

BRIEF ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PROCESS AT CONNORS STATE COLLEGE

What are violations of academic integrity (AI)?

Violations include, but are not limited to, unauthorized collaboration, plagiarism, cheating on examinations, altering or destroying the work of others, fabricating information, and several other behaviors (see 1.0 in the policy).

What if the alleged violation is not listed in the policy?

Section 5.02 in the policy says, "Instructors may identify other behaviors that violate academic integrity."

What is not a violation of academic integrity?

All non-academic student misconduct (e.g., inappropriate classroom behavior, theft, drunkenness, etc.) is handled through the Office of Student Affairs.

How do I deal with a violation of academic integrity?

If you have sufficient evidence that it is "more likely than not" the student committed an academic integrity violation, you should complete the following process within 5 school days of the discovery:

- organize the evidence
- contact an Academic Integrity Facilitator from the list provided at <http://academicintegrity.okstate.edu/doc/facilitators.pdf>
- complete the Academic Integrity Inquiry Form and send or give them to the student.

After the student responds (within 5 school days following receipt of the Inquiry Form), schedule a meeting time for you and the student discuss the charge. At the end of the meeting, send the Inquiry Forms to the Office of Academic Affairs. For more complete information see 2.0 and 3.0 in the policy.

In the event an academic integrity incident is not resolved at the time grade reports are due to the Registrar, an 'I' grade should be assigned with a default grade that reflects the proposed sanction. The default grade will be "F!" or a grade calculated to reflect a "zero" or "F" for the assignment(s) or examination(s) that are under review for violating academic integrity. Students have 5 school days to appeal the violation. This 5 day appeal period will roll over into the next regular semester (fall or spring). The default grade becomes final if the student does not appeal by the 5 day deadline.

Can I email the student the Inquiry Form?

You may email the form to the student's institution email address.

What sanctions will be assigned by the instructor for alleged violations of academic integrity?

Four sanctions are recommended based on the seriousness of the violation.

1. Admonition: warning issued by the instructor and a grade reduction that does not exceed the value of the assignment in question for violations including but not limited to the following:
 - Plagiarism/copying of work done for a course, if the plagiarized/copied material is less than 10% of the assignment or deemed minor by the instructor.
 - Unauthorized collaboration on homework assignments making up less than 10% of the assignment or deemed minor by the instructor.
2. Level one sanction: award a grade of "zero" or "F" for the assignment or examination for violations including but not limited to the following:
 - Copying a few sentences of material (1-5 sentences or a minor portion) from a written or Internet source without proper citation.
 - Cheating on a quiz or minor assignment (less than 10% of the final grade).
 - Receiving unpermitted help on an assignment.
 - Working on an assignment with others when the instructor asked for individual work.
 - Using a false excuse to obtain an extension on a due date.

Instructors can also assign students found responsible for level one violations an academic integrity education sanction.

3. Level two sanction: award a grade of "F!" for the course for violations including but not limited to the following:
 - Turning in a paper copied from another student.
 - Turning in a paper obtained in full or in part from a term paper "mill" or website.
 - Copying material almost word for word from a written source and turning it in as one's own work.
 - Getting questions or answers from someone who has taken an examination.
 - Obtaining an unauthorized copy of an examination in advance.
 - Using unauthorized notes during an examination.
 - Having another student take an examination.
 - Inappropriate use of technology during an examination.
 - Copying from another student during an examination with or without his/her knowledge.
 - Helping someone else cheat on an examination.
 - Stealing an examination or problem answer from the instructor.
 - Altering a grade or scoring on an examination or paper to obtain unearned credit.
 - Inappropriately sharing or using work on an online assignment or examination.
 - Turning in work done by someone else.
 - Submitting substantial portions of the same assignment to more than one class without permission of the instructors.

For level two sanctions the transcript will indicate that a grade of "F!" signifies that the student failed the course because of an alleged violation of academic integrity.

4. Level three sanction: recommend a transcript notation of "Administrative Withdrawal for Academic Integrity Violation" and dismissal from the graduate or professional program and dismissal from the university for the following types of violations:
 - Plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity in a thesis or dissertation proposal, qualifying examination, comprehensive examination, thesis or dissertation, report for a creative component, thesis or dissertation defense, professional education portfolio, or professional presentations or publications.
 - Fabrication or falsification of research or laboratory data used in a creative component, report, thesis or dissertation, presentation or publication.
 - Altering academic records such as transcripts, falsification of applications for admission or cheating on required prerequisite exams.

What is an Admonition?

