

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

What are violations of academic integrity (AI)?

Violations include, but are not limited to, unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, cheating on examinations, altering or destroying the work of others, fabricating information, and several other behaviors (see 1.04 and 6.01 in the policy).

What if the alleged violation is not listed in the policy?

Section 6.02 in the policy says "Instructors may identify other behaviors that violate academic integrity."

What is not a violation of academic integrity?

All non-academic student misconduct (inappropriate classroom behavior, theft, drunkenness, etc.) is handled through the Office of Student Conduct.

How do I deal with a violation of academic integrity?

If you have sufficient evidence that it is "more likely than not" the student committed an academic integrity violation, you should, within 7 school days of the discovery:

- * organize the evidence
- * contact an Academic Integrity Facilitator from the list provided at <http://academicintegrity.okstate.edu/doc/facilitators.pdf>
- * complete academic integrity violation and notification forms (A&B) and send or give it to the student
- * after the student responds (within five days following receipt of the Notification Form), schedule a meeting time.

You, the student, and the Facilitator meet to discuss the charge. At the end of the meeting, the three persons complete and sign the "Academic Integrity Resolution Form," file the form, and send the notification and resolution forms (A&B) to the Office of Academic Affairs. For more complete information see Part III of the Academic Integrity Handbook "Detecting and Reporting Academic Integrity Violations."

- * **Note: If a violation is discovered at the end of the semester** the instructor should assign an "I" in the course until the instructor can notify the student and hold a resolution meeting?

Who is allowed to facilitate a resolution meeting?

Only someone trained in the academic integrity policies and procedures can act as an academic integrity facilitator. A list of facilitators is available at: <http://academicintegrity.okstate.edu/doc/facilitators.pdf>.

What is the role of the Academic Integrity Facilitator?

An Academic Integrity Facilitator is an instructor, adviser or academic administrator who is trained in academic integrity policy and procedures. The role of the Academic Integrity Facilitator is to provide information about Oklahoma State University's academic integrity policy and procedures, and serve as an impartial observer during the initial meeting between the instructor and student. The facilitator does not act as a mediator or negotiator, but aids the academic integrity process by explaining the standard of proof required for an allegation and encouraging the instructor and student to reach their own conclusion after they discuss the evidence supporting the alleged violation of academic integrity. The facilitator will describe the appeals process if the student and instructor disagree about the student's responsibility for the violation or the appropriateness of the sanction and provide a copy of the appeal form.

Does the Academic Integrity Facilitator have to be from my department?

No, instructors are not required to select facilitators from the same department or college. They must be trained by Academic Affairs about the policies and procedures. A list of facilitators is available at <http://academicintegrity.okstate.edu/doc/facilitators.pdf>.

What sanctions will be assigned by the instructor for alleged violations of academic integrity?

Three sanctions are recommended based on the seriousness of the violation.

- a. Level one sanction: award a grade of "zero" or "F" for the assignment or examination for violations including but not limited to the following:

Copying a few sentences of material (1-5 sentences or a minor portion) from a written or Internet source without proper citation.

Cheating on a quiz or minor assignment (less than 10% of the final grade).

Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment.

Working on an assignment with others when the instructor asked for individual work.

Using a false excuse to obtain an extension on a due date.

Signing an attendance roster for someone who is absent or asking someone else to sign the roster to avoid being counted absent.

- b. Level two sanction: award a grade of "F!" for the course for violations including but not limited to the following:

Turning in a paper copied from another student.

Turning in a paper obtained in full or in part from a term paper "mill" or website.

Copying material almost word for word from a written source and turning it in as one's own work.

Fabricating or falsifying a bibliography.

Getting questions or answers from someone who has taken an examination.

Obtaining an unauthorized copy of an examination in advance.

Using unauthorized notes during an examination.

Having another student take an examination.

Inappropriate use of technology (camera phones, text messaging, programmable calculator, etc.) during an examination.

Copying from another student during an examination with or without his/her knowledge.

Helping someone else cheat on an examination.

Stealing an examination or problem answer from the instructor.

Altering a grade or scoring on an examination or paper to obtain unearned credit.

In a course requiring computer work, copying another student's program rather than writing one's own.

Fabricating or falsifying laboratory or research data.

Inappropriately sharing or using work on an online assignment or examination.

Turning in work done by someone else.

Submitting substantial portions of the same assignment to more than one class without permission of the instructors.

For level two sanctions the transcript will indicate that a grade of "F!" signifies that the student failed the course because of an alleged violation of academic integrity.

- c. Level three sanction: recommend dismissal from the graduate, professional education, or Veterinary Medicine program and suspension from the university for the following types of violations:

Plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity in a thesis or dissertation proposal, qualifying examination, comprehensive examination, thesis or dissertation, report for a creative component, thesis or dissertation defense, or professional education portfolio.

