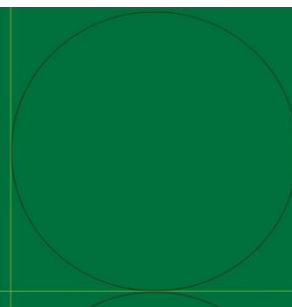


Responding to Academic Misconduct: a Faculty Guide



Overview

Policy 7O and Procedures guide action when responding to potential academic misconduct. This document serves as a resource to the student academic misconduct process and is based on the policy and best practice for conducting fair investigations.

Key terms

<i>Faculty member/Instructor</i>	The employee responsible for initiating proceedings in response to academic misconduct allegations. This includes a Faculty-led Response or conducting an investigation.
<i>Decision-maker</i>	The department head or director. When a 3rd case of misconduct has occurred, the Dean or designate will be the decision-maker.
<i>Resolution Meeting</i>	A meeting between the student and the decision-maker to discuss the evidence and potential outcomes.
<i>Penalty</i>	The outcomes from a finding of misconduct.
<i>Appeal</i>	Policy 7O procedures allows for an appeal of a Notice of Disciplinary Action based on 3 grounds: the misconduct did not occur, there was procedural bias or unfairness, or the assigned penalty is too severe. Students must provide proof to support their grounds for appeal.

<i>Notice of Disciplinary Action</i>	The formal record of misconduct.
<i>Standard of Proof</i>	The allegation is more likely to be true than not true based on the findings of the investigation.
<i>Bias</i>	A tendency, inclination, or prejudice toward or against someone or something.

Fairness



(Ombudsperson of Saskatchewan, 2019)

Fairness is an integral part of fact-finding processes. When principles of fairness have not been applied, decisions made can be vulnerable to appeal.

The fairness triangle can be helpful to understand three main components of fair practice.

Relational Fairness: *How was I treated?*

- The student should be treated respectfully
- The instructor and decision-maker should be approachable, honest, and transparent

Procedural Fairness: *How was it decided?*

- The student should be given details of the suspected misconduct and evidence against them so they can respond
 - The student should be informed about the process and their ability to access support
 - The student should have the opportunity to respond and share their information, prior to a decision being made:
 - “What do you want to share about the alleged misconduct?”
 - “Tell me your process for completing the academic work - how did you prepare?”
 - “What evidence/documentation do you have that shows you did not engage in academic misconduct? ”
 - Reasons for the decision must be provided to the student
 - The fact-finder and decision-maker must be unbiased
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Substantive Fairness: *What was decided?*

- The decision must be made based on the relevant evidence
 - The decision should be based on contextual factors and with an understanding of the impact of the decision
 - The decision should not be overly punitive or cause disproportionate impacts
 - Include the student in a conversation about outcomes:
 - “Here are the potential penalties. What penalty matches your understanding of the misconduct?”
 - “If one of these penalties was applied, tell me about the potential impact it could have for you”
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Faculty Response Options

<i>Faculty-led response</i>	<i>Full academic misconduct procedures</i>
<p>When minor plagiarism occurs, defined by formatting errors, using the wrong citation style, using in-text citation, but neglecting to indicate direct quotes for one-two lines of text as a paraphrase instead of a direct quote and there is only one case of this in the Academic Work; or, no citation of a source for a small (one-two lines of text) direct quote, but citations are included for all other material in the assignment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ This process does not result in a Notice of Disciplinary Action, the formal record of the misconduct.	<p>All other forms of academic misconduct not considered “plagiarism minor”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ This process results in a Notice of Disciplinary Action.

