

**The Ohio State University
Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM)
Procedures and Rules
(Revised 1/18/2008)**

This document contains a summary of the rules and procedures used by the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM), as excerpted from The Ohio State University's *Code of Student Conduct and Faculty Rules*.

1. Prohibited conduct

(A) Academic misconduct

Academic misconduct is any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University, or subvert the educational process. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- (1) Violation of course rules as contained in the course syllabus or other information provided to the student; violation of program regulations as established by departmental committees and made available to students;
- (2) Knowingly providing or receiving information during examinations such as course examinations and candidacy examinations; or the possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during those examinations;
- (3) Knowingly providing or using assistance in the laboratory, on field work, or on a course assignment, unless such assistance has been authorized specifically by the course instructor;
- (4) Submitting plagiarized work for an academic requirement. Plagiarism is the representation of another's work or ideas as one's own; it includes the unacknowledged, word-for-word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas;
- (5) Submitting substantially the same work to satisfy requirements for one course that has been submitted in satisfaction of requirements for another course, without permission of the instructor of the course for which the work is being submitted;
- (6) Falsification, fabrication, or dishonesty in reporting laboratory and/or research results;
- (7) Serving as, or enlisting the assistance of a substitute for a student in the taking of examinations;

- (8) Alteration of grades or marks by a student in an effort to change the earned grade or credit;
- (9) Alteration of academically-related University forms or records, or unauthorized use of those forms; and
- (10) Engaging in activities that unfairly place other students at a disadvantage, such as taking, hiding or altering resource material, or manipulating a grading system.¹

2. Committee on Academic Misconduct

- (A) The Coordinator for the Committee shall investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. However, the Committee does not hear cases involving academic misconduct in professional colleges having a published honor code. These colleges shall follow their own codes and procedures, which can be obtained in their respective central offices. The Coordinator or Committee may refer complaints to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs if it is determined that the academic misconduct allegation is incidental to some other misconduct.
- (B) All complaints of academic misconduct shall be reported to the Coordinator of the Committee. Students have an obligation to report suspected misconduct. The committee consists of:
 - (1) Eighteen (18) regular faculty members selected by the Faculty Council for three-year terms, beginning with the autumn quarter. The selection is to be held annually so that six (6) members will retire each year. No University faculty member shall serve more than two (2) consecutive terms;
 - (2) Seven (7) graduate student members appointed by the end of the summer quarter by the President of the Council of Graduate Students, with the approval of the Council of Graduate Students and Committee's Coordinator, for a one-year term beginning with the autumn quarter;
 - (3) Seven (7) undergraduate student members appointed by the end of the summer quarter by the Vice President of the Undergraduate Student Government, with the approval of the Undergraduate Student Government, the Undergraduate Student Senate, and the Committee's Coordinator, for a one-year term beginning with the autumn quarter; and
 - (4) A Coordinator, appointed by the Executive Vice President and Provost, *ex-officio*
 - a. Without vote

¹ Graduate students and members of the graduate faculty should recognize that the University Rules regarding academic misconduct apply to all scholarly activities associated with graduate education. Since the nature and scope of these scholarly activities can vary among the graduate programs on campus, graduate students must understand the specific requirements of academic integrity for the Graduate School and their individual graduate programs.

- (5) A quorum for a hearing shall be no less than four (4) voting members of the panel
 - a. Which shall include no less than one (1) student member and two (2) faculty members.

