

SCHOLASTIC DISCIPLINE FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

(S.03-077a) (S.08-174)

Effective July 1, 2008, the Faculty of Graduate Studies became the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, headed by the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) rather than a Dean. These references have been revised in the following document and all reference to the Vice-Provost are specific to the Vice-Provost (SGPS) unless otherwise stated. As well, references to the Graduate Program Chair have been changed to Graduate Chair.

SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES

Members of the University Community accept a commitment to maintain and uphold the purposes of the University and, in particular, its standards of scholarship. It follows, therefore, that acts of a nature that prejudice the academic standards of the University are offences subject to discipline. Any form of academic dishonesty that undermines the evaluation process, also undermines the integrity of the University's degrees. The University will take all appropriate measures to promote academic integrity and deal appropriately with scholastic offences.

DEFINITION

Scholastic Offences include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

- Plagiarism - the "act or an instance of copying or stealing another's words or ideas and attributing them as one's own." (Excerpted from Black's Law Dictionary, West Group, 1999, 7th ed., p. 1170). This concept applies with equal force to all academic work, including theses, assignments or projects of any kind, comprehensive examinations, laboratory reports, diagrams, and computer projects. Detailed information is available from instructors, Graduate Chairs, or the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. Students also may consult style manuals held in the University's libraries. See <http://www.lib.uwo.ca/services/styleguides.html>
- Cheating on an examination or falsifying material subject to academic evaluation.
- Submitting false or fraudulent research, assignments or credentials; or falsifying records, transcripts or other academic documents.
- Submitting a false medical or other such certificate under false pretences.
- Improperly obtaining, through theft, bribery, collusion or otherwise, an examination paper prior to the date and time for writing such an examination.
- Unauthorized possession of an examination paper, however obtained, prior to the date and time for writing such an examination, unless the student reports the matter to the instructor, the relevant program, or the Registrar as soon as possible after receiving the paper in question.
- Impersonating a candidate at an examination or availing oneself of the results of such an impersonation.
- Intentionally interfering in any way with any person's scholastic work.
- Submitting for credit in any course or program of study, without the knowledge and *written* approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit previously has been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.
- Aiding or abetting any such offence.

Evidence of wrongdoing may result in criminal prosecution in addition to any proceedings within the University.

PROCEDURES FOR SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES

If a student is suspected of cheating, plagiarism or other scholastic offence, the University will investigate and if it is satisfied that the student has committed a scholastic offence it may impose sanctions, up to and including expulsion from the University. The procedures that the University will follow are set out in this section.

Note: Throughout these scholastic offence regulations, reference to "Vice-Provost" is to be interpreted "Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) or his/her designate" (who is usually an Associate Vice-Provost) and reference to "Chair" is to be interpreted "Graduate Chair or his/her designate". If the matter has been designated by the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) or a Graduate Chair to another person(s), that person(s) is authorized to make the School's or Program's final decision on the matter.

PART I: OFFENCES NOT RELATED TO A PROGRAM

- If an allegation of misconduct does not relate directly to the student's program (e.g., a course or thesis), the allegation will be referred to the Vice-Provost.
- If the Vice-Provost decides that there is evidence to support the allegation, the Vice-Provost will advise the student of the allegation and the information supporting the allegation, normally within one week after the matter has been forwarded to him/her.
- The student will be given a reasonable opportunity to respond and submit evidence, and a reasonable opportunity to meet with the Vice-Provost before a decision is made.
- If the Vice-Provost decides that the student has committed a scholastic offence, he/she will determine the appropriate penalties.
- The Vice-Provost's decision, including the penalties, will be communicated to the student in writing, normally within three weeks after the Vice-Provost advised the student of the allegation. The letter will inform the student whether there will be a notation on the student's academic record and of his/her right to appeal the decision to the Senate Review Board Academic within six weeks of the date of the decision.

PART II: PROGRAM-RELATED OFFENCES

- If evidence of a possible scholastic offence is brought to the attention of, or discovered by, a course instructor or member of a student's thesis supervisory committee, normally he/she will meet with the student to discuss the allegation if practicable and appropriate in a given case.
- The relevant Chair will be notified if there is evidence of a scholastic offence.
- **Decision by Graduate Chair**
 - If the Chair agrees that there is evidence to support the allegation he/she will advise the student of the allegation and the information supporting the allegation, normally within one week after the matter was forwarded to him/her.
 - The student will be given a reasonable opportunity to respond and submit evidence, and a reasonable opportunity to meet with the Chair before a decision is made.
 - If the Chair decides that the student has committed a scholastic offence, he/she will determine the appropriate penalties in consultation with the instructor or the student's supervisor, as appropriate.
 - The Chair's decision, including any penalties and any recommended penalties, will be communicated to the student in writing with a copy to the Vice-Provost, normally within three weeks after the Chair advised the student of the allegation. The letter also will advise the student of his/her right to appeal the finding of misconduct and/or any penalties imposed by the Chair to the Vice-Provost, the time period by which the appeal must be filed, and will refer the student to the regulations governing Scholastic Offences in the Graduate Calendar.
- **Appeal to Vice-Provost**
 - A student may appeal a Chair's finding of misconduct and/or penalties imposed by the Chair to the Vice-Provost. A completed appeal application (http://grad.uwo.ca/files/downloads/academic_services/Application_for_an_Appeal_to_SGPS.pdf) together with all supporting documents must be submitted to the Office of the Vice-Provost within three weeks of the issuance of the Chair's decision.
 - The Vice-Provost will review the evidence provided by both the student and the Chair and may investigate further. The Vice-Provost will give the student a reasonable opportunity to meet with him/her before making a decision.
 - The Vice-Provost may affirm, vary or overturn any decision made by the Chair and may impose other penalties. If the Vice-Provost is considering imposing a penalty or penalties that were not imposed by the Chair, he or she shall notify the student and give the student a reasonable opportunity to file written submissions on the issue of penalty.
 - The Vice-Provost's decision will be communicated to the student in writing with a copy to the Chair, normally within three weeks after receiving the student's appeal. The decision letter will also inform the student whether there will be a notation on the student's academic record, and will inform the student of his/her right to appeal a negative decision to the Senate Review Board Academic within six weeks of the date of the decision.

