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Academic Misconduct Handout

Table of Contents

Alleged Academic Misconduct Investigation Process 2

Investigating Academic Misconduct: The Basic Steps for Instructors 3

Reporting Academic Misconduct 4

Report Structure 4

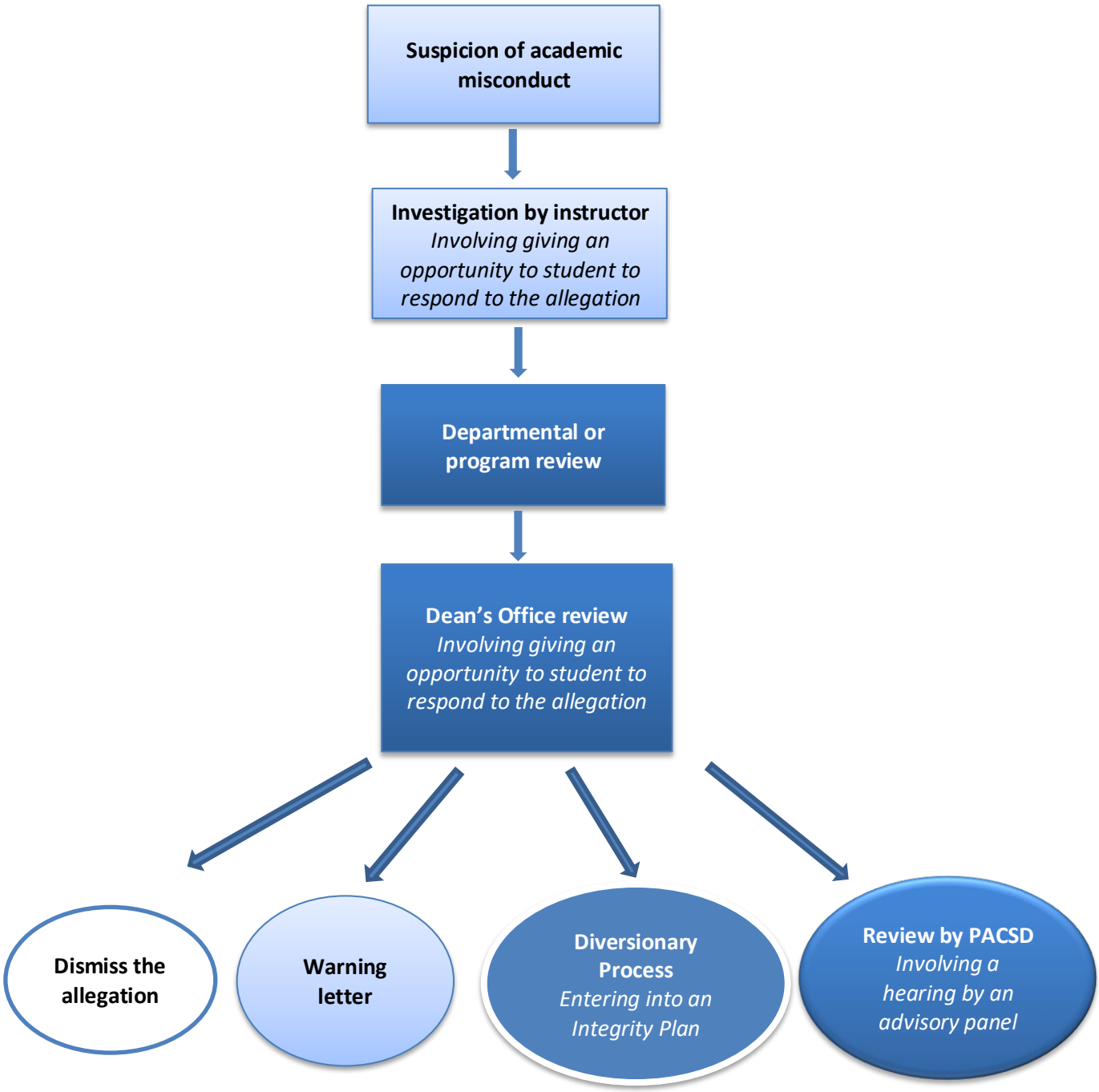
Dealing with a Large-scale Case of Alleged Academic Misconduct 5

Sample Message to Suspected Students 6

Academic Integrity and Supporting Resources 7

Sample Report 8

Alleged Academic Misconduct Investigation Process



Note: The Diversionary Process has been introduced to the academic integrity regulation since 2022W. This includes an Integrity Plan – a set of agreed upon outcomes (with a focus on educative and developmental outcomes) and a plan of action between student and Faculty.

