

# ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT GUIDE FOR INSTRUCTORS

## INTRODUCTION

The discovery of cheating in the classroom is distasteful and unpleasant for instructors. Our own values of academic integrity and our view of the classroom as a place where learning occurs in an atmosphere of trust between faculty and students can lead to intense personal reactions when students seem to violate this trust. While the majority of students are honest, the reality is that some students will be tempted to - and will - cheat.

An atmosphere of trust between faculty and students should certainly be encouraged. Instructors can foster this atmosphere by an open and frank discussion of the instructor's own values of academic integrity and of the expectations of the course. The beginning of the semester and/or before the first exam or paper assignment would be natural times to discuss these issues with your students.

Your students should understand that work turned in under a student's name must be solely the work of that student and be carried out in the manner prescribed. Since there is wide variation among instructors as to the amount of collaboration on assignments permitted or encouraged, it is important to let your students know what your expectations are regarding discussion and/or collaboration on assignments.

If the writing of papers is a part of your course, plagiarism and the rules of citation should be discussed. This may be particularly important for new or young students who may not be well grounded in the mechanics of citing sources or who may not understand that plagiarism is using another's ideas without credit as well as using another's exact words. You may also wish to make clear your position on whether students may submit work that they have previously submitted in another course.

To reduce the temptation to cheat during exams, you may wish to consider the conditions under which exams are given. Attention to seating, number and role of proctors, and the use of alternate versions of exams may be useful.

We know that honest students are concerned and upset when they observe cheating. It is hoped that the creation of an open atmosphere in which your values and standards are made clear will encourage students who observe misconduct to come to you to share their concerns and observations.

Following is a plain language summary of the UW-La Crosse Academic Misconduct Rules and Procedures, a flow chart of the process, and sample formats for a report of misconduct. If you would like a copy of the full text of Chapter 14 as approved by The Board of Regents and the Wisconsin Legislature, please look at [www.uwlax.edu/StudentLife/academic\\_misconduct.htm](http://www.uwlax.edu/StudentLife/academic_misconduct.htm), or if you have questions or need copies of documents, call the Office of Student Life at X58062.

## **PLAIN LANGUAGE SUMMARY OF CHAPTER 14 PROCESS INVESTIGATION**

If it appears to you that a student in your class may be guilty of academic misconduct - for example, cheating on an exam, plagiarizing a paper, or interfering with another student's lab work - you must promptly ask the student to meet with you informally to discuss your concerns.\* During this meeting, you should explain why you believe the student may have committed academic misconduct and give the student an opportunity to respond. It is not necessary to inform the student in writing before this meeting.

If you conclude that no misconduct occurred or that no penalty is warranted, this meeting will end the matter. You do not need to keep any notes or notify anyone else.

If instead you conclude that the student is guilty and that a penalty is warranted, you may choose from the following range of sanctions. These are ranked as to severity, and the procedures vary with increasing severity. You may choose to impose more than one penalty.

### **PENALTIES**

Chapter 14 lists penalties as "a" through "j." They are grouped by degrees of severity and procedural process as follows:

#### **Group A**

- a) An oral reprimand
- b) A written reprimand presented only to the student
- c) An assignment to repeat the work, to be graded on its merits

#### **Group B**

- d) A lower or failing grade on the particular assignment or test
- e) A lower grade in the course
- f) A failing grade in the course
- g) Removal of the student from the course in progress
- h) A written reprimand to be included in the student's disciplinary file

#### **Group C**

- i) University disciplinary probation
- j) Suspension or expulsion from the university.

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\*If students not enrolled in your class are involved, or if you have reason to believe the student may have been involved in other incidents, or if you feel you could not give the student a fair hearing, you should contact the Office of Student Life.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Group A: Penalties a through c**

You can privately reprimand the student, either orally or in writing, and/or ask the student to repeat the work in which the misconduct occurred. Under the latter option, you must grade the work on its merits without making a deduction for the previous misconduct. No permanent record is made of the incident. The student does have the right to contest any penalty you impose, including these very mild ones. You must inform the student of the right to a hearing and you should keep some notes about the incident.

