

Academic Misconduct: A Guide for Students

Mission Statement

As an academic community, NMSU holds the intellectual and personal growth of the individual to be a central purpose. Its programs are designed to broaden perspectives, enrich awareness, deepen understanding, establish disciplined habit of thought, prepare for meaningful careers, and thus to help develop individuals who are informed, responsible, and productive citizens. Part of this process includes the expectation that students will be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors; therefore, all forms of academic misconduct are prohibited by the NMSU Student Code of Conduct.

Upholding Honesty

Academic integrity and honesty are basic values of NMSU. Students are expected to follow standards of academic integrity and honesty. Academic misconduct implies dishonesty or deception in fulfilling academic requirements and includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, or the furnishing of false information to the university or a university affiliate in academic related matters. An affiliate of the university is any person, organization, or company that works in conjunction with NMSU for the purposes of assisting students in fulfilling their academic requirements.

The Importance of Academic Integrity

Academic integrity suggests that students are honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. Moreover, having such integrity suggests that you are forthright and honest in all aspects of your life. Because academic misconduct may imply dishonesty, you may be affected in the following ways by those who engage in academic misconduct:

- It is unethical and morally wrong
- It hurts the academic community
- Your degree from NMSU will be degraded if the public believes that NMSU students and alumni are dishonest
- You will not receive the full credit for work that you have done honestly because those who were dishonest will likely receive a higher grade
- You may lose a job opportunity or a slot at a desired graduate school to a person who engaged in dishonest behavior and maintained a higher grade point average
- Faculty members may distrust students and create an atmosphere that allows little stimulation and creativity for honest students
- Dishonest students may set a pattern for future dishonest workers and leaders.

Forms of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct violates the NMSU Student Code of Conduct and is defined as dishonesty or deception in fulfilling academic requirements. It includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, un-permitted collaboration, forged attendance (when attendance is required), fabrication (e.g., use of invented information or falsification of research or other findings), using advantages not approved by the instructor (e.g., unauthorized review of a copy of an exam ahead of time), knowingly permitting another student to

plagiarize or cheat from one's work, or submitting the same assignment in different courses without consent of the instructor.

To assist you in understanding academic misconduct the following are examples:

Cheating

Cheating is defined as any attempt by a student to answer questions on a test, quiz, or assignment by means other than his or her own knowledge. Examples include:

- Using the textbook or other materials, such as a notebook, not authorized for use during an examination
- Observing the work of another student or allowing another student to plagiarize, copy, or observe your work
- Using unauthorized material during a test, notes, formula lists, notes written on clothing, etc
- Taking a quiz, exam, or similar evaluation in the place of another person. Providing or requesting assistance from another person in a manner prohibited by the instructor
- Using a laboratory, computer, or calculator improperly or without authorization. Changing material on a graded exam and then requesting a regrading of the exam. Acquiring unauthorized knowledge of an examination or any part of an examination
- Submitting the same paper in two different courses without the knowledge and consent of instructors
- Signing in persons other than yourself for class attendance

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the presentation of the ideas or the writing of someone else as one's own. Examples include:

- Reproducing another person's work, whether published or unpublished. (This also includes using materials from companies that sell research papers)
- Submitting as your own any academic exercise (written work, computer printout, or art project) prepared totally or in part by another
- Allowing another person to substantially alter or revise your work and submitting it as your own
- Using another's written ideas or words without properly acknowledging the source. If a student uses the words of someone else, he or she must put quotation marks around the passage and add indication of its origin, such as a footnote. Simply changing a word or two while leaving the organization and content substantially intact and failing to cite the source is plagiarism. Students should also take note that failure to acknowledge study aids such as Cliff's Notes or common reference sources constitutes plagiarism.

If a student is unsure about a question of plagiarism or cheating, consult the instructor on the matter before submitting the material. If you have further questions, consult the program manager or chair of the Academic Misconduct Appeals Committee.

Examples of Plagiarism

In the textbook *The Art of Public Speaking*, (10th ed., McGraw-Hill) Stephen E. Lucas reviews the most common forms of plagiarism: global, patchwork and incremental.

Global Plagiarism. According to Lucas, global plagiarism takes an entire section of someone's work (usually a single source) and presents it as one's own work. This is blatantly unethical and faculty will see this as one of the most severe forms of academic misconduct. This tactic is usually the result of procrastination and is used by a student who needs something to turn in at the last minute. Resist the temptation to use global plagiarism.

Patchwork Plagiarism. This form of plagiarism, says Lucas, lifts verbatim segments from two or three sources and cobbles them together with connective phrases to give the appearance of original work. Patchwork plagiarism is equally serious to global plagiarism because the ideas of multiple individuals are stolen without giving credit to the creators. Citing your sources along with quoting or paraphrasing avoids this form of academic misconduct.

