

# Faculty Instructions for Handling Cases of Academic Dishonesty

**Academic dishonesty** encompasses a wide range of activities, including, but not only: all forms of fraud, plagiarism, any failure to cite explicitly all materials and sources used in one's work, cheating, lying, deception, and directly harming the work of others.

**You must give students due process in suspected cases of academic dishonesty.** In other words, you must clearly inform students of the problem and allow them the opportunity to either accept or deny responsibility for the charges no matter how strong the cases against them.

## WHAT TO DO AT ALL TIMES:

- State your expectations for academic honesty as part of your grading policy for every course. Senate policy requires instructors to include a statement on Academic Integrity within each syllabus. While there is no official recommended University statement, the College of the Liberal Arts provides a [recommended statement](#) on the Academic Integrity faculty resource web page. The purpose of the Academic Integrity statement is both to educate your students and to protect yourself should incidents arise later in the semester. A written statement is one way to ensure that students are made aware of Penn State policy, so they cannot claim ignorance later. In addition, some students are naive about plagiarism, associating it merely with copying and not with the use of ideas which they have paraphrased without proper citation.
- Clearly state to students your expectations for such issues as group work and take-home assignments and exams.
- Provide sufficient proctoring for exams.
- Make use of the [College of the Liberal Arts Academic Integrity Web site](#). It includes links to the official College and University academic integrity policies; to information regarding academic integrity and your syllabus; to resources on preventing, detecting, and educating your students about plagiarism; to resources to share with your students, and more. Consider including a link to the [student resource](#) portion of the website on your syllabi.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

- Before you take any action at all, inform yourself fully about the relevant academic integrity policies and procedures. Links to the official College and University policies can be found on the College of the Liberal Arts Academic Integrity [faculty resource](#) page.
- Determine the sanction you deem appropriate. The document [Sanctioning Guidelines for Academic Integrity Violations](#) may assist you in this decision. Do consider the level of infraction as you determine your sanction. In general, minor infractions involve errors in judgment without a clear intent by the student to violate academic integrity. Moderate infractions are unpremeditated dishonest acts that directly affect only one student. Major infractions are premeditated dishonest acts, or dishonest acts that directly affect the grade of another student.
- Arrange a meeting with the student as soon as possible. Email is acceptable only when distance precludes a face-to-face meeting. Simply informing the student by mail is not acceptable. Confront the student with the information you have that suggests dishonest conduct, and ask for an explanation. Outline the basis for your allegation, and allow the student an opportunity to respond.
- If you determine at this point that academic dishonesty has not occurred (perhaps this was a misunderstanding, or simply a case of academic incompetence) the academic integrity process is concluded and nothing else needs to happen.

## IF YOU DETERMINE THAT YOU BELIEVE ACADEMIC DISHONESTY HAS OCCURRED:

- If, in the course of your discussion with the student, you determine that you believe academic dishonesty has occurred, inform the student that you intend to file a charge, advise the student to read the College's [academic integrity policy](#), and inform the student of the academic and/or disciplinary sanction(s) that you intend to recommend.
- Give the student a copy of your evidence and the [Academic Integrity Form](#) with the instructor portion completed. Keep a copy of the completed form in the event that the student does not sign and return it.
  1. **If the student does not deny the allegation** of academic dishonesty or contest the recommended sanction(s), ask him/her to sign the "I DO NOT CONTEST" portion of the Academic Integrity Form. Forward the signed form, a thorough statement of your case, and your completed documentation\* to Barbara Welshofer, Academic Integrity Coordinator, 116 Sparks Building.

2. **If the student denies the allegation** of academic dishonesty and contests the recommended sanction(s), ask him/her to sign the "I CONTEST" portion of the Academic Integrity Form. Forward the signed form, a thorough statement of your case, and your completed documentation\* to Barbara Welshofer, Academic Integrity Coordinator, 116 Sparks Building.
- Note that in both cases—contesting and non-contesting—students have three days to sign and return the form. A student's refusal to sign the form will be interpreted as acceptance of the charge(s) and sanction(s). If the student does not sign the form within three days, inform the Academic Integrity Coordinator immediately and forward your signed copy, your statement, and your documentation to 116 Sparks.

#### Guidelines for supporting documentation\*

It is the instructor's responsibility to compile documentation, which indicates in a clear and convincing way that the student's conduct violated the academic integrity policy:

1. If the supporting information is circumstantial or subjective in nature, then two corroborative pieces of information are suggested. For example, if a student was observed looking at another student's test during an exam then a statement by a proctor attesting to this is considered a single piece of supporting information.
2. Single pieces of supporting information are acceptable if they are such things as a cheat sheet, possession of two exam copies, formulae programmed into calculators, another student's name appearing on the exam or the same student observed attending two exams at different times.
3. In cases of plagiarism, your documentation should include the student's paper with the alleged plagiarized sections clearly highlighted and the websites or other documents from which they were drawn noted precisely. The corresponding websites/documents should be printed out with the alleged plagiarized sections highlighted as well. In cases where plagiarism is not word for word, the supporting information should provide a clear, and significant, link between the two documents. For example, copies of two similar papers might show consistent sentence or paragraph structures throughout.