An admonition is a warning issued by the instructor and not considered a grievance. An admonition should be used for first time minor offenses. The sanction for an admonition is a grade reduction not to exceed the value of the assignment or examination in question. A first time offense is not automatically treated as an admonition. Admonitions will be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs, but will not be recorded in the student's or noted on a student's transcript. An admonition will be taken into account if additional academic integrity violations are reported. An admonition can be assigned for the following violations of academic integrity:

- Plagiarism/copying of work done for a course, if the plagiarized/copied material is less than 10% of the assignment or deemed minor by the instructor.
- Unauthorized collaboration on homework assignments making up less than 10% of the assignment or deemed minor by the instructor.

Is an instructor allowed to assign other sanctions for violations of academic integrity?

Instructors should assign an admonition, level one, level two, or level three sanctions for alleged violations of academic integrity. Instructors should use standards consistent with the Academic Integrity Policy in their courses.

Can a student withdraw from a course once a violation of academic integrity has been identified?

The instructor or Academic Integrity Committee may permit a student to withdrawal from a course with a grade of "W" if the allegation is dismissed or if the student admits responsibility for a level one sanction, however, the student must withdraw from the course by the withdrawal deadline. A student may not withdraw from a course in which the "F!" grade was assigned.

What is a resolution meeting?

At this point in the process the student has not been found responsible for a violation of academic integrity. This meeting is an opportunity for the instructor and student to discuss the allegation and determine if a violation occurred and if so what sanction is appropriate.

Can a parent/s and/or friend/s attend the resolution meeting?

No. The resolution meeting is attended instructor and student. If a student appeals he or she has the right to be accompanied to the Academic Integrity Committee meeting by one adviser of their choosing.

How does the student appeal the instructor's decision?

The student responds to their official notification email with a statement of appeal within 5 school days after the official email notification is sent from the Academic Affairs Office. The Academic Affairs Office gives the student notice of receipt of the appeal, notifies the instructor of the course, assists the student and instructor in understanding the appeals process, assembles the supporting documents, and transmits the case to the Academic Integrity Committee.

The instructor submits sufficient information to substantiate an alleged violation of academic integrity and the sanction. The instructor must return the evidence and make themselves available for a hearing within 20 school days after the student returns the appeal form or the case will be dismissed.

An Academic Integrity Committee will schedule a hearing to listen to statements by the instructor, student and others; review materials submitted by the instructor and student; decide if it is "more likely than not" that the student committed the alleged violation; and determine if the sanction is appropriate for the violation. The Committee will make one of the following decisions:

- The student is not responsible for a violation of academic integrity. Academic Affairs will remove the sanction and the instructor will assign an appropriate grade.
- The student is responsible for a violation and the sanction is appropriate.
- The student is responsible for a violation but the sanction is not appropriate. The Committee may increase or decrease the sanction.

After the decision Academic Affairs will send a hearing report to the student, instructor, instructor's division chair, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Registrar (if necessary).

How are grades assigned when a violation of academic integrity has occurred?

If more than 5 school days remained in a semester after the resolution meeting, the grade should be assigned by the instructor with the sanction applied (including the assignment of an F! in the course). If an alleged violation occurs at the end of the semester and the resolution meeting has not been held or the 5 school day appeal deadline falls in the next regular semester, then a grade of "I" should be assigned with a default grade that reflects the proposed sanction. The default grade will be "F!" or a grade calculated to reflect a "zero" or "F" for the assignment(s) or examination(s) that are under review for violating academic integrity. At the end of the appeals deadline Academic Affairs will send a copy of the resolution to the Registrar so that the appropriate grade can be assigned.

What are rights of the student in the Academic Integrity appeals process?

The procedures for the Academic Integrity Committee afford the student his/her rights by providing:

- Written notification of the time and place of the hearing of the appeal. This notice will be emailed to the student's institution email address.
- A copy of the Academic Integrity Inquiry Form with the instructor's statement.
- The right to appear in person and present his/her 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 hearing panel at the same time, 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 one adviser (colleague or friend); however, the adviser may not address the hearing panel.
- The right to call witnesses to assist in establishing facts of the case.
- The right to ask questions.
- The right to an explanation of the reasons for any decision rendered.
- The right to be free from retaliation by the instructor.

- The assurance that all personally identifiable information about alleged violations of academic integrity will be confidential under provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and will not be disclosed except as permitted by the Act or with written permission of the student.

What are the chances of this charge being overturned?

Each appeal is heard on a case by case basis. The pertinent questions for the Academic Integrity Committee are “Did a violation of academic integrity occur?” and “Is the assigned sanction appropriate?” The instructor should present all evidence and testimony that led them to conclude a violation of academic integrity occurred. The student should present any evidence or witness statements when they turn in their appeal.

