

McCORMICK SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING  
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY

**STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Integrity, honor, and dignity are fundamental characteristics of the engineering profession. Engineers strive to exhibit these characteristics while using their knowledge, skills and experience to improve the world around them. By being honest, straightforward, and impartial in serving the public, their employers and clients, engineers continuously increase the excellence and prestige of the engineering profession. These principles cannot be described by an equation or an integral, but they are rooted in the curricula of the best engineering schools. Adherence to these fundamental principles, essential not only in engineering but also in our entire society, is the responsibility of the students.

Students and faculty are guided in matters of academic integrity at the University, The Graduate School, and the McCormick School of Engineering & Applied Science levels, so it is the responsibility of every member of the engineering academic community to be familiar with the specific policies of our school. McCormick's procedures, described here, operate within the broader Northwestern policy framework detailed in the document *Academic Integrity, A Basic Guide*, available on the Provost's website.

**Student Responsibilities**

In particular, it is the responsibility of every student in the McCormick School of Engineering & Applied Science to be familiar with and to adhere to the Policies on Academic Integrity of Northwestern University, The Graduate School, and the McCormick School of Engineering & Applied Science.

**Procedures for Cases of Alleged Violations of Academic Integrity**

**I. INITIATION OF A COMPLAINT**

- A. All cases of alleged violations of academic integrity by students in courses in the McCormick School of Engineering must be referred to the appropriate Assistant or Associate Dean (AD):

- Cases involving undergraduate students are investigated by McCormick's Associate Dean for Undergraduate Engineering (Wesley Burghardt).
- Cases involving students enrolled in McCormick Master's programs are investigated by McCormick's Assistant Dean for Professional Educational Programs (Ward Lavino).
- Cases involving graduate students enrolled in The Graduate School (TGS) are investigated by McCormick's Assistant Dean for Graduate Study (Bruce Lindvall).

Cases should be referred within one month of the date of the alleged incident, or within one month of the date the reporting individual becomes aware of the alleged incident, whichever is later. However, no action will be taken on any case if more than one year has elapsed since the alleged incident. Once a matter has been referred to the AD, it may not be withdrawn without the AD's approval, nor may the referring faculty member resolve the case without the AD's approval.

- B. The AD shall review the facts of the alleged incident, including statements of the reporting individual and any supporting material. If the AD determines that there is cause for further investigation, he or she shall notify the student by letter of the date of the incident (if known), the course and instructor, and the nature of the alleged violation. A copy of the current procedures should accompany the letter.

The student will be asked to make an appointment with the AD to discuss the case within seven working days of the date of the letter, at which time the student may present any relevant material or statements in his or her behalf. The student will have the right, prior to meeting with the AD, to review relevant original materials, to obtain copies of such materials if desired, and to discuss the matter with a faculty adviser or other individual. Review of original materials must take place by appointment during normal working hours within seven working days of the date of the AD's letter.

If the student does not schedule a meeting to take place within seven working days, the AD may make his/her determination on the basis of the evidence before him/her at that time. The AD may grant reasonable requests for an extension of this time deadline in his/her sole discretion.

- C. In certain cases where timely notification is important as, for instance, if a student is about to leave campus for vacation, verbal notification may be made, but such verbal notification should be followed by a letter.

## II. MEETING WITH THE DEAN

- A. The AD has the authority to determine, based on a preponderance of the evidence available, whether a violation of academic integrity has occurred. In cases involving graduate students, the investigating Assistant Dean may consult with the relevant academic Associate Dean in reaching a decision.
- B. In meeting with the student, the AD will describe the charges made and detail the evidence supporting those charges. At this initial meeting, the student may decline to discuss the matter and/or request that the AD defer making a determination until after a subsequent meeting between the student and the AD, at which time the student may present other relevant information or evidence. This second meeting must be requested at the initial meeting and must be scheduled for a time within seven working days of the initial meeting.
- C. After the review, the AD shall inform the student by letter of his or her decision and the sanction, if any, to be imposed. If the student is not registered in McCormick School of Engineering & Applied Science or The Graduate School, the sanction of the AD will be limited to a recommendation related to grading in the course. Additional sanctions may be imposed by the associate dean for undergraduate studies in the school in which the student is registered, or the appropriate assistant dean or associate dean at the graduate level.

## III. SANCTIONS

- A. Any grade entered for a student in a course in which an allegation of academic integrity violation is pending is subject to modification after all proceedings and appeals are concluded. Should the student be found to have violated academic integrity, the course instructor is empowered, in his/her sole discretion, to determine the effect this violation will have on the student's grade in the course. Possible actions range from disregarding the incident in calculating the grade to failing the student in the course.
- B. Additional sanctions that may be imposed by the AD of the student's home school include, but are not limited to: a letter of reprimand and warning; a defined period of suspension up to one year; ineligibility for certain awards, honors or special programs; permanent exclusion from the University (noted on official transcript); revocation of an awarded degree; or any appropriate combination of these sanctions.