If you have any questions as to how to compile your documentation, contact Barbara Welshofer at [865-1070](tel:865-1070) or [welshofer@psu.edu](mailto:welshofer@psu.edu). You are also welcome to stop by [116 Sparks](#) to peruse generic samples of completed case documentation available for your perusal in 116 Sparks.

- The student will be contacted by the Academic Integrity Coordinator to submit his/her statement and documentation.
- Note that you will receive a copy of the student's statement/documentation and the student will receive a copy of your statement/documentation.
- In the event that a case is not resolved by the end of the semester in which the charges were filed, record an "NG" grade. **Do not record an "F" grade or a "DF" (deferred)**. The eLion system will enter a "no grade", or "NG" if you simply leave the student's grade blank. Similarly, do not record a grade for a particular assignment in which an academic integrity case is pending.

#### WHAT *NOT* TO DO IN SUSPECTED CASES OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

- Do not handle the situation on your own by assigning a lower grade or simply failing the student; doing so denies students their due process. The College and University value academic integrity. Faculty, students and administrators should "contribute actively to fostering a climate of academic integrity" (Statement by the Council of Academic Deans, 8/29/00). Working in isolation with students who may have violated the academic integrity policy provides opportunities for them to commit the same or other violations in the future without ever having been held accountable. For some students, this practice simply illustrates that it is acceptable to engage in these acts again. Conversely, engaging the formal academic integrity process conveys the seriousness of the situation, and teaches students to respect the intellectual rights and property of others.
- Do not take any action that can be considered punitive prior to engaging the formal process.
- Do not contact the Office of Judicial Affairs. The Academic Integrity Coordinator will arrange for the necessary Judicial Affairs contacts to check for prior violations.
- Do not advise the student to drop the course; doing so violates University policy. The following is an excerpt from the G-9 Procedures for Academic Integrity:

"Once a student has been informed that academic dishonesty is suspected, the student may not drop the course during the adjudication process. Any drop or withdrawal from the course during this time will be reversed. A student who has received an academic sanction as a result of a violation of academic integrity may not drop or withdraw from the course

at any time. These drop actions include regular drop, late drop, withdrawal, retroactive late drop and retroactive withdrawal. Any such drop action of the course will be reversed."

- Do not impose an academic sanction or proceed with the case in any way until the College Committee reviews the case and you are instructed to take action.
- Do not contact, or discuss the case with, members of the College Committee prior to a review. If you have questions at any point in the process, contact the Academic Integrity Coordinator.
- Do not threaten the student in any way (e.g., "if you don't sign the form the sanctions will be worse").

**If at any time during a case you are not sure what to do, contact Barbara Welshofer in 116 Sparks, by phone at 865-1070, or via email at [welshofer@psu.edu](mailto:welshofer@psu.edu).**

## USEFUL WEBSITES

[College of the Liberal Arts Academic Integrity Website](#): This page includes resources to aid both faculty and students in understanding and properly engaging the College's academic integrity policy and procedures.

[Faculty resource page](#): All of the links you'll need regarding academic integrity—policies, procedures, forms, how-to guides, reference documents, and news—are gathered for you on this page.

[Student resource page](#): This page is an excellent resource to include in your syllabi or announce to students in your classes. It includes information on how to avoid unintentional plagiarism, how to practice responsible research techniques, and more.

[Academic integrity form](#): This is the official form to use when filing a charge. **Note: this form has been revised, and it contains statements now required by University policy. Forms dated prior to 8/25/05, or forms from colleges other than the Liberal Arts, will not be accepted.**

[Sanctioning guidelines for academic integrity violations](#): When you formally charge a student with academic dishonesty, part of your responsibility is to recommend a sanction that is fitting for the alleged violation. This document includes violation categories (plagiarism, cheating, copying, etc.) sanction considerations, and sanction ranges. To help you sort through the various issues at hand as you decide on your recommended sanction.

[Academic integrity and your syllabus](#): Senate policy requires instructors to provide a statement on Academic Integrity within their syllabi. The official Senate policy is provided here as well as a recommended statement for inclusion in syllabi.

[Academic Administrative Policies and Procedures G-9](#): This is the official University procedure on academic integrity.

[Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and Copyright](#) : To help educate students about academic integrity, Penn State developed this anti-plagiarism study unit as part of the iStudy series of online instructional modules. This module is easily incorporated into any ANGEL course.

[Turnitin® at Penn State](#) : In an attempt to improve faculty efforts to prevent and detect plagiarism, Penn State has licensed a tool from Turnitin.com that performs originality checks on submitted papers by comparing the submitted paper with the Internet, ProQuest (an online database that is widely used by undergraduates,) a database of student papers from other universities and with papers submitted from Penn State. This service is available for all faculty and teaching assistants who are teaching a course and have "...psu.edu" e-mail addresses.

[Types of Plagiarism](#) : Inform your students about the various forms of plagiarism, and how to avoid them. This document was originally compiled by the Department of English and it includes definitions and examples of plagiarism by paraphrase and mosaic plagiarism.

[Information Literacy and You](#) : Insist that your students use responsible research techniques. This University Libraries website provides a wealth of information on identifying and locating resources, use of periodicals and journals, using online sources, proper citation, and more.

[A Writer's Reference](#) This site by Diana Hacker provides very thorough information on how to cite your research materials. Specific samples illustrate the appropriate style for works cited, in-text citations, manuscript formats, and more.