

Academic Integrity - Tips & Resources

[College of IST Academic Integrity Committee, SU17-SU18](#)

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SENATE POLICY 49-20 ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Definition and expectations: Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity in an open, honest and responsible manner. Academic integrity is a basic guiding principle for all academic activity at The Pennsylvania State University, and all members of the University community are expected to act in accordance with this principle. Consistent with this expectation, the University's Code of Conduct states that all students should act with personal integrity, respect other students' dignity, rights and property, and help create and maintain an environment in which all can succeed through the fruits of their efforts.

G-9 MESSAGE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Recognizing the importance of academic integrity to the Penn State community, the University Faculty Senate adopted a new Academic Integrity policy, Spring 2000. The shared conviction, represented [therein], is that academic integrity is best taught and reinforced by faculty as an element of the teaching and learning process. Only in the limited instances in which faculty believe that disciplinary, as well as academic, sanctions are called for should the process move to the Office of Student Conduct.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY TIPS (From the IST AI Committee)

- Articulate your personal philosophy verbally and in writing, but
- Avoid establishing pre-determined sanctions:
 - It pre-judges the case
 - It assumes all violations are equal
 - When course failure is the defacto sanction, it automatically raises the case to the AI Committee for final adjudication
- Do consider each AI case on it's own merits
- Consider including a Academic Integrity Pledge as part of your course
- Include an AI message with all assignment & exam instructions
- Be clear on the use of PINs & Passwords
- Utilize College of IST AI resources, including the AI committee
- Consider the use of TURNITIN for all writing assignments
- Check out "*Course Hero*" to see if materials from your course are present (<https://www.coursehero.com/>)
- Let your students know, "*what you know*"
- Review the trends cited below
- Share your personal AI experience with fellow faculty
- Avoid tabling clear AI violations; they tend to resurface
- Consult with the AI committee with questions regarding AI sanctions or any part of the process
- Refer students who have been notified of an AI violation to the AI committee

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- Remind students that they are prohibited from dropping the course with an AI case pending

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PROCESS, IN-BRIEF¹

A. When Academic Misconduct is Suspected:

1. The faculty member informs the student of the allegation.
2. The faculty member will enter the charge and the academic sanction on the College of IST Academic Integrity Form, sign the form, and then convey the charge and sanction to the student for his or her signature (in person or through other methods if necessary).
3. After reviewing the allegation of academic misconduct with the student, the faculty member may provide the student with up to 5 days before the student has to make a decision and sign the Academic Integrity Form as to whether or not to accept the academic sanction. A student's failure to sign and return the Academic Integrity Form, by the specified deadline, will be construed as not contesting the charge or sanction and the adjudication process will go forward as defined by the College of IST procedures.
4. Normally, it is preferable to pursue academic sanctions with the college, relying on the assignment of grades and course or program-related sanctions to support the learning process, rather than requesting additional University-level *disciplinary* sanctions. However, where integrity violations are considered to be extreme, the faculty member may also opt to pursue a disciplinary action in conjunction with both the IST Academic Integrity Committee and the Office of Student Conduct. See a more detailed and comprehensive listing in [Sanctioning Guidelines for Academic Integrity Violations](#).
5. Throughout the academic integrity process, the authority to administer academic sanctions remains the responsibility of the instructor and the IST AI Committee, as appropriate. In situations where a disciplinary sanction is requested and referred to the Office of Student Conduct, the college will carry out the application of academic sanctions, while the Office of Student Conduct; in consultation with the IST Academic Integrity Committee will carry out the application disciplinary sanctions.
6. Once a student has been informed that academic misconduct is suspected, the student may not drop the course during the adjudication process. The Dean of the College of IST or his or her representative is responsible for notifying the Office of the University Registrar when academic misconduct is suspected in a course. Any drop or withdrawal from the course during this time will be reversed. A student who has received an academic sanction as a result of a violation of academic integrity may not drop or withdraw from the course at any time. These drop actions include regular drop, late drop, withdrawal, retroactive late drop and retroactive withdrawal. Any such drop action of the course will be reversed.
7. If, after notification of a violation of academic integrity, a student fails to sign the Academic Integrity Form by the specified deadline, the adjudication process will go forward as defined by the College of IST AI procedures.

¹ The full description of the Academic Integrity Process is found here: <http://undergrad.psu.edu/aappm/G-9-academic-integrity.html>)

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8. The final decision on a sanction may differ from the sanction recommended by the faculty member regardless of whether or not the student accepts responsibility for the violation. For this reason, a student who has been notified of an alleged academic integrity violation should continue to attend classes and meet course requirements during the adjudication process. If the student chooses not to attend class or fulfill course expectations while the College completes its review of the academic integrity case, he or she agrees implicitly with the sanctions recommended by the faculty member and will receive their grade as appropriate. The imposed sanction will be communicated in writing to the student by the College of IST, Associate Dean for Graduate and Undergraduate Studies, upon conclusion of the review.

