

The University of Mississippi

## Academic Conduct and Discipline

### Academic Discipline

The broad purpose underlying student discipline is to order University living in such a way that the interests of the student body as a whole and of the individual members are best served. The University's responsibility extends to the conduct of all students on the campus of the University. The University reserves the right to sever the connection of any student with the University for appropriate reason. When a situation of a disciplinary nature arises, every effort is made to discover the reasons underlying the behavior in question so that constructive steps for the future may be taken. The standards of conduct and disciplinary procedures are stated in detail in the *M Book*, which is available online at [www.olemiss.edu](http://www.olemiss.edu).

### Academic Conduct

**Standards of Honesty** • The University is conducted on a basis of common honesty. Dishonesty, cheating, or plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are regarded as particularly serious offenses. Disruptive behavior in an academic situation or purposely harming academic facilities also is grounds for academic discipline.

**Disciplinary Procedures** • In the College of Liberal Arts and in the Schools of Accountancy, Business Administration, Education, and Applied Sciences, faculty members handle cases of academic dishonesty in their classes by recommending an appropriate sanction after discussion with the student. Possible sanctions include: failure on the work in question, retake of an examination, extra work, grade reduction or failure in the course, disciplinary probation, or suspension or expulsion from the University. An appeals process is available to the student. A more complete statement concerning definitions, offenses, penalties, and grievance procedures is found below.

The Schools of Law, Pharmacy, and Engineering deal with disciplinary infractions through their student bodies, which maintain Honor Code systems.

### Examples of Academic Misconduct

*Plagiarism.* Plagiarism is a serious offense in which someone else's work is presented as one's own. There are many forms of plagiarism. Plagiarism takes place when published material is copied verbatim or paraphrased without appropriately citing the source of material; and it is not limited to copying the exact words from published material. Forms of plagiarism include, and are not limited to copying published material verbatim, paraphrasing the work of another without properly citing that work, keeping the content and/or structure of another's work and changing the words, and unfair use such as taking large portions of another's work without substantial addition of one's own ideas or commentary. (For more specific examples of plagiarism, please visit [http://www.plagiarism.org/learning\\_center/types\\_of\\_plagiarism.html](http://www.plagiarism.org/learning_center/types_of_plagiarism.html).) In addition to these examples of

plagiarism, a student who copies another's homework, copies answers to test questions, or allows someone else to do work for him/her on homework or tests also violates the standards of honesty and fairness and is subject to academic discipline.

*Using someone's work.* A student who misrepresents the work of another as his/her own is engaging in academic misconduct. For example, handing in a paper purchased from a term paper service, using a paper prepared by another, or engaging another person to take a test (class-related or standardized, such as the GRE) in his/her stead, are examples of academic misconduct. This type of academic misconduct applies to all disciplines and fields of study.

*Knowingly allowing someone else to represent your work as his/her own.*

Letting someone else use your work. Under the section above, there are clearly at least two persons involved: the person who does the work and the person who falsely represents that work as her or his own. A person who knowingly assists another person in falsely representing work also is subject to academic discipline.

*Gaining or attempting to gain an unfair advantage.* Violations of the University's standards of honesty include possession of or an attempt to gain possession of a test prior to its being given. An attempt to gain possession does not imply that one must physically have an original of the test or assignment. Other violations include, but are not limited to, accessing computer files, breaking or entering a locked or unoccupied office in an attempt to gain an unfair advantage; using reference materials that have not been allowed by the instructor; using handwritten or printed notes during a "closed book/closed notes" test; stealing books or other materials from the Library, Museums, Computer Center, or other University facilities; removing pages from University owned books or journals; and/or employing bribery, intimidation, or harassment in an attempt to gain unfair advantage.

*Giving false information or altering documents.* Falsely attesting that work has been done when it has not been, falsely attesting that functions or classes were attended that were not attended, and altering answers to test questions after the tests have been graded and returned are examples of giving false information. Altering grade report forms or changing grade forms or class rolls, either in their physical or electronic (computer file) form, and altering, falsifying, or misusing any other University documents also constitutes a violation of expected standards of honesty. Falsifying research data or other scientific misconduct also may be considered a violation.

*Disruptive behavior.* Disorderly behavior that disrupts the academic environment violates the standard of fair access to the academic experience. Some examples of disruptive behavior are purposeful acts, such as "shouting down" a seminar speaker, physically or verbally harassing an instructor or fellow student, or engaging in any type of disruptive behavior in a class situation that interferes with the ability of the professor to teach or other students to learn.

*Harm to the facilities that support the academic environment.* A student who purposely harms the facilities that support the academic environment may be subject to academic discipline. Damage to books, laboratory equipment, computers, and other facilities violates the standard of fair access to the academic experience.

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*Violations Are Not Limited to the Areas and Examples Given.* The academic discipline procedure can be invoked whenever the principles of honesty and fairness are violated and/or the facilities that support the academic environment are harmed. The examples given above are illustrative only (it is impossible to delineate or cite every possible violation), and any act that violates the principles of honesty and fairness may be subject to academic discipline. Some acts, such as sabotage of another student's work or sabotage of an instructor's records, may not fall neatly into any one of the six areas listed above but are subject to academic discipline if proved damaging to the academic environment at The University of Mississippi.

