a failing grade for the assignment or course).

A sample letter will be provided later in this document.

- 5) According to the faculty manual, you are required to notify the Office of Student Conduct by completing the electronic reporting form at <https://conduct.wsu.edu/file-complaint/report-academic-integrity-violation>. Along with the online form, please provide a copy of the notice you sent to the student (which includes the appeal process), the offending work, any original sources if plagiarism or cheating, and a copy of your syllabus. These documents can be uploaded into the online form or emailed separately to conduct@wsu.edu.

Why should I report the violation to the Office of Student Conduct?

There are two parts to the penalty process in academic integrity violations—the academic sanction and the university sanction.

Reporting the violation to the Office of Student Conduct insures that the student will receive an educational sanction that has been tailored to the particular offense with the goal of providing education about approaching academic work with integrity, while promoting personal responsibility for the violation. Our goal is to support the student toward a successful career at WSU and provide the needed education to prevent a second violation from occurring.

Sample Letter

March 25, 2015

John Doe
000 Streit-Perham
Pullman, WA 99163

Dear John:

On Tuesday, March 24, 2015, you and I met in my office to discuss my concerns that you plagiarized internet sources in the paper you submitted for credit on March 20, 2015. I showed you that four pages from your paper that were identical (word-for-word) to materials found at www.easytermpapers.com. I also showed you that the remaining two pages contained substantial excerpts from “The American Response to Civil Disobedience,” an article by John Smyth (published at....)

You told me that you had no idea why your paper was so similar to the materials found at these two sites and that you had not used them in writing your paper. In my judgment, the preponderance of the evidence shows that you plagiarized. Therefore, in keeping with the policy printed in the course syllabus, I am assigning you a failing grade for the course.

I will forward a copy of this letter, a copy of my syllabus, and copies of the evidence to the Office of Student Conduct. You have the right to request a review of my decision. If you wish to have a hearing with the Academic Integrity Hearing Board to appeal this decision, **you must make your request within 21 days of the date of this letter**. Use the online form available at: <https://conduct.wsu.edu/academic-integrity-review-form/>. I recommend you contact the Office of Student Conduct at 509-335-4532 if you have questions about the appeal process.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Instructor, Class-Section

Academic Sanctions

You have authority in your classroom to assign the academic sanctions of your choosing as long as they are outlined in your syllabus. *It is important that you only articulate the standards you are willing to enforce.* Suggested sanctions include but are not limited to:

- ▣ Warning
- ▣ Failing grade on the assignment
- ▣ Failing grade for the course
- ▣ Extra assignments



University Sanctions

The University has the authority to assign sanctions for academic integrity violations as outlined in WAC 504-26-405. The most common sanction assigned for first offenses is an educational assignment and placing a student on disciplinary probation. The list of sanctions available for academic integrity violations includes:

- ▣ Warning
- ▣ Probation
- ▣ Loss of privileges
- ▣ Education
- ▣ Community Service
- ▣ University suspension
- ▣ University expulsion
- ▣ Revocation of admission and/or degree
- ▣ Withholding degree
- ▣ Hold on transcript or registration

Disciplinary records are kept separate from academic records. If a student is suspended or expelled, a letter may be sent with their transcript to a receiving institution if a conduct board rules the offending behavior is egregious.

The Appeal Process

The appeal process at WSU is guided by a framework of due process rights, and provides students with an opportunity to be heard by an independent review body.

Academic Integrity Hearing Board

The Academic Integrity Hearing Board is a quorum of faculty and a chairperson recommended by the faculty senate and appointed by the university president. The board members serve a term of three years.

The function of the board is to make a separate and independent determination of whether or not the student is responsible for violating the academic integrity policy and/or whether the academic sanction is in keeping with the instructor's syllabus.

Once an appeal has been received...

The student has 21 days from the date of your letter to file an appeal with the Office of Student Conduct. Once the appeal is received the Office will convene the Academic Integrity Hearing Board to hear the case.

The Hearing

Before the hearing, the student will be notified by electronic mail of the date, time, and location of the hearing. The letter also will provide instructions for witnesses and statements, and will list the evidence to be reviewed. During the hearing, the student will be asked to provide a statement of events, and to answer any questions the board has about the case. The faculty member will be called as a witness and will be asked to be available for any questions the board may have about the case. Once the board is satisfied with the responses, the

hearing will be adjourned. The chairperson of the board will notify the student by electronic mail of the outcome within ten days of the hearing. The reporting faculty member also will be sent a copy of the letter by electronic mail.

If the student is found *Responsible* by the board...

The Office of Student Conduct will continue with the regular academic integrity process and assign an additional appropriate university sanction.

If the student is found *Not Responsible* by the board...