CLARIFICATION ON COURSE DROP DURING/BEFORE THE AI PROCESS

While preferable, it is not necessary to complete an academic integrity form ahead of notifying a student of a suspected AI violation. However, as soon as a student is notified of a suspected AI violation, they should also be briefed on the course drop policy regarding AI, which is reflected on the College of IST Academic Integrity Form, which states:

"You may not drop or withdraw from this course until this academic integrity case is resolved and you are found not-responsible. Any such drop action of the course will be reversed. If, after notification of a violation of academic integrity, you fail to sign this form, the academic integrity adjudication process will go forward as defined by the College of IST AI procedures."

In the case of a student who has dropped or withdrawn from a course before notification of an alleged academic integrity violation, the adjudication process will go forward and a record of violation created, if appropriate. In such a case, the Dean of the College of IST or his or her representative, in consultation with the instructor of the course, will confirm that the student is notified of the alleged violation and proceed in accordance with the College of IST procedure.

ACADEMIC I TRENDS FROM FA16-SU17

1. Topic. Students will "lawyer-up"
 - a. Discussion. In just about every case, the student's first inclination, regardless of type or severity of suspected violation, was to seek loopholes in the system. For this, their primary source was the course syllabus, then assignment instructions, and then course slides. I cannot recall a single case where a student referred to his/her personal course notes or instructor announcements as a delineator.
 - b. Possible Remedy. None is perfect, but my best advice is to provide instructions for the things you want to "hold them accountable for," quizzes, individual work, exams, etc. This could be as easy as, "Refer to the AI Pledge"
2. Topic. Violations of Attendance PINs
 - a. Discussion: By far the # 1 violation in frequency. In ALL cases, students went back to item 1 above. Some were more successful in defending their case, depending on the degree of instructor documentation of the delineated expectations of such use.
 - b. Possible Remedy. In the Quiz/Attendance Instructions simply cite: *UNAUTHORIZED USE OF A PIN OR PASSWORD IS A VIOLATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. DO NOT REQUEST, SHARE OR ENTER A PIN OR PASSWORD ON ANOTHER STUDENT'S BEHALF.*

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- c. In the case where assignments/quizzes are to be completed in-class, so state.
3. Topic. Course-Share site (Course Hero) – If you haven't visited these sites, you should...you may see your entire course!
 - a. Discussion: We are starting to see an increased number of such violations, including use by our On-line students, who may not be as well indoctrinated in the issues of acceptable academic behavior.
 - b. Possible Remedy. This is more difficult, especially if you re-use course material from a previous semester. I think the Instructors who are most successful in rooting this out make use of tools such as Turnitin. Again, fair warning as part of your guidance that you know about and will be checking for such violations may help deter most...others will use these sites regardless.
4. Topic. Team-Based Assignments
 - a. Discussion: Very nuanced, and hard to reach ground truth, but a common scenario goes like this: Student "A" is responsible for a portion of the group assignment, but is late in making his/her contribution; in a last-ditch effort, submits shoddy work (often not their own) and the assignment is submitted before it has been vetted by other members (or the Team Leader – except in a case before the committee where the Team Leader, was the violator) – and then the assignment gets flagged as an AI violation and the entire team is "called onto the carpet."
 - b. Possible Remedy. Submit all group assignments through Turnitin. This should alleviate most problems. Instructions. "All group work must be vetted for compliance for both assignment instructions and within the standards of academic integrity.
5. Topic. Repeat offenders
 - a. Discussion: We are starting to see students who have multiple AI violations; some slip under the radar if they happened at another college and a subsequent violation is accepted by the student and therefore not see by the committee (we have addressed a fix to this).
 - b. Dean Sears and I met with the University Conduct folks to discuss strategies on how to deal with such cases, including clarifying the authority of the committee – I plan to brief the trends and results of that discussion in an early Faculty meeting in the fall.
 - c. Suffice to say, we have students, who have as many as four (4) AI violations before they have even declared a major!

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY RESOURCES

IST AI Resources Page: https://ist.psu.edu/students/academic_integrity

Academic Integrity Form: <https://ist.psu.edu/sites/default/files/u19/AcademicIntegrityForm2014.pdf>

AI Sanctioning Guidelines: <http://undergrad.psu.edu/aappm/sanctioning-guidelines.html>

University Senate G-9 Policy on AI: <http://undergrad.psu.edu/aappm/G-9-academic-integrity.html>

Avoiding Plagiarism: https://ist.psu.edu/students/academic_integrity/plagiarism

TURNITIN: <http://turnitin.psu.edu/>