

Academic Integrity
Washington State University
A Reference Guide for Faculty



Academic Integrity at Washington State University
A Reference Guide for Faculty

Office of Student Conduct
Lighty 360
Washington State University
Pullman, WA 99164-1050
(509) 335-4532
conduct@wsu.edu
<http://conduct.wsu.edu/>

Authored and Edited by:
Meghan Burton
Karen Fischer
Adam Jussel

Updated: 10/21/2015

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of higher education. Integrity is a core value of Washington State University and reflected in the institutional strategic plan. All members of the university community share responsibility for maintaining and promoting the principles of integrity in all activities, including academic integrity and honest scholarship.



The classroom is not only a place for learning a subject, but also for learning a culture that upholds and promotes academic integrity. By placing the needed value on academic integrity in the classroom, we help facilitate a culture of scholarship and integrity at WSU.

The policies defining academic dishonesty, as well as the review and sanction processes, provide educational opportunities for students to understand that academic integrity violations are not simply against the rules, but against the greater philosophy of higher education. *The Faculty Manual* (Section II.E. Faculty Responsibilities Related to Student Academic Integrity)

outlines the process to be followed when there is an alleged academic integrity violation. The Office of Student Conduct facilitates the process and aims to promote personal responsibility. Students are informed and expected to have a clear understanding of the Standards of Conduct for Students and to live and work within the parameters defined by a scholarly community. The goal of the process is to empower students to take pride in their individual work and add a greater value to their personal educational career at WSU.

This reference manual is designed to: 1) clearly define academic integrity violations; 2) offer sample language for documents; 3) assist faculty with reporting and protocol procedures; 4) provide clarity on the appeal process that is governed by the faculty and the Faculty Manual and facilitated by the Office of Student Conduct; and 5) clarify the rights and responsibilities of members of our community.



Definitions of Academic Integrity Violations (WAC 504-26-010)

The following definitions include the various types of academic dishonesty violations for which a student at WSU can be held responsible. These definitions are found in the [Standards of Conduct for Students](#) (WAC 504-26-010).

Cheating

Use of unauthorized materials in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations, or giving or receiving unauthorized assistance by any means, including talking, copying information from another student, using electronic devices, or taking an examination for another student.

Unauthorized Sources

Use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments.

Stealing Tests

Acquisition or possession of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the university faculty or staff when acquired without the permission of the university faculty or staff member.

Fabrication

Fabrication is the intentional invention or counterfeiting of information in the course of an academic activity. Fabrication includes, but is not limited to: Counterfeiting data, research results, information, or procedures with inadequate foundation in fact; counterfeiting a record of internship or practicum experiences; submitting a false excuse for absence or tardiness or a false explanation for failing to complete a class requirement or scheduled examination at the appointed date and time.

Unfair Advantage

Engaging in any behavior for the purpose of gaining an unfair advantage specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.

Scientific Misconduct

Falsification, fabrication, plagiarism, or other forms of dishonesty in scientific and scholarly research are prohibited. Complaints and inquires involving cases of scientific misconduct are managed according to the University's policy for responding to allegations of scientific misconduct. A finding of scientific misconduct is subject to sanctions by the Office of Student Conduct. The policy for responding to allegations of scientific misconduct may be reviewed by contacting the Office of Research.

Collaboration

Unless otherwise explicitly stated by the faculty member or outlined in the syllabus, the expectation is that all academic work be conducted by an individual student.

Unauthorized Knowledge

Intentionally obtaining unauthorized knowledge of examination materials.

Plagiarism

Presenting the information, ideas, or phrasing of another person as the student's own work without proper acknowledgement of the source. This includes submitting a commercially prepared paper or research project or submitting for academic credit any work done by someone else. The term "plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared

by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

Multiple Submission

Unauthorized multiple submission of the same work.

Sabotage

The sabotage of others' work.

Records

Tampering with or falsifying records.

Syllabus Statements

It is helpful if you clarify academic and behavioral expectations at the beginning of the semester, and reach an agreement with students on standards for classroom conduct. The syllabus represents that agreement. When establishing guidelines for behavior in your course, it is important that you only articulate the standards you are willing to enforce. You have broad authority to manage your classroom, so please exercise that authority with compassion and self-restraint. Apply standards fairly and consistently, as students will recognize and resent perceived unfairness.

Emphasizing the importance of academic integrity in the course syllabus will assist you in addressing it on the first day of class. Information should specify what academic behaviors are prohibited, how you will manage academic integrity violations, and any consequences that may result. For example, the syllabus should indicate whether certain resources (i.e., past exams, etc.) are prohibited.

