

III. General Student Disciplinary Policies

Disciplinary policies at OSU-Oklahoma City are set forth in writing in order to give students general notice of prohibited conduct. These policies should be read and interpreted broadly. They are not designed to identify or define all possible types of prohibited conduct in exhaustive terms.

A. Definitions of Inappropriate Behavior

Students will be held accountable for, and face possible disciplinary action, should their behavior fall into one of the following categories:

1. Academic Dishonesty: Behavior in which a deliberately fraudulent misrepresentation is employed in an attempt to gain undeserved academic credit, either for oneself or for another person.
2. Academic Misconduct: Academic misconduct differs from academic dishonesty in that there is no intent to deliberately obtain undeserved academic credit by fraudulent means. Even unknowingly allowing other students to see test answers or to see term projects or papers are possible acts of academic misconduct. Students are required to actively protect their work against misuse by others.
3. Nonacademic Misconduct: Misconduct that is not of an academic nature, usually involving violations of law, institutional policies or accepted societal norms.

B. Acts of Academic Dishonesty and Misconduct

1. *Examples of Academic Dishonesty:*

- **Plagiarism**: The representation of previously written, published, or created work as one's own. Wherever the wording, arguments, data, design, etc. belonging to someone else are used in a paper, report, oral presentation, or similar academic project, this fact must be made explicitly clear by citing the appropriate references or sources. The reference wording must fully indicate the extent to which any part or parts of the project are attributed to others. Paraphrased materials must be acknowledged in the same manner as material that is used verbatim.
- **Unauthorized Collaboration on Projects**: The representation of work as solely one's own when in fact it is the result of an unauthorized joint effort.

- **Cheating on Examinations:** The covert gathering of information before or during an examination from other students or use of unauthorized notes or other unapproved aids. It is the responsibility of the instructor to indicate what testing aids, if any, are authorized for use during an examination.
- **Unauthorized Advance Access to Exams:** The submission of materials prepared at leisure, as a result of unauthorized advance access to an examination or examination materials, as if the materials were prepared under the rigors of the exam setting.
- **Fraudulent Alteration of Academic Materials:** The alteration of graded papers, research data, computer materials/records, course withdrawal slips and trial schedules, or the falsification of any academic documents in order to receive undeserved credit or advantage. This includes forging instructors' or advisors' signatures and altering transcripts.
- **Knowing Cooperation with Another Person in an Academically Dishonest Undertaking:** Failure by a student to prevent misuse of his/her work by others. A student must actively protect his/her own work. Reasonable care must be taken that exam answers are not seen by others or that term papers or projects are not plagiarized or otherwise misused by others. Even passive cooperation in such an act is unacceptable.

2. Examples of Academic Misconduct

- Failure to observe the rules governing the conduct of examinations through ignorance, carelessness, preoccupation, or psychological stress. Failure to stop when time is called at the end of an examination.

Faculty members have the authority to set reasonable standards in their classes within the definitions provided. Clearly communicated and consistently enforced standards regarding academic dishonesty and misconduct will be upheld by the Academic Appeals Committee.

IV. Academic Discipline, Procedures and Grievances

A. Evidentiary Standards for Academic Dishonesty

In the case of academic dishonesty, the burden of proof rests with the faculty member to demonstrate by “clear and convincing evidence” that the alleged act(s) occurred. Academic dishonesty requires an intent to deceive. A person’s behavior in context can provide clear and convincing evidence of intent. The Academic Appeals Committee has authority to change and/or reduce charges against the student.

In most circumstances, evidence supporting the faculty member’s assertion of academic dishonesty should be presented in the form of (1) documentary evidence, or (2) corroborating testimony from the institution’s faculty or staff, or other witnesses. Only in instances in which no other supporting evidence is available should faculty members use other students as witnesses in support of an allegation of academic dishonesty. Because the student accused of academic dishonesty has the right to cross-examine the witnesses against him or her, written statements by persons not present at the Academic Appeals Committee hearing normally will not be considered by the committee.

B. Faculty Procedures for Cases of Alleged Academic Dishonesty

1. Instructor of Record, defined: The instructor of record is the individual responsible for the final grade assignment. Other faculty members who are participating in a course (such as in team-taught courses) and clinical or lab instructors are also expected to participate in any appropriate way in assessing any penalties for dishonesty (or misconduct) and in any appeal. However, the instructor of record is responsible for all actions that arise from the class team, which means that he/she must ultimately make any decision regarding whether or not to charge a student with academic dishonesty.

2. Instructor Procedures: In instances where the instructor of record has clear and convincing evidence that a student has engaged in dishonest academic behavior, the following procedures will be used:

a. The instructor of record shall discuss the situation as soon as possible with the student, explaining the allegation, the reasons for it, and the disciplinary action(s) being considered, and shall give the student the opportunity to respond to the allegation. After consultation with the student, the instructor of record may decide to initiate one or more of the following:

- Require the student to complete a substitute assignment or examination.
- Award a reduced grade for the examination, assignment, or course.
- Award a grade of “zero” or “F” for the assignment or examination.
- Award a grade of “F” for the course.

