



Procedure for Undergraduate Scholastic Offences

Governing Policy: Scholastic Offences

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Officer(s) Responsible for Procedures: Provost & Vice-President (Academic)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

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.

Throughout this section, reference to “Dean” is to be interpreted as “Dean or their designate” and reference to “Department Chair” is to be interpreted as “Department Chair or their designate”. If the matter has been designated by the Dean or Chair to another person, that person is authorized to make the Faculty or Department’s final decision on the matter. In a course offered by Western Continuing Studies, “Department Chair” shall be interpreted as “Executive Director of Western Continuing Studies” and “Faculty Dean” shall be interpreted as “Dean of the partnering Faculty”.

To learn more about the request for relief and appeals process, students may contact the Office of the Ombudsperson.

2.0 **PART I: SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES: COURSES**

Instructor-Level Investigation

In most cases, evidence of a possible scholastic offence in a course will have been discovered by, or brought to the attention of, the course instructor. In these situations, the instructor will meet with the student if practicable and appropriate. In all other cases the allegation will be reviewed by the appropriate University official.¹

The instructor (or other University official) will notify the Department Chair ("Chair") in Faculties with department structures, or, in Faculties without department structure, the Dean of the Faculty, if they decide that there is evidence of a scholastic offence. If the Chair or Dean of the Faculty agrees that there is evidence to support the allegation, they shall proceed as follows:

2.1 Courses in Student's Faculty of Registration ("Home Faculty")

1) Faculty with department structure (including the Faculty of Health Sciences):

a) Chair-Level Review

The Chair will advise the student of the allegation and the information supporting the allegation. 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.

- i. If the Chair decides that the student has committed a scholastic offence, they will determine the appropriate penalties in consultation with the instructor.
- ii. The Chair's decision and any penalties imposed by them will be communicated to the student in writing, with a copy to the Dean. The letter will advise the student of their right to file a request for relief from this decision to the Course Dean within four (4) weeks and will refer the student to the policies governing Student Requests for Relief and Scholastic Offences.

The Chair will forward all documentation relating to the offence to the Dean.

b) Dean-Level Review

- i. If the student files a request for relief from Chair's decision:

¹ In some Faculties, the appropriate University official will be the Department Chair or Dean of a Faculty without department structure.

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The student will be given a reasonable opportunity to meet with the Dean and submit evidence supporting their argument after submitting the request for relief but before a decision is made. The Dean will review the evidence provided by both the Chair and the student, the student's offence record, if any, and may investigate further. The Dean may vary the decision and may vary and/or impose other penalties. If the Dean is considering additional penalties, they shall first notify the student and give the student a reasonable opportunity to make written submissions on the issue of penalty.

- a. If the Dean does not vary the Chair's decision or impose other penalties, they will affirm the decision and deny the request for relief.
- b. If the Dean decides to vary the Chair's decision or impose other penalties, they will either grant the request for relief or overturn, modify, and/or increase or reduce the previous decision and penalties.
- c. The Dean's decision and any penalties imposed by them will be communicated to the student in writing, with a copy to the Chair. The letter also will inform the student if there will be a notation on the academic record and of their right to appeal the Dean's decision to SRBA.

ii. If the student does not file a request for relief from Chair's decision:

The Dean will review the evidence submitted by the Chair, the student's offence record, if any, and may investigate further. The Dean may impose other penalties. If the Dean is considering additional penalties, they shall first notify the student and give the student a reasonable opportunity to make written submissions on the issue of penalty.

- a. If the Dean does not impose other penalties, their decision will be communicated to the student in writing, with a copy to the Chair. The decision letter will also inform the student whether there will be a notation on the student's academic record. Such a decision is not subject to appeal to SRBA.
- b. If the Dean decides to impose other penalties, the Dean's decision and any penalties imposed by them will be communicated to the student in writing, with a copy to the Chair. The letter also will inform the student if there will be a notation on the academic record and of their right to appeal the Dean's decision to impose other penalties to SRBA.

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2) Faculty without department structure:

The Dean will advise the student of the allegation and the information supporting the allegation. The student will be given reasonable opportunity to respond and submit evidence and a reasonable opportunity to meet with the Dean before a decision is made. The Dean will review the evidence provided by both the student, the student's offence record, if any, and may investigate further.

- a) If the Dean decides that the student has committed a scholastic offence, they will determine the appropriate penalties in consultation with the instructor.
- b) The Dean's decision and any penalties imposed by them will be communicated to the student in writing. The letter also will inform the student if there will be a notation on the academic record and of their right to appeal the decision to SRBA.