The following are suggested syllabus statements:

Academic integrity will be strongly enforced in this course. Any student caught cheating on any assignment will be given an F grade for the course and will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. Cheating is defined in the Standards of Conduct for Students WAC 504-26-010 (3). It is strongly suggested that you read and understand these definitions: <http://conduct.wsu.edu/policies/>

I encourage you to work with classmates on assignments. However, each student must turn in original work. No copying will be accepted. Students who violate WSU's Standards of Conduct for Students will receive an F as a final grade in this course, will not have the option to withdraw from the course, and will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. Cheating is defined in the Standards of Conduct for Students WAC 504-26-010 (3). It is strongly suggested that you read and understand these definitions: <http://conduct.wsu.edu/policies/>

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of the university. Any student who attempts to gain an unfair advantage over other students by cheating, will fail the assignment and be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. Cheating is defined in the Standards for Student Conduct WAC 504-26-010 (3). <http://conduct.wsu.edu/policies/>

Academic integrity is the cornerstone of the university. Any student who attempts to gain an unfair advantage over other students by cheating, will fail the assignment and be reported to the Office of Student Conduct. Cheating is defined in the Standards for Student Conduct WAC 504-26-010 (3). <http://conduct.wsu.edu/policies/>

Addressing a Violation: The Initial Hearing

When you believe a violation has occurred in your classroom it is important to address the violation in the following manner:

- 1) Assemble the evidence, including: the offending work, statements by any witnesses, and original sources if plagiarism is alleged. The standard of proof in academic integrity matters is "preponderance of evidence" (more likely than not).

- 2) Notify the student about your concerns privately as soon as possible and provide a date, time, and place for a face-to-face meeting to discuss the situation. This can be scheduled via e-mail.
- 3) Show the evidence to the student and allow him or her to respond. This meeting is your chance to provide a learning opportunity for the student and the student's opportunity to respond in a responsible manner. Notify the student that you are required to report the incident to the Office of Student Conduct and that you will provide the student with a written summary of the meeting, academic sanction and appeal information.
- 4) Provide the student with your written statement (email is acceptable) that includes the following: a) outline of the evidence, b) summary of your meeting, c) academic sanction assigned (in keeping with your syllabus), and d) notice of the 21 day appeal period.

A sample letter will be provided later in this document.

- 5) Notify the Office of Student Conduct. According to the faculty manual, you are required to notify the Office of Student Conduct by completing the electronic reporting form available at <http://conduct.wsu.edu>. In addition to completing the online form, email a copy of the offending work, any original sources of plagiarism, and a copy of your syllabus to conduct@wsu.edu.

Why should I report the violation to the Office of Student Conduct?

There are two parts to the penalty process in academic integrity violations—the academic sanction and the university sanction.

Reporting the violation to the Office of Student Conduct ensures that the student will receive an educational sanction that has been tailored to the particular offense, with the goal of providing education about approaching academic work with integrity, while promoting personal responsibility for their educational experience. Our goal is to support the student toward a successful career at WSU and provide the needed education to prevent a second violation from occurring.



Sample Letter

October 2, 2015

John Doe
Email: john.doe@wsu.edu

Dear John:

On Tuesday, October 2, 2015, you and I met in my office to discuss my concerns that you plagiarized internet sources in the paper you submitted for credit on September 30, 2015. I showed you four pages from your paper that were identical (word-for-word) to materials found at www.easytermpapers.com. I also showed you that the remaining two pages contained substantial excerpts from "The American Response to Civil Disobedience," an article by John Smyth (published at....)

You told me that you had no idea why your paper was so similar to the materials found at these two sites and that you had not used them in writing your paper. In my judgment, the preponderance of the evidence shows that you plagiarized. Therefore, in keeping with the policy printed in the course syllabus, I am assigning you a failing grade for the course.

I will forward a copy of this letter, a copy of my syllabus, and copies of the evidence to the Office of Student Conduct. You have the right to request a review of my decision. If you wish this decision to be reviewed, **you must make your request within 21 days of the date of this letter**. Use the online form available at <http://conduct.wsu.edu>. I recommend you contact the Office of Student Conduct at 509-335-4532 if you have questions about the appeal process.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Instructor, Class-Section

Academic Sanctions

You have authority in your classroom to assign the academic sanctions of your choosing, as long as they are outlined in your syllabus. *It is important that you only articulate the standards you are willing to enforce.* Suggested sanctions include but are not limited to:

- Warning
- Failing grade on the assignment
- Failing grade for the course
- Unable to withdraw from the course if receiving a failing grade as sanction
- Extra assignments



University Sanctions

The University has the authority to assign sanctions for academic integrity violations as outlined in WAC 504-26-405. The most common sanction assigned for first offenses is an educational assignment and probation. The list of sanctions available for academic integrity violations includes:

- Warning
- Probation
- Loss of privileges
- Educational sanctions
- Community Service
- University suspension
- University expulsion
- Revocation of admission and/or degree
- Withholding degree
- Hold on transcript or registration

Disciplinary records are kept separate from academic records. If a student is suspended or expelled, a letter may be sent with his or her transcript to a receiving institution if a conduct board rules the offending behavior is egregious.

