



Office of the Dean of Students

Department of Student Life

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Dear Faculty Member:

Thank you for all you do for our students and your commitment to New Mexico State University. We know that you are extremely busy and that cases of academic misconduct are not only frustrating but addressing them can also be very time consuming. However, academic integrity is critical to the value of an NMSU degree and it is important for us all to expect our students to act with honor and integrity. To that end, we want to assist you in addressing violations consistently and thoughtfully, ensuring that students understand University expectations, policies, and processes so that they can be successful.

On each NMSU campus, there is an assigned Academic Conduct Officer (ACO) to work with faculty members and facilitate the process of addressing alleged violations. The ACO and Office of Student Conduct & Community Development team wants to assist you with these matters and make sure that you feel comfortable with the process of holding our students to the expected scholarly standards and NMSU Core Value of Accountability.

Attached is a checklist created to help you walk through the basic process of addressing academic misconduct cases. Should you have ANY questions about what to do in a particular situation please reference the NMSU Academic Integrity website or contact us via email at ACO@nmsu.edu.

Sincerely,

Ann C. Goodman
AVP & Dean of Students

Cc: *Campus ACOs*
College Deans
Dr. Carol Parker, Provost
Dr. Renay Scott, Vice President for Student Success
Dr. Julia Parra, Chair, NMSU Faculty Senate

Faculty Checklist – Academic Misconduct

I just witnessed an act of academic misconduct or believe that a student plagiarized an assignment what do I do next?

- 1) Collect all of the documentation (evidence) specific to the allegation**
 - a) You may already have all that is applicable; **OR**
 - b) You will want to gather additional documentation and identify others involved in the matter
- 2) Decide how you want to address the matter.** There are two options
 - 1) resolve it directly with the student **or**
 - 2) refer it to the Academic Conduct Officer to process.

Below are the instructions for each option.

a) OPTION 1 - Adjudicate the Matter Autonomously

(Faculty/Student Resolution Process)

- i) **You will notify the student of the academic misconduct allegation via email.**
** See suggested email templates on page 3.*
- ii) Wait for the student's response OR immediately set a time and schedule a meeting with the student (*virtually is preferred*).
- iii) **At the scheduled meeting** with the student you should discuss the allegation, hear their side, talk about proposed resolution (0 on assignment, grade change, etc.)
 - (1) Decide as to their responsibility... *Remember the evidence needs to be clear and convincing.*
 - (2) The student 1 of 3 choices regarding the situation
 - (a) Accepts responsibility and sanction
 - (b) Accept responsibility but not agree to sanction
 - (c) Deny responsibility and request case be heard by academic hearing panel
- iv) **After your meeting**
 - (1) Send an email letter to the student with the link to an online [Academic Case Disposition & Acknowledgement Form](#) for them to complete and submit.
(see suggested email template on page 3)
If hyperlink does not work copy the online link URL to acknowledge next steps
https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?NewMexicoStateUniv&layout_id=18
- v) Complete the online [Academic Misconduct Incident Report](#) with the outcome of the conversation.

b) OPTION 2 - Refer the case to the campus Academic Conduct Officer (ACO)

- i) Complete the online [Academic Misconduct Incident Report](#) and upload all documentation.

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*** Example email template
from faculty ***

TO SCHEDULE FACULTY~STUDENT MEETING

Dear [Insert Student Name]:

This email serves as notification that I believe you have engaged in academic misconduct in my course. Specifically, information I have received indicates to me that you may have [*cheated, plagiarized, etc.*] on [*assignment*] during [*course and section number*] on or about [*date of occurrence*]. The information that supports these suspicions includes: [*list information or "evidence" that supports the charges of academic misconduct*].

I would like to discuss this matter and ask that you provide me with several times that you are available to meet in the next 5 days. I will then schedule a virtual meeting and send you connection instructions. Should you not respond to this email in a timely manner, the case will be forwarded to the campus Academic Conduct Officer for further review.

Additional information about the University's processes may be found on the [Academic Integrity at NMSU](#) website.

