

# 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.

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 School of Professional Studies' 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. 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.

## I. Initiation of a Complaint

All cases of alleged violations of academic integrity by students in undergraduate courses in the School of Professional Studies must be referred to the Assistant Dean of Undergraduate Programs (the Assistant Dean).

A. Suspected cases of academic integrity violations should be reported to the course instructor or the Assistant Dean. Reports must be brought within 1 month of the date the reporting individual becomes aware of the alleged incident. The Assistant Dean will review the report, including statements of the reporting individual, the instructor(s), and any supporting material and decide whether to bring a charge. The review may include electronic searches of plagiarism resources, websites, computer network traffic logs, 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 Assistant Dean 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 an academic integrity violation; the principle(s) of academic integrity said to have been violated; and the procedure by which the accuracy of the charge will be determined.

C. The student will have reasonable time, if requested, within which to prepare a response to the charge. Ordinarily, an initial meeting with the Assistant Dean will take place within 7 business days of receiving written notice of the charge, 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 the School of Professional Studies, 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 the School of Professional Studies within seven 7 days of receiving written notice of the charge.

D. If the student does not schedule a meeting to take place within 7 business days, the Assistant Dean may decide whether there was sufficient evidence of a violation of academic integrity. The Assistant

Dean may, at their discretion, grant reasonable requests for an extension of this deadline. 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 written notice.

## II. Meeting With the Assistant Dean

A. The Assistant Dean has the authority to determine whether there was sufficient evidence of a violation of academic integrity.

B. In meeting with the student, the Assistant Dean will describe the allegation and detail the evidence provided by the instructor. 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 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 the evidence and the statements made by the student in the meeting, the Assistant Dean shall inform the student in a written statement of decision on whether there was sufficient evidence of a violation of academic integrity, and the sanction. Any finding of violation 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

A. 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 Assistant Dean's decision and/or sanction may be appealed to the SPS Academic Integrity Appeals Committee by filing a written notice of appeal within 10 business days of the date of the letter of notification to the SPS Associate Dean of Academics. The student's written notice of appeal must state what is being appealed—whether the finding of violation, 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.

B. 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 7 business 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.

C. Following its review, the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee may sustain or reverse the finding of violation, if that portion of the Assistant Dean's decision was appealed, and may, if a finding of violation stands, sustain or modify (but not increase) the sanction, if that portion of the decision was appealed. The Academic Integrity Appeals Committee shall provide the student with written notice of its decision.

#### 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 School of Professional Studies course, the authority of the School of Professional Studies 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 the School of Professional Studies has been found in violation of academic integrity in a course based in another school, the Assistant 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 Assistant Dean may determine a sanction based on the available information.

C. The Assistant 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. Students may not receive a University degree while a charge of an academic integrity violation is pending or a suspension imposed pursuant to a finding of violation is in effect.

B. No action will be taken on any case if more than 1 year has elapsed since the alleged incident.

C. Once a matter has been referred to the Assistant Dean, it may not be withdrawn without his/her approval, nor may the referring faculty member resolve the case without the Assistant Dean's approval.

D. 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 his or her own behalf.

E. Sanctions specified by the Assistant Dean, 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.

F. 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.

G. All references to the Assistant Dean for Undergraduate Programs (the Assistant Dean) in these procedures include the Assistant Dean's designee, whom the Assistant Dean may appoint at their discretion.

H. 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.