

# Academic Integrity

AT WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

## A Message from the Dean of Students Office

The Dean of Students Office, with support from the Committee on Academic Policy (CAP), has developed this guide to help faculty members create an atmosphere where academic integrity is recognized and appreciated as a core value of the institution.

The guide is intended to assist the community in understanding the subject of academic integrity and to orient faculty to WPI's specific policies and procedures. It also provides suggestions for how to minimize violations of academic integrity in academic activities inside and outside of class, labs, and projects.

Topics include:

- Aspirations for Academic Integrity at WPI
- Responsibilities of Faculty Members
- What Constitutes an Academic Integrity Violation at WPI?
- What if I Suspect a Violation of Academic Integrity?
- Conduct Records
- Suggestions to Discourage Violations of Academic Integrity

The Dean of Students Office welcomes comments and suggestions from faculty on ways to enhance this guide and/or make the inquiry process as easy as possible. Please feel free to contact us at [dean-of-students@wpi.edu](mailto:dean-of-students@wpi.edu) or 508-831-5201.



## ASPIRATIONS FOR ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AT WPI

Academic integrity is a fundamental principle of learning and a necessary foundation for all academic institutions, particularly those dedicated to independent project-based education. Upholding these principles allows all students an opportunity to obtain a confident command of material and to receive deserved rewards and recognition. All members of the WPI community should maintain high standards of academic integrity to protect the value of the educational process and maintain the credibility of the institution.



## RESPONSIBILITIES OF FACULTY MEMBERS

Education involves the search for and acquisition of knowledge and understanding, which must be evaluated by instructors. As each course/project is unique, evaluation methods may differ in different courses/projects. Thus, instructors set the context of the academic integrity policy in their own courses. Faculty members are responsible for knowing and understanding WPI's policy and procedures for dealing with potential violations of academic integrity.

## WHAT CONSTITUTES AN ACADEMIC INTEGRITY VIOLATION AT WPI

Any student act that interferes with the evaluation of students' actual state of knowledge is a breach of the academic integrity policy.

The following acts provide a broad overview, but not an all-encompassing definition, of what constitutes a violation of academic integrity.

Academic Integrity is defined within the following constructs:

**Cheating:** Attempting to use or intentionally using unauthorized study aids, materials, information, or assistance in any academic activity or assessment.

**Fabrication:** Falsification or invention of data, information, and/or citations in any academic activity, or alteration of official academic records.

**Plagiarism:** Using words, ideas, assertions, data, creative works, or graphics of another without proper attribution in any academic activity.

**Facilitation:** Helping or attempting to help another student to violate any provision of the academic integrity policy.

Additional information about academic integrity for WPI students, including examples of violations of academic integrity, may be found on the Dean of Students website.

## WHAT IF I SUSPECT A VIOLATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY?

The WPI faculty and administration have developed a set of procedures (identified below) designed to ensure consistent (and fair) treatment of undergraduate and graduate students suspected of violations of academic integrity. Faculty are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office via email at [gr-academicintegrity@wpi.edu](mailto:gr-academicintegrity@wpi.edu) or 508-831-5201 with any questions or concerns about the process.



Allegations of violations of academic integrity are resolved by two distinct processes, one for matriculated students and one for non-matriculated students. Per the Student Code of Conduct, once an allegation concerning an academic integrity violation has been made, a student may not drop the course/project, change to audit status, change course/project grading to Pass/Fail, or withdraw from the course/project. If the allegation or proceedings overlap terms to find resolution, the student should receive an incomplete until the case is resolved.

As described below, allegations may involve the Campus Hearing Board (for matriculated students) or an Administrative Decision/Hearing (for non-matriculated students). The standard used in campus conduct hearings is “preponderance of the evidence,” meaning more likely than not. Hearsay and circumstantial evidence are allowed to be considered in hearings.

### MATRICULATED STUDENTS

For matriculated students, allegations of violations of academic integrity may be resolved at the department level or through the Campus Hearing Board, as follows.

1. The instructor of record reports to the department head (or designee) any suspected violation of academic integrity by a student. The department head (or designee) reviews supporting material or evidence to determine if there is reason for believing that a violation of academic integrity may be involved.
2. The instructor of record allows the student to continue the academic activity without prejudice, pending resolution of the case.
3. The instructor of record contacts the Dean of Students Office via email at [gr-academicintegrity@wpi.edu](mailto:gr-academicintegrity@wpi.edu) to determine if the student has any record of prior offenses involving academic integrity.
4. The instructor of record meets with the student to present the allegation and engage in a conversation with the student to learn any additional information.
  - a. After the conversation, if the instructor of record believes that no violation occurred, they can dismiss the allegation and communicate this resolution to the Dean of Students Office.
  - b. After the conversation, if the instructor of record believes a violation has occurred, the matter will be resolved per step #5.
5. The allegation may be resolved at the departmental level through a Departmental Agreement or via the Campus Hearing Board. If the student desires, the student may seek counsel from the Dean of Students Office regarding the process and options.