Sincerely,

[To be filled in with appropriate information.]

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*** Example email template from faculty ***

TO CONFIRM OUTCOME OF FACULTY~STUDENT MEETING

Dear [Insert Student Name]:

This email is to confirm that on [*insert date and time*] we discussed via [*insert method of communication*] an academic misconduct allegation. Specifically, we discussed evidence that you [*insert misconduct i.e. cheated, plagiarized*] on a [*insert assignment, project, exam, etc.*]. During the conversation you indicated that you understood the allegation and consequently you: [*insert one of the choices below*].

- *accepted responsibility for the charge and proposed sanction*
- *Accepted responsibility for the charge but did not agree with the proposed sanction.*
- *denied responsibility and would like the case to be heard by a Student Academic Hearing Panel*

To resolve this matter, please complete the online [Academic Case Disposition & Acknowledgement Form](#) by [*insert date 5 days from date of email*] to confirm our conversation and your decision. Your response will be received by the campus Academic Conduct Officer who will respond with further information regarding this case.

For additional information regarding your rights and responsibilities in this matter please see the NMSU ARP 5.10/5.11 Student Academic Misconduct. If you have any questions regarding this case, please let me know or send an email to the campus ACO officer at aco@nmsu.edu.

Sincerely,

[To be filled in with appropriate information.]

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*** Example email correspondence from faculty ***
SENT AFTER FACULTY~STUDENT MEETING

EXAMPLE

Dear Student Name:

This email is to confirm that on **Wednesday January 14, 2019** we discussed via **Zoom** an academic misconduct allegation. Specifically, we discussed evidence that you **cheated** on an **Accounting 150 mid-term exam**. During the conversation you indicated that you understood the allegation and consequently you: **denied responsibility and would like the case to be heard by a Student Academic Hearing Panel.**

To resolve this matter, please complete the online **Academic Case Disposition & Acknowledgement Form** by **January 22, 2019** to confirm our conversation and your decision. Your response will be received by the campus Academic Conduct Officer who will respond with further information regarding this case.

For additional information regarding your rights and responsibilities in this matter please see the NMSU ARP 5.10/5.11 Student Academic Misconduct. If you have any questions regarding this case, please let me know or send an email to the campus ACO officer at aco@nmsu.edu.

Sincerely,

Faculty Name:

EXAMPLE EMAIL ONLY

1. **If you choose Option 2, the ACO will coordinate a meeting with you** [the faculty member] to review the allegation and documentation (evidence).
 - a. The ACO will go over the evidence you have provided, the viability of case – is there clear and convincing evidence, and proposed sanctions. Are they reasonable and consistent with the violation, are there other options that should be considered, etc.
 - b. If the information is clear and it appears that there is a violation – the ACO will coordinate an “informal meeting” via Zoom or MS Teams with the student and you [the faculty].
2. **The ACO will send official notification *via email* to the student** noting the specific allegation of academic misconduct and will schedule an “informal meeting”. This correspondence will also be copied to you [the faculty member] and the department head.
 - a. The ACO facilitates the informal meeting (Zoom or MS Teams) and will provide the student an opportunity to address the allegations and will involve you [the faculty member] in the conversation. This process is designed to all parties involved the chance to review the evidence, the situation in general and discuss proposed resolution options.
 - i. The Outcome of the Informal Meeting may include:
 1. Student being found not responsible; or
 2. Student accepting the findings and sanctions; or
 3. Student being found responsible and sanctioned – Level I; or
 4. The student does not accept finding and/or sanction and asks for the case to be heard by the Student Academic Board.
 - ii. At end of meeting the ACO will send the student an on-line [Academic Case Disposition & Acknowledgement Form](#) to acknowledge next steps.
3. **Upon receiving the Acknowledgement Form, the ACO will send a formal notification to student of the final outcome of informal meeting.**
 - a. Student receives notification of meeting finding and case is closed (faculty member and department heads are copied); **OR**
 - b. Student receives notification of Academic Hearing Panel date & time (faculty member and department heads are copied)

SANCTION CONSIDERATIONS

While the conduct process is designed to hold an individual accountable to rules and expectations, part of the mission of higher education institutions is to ensure that the discipline process is also educational in nature. Keeping this in mind, the university has a duty to ensure that students are aware of those expectations before a problem arises and educate violators.

