

## 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 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*.

### 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, Applied Sciences, Business Administration, Education, and Journalism and New Media, 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 Engineering, Law, and Pharmacy, 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 is not limited to copying the exact words from published material. Forms of plagiarism include, but 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 unfairly using material, such as taking large portions of another's work without substantial addition of one's own ideas or commentary. (For more specific examples of

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plagiarism, please visit <http://www.plagiarism.org>.) 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.* By letting someone else use your work, there are at least two people involved: the person who does the work and the person who falsely represents that work as her or his own. Both are subject to academic discipline.

*Gaining or attempting to gain an unfair advantage.* Violations of the University's standards of honesty include possession, 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 a cell phone or other device to obtain materials from websites or other students; 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 accomplished 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.

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Damaging books, laboratory equipment, computers, and other facilities violates the standard of fair access to the academic experience.

*Violations are not limited to the areas and examples given.* The academic discipline procedure may 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 found 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 alleged 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 or other sanctions. The faculty member shall inform the student of the recommended sanction either within the communication described above or a separate communication. Note that if the student does not respond to communications from the faculty member, the matter may still proceed.

#### **Initiation of Case and Notification to Student**

In the event that a) a sanction beyond probation (see the list of possible sanctions) has been appealed by a student, b) the appeal has not yet been resolved, and c) it is the period for course grade reporting, an instructor should submit an I (incomplete) course grade. The Registrar's Office will contact the instructor to finalize the course grade after the case has been finalized. If the student does not appeal a sanction or if an appeal has been resolved before the grade reporting period, the instructor should submit a course grade that includes the upheld or non-appealed sanction.

If the alleged violation occurred outside of the structure of a course, e.g., comprehensive exams, the appropriate faculty member, or program, department, or college/school official, shall initiate the case within the myOleMiss system by accessing Students > Academic Discipline > Initiate Academic Discipline Case.

Initiating an academic discipline case requires the person initiating the case to provide a written report of the alleged incident, including information regarding the communications with the student described above, as well as indicate the recommended sanction. The faculty member also is asked to indicate whether the student accepted the sanction. If there are documents related to

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the case, the system provides the faculty member with directions on how to upload those documents, and such uploaded documents become a part of the case that is accessible online through the myOleMiss portal.

Once a case is initiated, email notifications of the matter are automatically sent by the online system from a Provost's Office representative to the following: the student, faculty member initiating case, department chair, dean of the school or college in which the course was offered (if initiated case was related to a course), student's academic dean (if different from above or alleged violation not associated with a course), Provost's Office representative, and chair of the Academic Discipline Committee. For cases that include a recommended sanction of probation, suspension, or expulsion, the following also will receive the email notification: Registrar's Office representative(s), the provost, and the vice chancellor for student affairs. If the case initiated involves the alleged actions of a graduate student, the dean of the Graduate School will receive the email notification as well. The email will contain a link to the accessible case information online. If the instructor of record is a graduate student, he/she may need to access the system with the assistance from his/her department chair.

In addition to the email notifications referenced above, if the recommended sanction is probation or suspension, the provost shall direct the registrar to inform the student of the sanction imposed via letter. 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 sanction imposed via letter. The registrar will send such letters to the student's current mailing address with copies to the faculty member, department chair, and appropriate dean(s).

### **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 a written appeal through the online system within 14 calendar days of the case being initiated. 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 and the case is considered complete, except as noted below in cases in which the sanction includes probation, suspension, or expulsion.

