Academic Standards

Academic Rights, Penalties, and Appeals

The policies described in this section are based on the West Virginia University (WVU) Board of Governors Policy 15, Student Academic Rights. This section expands the general policy to include procedures for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students at WVU (not including the Potomac State and WVU Tech campuses).

A student, by voluntarily accepting admission to West Virginia University (WVU) or enrolling in a class or course of study offered by WVU, accepts the academic requirements and criteria of the institution. 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. 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. 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. Further, WVU students 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 is prohibited and is subject to academic penalties. Students who fail to meet academic requirements or standards, including those for academic dishonesty, may be subject to one or more of the academic penalties described in the Academic Penalties section.

Any question of interpretation regarding student rights and responsibilities, academic penalties, or appeal processes for academic penalties shall be referred to the Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs (or designee) or the Vice President for Health Sciences (or designee) 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 (http://bog.wvu.edu/files/d/4c27ce4e-93b5-451b-a557-c9d8ab25a773/policy-31-dec-18-2015-amendment.pdf). Although academic penalties are imposed on students who engage in academic dishonesty according to the procedures described below, findings of academic dishonesty may also be taken into consideration with respect to disciplinary penalties and procedures described in the Campus Student Code.

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 documents in which all current program requirements and standards are described (e.g. required courses, total credit requirements, time in residence requirements, special program 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.

Academic Dishonesty

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" mean (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 or supervisor 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" mean (i) wrongfully altering, or causing to be altered, any records; (ii) use of University documents or instruments of identification with the intent to defraud; (iii) presenting false data or
Academic Penalties

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, including failure of a course. A lower grade or failure of the course can be imposed by the course instructor/coordinator. The course instructor/coordinator can recommend the grade of unforgivable failure (UF). The UF penalty can only be imposed by the dean of the college or school offering the course after the time limit for a student appeal has expired or the appeal process has been completed, upholding the UF penalty. The student may repeat the course, but the undergraduate D/F repeat process will not be applied to the UF.

2. Other course-related academic penalties. When academic dishonesty occurs within the context of a course (including individually supervised courses), the course instructor/coordinator may impose the following academic penalties, including but not limited to:
   a. Change in assignment or test grade
   b. Required repetition or revision of the assignment or test
   c. Change in course grade
   d. Failure of the course, with possible exclusion from further participation in class, including laboratories or clinical experiences
   e. Other course resolutions within the discretion of the course instructor/coordinator

3. Required repetition or revision of a program requirement, or termination of the student’s participation in specific program-related activities. When academic dishonesty occurs within the context of program requirements and expectations not associated with a specific course (including, but not limited to, completing qualifying exams, conducting research, performing duties associated with a graduate assistantship, performing required service or professional activities, etc.), the student’s program director, supervisor, or chair of an appropriate committee may impose these or similar academic penalties.

4. Exclusion from further participation in class (including laboratories or clinical experiences). Exclusion of a student from further participation in class requires that the course instructor/ coordinator first consult with the dean of the college or school offering the course.

5. Failure of a program requirement or failure to meet academic standards. Program requirements and standards must be described in the catalog or other program documents provided or available to students. Program requirements may include such items as passing a qualifying exam, maintaining progress on research, developing required technical skills, or meeting professional standards of conduct (including the avoidance of academic dishonesty). Failure of a program requirement or failure to meet academic standards must be communicated to the student in writing, typically by their program director or chair of the committee that assesses the program requirement or academic standard.

6. Academic probation or suspension at the program, college, school level for failure to meet program requirements and academic standards, or at the university level for failure to meet grade point average standards. Students placed on probation or suspension shall be notified in writing, including the reason for the probation or suspension, the length of the probation or suspension, and the requirements for removing or continuing the probation or suspension. More information concerning probation and suspension of undergraduate students at the university level is available in the Academic Standards section of the undergraduate catalog. More information about probation and suspension of graduate students at the program, college, or school level is in the Academic Standards section of the graduate catalog as well as in program documents.

7. Dismissal from a program, college, school, or the university. Dismissal 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). Dismissal from a program, college, or school must be communicated to the Associate Provost for Undergraduate or Graduate Academic Affairs or to the Health Sciences Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs once the time limit for a student appeal has expired or the appeal process has been completed. The Associate Provost or Associate Vice President submits a request to the Office of the University Registrar to change the student’s status to non-degree. Academic dismissal from the university (expulsion) requires consultation and approval from the student’s dean, the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (Health Sciences students only), and the Provost’s Office.

