

Procedures for Handling Suspected Cases of Academic Dishonesty

An instructor who suspects academic dishonesty should refer the case to the Professional Studies Committee. It is a good practice for the instructor to interview the student or students who appear to be guilty of academic dishonesty before referring the matter to the Professional Studies Committee, in order to make absolutely certain that an allegation of academic dishonesty is warranted. Instructors may wish to consult with the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs in making this determination. If an allegation of academic dishonesty is warranted, the instructor should forward the materials supporting the charge, accompanied by a cover letter assessing the nature, extent, and gravity of the offense, to the chair of the Professional Studies Committee. In cases of alleged plagiarism, for example, the Committee needs a thorough identification of the improperly used sources, keyed to the passages in which they appear in the student's essay, from the instructor. Except in unusual circumstances, an instructor who has alleged dishonesty on the part of a student is not required to attend the student's interview with the committee, since the documents in the case are almost always sufficient for the committee's deliberations.

For the sake of consistency, impartiality, fairness, and due process in treating cases of academic dishonesty, it is essential that all such cases be referred to the Professional Studies Committee rather than being settled privately between instructor and student.

Upon receiving an allegation of academic dishonesty, the chair of the Professional Studies Committee will contact the student or students to advise them of the allegations and inform them of the procedures. The student will be offered the opportunity to respond to the charges in a written statement to the Committee. The Committee will make every effort to consider the case at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The Committee reviews the allegations, evidence, and student statement, and makes a determination of guilt. If the student is found guilty of academic dishonesty, the Committee assigns a penalty. Whether the offence was intentional is not taken into account in determining guilt, but is considered when assigning a penalty. Penalties vary in proportion to the severity of the offence, and range from the requirement to re-do the assignment or submit an additional assignment, failure of the assignment, academic probation, failure of the course, suspension for a semester or year, to expulsion from the school. The decision to suspend or expel a student is made by the General Faculty upon recommendation by the Professional Studies Committee. If the Committee is considering one of these serious penalties, the student shall have the right to appear in person before the Committee, and may bring one individual from the Yale community with them to offer support, i.e., a faculty advisor, Student Affairs staff person, or friend.