Investigating Academic Misconduct: The Basic Steps for Instructors

1) When you suspect that a student has committed academic misconduct you normally will be the first to investigate the incident.

2) Inform your Head or Head's delegate (usually the Associate Head or Undergraduate Chair) of the potential misconduct. If the case is severe, contact both the Head or Head's delegate and Associate Dean Students (academicintegrity@science.ubc.ca) as soon as possible.

3) Next give the student a fair opportunity to respond to the allegation; normally that entails an in-person or on-line meeting. (It is considered unfair, if these issues get escalated, not to inform the student about the topic for discussion. In the invitation you do not need to say that you suspect them of cheating, only that you want to discuss the irregularity on the assignment, lab, quiz, etc.) Approach the meeting with an open mind. Don't directly assume guilt, even if the evidence is compelling. Set out the evidence and ask the student to explain the observations you see. That meeting may convince you that an offence did not occur or the student was not involved in misconduct. The UBC Ombuds Office provides faculty members with a checklist to aid in conducting these meetings with students.

4) Whether or not the student agrees with the allegation, if you still believe that misconduct has occurred after your investigation, you may re-evaluate the academic merit of the student's work at issue. Note that this is an academic assessment (that the student did not do the work within the parameters), not a disciplinary action. You may assign a grade of zero or a lower grade for the work at issue, but cannot assign a mark of zero for the course. Any further penalties or outcomes may only be imposed by the President or accepted through the Diversionary Process.

5) Notify the student of the outcome of your review. Also, let them know that their case will be reported to the Dean's Office for review, and the Dean's Office will be in touch with them.

6) Then write a report to the Head or Head's delegate who forwards it to the Dean's Office (academicintegrity@science.ubc.ca). Associate Dean Students and Assistant Dean Students (the Dean's delegates) will review the case and inform the student of the outcome of the review.

Notes:

- If the case is referred to the President's Advisory Committee on Student Discipline (PACSD), you may be required to be present at a hearing as a witness. Since significant disciplinary actions may be imposed (e.g., suspension from the University for a period of time), it is important that all procedures are followed correctly.

- Any questions concerning procedures that should be taken during or after an alleged incident of cheating should be directed to Associate Dean Students (academicintegrity@science.ubc.ca).

Reporting Academic Misconduct

Note: This high-level report structure may help instructors draft a report to the Dean's Office when there is an incident of alleged academic misconduct in a Science course. The report doesn't have to strictly follow the order provided, but the report should address relevant elements given below.

Report Structure

1) Summary of the incident of alleged academic misconduct may include (but not limited to):
    - A description of the incident;
    - The investigation process followed by the instructor;
    - The specific allegation against a suspected student(s);
    - How the student responded to the allegation:
        - Did the student deny or admit to academic misconduct?
        - What reasons did the student give for why they committed the misconduct, or what explanation did the student give to explain the facts forming the basis of the allegation?
        - Any extenuating, mitigating, or aggravating circumstances that arise.
    - Instructor's decision with regards to how to treat the student's work at issue. In terms of the Calendar, the instructor may:
        - require the student to re-do work at issue or to do supplementary work in order to properly assess the academic merit of the student; or
        - assign a reduced grade (including a zero) for the work based on the academic assessment of that work.
2) Course syllabus, the academic integrity policy in the course, exam instructions, etc.
3) Evidence in support of the allegation, such as:
    - A comparison of the student's work and the work of another person;
    - A copy of the student's work at issue (e.g., assignments, exams), annotated as necessary;
    - Copies of the works that were plagiarized;
    - Turnitin reports;
    - Unauthorized materials/tools used;
    - Digital evidence : IP address logs, exam activity logs, etc.
4) Other supporting documents (if applicable):
    - Meeting notes/summary;
    - Misconduct communications with the student;
    - A summary of attempts to schedule a meeting with the student (with dates of attempted contact), if the student fails to meet with the instructor.