3. Suspected Academic Misconduct

- A. When a student is suspected of academic misconduct, the instructor should make every effort to inform the student of the allegation. The presence of a colleague with the instructor at any subsequent meeting with the student is recommended.
- B. The instructor shall prepare a typed written report on department letterhead on the alleged academic misconduct. The report should be as complete as possible and should have all relevant evidence attached. The report should identify the student's name and identification number, and the call number of the course in which the alleged misconduct occurred. Whenever possible, original documents, such as the alleged plagiarized paper, examination, printouts, etc., should be submitted. Sources of plagiarized material should be provided with passages that are alleged to be plagiarized marked clearly. A copy of the course syllabus should be included. The instructor of record for the course, if different from the person observing the alleged misconduct, must provide a letter acknowledging that charges are being brought forward. The Coordinator may request additional information to clarify the charges.
- C. Students suspected of academic misconduct, whether acknowledging involvement or not, should be allowed to continue in the course without prejudice, pending action by the Committee. If the course ends before the Committee has acted, the instructor should assign the student the grade of "Incomplete." The alternate grade for the Incomplete should be that which would be given if the student were not found in violation of the Code of Student Conduct.
- D. The chairperson of the academic unit (and/or the chairperson of the graduate studies committee in the case of graduate students) should be informed of the allegations of academic misconduct. The report prepared by the instructor and a letter from the department's chairperson (or graduate studies committee's chairperson) should be sent to the Coordinator of the Committee on Academic Misconduct, 33 W. 11th Avenue, Room 107. If possible, the report should be hand-carried and marked "Confidential."
- E. The Coordinator, on behalf of the Committee, will notify the accused student(s) of the charge of Academic Misconduct and, whenever possible, provide the student with a copy of the materials that have been received regarding the case.

4. Notice of charges

Students shall be notified of University charges in writing, unless a more effective form of notification is deemed appropriate. Charges may be presented in person, by placement in a student's residence hall mailbox, or by mail to the accused student's local or permanent address on file in the office of the University Registrar. All students are required to maintain accurate and current local and permanent addresses with the University Registrar. Following notification of charges, students are encouraged to and shall be afforded the opportunity to meet with a University official for the purpose of explaining the University judicial process and discussion of the charges. Failure of the accused student to respond to the initiation of charges or schedule a preliminary meeting shall in no way prevent the University from scheduling and conducting a hearing in the absence of the accused student.

5. Administrative decision

In all cases, a student charged with one or more violations of the Code of Student Conduct has the right to a hearing. However, in a case where a charged student admits such violations in writing, the student may request in writing to have a decision as to appropriate action made administratively by a hearing officer rather than have the charges referred to a panel or commission for a hearing. In such situations, the student waives the right to a hearing and the related procedural guarantees provided by a panel or commission hearing. Following an administrative decision, the student retains the right to request an appeal of the original decision, but may do so only upon the ground that the sanction is grossly disproportionate to the offense committed.

6. Notice of Hearing

If a hearing is to be held, written notification will be provided. The notice may be hand delivered, placed into a student's residence hall mailbox, or mailed to the last known address of the student, either by certified mail or first class mail, no fewer than ten (10) calendar days prior to the hearing. Unless already provided to the student, the notification will include the charge(s), date, time, and location of the hearing, the designated hearing officer or panel, a statement of the student's rights, and information on the hearing procedures. The accused student may request a postponement for reasonable cause, or a hearing separate from other accused persons. A request for a postponement for reasonable cause must be made in writing, include supporting rationale, and be received by the person sending the hearing notification at least two (2) business days before the scheduled hearing.

7. Hearing procedures

Although the procedural requirements are not as formal as those existing in criminal or civil courts of law, to ensure fairness, the following procedures will apply and, unless already provided to the student, be included within the hearing notice:

- (A) Attendance at hearings is limited to those directly involved or those requested by the Coordinator or panel to attend. The Coordinator or panel will take reasonable measures to assure an orderly hearing, including removal of persons who impede or disrupt the proceedings.
- (B) The accused student may have an advisor throughout the hearing. The advisor may only counsel the student and may not actively participate in the hearing, unless clarification is needed as determined by the Coordinator or panel.
- (C) The accused student may submit a written statement, may invite relevant witnesses to attend, may ask questions of witnesses called by others, and will be notified of potential witnesses to be called. The University may present witnesses as well as question those presented by the accused.
- (D) Written statements may be used if, for good reason, a witness cannot attend the hearing. Written statements must be notarized if other clear evidence of authenticity is lacking.
- (E) In cases requiring special expertise, the Coordinator may appoint individuals with appropriate expertise to serve as consultants to the panel. The consultants may be present and provide information as called upon during the hearing but will not vote.
- (F) Students are entitled to a presumption of innocence. Therefore, a student will not be found in violation unless a preponderance of the evidence supports the charge(s).

8. Attendance

Because the most accurate and fair review of the facts can best be accomplished when all parties are present, the accused is expected to attend and participate. If an individual does not choose to attend a hearing, the charges will be reviewed as scheduled on the basis of the information available, and a decision will be made. Although no inference may be drawn against a student for failing to attend a hearing or remaining silent, the hearing will proceed, and the conclusion will be based on the evidence presented. No decision shall be based solely on the failure of the accused student to attend the hearing or answer the charges.

