

# Pennsylvania College of Technology

## Procedure Statement

**Title:** Academic Dishonesty Complaint  
Procedure

**Number:** PR 4.45

**Approved by:**  
Presidential Action

**Approved Date:** 12/2010  
**Last Review Date:** 11/2024  
**Last Revision Date:** 11/2024

**Persons/Departments Affected:**  
All staff, faculty, and students

**Responsible Department:**  
Academic Affairs

### Definitions:

- a. **Academic Dishonesty:** deceptive behavior or actions regarding data, records, submitted works, exams, or other materials related to participation in a course or other academic exercise; these actions include, but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, multiple submissions, misrepresentation of academic records, falsification of any course related documents, facilitation of academic dishonesty by others, unfair advantage, violation of known safety requirements and ethical misconduct.
- b. **Cheating:** using or attempting to use unauthorized assistance (e.g., asking someone for an answer during a test, copying answers from another student's test, etc.), using unauthorized study aids during an exam (e.g., "cheat sheets" or books/notes), using unauthorized artificial intelligence (AI) tools and websites (e.g., content/text/code generators or word spinners) to complete assignments/exams, or submitting the work of another as one's own.
- c. **Plagiarism:** using the idea, data, or language of another without specific or proper acknowledgement. See the College's full [definition of plagiarism](#).
- d. **Multiple submission:** submitting (or attempting to submit), without prior permission of the current faculty member, any work previously submitted to fulfill another academic requirement (e.g., paper or project submitted for another course or a repeated course).
- e. **Misrepresentation of academic records:** misrepresenting or tampering with any portion of a student's transcripts or academic record.
- f. **Facilitating Academic Dishonesty:** knowingly helping (or attempting to help) another student to commit academic dishonesty.
- g. **Unfair advantage:** attempting to gain unauthorized advantage over fellow students (e.g., unauthorized access to exam materials, preventing or interfering with another student's efforts, lying about a need for a due date extension, continuing to write when time for a test has expired, destroying or keeping library materials beyond the allotted time period or permanently, etc.)

- h. **Student:** any person who is taking or auditing classes (including non-credit) at the College or is enrolled in any College program, including students enrolled in distance learning majors.
- i. **Instructor of Record:** Person(s) identified in the course syllabus as the instructor(s). In most cases, this refers to a faculty member; however, in cases of clinical or laboratory study, the term may refer to a professional staff member who oversees student progress and is responsible for course evaluation (for example, clinical, laboratory, or program director).
- j. **Dean or designee:** In most instances, an academic school dean's designee will be an assistant or associate dean. However, in the School of Nursing & Health Sciences, the respective program director will receive appeals and render decisions in cases where the student denies the instructor's charges (see section IV.C). In such cases, the program director will consult with the dean of Nursing & Health Sciences or designee, who must review and approve the decision. In cases where the program director is also the instructor of record for the course in question, responsibility for receiving appeals and rendering decisions falls to the dean of Nursing & Health Sciences or designee.
- k. **Business day:** Monday through Friday, excluding any days that the College is closed. Also excluded for the purposes of instructor responses are Fall, Thanksgiving and Spring Breaks.
- l. **Meeting:** a real-time interaction among the specified individuals, either face-to-face or facilitated by technologies such as telephone or internet-based communication software.

**Procedure:**

The following identifies the rights, responsibilities, and protocol relating to academic dishonesty, as defined and articulated in [P4.45](#), Academic Dishonesty Policy Statement

I. Authority for Student Discipline

Ultimate authority for student discipline is vested in the College President. Disciplinary authority may be delegated to College administrators, faculty, staff, committees, and organizations, as appropriate.

II. Procedural Protections

A. Students accused of academic dishonesty are entitled to the following procedural protections:

- i. To be informed of the charge and alleged misconduct as well as evidence upon which the charge is based.
- ii. To be allowed reasonable time to prepare an appeal of the charge.
- iii. To be assured of confidentiality as provided by the federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) (the nature of the case may require some disclosure as permissible under law).
- iv. To be considered not responsible for the violation until shown to be responsible by a preponderance of evidence (more likely than not).

### III. Communication; Extensions of Time

- A. All written communication with the student regarding the academic dishonesty allegations and outcomes are delivered via the Penn College email system, absent extenuating circumstances. It is the responsibility of the student to monitor their PCT email account to keep abreast of matters relating to the alleged violations and ensure timely student responses.
- B. The time periods provided for in this procedure may be extended if there are extenuating circumstances or additional time is necessary for the applicable College personnel to explore issues presented.
  - i. If the instructor of record requires additional time to explore the possible infraction, they will notify the student of the extension.
  - ii. If the dean or designee requires additional time to explore an appeal, they will notify the student and instructor of record of the extension of time.
  - iii. If the Assistant Dean of Academic Operations or designee requires additional time to explore an appeal, they will notify the dean/designee, instructor of record, and the student of the extension of time.
  - iv. If the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost requires additional time to explore an appeal, they will notify the Assistant Dean of Academic Operations, dean/designee, instructor of record, and the student of the extension of time.