Note: Legal representation is not permitted at any stage of the appeal process prior to the level of the Senate Review Board Academic.

- **Review by Vice-Provost**

- If a student does not appeal a Chair's decision, the Vice-Provost will review the evidence presented and the penalties imposed by the Chair, if any, and may vary the Chair's penalties and/or impose other penalties.
- If the Vice-Provost is considering imposing a penalty or penalties that were not imposed by the Chair, he/she shall notify the student and give the student a reasonable opportunity to file written submissions on the issue of penalty.
- The Vice-Provost's decision will be communicated to the student in writing, with a copy to the Chair, normally within three weeks after the deadline for filing an appeal.
- The decision letter will also inform the student whether there will be a notation on the student's academic record, and will inform the student of his/her right to appeal the penalties imposed by the Vice-Provost to the Senate Review Board Academic within six weeks of the date of the decision.

OFFENCE RECORD

(S.08-174)

- A student who commits a scholastic offence acquires an Offence Record. This record contains evidence collected during the investigation of the offence and copies of correspondence with the student.
- The Offence Record is held in the Vice-Provost's Office and is kept separate from the student's academic counselling file. If a student subsequently is found not to have committed the offence in question, the record of that charge will be destroyed in accordance with Western's Records Retention and Disposal Schedules. The Student Affairs records retention and disposal schedule is at the following Web site: http://www.lib.uwo.ca/archives/retention_schedules/05_student_affairs.shtml
- Apart from the student, no one outside the Vice-Provost's Office shall have access to an Offence Record, except in the event of an appeal by the student to SRBA against the decision or the penalty (or penalties) imposed or except as set out in "Release of Information Concerning Scholastic Offences" below.
- **Release of Information Concerning Scholastic Offences**
 - The letters informing a student that he or she has been found to have committed a scholastic offence, and the penalty or penalties imposed are confidential documents. Copies will be sent only to involved parties.
 - In the event that the penalties imposed are to be reflected in the student's academic record, either on the official transcript or the internal electronic record, a copy will be sent to the Registrar.
 - If a student registers in another Faculty, or an Affiliated University College of this University, the Offence Record will be transferred to the Dean's Office of that Faculty or College.
 - In addition, information may be released with the written permission of the student or if required pursuant to a contract, grant, scholarship, agreement, or a court order.
 - Under all other circumstances, the information contained in a student's Offence Record shall be considered confidential and, unless the offence is to be recorded on the student's transcript, no information about the student's Offence Record shall be provided to any person or institution outside the University.
- **Report to Senate**
 - The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies prepares an annual summary of scholastic offences committed by students registered in the School. The summary sets out the nature of the offence and the penalties, with students' names removed. The Vice-Provost reports this information annually to the Senate Committee on Academic Policy and Awards, which will forward the report to Senate for information.

PENALTIES

The University will treat seriously any incident of academic dishonesty and students should expect significant consequences for their actions. A serious incident or repeated offences may result in a requirement that the student withdraw from the program and/or may result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

A student guilty of a scholastic offence may be subject to one or more penalties, examples of which are:

1. Reprimand.
2. Requirement that the student repeat and resubmit the assignment.
3. A failing grade in the assignment.

4. A failing grade in the course in which the offence was committed.
5. Withdrawal from the program.
6. Suspension from the University for up to three academic years or for a portion of one academic year including the academic session in which the student is currently registered.
7. Expulsion from the University.

Notes:

- A Graduate Chair may impose penalties 1 through 4.
- Only the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) may impose penalties 5, 6 and 7.
- A Graduate Chair also can recommend a more severe penalty (e.g., withdrawal, suspension, expulsion) to the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) in addition to penalty(ies) imposed at the program level.
- In determining what penalties are warranted in a given case, the Vice-Provost will consider the gravity of the offence, any Offence Record, any recommendations of the Graduate Chair, and the need for consistency in standards of discipline across the School.
- The Vice-Provost may require a notation of the scholastic offence (e.g., "Scholastic Offence recorded in...") on a student's internal, electronic record for penalty 4. On the successful completion of the student's program, the student may request that the notation be removed. The Vice-Provost, after consulting with the Graduate Chair, will decide whether to grant the request.
- The penalties of suspension and expulsion are recorded as notations on the student's official transcript.*
- Appeals against the imposition of any penalty will be dealt with in accordance with the procedures set out in "Procedures for Scholastic Offences."
- Students who have been suspended by the University as a result of a scholastic offence must apply for readmission subject to the same conditions that operate for students applying for "Readmission Following Unsatisfactory Performance."

* For the Senate regulation on removal of suspension and expulsion notations from academic transcripts, see "Transcript Notations" under "Academic Records and Student Transcripts":

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/records.pdf

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Related Policies and Notes:

Transcript Notations:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/general/records.pdf
