



Academic Integrity Faculty Obligations, Hearing Procedures & Instructions

This document supplements the University of Pittsburgh's Guidelines on Academic Integrity. No attempt to use it should be made without consulting the parent document. Instructors of SCI courses who have identified an integrity violation should follow the procedure outlined in the "Instructor Steps for Addressing Academic Integrity at SCI" section.

Effective Date: August 2018 / Last Revised: February 2018

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Academic Integrity: Faculty Obligations

I. Faculty Obligations

A faculty member accepts an obligation, in relation to their students, to discharge their duties in a fair and conscientious manner in accordance with the ethical standards generally recognized within the academic community, as well as those of the professions represented in the School of Computing and Information. Without limiting the application of the above principle, members of the faculty are also expected (except in cases of illness or other compelling circumstance) to conduct themselves in a professional manner, including the following:

1. To meet their classes when scheduled;



2. To be available at reasonable times for appointments with students, and to keep such appointments;
3. To make appropriate preparation for classes and other meetings;
4. To perform their grading duties and other academic evaluations in a timely manner;
5. To describe to students, within the period in which a student may add and drop a course, orally, in writing, or by reference to printed course descriptions, the general content and objectives of a course; and announce the methods and standards of evaluation, including the importance to be assigned various factors in academic evaluation, and, in advance of any evaluation, the permissible materials or references allowed during evaluation (See footnote 3);
6. To base all academic evaluations upon good faith professional judgement;
7. Not to consider, in academic evaluation, such factors as race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, age, national origin, and political or cultural affiliation, and life style, activities, or behavior outside the classroom unrelated to academic achievement (See footnote 4);
8. To respect the confidentiality of information regarding a student contained in University records; and to refrain from releasing such information, except in connection with intra-University business, or with student consent, or as may be permitted by law (See footnote 5);
9. Not to exploit their professional relationship with students for private advantage; and to refrain from soliciting the assistance of students for private purposes in a manner which infringes upon such students' freedom of choice;
10. To give appropriate recognition to contributions made by students to research, publication, service, or other activities;
11. To refrain from any activity which involves risk to the health and safety of a student, except with the student's informed consent, and, where applicable, in accordance with the University policy relating to the use of human subjects in experimentation; and
12. To respect the dignity of students individually and collectively in the classroom and other academic contexts.*

II. Grievance Procedures

Any member of the University community having evidence may bring to the attention of the appropriate department chair within SCI and/or SCI dean a complaint that a faculty member has failed, in one or more respects, to meet faithfully the obligations set forth above. The Chair or Dean, at their discretion, will take such action by way of investigation, counseling, or action—in accordance with applicable University procedures—as may appear to be proper under the circumstances. The faculty member's and student's interest in



confidentiality, academic freedom, and professional integrity in such matters will be respected.

III. Individual Grievances

In order to provide a means for students to seek and obtain redress for grievances affecting themselves individually, the following procedures should be followed. These are not intended and shall not be used to provide sanctions against faculty members.

IV. Procedures

Where an individual student alleges with particularity that the actions of a faculty member have resulted in serious academic injury to the student, the matter shall (if requested by the student) be presented to the SCI Academic Integrity Hearing Board for adjudication. Serious academic injury includes, but is not necessarily limited to, the awarding of a lower course grade than that which the student has earned or suspension from a class. However, this is not intended to address normal grading decisions of faculty in exercising good-faith professional judgment in evaluating a student's work.

It is the responsibility of the student, before seeking to have a grievance adjudicated, to attempt to resolve the matter by personal conference with the faculty member concerned, and, if such attempts are unavailing, to call the matter to the attention of the Department Chair (or her/his designated representative) for consideration and adjustment by informal means. If unsatisfied with the outcome at that level, the student or faculty member may take the case to the Associate Dean for Academic Programs. The Associate Dean for Academic Programs (or her/his designated representative) will review the student's concerns, investigate the charges, and render a decision. If the student or faculty member disagrees with the Associate Dean's decision, either may appeal to the School of Computing and Information Academic Integrity Officer, in which case the following grievance procedures shall be employed:

1. The aggrieved student will file a written statement of charges with the SCI Academic Integrity Officer.
2. If the Academic Integrity Administrative Officer determines that the charges are subject to adjudication under the terms of the Academic Integrity Guidelines, she/he will transmit the charges to the faculty member, together with a copy of these regulations.
3. The letter of transmittal to the faculty member, a copy of which shall also be sent to the student, shall state the composition of a committee that has been named to meet with the involved parties to make an informal inquiry into the charge. The purpose of this committee is to provide a last effort at informal resolution of the matter between the student and the faculty member. The committee will be appointed by the Associate Dean for Academic Programs and composed of one faculty member and one student from the same population (graduate or undergraduate) as the student filing the



grievance. The committee will serve on a case-by-case basis. Members of this informal committee must recuse themselves from further participation should the case proceed to a formal hearing.