Procedures

Faculty-led

Instructor:

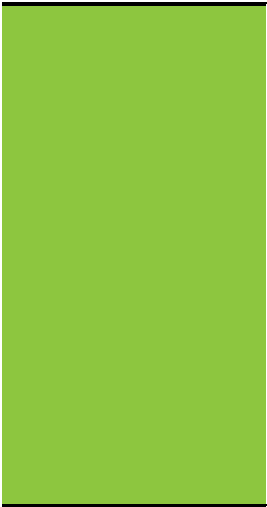
- ☐ Notify the student by email that you have identified minor plagiarism and are beginning a Faculty-led response (email template in Appendix A)
- ☐ In this email, schedule a meeting within 5 business days with them to discuss the error(s) and how to correct them in the future
- ☐ In this meeting, assign outcomes allowed in faculty-led procedures
- ☐ Submit the online form

Full Procedures

Instructor:

- ☐ Notify the student by email within 2 days of detecting the alleged misconduct that you have suspicions of academic misconduct and are beginning an investigation (email template in Appendix A)
- ☐ Alert your Department Head or equivalent that you are investigating a potential case of academic misconduct
- ☐ Conduct your investigation - must be completed within 5 business days of sending notification email to student
- ☐ Following your investigation:
 - if insufficient evidence: notify the student that there is no finding of academic misconduct via email within 2 business days
 - if sufficient evidence: notify your Department Head/Director of your findings

Department Head/Director:

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- ☐ Notify the student of a finding of academic misconduct via email (email template in Appendix A)
 - ☐ Set up a Resolution Meeting with the student within 10 business days of receiving investigation results
 - ☐ Contact the SRRO to inquire about previous Notices of Disciplinary Action
 - ☐ Conduct the Resolution Meeting
 - ☐ Submit the online form
-

Evidence

Evidence refers to all information gathered, discovered, or provided to you that helps determine whether the misconduct did or did not occur.

Some examples include:

- The works cited in the academic work do not exist
- Quotations in the academic work do not exist
- Results of asking the student to explain works cited in the academic work
- Results of asking the student to answer an exam question where suspected cheating occurred

Tips for student meetings

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the reason for meeting and discuss your role• Demonstrate openness to hear the student's side• Be mindful of timing when communicating stressful news (avoid Friday afternoons when the university will not have supports available) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider accessibility of the meeting space• Listen to the student's experience without judgement• Refer students to supports and/or resources, if applicable |
|--|---|

1. Ombudsman Saskatchewan, (2019, January). *What is fairness?* <https://ombudsman.sk.ca/app/uploads/2020/01/What-is-Fairness-Jan-2019.pdf>

Responding to Academic Misconduct: Appendix A - Email Templates

Faculty-led Response

Notifying Student

Subject: Response Required: Minor Case of Plagiarism Detected

Dear [student's name],

I am reaching out regarding your submission for [specific assignment/exam] in [course name and section]. I noticed [specific issue, e.g., a section of your work closely aligns with an external source without appropriate citation], which constitutes a minor instance of plagiarism under UFV's [Policy 7O - Student Academic Misconduct](#).

As this is a minor issue, I am addressing it through the Faculty-Led Response to Minor Cases of Plagiarism, which is intended to help educate students on minor academic integrity issues. This is outlined under UFV's [Student Academic Misconduct \(7O\) Regulations and Procedures](#). To help clarify academic expectations and support your learning, it is important we meet to discuss this matter further.

I have the following dates and times available, please let me know which one works best for you:

· [Date, Time]

· [Date, Time]

· [Date, Time]

I am hoping that our meeting can be an opportunity to discuss the minor errors in your assignment to enhance your learning and understanding.

UFV support services are here for you. If you have questions about this process, please connect with the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Office](#). For support with other matters, please connect with the [Student Support Centre](#) and UFV [Counselling](#).

[signature]

Formal Response

(1) Notifying Student that Formal Investigation is starting

Subject: Notification of Academic Misconduct Investigation

Dear [student's name],

I am writing to inform you that I have identified possible academic misconduct in your submission for [specific assignment] in [course name and section]. After reviewing your work, I suspect that [briefly outline the suspected misconduct, e.g. cheating by copying another person's work, etc.].