### **Group B: Penalties d through h**

If you choose a penalty in this group, you must: (a) prepare a written report, summarizing the reasons for your belief that misconduct occurred, proposing one or more sanctions, and (b) notify the student that s/he has the right to request a hearing within 10 days. You must send or give a copy of your report to the student along with a copy of the rules governing academic misconduct. Send a copy of the report (electronically) to the Office of Student Life and one copy to the dean of the student's college. (See sample report format on page 5.) If you have decided to remove the student from the course, you should file the course change form.

### **Group C: Penalties i and j**

If you conclude that disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion is warranted, the incident must be referred to the Office of Student Life. Your report (electronically sent) to the Office of Student Life should include a description of the incident and specification of the sanction recommended. Send or give a copy of this report to the student (see sample report format on page 6). The Investigating Officer appointed by the Office of Student Life to follow through with the case will consult with you and will also meet with the student. A hearing will automatically be scheduled for these sanctions unless the student waives the right.

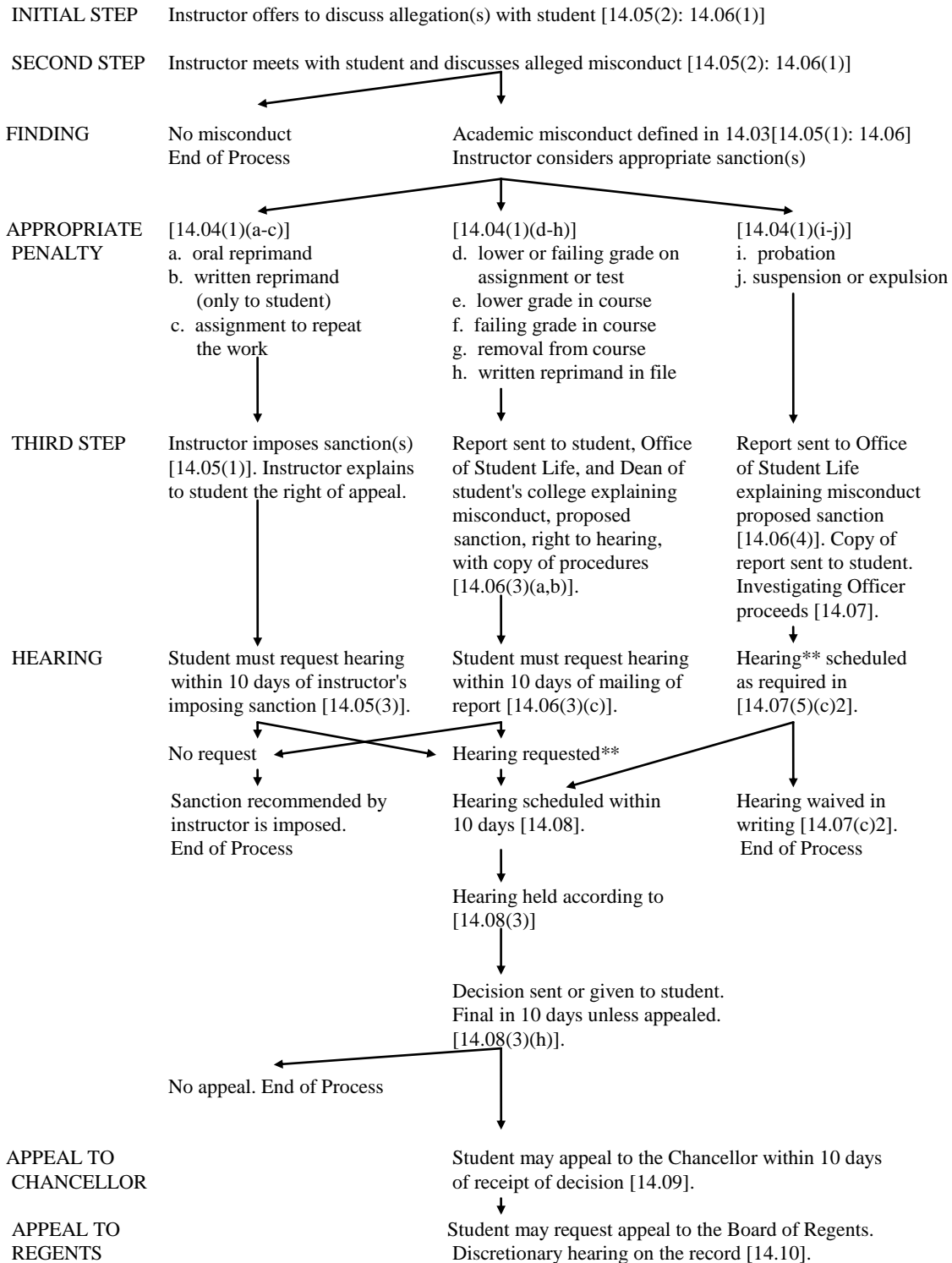
### **Student's Right to a Hearing**

If the student wishes to contest any part of your report, there will be a hearing before an academic misconduct hearing committee which will include faculty and students designated by the Chancellor. Note: Your role in the hearing will be that of witness; you are not obliged to "prosecute" the case or defend your decision. The committee will listen to the evidence and arguments and decide whether academic misconduct has occurred and what the appropriate sanction should be.

If the sanction you propose is probation, suspension, or expulsion from the University, a hearing will automatically be scheduled unless the student waives this right. If the hearing committee prescribes one of these severe penalties, the student can appeal to the Chancellor, who will review the decision. Ordinarily, campus decisions are final except that the Board of Regents may, at its discretion, grant a review of the record.

# FLOW CHART FOR UWS 14 ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT PROCEDURES

Student enrolled in instructor's course\*



\* If the student is not in the instructor's course, the instructor refers the matter to the Office of Student Life who proceeds under 14.07. The process under 14.07 is similar to 14.06.

\*\* Sanctions recommended by the instructor or Investigating Officer are not imposed until after the hearing is held or waived.

## EXAMPLE OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT REPORT

### Penalties d-h

To: Student's name

Explanation of the facts supporting instructor's conclusion

After considering the evidence and the results of our conference on (date), I have concluded that you did engage in academic misconduct in my course (title and number) on (date) by (description of the misconduct).

