Academic and Professional Standards

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RIGHTS, PENALTIES, AND APPEAL

In this section:

- Academic Rights
- Application of Policy to Students
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Academic Rights, Penalties, and Appeal Procedures

A student, by voluntarily accepting admission to West Virginia University or enrolling in a class or course of study offered by West Virginia University, accepts the academic requirements and criteria of the institution. It is the student’s responsibility to fulfill coursework and degree or certificate requirements and to know and meet criteria for satisfactory academic progress and completion of the program.

Any question of interpretation regarding Student Rights and Responsibilities shall be referred to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs or his or her designee or the Chancellor/Vice President for Health Sciences or his or her designee (Associate Provost for Undergraduate or Graduate Academic Affairs) for final determination.

Any behaviors not academic in nature but related to student conduct should be referred to the Campus Student Code as stipulated in Board of Governors Policy 31.

Academic Rights

Each student at West Virginia University shall have the following academic rights:

1. Right to have his/her performance evaluated solely upon performance in the coursework as measured against academic standards. The student shall not be evaluated prejudicially, capriciously, or arbitrarily. The student shall not be graded, nor shall his/her performance be evaluated, on the basis of his/her race, age, disability, veteran status, religion, sexual orientation, color, national origin, or other protected status.
2. Right to appeal any academic penalty or sanction.
3. Right to access a copy of the college or University catalog or program brochure in which all current program requirements and standards are described (e.g. required courses, total credit requirements, time in residence requirements, special programs requirements, minimum Grade Point Average, probation standards, professional standards, etc.).
4. Right to receive course syllabi with descriptions of content and requirements for any course in which they are enrolled (e.g., attendance expectations, special requirements, laboratory requirements including time, field trips and costs, grading standards and procedures, professional standards, etc.).
5. Right to assigned grades issued from the instructor of each course to students enrolled in the course consistent with the academic rights set out in the preceding sections.

APPLICATION OF POLICY TO STUDENTS

Students are expected to adhere to academic requirements and standards in all academic settings, classrooms, laboratories, clinics, and at any other activities that are part of academic requirements. Students who fail to meet the academic requirements or standards, including those for academic dishonesty, may be subject to one or more of the penalties described below.

Academic Requirements & Consequences of Failure to Meet Requirements

Normally students may finish a program of study according to the requirements under which they were admitted to the program. However, requirements are subject to change at any time with reasonable notice provided to students.

A student at West Virginia University who fails to meet academic requirements or standards, including those for academic honesty, will be subject to one or more of the following academic penalties:

1. A lower final grade, failure of the course or exclusion from further participation in class (including laboratories or clinical experiences). A lower grade or failure of the course can be imposed by the instructor. Exclusion from further participation from class requires consultation with the College Dean and the Associate Provost for Undergraduate or Graduate Affairs.
2. The grade of unforgivable failure (UF). The course instructor can recommend the grade of UF; the UF penalty can only be imposed by the dean of the college or the dean's designee upon recommendation from the instructor. The UF appears in a student’s transcript (permanent record) and is included in GPA calculations.
3. Academic probation at the program or college level for failure to meet program requirements and academic standards. Students placed on probation shall be notified in writing by the department chair or college administrator, including the reason for the probation, the length of the probation, and the requirements for removing or continuing the probation.
4. Academic dismissal (program dismissal), which is defined as termination of student status, including any right or privilege to receive some benefit or recognition or certification. “A student may be academically dismissed from any program and remain eligible to enroll in courses in other programs at the institution, or a student may be academically dismissed from the institution and not remain eligible to enroll in other courses or program at the institution” (BOG Policy 15, page 3).

Academic Units shall determine and specify the conditions under which a grade of unforgivable failure (UF), academic probation while in the program, and academic dismissal from programs are imposed as penalties. A student may appeal any academic penalty by following the procedures below.

Appeals

Students may appeal any academic penalty or sanction imposed by an instructor, the institution, or its constituent academic units.