### IV. Academic Dishonesty Complaint Procedure

- A. The instructor of record begins the process within five business days of discovery of the alleged violation, but not more than two weeks after the infraction occurs (e.g., within two weeks of the work being submitted)
  - i. If academic dishonesty relating to a previously assessed/graded assignment is discovered, the instructor of record must notify the student of the charges within five business days of the discovery.
- B. Within the above timeline, the instructor of record notifies the student, in writing, of the charges and schedules a meeting with the student to occur within five business days of said notification.
  - i. In cases where the student fails to attend the scheduled meeting, the process is considered complete. The student will be deemed to have acknowledged that the violation has occurred and the instructor of record will proceed with issuing an appropriate sanction.
  - ii. In cases where the student attends the scheduled meeting, the instructor of record will present the student with the charges, any evidence, and the instructor of record's sanction. Penn College encourages the instructor of record and the accused student to informally arrive at a resolution.
  - iii. The instructor of record will provide the student, school dean or designee, and the Assistant Dean of Academic Operations or designee with a written outcome, within two business days of the

scheduled meeting, whether or not the student attended the meeting. (Academic Dishonesty Faculty Decision memorandum templates are available on the Academic Affairs portal site.)

- a. The Assistant Dean of Academic Operations or designee may, in certain circumstances, intervene upon receipt of the instructor of record's statement. See section V, Administrative Intervention and Injunction.
  - iv. If the student accepts the instructor of record's sanction, the process is concluded.
- C. If the student denies the charges and/or rejects the sanction, the student then has five business days from the date of the notification of the written outcome in which to submit, in writing, an appeal of the instructor of record's sanction and a request for an administrative hearing with the appropriate school dean or designee.
- i. The student may not drop the course until the issue is resolved. Once resolved, the student may drop the course only if and to the extent permitted by the instructor of record's sanctions, and then only in accordance with the College's normal policies and procedures for the dropping of courses.
  - ii. The dean/designee will proceed with an investigation of the charges and sanction. Within five business days of receiving the student's request for an administrative hearing, the dean/designee will meet with the student. If the student fails to meet with the dean/designee at the scheduled time, the student shall be deemed to have withdrawn their appeal, and the matter will be deemed to be finally determined in accordance with the decision of the instructor of record.
  - iii. The dean/designee will provide the student, the instructor of record and the Assistant Dean of Academic Operations or designee with a written outcome within five business days of the meeting between the dean and the student.
- D. The student and/or instructor of record may appeal the dean's/designee's administrative hearing outcome, but such an appeal is permissible only when new information has been discovered.
- i. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Assistant Dean of Academic Operations or designee within five business days from the date of the notification of the dean's/designee's written outcome.
  - ii. The written appeal must clearly state the basis for the appeal, specifically detailing the new information that has been discovered for review
  - iii. During the appeal, the administrative sanctions will be placed on hold.
  - iv. The Assistant Dean of Academic Operations or designee will provide the student, the instructor of record, and the dean/designee

with a written outcome notice, within five business days of receiving the written appeal.

- E. The decision of the Assistant Dean of Academic Operations or designee is final and there is no further appeal of administrative outcomes, except in cases that result in suspension or expulsion from the College. In such cases, an appeal may be submitted in accordance with section V-C of this procedure.
- F. If the faculty sanction or any subsequent appeal outcome impacts the student's final grade in the course, the Assistant Dean of Academic Operations will notify the Registrar of the change via e-mail.
- G. If the case has not been finally determined by the end of the semester, the instructor of record will submit an Incomplete (I) grade for the course. When the case is adjudicated, the instructor will submit a grade change form to the Registrar.