- a. Departmental Agreement: Allegations of violations of academic integrity may be resolved through a departmental agreement if all of the following are true:
  - i. The student admits to violation of academic integrity;
  - ii. It is the student's first violation of academic integrity; and
  - iii. The student accepts the sanction(s) imposed by the instructor of record.

The maximum penalty that can be applied at the department level is to assign no credit for the course/project. An Academic Integrity Departmental Agreement form is completed by the instructor of record; signed by the instructor of record and student; and sent to the Dean of Students Office.

- b. Campus Hearing Board Resolution. Allegations of violations of academic integrity are referred to the Campus Hearing Board (CHB) for resolution if one or more of the following is true:
  - i. The alleged violation of academic integrity is the first violation and the student does not want to resolve the case at the department level;
  - ii. The instructor of record feels the allegation is truly egregious; and/or
  - iii. The student has a record of prior offense(s) involving academic integrity.

The CHB hears the allegations following standard procedures for disciplinary hearings as established by WPI.

- i. If the student is found responsible for a violation of academic integrity, the CHB may recommend grading sanctions and may impose disciplinary sanctions as outlined through the Student Code of Conduct.
- ii. If a student is found not responsible for a violation of academic integrity, the student may not be penalized by the instructor of record on the grounds of integrity. The instructor of record assigns a grade based on assessment of the student's mastery of the material.
6. Student conduct records for any violation of academic integrity are maintained and shared by the Dean of Students Office in accordance with the Reporting of Student Conduct Records Policy as established by WPI.
7. Resolution of alleged cases of violation of academic integrity should proceed in as timely a manner as is practical.

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#### NON-MATRICULATED STUDENTS

For non-matriculated students, the administrative decision process is as follows:

1. The instructor of record reports to the department head (or designee) any suspected violation of academic integrity by a student. The department head (or designee) reviews cases to determine if there is reason for believing that academic integrity may be involved.

2. The instructor of record allows the student to continue in the academic activity without prejudice, pending resolution of the case.
3. The instructor of record contacts the Dean of Students Office to determine if the student has any record of prior offenses involving academic integrity.
4. The instructor of record consults with the student involved. The student may seek counsel from the Dean of Students Office.
5. The allegation is resolved at the departmental level through a Departmental Agreement or via an Administrative Decision.
  - a. Departmental Agreement: Allegations of violations of academic integrity may be resolved through a departmental agreement if all of the following are true:
    - i. The student admits to violation of academic integrity;
    - ii. It is the student's first violation of academic integrity; and
    - iii. The student accepts the sanction(s) imposed by the instructor of record.

The maximum penalty that can be applied at the department level is to assign no credit for the course/project. An Academic Integrity Departmental Agreement form is completed by the instructor of record; signed by the instructor of record and student; and sent to the Dean of Students Office.

- b. Administrative Decision: Allegations of violations of academic integrity are resolved through an Administrative Decision if one or more of the following is true:
    - i. The alleged violation of academic integrity is the first violation and the student does not want to resolve the case at the department level;
    - ii. The instructor of record feels the allegation is truly egregious; and/or
    - iii. The student has a record of prior offense(s) involving academic integrity.

The Dean of Students office informs the student of the time, date, and location of the hearing, in writing, at least two (2) business days prior to the hearing. Before the hearing, the student may consult an advisor as defined in the Student Code of Conduct. This advisor may not ask, answer, or be asked questions by any party at the hearing, and may not serve as a witness in the case. The Administrative Decision is conducted as follows:

- i. A representative from the Dean of Students Office oversees the hearing as the Conduct Officer. The hearing includes the Conduct Officer, student, instructor of record (optional), advisor (optional), and witnesses (optional).
  - ii. The student has the opportunity to respond to the allegations and present evidence and/or witnesses.
  - iii. The Conduct Officer may seek other expertise to gain perspective associated with any submitted evidence.
  - iv. The Conduct Officer determines the student's responsibility for the allegation of violation of academic integrity based on the preponderance of the evidence.
  - v. If the student is found responsible for violation of academic integrity, the Conduct Officer meets with the instructor of record to determine the appropriate academic grade sanction for the violation of academic integrity.

- vi. If the student disagrees with the decision and/or grade sanction, the student may appeal to the next highest administrator in the Dean of Students Office based upon the criteria outlined in the Student Code of Conduct under Appeals Process.
- 6. Conduct records for any violation of academic integrity are maintained by the Dean of Students Office in accordance with the Reporting of Student Conduct Records policy as established by WPI.

#### CONDUCT RECORDS

Conduct Records are maintained by the Dean of Students Office, and may be shared both internally (e.g., GEO, honor societies) as appropriate without the student's permission to determine if the student has any record of prior offenses involving academic dishonesty.

Signing a Departmental Agreement results in a student conduct record. The Dean of Students Office retains this record and will only report a student's conduct record with the student's permission and in accordance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations for two (2) years following student's date of graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from WPI.

A student's academic transcript does not include the existence or outcome of a student conduct proceeding.

For additional information on reporting of student conduct records, please contact the Dean of Students Office at [gr-academicintegrity@wpi.edu](mailto:gr-academicintegrity@wpi.edu).

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