

Academic Integrity Guide for Hendrix Faculty

Brent Yorgey

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Quick Reference

- Questions? Unsure what to do? Don't hesitate to reach out to me (or the current chair of the committee), via whichever means you are most comfortable with:
 - Email/Teams: yorgey@hendrix.edu
 - Phone: x1377
 - Office: MC Reynolds 310, <http://byorgey.youcanbook.me/>
- To report an academic integrity violation, use the form found on the Hendrix webpage under Faculty/Staff > Faculty Resources > Faculty Forms > Academic Integrity.
- Academic integrity process cheat sheet!
 - Fill out form
 - Meet with student
 - Student has two days to decide whether to sign the form
 - Send the (signed or unsigned) form + supporting evidence to the chair of the academic integrity committee
 - * Electronic is preferred but a physical form is OK too
 - If the student signed the form, the form is filed and a letter is sent to the student and cc'd to you, ending the process.
 - Otherwise, the chair will be in touch about scheduling a conference.

Best Practices

Before you even reach the point of having to deal with academic dishonesty, it's worth considering some simple things you can do to help reduce incentives for cheating.

- Be very clear in your syllabus and on individual assignments what is allowed and what is not. This may or may not make much difference in terms of convincing students not to cheat, but it certainly makes it much harder for them to argue that they didn't know what was expected or appropriate.
- Talk about academic integrity as a positive expectation (being generous in giving credit to others and grateful for their help; upholding community standards and ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to learn and do their best), rather than just a negative ("don't cheat or else").
- If you teach first-year students, consider spending some class time explicitly going over your expectations regarding academic integrity. Do not assume it is "obvious" or that they already learned the proper standards in high school.
- Use plagiarism detection software such as turnitin.¹
- Consider adopting assignments and grading practices that reduce incentives for cheating. In fact, **these are often the types of assignments and grading practices that lead to the best learning outcomes.**² Some examples include:
 - Use multiple, low-stakes assessments (*e.g.* small quizzes) in place of a single, high-stakes assessment (*e.g.* a big exam).
 - Scaffold big, high-stakes assignments with multiple required stages and checkpoints.
 - Build intrinsic motivation for assignments by
 - * giving authentic ("real-world") assignments and assessments
 - * explaining the motivation and goals behind assignments
 - * offering students choices in terms of which assignments they complete, what they do to complete them, *etc.*
 - Assign some formative work that is not formally assessed, *e.g.* practice problems that are not graded, ungraded drafts that can be turned in for feedback, *etc.*
 - Use something like specifications grading³ with built-in opportunities for revision.

¹ <https://www.turnitin.com/>

² J.M. Lang (2013). *Cheating Lessons: Learning from Academic Dishonesty*. Harvard University Press. ISBN: 9780674727304

³ L.B. Nilson and C.J. Stanny (2014). *Specifications Grading: Restoring Rigor, Motivating Students, and Saving Faculty Time*. Stylus Publishing. ISBN: 9781620362419

Dealing with Academic Dishonesty

“I think some students cheated. Now what?”

It’s important to first consider what the goal of the process is, and what it is not. In particular, the goal is **not retribution or punishment**. This sounds obvious when stated plainly, but academic integrity issues can be emotionally fraught. Feelings of betrayal and anger are normal, and with them a subconscious desire to inflict on the student the same suffering they have inflicted on us. It’s important to be able to recognize and validate those emotions but not allow them to dictate the way we respond to students who have violated standards of academic integrity.

Rather, in my opinion, the goals of the academic integrity process should be to form students as whole persons, uphold community standards, and maintain the integrity of the educational environment.

Decide whether to formally pursue the violation

At some institutions, faculty are *required* to report any suspected academic integrity violations; at Hendrix, faculty are encouraged but not required to do so.