Appeals may include but are not limited to:

• Appeals of grade penalty. Grades for individual course assignments can only be appealed when the final grade is issued (see additional information below);
• Appeals of exclusion from class;
• Appeals of imposition of academic probation;
• Appeals of dismissal from undergraduate programs;
• Appeals of dismissal from graduate programs;
• Appeals of dismissal from professional degree programs;
• Appeals of dismissal from the institution; and
• Appeals of final grade, including the grade of unforgivable failure (UF) if determined by a violation other than academic dishonesty. [Students have the right to appeal final course grades which they believe reflect a capricious, arbitrary, or prejudiced academic evaluation, or reflect discrimination based on race, sex, age, handicap, veteran status, religion or creed, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. The grade appealed shall remain in effect until the appeal procedure is completed or the problem resolved.]

[Students have the right to appeal final course grades which they believe reflect a capricious, arbitrary, or prejudiced academic evaluation, or reflect discrimination based on race, sex, age, handicap, veteran status, religion or creed, sexual orientation, color, or national origin. The grade appealed shall remain in effect until the appeal procedure is completed or the problem resolved.]
The College Dean or his/her designee is the final level of appeal for grade penalties, exclusion from class, final course grades, and academic probation within program or college. The Office of the Provost is the final level of appeal for dismissal from the program, not including suspension and probation imposed by the university upon the student for failure to maintain minimum academic requirements (GPA).

**APPEAL PROCEDURES FOR ACADEMIC PENALTIES EXCLUDING APPEAL OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

All appeals must be filed within 30 business days of the penalty. For final grade appeals, the appeal must be filed within 30 business days of the final grade posting to the student’s record.

**STEP 1: LEVEL ONE**

1. Student receives written notice of one of or a combination of the following: (a) final grade; (b) failure to meet or maintain academic standard; (c) methods, if any, by which the student may correct the failure; and (d) nature of the penalty. If the penalty is academic dishonesty, instructors should follow the Academic Dishonesty procedure as provided in the catalog. Academic dishonesty is addressed under WVU Board of Governors Policy 31, concurrent with Policy 15.

2. The student informally meets with the instructor or program/unit leader who assigned the penalty, to resolve the issue. The course instructor or program/unit leader reviews the evidence provided by the student, makes a decision to uphold or overturn the penalty, and informs the student within five business days. If the student is dissatisfied with the decision or outcome from his/her meeting with the instructor or program/unit leader, the student must file a formal appeal (Step 2). If the student is satisfied with the outcome or penalty, the case is closed.

**Special Notes**

If the course instructor or program/unit leader is not available, or the nature of the complaint makes the discussion with the instructor and unit leader uncomfortable, the student may proceed to Step 2 within ten business days after contacting the instructor.

Appeals related to programmatic level infractions (such as failure to meet program academic standards, requirements or professional behavior) should be filed to the Department Chair.

Final grade appeals during the summer, when faculty members are not available, may be initially filed with the Department Chair (Level Two).

**STEP 2: LEVEL TWO:**

1. Within five business days of the instructor’s or program/unit leader’s decision, the student formally appeals (in writing) the decision to uphold penalty or outcome from the meeting with instructor or program/unit leader (listed in Step 1 above) to the Department Chair (or designee). In this appeal, the student must provide all documentation and evidence forming the basis of the appeal. When a student appeals a final grade, the course instructor must provide all criteria for determining grades.

2. The chair or unit leader reviews the appeal, makes a decision to uphold or rescind the penalty, and informs the student and instructor or program/unit leader of the decision within five business days.

3. If the appeal is resolved, the case is closed. If the student is dissatisfied, he or she may proceed to Step 3.

**STEP 3: LEVEL THREE:**

1. The student formally appeals (in writing) the penalty to the College Dean (or designee) within five business days of the Department Chair’s decision.

2. The Dean reviews the case, refers the case to the unit’s Academic Review Committee, or appoints a representative committee that consists of three or more faculty members, including at least one member from outside of the instructor’s department, for a recommendation within ten business days.

3. The Dean, as the President’s designee:
   - Reviews the committee’s recommendation, makes a final decision, and informs the student, the instructor, and the Department Chair within ten business days. The case is closed.
   - If the decision is dismissal from the program or from the University, the student may appeal to the Provost’s designee (Associate Provost for Undergraduate or Graduate Academic Affairs) (Step 4: Level Four).

**STEP 4: LEVEL FOUR:**

1. The student formally appeals to the Provost’s designee within five business days of the decision from the Dean. The student will be required to supply evidence and establish grounds for the appeal.

2. The Provost’s designee reviews the case and makes a final decision within thirty (30) days of his/her receipt of such appeal, except where adherence to such time period would be impracticable, in which case such time period shall be extended as warranted by particular circumstances.
ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

In this section:
• Academic Integrity and Dishonesty
• Academic Dishonesty Defined
• Penalties for Academic Dishonesty
• Procedures for Academic Dishonesty

Academic Integrity and Dishonesty

Students of West Virginia University are citizens of a broader academic community. As such, the University expects that every member of its academic community share its historic and traditional commitment to honesty, integrity, and the search for truth. To meet these standards, academic dishonesty will not be tolerated.

Academic Dishonesty Defined

The term “academic dishonesty” means plagiarism; cheating and dishonest practices in connection with examinations, papers, and/or projects; and forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud as it relates to academic or educational matters.

1. The term “plagiarism” means the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment, including, but not limited to, the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another individual engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.

2. The terms “cheating and dishonest practices in connection with examinations, papers, and/or projects” means (i) giving or receiving of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, examinations, or any other assignment for a grade; (ii) depending upon the aid of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in quizzes, tests, examinations, writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments; (iii) the acquisition or use, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the University faculty or staff; or (iv) engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.

3. The terms “forgery, misrepresentation, or fraud as it relates to academic or educational matters” means (i) wrongfully altering, or causing to be altered, the record of any grade or other educational record; (ii) use of University documents or instruments of identification with the intent to defraud; (iii) presenting false data or information or intentionally misrepresenting one’s records for admission, registration, or withdrawal from the University or from a University course; (iv) knowingly presenting false data or information or intentionally misrepresenting one’s records for personal gain; (v) knowingly furnishing the results of research projects or experiments for the inclusion in another’s work without proper citation; or (vi) knowingly furnishing false statements in any University academic proceeding.

Penalties for Academic Dishonesty

Cases of academic dishonesty shall be concurrently subject to academic penalties listed in WVU Board of Governors Policy 15 (http://bog.wvu.edu/r/download/158325) and the disciplinary penalties in Policy 31 (http://bog.wvu.edu/r/download/158326).

ACADEMIC PENALTIES FOR A CHARGE OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

The instructor may impose the following academic penalties:

• A lower grade or failing project/paper/test grade
• A lower final grade
• Failure of the course

In addition to the above penalties, the instructor may also recommend to the department chair and college dean penalties the college dean may impose.

The college dean may impose the following academic penalties:

• Exclusion from further participation in class (including laboratories or clinical experiences)
• Grade of unforgivable failure (UF)
• Exclusion from an academic program*
• Academic probation within a program*
• Academic dismissal from a program*

*These sanctions may be enforced if the academic dishonesty occurs in a course in the student’s major college.

DISCIPLINARY PENALTIES

Disciplinary penalties may include the following:
• Expulsion: Permanent separation of the student from the University. Permanent notification will appear on the student’s transcript.
• Suspension: Separation of the student from the University for a specified period of time. Permanent notification will appear on the student’s transcript.
• Probation: A written reprimand for prohibited conduct that specifies a designated probationary period of time and includes the probability of more severe disciplinary sanctions if, he/she/ commits academic dishonesty.

**Procedures for Academic Dishonesty**

Upon discovering academic dishonesty, and/or to begin the process of issuing a penalty, the following steps must be followed:

**STEP 1: INSTRUCTOR LEVEL**

1. The instructor notifies the student in writing of the academic dishonesty charge and impending penalty within five (5) business days of discovering the infraction.
2. The instructor meets with the student to discuss the academic dishonesty charge, assigned penalty and to review all relevant materials.
3. The instructor shall fill out the Academic Dishonesty Form (http://studentlife.wvu.edu/download/99267) found on the Office of Student Conduct website (http://studentlife.wvu.edu/office_of_student_conduct). A student must sign the Academic Dishonesty Form and indicate whether he/she accepts or rejects responsibility for both the charge and the penalty. The instructor will send signed copies to the department chair, college dean, and the Office of Student Conduct. If student accepts responsibility of both the charge and penalty, the case is closed. If the students does not accept responsibility of the academic dishonesty charge and/or penalty, he/she may appeal to the department chair (Step 2 below).
4. If the penalty is unforgivable failure (UF), and if the student accepts both the charge and penalty, the instructor shall recommend to the college dean to impose the UF on the student’s permanent records. Case is closed.

**STEP 2: DEPARTMENT CHAIR LEVEL**

1. The student appeals in writing and provides supporting documents to the department chair within five (5) business days of his/her meeting with the course instructor.
2. The department chair will assess all evidence and or meet with impacted parties for additional information. The chair shall make a final determination within ten (10) business days, fill out the Academic Dishonesty Form, and have the student sign. Copies of the signed Academic Dishonesty Form shall be distributed to the student, instructor, the college dean, and the Office of Student Conduct. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution reached during the meeting with the department chair, he/she may proceed to step 3 below.
3. If the penalty is unforgivable failure (UF), and if the student accepts both the charge and penalty, the department chair shall recommend to the college dean to impose the UF on the student’s permanent records. Case is closed.

**STEP 3: OFFICE OF STUDENT CONDUCT (UNIVERSITY LEVEL)**

1. The student appeals in writing and provides supporting documents to the Office of Student Conduct.
2. The Office of Student Conduct, “Conduct Process” will apply. (See West Virginia University Campus Student Code)
3. Student Conduct Board shall review all evidence and determine the outcome. If the recommendation is a penalty of unforgivable failure (UF), the Student Conduct Board shall contact the respective college dean to impose the penalty on the student’s permanent records. Case is closed.

**GRADUATE ACADEMIC PROBATION, SUSPENSION, AND DISMISSAL POLICY AND APPEAL**

In this section:

- Probation
- Suspension and Dismissal
- Reinstatement After Suspension
- Appeal of Suspension or Dismissal

**Probation**

Graduate students may be placed on probation by the dean of their college or school by failing to maintain acceptable grades in their courses or in their performance in other areas such as research progress or professional behavior. Graduate students with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) below 2.75 may be subject to probation by the dean of their college or school. Individual academic units may designate a higher GPA or other academic standards required for students to remain in good standing.

Probation, which is not recorded on a student’s permanent record, constitutes a warning to the student that standards are not being met. A letter of probation delivered by the graduate program to the student must outline the reason for the sanction as well as delineate academic or other benchmarks for the student to attain in order to have the probation sanction removed. Students may request review of the sanction of probation by the academic official who imposed it at any point in a semester. At the conclusion of the semester in which a student was placed on probation, the academic program shall review the academic record and performance of the student. If the stipulations set forth in the letter of probation have been met, the student
is removed from probation. If the stipulations have not been met, student standing is reassessed by the program and the student may continue on probation or be suspended or dismissed by the academic unit.