9. Record of proceedings

A single record consisting of written notes, tape recording, or other method selected by the Coordinator, will be made of all hearings. Such records will remain the property of the University but will be made available to the accused for review during the appeal period. A written notice of the decision and, if found in violation, information regarding appeal procedures will be provided to the accused student.

10. University Sanctions

General guidelines for sanctions

Sanctions should be commensurate with the violation(s) found to have occurred. In determining the sanction(s) to be imposed, the Coordinator or panel should take into account any mitigating circumstances and any aggravating factors including, but not limited to, any past misconduct by the student, any failure of the student to comply fully with previous sanctions, the actual or degree of intent and motivation of the student in committing the violation, and the severity and pervasiveness of the conduct that constituted the violation. One or more of the following courses of action may be taken when a student has been found to have violated the Code of Student Conduct.

(A) Informal admonition

An oral or written admonition issued by the Coordinator resulting from the student's misconduct. No formal charges, hearing, or other compliance with the Code of Student Conduct is required before the issuance of an informal admonition. However, following issuance of an informal admonition, the student shall be entitled to a hearing upon written request, under the procedures provided in the Code of Student Conduct. A written request for such a hearing must be filed with the University official who administered the informal admonition, within five (5) working days of the student's receipt of the informal admonition. An informal admonition shall not be considered a disciplinary sanction, but may be considered in any subsequent hearings.

(B) Disciplinary sanctions

- (1) **Formal reprimand:** A written letter of reprimand resulting from a student's misconduct.
- (2) **Conduct probation:** This probationary condition is for a specified period of time (quarters of enrollment) but without loss of privileges. Further violation of University policies during the probationary period will be viewed not only as the act itself, but also as a violation of the probation, which could result in disciplinary probation, suspension or dismissal.
- (3) **Disciplinary probation:** This probationary condition is in effect for a specified period of time (quarters of enrollment) and may involve the loss of specified privileges. Further violation of University policies during the probationary period will be viewed not only as a violation based upon the act itself, but also as a violation of the probation, which shall result in further action up to and including suspension or dismissal.
- 4) **Suspension:** Suspension is a sanction that terminates the student's enrollment at the University for a specified period of time. Satisfactory

completion of specified stipulations may be required for readmission at the end of the suspension period.²

- (5) **Dismissal:** Dismissal is a sanction that permanently separates a student from the University without the opportunity to re-enroll in the future.³

(C) Conditions of suspension and dismissal

A student who has been dismissed or suspended from the University shall be denied all privileges afforded a student and shall be required to vacate campus at a time determined by the hearing officer or panel. In addition, after vacating campus property, a suspended or dismissed student may not enter upon campus and/or other University property at any time, for any purpose, in the absence of express written permission from the Vice President for Student Affairs or his/her designee. To seek such permission, a suspended or dismissed student must file a written petition to the Vice President for Student Affairs for entrance to the campus for a limited, specified purpose, or to have the terms of this condition modified or reduced.

(D) Failing or lowered grades

In cases of academic misconduct, the hearing officer or panel may authorize the instructor to award a failing or lowered grade in the course, a loss of credit on the assignment or examination, and impose any of the above-listed sanctions including suspension or dismissal from the University.

If a student drops a course after being notified by the course instructor or the Committee on Academic Misconduct of allegations of academic misconduct, and the student is found subsequently to be “in violation” of the Code of Student Conduct and the authorized grade sanction is a failing grade (E, U, or NP) in the course, the student will be re-enrolled in the course in which the academic misconduct occurred and given a failing grade. This policy does not apply if (1) a student drops a course before he/she is notified of the allegations of academic misconduct or (2) a student drops the course after being notified of allegations of academic misconduct and the grade sanction is anything other than a failing grade in the course.

(E) Other sanctions

Other appropriate sanctions may be imposed by a hearing officer or panel, singularly or in combination with any of the above-listed sanctions.

² If a student is suspended, a “disciplinary suspension” notation is added to the student’s transcript. The student may request that this notation be removed from his/her transcript once the conditions of the suspension have been met. This request must be submitted to COAM.

³ If a student is dismissed, a “disciplinary dismissal” notation is added to the student’s transcript. This notation is permanent.