Fabrication or falsification of research or laboratory data used in a creative component, report, thesis or dissertation.

Is an instructor allowed to assign other sanctions for violations of academic integrity?

Instructors should assign level one or two sanctions for alleged violations of academic integrity. The recommended levels of sanction should be used by the instructor unless the instructor provides a specific written policy during the first week of class (e.g., an instructor may assign an F! for receiving unauthorized help on an assignment if they provide a written statement during the first week of class). The instructor or Academic Integrity Panel may permit a student to drop a course with a grade of "W" if the allegation is dismissed or if the student admits responsibility for a level one sanction, however, the student must drop the course by the drop deadline. A student may not drop a course in which the "F!" grade was assigned.

What are rights of the student in the Academic Integrity process?

The procedures for the Academic Integrity Panel afford the student his/her rights by providing:

Written notification of the time and place of the hearing of the appeal. This notice will be mailed to the student's local address (as listed in the Student Information System).

A copy of the Academic Integrity Violation and Resolution forms and the instructor's statement.

The right to appear in person and present his/her case. Either party may elect not to appear; in this instance, the hearing shall be held in his/her absence. Failure to appear must be noted without prejudice.

The right to meet with the hearing panel at the same time, so no further allegations can be made against the student without the student's knowledge or against the instructor without the instructor's knowledge.

The right to be accompanied by one adviser (colleague or friend); however, the adviser may not address the hearing panel.

The right to call witnesses to assist in establishing facts of the case.

The right to ask questions.

The right to an explanation of the reasons for any decision rendered.

The right to be free from retaliation by the instructor.

The assurance that all personally identifiable information about alleged violations of academic integrity will be confidential under provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and will not be disclosed except as permitted by the Act or with written permission of the student.

What is a resolution meeting?

At this point in the process no formal charge of a violation. This is an opportunity for the instructor and student to discuss the allegation and determine if a violation occurred and if so what sanction is appropriate.

Can a parent/s and/or friend/s attend the resolution meeting?

The resolution meeting is attended by the facilitator, instructor and student. If a student appeals he or she has the right to be accompanied by one adviser of their choosing.

What are the chances of this charge being overturned?

Each appeal is heard on a case by case basis. The pertinent questions for the Academic Integrity Panel are "Did a violation of academic integrity occur?" and "Is the assigned sanction appropriate?" The instructor should present all evidence and testimony that lead them to conclude a violation of academic integrity occurred. The student should present any evidence or witness statements when they turn in their appeal form.

Who can help me if I appeal the alleged violation of academic integrity?

Prior to each hearing both the instructor and student are given the name, address, and phone number of an academic integrity panel member who will act as their consultant. This person is an active panel member who will

not be hearing the appeal. Both parties are encouraged to contact this person if they have any questions about going before the panel or for any policy questions they might have.

Can the sanction be increased by the panel?

Yes. If it is discovered the student has a prior violation under the old or new policy then the Academic Integrity Assistant will contact the student and notify them of a hearing regarding the second violation. The Panel also has the option of increasing a sanction if they believe a greater sanction is more appropriate.

How will the instructor know that an appeal has been filed?

Within five school days of signing the Academic Integrity Resolution Form, the student may submit an appeal form with supporting documentation. You will be notified promptly, and a consulting member of the Academic Integrity Panel will be assigned to assist both you and the student in preparing materials for an Academic Integrity Hearing Panel. For more complete information see sections 3.01 - 3.11 in the policy.

Does the Academic Integrity Panel consider grade appeals?

No. The Academic Integrity Panel deals only with violations of academic integrity. Grade appeals are handled by the Grade Appeals Board.

How does an appeal of an academic integrity violation charge differ from a grade appeal?

The situations are definitely different. The charge of an academic integrity violation is brought by an instructor against a student. In a grade appeal, which is handled by the Grade Appeals Board, the action is initiated by the student against an instructor and is filed after a course grade has been assigned. In this case, the question for the Grade Appeals Board is "Did the instructor act fairly (i.e., follow stated procedures accurately and consistently, etc.) in assigning the grade?" If the Grade Appeals Board determines that a (lower) grade was given as a penalty for suspected cheating (or some other academic integrity violation), the case will be immediately referred to the Academic Integrity process. For more information on grade appeals, see osu.okstate.edu/acadaffr/aa/gab.htm.

Can an academic integrity violation be charged for non-class work?

In accordance with a policy developed by the Graduate College, a graduate or professional student may appeal a decision concerning work in non-class settings such as comprehensive or qualifying examinations or dissertation drafts. Alleged violations of academic integrity in these activities are handled by the Academic Integrity Panel. Appeals involving alleged violations of academic integrity by graduate students outside of class (e.g., qualifying or comprehensive examinations, proposals, theses/dissertations), the Academic Integrity hearing panel will be composed of graduate students and members of the graduate faculty.

