

# **Chapter 13**

## **Student Conduct and Grievance Procedures**

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The Graduate School, like the University itself, expects and will require of all its students cooperation in developing and maintaining high standards of scholarship and conduct.

## **A. Standards of Conduct**

Graduate students are expected to uphold the Duke Community Standard and to meet academic requirements and financial obligations, as specified elsewhere in this manual, the Graduate School Bulletin and Best Practices: Core Expectations for Graduate Study at Duke University. Failure to meet these requirements may result in summary dismissal by the Dean of the Graduate School. Students are also subject to other rules and regulations of the university currently in effect. In accepting admission to the Graduate School, students indicate their willingness to subscribe to and be governed by these rules and regulations and acknowledge the right of the university to take such disciplinary action, including suspension and/or expulsion, as may be deemed appropriate for failure to abide by such rules and regulations or for conduct judged unsatisfactory or detrimental to the university.

Serious violations of the Duke Community Standard typically result in suspension or dismissal from the university. Students charged with crimes by the Duke or municipal police are not normally suspended or dismissed unless their actions have suggested they may be a threat to other people or property. Such cases are evaluated with Duke Police, the University Behavioral Assessment Team and other relevant parties. We take very seriously the possibility that a student may endanger resources or people, and work to ensure that this does not happen. If a student is convicted of a crime, the actions taken by the university will be determined in consultation with University Counsel.

## **B. Academic Misconduct**

Students receive general instruction on academic integrity at their initial orientation and in many subsequent venues, as well as in the *Graduate Student Handbook* and other written resources. Individual programs are strongly encouraged to provide detailed examples of academic misconduct to their students, preferably using field-specific examples to ensure that students understand academic integrity in general and in their own disciplines. Discussion within programs of the importance of academic integrity can greatly diminish cases of academic misconduct.

Please advise your faculty members to design and conduct examinations, problem sets and other exercises such that the potential for cheating is minimized. Make clear to what extent collaboration with other students or consultation of online sources or notes is allowed. Do not use problems or questions for grading that are recycled from textbooks or other exams wherever possible, as students are very skilled at finding solutions manuals and such online. A good policy is to have students sign a statement that they have worked alone when they turn in exams and graded work, unless explicitly allowed to work in groups.

The Graduate School is required to keep records on all cases of academic misconduct and strives to treat all accused students consistently and fairly. Instructors who suspect cheating or other academic misconduct of any kind should work to document it. The appropriate action for an instructor is to give the student zero (0) credit on whatever assignment or

examination involved cheating of any kind. Instructors must report any suspected or proven instances of academic misconduct to their department chair and to the associate dean for academic affairs. Together, they will investigate and determine any appropriate disciplinary action, in consultation with the student's DGS. Nonetheless, keep in mind that the norm is dismissal when a student has clearly plagiarized or cheated, i.e. misrepresented the work of another as his or her own. Improper collaboration with other people or prohibited consultation of information sources also leads to significant disciplinary actions, such as suspension for a semester.

Duke University, and the Graduate School in particular, as a community of scholars, strongly rely upon the standard of academic integrity. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty represent a corruption of this integrity and, as such, cannot be tolerated within the community. Ignorance of what constitutes academic dishonesty is no excuse for actions which violate the integrity of the community. We take the Duke Community Standard very seriously, and hold students to it. They commit to upholding it each time they register, and we insist they follow through.

### **C. Discrimination and Harassment**

Duke University adheres to a policy of equal opportunity, without discrimination on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin, sex, handicap, or age, in the administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, financial aid programs, employment, or any other University program or activity. Sexual harassment is a form of discrimination.

University policies and procedures regarding harassment and discrimination can be located online at: [Harassment and Discrimination Policies](#).

Harassment is an especially serious disruption of the academic community, and all forms of intimidation and harassment, sexual or otherwise, must be dealt with promptly and carefully. It is, of course, easier to state the ideals of a collaborative research environment than to specify the mechanics by which to deal with disturbances in that environment or the various kinds of personal and professional misconduct that can occur. Your best strategy, as DGS, is to keep the Graduate School, and particularly the Associate Dean, fully informed of any situation that could disrupt the departmental/program or university workplace. You should also be familiar with the [Judicial Code and Procedures](#), as it appears in the Graduate School *Bulletin*. Please remember that the Graduate School has broad institutional experience with various forms of misconduct, and is therefore in a position to offer some perspective about which issues hold potentially serious legal complications and thus a clearer sense of when to involve the offices of the University Counsel.

### **D. Student Grievances**

It is the responsibility of the DGS to inform each graduate student of the appropriate channels of redress for various kinds of grievances. In most circumstances, as DGS, you will be the first to hear a complaint. Each department should have a standardized approach to dealing with student grievances that has been discussed among the faculty and is a written procedure. When dealing with a complaint, carefully document each communication, discussion, recommendation or action relating to a student grievance.

If the complaint cannot be resolved by you, the student may appeal to the department chair. The chair should meet with the student to hear the complaint, then review all material and your decision, then uphold or overrule it in writing as the chair sees fit. For matters involving disputed grades, the instructor should be consulted and provided with all relevant material. Only the instructor and chair of the department in which a course was offered can modify grades. The chair should carefully review all relevant materials and make a judgment to the instructor, on the record, of any appropriate grade change. The Academic Affairs unit of the Graduate School should be informed of any such revisions.

If a student does not accept the departmental decision, s/he can appeal to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. All documentation of the grievance will be required. The Associate Dean will make a judgment in writing to the student and department. If further appeal is desired, the student may request that the Dean of the Graduate School hear the case, OR appoint a Judicial Board to hear the case. By either route, this shall be the final avenue of appeal and the decision binding. See the *Bulletin* for details on the appeals process.

Students should also be informed that if they feel they will not receive a fair hearing in the department, or their grievance is such that raising it in the department could in their view jeopardize their graduate careers, they should go directly to the Associate Dean of the Graduate School. Please assure all students that the Graduate School will protect the confidentiality of their complaints as fully as possible.