Who can help me if the student appeals the alleged violation of academic integrity?

Academic Affairs will assist both the student and instructor in understanding the appeals process. Both parties are encouraged to make contact if they have any questions about going before the panel or for any policy questions.

Can the sanction be reduced by the Committee?

Yes. The Committee will review the proposed sanction and may determine a lesser sanction is more appropriate. They will consider the recommended sanctions outlined in the Academic Integrity Policy.

Can the sanction be increased by the Committee?

Yes. If it is discovered the student has a prior violation, then the Academic Affairs Office will contact the student and notify them of a hearing regarding the second violation. The Committee also has the option of increasing a sanction if they believe a greater sanction is more appropriate.

How will the instructor know that an appeal has been filed?

Within 5 school days of the official notification being sent from the Office of Academic Affairs, the student may submit an appeal with supporting documentation. You will be notified by the Academic Affairs Office via email. For more complete information, see section 3.0 in the policy.

Does the Academic Integrity Panel consider grade appeals?

No. While a grade change may occur as the result of an academic integrity hearing the Academic Integrity Committee deals only with violations of academic integrity. Grade appeals are handled through the Grade Appeals process described in the Connors State College Catalog.

How does an appeal of an academic integrity violation charge differ from a grade appeal?

The situations are definitely different. The charge of an academic integrity violation is brought by an instructor against a student. In a grade appeal, which is handled by the Grade Appeals process, the action is initiated by the student against an instructor. In this case, the question for the Grade Appeals Committee is “Did the instructor act fairly (i.e., follow stated procedures accurately and consistently, etc.) in assigning the grade?” If the Grade Appeals Committee determines that a (lower) grade was given as a penalty for suspected cheating (or some other academic integrity violation), the case should be referred to the Academic Integrity process. For more information on grade appeals, see the full catalog at <https://connorsstate.edu/college-catalog/>.

Can a person not enrolled in the course be charged with a violation of academic integrity?

Only in the cases outlined above. The only sanctions available in this policy are related to a grade in a class.

What can I do to encourage academic integrity in my classes and on campus?

This is the most important question. Faculty can lead discussions of academic integrity in classes, provide a clear explanation of permissible and impermissible academic behavior (e.g., regarding collaboration, use of Internet sources, term paper documentation, and the like), include statements about academic integrity in the course syllabus, show the academic integrity video, and reduce opportunities for cheating (e.g., adjust seating during examinations and record the examination seating arrangement, modify examinations and other projects from term to term, limit or prohibit the use of electronic devices during examinations). For more suggestions, consult with your division chair.

What is a grade of “F!”?

A grade of “F!” (pronounced F shriek) on the student’s transcript indicates that the student received a failing grade in the course because of an alleged violation of academic integrity. The first “!” may be removed through successful completion of an academic integrity education program (see below); however, the “!” will remain on the transcript for at least one

semester.

What is the Academic Integrity Committee?

The Academic Integrity Committee is an ad hoc committee appointed by the Vice President of Academic Affairs and should consist of no fewer than one member of Academic Council, one staff member, and one member of the student body. The member representing Academic Council should not be from the same division as the instructor and will serve as the Committee's chairperson.

What standard of proof is required for alleged violations of academic integrity?

When an instructor confronts a student with an alleged violation of academic integrity the instructor is expected to provide sufficient information to substantiate the allegation. The information should support a determination that it is "more likely than not" that a violation of academic integrity occurred.

The standard of proof requires more than a mere assertion by an instructor that a student has been involved in an alleged violation of academic integrity. In most circumstances, information supporting the instructor's assertion of a violation of academic integrity should be presented in the form of documents or corroborating statements from other University faculty or staff, or both.

Only in instances in which no other supporting information is available should the instructor ask other students in a class to support an allegation of a violation of academic integrity. An instructor should not report a violation of academic integrity based on an allegation by another student that is unsupported either by documents or observation of the alleged violation by a member of the University faculty or staff.

Examples of documents that have been found helpful in past cases include examinations with identical or highly similar answers, particularly when the answer on one or both examinations is incorrect, and when the instructor can demonstrate that the papers were produced by students seated in close proximity to one another during an examination; copies of a student's written work and the original source(s) from which the work is alleged to have been taken; improper source materials such as notes taken from a student during the course of an examination for which no notes were allowed; and texts or other materials improperly in possession of a student during the examination. In these situations, the documents should be retained by the instructor. It strengthens the instructor's case to have another witness to the presence of improper materials during the examination, particularly if there is a dispute as to the presence of the materials.