11. Appeal Process

(A) Right to appeal

A student found to have violated this Code has the right to appeal the original decision. An appeal of a decision must be submitted in writing and postmarked or hand delivered to the Executive Vice President and Provost or the Executive Vice President and Provost's designee, within ten (10) calendar days after the date on which written notice of the decision is sent to the student. Each student shall be limited to one appeal. The decision of the appeal officer is final.

(B) Grounds for appeal

An appeal may be based only upon one or more of the following grounds:

- (1) Procedural error;
- (2) Misapplication or misinterpretation of the rule alleged to have been violated;
- (3) Findings of facts not supported by a preponderance of evidence;
- (4) Discovery of substantial new facts that were unavailable at the time of the hearing; and
- (5) That the disciplinary sanction imposed is grossly disproportionate to the violation committed.

(C) Appeal proceedings

- (1) The appeal officer shall dismiss the appeal if the appeal is not based upon one or more of the grounds set forth in Section (B) above.
- (2) The appeal officer may decide the appeal based upon a review of the record.
- (3) The appeal officer may request additional written information or an oral presentation from any relevant person(s) and then decide the appeal based upon the enhanced record.

(D) Possible dispositions by the appeal officer

The appeal officer may, after a review of the record, uphold the original sanction, dismiss the original sanction, or impose a lesser sanction. An appeal officer may also remand the case to the original hearing body or refer the case to a new hearing officer or panel to be reheard. If possible, the new hearing officer or panel should be different from the one that originally decided the case. If a case is reheard by a hearing officer or panel, the sanction imposed can be greater than that imposed at the original hearing.

(E) Minor deviations from procedure

A student and hearing officer may agree in advance to minor deviations from procedure. Such deviations are not then subject to appeal. Other minor deviations are acceptable as long as such deviations are not found upon appeal to be unreasonably harmful to the student.

12. Records of the Committee on Academic Misconduct

Records are considered confidential. Copies of sanction letters are sent only to those University officers with a valid need to know, such as the Office of Judicial Affairs, which retains notations of records of students found in violation of academic misconduct for a minimum of ten years.

If a student enrolled in the Graduate School is found “in violation” of the Code of Student Conduct, the Graduate School is notified of the nature of the violation and the sanction imposed.

If a student is suspended or dismissed from the University, the Office of the University Registrar is informed and an appropriate notation (“disciplinary suspension” or “disciplinary dismissal”) is added to the student’s transcript. Once the conditions of a disciplinary suspension have been fulfilled, a student may request that the "disciplinary suspension" notation be removed from his/her transcript. This request must be submitted through COAM's office. Since "dismissal" from the University is permanent, a "disciplinary dismissal" notation on a transcript is also permanent.

13. Confidentiality and Release of Records

The Federal and State governments have adopted legal requirements designed to protect the privacy of students’ educational records maintained by various University offices and to provide for the students’ right to access the educational records. Generally, any information from these records may not be released to individuals outside the University community by the custodian of the records without permission of the individual whose record it is, and any individual has the right to see his or her own educational records.

14. Regional Campus Hearings

Regional campus and Agricultural Technical Institute (ATI) students may request to have cases heard in Columbus or by an *ad hoc* panel at the regional campus/ATI. With a request to be heard on a regional campus or ATI, the student waives the right to have the case heard by a panel of the Committee on Academic Misconduct in Columbus. The decision of the *ad hoc* panel is final, subject to the regular appeal procedures. All rules and procedures outlined in this document are to be followed.

The composition of the *ad hoc* hearing panel for regional campus or ATI is as follows:

Committee Membership	Source of Appointment to <i>ad hoc</i> Committee	Voting Status
Regular COAM member (optional)	Coordinator of COAM	Voting
Faculty member on regional campus/ATI	Dean or Director with concurrence of COAM Coordinator and/or chair	Voting
Faculty member on regional campus/ATI	Dean or Director with concurrence of COAM Coordinator and/or chair	Voting
Faculty member or student on regional campus/ATI	Dean or Director with concurrence of COAM Coordinator and/or chair	Voting
Student on regional campus/ATI	Dean or Director with concurrence of COAM Coordinator and/or chair	Voting
Coordinator of COAM	Executive Vice President and Provost	Non-voting