

PENNSTATE



COLLEGE of EDUCATION

Academic Integrity Policy

I. **Introduction**

The Academic Integrity Committee addresses unresolved cases of academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication of information or citations, facilitation of acts of academic dishonesty by others, unauthorized possession of examination, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, and tampering with the academic work of other students.

The College of Education recognizes the intrinsic nature of academic integrity as a linchpin of the Penn State community. In general, academic integrity is best taught and reinforced by faculty as an element of the teaching and learning process. Only in limited instances in which faculty believe that disciplinary and/or academic sanctions are called for should the process move from the realm of faculty and students to the Academic Integrity Committee.

The Associate Dean for Teacher Education and Undergraduate Programs maintains and makes available to students and faculty the academic integrity procedures adopted by the College's Academic Integrity Committee. Please direct questions to Dr. Jacqueline Edmondson (jedmondson@psu.edu).

II. **Academic Integrity: Definition and Expectations**

As defined by Faculty Senate Policy 49-20, academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest, and responsible manner, serving as a basic guiding principle for all academic activity. Academic integrity includes a commitment not to engage in or tolerate acts of falsification, misrepresentation or deception. Such acts of dishonesty violate the fundamental ethical principles of the University community and compromise the worth of work completed by others. To protect the rights and maintain the trust of honest students and to support appropriate behavior, faculty and administrators should regularly communicate high standards of integrity and reinforce them by taking reasonable steps to anticipate and deter acts of dishonesty in all assignments (Senate Policy 44-40; Proctoring of Examinations). *At the beginning of each course, it is the responsibility of the instructor to provide students with a statement clarifying the application of University and College academic integrity policies to that course.*

III. Background

These efforts of the College of Education Academic Integrity Committee build on a long College history of emphasis on issues related to academic integrity. This emphasis is prompted in part by the fact that our Dean's signature on an application for a professional certificate to be issued by the Pennsylvania Department of Education is based on the State's expectation that we know the applicant as "a person of good moral character, possessing personal qualities, professional knowledge and skills which warrant issuance of a . . . certificate." (24 Purdon Statutes XII-1209)

IV. The College of Education Academic Integrity Committee

Each College has a Committee on Academic Integrity made up of faculty, students, and academic administrators. To ensure University-wide consistency, College Committees work with the Office of Judicial Affairs and the Office of the Provost of the University to develop procedures for handling and sanctioning dishonesty infractions. The College Committee:

1. Promotes expectations for academic integrity consistent with the definition in this policy.
2. Ensures fairness and consistency in processes and outcomes.
3. Reviews and settles all contested cases in which academic sanctions are applied. If necessary, refers cases to the Office of Judicial Affairs for disciplinary action.
4. Records all cases in which academic dishonesty was recorded and reports them to Judicial Affairs.

The College's approach to the formation, support, implementation, and evaluation of the Academic Integrity Committee reflects our commitment to involve faculty, students, and staff. To this end, we continue to communicate with the leadership of the College's Faculty Council, the Dean's Advisory Committee, our student organizations, and our Administrative Support Staff Committee.

In consultation with the Chair of the College of Education Academic Integrity Committee, overall coordinating responsibility for this initiative, and attendant support, is provided by the Office of the Associate Dean for Teacher Education and Undergraduate Programs, who is also a member of the Administrative Council on Undergraduate Education (ACUE).

As is clear from the charge to this Committee, we seek a college-wide emphasis on the meaning and implementation of academic integrity, hence the broad representation on the Committee. The Committee also seeks the assistance of the College's public information office.

A. Composition of the College Academic Integrity Committee

The membership of the College of Education Academic Integrity Committee consists of:

At least two representatives from the College of Education Faculty Council, including a representative from the Council's Faculty, Student, and Staff Concerns Subcommittee; one undergraduate student representative; one graduate student representative; one Assistant or Associate Dean; one faculty member with expertise in legal issues in education; one member of the Academic Support Staff Committee; and the Dean of the College (ex-officio).

B. Charge to the Committee

The College of Education Academic Integrity Committee is charged to:

1. Conduct its affairs in a manner consistent with pertinent university-wide policies, guidelines, and procedures.
2. Be responsible for routine, clear, and firm messages of high expectations of all persons affiliated with the College concerning academic integrity, together with useful suggestions in meeting them. It shall continually seek ways to promote and advance these messages.
3. Be responsible for setting guidelines and giving advice to faculty that will be responsive to teaching/learning processes and practices in the College, and consistent with guidelines and practices across the University.
4. Arrange College participation and/or representation in University-wide forums on consistency of guidelines and fairness to students.
5. Create and implement, with appropriate College- and University-wide consultation and approval, procedures and processes for review of contested cases and application of agreed guidelines for academic sanction.
6. Be the principal agent for referring cases to the Office of Judicial Affairs for disciplinary sanctions, when requested.
7. Ensure that all academic sanctions applied within the College are reported to the central database.
8. Encourage, in cooperation with the appropriate Associate/Assistant Dean and Department Heads, that (a) statements buttressing academic integrity are included on the College's electronic and hard copy publications and in syllabi or comparable course materials, and (b) guidelines unique to the conditions of courses are clearly given for all instruction offered by the College.
9. Adapt or expand its above charges to ensure effective operation within applicable, overarching University policies.