2.2 Courses in Faculty Other Than Faculty of Registration ("Course Faculty")

1) Faculty with department structure (including the Faculty of Health Sciences):

a) Chair-Level Review

- i. The Chair will advise the student of the allegation and the information supporting the allegation. 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.
- ii. If the Chair decides that the student has committed a scholastic offence, they will determine the appropriate penalties in consultation with the instructor.
- iii. The Chair's decision and the penalties imposed by them will be communicated to the student in writing, with a copy to the Dean of the Course Faculty ("Course Dean"). The letter will advise the student of their right to file a request for relief from this decision to the Course Dean within four (4) weeks and will refer the student to the policies governing Student Requests for Relief and Scholastic Offences. The Chair will forward all documentation relating to the offence to the Dean.

b) Course Dean-Level Review

- i. If the student files a request for relief from Chair's decision:

The student will be given a reasonable opportunity to meet with the

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Course Dean and submit evidence supporting their argument before a decision is made. The Course Dean will review the evidence provided by the Chair and the student, and may investigate further. The Course Dean may vary the decision and may vary and/or impose other penalties. If the Course Dean is considering additional penalties, they shall first notify the student and give the student a reasonable opportunity to make written submissions on the issue of penalty.

- a. If the Course Dean does not vary the Chair's decision or impose other penalties, they will affirm the decision and deny the request for relief.
- b. If the Course Dean decides to vary the Chair's decision or impose other penalties, they will either grant the request for relief, or overturn, modify, and/or increase or reduce the previous decision and penalties.
- c. The Course Dean's decision and any penalties imposed by them will be communicated to the student in writing, with a copy to the Chair. The letter also will inform the student if there will be a notation on the academic record, that this decision and the decision of the Chair are being referred to the Dean of the Home Faculty ("Home Dean") who may impose additional penalties, and of their right to appeal the Course Dean's decision to SRBA. The Course Dean will forward all documentation relating to the offence to the Home Dean.

ii. If the student does not file a request for relief from Chair's decision:

The Course Dean will review the evidence provided by the Chair and may investigate further. The Course Dean may impose other penalties. If the Course Dean is considering additional penalties, they shall first notify the student and give the student a reasonable opportunity to make written submissions on the issue of penalty.

- a. If the Course Dean does not impose other penalties, their decision will be communicated to the student in writing, with a copy to the Chair. The decision letter will also inform the student whether there will be a notation on the student's academic record and that this decision and the decision of the Chair are being referred to the Home Dean who may impose additional penalties. Such a decision is not subject to appeal to SRBA. The Course Dean will forward all documentation relating to the offence to the Home Dean.
- b. If the Course Dean decides to impose other penalties, the Course Dean's decision and any penalties imposed by them will be communicated to the student in writing, with a copy to the Chair. The letter also will inform the student if there will be a notation on the academic record, that this decision and the decision of the Chair are being referred to the Home Dean who may impose additional

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penalties, and of their right to appeal the Course Dean's decision to impose other penalties to SRBA. The Course Dean will forward all documentation relating to the offence to the Home Dean.

c) Home Dean-Level Review

- i. Upon receipt of the decisions of the Chair and Course Dean, the Home Dean will decide if additional penalties are warranted. The Home Dean will review the evidence presented, the student's offence record, if any, and the penalties imposed by the Chair and Course Dean and may investigate further. If the Dean is considering additional penalties, they shall first notify the student and give the student a reasonable opportunity to make written submissions on the issue of penalty.
 - a. If the Home Dean does not impose additional penalties, their decision will be communicated to the student in writing, with a copy to the Chair and Course Dean. The decision letter will also inform the student whether there will be a notation on the student's academic record. Such a decision is not subject to appeal to SRBA.
 - b. If the Home Dean decides to impose additional penalties, the Home Dean's decision and the penalties imposed by them will be communicated to the student in writing, with a copy to the Chair and Course Dean. The letter also will inform the student if there will be a notation on the academic record and of their right to appeal the Home Dean's decision to SRBA.

2) *Faculty without department structure:*

- a) The Course Dean will advise the student of the allegation and the information supporting the allegation. The student will be given reasonable opportunity to respond and submit evidence and a reasonable opportunity to meet with the Dean before a decision is made.

If the Course Dean decides that the student has committed a scholastic offence, they will determine the appropriate penalties in consultation with the instructor.

The Course Dean's decision and the penalties imposed by them will be communicated to the student in writing. The letter will inform the student if there will be a notation on the academic record, that the decision is being referred to the Home Dean who may impose additional penalties, and of his/her right to appeal the Course Dean's decision to SRBA. The Course Dean then will forward all documentation relating to the offence, including a copy of their decision, to the Home Dean.

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- b) Upon receipt of the Course Dean's decision, the Home Dean will proceed in accordance with item 2.2 (1)(c).