Appeals

In this section:

• General Information about Appeals (p. 3)
• Appeal Procedures for Academic Penalties (p. 3)
• Disciplinary Penalties for Academic Dishonesty (p. 6)
GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT APPEALS

Students may appeal any academic penalty or sanction described above and imposed by a course instructor/coordinate, the institution, or its constituent academic units through the procedures described in this section of the catalog with the following exceptions:

- Probation and suspension imposed by the university upon undergraduate students for failure to maintain minimum university academic requirements (GPA) may not be appealed through the process described in this section of the catalog. University probation based on GPA may not be appealed. University suspension of undergraduate students based on GPA may be appealed as described in the Academic Standards section of the undergraduate catalog (http://catalog.wvu.edu/undergraduate/coursecredittermsclassification/#probationsuspensiontext).
- Disciplinary penalties, including but not limited to probation, suspension, or expulsion from the university, imposed by the Office of Student Conduct may not be appealed through this process. Refer to the Campus Student Code for procedures to appeal disciplinary penalties, including those for academic dishonesty.

Appeals may include but are not limited to:

- Appeals of a final grade, including the recommendation of a grade of unforgivable failure (UF). Grades for individual course assignments cannot be appealed except in the context of a final grade appeal or a charge of academic dishonesty (see below). The grade appealed shall remain in effect until the appeal procedure is completed or the problem resolved.
- Appeals of academic penalties for academic dishonesty. Students may appeal both the charge of academic dishonesty and the academic penalty imposed.
- Appeals of exclusion from class. If the student appeals, the dean of the college or school offering the course will determine if the student shall be allowed to attend and participate in class until the case is determined.
- Appeals of failure of academic program requirements.
- Appeals of imposition of academic probation for graduate and professional students.
- Appeals of imposition of academic suspension for graduate and professional students. If the student appeals, the dean of the college or school offering the student’s program will determine if the student shall be allowed to continue in the program until the case is determined.
- Appeals of dismissal from undergraduate, graduate, or professional degree programs. If the student appeals, the dean of the college or school offering the student’s program will determine if the student shall be allowed to continue in the program until the case is determined.
- Appeals of dismissal from the institution.

The primary purpose of the appeal procedure is to allow review of a penalty or sanction in cases where a student believes that due process was not followed or that the penalty or sanction was imposed unfairly or inconsistently with program and university standards and regulations.

Students have the right to appeal academic penalties that 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. Additional grounds for appeal may include: unreasonable severity of the penalty; demonstrable prejudice in the decision-making process; a belief that the evidence does not support the finding of guilt (in the case of academic dishonesty) or the choice of penalty; or additional evidence or new information that was not considered in determining the penalty.

If a student does not appeal an academic penalty, fails to follow the appeal procedures described below, or does not attend a scheduled meeting regarding the appeal, the academic penalty will be upheld.

APPEAL PROCEDURES FOR ACADEMIC PENALTIES

Time limits:

The person making a charge of academic dishonesty must notify the student in writing of the charge and penalty within 10 business days of discovering the infraction.

Students who wish to appeal an academic penalty must begin their appeal at Level 1 or 2 (described below) within 30 calendar days of the posting of the final grade or delivery of the written notice of the penalty. In most cases, students should begin their appeal at Level 1, but if they are unable to meet with the person who imposed the penalty or the nature of the appeal makes the discussion with that individual uncomfortable, students may proceed directly to Level 2.

The person charged with reviewing an appeal must inform the student of their decision to uphold or overturn the penalty within 21 calendar days of receiving the written appeal from the student. This time limit may be extended at Level 4 at the discretion of the Provost.

Students must submit their appeal in writing to the person charged with reviewing their appeal at Levels 2, 3, and 4 within 14 calendar days of delivery of the written decision on the appeal at the previous level.

Individuals responsible for reviewing appeals:

The appeal procedures below indicate who is responsible for reviewing appeals at each level. These individuals at levels 2 and 3 may defer this responsibility to a designee or to a standing or ad-hoc committee. In some cases, program, college, or school documents may provide additional
guidance on who is charged with reviewing specific types of appeals. Any disagreements about who is responsible for appeal decisions will be resolved by the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs in Health Sciences, or the Associate Provost for Undergraduate or Graduate Academic Affairs.