Disciplinary sanction

In response to your actions in my course, I have decided to recommend the following disciplinary sanction: (specify in full).

Notification of right to hearing

As explained in Section 14.03(b) of the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Disciplinary Procedures ([www.uwlax.edu/StudentLife/academic\\_misconduct.htm](http://www.uwlax.edu/StudentLife/academic_misconduct.htm)), you have the right to request a hearing before the Academic Misconduct Review Committee. Should you make such a request, you must submit your request in writing to the Office of Student Life (149 Main Hall) within ten (10) days of receipt of this notice. Should you exercise this right, my decision will be stayed pending the committee's determination. Should you NOT request such a hearing, my decision as to the facts and the disciplinary sanction described above shall become effective. If you have questions regarding this procedure, you are to contact the Office of Student Life.

Notice of filing with the Student Life Office and Academic Dean

Copies of this report have been filed with the Office of Student Life and with the dean of your college/school.

Instructor's signature, date

cc: Office of Student Life  
Dean of the student's college/school

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Note: This report may either be delivered to the student in person or be mailed to his/her current local address or sent to the students e-mail.

## EXAMPLE OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT REPORT

**Penalties i-j**

To: Investigating Officer/Student Life Office

Explanation of the facts supporting instructor's conclusion

After considering the evidence and the results of my conference with (student's name) on (date), I have concluded that s/he engaged in academic misconduct in my course (title and number) on (date) by (description of the misconduct).

Disciplinary sanction

In response to (student's name) actions in my course, I have decided to recommend the following disciplinary sanction: (specify in full).

Instructor's signature, date

cc: Dean of the student's college

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The Investigating Officer/Office of Student Life will investigate by interviewing the student and the instructor and any potential relevant witnesses.

If, as a result of these conferences, the Investigating Officer determines that no academic misconduct occurred and that no disciplinary sanctions are warranted, the matter will be considered resolved without necessity for further action or a written report.

If it is determined that academic misconduct did occur, then the Investigating Officer will complete the report to the student with: a description of the misconduct, specification of the recommended sanction, notice of the student's right to a hearing, and a copy of the institutional procedures.

For penalties i-j, a hearing will automatically be scheduled and the student has the right to waive this opportunity and accept the consequences.

Faculty will **NOT** be thrust into a role of "proving the case." They will simply serve as a witness.