2.3 Requests for Relief

Requests for relief to a Dean must be submitted in writing within four (4) weeks of a decision being issued. The written request need not be lengthy but should state clearly the detailed reasons for the request and the relief requested and include all supporting documentation. A student may request that the Chair's finding that a scholastic offence occurred, and/or the penalties imposed, be set aside or adjusted.

Note: Some Faculties have longer deadlines. The letter from the Chair to the student will set out the applicable deadline.

2.4 Certificate and Diploma-Credit Courses

An allegation of misconduct in a certificate-credit or diploma-credit course offered within a department, or in a Faculty without department structure, will be handled in accordance with the same procedures set out above for degree-credit courses. Otherwise, where the course is not offered by a particular department in a Faculty with department structure, the allegation will be dealt with by the Dean of the Faculty (Part I, Section 2.1, #2 above).

An allegation of misconduct in a certificate-credit or diploma-credit course offered by the Western Continuing Studies will be handled in accordance with the procedures set out in Part I, Section 2.1, #1 above ("Faculty with department structure"). In such cases, references to "Chair" shall be interpreted as "Executive Director of Western Continuing Studies" and references to the "Dean" shall be interpreted as "Dean of the partnering Faculty".

2.5 Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies Courses

An allegation of misconduct in a course offered by the Department of Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies will be handled in accordance with the procedures set out in Part I, Section 2.1, #1 above ("Faculty with department structure"). References to "Dean" shall be interpreted as "Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities".

3.0 PART II: SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES: OTHER

Where an allegation does not relate to a course, the matter will be referred to the Dean of the student's Home Faculty. If the Dean decides that there is evidence to support the allegation, the Dean will advise the student of the allegation and the information supporting the allegation. The student will be given a reasonable opportunity to respond and submit evidence and a reasonable opportunity to meet

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with the Dean before a decision is made. If the Dean decides that the student has committed a scholastic offence, the Dean will determine the appropriate penalties. The Dean's decision and the penalties imposed will be communicated to the student in writing. The letter will inform the student if there will be a notation on the academic record and of their right to appeal the decision to SRBA.

4.0 **PENALTIES**

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

- a) Reprimand.
- b) Requirement that the student repeat and resubmit the assignment.
- c) A failing grade in the assignment.
- d) A failing grade in the course in which the offence was committed.
- e) Prohibition of further registration in a course or courses.
- f) Prohibition of further registration in a course or courses in the Department or Faculty in which the offence occurred.
- g) Failure of the year (applies in certain professional programs).
- h) Suspension from the University for up to, but not more than, three (3) academic years.
- i) Expulsion from the University.

This is a non-exhaustive list.

In determining what penalties are warranted in a given case, previous offences within the Faculty, the gravity of the offence, and the need to ensure consistency in standards of discipline across a Faculty will be relevant considerations for a Dean. A Home Dean also will take into account an existing Offence Record.

- 2) A notation of the scholastic offence (e.g., "Scholastic Offence recorded in...") may be placed on a student's internal, electronic record for the penalties (1)(d), (e), (f), and (g) at the discretion of the Dean of the Faculty imposing the penalty. Upon successful completion of the student's program, the student may request that the notation be removed. The Dean, after consulting with the relevant Chair in the case of a departmentalized Faculty, will decide whether to grant the

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request. A notation on the official transcript* is recorded for penalties (1)(h) and (i).

Penalty (1)(f) is a program decision that can be imposed only by the Dean of the Course Faculty.

Penalties (1)(g), (h), and (i) are program decisions that can be imposed only by the Dean of the Home Faculty.

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

5.0 APPEAL TO SRBA

A student may have a right of appeal to SRBA if the decision falls within its jurisdiction. Appeals to SRBA must be made **within six weeks of the date of the Dean's decision**.

The decision of the Dean or their designate remains in full force and effect unless and until overturned or modified by SRBA.

See the *Senate Review Board Academic Appeals* policy and *Procedure for Senate Review Board Academic Appeals* for further information.

6.0 OFFENCE RECORD

The offence record will be held in the Dean's Office of the student's Home Faculty and will be kept separate from the student's academic advising file.

If a student is subsequently 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 on the Western Libraries Retention Schedules website.

Apart from the student, no one outside the Dean'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.

7.0 RELEASE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES

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 transfers to another Faculty, or to an Affiliated University College of this University, the offence record will be transferred to the Dean's Office of that Faculty or College. Otherwise, information may be released with the written permission of the student or if required by 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.

7.1 Report to Senate

Each Faculty shall submit to the Vice-Provost (Academic Programs) an annual summary of scholastic offences committed by students registered in the Faculty. The summary will set out the nature of the offence and the penalties, with students' names removed. The Vice-Provost (Academic Programs) will compile the information, by Faculty, and report annually to Senate for information.

Last Reviewed:

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