As it relates to academic conduct standards, information should be shared in course syllabi, and discussed regularly as a part of assignments and resources that students can use. When it comes to assessing sanctions or penalties for a violation the following items should be taken into consideration:

SANCTION CONSIDERATIONS

- 1) Severity of the violation
 - a) Deliberation / Intent
 - b) Impact on the Community / University
- 2) Prior violations/prior academic disciplinary history
 - a) Related vs Unrelated
- 3) Mitigating or Aggravating circumstances surrounding the violations

- 4) Motivation for the behavior
 - a) Value of Learning
 - b) What has the student learned?
 - c) What gaps remain?
- 5) Sanctions assigned in cases involving similar violations
 - a) Equitable Treatment
 - b) Application of consistent standards for sanctions
- 6) **Desired developmental & educational impact**

Level I Sanction: Level I sanctions are intended for first time violations by undergraduate students and for less serious (e.g. unintentional) breaches of academic integrity. Level I sanctions are limited to one or more of the following:

1. Verbal warning issued in coordination with the Academic Conduct Officer, to ensure the student signs the Academic Misconduct Report Form, acknowledging receipt of the warning, and for central documentation;
2. Requirement to re-do an academic assignment;
3. Imposition of a failing grade on an assignment; or
4. Reduction of final grade in course by one letter grade.

Level II Sanction: Level II sanctions are imposed for first time violations by graduate students, and for repeat violations and more serious breaches of academic integrity by undergraduate students. Level II sanctions are limited to one or more of the following:

1. Written reprimand issued in coordination with the Academic Conduct Officer, to ensure the student signs the Academic Misconduct Report Form, acknowledging receipt of the warning, and for central documentation;
2. Imposition of a failing grade in the course;
3. Disciplinary probation for a specified time period;
4. Disciplinary suspension for a specified time period;
5. Disciplinary dismissal for a specified time period; or
6. A notation of academic misconduct on the student's official transcript.

ADDITIONAL EDUCATIONAL SANCTIONS

An Academic Integrity Module is currently under development and will be available to be assigned by the Academic Conduct Officer.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A STUDENT REQUESTS THAT THEIR CASE GOES TO AN ACADEMIC HEARING PANEL

If a student does not accept responsibility for a violation or the proposed sanction the ACO will coordinate a meeting of the Academic Hearing Panel. **You, as the faculty member will be a part of that process to provide an overview of the documented evidence, etc.**

Below are the steps that you can expect to happen:

1. The ACO will identify 3 panel members from the Student Academic Conduct Board to serve on an administrative hearing panel (identify time, date, meeting venue URL)
 - a. The ACO will send the student an official notification of Academic Hearing Panel date and time.
2. On the date of the hearing, the ACO will convene the hearing process and will facilitate a process that allows the student the opportunity to address the allegation(s)
**NOTE: The administrative hearing is recorded by ACO*
 - a. ACO Processes Outcome of academic administrative hearing
 - i. Student found not responsible OR found responsible and sanctioned
 - ii. ACO immediately sends Academic Case Disposition & Acknowledgement Form
 - b. ACO sends notification to student of outcome of academic administrative hearing (*faculty member, department heads, college deans are copied*)
 - i. Outcome Responsible - Sanction Level I - case is closed.
 - ii. Outcome Responsible - Sanction Level II
 1. case is closed OR student can request final review by Provost
3. If student contests decision ACO compiles hearing record for Provost to conduct an administrative review
4. Provost issues final decision (can uphold, modify, or reverse decision/sanction) – case is closed. (*Provost reviews finding & sanction and issues letter*)
5. ACO completes CRF (Case Resolution Form) documentation in Maxient uploading final electronic documents, etc.