

# ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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. The Graduate School enforces Northwestern University's common principles of academic integrity that are outlined on the Office of the Provost's "Principles Regarding Academic Integrity" webpage (<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/principles.html>) under "A. Basic Standards of Academic Integrity." More detailed standards of academic conduct, procedures, and sanctions are set forth below.

## Standards of Academic Integrity

Basic standards of academic integrity are outlined by the Office of the Provost (<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies/academic-integrity/principles.html>). In addition to these basic standards, 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

## Academic Integrity Violations Procedures

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

### Reporting of Alleged Academic Misconduct

Any case of alleged academic misconduct involving a student in The Graduate School (TGS) must be reported by the complainant (course instructor, faculty member involved in graduate education, other party) to the appropriate Assistant or Associate Dean (<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/counseling-and-contacts.html>). Allegations of dishonesty related to a class will be referred by the instructor to the appropriate Assistant or Associate Dean (<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/counseling-and-contacts.html>) 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 and whether misconduct has occurred.

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 or their proxy.

Reports of academic misconduct must be made in writing no later than thirty days from the date of the alleged incident, or within thirty days of the complainant becoming aware of the alleged misconduct. 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.

Students charged with academic misconduct may not change their registration in a class in which a charge is pending, or in which a finding of academic misconduct has been made.

### Case Review

The appropriate school contact (<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/counseling-and-contacts.html>) will review the case of alleged academic misconduct according to their documented process. This may include reviewing statements from the complainant, statements and/or supporting materials from the instructor or Director of Graduate Studies (DGS), and any other supporting materials. If it is determined that there are sufficient grounds to warrant further action, the student will be notified in writing.

### Notice of Alleged Academic Misconduct

Once it has been determined through the case review that there are sufficient grounds for further action, the student will be notified of the allegation and the next steps. The exact process depends on which school is responsible for the investigation (<https://www.northwestern.edu/provost/policies-procedures/academic-integrity/>).

When alleged academic misconduct is investigated by The Graduate School, the Associate Dean for Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Programs (or their proxy) will notify the student/former student in writing by email of the nature of the concern that has arisen. The student will have ten business days from the date of this notification to request a meeting with the Associate Dean for Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Programs (or their proxy) to discuss the case and present any relevant materials or statements. If the student fails to schedule a meeting within ten business days or does not wish to meet, the Associate Dean (or their proxy) may make a determination on the basis of the available evidence. The Associate Dean (or their proxy) may grant reasonable requests for an extension of this time deadline at their sole discretion.

### Meeting with the Academic Integrity Contact

Student(s) charged with academic misconduct will participate in a meeting during which the student involved may be heard and the accuracy of the charge determined by a neutral decision-maker.

The individual responsible for investigating academic misconduct allegations has the authority to determine, based on a preponderance of the evidence available, whether a violation of academic integrity has occurred.

### Sanctions

All proven cases of academic dishonesty will be penalized as appropriate under the circumstances. Sanctions other than a reduced or failing grade will be imposed by the school in which the student is enrolled. The imposition of any sanction other than a private reprimand will include a statement of reasons supporting its severity. Sanctions may include but are not limited to:

- Reduced or failing grade
- A letter of reprimand and warning
- A defined period of suspension, up to one year
- Ineligibility for certain awards, honors and special programs
- Dismissal (exclusion)

- Revocation of an awarded degree
- Permanent exclusion from the University (noted on official transcript)
- Any appropriate combination of the above

It should be understood that there is no necessary connection between a first-time offense and a letter of reprimand. Depending on the nature of the offense, a student may be suspended or permanently excluded as a result of a first-time offense. Any grade entered for a student in a course in which an allegation of violations of academic integrity is pending against the student, 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 the standards of academic integrity, the course instructor is empowered, in 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 in the course.

When a student in The Graduate School is alleged to have violated academic integrity in a course outside of The Graduate School, the authority of that school will extend only to determining whether or not the alleged action constitutes a violation of academic integrity and, if so, to the imposition of a 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, the case will be formally referred to the Associate Dean for Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Programs (or their proxy) for whatever further sanction The Graduate School deems appropriate.

Academic integrity 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.

The student will be notified by letter of the outcome of the investigation and the resulting sanction, if any.

## Appeals

The student may appeal any adverse initial determination in writing within ten business days of the date of the initial decision letter. Students may appeal both the finding and the sanction. 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.

If appealing the finding, the student must follow the appeal process of the school that determined there was a violation of academic integrity. If appealing the sanction, the student must follow the appeal process of the school that applied the sanction.

Appeals to The Graduate School will be reviewed by an ad hoc faculty committee with whom the student may meet, in person, 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 ten 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 for Graduate Student and Postdoctoral Programs 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.

## Appeals to the Provost

The student may appeal the decision of the appeal committee to the Provost of the University. An appeal to the Provost must be submitted within ten business days from the date of the appeal committee's written notification to the student. 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 finding and/or sanction. The Provost's decision is final.

## Reportability

Sanctions that do not result in separation from the University (suspension or exclusion) are not reported by Northwestern University to external entities unless: 1) the student consents to the disclosure; or 2) disclosure is required by law.