The Office of Student Conduct will contact the student notifying him or her that the case is closed and that no further action is required.

You, as the faculty member, will then be guided by the academic integrity hearing board to properly grade the student for the work done.

The written decision of the academic integrity hearing board is the university's final decision. There is no appeal from findings of responsibility or outcomes assigned by the board.

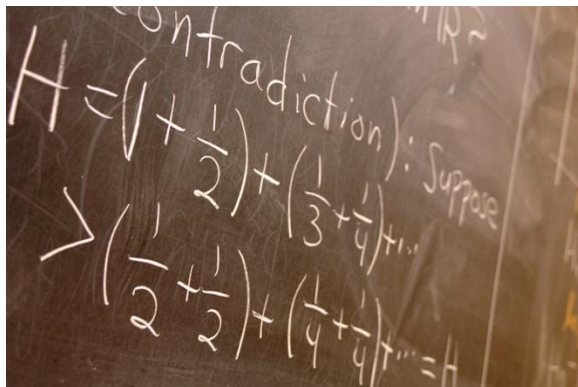


Second or Egregious Offenses

If the reported violation is the second academic integrity offense recorded with the Office of Student Conduct, the student is ordinarily required to appear before the University Conduct Board. The University generally makes a recommendation of expulsion to the board for second offenses.

If a first offense is determined to be particularly egregious by the instructor or the Academic Integrity Hearing Board, the student will be required to appear before the University Conduct Board. Expulsion can be the recommendation, even if it is the student's first recorded offense.

In accordance with the above mentioned due process rights, any student who appears before the University Conduct Board is given the option to appeal that board's decision. Similar to the Academic Integrity Hearing Board, the student has 21 days from the date of the Conduct Board's decision letter to file an appeal with the University Appeals Board using an online form available at conduct.wsu.edu. The appeal is a review of the documentation—it is not a rehearing. The student and/or the university will not have the opportunity to address the appeal board. The student will be notified by mail within twenty days of the appeal board's decision.



The Accused Student's Rights and Responsibilities

As always, in situations involving students, you should observe appropriate confidentiality. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of student education records (including disciplinary records).

Disciplinary records are kept separate from academic records. If a student is suspended or expelled, a letter may be sent with their transcript to a receiving institution. Thus, it is prudent to communicate only with those directly involved with the situation.

WSU expects our students to act as independent, responsible, and adult members of the university community. Students are afforded due process rights during the academic integrity violation process. A student who believes that he or she has been treated improperly in the aftermath of an incident may seek assistance through established university grievance procedures. (University Ombudsman, Office for Equal Opportunity, etc.)

Faculty and Staff Members Rights and Responsibilities

When you report academic integrity violations to the Office of Student Conduct, you will be advised of the outcome because you have a legitimate educational interest as defined in FERPA.

As a faculty member acting in good faith, you have certain assurances when reporting academic integrity violations.

The risk of liability for making such a report is minimal. There are strong public policy reasons to support and protect individuals who make good faith reports of wrongdoing to appropriate officials, even if those reports later prove to be mistaken. Common law (or statutes in some states) gives people who report misconduct to proper authorities a “qualified privilege.” Simply stated, that means they cannot be held liable for defamation unless the report was made in bad faith, with knowledge the information they provided was false, or in reckless disregard of its truth or falsity.

Documentation

Resolving disruption cases can be helped if you document problem behavior, including dates, times, brief descriptions of what happened, and the names of witnesses who may have observed the behavior. Such documentation should always be factual, and not include personal interjections.

Remember that documentation (emails, letters, etc.) are subject to public records requests, and could be requested by outside parties.



Consultation

The Office of Student Conduct aims to be a transparent reference and resource for all issues regarding students at WSU. Please call us regarding any questions you have about the academic integrity policies at WSU.

Further, if you would like to have us speak to your department or colleagues about the process we would be happy to provide that service as well.



Important Contact Information

Office of the Dean of Students
134 French Administration
(509) 335-5757
<http://deanofstudents.wsu.edu/>

University Ombudsman
2 Wilson Hall
(509) 335-1195
<http://ombudsman.wsu.edu/>

Office of Student Conduct
260 Lighty
(509) 335-4532
<http://conduct.wsu.edu>

Counseling and Testing Services
280 Lighty
(509) 335-4511
<http://counsel.wsu.edu/>

Office of the Dean of Students

Melynda Huskey, Dean of Students
Karen Fischer, Associate Dean of Students
Mel Morgan, Assistant Dean of Students
Chio Flores, Assistant Dean of Students

Office of Student Conduct

Adam Jussel, Director
Deborah Baker, Associate Director

Note: Brief sections of this document are adapted from the University of Southern California document, “*Disruptive & Threatening Student Behavior.*”