4. The committee shall meet with the faculty member, the student, and others as appropriate, to review the nature of the problem in an attempt to reach a settlement of the differences. This is not a formal hearing and formal procedural rules do not apply. Upon completion of these meetings, if no mutually agreeable resolution results, the committee may produce its own recommendation for a solution to the conflict.
5. Should the committee recommend that the faculty member take some corrective action on behalf of the student, its recommendations shall be provided to the faculty member. As promptly as reasonable and at least within five (5) working days after the faculty member receives the recommendations of the committee, the faculty member shall privately take that action which they elect, and so advise the student and chair of the committee of that action.
6. Should the committee conclude that the faculty member needs to take no corrective action on behalf of the student, this finding shall be forwarded to both the faculty member and the student.
7. If the student elects to pursue the matter further, either because he or she is dissatisfied with the resulting action of the faculty member or the conclusion of the committee, they should discuss this intent with the chair of the committee who should review the procedures to be followed with the student. If the student wishes to proceed with a formal hearing, the chair of the committee shall advise the SCI Academic Integrity Officer. The Academic Integrity Officer will review the case and make a final attempt at resolving the issue informally. If this fails, the Integrity Officer will convene an Academic Integrity Hearing Board and transmit a written statement of charges to the faculty member, together with a copy of these regulations.
8. The formal hearing should provide a fair inquiry into the truth or falsity of the charges, with the faculty member and the student afforded the right to cross-examine. At the level of the SCI Academic Integrity Hearing Board, legal counsel shall not be permitted, but a representative from within the University community shall be permitted for both faculty and students.
9. A suitable record (audio recording) shall be made of the proceedings, exclusive of deliberations to arrive at a decision.
10. The proposed decision, which shall be written, shall include a determination whether charges have been proved by clear and convincing evidence, together with findings with respect to the material facts. If any charges are established, the proposed decision shall state the particular remedial action to



be taken.

11. The proposed decision shall be submitted to the Dean, who will make an independent review of the hearing proceedings. The Dean may require that the charges be dismissed, or that the case be remanded for further proceedings whenever he or she deems this to be necessary. The Dean may limit the scope of any further proceedings or require that part or all of the original proceedings be reconvened. Upon completion of such additional proceedings, if any, the Dean shall issue a final decision. The Dean may reject any findings made by the Academic Integrity Hearing Board, may dismiss the charges, or may reduce the extent of the remedial action to be taken. If the Dean believes remedial action to be taken may infringe upon the exercise of academic freedom, they will seek an advisory opinion from the Senate Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom before issuing his or her own decision. The decision of the Dean shall be in writing, shall set forth with particularity any new findings of fact or remedies, and shall include a statement of the reasons underlying such action.
12. The Dean's Office shall then transmit to the faculty member and to the student copies of all actions affecting them taken by the hearing authority and the Dean. Suitable records shall be maintained as confidential and retained in the office of the SCI Dean.

V. Remedial Action

Remedies in a student's behalf should usually be those agreed to willingly by the faculty member. Other remedial action to benefit a student may be authorized by the Dean only upon recommendation of the Academic Integrity Hearing Board and limited to:

- allowing a student to repeat an examination;
- allowing a student to be evaluated for work that would otherwise be too late to be considered;
- directing that additional opportunities be afforded for consultation or instruction;
- elimination of a grade that had been assigned by a faculty member from the transcript;
- changing of a failing letter or numerical grade to a "pass" or "satisfactory" grade, so as not to affect adversely a student's grade average;
- allowing a student to repeat a course without paying tuition or any other penalty, schedule and program permitting.

If some action is contemplated that might be deemed to infringe upon the academic freedom of the faculty member, the Dean shall seek an advisory opinion from the Senate Committee on Tenure and Academic Freedom (TAF). In such cases, the Senate TAF may identify other acceptable remedies or render such advice as may be appropriate in the particular situation.



No action detrimental to the faculty member shall be taken, except as in strict accordance with established University procedures. An adjustment hereunder in the student's behalf shall not be deemed a determination that the faculty member was in any way negligent or derelict.

VI. Review and Appeal

A student or faculty member may seek to have the Dean's final decision (or a determination that the charges are not subject to adjudication) reviewed by the Provost, who may seek the advice of the University Review Board, or the student may appeal to the University Review Board, whose recommendation shall be made to the Provost. The action of the Provost, taken with or without the advice of the University Review Board, shall constitute an exhaustion of all required institutional remedies.

If any such determination may be deemed to have a possible adverse effect upon the faculty member's professional situation, the faculty member may seek the assistance of the Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee of the University Senate.