### **Procedures Related to Academic Misconduct Charges**

#### **Faculty Discussion with Student**

When a faculty member believes that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, he/she shall seek to discuss the apparent violation with the student as soon as possible and give the student an opportunity to explain. If the faculty member still believes the student committed an act of academic dishonesty after discussing the matter with the student, the faculty member may recommend an appropriate sanction, such as grade reduction, retake of a test or examination, extra work, failure in the course, suspension, expulsion, or a combination of these sanctions.

#### **Informing Student of Recommended Sanction**

The faculty member shall inform the student of the recommended sanction. If this recommended sanction is less than probation, suspension, or expulsion and is accepted by the student, the matter shall stop at this point. The faculty member then shall submit a written report through the myOleMiss web portal (Students > Academic Discipline > Initiate Academic Discipline Case). Email notifications of the matter are automatically submitted by the online systems to the department chair, the dean of the school or college in which the course was offered, and, if different, the student's academic dean, with a copy to the student. In the case of a graduate student, the dean of the Graduate School also shall be sent a copy of the faculty member's report by email notification. If the recommended sanction is probation, suspension, or expulsion, the faculty member's online report will generate an email notification of the matter to the department chair, the dean of the school or college in which the course was offered, and, if different, the student's academic dean, the registrar, the provost, and the vice chancellor for student life, with a copy to the student. If the recommended sanction is probation or suspension, the provost shall then direct the registrar to inform the student of the sanction imposed. If the recommended sanction is expulsion, the provost shall inform the chancellor, and the chancellor shall direct the registrar to inform the student of the recommendation of expulsion. In each case, copies of the notification of a recommended sanction shall be sent by the registrar to the faculty member, the department chair, the dean of the school or college in which the course was offered, and, if different, the student's academic dean.

## **Challenge of Sanction by Student**

The student may challenge the sanction recommended by a faculty member by logging onto the page linked in the email notification and submitting an appeal in writing to the Academic Discipline Committee within 14 days of the recommendation of the sanction by the faculty member. The student's written appeal request shall state, as simply as possible, why the faculty member's decision is unacceptable. Failure to make an appeal within this 14-day time period shall constitute a waiver of the appeal right and shall result in the sanction becoming final as recommended.

## **Subcommittee to Review Sanction**

When the student presents a timely appeal of a recommended sanction, the chair of the Academic Discipline Committee shall appoint a subcommittee to review the appeal to determine if a formal hearing is warranted. If, in the opinion of the subcommittee, a formal hearing is not warranted, the Academic Discipline Committee, based upon written evidence submitted by the student and faculty member, shall make a decision on the appeal. Both the student and the faculty member will be informed in writing of the subcommittee's decision on whether a formal hearing is warranted. If the student appealing the faculty member's decision is a graduate student, the chair of the Academic Discipline Committee shall notify the dean of the Graduate School of the request for an appeal and of the subcommittee's decision on whether a formal hearing is warranted.

## **Hearing**

If the appeal is based upon a recommendation of suspension or expulsion, a hearing automatically shall be provided the student if he/she so requests.

## **Legal Counsel**

The student shall be permitted, at his/her expense, to have an adviser or legal counsel represent him or her at the hearing and through all other stages of the academic discipline process. The role of the adviser or legal counsel shall be limited to an advisory capacity only. He/she will not be permitted to make opening or closing statements, question witnesses, or make oral argument. The student is entitled to present witnesses or other evidence, question opposing witnesses, and make opening and concluding statements on his/her own behalf.

## **Taping of Committee Hearings**

The Academic Discipline Committee shall tape record all hearings and, when economically feasible, also shall have hearings recorded by a court reporter. The tapes and the court reporter's record shall be preserved until the time for all avenues of appeal available to the student shall have expired. At the

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student's request, and at his/her own expense, copies or transcripts of the tape and the court reporter's record shall be made available.

### **Approval of Sanction Possibilities**

The Academic Discipline Committee shall have the right to approve the faculty member's recommended sanction, impose a lower sanction or no sanction, or impose a harsher sanction than recommended by the faculty member. Sanctions available to the Academic Discipline Committee may include, but are not limited to, one or a combination of the following penalties:

- (a) The student receives a reduced grade, F, or zero on the assignment.
- (b) The student receives a reduced grade or an F in the class.
- (c) The student is required to take another test or examination.
- (d) The student is required to submit another term paper, computer project, etc.
- (e) The student is placed on academic disciplinary probation.
- (f) The student is suspended.
- (g) The student is expelled.

### **Vote of the Academic Discipline Committee**

To find a student guilty of a violation, a majority vote of the members of the Academic Discipline Committee hearing the case is required. The Academic Discipline Committee shall render a written decision via the online system within five working days of the completion of the hearing. The written decision shall contain findings of fact and conclusions. Email notifications of the posted decision will be sent to the student and the faculty member of the committee's action with instructions on how to access the decision. In cases involving graduate students, the dean of the Graduate School will also be sent an email notification of the committee's action with instructions on how to access the written decision. If, in cases involving undergraduates, the committee finds that no act of academic dishonesty was committed or recommends a sanction less than probation, suspension, or expulsion, the decision of the Academic Discipline Committee shall be final. Sanctions that include probation must be approved by the vice chancellor for academic affairs.