For more information, contact the Associate Dean for the Graduate College, 202 Whitehurst, 405-744-6368.

What can I do to encourage academic integrity in my classes and on campus?

This is the most important question. Faculty can lead discussions of academic integrity in classes, provide a clear explanation of permissible and impermissible academic behavior (e.g., regarding collaboration, use of Internet sources, term paper documentation, and the like), include statements about academic integrity in the course syllabus, and reduce opportunities for cheating (e.g., adjust seating during examinations and record the examination seating arrangement, modify examinations and other projects from term to term, limit or prohibit the use of electronic devices during examinations). For more suggestions, see Part II of the Academic Integrity Handbook "Detecting and Reporting Academic Integrity Violations."

What is a grade of "F!"?

A grade of "F!" (pronounced F shriek) on the student's transcript indicates that the student received a failing grade in the course because of an alleged violation of academic integrity. The first "!" may be removed through successful completion of an academic integrity education program (see below); however, the "!" will remain on the transcript for at least one semester.

How does the student appeal the instructor's decision?

The student submits an appeal form and a statement to the Assistant to the Academic Integrity Panel within five school days after the Academic Integrity Resolution Form was signed. The Assistant, who can be contacted in 101 Whitehurst, the Office of Academic Affairs, notifies the instructor of the course, and assigns a consulting member of the Academic Integrity Panel to assist the instructor and student. The consulting member of the Panel helps the student and instructor understand the appeals process, assemble the supporting documents, and transmit the case to the Academic Integrity Panel.

The instructor submits sufficient information to substantiate an alleged violation of academic integrity and the sanction.

An Academic Integrity hearing panel will schedule a hearing to listen to statements by the instructor, student and others; review materials submitted by the instructor and student; decide if it is "more likely than not" than the student committed the alleged violation; and determine if the sanction is appropriate for the violation. The hearing panel will make one of the following decisions:

The student is not responsible for a violation of academic integrity. The instructor will remove the sanction and assign an appropriate grade.

The student is responsible for a violation and the sanction is appropriate.

The student is responsible for a violation but the sanction is not appropriate. The panel may increase or decrease the sanction.

After the decision the Chair of the Academic Integrity hearing panel will send a letter to the student, instructor, and Office of Academic Affairs.

What is the Academic Integrity Panel?

The Academic Integrity Panel is composed of faculty, undergraduate student and graduate student representatives from each college. When a student submits an appeal of an alleged violation of academic integrity, one consulting member of the panel is assigned to assist the instructor and student in the appeals process by describing the appeals process and helping the instructor and student assemble documents for their hearing.

When a hearing panel is convened to hear an appeal, it will be composed of a student chair, two student members and two faculty members. The consulting member who assisted the student and instructor will not serve on the hearing panel for the case. The hearing panel will listen to statements by the instructor, student and others who have direct knowledge of the incident; review materials submitted by the instructor and student; decide if it is "more likely than not" than the student committed the alleged violation; and determine if the sanction is appropriate for the violation.

What standard of proof is required for alleged violations of academic integrity?

When an instructor confronts a student with an alleged violation of academic integrity the instructor is expected to provide sufficient information to substantiate the allegation. The information should support a determination that it is "more likely than not" that a violation of academic integrity occurred.

The standard of proof requires more than a mere assertion by an instructor that a student has been involved in an alleged violation of academic integrity. In most circumstances, information supporting the instructor's assertion of a violation of academic integrity should be presented in the form of documents or corroborating statements from other University faculty or staff, or both.

Only in instances in which no other supporting information is available should the instructor ask other students in a class to support an allegation of a violation of academic integrity. An instructor should not report a violation of academic integrity based on an allegation by another student that is unsupported either by documents or observation of the alleged violation by a member of the University faculty or staff.

Examples of documents that have been found helpful in past cases include examinations with identical or highly similar answers, particularly when the answer on one or both examinations is incorrect, and when the instructor can demonstrate that the papers were produced by students seated in close proximity to one another during an examination; copies of a student's written work and the original source(s) from which the work is alleged to have been taken; improper source materials such as notes taken from a student during the course of an examination for which no notes were allowed; and texts or other materials improperly in possession of a student during the examination. In these situations, the documents should be retained by the instructor. It strengthens the instructor's case to have another witness to the presence of improper materials during the examination, particularly if there is a dispute as to the presence of the materials.

Written statements by persons who do not attend the Academic Integrity Panel hearing normally will not be considered by the panel. In the event that a majority of the panel concludes that such written statements are necessary, the record of the case shall contain the reasons for the conclusion.

What happens to students who violate academic integrity a second time?

Students who are accused of a second alleged violation of academic integrity will be referred to the Academic Integrity Panel for additional sanctions. The panel will conduct a hearing and determine if the student violated academic integrity. If the student's first violation had a sanction of a "zero" or "F" on an assignment or examination, the panel may increase the sanction for the second violation to an "F!" for the course. These students will be suspended for a third violation.