C. General Procedures

The College of Education Academic Integrity Committee has developed the following guidelines designed to assist both students and faculty in understanding their rights and responsibilities regarding procedures related to possible academic integrity violations. These procedures are consistent with those set forth by the Penn State Faculty Senate. (See flow chart for the process on the back of the College's Academic Integrity Form.)

D. When Academic Dishonesty is Suspected

1. The faculty member will arrange to meet with the student to explain and discuss the suspicion of dishonesty and give the student a chance to explain. The faculty member should outline the violation and academic sanction to be given. This is an opportunity to resolve issues between the faculty member and the student. Completion of the Academic Integrity Form (see attached) is mandatory for every alleged incident of academic dishonesty. At this time, if the faculty member accepts the student's explanation of what transpired and agrees that no academic integrity violation has occurred, no Academic Integrity Form will be completed and no record will be made in the student's file.
2. **If this initial attempt does not lead to a resolution**, the faculty member will inform the student of the allegation, of the college procedures for such cases, and will ask the student to sign the College's Academic Integrity Form. Students may not withdraw from a course once an allegation of academic dishonesty has been made by the faculty member, until such time as the alleged violation has been adjudicated. A student who has received an academic sanction may not drop or withdraw from the course at any time.
3. The student has up to three business days from the faculty member's completion of the College of Education Academic Integrity Form to decide whether to accept or contest the charge and sanction. A student's failure to meet with the faculty member or sign and return the Academic Integrity Form, by the specified deadline, will be construed as not contesting the charge or sanction.

NOTE: Throughout the academic integrity process, grading authority remains the responsibility of the instructor.

E. Once the Faculty Member and Student Sign the College's Academic Integrity Form and the Student Accepts Responsibility for the Violation and the Proposed Sanction(s), then

1. The form is forwarded, through the Associate Dean for Teacher Education and Undergraduate Programs, to the Office of Judicial Affairs for record keeping and to determine if the student has a history of academic integrity violations.
2. When no prior recorded violation is discovered, and if the faculty member has recommended only an academic sanction, the faculty member initiates the sanction and informs the pertinent parties, thus concluding the process.
3. If a prior recorded violation is discovered after the student has admitted responsibility and accepted the academic sanction, the matter must be referred to the Academic Integrity Committee for further review. A new academic sanction will be considered by the Academic Integrity Committee while affording the student his or her institutional rights (including the right to contest the violation being reviewed and/or new academic sanctions). A Hearing Committee consisting either of the College Academic Integrity Committee as a whole, or of at least five individuals appointed by the Academic Integrity Committee, will be formed (see G.2 and G.3 below). Information concerning prior academic misconduct may not be used as a basis for judging a student's guilt, but it may be used as a basis for imposing additional academic sanctions or deciding whether

disciplinary action is also warranted.

4. When a prior record of academic misconduct is discovered, the Academic Integrity Committee, in consultation with the Office of Judicial Affairs, may consider also recommending University-level disciplinary sanction(s). If University-level disciplinary sanction(s) are recommended, the Academic Integrity Form, along with other relevant documents, will be sent to the Office of Judicial Affairs for review and disposition. The committee can impose academic sanctions, but can only *recommend* disciplinary sanctions to the Office of Judicial Affairs, which has the sole authority for imposing disciplinary sanctions.

F. If the Student Denies Responsibility for an Academic Integrity Violation or Contests the Academic Sanction

The Associate Dean forwards the case to the College Academic Integrity Committee which conducts the hearing, or appoints a chair and at least four individuals to do so (See G.2 and 3 below.). The Academic Integrity Form is forwarded, through the Associate Dean for Teacher Education and Undergraduate Programs, to the Office of Judicial Affairs for record keeping and to determine if the student has a history of academic integrity violations.

1. The Hearing Committee conducts fact finding in accordance with due process procedures.
2. The Hearing Committee conducts a hearing consistent with the procedures outlined below.