If the alleged violation of the academic discipline policy occurred as part of a course, the student may not drop the course. If a student drops the course following the incident on which the case is based, whether before or after the initiation of the case by the faculty member, the student will be re-enrolled by Registrar's Office staff. If the incident on which the case is based occurred prior to the University's deadline for course withdrawals and the student wishes to request an allowance to drop the course, that request must be made as part of the student's written appeal. To reiterate, such requests will be considered only when the alleged incident occurred prior to the University's deadline for course withdrawals. Further, even if the timing is appropriate under the University's deadline for course withdrawals, such requests will be granted only in extenuating circumstances including, but not limited to, dismissal of the case or minor sanction. If a student is allowed to withdraw from the course, Registrar's Office staff will effectuate the

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withdrawal in the system. If it is determined that the student committed an act of dishonesty and the student is allowed to withdraw from the course, the case will remain within the academic discipline system and the Academic Discipline Committee, or appropriate party, will have the right to implement a non-course related sanction. In making a determination to allow a student to withdraw from a course, the Academic Discipline Committee will consider the documentation in the case and level of sanction(s), and also will consult with the instructor of the course regarding the student's status and progress in the course at time of alleged incident. If the incident on which the case is based occurs after the University's deadline for course withdrawals, the student may only withdraw if the case is dismissed and the University's late withdrawal policy will apply.

### **Academic Discipline Committee Procedures**

If a student presents a timely appeal, the appeal will be reviewed by the Academic Discipline Committee, whose membership includes faculty, staff, and students, and the composition of which as of the beginning of any academic year may be found in the myOleMiss portal by accessing the Committees > Standing Committees menu. The Academic Discipline Committee first shall review the appeal to determine whether a formal hearing is warranted. The chair of the Academic Discipline Committee may appoint a three-person subcommittee to make this determination or ask the full committee to participate in that part of the review. If the Academic Discipline Committee determines that a hearing is not warranted, then the full committee shall vote, based upon written statements and documentation submitted by the student and faculty member, on whether to uphold the recommended sanction, dismiss the case, decrease the sanction, or increase the sanction.

If the Academic Discipline Committee determines that a formal hearing is not warranted, the chair of the Academic Discipline Committee shall enter that decision, along with the determination regarding the sanction, into the online system, which will generate another set of automatic emails to those who received the initial email notifications regarding the case. The decision of the Academic Discipline Committee may then be viewed as part of the case by logging into the page linked in the email.

If the Academic Discipline Committee determines that a formal hearing is necessary, the chair of the Academic Discipline Committee will work with the student and members of the Academic Discipline Committee to arrange a time and place for the hearing. If a student appeals and the sanction involves suspension or expulsion, the student will be granted a hearing automatically.

### **Advocate/Legal Counsel and Witnesses**

The student and faculty member initiating the case shall be permitted, at his/her expense, to have an advocate or legal counsel provide support for him or her at the hearing and through all other stages of the academic discipline process. The role of the advocate or legal counsel shall be limited to an advisory capacity only. The advocate or legal counsel may not make opening or closing statements, question witnesses, make oral argument, or otherwise speak a party's behalf or to the party during the hearing process. The student or faculty member initiating the case may present witnesses or other evidence, question opposing witnesses, and make opening and

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concluding statements on his/her own behalf. The student and faculty member initiating the case shall provide the chair of the Academic Discipline Committee, within 72 hours prior to the hearing, the names of any advocate, legal counsel, and witnesses, as well as documentation he or she intends to present at the hearing that is not available or been uploaded through the online system.

### **Recording of Committee Hearings**

Hearings before the Academic Discipline Committee shall be recorded. The recording shall be preserved until the time for all avenues of appeal available to the student have expired. At the student's request, and at his/her own expense, copies 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 (i.e., dismiss the case), 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 responsible to a violation of the Academic Conduct and Discipline policy, a majority vote of the members of the Academic Discipline Committee hearing the case is required based on the preponderance of the evidence standard. The chair of the Academic Discipline Committee shall upload a written decision through the online system within five working days of the completion of the hearing. The written decision shall contain findings of fact and conclusions. Entering the decision into the online system will generate another set of automatic emails to those who received the initial email notifications regarding the case. The decision of the Academic Discipline Committee may then be viewed as part of the case by logging into the page linked in the email. Decisions of the Academic Discipline Committee are final, and no further appeal may be made, unless the final sanction includes suspension or expulsion.

Sanctions including probation must be reviewed by the provost. If the final sanction following appeal to the Academic Discipline Committee includes suspension or expulsion, student shall have the right to appeal this sanction in writing to the chancellor within five working days of the student's receipt of the written decision of the Academic Discipline Committee's, or, if the case was initiated against a graduate student, of the dean of the Graduate School (see next paragraph).

