

# ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

To protect the value of your academic record and the education it represents, Northwestern maintains standards of fairness and honor in all academic work. The essence of these standards is a respect for individual achievement and an intolerance of any form of lying, cheating, or theft that threatens to devalue such achievement. Northwestern has created Academic Integrity: A Basic Guide (<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/>) to set forth the terms under which academic work is pursued at Northwestern and throughout the larger intellectual community of which we are members. Please read the guide carefully, as you will be held responsible for its contents. It describes the ways in which common sense and decency apply to academic conduct.

There are four main sections of the Guide:

- Principles Regarding Academic Integrity
- Eight Cardinal Rules of Academic Integrity
- Counseling and Contacts
- How to Avoid Plagiarism

## Academic Integrity Violation Procedures at SPS

Instructors may require students to submit their work electronically in addition to or in place of printed form. All student work may be analyzed electronically for violations of the University's academic integrity policy and may also be included in a database for the purpose of testing for plagiarized content.

Should the issue of academic dishonesty arise, the following procedure will be followed.

### Initiation of a Complaint

All cases of alleged academic dishonesty by students in graduate courses in the School of Professional Studies must be referred to the Assistant Dean of Graduate Programs. Cases should be referred within one month of the date of the alleged incident, or within one month of the date the reporting individual becomes aware of the alleged incident, whichever is later. However, no action will be taken on any case if more than one year has elapsed since the alleged incident. Once a matter has been referred to the Assistant Dean, it may not be withdrawn without their approval, nor may the referring faculty member resolve the case without the Assistant Dean's approval.

The Assistant Dean shall review the facts of the alleged incident, including statements of the reporting individual, the instructor(s) and any supporting material. The review process may include electronic searches of plagiarism resources, websites, computer network traffic logs and other databases. If, after the review, the Assistant Dean determines that there is cause for further investigation, they shall notify the student by letter of the date of the incident (if known), the course and instructor and the nature of the alleged violation. A copy of the current procedures will accompany the letter.

The student will be asked to make an appointment with the Assistant Dean to discuss the case within seven working days of the date of the letter, at which time the student may present any relevant material or statements on their behalf. The student will have the right, prior to meeting with the Assistant Dean, to review relevant original materials in SPS, to obtain copies of such materials if desired and to discuss the

matter with an adviser or other relevant individual. Review of original materials must take place by appointment during normal working hours at SPS and within seven working days of the date of the Assistant Dean's letter.

If the student does not schedule a meeting to take place within seven working days, the Assistant Dean may make their determination on the basis of the evidence present at that time. The Assistant Dean may grant reasonable requests for an extension of this time deadline at their sole discretion.

In certain cases where timely notification is important, verbal notification of the alleged violation may be made, but such verbal notification will be followed by a letter.

### Meeting With the Assistant Dean

In meeting with the student, the Assistant Dean will describe the charges made and detail the evidence supporting those charges. At this initial meeting, the student may decline to discuss the matter and/or request that the Assistant Dean defer making a determination until after a subsequent meeting between the student and the Assistant Dean, at which the student may present relevant information or evidence. This second meeting must be requested at the initial meeting and must be scheduled for a time within seven working days of the initial meeting.

The Assistant Dean has the authority to determine, based on a preponderance of the evidence available to them, whether a violation of academic integrity has occurred.

After the review, the Assistant Dean shall inform the student by letter of their decision and the sanction, if any, to be imposed.

### Sanctions

Sanctions which may be imposed by the Assistant Dean include, but are not limited to, a letter of warning; a required online workshop on Academic Integrity; a defined period of probation with the attachment of conditions; disqualification for academic honors; a defined period of suspension with or without the attachment of conditions; permanent exclusion from the University; notation on the official record; revocation of an awarded degree; or any combination of the previously listed sanctions. In all cases of permanent exclusion from the University, a notation shall be entered on the student's official transcript.

Any grade entered for a student in a course in which an allegation of academic dishonesty is pending against them, whether for the course as a whole or for a piece of work submitted in the course, is subject to modification after all proceedings and appeals are concluded. Should the student be found to have violated academic integrity, the course instructor is empowered, at their sole discretion, to determine the effect this violation will have on the student's grade in the course. Possible actions range from disregarding the incident in calculating the grade to failing the student for the assignment or for the course.