Individuals and committees reviewing appeals may convene individual or joint meetings or request additional materials to collect further evidence. The student may be accompanied to meetings by a person of his or her choice from the institution. Such advisors may consult with but may not speak on behalf of their advisees or otherwise participate directly in the proceedings, unless they are given specific permission to do so by the individual or committee conducting the appeal. The meeting is not adversarial in nature; the formal rules of evidence do not apply.

The individual responsible for reviewing an appeal assesses the evidence and reviews any committee recommendations. The individual may accept a committee’s recommendation in whole or in part, or may exercise his or her sole discretion in making a final decision about the appeal.

Communication:

Except in the case of final grades, students must be informed in writing of any academic penalty (or the intent to impose a penalty of a grade of UF). All communication concerning appeals of academic penalties or sanctions must come directly from, or be directed to, the student who has received the penalty or sanction. Although students and others named below may consult with third parties, communication about an appeal should be conducted between the individuals or committees identified in these procedures. Communication may take place through written documents, e-mail (using official University e-mail accounts whenever possible), and direct contact (telephone, face-to-face meetings, etc.). Final decisions at each level of appeal must be communicated to the student and other individuals involved with the appeal at prior levels via WVU e-mail.

When an academic penalty is imposed for academic dishonesty, the penalty must be reported to the Office of Student Conduct (http://campuslife.wvu.edu/office_of_student_conduct) after any appeals process is completed. This office will maintain records of academic penalties imposed on individual students for academic dishonesty, and may use this information to initiate or inform disciplinary penalty procedures when deemed appropriate.

Procedures

Level 1: Informal Appeal

Individual responsible for reviewing the appeal at Level 1:

- Final grade, exclusion from class, or other academic penalty for academic dishonesty within the context of a course: Course instructor/coordinator
- Failure of a program requirement, academic penalty for academic dishonesty within the context of program requirements or expectations, or probation, suspension, or dismissal from a program: Program director or chair of committee that imposed the penalty

Procedure

1. If a student is dissatisfied with an academic penalty, the student meets informally with the individual named above to determine if the issue can be resolved.
2. The individual named above reviews the evidence provided by the student, makes a decision to uphold or overturn the penalty, and informs the student of the decision.
3. If the student is satisfied with the outcome or penalty, the case is closed.
4. If the student is dissatisfied with the decision or outcome from the meeting with the individual named above, the student may proceed to Level 2.

Level 2: First Formal Appeal

Individual responsible for reviewing the appeal at Level 2:

- Final grade, exclusion from class, or other academic penalty for academic dishonesty within the context of a course: Chair of the course instructor’s/coordinator’s department or the chair of the department defined by the subject code of the course.
- Failure of a program requirement, academic penalty for academic dishonesty within the context of program requirements or expectations, or probation, suspension, or dismissal from a program: Chair of the department in which the program is administered
- Non-department-based Health Sciences programs: Dean of the school in which the program is administered

Procedure

1. The student formally appeals in writing to the individual named above. 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/coordinator must provide all criteria for determining grades to the individual named above.
2. The individual named above reviews the appeal, makes a decision to uphold or rescind the penalty, and informs the student and course instructor/coordinator or program director/committee chair of the decision.
3. In the case of an academic penalty for academic dishonesty, the individual named above makes a final determination concerning both the student’s guilt and the appropriateness of the penalty.

4. If the appeal is resolved, the case is closed.

5. If the student is dissatisfied, the student may proceed to Level 3.

Level 3: Second Formal Appeal

**Individual responsible for reviewing the appeal at Level 3:**

- Final grade, exclusion from class, or other academic penalty for academic dishonesty within the context of a course: Dean of the college or school in which the course is offered
- Failure of a program requirement, academic penalty for academic dishonesty within the context of program requirements or expectations, or probation, suspension, or dismissal from a program:
  - Department-based programs: Dean of the college in which the program is administered
  - Non-department-based Health Sciences programs: Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs in Health Sciences

**Procedure**

1. The student formally appeals in writing to the individual named above. The student must supply all prior documentation and any additional evidence available concerning the case and to clearly state the grounds for the appeal.