In cases involving graduate students, a committee finding that no act of academic dishonesty was committed is final, but the dean of the Graduate School shall review all committee decisions recommending sanctions and penalties, including decisions recommending the penalties of probation, suspension, or expulsion. In reviewing the committee's decision, the dean of the Graduate School shall consult with the dean of the college or school in which the course was offered, and, if different, the dean for the graduate student's degree program. The dean of the Graduate School's review of the committee's decision shall be on the record and without any right by the graduate student or his or her counsel or representative to present additional evidence or argument. The dean of the Graduate School shall, by written decision, affirm, modify, or reverse the committee's action within 10 working days of his or her receipt of the committee's written decision. The dean of the Graduate School shall notify the graduate

student, the Chair of Academic Discipline Committee, vice chancellor for academic affairs, faculty member, department chair, and the appropriate dean of his or her written decision. If, in the case of undergraduates, the committee's decision recommends a sanction that includes suspension or expulsion, or, in the case of a graduate student, if the decision of the dean of the Graduate School recommends suspension or expulsion, then the student shall have the right to appeal this decision in writing to the chancellor within five working days of the student's receipt of the committee's or the dean of the Graduate School's written decision. The chancellor shall review the record and make a written decision upon the record as submitted. The student and his/her representative are not entitled to present additional evidence and argument to the chancellor. Upon making a decision, the chancellor shall notify the student, the chair of the Academic Discipline Committee, vice chancellor for academic affairs, the dean of the Graduate School, faculty member, department head, and the appropriate dean, of his/her action. They shall be given copies of the chancellor's written decision.

### **Written Report of Outcome**

If the sanction is suspension or expulsion, the vice chancellor for academic affairs shall provide a written report of the outcome to the faculty member, the department chair, the dean of the school or college in which the course was offered, and, if different, the student's academic dean, the registrar, and the vice chancellor for student life, with a copy to the student. This written report shall not be provided until the appeals process is completed.

### **Attendance in Class Pending Outcome of Appeal**

A student who has been informed that a grade penalty of failure has been imposed shall be immediately dismissed from the class involved unless the student plans to appeal the penalty. In the event of an appeal, the student may continue to attend the class until the appeal process has been concluded. The student should be given a grade of I (incomplete) while the appeal is pending.

### **Offenses Not Associated with a Course**

The policies and procedures outlined above are to be followed when academic dishonesty takes place in an academic course. When academic dishonesty not directly associated with a course taken for University credit is committed, the individual detecting the dishonesty shall serve in the same role as a faculty member in a course. Procedures paralleling those described above will be followed. Examples of such academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, cheating on competency tests or on comprehensive examinations. In the case of repeat offenders, the vice chancellor for academic affairs or the dean of the school/College of the student involved may seek to impose additional penalties.

## **Penalties**

The academic discipline penalty for the commission of any offense in most cases will be failure in the course. If the academic penalty is a grade of D or F in the course, Policy Code ACA AR 200.003 on the Forgiveness Policy will apply: “The forgiveness policy cannot be used to remove grades given for reasons of academic discipline.”

However, other penalties, such as lowering a grade, disciplinary probation, suspension and/or expulsion, may be recommended by the Academic Discipline Committee.

### **Academic Disciplinary Probation**

When a grade penalty is not appropriate, a probation may be imposed for a specific period and constitutes a warning that affects the student’s good standing in the University. Violations of regulations during the period may result in suspension or expulsion. The duration of any disciplinary probation period or any condition(s) or penalty(ies) recommended shall be in proportion to the seriousness of the violation and subject to the approval of the vice chancellor for academic affairs in the case of undergraduates or to the approval of the dean of the Graduate School in the case of graduate students. The vice chancellor for academic affairs or the dean of the Graduate School shall notify the student of his or her decision, with copies to the Academic Discipline Committee, the appropriate dean, the department chair, and the faculty member.

### **Academic Suspension**

Suspension results in the exclusion of the student from classes and other specified privileges or activities for a definite period of time. The duration of any suspension or any condition(s) or penalty(ies) recommended shall be in proportion to the seriousness of the violation and subject to the approval of the chancellor. All suspensions shall be permanently noted on the student’s transcript. The chancellor shall notify the student of his or her decision, with a copy to the Academic Discipline Committee, the vice chancellor for academic affairs, the dean, the dean of the Graduate School, the department chair, and the faculty member.

### **Expulsion**

The student is deprived of his or her opportunity to continue at the University in any status. The penalty of expulsion is subject to the approval of the chancellor, who shall notify the student of his or her decision, with a copy to the Academic Discipline Committee, the vice chancellor for academic affairs, the dean, the dean of the Graduate School, the department chair, and the faculty member. A notation shall be placed on the student’s transcript.