Dealing with a Large-scale Case of Alleged Academic Misconduct

In general, when an incident of alleged academic misconduct occurs in a Science course, the instructor is expected to follow the basic steps listed on Page 3, and to interview all students involved in the suspected misconduct, because the student(s) should be given an opportunity to meet in person (or on Zoom) to explain what happened and provide any extenuating or mitigating circumstances.

However, in the event that the number of students involved in a potential cheating case is too large to hold an interview with every single student, and the case is less severe (i.e.: assignments, quizzes, etc.), you may choose to adjust your approach and to contact each student first by sending out a detailed email communication, requiring a written response for the allegation within a reasonable time frame.

This message should contain:

- a brief summary of the facts forming the allegation;
- the specific allegation against the student;
- a deadline by which the student must respond either agreeing with the allegation or requesting a meeting with the instructor (see below);
- a brief summary of or reference link to the course and/or exam policies;
- and a link to the Academic Misconduct policy in the Calendar.

One option is for the students to reply via email acknowledging that they have committed academic misconduct and providing the detail of their behaviour leading to the misconduct; the other is for them to request an in-person meeting with you to discuss the allegation.

A sample email message is provided on the next page that can be adapted to your purposes.

Sample Message to Suspected Students

Subject Line: Suspected Academic Misconduct in Course XXX

Dear XXX,

We are writing to you because we believe that you were involved in an incident of suspected academic misconduct on Assignment #1. After careful investigation, we have found that your submitted solutions contain someone else's work without appropriate attribution and citation in violation of the misconduct policy.

Now, it is important for you to understand what will happen next and possible consequences resulting from this incident. We have two options for you to choose:

1) Reply to this email acknowledging that you have committed academic misconduct described above; OR
2) Request a meeting to discuss the allegation.

Please be advised that your response to this email is required no later than **December 1, 2020.**

If you choose option 1) to take full responsibility for your actions, we will inform you of our decision regarding the academic re-assessment on your assignment shortly. Please include an account of what happened or led to the misconduct. In addition, a report outlining the misconduct will be submitted to the Dean's Office for review. The Dean's Office will apprise you of the outcome of the review, at the conclusion of the review.

If you choose option 2), please indicate your availability for next week to set up a meeting for up to 20 minutes. We will get back to you with a mutually agreeable time.

Before you make your decision, we encourage that you familiarize yourself with the course policy **(link)** and the Academic Misconduct policy in the Calendar. If you have any questions about the procedures or policies, please don't hesitate to contact us.

As a reminder, it is your responsibility to respond to this email by **December 1, 2020**. We hope to hear from you soon.

All the best,

The Teaching Team

Academic Integrity Resources

- Academic Misconduct Policy in the Calendar: https://vancouver.calendar.ubc.ca/campus-wide-policies-and-regulations/student-conduct-and-discipline/discipline-academic-misconduct
- Academic integrity learning modules: https://academicintegrity.ubc.ca/modules/
- Academic Integrity Hub: https://academicintegrity.ubc.ca/academic-integrity-hub/
- Academic misconduct toolkit: https://ombudsoffice.ubc.ca/our-toolkits/academic-misconduct/

Supporting Resources for Students:

Note: If a student is in significant distress or discloses something concerning please file an Early Alert.

- Wellness Centre
- Counselling Services
- AMS Advocacy Office
- GSS Peer Support
- Office of the Ombudsperson for Students
- Science Advising *(for Science students; non-Science students should be directed to their academic advising office in their home Faculty.)*

Report of Academic Misconduct on Final Exam for 2019W2 CPSC 110

Instructors:
Course Coordinator:

In an effort to ensure the integrity of CPSC 110 grades, graders flagged submissions that had blocks of code from previous final exams that had been made available to students for practice on the course website. After grading, we ran MOSS to identify similar submissions. Students in CPSC 107 and 110 wrote the same exam and so the process of reviewing submissions was done jointly up until the interview stage. Based on the results from MOSS and our observations, we identified 28 submissions (CPSC 110 - 14 and CPSC 107 - 14) as potential cases of academic misconduct. All CPSC 110 students were notified (see Appendix for email) and instructed to either respond by email or schedule a virtual meeting with instructors. One student admitted by email to have engaged in academic misconduct, the remaining 13 were interviewed (using Zoom) by instructors was present during the meetings. In this report, we bring forward four academic misconduct cases of CPSC 110 students. Based on the interviews and the strength of the evidence, we have decided not to pursue the remaining 10 cases.

