Academic Standards

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RIGHTS, PENALTIES, AND APPEAL

In this section:

• Academic Rights
• Application of Policy to Students
• Academic Requirements & Consequences of Failure to Meet Requirements
• Appeals

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.]

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
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/r/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 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.

UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC PROBATION AND SUSPENSION POLICY AND APPEAL

In this section:

- Undergraduate Academic Probation and Suspension Policy
- Suspension Guide
- Probation Procedures
- Suspension Procedures
- Duration of Suspension
- Appeal of Suspension
- Summer Enrollment for Students Suspended for Fall
- Immediate Reinstatement after Suspension
- Readmission after Serving Suspension

Undergraduate Academic Probation and Suspension Policy

This policy concerns academic probation and suspension (referred to below as probation and suspension) from the University. Individual schools, colleges, and programs may place students on probation or dismiss them from their programs as well, using criteria that are the same as or different from those below. Students who are dismissed from a program may transfer to another program if they meet the program’s admission requirements or they may be advised in the University College until they are able to be accepted to a program.

Any student with an overall grade point average (GPA) below 2.0 is considered to be on probation and may be eligible for suspension. The standards that are used to determine a student’s eligibility for suspension are based on overall GPA in relation to credit hours attempted. Credit hours attempted include all credits included on the student’s WVU transcript (regardless of where or how completed and including credits with grades of F). Students whose GPAs are below the following requirements are eligible for suspension from the University:
## Suspension Guide

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Hours Attempted*</th>
<th>Minimum cumulative GPA*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-28 hours</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29-58 hours</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59-88 hours</td>
<td>1.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89 or more hours</td>
<td>2.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Probation Procedures

At the conclusion of every term, students on probation (i.e., with a GPA below 2.0) are sent a probation letter (via e-mail to their MIX account and by post to their permanent address) from the Office of the University Registrar (OUR). This letter informs students about their academic status, explains what is meant by probation, provides information on resources available to help them improve their academic performance, and describes the consequences of continued poor performance, including the standards and procedures concerning suspension.

### Suspension Procedures

At the conclusion of each spring term only, students eligible for suspension are sent a suspension letter rather than a probation letter from the OUR (via e-mail to their MIX account and by post to their permanent address) and are suspended from the University effective at the end of the summer term. This letter informs students that they have been suspended from the University, explains what that means, and provides information about appealing the suspension. The letter also describes procedures for reinstatement to the University after their suspension period and the impact of taking classes at other institutions during the suspension period.

Students may also be suspended at the end of fall or summer term, as recommended to the OUR by the designated academic officer in each school or college, based on a failure to meet the provisions of a prior contract put in place for a reinstated student.

### Duration of Suspension

Students who are suspended for the first time may not enroll in classes at WVU (including sections offered through Extended Learning) for the following major term (fall semester). Students suspended for a second time will not be allowed to enroll in classes at WVU (including sections offered through Extended Learning) for one calendar year. Students suspended for a third and final time will not be allowed to return to WVU for a minimum of five years.

### Appeal

Suspended students have until early June (exact date specified in written notice of suspension) to appeal the suspension by sending a request to their school or college by e-mail or post. A designated academic officer in each school or college will then have until July 1 to review the requests and to reinstate students whose appeals are approved. Students who appeal and are denied or who do not appeal their suspension will be removed from their fall classes.

### Summer Enrollment

Students who are suspended for fall may enroll in summer courses at WVU (main campus, Extended Learning, Potomac State College and WVU Institute of Technology). Students who are enrolled in summer courses as of July 1 will not be removed from their fall classes until summer grades are available. Students who rehabilitate their GPA above minimums required for their class will be automatically removed from suspension. Colleges and schools may elect to defer a reinstatement decision as well until summer grades are available. Each college or school will communicate to the OUR the final decision on reinstatement immediately after summer grades are released. Only summer courses taken at WVU will be considered in determining eligibility for reinstatement for the fall following suspension.

### Immediate Reinstatement after Suspension

Students who are suspended and subsequently reinstated following a successful appeal or a successful summer term may be retained in their major for advising.

### Readmission after Serving Suspension

Suspended students who wish to be readmitted into the University after their required suspension period must contact Undergraduate Admission. Students, at the discretion of their College/School, may remain in their major at the time they leave WVU or change majors upon return. All reinstated students whose GPAs are below the suspension cutoff are given a contract that describes the conditions that must be met to avoid suspension in future terms.