The Appeal Process

The academic integrity appeal process at WSU is guided by a framework of due process rights and provides students with an opportunity to be heard by an independent review body.

The Academic Integrity Hearing Board

The Academic Integrity Hearing Board is a quorum of faculty and a chairperson recommended by the Faculty Senate and appointed by the university president. The board members serve a term of three years.

The function of the board is to make a separate and independent determination of whether or not the student is responsible for violating the academic integrity policy and/or whether the academic sanction is in keeping with the instructor's syllabus.

Once an appeal has been received...

The student has 21 days from the date of your letter to file an appeal with the Office of Student Conduct. Once the appeal is received, the Academic Integrity Hearing Board will be convened to hear the case.

The Hearing

Before the hearing, the student will be notified by electronic mail of the date, time, and location of the hearing. During the hearing, the student will be asked to provide a statement of events, and to answer any questions the board has about the case. The faculty member will be called as a witness and will be asked to be available for any questions the board may have about the case. Once the board is satisfied with the

information provided, the hearing will be adjourned. The chairperson of the board will notify the student by electronic mail of the outcome within ten days of the hearing. The faculty member will be sent a copy of the letter by electronic mail.

If the student is found responsible by the board...

The Office of Student Conduct will continue with the regular academic integrity process and assign the appropriate university sanction.

If the student is found not responsible by the board...

The Office of Student Conduct will contact the student notifying them that their case is closed and we require no further action on their part.

You, as the faculty member, will then be guided by the Academic Integrity Hearing Board to properly grade the student for the work done.

The written decision of the Academic Integrity Hearing Board is the university's final decision. There is no appeal from findings of responsibility or outcomes assigned by the board.



Second or Egregious Offenses

If the reported violation is the second academic integrity offense recorded with the Office of Student Conduct, the student is ordinarily required to appear before the University Conduct Board. The University generally makes a recommendation of expulsion to the Conduct Board for second offenses.

If a first offense is determined to be particularly egregious by the instructor or the Academic Integrity Hearing Board, the student will be required to appear before the University Conduct Board. Expulsion may be the recommendation, even though it is the student's first recorded offense.

In accordance with the above mentioned due process rights, any student who appears before the University Conduct Board is given the option to appeal that board's decision. Similar to the appeal of a faculty member's decision, the student has 21 days from the date of the Conduct Board's decision letter to file an appeal using an online form available at <http://conduct.wsu.edu>. The appeal of a Conduct Board's decision is a review of the documentation—it is not a rehearing. The student and/or the university will not have the opportunity to address the University Appeals Board. The student will be notified by mail within twenty days of the University Appeals Board's decision.

The Accused Student's Rights and Responsibilities

As always, in situations involving students, you should observe appropriate confidentiality. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) protects the privacy of student education records (including disciplinary records). Thus, it is

prudent to communicate only with those directly involved with the situation.

WSU expects our students to act as independent, responsible, and adult members of the university community. Students are afforded due process rights during the academic integrity violation process. A student who believes that he or she has been treated improperly in the aftermath of an incident may seek assistance through established university grievance procedures (University Ombudsman, Office of Equal Opportunity, etc.).

The Faculty and Staff Members Rights and Responsibilities

When you report academic integrity violations to the Office of Student Conduct, you will be advised of the outcome because you have a legitimate educational interest as defined by FERPA. As a faculty member acting in good faith, the risk of liability for reporting academic integrity violations is minimal. There are strong public policy reasons to support and protect individuals who make good faith reports of wrongdoing to appropriate officials, even if those reports later prove to be mistaken. Common law (or statutes in some states) gives people who report misconduct to proper authorities a "qualified privilege." Simply stated, that means they cannot be held liable for defamation unless the report was made in bad faith, with knowledge the information they provided was false, or in reckless disregard of its truth or falsity.

Documentation

Resolving disruption cases can be helped if you document problem behavior, including dates, times, brief descriptions of what happened, and the names of witnesses who may have observed the behavior. Such documentation should always be factual, and not include personal interjections

Remember that documentation (e-mails, letters, and text messages) are subject to public records requests, and could be requested by outside parties.

Consultation

The Office of Student Conduct aims to be a transparent reference and resource for all issues regarding students at WSU. Please call us regarding any questions you have about the academic integrity policies at WSU.

If you would like to have us speak to your department or colleagues about the process, we would be happy to provide that service as well.

Important Contact Information

Office of the Dean of Students
134 French Administration
(509) 335-5757
<http://deanofstudents.wsu.edu/>

Office of Student Conduct
360 Lighty
(509) 335-4532
<http://conduct.wsu.edu>

University Ombudsman
2 Wilson Hall
(509) 335-1195
<http://ombudsman.wsu.edu/>

Counseling and Psychological Services
Washington Building
(509) 335-4511
<http://counsel.wsu.edu/>

Note: Brief sections of this document are adapted from the University of Southern California document, “*Disruptive & Threatening Student Behavior.*”