



Policy Name:	Code of Academic Integrity
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Responsible Office:	Provost
Category:	Academics and Enrollment

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the Code of Academic Integrity and to describe the common areas of violation, the consequences for students charged with violating the Code, and the rights and responsibilities of the university community in sustaining academic integrity at Northwest.

II. Policy

Code of Academic Integrity: Undergraduate & Graduate

The students, faculty, and staff at Northwest endeavor to sustain an environment that values honesty in academic work, that acknowledges the authorized aid and intellectual contributions of others, and that enables equitable evaluation of student work. Sustaining academic integrity at Northwest is the responsibility of the entire university community.

Students are responsible for performing with integrity in all academic situations. Students must be especially attentive to academic integrity whenever submitting work for evaluation, honors, or publication.

Students are responsible for understanding the eight areas of academic behavior which violate the Code of Academic Integrity: (1) knowingly giving or receiving unauthorized aid or information; (2) committing plagiarism; (3) misrepresenting facts or data; (4) offering bribes; (5) using library, computer, or other university resources unethically; (6) knowingly engaging in acts of deception, falsification, or misrepresentation that interfere with equitable academic assessment and evaluation; (7) publishing or transmitting academic materials authored by an instructor, including

study guides, exams, and assignments, without the author's permission; and (8) knowingly assisting in any of the above practices.

Faculty and staff will bring charges of violation when a preponderance of the evidence indicates that one or more of the prohibited eight academic behaviors has been committed.

Students who have witnessed, or who have evidence of, a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity are encouraged to speak with a faculty or staff member. Faculty and staff are obligated to treat seriously allegations of violations brought to their attention by Northwest students. When faculty or staff believe a preponderance of the evidence indicates a violation has occurred, the evidence provided by a student may be used by the faculty or staff filing an official charge of violation.

If a student feels he/she/they has been erroneously charged with a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity, the student has a right to appeal. Appeals committees, which determine whether there is a preponderance of the evidence to sustain the charge, will offer charged students an opportunity to review all evidence and to provide oral testimony. Appeals must be made in writing within 10 academic days of receipt of the official letter of violation.

If the violation is related to a course that the student is currently enrolled in, the instructor may impose a course-level sanction up to and including failure of the course. Course-level sanctions for violations are at the discretion of the individual faculty member.

Any violation of the Code of Academic Integrity will initiate a review by the Academic Integrity Panel, whose membership includes university students, faculty, and staff. After reviewing a student's academic record and all violations, the Academic Integrity Panel may recommend to the Provost an administrative sanction up to and including dismissal from the university.

Any changes to the Code of Academic Integrity must be implemented following the close of the academic year in which the changes are approved.

III. Process for Adjudicating Violations of the Code of Academic Integrity

Academic honesty is essential to the integrity of the mission and success of the University and is expected of all students. This document outlines the process to be followed when a student is suspected of violating the Code of Academic Integrity. Northwest students should communicate with faculty or staff about any suspected violations of the Code of Academic Integrity. Faculty and staff are obligated to treat seriously allegations of violation brought to their attention by Northwest students.

Suspected Violations

If a member of Northwest's faculty or staff suspects a student of violating the Code of Academic Integrity, the faculty or staff member will first discuss with the student the evidence that has caused suspicion. All reasonable effort must be made by faculty and staff to discuss allegations and evidence with students suspected of violating the Code before proceeding.

If, after discussion with the student suspected of a violation, the faculty or staff member believes no violation of the Code of Academic Integrity has occurred, no official charge will be filed and no further action is needed. When appropriate, faculty and staff may require students to repeat educational activities (e.g., revising and resubmitting an essay, re-taking an exam) without filing an official charge. Such recourse may be warranted in those instances when the faculty/staff member believes the student did not intend to deceive in the submission of evaluated work or when the faculty/staff member believes there is not a preponderance of the evidence to support a charge. A course-level sanction beyond repeating the educational activity shall not be imposed if no official charge is filed.

Filing Official Charges

If, after discussing the allegation with the student, the faculty/staff member feels a violation of the Code of Academic Integrity has occurred, the next step is to consult the appropriate department chair/school director. Cases involving an academic course will be routed through the department/school of the course. In cases unrelated to a specific course the faculty/staff members who bring charges shall choose a chair/director to consult; the faculty/staff member will thereby select a school or department to act as host for consultation and, if requested by the charged student, the first appeal.

