

# Conducting Course-Level Investigations

As outlined in the Academic Disciplinary Actions Procedures, alleged violations of the University Policy on Academic Integrity are initially investigated at the course level. They are managed by the course instructor(s) of record or the departmental designee. Best practices for conducting an investigation are outlined below.

## Step 1: Organize initial information.

- If the violation occurs during a class meeting/exam:
  - Feel free to make general announcements/reminders about expectations but avoid calling out individuals in situations that may be readily observed by other students.
  - Avoid dismissing student from class.
  - Take note of specific behavior, student's seat location, relevant times
- If you suspect that an academic integrity violation may have occurred, gather any and all pertinent documentation of the alleged violation in a prompt and timely manner. Documentation may include but is not limited to:
  - Copies of assignment(s)/exam(s) in question
  - Relevant email correspondence
  - Course policy related to expectations (if applicable)
  - Copy of the course syllabus
- Avoid submitting grades until the investigation is complete. If a grade must be submitted, submit as Incomplete with the appropriate default grade.

## Step 2: Consult appropriate resources.

- If you are a TA, present this information immediately to the course instructor.
- If you are a course instructor, you may want to consult your department head or your department's designated Academic Integrity Liaison to decide how to proceed. Additionally, staff in your college dean's office or the Office of Community Responsibility (OCR) would be happy to discuss the situation to determine an appropriate plan of action.
- Please note that OCR cannot provide any further information regarding the student's prior incidents (if any).

## Step 3: Initiate student meeting.

- Once pertinent documentation has been collected and appropriate stakeholders have been consulted if needed, outreach directly to the involved student(s) individually.
  - Do not wait to observe a pattern of behavior.
  - This meeting may occur in person or via phone or videoconference as circumstances warrant.
- This meeting should be held in private and as proximate to the suspected violation as possible.
  - Ideally, this meeting should occur within one to two weeks of discovering the alleged violation.
  - Additional time may be needed to accommodate complex investigations as well as break periods.
- Approach the conversation as the next step in the process of gathering information.
  - Present the student with the documentation that has been collected.
  - Use a combination of close-ended, open-ended and directive statements to supplement the documentation.
    - Open-ended: How did you prepare for this exam? How do you feel you are progressing in this class?
    - Closed-ended: Did you understand the expectations of this assignment?
    - Directive statements: Please show me where you found this information
  - Prepare for a wide range of responses and reactions.
    - Students can be directed to the appropriate [support resources](#).
- Document the conversation as appropriate.
  - The final decisions related to responsibility and outcomes (if appropriate) do not need to be made in this initial meeting.
  - Students should be informed about next steps including continuing investigation, reporting, etc.
- Consult your department head and/or OCR for further guidance if needed.