VII. Timeliness

It is the responsibility of all parties, including administrative officers, to take prompt action in order that grievances may be resolved quickly and fairly. While no explicit time limit could apply to all cases, failure to use diligence in seeking redress may constitute grounds for denial of a hearing or other relief, especially if prejudice results. Parties have the right to seek review of the Provost or to petition the University Review Board for an appeal from a decision of The Academic Integrity Hearing Board or investigatory committee within five (5) working days of the date of the decision letter.

VIII. Formal Hearing Board

The Academic Integrity Hearing Board shall be appointed by the Dean's Office and will comprise three (3) faculty and three (3) students; the students appointed to the Board shall be of the same academic level (i.e., graduate or undergraduate) as the student whose case is being considered. The Dean will also designate which appointed faculty member shall serve as Chair of the Academic Integrity Hearing Board. The Chair will vote only in the case of a tie vote.

In appointing members to the Academic Integrity Hearing Boards, emphasis should be placed on obtaining faculty members with expertise and/or concerns related to academic integrity matters. Regardless of the selection process, it is the responsibility of the Dean's Office to provide all new Academic Integrity Hearing Board members with an orientation designed to familiarize the new members with the academic integrity guidelines for the given unit. Hearing Board members, thought appointed on an as-needed basis, shall be appointed in such a way as to ensure continuity of membership as well as orderly turnover of membership.



Grievance Procedures Against Senior Administrators

A student complaint of arbitrary or unfair treatment against the SCI Dean should be made to the Provost or appropriate Senior Vice Chancellor. There must be a prompt review and decision on the grievance. Members of the faculty who may be called upon to review and advise on the grievance should be drawn from outside the jurisdiction of the administrator against whom the charge is made.

Footnotes

1. The University Review Board and its jurisdiction are described in the University of Pittsburgh's Guidelines on Academic Integrity.
2. In implementation, the decision of the Provost shall be binding also on matters of interpretation of codes and procedures, determination of serious injury, and determination that an allegation is subject to adjudication by the procedures provided herein.
3. SCI recognizes that what is expected of faculty hereunder is intended to provide students with a notion of what is required in the course, and how they will be evaluated; a general statement of broadly defined parameters therefore typically suffices. If a course is deemed experimental in content, evaluation techniques, or grading practices, the students should be so advised. By academic evaluation is meant a measurement or grading of a student's academic performance, such as in written or oral examinations or papers, research reports, or class or laboratory participation.
4. If the student charges include discrimination, the SCI Academic Integrity Officer will consult with the SCI Affirmative Action Officer to ensure compliance with appropriate civil rights legislation and regulations. In such cases, the University Senate Tenure and Academic Freedom Committee may be consulted at any time.
5. References or recommendations may be given in good faith by a faculty member on his or her own behalf, without documentation of a student's consent if it may be reasonably perceived that the student initiated the request for a recommendation, in response to apparent bona fide inquiries, such as those from institutions which state that the student has applied for employment, for admission to graduate school, or for a professional license. See fuller statements concerning University records in the Student Code of Conduct and Judicial Procedures.

***Note:** There may be instances where the charging party may more appropriately invoke the University of Pittsburgh Student Code of Conduct and Judicial Procedures. This may occur where the alleged wrong mainly involves factual determinations and not academic issues. Similarly, students should be advised that other



University policies may more appropriately apply to a given grievance or avenue of redress, including, but not necessarily limited to, the University of Pittsburgh Sexual Harassment Policy and Procedure.

****Note:** If the instructor elects not to pursue a complaint submitted by a member of the University community, the complaint can be submitted to an individual appointed by the Dean who can pursue the matter in place of the instructor.

The University of Pittsburgh, as an educational institution and as an employer, values equality of opportunity, human dignity, and racial/ethnic and cultural diversity. Accordingly, the University prohibits and will not engage in discrimination or harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, ancestry, sex, age, marital status, familial status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, disability, or status as a disabled veteran or a veteran of the Vietnam era. Further, the University will continue to take affirmative steps to support and advance these values consistent with the University's mission. This policy applies to admissions, employment, and access to and treatment in University programs and activities. This is a commitment made by the University and is in accordance with federal, state, and/or local laws and regulations.

For information on University equal opportunity and affirmative action programs and complaint/grievance procedures, please contact the University of Pittsburgh; Office of Affirmative Action, Diversity, and Inclusion; Carol W. Mohamed, Director (and Title IX, 504 and ADA Coordinator); 412 Bellefield Hall; 315 South Bellefield Avenue; Pittsburgh, PA 15260; 412-648-7860.

Instructor Steps for Addressing Academic Integrity at SCI

If you have questions about the process detailed here, see the FAQs below. If your question is not answered there, contact SCI's Academic Integrity Officer at SCI-integrity@pitt.edu.