If the faculty member believes further disciplinary action is warranted he/she may recommend to the Judicial Coordinator that action be initiated for more stringent disciplinary action (e.g., conduct probation, suspension, or expulsion) by the institution.

- b. If disciplinary action is, such as conduct probation, suspension or expulsion is recommended, the instructor of record must communicate in writing, within ten working/school days, the actions taken, and the reasons for them to the (1) student, (2) department head of the instructor of record, (3) division head, (4) Vice President of Academic Affairs, and (5) Judicial Coordinator

3. Student Appeal of Alleged Academic Dishonesty: A student alleged to have engaged in academic dishonesty shall have the right of due process and review as delineated herein, should he/she believe the instructor's action was unfair. If the student decides to challenge any disciplinary actions taken by the instructor, he/she may file an appeal with the Academic Appeals Committee within ten working/school days of receiving the written notice of action taken by the instructor of record. No disciplinary action may be carried out while a case is being appealed; nor may the student who has been accused of academic dishonesty withdraw from the course while the accusation is pending. The Academic Affairs Office will write a memorandum instructing that a registration and transcript hold be placed on the student's record until a decision can be made. If the student is absolved of alleged academic dishonesty, withdrawal from the course with no record appearing on the transcript is allowed. Conversely, should the Academic Appeals Committee sustain the action of the instructor, the student will not be permitted to drop the class. The student will use the following procedures in filing an appeal.

- a. The student obtains and completes an appeal form, which is available from the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. In completing an appeal form, the student must discuss the situation with (1) the instructor of record, (2) the department head of the instructor of record, and (3) the division head or designated representative. The completion of this form insures that appropriate parties have an opportunity to consider the allegation and appeal.

- b. The student submits the appeal form to the Office of Academic Affairs, which in turn
 - gives the student notice of receipt of the appeal form
 - assembles the verification documents
 - forwards the case to the Academic Appeals Committee

4. In cases of alleged academic dishonesty where the instructor of record recommends that the student be suspended or expelled from the institution, the Judicial Coordinator shall be responsible for administering and processing the recommendation as a disciplinary complaint. In the event a formal hearing is required to resolve the complaint, the Academic Appeals Committee will hear and decide the matter.

If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the Academic Appeals Committee in suspending or expelling him/her, he/she may appeal to the Vice President for Academic

Affairs, who has the final authority in matters of suspension and expulsion for Academic dishonesty.

C. Faculty Procedures in Cases of Alleged Academic Misconduct

1. Instructor of Record, definition: The instructor of record is the individual responsible for the final grade assignment. Other faculty members who are participating in a course (such as in team-taught courses) may be requested to participate in any appropriate way in assessing any penalties for misconduct (or dishonesty) and in any appeal. However, the instructor of record is responsible for all actions that arise from the class team, which means that he/she must ultimately make any decision regarding whether or not to charge a student with academic misconduct.

2. Instructor Procedures: In instances where the instructor of record believes that a student has engaged in academic misconduct, the following procedures will be used.

a. The instructor of record shall discuss the situation as soon as possible with the student, explaining the allegation, the reasons for it, and the disciplinary action(s) being considered, and shall give the student the opportunity to respond to the allegation.

b. If after consultation with the student, the instructor of record decides to initiate disciplinary action, he/she may take one or more of the following actions.

- Require the student to complete a substitute assignment or examination.
- Award a reduced grade for the assignment or examination.
- Award a grade of "zero" or "F" for the assignment or examination.

c. The student must be clearly notified in writing of any penalty within ten business days of the discovery of the alleged act of misconduct.

3. Student Appeal of Alleged Academic Misconduct:

Grade reductions for reasons of academic misconduct make no allegation of moral shortcomings and require no further notification of officials of the institution. Student appeals in such cases are to be seen as generally comparable to grade appeals. In this instance, the burden of proof rests upon the student to establish his/her case. This may be done by showing that (1) the student was not clearly notified of the non-permissibility of the behavior in question, (2) the penalty was inconsistently administered, or (3) the non-permissible behavior did not occur. If the student wishes to argue the third alternative, he/she should be prepared to present corroborating evidence in support of the claim.

D. Academic Appeals Committee

The Academic Appeals Committee is authorized by the president of the institution to review appeals of alleged academic dishonesty or misconduct and to decide upon the appropriateness of the charge. The Academic Appeals Committee will (1) determine whether or not the parties involved acted within the prescribed policies and procedures for academic dishonesty or misconduct, and (2) determine whether or not the allegations of academic dishonesty or misconduct are valid.

If the charge of academic dishonesty or misconduct is dismissed by the Academic Appeals Committee, and the instructor of record fails to appropriately adjust and assign the final grade at the end of the semester, the student may file a Final Grade Appeal.