2. The individual named above reviews the appeal, makes a decision to uphold or rescind the penalty, and informs the student and course instructor/coordinator or program director/committee chair of the decision.

3. In the case of academic dishonesty, the individual named above may aggravate the penalty requested by the individual who initiated the charge and penalty.

4. If the appeal concerns a final grade, exclusion from class, other course-related penalty, failure of a program requirement, or program probation, the case is closed.

5. If the student is dissatisfied and the academic penalty involves program suspension (for academic dishonesty only) or dismissal (for any academic reason), the student may proceed to Level 4.

Level 4: Formal Appeal to the Office of the Provost

**Individual responsible for reviewing the appeal at Level 4:**

- Undergraduate students: Associate Provost for Undergraduate Academic Affairs
- Graduate and professional students: Associate Provost for Graduate Academic Affairs

**Procedure**

1. The student formally appeals in writing to the individual named above. The student must supply all prior documentation and any additional evidence available concerning the case and clearly state the grounds for the appeal.

2. The individual named above may appoint and convene a Student Academic Hearing Committee (SAHC) to hear the case and review the appeal. In the case of an academic penalty of program suspension or dismissal based on academic dishonesty, a hearing is required. Members are appointed to the SAHC at the discretion of the individual named above, and shall comprise at least three faculty members. At least one SAHC member should be from the program offering the course or the student’s program; at least one should be from outside the program offering the course or the student’s program.

The committee holds a joint hearing with the student and any individuals involved in imposing the academic penalty or making the academic dishonesty charge; and may also convene additional individual meetings or request additional materials to collect further evidence. The hearing is set outside of the student’s scheduled classes; should the student choose not to appear, the meeting will proceed as scheduled.

The student may be accompanied to the hearing or meetings or be advised by a person of his or her choice from the institution. Likewise, the faculty member, academic officer, or committee recommending academic dismissal may have an advisor from the institution. Such advisors may consult with but may not speak on behalf of their advisees or otherwise participate directly in the proceedings, unless they are given specific permission to do so by the individual or committee conducting the appeal. Witnesses may be called by any of the parties involved. A record of the appeal shall be prepared in the form of summary minutes and relevant attachments and will be provided to the student upon request.

In addition, for cases involving program suspension or dismissal based on academic dishonesty, the student may be accompanied to the hearing or meetings by an attorney, who may question witnesses and make arguments on behalf of the student.

3. The individual named above reviews the appeal, including the SAHC recommendation, and makes a decision to uphold or rescind the penalty, and informs the student and individuals involved in imposing the penalty or reviewing the appeal at prior levels of the decision.

4. The case is closed.
DISCIPLINARY PENALTIES FOR ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

1. The individual who charged the student with academic dishonesty, or any of the individuals or committees that reviewed an appeal at Levels 2 or 3 may determine, in their judgment, that in addition to the academic penalty already assigned, the academic dishonesty rises to a level of significance warranting a potential disciplinary penalty of University probation, suspension, or dismissal (expulsion). Based on this recommendation, the individual named in Level 3 may choose to refer the matter to the Office of Student Conduct. The Office of Student Conduct may also choose to pursue disciplinary penalties based on evidence of repeated instances of academic dishonesty by a student obtained from reports of academic dishonesty penalties. The Office of Student Conduct shall then undertake student disciplinary proceedings consistent with WVU BOG Policy 31 and the Campus Student Code. These proceedings do not affect the academic penalty.

2. If the disciplinary proceedings under the Campus Student Code result in a finding that the academic offense does not warrant additional disciplinary penalty, the case is closed and only any academic penalty imposed and upheld through the academic appeal process will apply.

In this section:

- Undergraduate Academic Probation and Suspension Policy (p. 6)
- Suspension Guide (p. 6)
- Probation Procedures (p. 6)
- Suspension Procedures (p. 7)
- Duration of Suspension (p. 7)
- Appeal of Suspension (p. 7)
- Summer Enrollment for Students Suspended for Fall (p. 7)
- Immediate Reinstatement after Suspension (p. 7)
- Readmission after Serving Suspension (p. 7)

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:

<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>
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</tbody>
</table>

Suspension Guide

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) 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.