Student Name	Student Number

Sample Report

Regarding bias: Gradescope was used during the grading process; as such, the identification of exams with blocks of code from previous solutions was made without knowing who the individuals were. In addition, the files used in MOSS were anonymized. The decision on which cases to pursue was finalized prior to attaching names to the cases. As such, the student's race, sexual orientation, gender, and performance on the exam and in the course did not impact our decision.

Regarding MOSS results: While we expect certain similarities to exist across submissions, we are only presenting the cases in which the level of similarity is unusual.

Regardingcopied code: We believe that even though it is common practice to memorize the template for graph problems, rarely do students memorize the solutions to specific problems. In addition, we find it hard to believe that students would memorize answers for material that we specifically mentioned would not be on the final exam.

Regardingpenalty: Based on feedback from the Associate Head of Operations, the final exam score for all students has been changed to 0 and Change of Grade Forms have been submitted.

Student Name

Graders flagged student's problem 5 submission because the solution is almost identical to the solution for Problem 4 on the final exam for Winter 2017W2. At the start of the meeting, intructor gave student an opportunity to speak.

Student says they are confused about this, because they did not do well in the course so they did not have an incentive to cheat. They are an international student, and they know cheating can put their visa status at risk.

During the meeting, instructors asked the student some questions relating to their conduct during the exam; the student answered no to the following questions.

- During the exam, did you work with anyone?
- During the exam, did you communicate with anyone?
- During the exam, did you access any materials other than the recipe checklist?

Sample Report

The table below shows part of student's solution for Problem 5 and part of the solution for 2017W2 Problem 4. The highlighted code in student's solution are the only points of difference.

Student's Solution	Solution for Problem 4 for 2017W2 final exam
(@template (listof Count) Word encapsulated accumulator) (define (arrows w0 x) ;; todo is (listof Word): worklist accumulator ;; visited is (listof String): names of words visited so far ;; rsf is Integer: count of how many more add than remove Count so far (local [(define (fn-for-word w todo visited rsf) (if (member? (word-name w) visited) (fn-for-lom todo visited rsf) (fn-for-lom (append (word-count w) todo) (cons (word-name w) visited) rsf)))	(@template Mutation (listof Mutation) Word encapsulated accumulator) (define (more-add-than-remove? w0 x) ;; todo is (listof Word): worklist accumulator ;; visited is (listof String): names of words visited so far ;; rsf is Integer: count of how many more add than remove mutations so far (local [(define (fn-for-word w todo visited rsf) (if (member? (word-name w) visited) (fn-for-lom todo visited rsf) (fn-for-lom (append (word-mutations w) todo) (cons (word-name w) visited) rsf)))

Below is the correct solution to 2019W2 Problem 5; it does not include the data types Word or Mutation. In addition, the template for the solution is very different from the one the student wrote. No other student (including those who got the question wrong) submitted a solution with the Word or Mutation data templates. It is also worth mentioning that the student failed to complete the more straightforward problems on the exam, so how the student was able to write 15+ lines of code for the most difficult problem has

yet to be explained. We have included her entire exam file to corroborate this point.

2019W2 Problem 5 Correct Solution

```
(@template encapsulated genrec arb-tree accumulator)

(define (arrows n0)
  ;; visited is (listof String): all nodes already visited
  ;; todo is (listof String): work list
  ;; rsf is (listof (list String Natural)) : result so far
  (local [(define (fn-for-n n todo visited rsf)
            (cond [(member? n visited)
                   (fn-for-lon todo visited rsf)]
                  [else
                   (fn-for-lon (append (next-nodes n) todo)
                               (cons n visited)
                               (add-arrows (next-nodes n) rsf))]))
          (define (fn-for-lon todo visited rsf)
            (cond [(empty? todo) rsf]
                  [else
                   (fn-for-n (first todo) (rest todo) visited rsf)]))

          ;; (@signature (listof Node) (listof Count) -> (listof Count))
          ;; merge two lists of names and values (both sorted) into one
          ;; (@template 2-one-of)
          (define (add-arrows lon loc)
```

Sample Report

Below is student's submitted code for the final

exam: (require spd/tags)

(@assignment 2019W2-F-P1)

;;CWL REMOVED

(@problem 1)

;; Consider the following data definition: