

North Dakota State University

Policy Manual

SECTION 335

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN INSTRUCTIONAL CONTEXTS

SOURCE: NDSU Faculty Senate Policy

The academic community operates on the basis of honesty, integrity, and fair play. This trust is violated when students engage in academic misconduct, either inadvertently or deliberately. This policy serves as the guideline for cases in which cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct have occurred in an instructional context (e.g., coursework, exams for degree requirements, practical experience, or fieldwork experience). Depending on the nature of the alleged offense, academic misconduct involving graduate or undergraduate research (e.g., thesis, dissertation, honors thesis), may be handled by either this policy or [policy 326, ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT](#). This policy also serves as the guideline for cases in which there is evidence of student academic misconduct in more than one instance.

The policy identifies the process for addressing academic misconduct in instructional contexts and the instances where the University may impose penalties beyond the instructional context.

1. Definitions. In this policy, an “instructional staff member” is defined as anyone who has primary responsibility for a course, experiential learning site/experience, or other applicable instructional contexts. Examples of instructional staff members include tenured and tenure-track faculty members, professors of practice, teaching assistants who have primary responsibility for a course, teaching fellows, instructors, lecturers, and hosts or supervisors of internship or practicum experiences.

In this policy, a “student” is defined as anyone enrolled in undergraduate, professional, or graduate coursework at NDSU. These students include individuals in a non-degree status, such as those taking NDSU courses through a collaborative, consortium, exchange, or early admission program, or in a conditional admit status (e.g., Tri-College, NDUS Collaborative Registration, and Early Entry/Dual Credit Program).

2. Academic or research misconduct (intentional or otherwise) includes but is not limited to the following:
 - a) Plagiarizing, i.e., submitting work that is, in part or in whole, not entirely one’s own, without attributing such portions to their correct sources;
 - i. Cases of apparently unintentional plagiarism or source misuse must be handled on a case-by-case basis and in the context of the instructor's policies. Unintentional plagiarism may constitute academic misconduct.
 - ii. Improper attribution of sources may be a symptom of bad writing and not plagiarism. Instructional staff members are encouraged to recognize that citation skills are developed over time and are contextual.
 - b) Receiving, possessing, distributing or using any material or assistance not authorized by the instructional staff member in the preparation of papers, reports, examinations or any class assignments to be submitted for credit as part of a course or to fulfill other academic

requirements;

- c) Unauthorized collaborating on individual assignments or representing work from unauthorized collaboration as independent work;
 - d) Having others take examinations or complete assignments (e.g., papers, reports, laboratory data, or products) for oneself;
 - e) Stealing or otherwise improperly obtaining copies of an examination or assignment before or after its administration, and/or passing it onto other students;
 - f) Unauthorized copying, in part or in whole, of exams or assignments kept by the instructional staff member, including those handed out in class for review purposes;
 - g) Altering or correcting a paper, report, presentation, examination, or any class assignment, in part or in whole, without the instructional staff member's permission, and submitting it for re-evaluation or re-grading;
 - h) Misrepresenting one's attendance or the attendance of others in a course or practical experience where credit is given and/or a mandatory attendance policy is in effect;
 - i) Fabricating or falsifying information in research, papers, assignments, projects, or reports;
 - j) Violating IRB protocol;
 - k) Aiding or abetting academic misconduct, i.e., knowingly giving assistance not authorized by the instructional staff member to another in the preparation of papers, reports, presentations, examinations, or laboratory data and products;
 - l) Unauthorized copying of another student's work (e.g., data, results in a lab report, or exam);
 - m) Tampering with or destroying materials, (e.g., in order to impair another student's performance);
 - n) Utilizing false or misleading information (e.g., illness or family emergency) to gain extension or exemption on an assignment or test.
3. Academic integrity is a paramount tenet of the university culture. The primary responsibility of students, instructional staff members, staff members and administrators is to create an atmosphere in which academic honesty, integrity, and fair play are the norm and academic misconduct is not tolerated.
- a) Instructional staff members are responsible for providing guidelines concerning academic misconduct at the beginning of each course, and should use precautionary measures and security to discourage academic misconduct. It is required that the [approved academic honesty statement](#) be contained in each class syllabus. For internships, practicums, experiential learning sites, or other courses that may not have a class syllabus, it is recommended that instructional staff members communicate these guidelines at the start of the practicum or experiential learning.
 - b) Students participating in academic misconduct are subject to disciplinary action even when not enrolled in the course where the academic misconduct occurred.