After consulting with the chair/director, the faculty or staff member who believes there is a preponderance of the evidence to support a charge will officially charge the student with violating the Code of Academic Integrity. The chair/director may first notify the Registrar to put an academic hold on the course to prevent the student from dropping the class. The official charge comes by way of a letter of violation sent from the faculty/staff member to the student, a copy of which is sent to the chair/director. The letter of violation will specify which of the eight prohibited behaviors the student is accused of committing, present a statement of the evidence and any relevant documentation, and outline any course-related sanctions imposed. In cases where an allegation has been raised by another student, the evidence provided by the student may be used in filing the official charge of violation.

Once an official charge has been filed, the chair/director¹ will communicate in writing with the charged student about the student's right to appeal the charge and the date by which any appeal must be made in writing. The chair/director will also initiate the Code of Academic Integrity violation checklist that will be submitted to the Office of the Provost to report the charge.

If the charge of violation is not appealed, the chair/director will send the official charge letter to the Office of the Provost once the expiry date for appeal has passed and complete the Code of Academic Integrity violation checklist.

Course-Level Sanctions

Faculty may impose a range of course-level sanctions on charged students currently enrolled in a course. The sanction will be based on the severity of the violation and may range from repeating the education activity to a failing grade for the course. A charge of violation of the Code of Academic Integrity may be filed without the imposition of course-level sanctions.

¹ If a chair/director filed the charge of violation, this role will be filled by a designated faculty member – either the assistant chair/director or a senior member of the faculty.

Appeals

If the student files an appeal to contest the charge of violation, the chair/director will appoint a committee of at least three faculty or staff members who are not directly involved in the case to consider the appeal. The chair/director shall take necessary precautions to avoid any conflict of interest on the part of the committee members. The chair/director must promptly notify the charged student with the names of the committee members and provide the student with an opportunity to file a written challenge to any committee member for cause.²

All reasonable effort must be made by the appeal committee to ensure charged students have access to all evidence considered, including written statements and oral testimony. Reasonable effort must be made to allow the student the opportunity to present oral testimony, invite witnesses with direct knowledge of the matter, and present additional evidence.

The appeal committee will consider whether there is a preponderance of the evidence supporting the charge of violation. The appeal committee, by a majority vote, can overturn or uphold the charge of violation; in cases where the violation is upheld, the appeal committee cannot alter course-level sanctions that have been imposed.

The appeal committee will report its decision in writing to the student, the charging faculty or staff member, and to the appropriate chair/director. The letter will present a summary of the relevant facts (see “Appeals Decision Letter—Template”: when the committee met, whether the student attended the meeting, what evidence was provided to the student, etc.) and the committee’s decision and supporting rationale.

At the conclusion of the appeal, the chair/director will send a copy of the Code of Academic Integrity violation checklist and the department/school appeal committee’s decision letter to the Office of the Provost.

Outcome of Appeal

A charge that is successfully appealed will be reported by the committee to the student, the charging faculty member, and the chair/director. The charging faculty member will rescind any course-level sanctions indicated in the official charge of violation. The chair/director will submit the decision of the appeal committee to the Office of the Provost and the violation will be expunged from the student’s record.

If the department/school appeal committee upholds the charge of violation, that decision will be reported in writing to the student, the charging faculty or staff member, and the appropriate chair/director. This decision letter will also include information about appealing to the university’s Academic Appeals Committee by petition available in the Office of the Registrar, including the date 10 academic days from the dated decision letter by which a petition must be submitted. The university Academic Appeals Committee, by a majority vote, can overturn or uphold a finding of a violation or alter a course-level sanction imposed. The Academic Appeals Committee will report

² The standard to be used in ruling on challenges is whether, in light of the challenged person’s knowledge of the case or personal or professional relationships with a party or witness, the challenged person would be able to fairly and impartially hear the case.

its action to the student, department chair/school director, and provost. The department chair/school director will report any consequent change of grade to the Registrar.

Final Academic Disciplinary Action

All official charges of violation are filed with the Office of the Provost. After all opportunities to appeal have been exhausted, the Academic Integrity Panel will review all confirmed violations and may recommend to the Provost that additional academic disciplinary sanctions be imposed on the student, up to and including dismissal from the university. The academic disciplinary sanctions will be based on a consideration of all circumstances in a particular case, including the student's prior record of academic misconduct, if any.