As per UFV's [Policy 70 - Student Academic Misconduct](#), I am starting an investigation process to gather additional information to help determine whether academic misconduct occurred; part of this process may involve meeting with you. Once complete, I will be in touch to notify you of the outcome of the investigation.

This process is outlined in UFV's [Student Academic Misconduct \(70\) Regulations and Procedures](#). For questions or support with this process, please contact the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Office](#).

UFV support services are here for you. Please don't hesitate to connect with services including the [Student Support Centre](#) and [Counselling](#).

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I will follow up with you soon regarding the next steps.

[Signature]

(2) Following Investigation:

(a) If Sufficient Evidence is Found

(1) Results of Investigation - Faculty Member contacts Department Head

Subject: Results of Academic Misconduct Investigation

Dear [Dpt Head's name],

I am writing to inform you that I have completed an academic misconduct investigation process for [course name, course code, section]. The involved student is [student name, student ID#, student email].

After a detailed review, I have found that there is sufficient evidence to show that [student name] engaged in behaviour that may be considered academic misconduct under [UFV's Policy 70 - Student Academic Misconduct](#) in relation to [assignment/exam].

Please find below/attached relevant evidence for this investigation. [*provide any relevant information regarding this case of academic misconduct*].

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please let me know if there is any further information I can provide regarding this case.

[signature]

(II) Results of Investigation - Faculty Member contacts student

Subject: Results of Academic Misconduct Investigation

Dear [student's name],

I am following up regarding the academic misconduct investigation process in [Course Name]. After a detailed review, I have found that there is sufficient evidence to show that you engaged in behaviour that may be considered academic misconduct under [UFV's Policy 70 - Student Academic Misconduct](#) in relation to [assignment/exam].

I have shared the results of this investigation with my [DptHead/Director] who will be contacting you to set up a Resolution Meeting to hear your side and discuss the evidence and potential outcomes.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. Please keep in mind the support services available to you, including the [Student Support Centre](#) and [Counselling](#).

[signature]

(III) Resolution Meeting required - Department Head/Director contacts student:

Subject: Response Required: Academic Misconduct Resolution Meeting

Dear [student's name],

I am following up regarding the academic misconduct investigation process in [Course Name]. Based on the materials submitted, your instructor has identified potential issues that may be considered academic misconduct under [UFV's Policy 70 - Student Academic Misconduct](#).

You have the opportunity to share your perspective and provide any information that might clarify the situation. I am inviting you to a [Resolution Meeting](#) where you can further present your side and submit any relevant evidence^[k]. After reviewing all available information, a decision about the misconduct will be made and potential outcomes assigned.

I have the following dates and times available, please let me know which one works best for you *[meeting must be held within 10 business days of you receiving the results of the investigation]*:

· [Date, Time]

· [Date, Time]

· [Date, Time]

If you do not respond or are unable to attend, I will proceed with submitting a formal report of academic misconduct based on the information currently available.

This process is outlined in UFV's [Student Academic Misconduct \(70\) Regulations and Procedures](#). For questions or support with this process, please contact the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Office](#).

UFV support services are here for you. Please don't hesitate to connect with services including the [Student Support Centre](#) and [Counselling](#).

[signature]

(b) If Insufficient Evidence Not Found - Instructor informs student formal investigation is closed:

Subject: Academic Misconduct Investigation Closed

Dear [student's name],

I have completed my investigation into the suspected academic misconduct regarding [specific assignment/exam] that I first notified you about on [date].

After a detailed review, I have found that there is not enough evidence to show that academic misconduct occurred in relation to this [assignment/exam]. As a result, your grade for this [assignment/exam] will be [details of grade, e.g. restored to the original grade or no changes will be made].

Thank you for your patience and understanding during this process. While the investigation did not find sufficient evidence, I encourage you to review the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Office's webpage on Academic Integrity](#) for resources that can support your academic success and deepen your understanding of UFV's academic integrity expectations.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

[signature]