#### V. Administrative Intervention and Injunction

- A. For very serious matters in which the charges may result in suspension or expulsion, or in cases of multiple incidents of academic dishonesty, the Assistant Dean of Academic Operations or designee may initiate, at any point in the procedure, an investigation of the charges and/or initiate the process to suspend or expel the student.
- B. The Assistant Dean of Academic Operations or designee will provide the student, instructor of record, and dean/designee a written statement of their findings and decision within five business days of the conclusion of the investigation or the suspension or expulsion process, as applicable.
  - i. If the findings result in a change to the student's academic status, the Assistant Dean of Academic Operations or designee will inform the Registrar.
- C. The decision may be appealed, but only in cases where new information has been discovered.
  - i. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost within five business days from the date of the notification of the written outcome from the Assistant Dean of Academic Operations or designee.
  - ii. The written appeal must clearly state the basis for the appeal, specifically detailing the new information that has been discovered for review.
  - iii. The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost will review all materials and provide to the student, the instructor of record, the dean/designee, and the Assistant Dean of Academic Operations or designee with a written outcome notice within five business days of receiving the appeal.
  - iv. The Vice President for Academic Affairs & Provost's decision is final.

- VI. Sanctions imposed for academic dishonesty may include, but are not limited to, the following, listed in order of severity:
  - A. Course sanctions including, but not limited to, grade reductions or issuance of an 'F' grade for specific assignments or classes/labs/clinics, additional assignments in a class/lab/clinic, temporary or permanent removal from classes/labs.
  - B. Probation for a designated period of time and the probability of more severe sanctions if the student is found to be in violation of any College policy during the probationary period. Probation may include a loss of privileges, assignment of research projects, or other activities.
  - C. School sanctions including, but not limited to, removal from an academic program.
  - D. College suspension from the College for a defined period of time, after which the student is eligible to return. Conditions for re-admission may be specified. While a student is suspended, they are prohibited from being on College premises and excluded from all courses, privileges, and activities.
  - E. College expulsion, which is a permanent separation from the College. An expelled student is prohibited from being on College premises and is excluded from all courses, privileges, and activities.
  
- VII. Any charge of academic dishonesty that also involves behavior prohibited by the Student Code of Conduct ([PR4.43](#)) may be subject to the provisions and sanctions provided therein.
  
- VIII. Disciplinary Action While Legal Charges are Pending  
The College may, if it chooses, pursue discipline charges against a student arising out of a violation alleged by any person(s), whether or not any legal action is pursued, dismissed, or reduced.
  
- IX. Results of College Suspension and Expulsion
  - A. Students who are expelled or suspended from the institution are assigned 'T' grades for all courses in which they are currently enrolled.
  - B. Students expelled or suspended from the College and/or College-owned housing are not entitled to refunds of tuition charges and or housing charges.
  
- X. Records that are part of the student's permanent academic record are maintained by the Registrar's Office. Records that pertain to academic dishonesty are maintained by Academic Affairs.
  - A. Only sanctions of withdrawal from a course ('F' or 'W' grades), College expulsion, and College suspension shall become a part of the student's permanent academic record.
  - B. All documentation (electronic or hardcopy) related to academic dishonesty will be maintained in Academic Affairs in accordance with records retention protocol established by the College.

## XI. Revocation of Degrees

The College reserves the right to revoke an awarded degree for academic dishonesty.

### **Revision History:**

- Date: 11/2024 Updated position titles.
- Date: 05/2023 Revised definition of cheating to include unauthorized use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools and websites.
- Date: 09/2020 Updated position titles.
- Date: 10/2019 Updated position titles.
- Date: 04/2019 Updated timelines from 10 days to five days and clarified business day definition.
- Date: 03/2019 Updated position titles; changed final appeals in cases that involve suspension and expulsion from president to vice president for academic affairs/provost.
- Date: 08/2018 Added reference to memorandum templates available for faculty use; updated position titles and school name.
- Date: 07/2017 Added definition of meeting; revised definition of student to include distance learning students.
- Date: 12/2016 Minor revisions to the Instructor of Record and Multiple Submission definitions.
- Date: 08/2015 Added definition to allow for a school dean's designee, namely an assistant or associate dean or, in Health Sciences, a program director.
- Date: 02/2015 Change position titles throughout; revision of extension of time section; specified who notifies the Registrar of changes to the student's grade; revision of definitions section; change to the time frame within which an instructor begins the complaint process; minor editorial/organizational changes.
- Date: 05/2013 Minor change to the definitions of academic dishonesty and multiple submission; addition of the extension of time section; significant changes to aspects of the timeline for submitting appeals, the procedure relating to students' failure to attend meetings with faculty and College staff, and the conditions under which an appeal can be submitted to the assistant vice president for academic operations; and minor editorial updates throughout.
- Date: 12/2010 Implementation of policy and procedure, extracted from Student Code of Conduct ([P4.43](#) and [PR4.43](#)) and further expanded.

### **Cross References:**

Student Code of Conduct Policy and Procedure, [P4.43](#) and [PR4.43](#)  
Academic Dishonesty Policy, [P4.45](#)