What should an instructor do if they feel a violation has occurred but aren't sure they have enough evidence to substantiate the "more likely than not" standard?

When an instructor suspects that a student violated academic integrity, they are obligated to investigate the allegation and determine if there is sufficient information to substantiate the allegation. In most cases the instructor should complete the Academic Integrity Inquiry Form and conduct a resolution meeting to determine if there is adequate evidence. However, it is up to the instructor to determine if the alleged violation constitutes an admonition, sanction or a "teachable moment." A "teachable moment" can occur when the student has made an error or there is not enough evidence to substantiate the claim of a violation. It may also be defined as a misunderstanding or miscommunication occurring between the student and instructor regarding the process by which the assignment should be completed. In this case the instructor does not feel that the student is responsible of a violation. This would be an opportunity to educate the student regarding academic integrity and the danger of their actions. The assignment would be graded as an error but not processed as a violation of academic integrity.

What happens to students who violate academic integrity a second time?

Students who are accused of a second alleged violation of academic integrity in the same course in the same semester may have the second violation increased to an F! for the course, even if both incidents were level one violations.

Students who are accused of a second alleged violation of academic integrity resulting in a second F! will be referred to the Academic Integrity Committee. The panel will conduct a hearing and determine if the student violated academic integrity.

Students who are found responsible for multiple academic integrity violations could be suspended from Connors State. If a student is found responsible for a violation resulting in suspension during the spring semester (even if the violation occurred during the previous fall or winter intersession semester), the student will be suspended for the subsequent summer and fall semesters. If a student is found responsible for a violation during the fall semester (even if the violation occurred during the previous spring or summer semester), the student will be suspended the subsequent spring and

summer semesters. Examples of circumstances that could result in suspension include, but are not limited to:

- Two or more level two violations.
- A level two violation followed by a level one violation
- Three or more violations (level one and/or level two)
- In rare circumstances, the Academic Integrity Committee may consider a different sanction if two violations occur at or about the same time.

Can the student or instructor appeal the decision of the Academic Integrity Committee?

Only the student can appeal a decision of the Academic Integrity Committee. The student may submit a written request for a decision (final) appeal before the Vice President of Academic Affairs within 5 school days after the Hearing Report is sent by the Office of Academic Affairs if the academic integrity procedure was not followed. If new information becomes available after the hearing that could substantially affect the outcome, the student may submit an appeal within one year. The Vice President for Academic Affairs will determine if the final appeal will be considered.

What is an approved Academic Integrity Education Program?

Students may remove the first “!” from their transcript by successfully completing an Academic Integrity Education Program. The Academic Integrity Education Program is a self-paced course within Canvas.

How will the Office of Academic Affairs handle allegations of violations of academic integrity that are received through EthicsPoint?

The Vice President for Academic Affairs will receive reports of alleged violations of academic integrity from EthicsPoint, a confidential reporting service that has a contract with CSC. These reports will be immediately forwarded to the instructor of record for the class. The instructor will determine if it is appropriate to conduct an investigation of the allegation.

Are instructors obligated to report all alleged violations of academic integrity?

When an instructor suspects that a student violated academic integrity, they are obligated to investigate the allegation and determine if there is sufficient information to substantiate the allegation. The information should support a determination that it is “more likely than not” that a violation of academic integrity occurred.

If sufficient information exists, the instructor should meet with the student to discuss the case. If the instructor believes that the student violated academic integrity, he or she is expected to report the incident to the Office of Academic Affairs. These reports will identify students who repeatedly violate academic integrity. Unreported violations will not be considered when hearing an appeal.

Each classroom environment is unique regarding the level of instruction regarding academic integrity and the expectations of how assignments should be completed. Therefore, it is up to the instructor to determine if the alleged violation constitutes a sanction or a “teachable moment.” A “teachable moment” can occur when the student has made an error but there is not enough evidence to substantiate the claim of a violation. It may also be defined as a misunderstanding or miscommunication occurring between the student and instructor regarding the process by which the assignment should be completed. In this case the instructor does not feel that the student is responsible for a violation. This would be an opportunity to educate the student regarding academic integrity and the danger of their actions. The assignment would be graded as an error but not processed as a violation of academic integrity.

If an alleged violation of academic integrity is discovered after a student graduates, can the degree be revoked?

Yes. Serious violations of Academic Integrity (such as significant plagiarism, fabrication of research or laboratory data, and/or altering academic records) may result in degree revocation. See section 6 for procedures regarding degree revocation.