1. Ensure that a statement about academic integrity is contained in your syllabus that aligns with the [SCI Academic Integrity Policy](#). You are encouraged to include specific consequences for violations. Please feel free to use [this academic integrity statement](#) as a starting point if you need to create a statement for your syllabus or would like to revise your existing statement.
2. If you find evidence of a potential violation, first confirm that the suspected infraction aligns with both the [SCI Academic Integrity Policy](#) (Section 1: Student Obligations) and the syllabus statement for your course.
3. After confirming that the suspected occurrence is within the purview of academic



integrity, schedule a meeting with the student to discuss the evidence, the suspected violation, and the sanction that you will propose based on your course policies. During (or shortly after) this meeting, complete and sign your portion of the [Academic Integrity Violation Documentation Form](#). (The required information is easiest to collect all at once using your PeopleSoft Faculty Center.) If you would prefer assistance when meeting with the student, you may reach out to the SCI Academic Integrity Officer, (SCI-integrity@pitt.edu), who can mediate this discussion.

4. If the student accepts the sanction proposed in the Academic Integrity Violation Documentation Form, the Dean's Office will communicate a copy of the School's academic integrity policies and the documented outcome formally to the student, will ensure that School integrity recidivism policies are enforced, and will ensure that the student is properly trained on academic integrity.
5. If the student does not accept the sanction documented in the Academic Integrity Violation Documentation Form, the Academic Integrity Officer will make a final attempt at an informal resolution by scheduling a meeting with the department chair, thus initiating the first stage of the appeals process.
 - a. If this meeting results in a mutually agreeable outcome, you will be asked to submit a new Academic Integrity Violation Form with the updated details, and the student will be asked to sign their acceptance.
 - b. If a mutually agreeable outcome is not reached during this final attempt, the Academic Integrity Officer will ask you to submit a written statement of charges to initiate a formal investigation by the Associate Dean for Academic Programs. This investigation will proceed as described in the Academic Integrity Policy, and the Academic Integrity Officer will guide you through next steps.



Frequently-Asked Questions

What if the student doesn't respond to my invitation, or otherwise refuses to discuss the occurrence?

If the student fails to respond to your requests for a meeting and/or refuses to meet within a reasonable amount of time, fill out the Academic Integrity Violation Form, noting the student's (lack of) response.

What happens after I fill out the Academic Integrity Violation Documentation Form?

The student will receive the Academic Integrity Violation Documentation Form via email and will be asked to sign acknowledging their perspective on the recorded violation and sanction (i.e., whether they accept the proposed sanction). Thus, students should sign this form regardless of whether they accept (and, in fact, signing non-acceptance initiates the appeals process).

What type of sanction can I impose?

Common sanctions include reduction of the relevant evaluation grade (e.g., "0 on the exam," or, "Half credit on the project") and reduction of the overall course grade (e.g., "F in the course," or, "Reduction of course grade by one full letter grade"). Sanctions **cannot** include enrollment changes, such as withdrawing from the course or re-enrolling in the course in a future semester.

Am I required to enforce the maximum sanction described on my syllabus?

You are permitted to reduce the sanction in consideration of mitigating circumstances. You are responsible for documenting these mitigating circumstances to ensure that sanctions proposed in your class are fair and consistent. The Academic Integrity Officer may ask for more information if you propose sanctions that differ among substantively similar violations.

When can I enforce the proposed sanction?

No sanction should be enacted against the student, nor should their participation in the course be restricted in any way, even if they sign acceptance of the proposed sanction, until after you receive the notification letter from the Dean's Office.

What if I don't hear back before I must submit final grades for the semester?

If an offense is reported at the end of the semester, and the process is not complete before grades must be submitted, a grade of G should be assigned. A Grade Change Request should then be submitted with a final grade once the outcome of the academic integrity case is finalized.

What if the student doesn't sign the Academic Integrity Violation Documentation Form?

If the student delays signing, the Academic Integrity Officer will impose a deadline consistent with the Academic Integrity Policy.



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Can I handle minor cases without involving the Dean's Office?

We encourage you to submit the Academic Integrity Violation Documentation Form to report any relevant incidents to the Dean's Office, regardless of severity. This includes cases in which you propose no sanction due to mitigating circumstances.

Why is it important to report academic integrity violations to the Dean's Office?

SCI, like other schools at Pitt, records all academic integrity violations to allow for tracking of repeat offenses and evaluation of our training materials.

Do academic integrity sanctions appear on students' transcripts?

Academic integrity records are kept confidential within the Dean's Office(s) and are purged following the student's graduation. While sanctions often impact grades, which appear on transcripts, those transcripts do not reflect academic integrity violations directly.