Incremental Plagiarism. Lucas describes incremental plagiarism as the selective use of small sections of work from a variety of sources. Unlike patchwork plagiarism, which uses stolen segments to build nearly the entire assignment, incremental plagiarism sneaks in phrases, ideas or snippets of information from other authors and intersperses them throughout one's work. Lucas goes on to explain that one form of incremental plagiarism consists of quoting or paraphrasing ideas from a figure that are cited in a secondary source. This denies the work of the secondary source author its due. So if J. Smith quotes George Washington and a student quotes Washington without acknowledging Smith, this is a form of plagiarism.

In sum, academic honesty is the best policy. Proper preparation, avoiding procrastination, and adopting a "when in doubt, cite it" policy will avoid accusation of academic misconduct. A reputation for academic honesty promotes an atmosphere where faculty will go to bat for you with recommendations and career referrals.

Appeals Procedures of NMSU Regarding Academic Misconduct

When academic misconduct is displayed, two issues arise: the issue of the grade in the class over which the instructor has authority, and the issue of dishonest or deceptive behavior over which the Academic Misconduct Appeals Committee has authority to take disciplinary action. Academic dishonesty is a violation of the NMSU Student Code of Conduct.

Both issues are of great importance and must be addressed if the university is to maintain high academic standards, confront deceptive behavior, and assist in changing

unethical behavior. Should a faculty member suspect that you have been involved in academic misconduct, he or she will normally confront you and then determine what action should be taken. The instructor may impose the appropriate grade penalty and/or file a formal judicial referral with University Academic Misconduct Appeals Committee.

If the instructor accuses you of misconduct and takes action, one or both of the following may occur:

- A grade penalty, such as an F, may be imposed on the project or in the course
- A formal appeal may be filed with the Academic Misconduct Appeals Committee.

If the instructor files a formal appeal against you with the Academic Misconduct Appeals Committee:

- You will receive written notification from the Academic Misconduct Appeals Committee including the time and date of your scheduled hearing
- You will present your side of the case to The Academic Misconduct Appeals Committee which is composed of three faculty and two students as well as an observer from the Student Services Offices
- Upon receipt of a referral, the chair of the Academic Misconduct Appeals Committee will notify the parties of the charges and schedule a hearing. The accused will be sent a copy of the formal charge, an information sheet outlining his/her rights and options as provided by the NMSU Student Code of Conduct
- During the hearing, both the faculty member who lodged the complaint and the accused will have the opportunity to present their perspective of the incident. Based on the testimony and evidence presented at the hearing, a decision regarding the charge will be rendered. If the accused is found responsible for the offense, an appropriate disciplinary sanction will be imposed
- After a decision is rendered, the accused has the right to appeal the decision in writing within ten working days
- Should the accused be dissatisfied with the decision of an appeal, under extremely unusual circumstances the accused may request that the Vice President of Academic Affairs and ultimately the University President review the decision. The faculty member will be kept apprised of the progress of this process
- If the accused is found responsible for misconduct through the course of a hearing, the result could be a disciplinary sanction of expulsion, suspension, probation, or other sanction.

For a more detailed description of the hearing process, please consult the document titled “***Makeup and Procedures of the Academic Misconduct Appeals Committee***”.

Student Non-Misconduct Appeals

Invariably students and faculty members have disagreements over grades, classroom procedures, and the enforcement of syllabi requirements. A student has a right to

appeal a grade or decision by a faculty member. However, a grade appeal cannot be filed simply because of dislike of the course outcome or because a student experienced “a rough semester.” Grade and course policy appeals may be filed for the following reasons:

- Failure of the faculty member to follow the course syllabus
- Arbitrary enforcement of course rules and policies
- Unreasonable changes in course syllabi or requirements
- Faculty member non-response to student inquiries
- Classroom conduct considered arbitrary or discriminatory.

Student grade and classroom policy appeals are similar to the academic misconduct procedure. A student with a course complaint should talk individually first to the faculty member and then to the program manager. The program manager will discuss the matter with the faculty member and if no resolution is reached, a joint meeting will be scheduled with student, faculty member, and program manager. Every effort should be made to reach a consensus at this stage of negotiations.

A student who still is not satisfied with the decision reached by the faculty member and the mediation of the program manager has a right to request an appeals hearing. The student will fill out an “Academic Misconduct Appeals Procedures” form (available from the program manager, Student Services’ Office, or Vice President for Academic Affairs Office) and request the faculty member and program manager to sign the form so that it can be forwarded to the Academic Misconduct Appeals Committee. From that point all parties are contacted and a hearing is scheduled in the manner described in the previous section.

Students are reminded that grade appeals must be documented. For this reason, keep copies of graded materials and assessments, correspondence, name of witnesses, or any corroborating evidence to support your appeal.

For a more detailed description of the hearing process, please consult the document titled “**Makeup and Procedures of the Academic Misconduct Appeals Committee**”.

Sources

Several of the ideas in this document have been adapted, with permission (pending), from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio.

Note: The Academic Appeals Committee recommends that this document be amended to the NMSU-Grants Student Code of Conduct.