Suspension and Dismissal

Students failing to maintain satisfactory academic standing, progress toward their degree, or professional behavior as delineated by the letter of probation may be suspended or dismissed from their degree program. Suspension or dismissal from a program normally follows a sanction of probation in cases where students have been counseled regarding academic stipulations and fail to attain those stipulations. Typically, students are suspended or dismissed from a program at the end of an academic term and are notified formally by the department and/or the dean of the college/school of suspension or dismissal from their program. However, students can be suspended or dismissed from their program without a prior probation period in the case of serious violations of academic or professional standards, with approval of the school or college dean and the Associate Provost for Graduate Academic Affairs. If the program recommends dismissal from the University the case is referred to the Office of Student Conduct and Student Conduct processes apply.

Suspension from a program means that a student will not be permitted to register for classes offered by the program or participate in other program activities until the student has been officially reinstated. The normal period of suspension is a minimum of one academic semester but will not exceed one calendar year. A student who has been suspended for academic deficiencies and who takes courses at other institutions during the period of suspension cannot automatically transfer such credit toward a degree at WVU upon readmission. Students are not eligible for readmission if they earn lower than a 2.75 at other institutions while on suspension from WVU. After one semester of satisfactory performance at WVU, and on request of the student’s program, the appropriate transfer credit will be entered into the student’s record.

Dismissal from a program can result from repeated failure to make academic progress, failure to meet probationary terms set forth in writing by the student’s program, violations of written standards provided by the student’s program, or serious violations of professional standards. A student who is dismissed from a program will not be permitted to register for any classes offered by the University for academic credit. After five calendar years from the effective date of dismissal, any student who has been dismissed shall, upon written application, be considered for reinstatement to the University with the terms of reinstatement to be established by the college or school willing to reinstate the student. Failure to meet these terms will result in permanent academic dismissal.

Reinstatement After Suspension

During the semester immediately following the effective date of suspension, suspended students may petition in writing for reinstatement. The college or school petitioned shall establish the terms of reinstatement for successful student petitions. After one calendar year from the effective date of suspension, any student who has been suspended once shall, upon written application, be reinstated to the University and to the college or school in which the student was previously enrolled, unless the student petitions for admission to another college or school. A suspended student who is reinstated under the provisions above will be placed on academic probation. Each college or school shall have the right to establish requirements or performance expectations. After the second or any subsequent suspension, a student may be reinstated to the University provided that a college or school agrees to reinstate the student. After a student has been reinstated, he or she must apply for readmission through the Office of Admissions.

Appeal of Suspension or Dismissal

See the Academic Rights, Penalties, and Appeal information in the Academic and Professional Standards section.

Research Integrity

Integrity in research and scholarship is an obligation of all who engage in the acquisition, application, and dissemination of knowledge. Research and scholarly work by West Virginia University faculty, staff, and students is governed by a number of federal, state, and institutional policies. Information on policies and procedures, guidelines, educational programs, and monitoring and accountability in these areas is provided at oric.research.wvu.edu.

Any graduate student who conducts research using animals must have a protocol approved by the Animal Care and Use Committee before starting the research. Information and procedures are available at oric.research.wvu.edu/animal.

Any graduate student who conducts research involving human subjects must have the approval of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects before starting the research. Information and procedures are available at oric.research.wvu.edu/human-research-protections-program-and-the-irb.

All members of the University community are obligated to report observed, suspected, or apparent misconduct in research. Reports should be made to the University’s research integrity officer through the link to Online Research Problem Reporting at oric.research.wvu.edu.

Intellectual Property

The Office of Technology Transfer is responsible for the protection and commercialization of intellectual property for all WVU organizations. Faculty members and other researchers, including graduate students, are the primary source of intellectual property, either through the invention of new
products or processes, or through know-how and expertise in certain fields. Intellectual property can be protected through patents, copyrights, trademarks, and trade secrets. Commercialization occurs primarily through licenses of patents and/or know-how to existing companies, and, in some cases, through the creation of a joint venture or even a start-up company. Policies, forms, and other useful information about intellectual property and technology transfer activities at WVU is available at techtransfer.research.wvu.edu.