4. Fairness. Instructional staff members and administrators are responsible for procedural fairness to any student accused of academic misconduct. An instructional staff member who suspects that academic misconduct has occurred in their class or other instructional context has an initial responsibility to:
 - a) inform the student involved of their suspicion and the suspicion's grounds;
 - b) allow a fair opportunity for the student to respond;
 - c) make a fair and reasonable judgment as to whether any academic misconduct occurred; and
 - d) inform the student of the judgment, penalty (if any), and the student's right to appeal any decision resulting in a penalty.

In instances where a penalty is imposed by the instructional staff member, the instructional staff member must contemporaneously complete the [Student Academic Misconduct Tracking Form](#) (the "Tracking Form") and submit it to the Office of the Provost. The Office of the Provost shall submit copies of the Tracking Form to the student, the Dean of the student's primary major, the Office of Registration and Records and, if applicable, the Dean of the College of Graduate and Interdisciplinary Studies.

The Office of the Provost shall maintain a database of all Tracking Forms it receives. This database may be shared with relevant personnel in order to address trends in academic misconduct, address multiple instances of academic misconduct, or as otherwise allowed under FERPA.

Once a student has been informed that academic misconduct is suspected in a class or other instructional context, that student cannot drop the class.

5. Penalties imposed by the instructional staff member. Instructional staff members have the prerogative of determining the penalty for academic misconduct in their classes and other instructional contexts.
 - a) Penalties may be varied with the gravity of the offense and the circumstances of the particular case. Penalties may include, but are not limited to, failure for a particular assignment, test, or course. Instructional staff members can recommend penalties outside of the scope of the class in which the misconduct took place; the recommendations can be written into the Student Academic Misconduct Tracking form, which would then be evaluated by the Dean of the instructional staff member's college to decide if additional penalties are warranted.
 - b) If an instructional staff member imposes a penalty, the student may not drop the course in question without the permission of the instructional staff member.
6. Penalties imposed by the University. If a student involved in a case of academic misconduct is not enrolled in the course in which the academic misconduct occurred, the instructional staff member teaching that course may recommend a penalty to the Dean of the student's primary college. In the situation where a student has engaged in multiple instances of academic misconduct, the Dean of the student's primary major may impose additional penalties in accordance with this policy or as otherwise allowed under established College policy. Absent mitigating circumstances, the Dean's decision on additional penalties shall be communicated to the student and instructional staff member within five business days of the Dean's receipt of the Student Academic Misconduct Tracking Form.

The University may also impose additional penalties according to procedures established by an academic program or college (including the College of Graduate and Interdisciplinary Studies). In the absence of any such procedures, penalties related to academic misconduct, including the ability to repeat a course, shall be controlled by this policy and other applicable NDSU policies. Additional penalties imposed by the university and colleges should be communicated across units that have imposed the previous penalties.

7. **Student Appeals.** A student who has received a penalty for academic misconduct may appeal the penalty imposed by the instructional staff member and, if applicable, the Dean of their primary major. Any such appeal must be initiated within 15 business days of the student's receipt of the notification identifying the penalty being imposed. In instances where the University is imposing additional penalties beyond those imposed by the instructional staff member, the 15-day period begins upon the notification from the Dean identified in Section 6. If a student chooses to appeal a penalty, the imposition of the penalty remains until the appeal process is resolved. A student who receives an academic misconduct notification within the last 15 business days of the spring term may submit an appeal up to 15 business days into the fall term.

All appeals must be in writing and will be reviewed in the following situations:

- a) The instructional staff member's decision was made in an arbitrary or unnecessarily harsh manner;
- b) The instructional staff member's decision was not substantiated by adequate evidence;
- c) The student's rights were violated.

Review of academic misconduct decision-making:

In all instances, student appeals are first considered by the instructional staff member. The student can initiate the appeal by sending written communication to the instructor who imposed the penalty. If the instructional staff member upholds the penalty, the student shall be notified of the decision and can submit the written appeal to the Chair of the instructional staff member's department. If the Chair upholds the penalty, the student shall be notified of the decision and can submit the appeal to the Dean of the instructional staff member's college in which the academic misconduct occurred. For penalties limited to the instructional context, the decision of the Dean is final.

In instances where the Dean has imposed additional penalties, the student's appeal shall be forwarded to the Office of the Provost for a final decision.

NDSU respondents will endeavor to complete the appeal process within 30 business days of the initiation of the appeal.

In the event that a penalty is overturned, the individual responsible for overturning the penalty shall notify the Office of the Provost so that the misconduct information may be removed from the database identified in Section 4.

8. **Rights of the instructional staff member for cases in which an appeal has been overturned.** In cases where the academic misconduct penalty has been overturned, an instructional staff member may request a review by the Academic Integrity Committee or by a sub-committee appointed by the Academic Integrity Committee ("Committee"). The Committee may not overturn the decision of the Chair/Head, Dean, or Provost, but it may review the process to ensure that the

policy was properly followed, while also addressing any negative consequences for the faculty members. The Committee shall provide its written findings, including its rationale, to all parties involved. The goal of this process shall be to improve policy implementation.

9. Procedures for cases involving individuals who are not NDSU students. If a person who is not an NDSU student (according to the definition in Section 1 of this policy) is involved in academic misconduct, the instructional staff member shall send a written statement describing the academic misconduct to the Office of the Provost, for appropriate action. Appropriate action may include, but is not limited to, holds being placed on admission or readmission to the university, and notification being sent to the individual's home institution.
10. Rescission of degrees or other academic credential(s). A degree or other academic credential(s) previously awarded may be rescinded if it is determined that the individual's actions taken to obtain the degree involved academic misconduct. The degree conferring college reserves the right to recommend to the Provost the rescission of any wrongfully obtained academic credential(s) using their own process or policies.
 - a) Written notice of the concerns and recommendation to rescind the individual's academic credential(s) shall be sent via certified mail and email with return receipt to the individual, with a hold placed on the individual's record. The individual will have 30 business days after the notice is received to respond in writing or request a hearing with the conferring college's Student Progress Committee for the undergraduate credential holder or the Graduate Council for graduate level credential holder. A recommendation by the Student Progress Committee whether to rescind the academic credential(s) shall be made within 30 business days after a response is received or hearing is completed. In the absence of response, the recommendation is finalized.
 - b) A decision by the Provost shall be made within 30 business days after receiving the recommendation. The graduate has 30 business days after receiving the Student Progress Committee's recommendation to respond, in writing, to the Provost. Notice of the decision whether to rescind the academic credential(s) shall be sent to the respondent via certified mail with return receipt. The respondent may file an appeal of this decision with the President of the University within 30 business days of receiving the notice of the decision. The President's decision will normally be made within 30 business days after receiving the appeal. In the absence of response, the action is finalized.
 - c) The Office of Registration and Records will be notified by the Office of the Provost of the results of the final decision on rescinding the academic credential(s).

HISTORY:

New	December 10, 1973
Amended	May 12, 1975
Amended	April 1992
Amended	December 2006
Amended	March 2007
Amended	January 27, 2011
Housekeeping	March 04, 2011hk
Amended	January 28, 2014
Housekeeping	June 15, 2018
Housekeeping	January 16, 2019
Housekeeping	March 24, 2021
Amended	May 13, 2022

Housekeeping	June 10, 2022
Amended	January 4, 2023
Amended	November 13, 2023
Amended	March 26, 2024
Housekeeping	April 3, 2024