

TIP SHEET for Instructors

Who can sanction students for academic misconduct?

In addition to defining offences and listing available sanctions, the Code of Student Behaviour (“the Code”) specifies who can make decisions on what, and how they should be communicated.

For the purposes of this tip sheet, the term “academic misconduct” will be used; it includes plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation of facts for academic advantage and participation in (or aiding and abetting) one of the above offences.

The following is a summary of the players involved, and their roles in a case of academic misconduct:

Teaching Assistant

- May discover academic misconduct while grading assignments, papers or exams or while proctoring an exam.
- Is required to bring suspicions to the attention of the Instructor.

Instructor

- Collects information and evidence related to suspicions or allegations of academic misconduct.
- Meets with the student involved.
- Is required to report all academic misconduct to the Dean.
- Is not authorized to impose sanctions for academic misconduct.

Dean, or designate (often an Associate Dean)

- Receives all complaints related to student academic misconduct in the Faculty.
- Meets with the student involved.
- Makes a finding on whether the student violated the Code.
- Is authorized to impose “Intermediate Sanctions”, that is, sanctions related to grades in that course (either on the relevant assignment or in the course itself), as well as notations on the student’s transcript.

- Functions to ensure that decisions throughout the Faculty (regardless of department) are consistent.
- May recommend “Severe Sanctions”, that is, sanctions that interrupt a student’s program (i.e., suspension or expulsion) to the Discipline Officer.
- Decisions can be appealed the University Appeal Board.

Discipline Officer (in Student Conduct and Accountability)

- Receives a recommendation from a Dean for Severe Sanctions.
- Meets with the student involved.
- Makes decision on whether to impose a Severe Sanction,
- Functions to ensure that decisions involving Severe Sanctions are consistent across the University.
- Decisions can be appealed by the student or the Dean to the University Appeal Board.

University Appeal Board (UAB)

- Avenue for appeal on any decision under the Code by the Dean and/or Discipline Officer.
- A student or the Faculty (in the case of a decision of a Discipline Officer) can appeal a finding or the severity of sanction.
- Offers a re-hearing of the entire case.
- Final and binding decision.

Note that the more severe the consequences to a student, the more processes are involved. The structure in place is designed to provide a fair process for the accused student, as required by law, as well as consistent decisions (without resorting to a precedent-based system) across Faculties and the University. It also functions to allow instructors to focus on their teaching and preserving a positive relationship with their students rather than becoming disciplinarians.

For more information please contact Student Conduct and Accountability at 780-492-0777, or studentconduct@ualberta.ca.