G. Hearing Procedures

1. The student will be given a minimum of two weeks to prepare for the hearing and will have until 5:00 p.m. on the business day preceding the hearing to withdraw. The student also has the right to be absent from the hearing.
2. The Chair of the Hearing Committee will direct the hearing, rule on procedures, and ensure that questioning is objective, evidence is relevant, standards are enforced, and confidentiality is maintained.
3. In addition to the Chair, the Hearing Committee will include at least four individuals (faculty/staff members and students) who will hear the case. Each person on the committee has one vote. The chair votes only in case of a tie.
4. Any committee member who feels she/he has a conflict of interest regarding a case should notify the Chair before the Hearing is held and may be excused.
5. At the hearing, the student will explain behaviors and submitted evidence and the instructor will explain his/her accusations and assigned sanction(s). The committee may question both parties.
6. Both the student and faculty member may question witnesses and the evidence. To

- maximize confidentiality, any and all witnesses will be present at the hearing only during their questioning.
7. The committee chair will maintain order and reasonable time limits to conduct the questioning.
 8. Neither parents nor attorneys are allowed at the hearing; however, the student has a right to the presence during the hearing of a faculty, staff, or student advocate from Penn State.
 9. The student or his/her advocate (mentioned above) may take notes, but no recording devices may be used by anyone attending any part of the hearing.
 10. At the close of the hearing, the chair of the committee will notify the student and the faculty member of the date by which a decision will be made. The decision should be made in a reasonable timeframe, but not later than two weeks after the hearing.
 11. The standard of proof for finding a student responsible will be based on existing, presented, relevant, and admissible evidence; i.e., whether it is reasonable to draw a clear and convincing conclusion that a code of conduct violation occurred.
 12. Following the hearing, the committee will examine all evidence/testimony and decide, by majority vote, whether the student was in violation, and if the assigned sanction(s) is/are appropriate.
 13. The Associate Dean will be asked to join the committee temporarily to report any recorded prior integrity violations by the student if the committee has determined that a violation has occurred.
 14. Prior integrity infractions may be used in determining the sanction to be applied. The committee may maintain, increase, or decrease the proposed sanction(s) based upon this information.
 15. If the student is not found responsible for academic dishonesty, all incident records are destroyed.
 16. The chair of the committee will write the final report that includes: the accusation; a summary of accepted testimony; evidence leading to the decision as supported by fact-finding; and the committee's decision, sanction(s) and rationale(s). The committee can impose academic sanctions, but can only *recommend* disciplinary sanctions to the Office of Judicial Affairs, which has the sole authority for imposing disciplinary sanctions.
 17. The Associate Dean will send a copy of the committee's final report to the student, the instructor, and the Office of Judicial Affairs.

V. Record Keeping

1. The Associate Dean is responsible for: convening the College of Education Academic Integrity Committee; seeing that students and faculty have ready access to this body; facilitating arrangements for hearings; and assuring that all cases handled on the college level, in which a student is found responsible for academic dishonesty, are reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs.
2. The Office of Judicial Affairs alone is responsible for central record keeping of all academic dishonesty cases. Records are kept confidential under federal law and university policies.

VI. To the Student Accused of Academic Misconduct:

A. Formal Procedures

You have up to three business days from the faculty's completion of the College of Education Academic Integrity Form to decide whether to accept or contest the charge.

If you choose to contest the charge, you may change your mind up until 5:00 p.m. of the business day immediately preceding the scheduled hearing or review.

B. Student Hearing Rights

In regard to the hearing, you have the right to:

- Be given a minimum of two weeks to prepare.
- Review available evidence and documentation prior to the hearing.
- Change your mind concerning the decision to contest the allegations.
- Be absent from the hearing.
- Bring a Penn State faculty, staff, or student advocate, but not a parent or legal counsel.
- Provide testimony as a defense.
- Question accusers and witnesses present.
- Record proceedings through hand notes.
- Receive a written report stating a decision, sanction(s) (if any), and rationale(s).

VII. Academic Integrity Committee

Appointed by the Dean in consultation with Faculty Council:

1. Chair: Dr. Simon Hooper, Member, College of Education Faculty Council, (shooper@psu.edu, 310C Keller Building, 867-1814)
2. Dr. Liza Conyers, Representative from the College of Education Faculty Council's Subcommittee on Faculty, Student, and Staff Concerns (lmc11@psu.edu)
3. Colleen Barron, College of Education Undergraduate Student (cmb5202@psu.edu)
4. Alexandra Durso, College of Education Graduate Student (alexandra@psu.edu)
5. Myrna Covington, Academic Counselor (mac11@psu.edu)
6. Dr. Jacqueline Edmondson, Associate Dean for Teacher Education and Undergraduate Programs (jxe117@psu.edu)
7. David H. Monk, Dean, College of Education (dhm6@psu.edu), *ex officio*

See also:

Council of Academic Deans' Statement: <http://www.psu.edu/oue/integrity.html>

G-9 Academic Integrity Statement: <http://www.psu.edu/oue/aappm/G-9.html>

Senate Policy #49-20 Statement: <http://www.psu.edu/ufs/policies/47-00.html#49-20>