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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, faculty member, department chair, appropriate dean(s), chair of the Academic Discipline Committee, representative(s) of the Registrar's Office, and provost, of his/her action.

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, faculty member, department chair, appropriate dean(s), chair of Academic Discipline Committee, representative(s) of the Registrar's Office, and provost, of his or her written decision.

### **Written Report of Outcome**

If the sanction is suspension or expulsion, the provost shall provide a written report of the outcome to the student, faculty member, department chair, appropriate dean(s), the registrar, and the vice chancellor for student affairs. This written report shall not be provided until the appeals process is completed.

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

A student may not drop a course when an academic discipline case has been initiated. A student who has been informed that a grade penalty of failure in course 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. If the appeal occurs at the end of a term, the faculty member will assign the student a grade of I (incomplete) while the appeal is pending. If the imposed sanction is expulsion or suspension, the student also has the right to continue in the course until the review by the Committee and appeal are exhausted, unless a determination is made by the provost that continuation in the course will significantly compromise the learning environment for other students or the safety of individuals.

### **Penalties**

The range of sanctions for an academic discipline infraction is given in an above section. These sanctions may be given in combination. In the case of expulsion, the student also will be

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assigned a failing grade in the associated course. In the case of suspension, the grade assigned for the associated course will be determined by the provost upon consultation with the Academic Discipline Committee and instructor. An expulsion will take effect immediately upon exhaustion of the review by the Committee and appeal to the Chancellor; if this occurs in the middle of a semester, the expulsion will terminate enrollment in all courses. In the case of a suspension, if the review and appeal is exhausted in the middle of a semester the provost will determine whether the student can continue in other courses.

Many departments have strong policies against plagiarism, and syllabi for courses often contain a statement indicating that the academic discipline sanction for the commission of any offense is failure in the course. However, other penalties, such as failure an assignment, repeating the assignment, reduction of course grade, academic disciplinary probation, suspension, and/or expulsion, may be recommended by a faculty member or the Academic Discipline Committee. In the case of repeat offenders, the Academic Discipline Committee, the provost or the dean of the school/college of the student involved may seek to impose additional penalties.

Under Policy Code ACA AR 200.003, “The forgiveness policy cannot be used to remove grades given for reasons of academic discipline.” Thus, if an academic discipline case is upheld and the resulting sanctions include either failure in the course or reduced grade in the course, with the resulting final grade in the course is a C-, D, or F, the student may repeat the course, but may not invoke the forgiveness policy to remove the first grade. For a lesser sanction, such as failure or reduced grade on assignment, repeating the assignment, or probation, the student may repeat the course and invoke the forgiveness policy. Consequently, if the infraction occurs on a test or assignment that is a major component of the course grade, the more appropriate sanction should be failure in the course or reduced grade in the course

### **Academic Disciplinary Probation**

When a grade penalty is not appropriate, probation may be imposed. Probation constitutes a warning that is noted in the academic discipline database for the student. Subsequent violations of academic discipline regulations by the student may result in suspension or expulsion. The duration of any disciplinary probation period will ordinarily be for the remainder of the student’s association with the university. However, a shorter term of probation may be recommended, which would be subject to approval by the provost in the case of undergraduates or the dean of the Graduate School in the case of graduate students. The provost or the dean of the Graduate School shall notify the student of his or her decision of the sanction of probation, with copies to the faculty member, department chair, appropriate dean(s), and Registrar’s Office representative(s), and chair of the Academic Discipline Committee. Academic disciplinary probation does not appear on a student’s transcript.

### **Academic Suspension**



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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 faculty member, department chair, appropriate dean(s), provost, Registrar's Office representative(s), and chair of the Academic Discipline Committee.

### **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 faculty member, department chair, appropriate dean(s), provost, Registrar's Office representative(s), and chair of the Academic Discipline Committee. A notation shall be placed on the student's transcript.