The Academic Appeals Committee has the authority to sustain, dismiss, or reduce the charge against the if deemed appropriate by a majority of the members. The procedures for the Academic Appeals Committee afford the student his/her right of due process by providing the following opportunities.

- Written notification of the time and place of the hearing of the appeal.
- A copy of the appeal verification form.
- The right to appear in person and present one's 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 Committee at the same hearing as the instructor 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 an advisor, colleague, or friend.
- The right to call witnesses to assist in establishing the facts of the case.
- The right to ask questions and refuse to answer questions.
- The right to an explanation of the reasons for any decision rendered.

The decisions of the Academic Appeals Committee, and its justification for them, will be communicated by the Committee chair (or co-chairs) in writing within ten working/school days to the (1) student, (2) instructor of record, (3) department head of the instructor of record, and (4) instructor's division head.

Any Instructor, Lead Instructor/Teacher, Department Head/Team Leader, Associate Division Head or Division Head of a class wherein a student appealing to the Academic Appeals Committee is in such class, shall be required to recuse himself/herself from that

particular case/hearing. In addition, the Chair of a particular Academic Appeals Committee hearing shall have the authority to excuse any member of the committee from that particular case/hearing if the Chair believes there is a potential conflict of interest in that case.

For all Academic Appeals Committee hearings (of any nature), representation shall be apportioned according to the following breakdown: (1) 3 faculty members (excluding the chair). (2) 2 staff members, and (3) 2 students. This provision is designed to ensure that all parties in a hearing shall have a fair cross-section of the institution to evaluate the merits of the case.

E. Student Appeal of a Final Grade to the Academic Appeals Committee

1. It is the responsibility of the faculty members of Oklahoma State University-Oklahoma City to communicate to students early in the term a clear statement of the grading practices and procedures that will be used to determine the student's final grade. This shall be included in the course syllabus. If a student believes those practices and procedures were not consistently and accurately followed when the instructor determined the student's final grade, the student shall have the right to appeal the case to the Academic Appeals Committee within four months after the grade was assigned, or six weeks after the student begins a new semester, whichever comes first, if informal discussion fails to resolve the issue.

The basis for the Academic Appeals Committee to change an assigned final grade is typically the failure of the instructor to assign that grade fairly and accurately within the grading system published by the instructor in his/her course syllabus or syllabus addendum. Examples of information which must be provided in the course syllabus include, but are not limited to, an explanation of the grading criteria, the grading scale, and due dates for all papers, projects, or other academic work to be handed in to the Instructor. All changes in the instructor's policies after the semester has begun must be made in writing as part of a written addendum to the course syllabus; this addendum should be clearly labeled as such and dated. If the alleged failure by the instructor to assign a final grade fairly and accurately within the grading system published in the course syllabus or written addendum is not demonstrated to the Academic Appeals Committee, the final grade will stand as assigned by the instructor.

In addition, a significant failure by a faculty member to behave in a business-like and professional manner may also be considered grounds for an academic grade appeal, if the majority of the committee believes this likely impacted a student's grade. However, under no circumstances may the committee undermine the academic freedom of a faculty member by evaluating course content issues, including but not limited to exam questions or other assignments.

2. The Burden of Proof

The burden of proof in all grade appeals is on the student who is challenging the final grade in the course. Therefore, the student may wish to bring a copy of the course

syllabus (with any written addendums) and graded work (if any) to the hearing. In cases in which the instructor allegedly did not issue a course syllabus, or in which he/she allegedly did not provide a written addendum for any alleged changes affecting the determination of the final grade in the course, the student may wish to provide direct witnesses or written testimony (with the original signature) from other students to corroborate these allegations. In other words, the student must show reasonable evidence that the instructor failed to fairly and accurately assign the final grade in harmony with the grading system published in his/her course syllabus or syllabus addendum. If the student cannot show reasonable evidence to that effect, then the final grade will stand as assigned by the instructor.

3. Procedures Before the Case Goes to the Academic Appeals Committee

Before an academic appeals case reaches the Academic Appeals Committee, the student must obtain a Grade Appeal Form from the Office of Academic Affairs. Then he/she must consult directly with the following persons, in the order given, until the matter is resolved or reaches an impasse:

- instructor
- instructor's department head (or other immediate supervisor if no department head position exists for that particular course)
- instructor's division head

The specific dates of these consultations should be noted on the Grade Appeal Form, along with the actual names of those consulted. If the matter is not resolved as the result of this process, then the student should complete the remaining portion of the Grade Appeal Form and submit it, along with a concise statement explaining the reason for the appeal, to the Office of Academic Affairs.

NOTE: A student should NOT submit the Grade Appeal Form if he/she has not consulted with all three (3) designated parties. However, if one of those persons is not available, the Office of Academic Affairs may pass the Grade Appeal Form with that information to the chair (or one of the co-chairs) of the Academic Appeals Committee.

4. Authority of the Academic Appeals Committee

In relationship to an appealed grade, the Academic Appeals Committee has the final authority to instruct the Registrar to change a final course grade.