### Appeals to the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee

The Assistant Dean's decision and/or sanction may be appealed to the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee by filing a written notice of appeal within 10 working days of the date of the letter of notification. The student's written notice of appeal must state what is being appealed — whether the finding of academic dishonesty, the sanction imposed or both — and must describe in detail the grounds for the appeal. The student's written notice of appeal should also state whether the student

desires to present the appeal in person to the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee.

If the student so requests, they will be granted an opportunity to appear to present their case to the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee and to hear and respond to any testimony provided by the Assistant Dean or witnesses appearing before the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee. Likewise, the Assistant Dean may be present to hear and respond to testimony of the accused student or any witnesses appearing before the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee. If the student wishes to present witnesses before the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee, they must inform the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee at least seven working days before the appeal is to be heard of the names of the proposed witnesses and of the nature of the evidence they are prepared to present. However, the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee has sole discretion to determine what witnesses other than the accused student and the Assistant Dean it will hear, if any. The Academic Integrity Appeals Committee shall review the appeal as soon as practical after it has been filed.

Following its review, the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee may sustain or reverse the finding of academic dishonesty, if that portion of the Assistant Dean's decision was appealed, and may, if a finding of academic dishonesty stands, sustain or modify (but not increase) the sanction, if that portion of the decision was appealed. The Academic Integrity Appeals Committee shall inform the student by letter of its decision.

## Appeal to the Provost

The student may appeal the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee's decision within 10 working days to the provost of the university. Such appeals must be in writing and include a detailed statement setting forth the grounds for the appeal. Appeals to the provost will be limited to alleged errors in procedures, interpretation of regulations or alleged manifest discrepancies between the evidence and a school finding and/or sanction. The provost will receive appeals only after a sanction has been specified for the alleged violation; an appeal to the provost may concern the finding and/or the proposed sanction.

## Cross-School Cases

In instances where a student registered in another school is alleged to have committed an act of academic dishonesty in a School of Professional Studies course, the authority of SPS will extend only to determining whether or not the alleged action constitutes academic dishonesty and, if so, to the imposition of any grade penalty by the instructor in the course. If the finding is affirmative and all appeals have been exhausted or the time for appeals has expired in SPS, the case will be formally referred to the appropriate authority of the school in which the student is registered for whatever further sanction that school deems appropriate.

In instances where a student registered in SPS has been found to have committed an act of academic dishonesty in a course offered by another school, the Assistant Dean will notify the student in writing of the formal referral of the matter to the School of Professional Studies for determination of a sanction, if any. Such notification will inform the student that they should schedule an appointment with the Assistant Dean, to take place within seven working days, to present any evidence of mitigating circumstances but not on the underlying question of guilt or innocence. If the student does not schedule an appointment within the allotted time, or within such extension of time as the Assistant Dean

may grant at their sole discretion, the Assistant Dean will make a decision regarding any sanction based on the available information.

The Assistant Dean will inform the student in writing of any sanction imposed and of the student's right to appeal that sanction (but not issues of guilt or innocence) to the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee.

## General Considerations

A student charged with academic dishonesty may not change their registration in the course(s) in which a charge is pending or in which a finding of academic dishonesty has been made. Nor may such student receive a University degree while a charge of academic dishonesty is pending or a suspension imposed pursuant to a finding of academic dishonesty is in effect.

At any stage of the proceedings described above, the student may be accompanied by a fellow student, a faculty member or another individual of the student's choosing, but not by an attorney. This person may not, however, take part in the proceedings; the student must speak on their own behalf.

Sanctions specified by the Assistant Dean for graduate programs, as modified by the School of Professional Studies Academic Integrity Appeals Committee or the provost (if an appeal has been filed), shall take effect at the expiration of the period for appeal of a decision if an appeal has not been filed, and after a decision has been reached by the School of Professional Studies Academic Integrity Appeals Committee or the provost if an appeal has been filed. If the appeal is not granted, the sanction will be applied retroactively to the date specified by the Assistant Dean, and if necessary, current registrations may be canceled.

All materials relating to an allegation of academic dishonesty will be kept in the School of Professional Studies Office of Registration and Records for up to 10 years after the incident.

All references to the Assistant Dean for graduate programs in these procedures include the Assistant Dean's designee, whom the Assistant Dean may appoint at their discretion.

If circumstances (e.g., departure of the faculty member) prevent the instructor of the course in which the violation is alleged to have occurred from participating at any stage of these procedures, the Assistant Dean may act on the instructor's behalf.