

Academic Honesty Policy & Process

Academic honesty is a fundamental principle of learning and a necessary foundation for all academic institutions, particularly those dedicated to independent project-based education, such as WPI. Violations of this principle deny the violators an opportunity to obtain confident command of the material they are credited with knowing, cheat their classmates out of deserved rewards and recognition, dishonor the institution, and demean the degree that it awards. It is, therefore, a matter of great and mutual concern to all members of the WPI community that a concerted effort is made to maintain high standards of academic integrity, both to protect the value of the educational process in which we are engaged and to maintain the credibility of the institution.

Individual integrity is vital to the academic environment because education involves the search for and acquisition of knowledge and understanding, which are, in themselves, intangible. Evaluation of each student's level of knowledge and understanding is a vital part of the teaching process, and requires tangible measures such as reports, examinations, and homework. Any act that interferes with the process of evaluation by misrepresentation of the relation between the work being evaluated (or the resulting evaluation) and the student's actual state of knowledge is an act of academic dishonesty.

Academic Dishonesty is defined within the following constructs:

Cheating: Attempting to use, or intentionally using, unauthorized study aids, materials, or information in any academic exercise.

Examples:

- Use of purchased term papers
- Copying on exams, homework, or take-home exams
- Use of unauthorized materials or sources of information such as "cheat sheets," preprogrammed calculator
- Assistance of another person in cases where prohibited

Fabrication: Falsification or invention of any citation or information in an academic exercise.

Examples:

- Altering grades or other official records
- Changing exam solutions after the fact
- Inventing or changing laboratory data
- Falsifying research
- Inventing sources

Facilitation: Helping or attempting to help another student to violate any provision of this code.

Examples:

- Sharing test questions or answers from an exam with another student
- Letting another student copy a solution to a homework problem, exam, or lab
- Taking an exam for another student
- Assistance in any act of academic dishonesty of another student

Plagiarism: Representing the ideas or words of another as one's own without proper attribution in any academic exercise.

Examples:

- Misrepresenting the work of another as one's own
- Inaccurately or inadequately citing sources including those from the Internet

Additional information about Academic Integrity for WPI students is [located here](#). There are two options available for resolving allegations of academic dishonesty.

Option One: Resolution via the Departmental Agreement Process. The faculty member will interact with the student via e-mail or Skype to discuss the allegation, and will follow the departmental agreement process, as outlined above. The maximum penalty that can be applied at the departmental level is dismissal from the course without credit. Because the case is resolved through an agreement, there is no appeal process.

Option Two: If the student does not accept responsibility for the complaint and/or sanctions at the departmental level or if this is an alleged second academic dishonesty incident (for matriculated students), the case will be referred to the Dean of Students Office for resolution, using one or two processes below.

For matriculated students, the process is:

- A. Faculty should report to the department chair any suspected act of academic dishonesty by a student. The chair shall review cases referred to him/her to determine if there is reason for believing that academic dishonesty may be involved.
- B. Faculty shall allow the student to continue in the course without prejudice, pending resolution of the case.
- C. The chair or instructor shall check with the Dean of Students Office to determine if the student has any record of prior offenses involving academic dishonesty.
- D. The chair or instructor shall consult with the student involved. If the act of academic dishonesty is admitted and is the first violation of that nature, the chair or instructor may resolve the complaint within the department, provided the penalty is accepted by the student in writing. The maximum penalty that can be applied at the department level is dismissal from a course or a project without credit. In all cases, a signed, written report on the matter, including the action taken, shall be sent to the Dean of Students Office. If the student does not want to resolve the case at the department level by signing the departmental agreement, the case will be referred to the Campus Hearing Board (CHB) for resolution.
- E. For the second and subsequent violations, the case shall be submitted to the CHB for resolution.
- F. The CHB shall hear the allegations, following standard procedures for disciplinary hearings outlined in the Student Planner and Resource Guide as established by WPI. The board may impose normal disciplinary sanctions and may recommend loss of any credit or grade for the course or project. If a student is found not responsible on a complaint of academic dishonesty, he/she may not be failed or penalized by the instructor on the grounds of dishonesty. The instructor shall assign a grade based on assessment of the student's mastery of the material being evaluated.
- G. Judicial records for any act of academic dishonesty are maintained by the Dean of Students Office in accordance with the Judicial Records Policy set forth in the Student Planner and Resource Guide.

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

- A. The student will be informed of the alleged code of conduct violation and the time, date and location of the hearing, in writing, at least two (2) business days prior to the hearing. This notice should include a description of the incident, and the policy allegedly violated.
- B. The hearing shall be conversational in nature and non-adversarial.
- C. Before the hearing, the student shall be given the opportunity to consult a member of the WPI community who can act as an advisor. This advisor may not ask, answer or be asked questions by any party at the hearing. The advisor may not also serve as a witness in the case. Persons from outside the immediate WPI community—such as lawyers, the public, the press, parents, and alumni—may not attend hearings.
- D. The student shall have an opportunity to respond to the charges and present any evidence or witnesses in response.
- E. The WPI representative may seek other expertise to gain perspective associated with any submitted evidence.
- F. The WPI representative will make a determination of the student's responsibility for the complaint based on the preponderance of the evidence.
- G. If the student is found responsible, the WPI representative will meet with the faculty member to determine the appropriate academic grade sanction for the offense.
- H. In the case where the student disagrees with the decision/grade sanction, they may appeal to the next highest administrator in the Dean of Students Office based upon the criteria outlined in the Code of Conduct under Conduct Appeals.