Students who received one "F!" and violate academic integrity a second time will be suspended from the university. This penalty will be assessed if the first "!" was or was not removed, or if the second incident was a level one or level two violation. In such cases, the Academic Integrity Panel will meet with the student and instructor to determine if the student is responsible for violating academic integrity. If the Academic Integrity Panel finds that the student committed the alleged act, the student will be suspended from the university for no less than one regular (fall or spring) semester. Students suspended for the fall will also be suspended for the previous summer sessions and those suspended for the spring will also be suspended for the subsequent summer sessions.

Can the student or instructor appeal the decision of the Academic Integrity hearing panel?

Yes. The student or instructor may submit a written request for a final appeal before the Appeals Panel. The student or instructor must submit an appeal within seven school days after the letter from the Academic Integrity Panel is mailed if the academic integrity procedure was not followed. If new information becomes available after the hearing that could substantially affect the outcome, the student or instructor may submit an appeal within one year. The Chair of the Appeals Panel will determine if the final appeal will be considered.

The student or instructor will use the following procedures in filing a final appeal:

The student or instructor obtains and completes a final appeal form that is available from the Office of Academic Affairs, 101 Whitehurst. The burden of proof rests upon the person who submits the appeal to establish his/her case with a preponderance of information.

The appellant submits the final appeal form to the Assistant of the Academic Integrity Panel by the date specified on the letter from the Chair of the Academic Integrity Panel. The Assistant notifies the other party (instructor or student), assembles the supporting documents, and transmits the case to the Appeals Panel.

The Academic Integrity Appeals Panel reviews written materials and determines if the academic integrity procedure was followed or if the new information warrants another hearing in front of the Academic Integrity hearing panel. The AI Appeals Panel may take any of the following actions:

The academic integrity procedure was not followed. The AI Appeals Panel may remand the case to the Academic Integrity hearing panel.

Academic integrity procedure was followed. The AI Appeals Panel upholds the decision of the Academic Integrity hearing panel.

New information does not warrant a new hearing. The AI Appeals Panel upholds the decision of the Academic Integrity hearing panel.

New information warrants another hearing in front of the Academic Integrity hearing panel.

The Chair of the Academic Integrity Appeals Panel sends a letter to the student, instructor, and Office of Academic Affairs. The decision of the Academic Integrity Appeals Panel is final.

What is an approved Academic Integrity Education Program?

Students may remove the first “!” from their transcript by successfully completing an Academic Integrity Education Program. The program will focus on the value of academic integrity; address OSU’s policy and procedures for violations of academic integrity. The program may include participation in a faculty-led seminar or a computer-based tutorial call MITT (Multimedia Integrity Teaching Tool). A subcommittee of the Academic Integrity Panel will review and approve applications for Academic Integrity Education Programs for students who are not able to attend the seminar or complete MITT.

How will the Office of Academic Affairs handle allegations of violations of academic integrity that are received through EthicsPoint?

The Associate Vice President for Undergraduate Education will receive reports of alleged violations of academic integrity from EthicsPoint, a confidential reporting service that has a contract with OSU. These reports will be immediately forwarded to the instructor of record for the class. The instructor will determine if it is appropriate to conduct an investigation of the allegation.

Are instructors obligated to report all alleged violations of academic integrity to the Academic Integrity Panel?

When an instructor suspects that a student violated academic integrity they are obligated to investigate the allegation and determine if there is sufficient information to substantiate the allegation. The information should support a determination that it is “more likely than not” that a violation of academic integrity occurred.

If sufficient information exists, the instructor should meet with the student and Academic Integrity Facilitator to discuss the case. If the instructor believes that the student violated academic integrity he or she is expected to report the incident to the Academic Integrity Panel. These reports will allow the Panel to identify students who repeatedly violate academic integrity. Unreported violations will not be considered when hearing an appeal.

Each classroom environment is unique regarding the level of instruction regarding academic integrity and the expectations of how assignments should be completed. Therefore it is up to the instructor to determine if the alleged violation constitutes a sanction or a “teachable moment.” A “teachable moment” can be defined when an error has occurred but there is enough evidence to substantiate the claim of a violation. It may also be defined as a misunderstanding or miscommunication occurring between the student and instructor regarding the process by which the assignment should be completed. In this case the instructor does not feel that the student is responsible of a violation. This would be an opportunity to educate the student regarding academic integrity and the danger of their actions. The assignment would be graded accordance to the error but not processed as a violation of academic integrity.

Do the Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures apply to the Center for Health Sciences, OSU-Okmulgee, or OSU-Oklahoma City?

No. The Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures apply to students and instructors of OSU Stillwater, Tulsa and Center for Veterinary Health Sciences courses.