

SUBMITTING ALLEGATIONS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT TO THE COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT (COAM)

The Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) has made available a form for submitting allegations of academic misconduct. We hope that you will use this form, or at least follow its format, when submitting an allegation of academic misconduct, since doing so will help to insure that COAM receives all of the information needed to resolve the case.

If you have any questions about this form or other aspect of academic misconduct, please do not hesitate to contact our office (292-7262) or the Coordinator (pappas.3@osu.edu). We will be happy to assist you in any way.

The form is supplied as a Microsoft Word (Windows) document (.doc). The document has been locked so you won't be able to enter information anywhere except in the "blanks." When you first open the document, the cursor appears automatically in the first blank ("Today's date"). You can move the cursor forward and backward by using the <Tab> key and <Shift+Tab> key combination, respectively. Or, you can scroll through the document using Word's scroll bars and click on any blank you want to select. If you hit the <Enter> key by mistake, a line break will be inserted in the blank; use the <Backspace> key to delete the line break.

The blanks are shaded gray, and each contains a descriptive phrase (in blue) of the information that should be entered. Even though the blanks are small, each will expand as you type in text. According to the Word documentation, each blank will hold an "unlimited" amount of text. When the form is printed, the shading is not printed. Thus, in the printed copy, the text that you entered will appear as black (B/W printer) or blue (color printer) on a white background.

To help familiarize you with this form, two kinds of help are available, and these are indicated on the form. "F1" opens a pop-up help box that contains additional information or examples. The "Instructions" (below) provide more detailed explanations and/or examples of what should be entered in the blanks.

To save the form and all the information that you have entered, use the "Save As" option (File|Save As) and a unique file name. You can also customize the form for your own use by completing the appropriate blanks and then saving the partially completed form for future use.

INSTRUCTIONS

“From”

Any member of the university community may report allegations of academic misconduct to COAM. In most cases, however, allegations are “from” a course instructor (faculty member, instructor, graduate teaching assistant) who first suspected academic misconduct. When COAM processes the case, all information regarding the case will be sent to this person. If the student elects to have a hearing to resolve the allegation, this person is expected to attend the hearing, present the evidence to and answer questions for the panel.

“Send copies of letters to”

Identify those individuals (and provide their contact information) who should receive copies of all correspondence. For example, if a GTA or instructor reports allegations of misconduct, the “instructor of record” (the person who assigns final grades) should receive copies of all correspondence. Similarly, if a faculty member reports allegations of misconduct, it might be appropriate to notify the student’s recitation or laboratory instructor.

“Student Information”

It’s easy to use this form when reporting allegations involving more than one student (most often allegations of copying or collusion). Complete the form for one of the students. Print the completed form and, if you want, save it (“Save As”) using a unique file name. Replace the “Student Information” for the first student with that of the second student. Print and save the completed form. Repeat the above as necessary for all students.

“What was the nature of the assignment(s) in question?”

For most allegations, this is straight forward, but please be as specific as possible (e.g., 1st midterm exam, lab reports 3 and 7, doctoral candidacy exam, etc.). For those allegations involving specialized assignments or no assignment (e.g., forgery of documents), a more detailed explanation or “N/A” (not applicable) might be appropriate.

“What were the guidelines and policies for completing this assignment, and how were students made aware of these?”

The Committee on Academic Misconduct expects that all students have read, understand, and will follow the University’s Code of Student Conduct. COAM does not accept ignorance of the Code as an “excuse” for academic misconduct. Nevertheless, COAM recommends strongly that instructors remind students about what is or is not permitted in their courses. Please describe what steps you took in your course to reinforce the principle of academic integrity. If your course syllabus included a statement

regarding academic integrity (misconduct), please make reference to that statement and include a copy of your syllabus.

“What is the basis of the allegation of academic misconduct? What do you believe that the student(s) did to violate the Code of Student Conduct, and what evidence do you have to support the allegation?”

Provide a written narrative describing the alleged violation (e.g., plagiarism, copying the work of another student, forgery, etc.) and the evidence in support of this violation. If appropriate, the evidence itself should be included with this form as separate documents.

Only the evidence reported in this section may be introduced at a hearing. If after submitting this form you find additional evidence the allegation of academic misconduct, you should send that evidence to COAM. COAM will notify the student(s) of the new evidence, and the new evidence may be considered at the hearing.

STUDENT NOTIFICATION

If you suspect that a student has violated the University’s Code of Student Conduct, the Committee recommends that you notify the student of your suspicions as soon as possible. If you do notify the student, please tell COAM the date of the notification.

Depending on the circumstances, you might meet privately with the student (and a witness) or send the student an e-mail. The purpose of this meeting is to inform the student, not to interrogate him/her. However, if the student makes any comments during the meeting (or replies to your e-mail), you may include this information as part of the evidence that you submit.