#### IV. **APPEALS TO THE ACADEMIC HEARING BOARD**

- A. The AD's decision and/or school-level sanctions (Section III.B) incurred as a result of the violation may be appealed to the Academic Hearing Board by filing a written notice of appeal within ten working days of the date of the letter of notification. Note that grade penalties within the class (Section III.A) may not be appealed. The student's written notice of appeal must state what is being appealed, whether it be the violation finding, the sanction, or both, and it must describe in detail the grounds for the appeal. The student's written notice of appeal should also state whether the student desires to present the appeal in person to the Academic Hearing Board.
- B. If the student so requests, he or she will be granted an opportunity to appear in person to present his or her case to the Academic Hearing Board and to hear and respond to any testimony provided by the AD or witnesses appearing before the Academic Hearing Board. Likewise, the AD may be present to hear and respond to testimony of the accused student or any witnesses appearing before the Academic Hearing Board. If the student wishes to present witnesses before the Academic Hearing Board, she or he must inform the AD at least seven working days before the appeal is to be heard of the names of the proposed witnesses and of the nature of the evidence they are prepared to present. However, the Academic Hearing Board has sole discretion to determine what witnesses other than the accused student and the AD it will hear. The Academic Hearing Board shall review the appeal as soon as practical after it has been filed.
- C. Following its review, the Academic Hearing Board may sustain or reverse the violation finding, if that portion of the AD's decision is being appealed, and may, if the finding stands, sustain or modify (but not increase) the sanction, if that portion of the decision is being appealed. The Academic Hearing Board shall inform the student by letter of its decision.

#### V. **APPEAL TO THE PROVOST**

- A. The student may appeal the Academic Hearing Board's decision within ten working days to the Provost of the University. Such appeals must be in writing and include a detailed statement setting forth the grounds for the appeal. Appeals to the Provost will be limited to alleged errors in procedures, interpretation of regulations, or alleged manifest discrepancies between the evidence and a school finding and/or sanction. The Provost will receive appeals only after a sanction has been specified for the alleged violation (see III).

#### VI. **CROSS-SCHOOL CASES**

- A. In instances where a student who is a degree candidate of another school is alleged to have violated academic integrity in a McCormick School of Engineering course, the authority of the McCormick School of Engineering will extend only to determining whether or not the alleged action constitutes a violation of academic integrity and, if so, to the imposition of a grade penalty by the instructor in the course (see Section III.A.). If the finding is affirmative and all appeals have been exhausted or the time for appeals has expired, the case will be formally referred to the appropriate authority of the school in which the student is registered for whatever further sanction that school deems appropriate.

Analogously, the AD will be called upon to determine if further sanctions for McCormick School of Engineering students who have violated academic integrity in courses of another Northwestern school are appropriate.

- B. In instances where a student who is a degree candidate of the McCormick School of Engineering has been found to have violated academic integrity in a course offered by

another school, the AD will notify the student in writing of the matter. The AD may apply an additional sanction based on the nature of the violation. Such notification will inform the student that he/she may schedule an appointment with the AD, to take place within seven working days, to present any evidence of mitigating circumstances but not on the underlying question of guilt or innocence. If the student does not schedule an appointment within the allotted time, or within such extension of time as the AD may grant in his/her sole discretion, the AD will make a decision on sanctions based on the available information.

- C. The AD will inform the student in writing of any additional sanction to be imposed and of the student's right to appeal that sanction to the Academic Hearing Board.
- D. In cross-school cases, an appeal of a *finding* of misconduct should take place in the school that offers the course (*i.e.*, the school in which the finding of misconduct was made). An appeal of *sanctions* imposed by the student's home school should take place in the home school (*i.e.*, the school that has imposed the sanctions).

## VII. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- A. A student may not change his or her registration in a course once an individual with responsibility in that course has become aware of the alleged violation of academic integrity.
- B. At any stage of the proceedings described above, the student may be accompanied by a fellow student, a faculty member, or another individual of the student's choosing, but not by an attorney. This person may not, however, take part in the proceedings; the student must speak on his or her own behalf.
- C. Sanctions specified by the AD, as modified by the Academic Hearing Board or the Provost (if an appeal has been filed), shall take effect at the expiration of the period for appeal of a decision if an appeal has not been filed, and after a decision has been reached by the Academic Hearing Board or the Provost if an appeal has been filed. If the appeal is not granted, the sanction will be applied retroactive to the date specified by the AD, and, if necessary, current registrations may be canceled.
- D. All materials relating to an allegation of an academic integrity violation will be kept until the student has graduated or for ten years after the incident, whichever is earlier.
- E. All references to the AD in these procedures include the AD's designee if circumstances prevent the AD from participating.
- F. Electronic messages may be used to fulfill the requirements of these procedures wherever a letter is specified, and electronic versions of policy statements may be used to comply with required document transmittal.

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