- For example, if a violation is very small and clearly unintentional, you may choose to simply give the student a (verbal or written) warning rather than go through the formal process.
- Or, if you are suspicious that a student may have plagiarized some part of an assignment but evidence is scant (because you are unable to identify the source, the plagiarized portions are very small, and/or your suspicions are also informed by your previous interactions with the student) you may opt to simply share your suspicions with the student (so they at least know you are paying attention and aren’t led to think they “got away with it”) rather than go through a formal process in which it could be difficult to convince the committee that an academic integrity violation had in fact taken place.

However, even in the above situations (especially the latter) you are welcome to go through the formal process if you wish.

In any case, you **must go through the formal process if you intend to impose some kind of sanction on the student**—even if the student agrees. For example, you cannot simply inform a student they will receive a zero on a plagiarized assignment and then neglect to report it to the Academic Integrity Committee.

Decide on a recommended sanction

Faculty have wide latitude in choosing recommended sanctions for academic integrity violations. The Academic Integrity Committee serves as a check on this latitude, with the power to hand down a different sanction if they deem the recommended one too harsh or too lenient; in practice, however, this power is rarely exercised.

If you have no idea what might be an appropriate sanction, there are some standard options:

- A zero on the assignment.
- A reduction of the final course grade by one letter grade.
- An F in the course is typically the sanction for cheating on a final or cumulative assessment such as a final exam, paper, or project.

However, given the latitude faculty enjoy, you are encouraged to use your judgment and be creative. Consider whether the violation seems intentional or just uninformed, and keep in mind that harsh penalties don't necessarily help students learn better or serve as effective deterrents. The goal is to pick a sanction which is commensurate with the violation and which will create a learning opportunity for the student. Here are a few alternative ideas to spark your creativity:

- Remember that disappointing you, having to go through the academic integrity process, and having an academic integrity violation on record are already sanctions in and of themselves. For relatively small and/or unintentional violations you might consider simply requiring the student to redo the assignment.
- Receiving a zero on an assignment means the student doesn't have to do the assignment any longer, and thus misses a learning opportunity. Consider sanctions where the student is still required to do the assignment. For example:
 - the student might still be able to get full credit for an assignment if they redo it appropriately, but in any case have their final course grade lowered by one letter grade;
 - or, the student might be able to redo an assignment, but only for partial credit.
- If the academic integrity violation affected certain community members in particular, the student might be required to write them an apology.

Fill out violation report form and collect evidence

The form to fill out can be found on the Hendrix webpage under *Faculty/Staff > Faculty Resources > Faculty Forms > Academic Integrity*.

Filling out the form itself should not take long.

You should also spend at least a bit of time collecting evidence.

This could consist of, for example, the instructions or prompt for the assignment in question, the student's work, any source material that may have been plagiarized (perhaps with plagiarized portions highlighted), the course syllabus, or any email exchanges with student.

Collected evidence may be helpful to show to the student; in my experience, students are more likely to cooperate when you explain your reasoning and show them your evidence (since it is often much stronger and clear-cut than the student would like to imagine). The collected evidence will also be sent to the committee in the case that a conference needs to be held. **However**, collecting evidence can take a lot of time, and you shouldn't worry about doing a thorough job for routine cases.

Meet with the student

This is often a difficult part of the process, but it's also critical. At some institutions, the academic integrity committee handles everything once there has been an accusation of academic dishonesty, including contacting the student. At Hendrix, however, faculty play a more active role in the process. This is more work for faculty, of course—both in time and emotional energy—but it fits with our institutional mission. For students to be formed as whole persons, and to best understand how their actions affect the Hendrix community, it's important that the process takes place in the context of existing relationships, rather than through an impersonal bureaucracy.

Here are some suggested dos and don'ts for meeting with a student about an accusation of academic dishonesty.

DO

- Be straightforward and transparent.
- Explain what you suspect happened and present your evidence.
- Although you should try not to let your emotional reaction dictate the way you handle the case, it can absolutely be appropriate to express your emotional reaction to the student (*e.g.* "I'm disappointed because I really thought you would make better choices than this," or "I feel hurt because I trusted you with this assignment but you lied to me about it.")

- Listen to the student's response.
- Give the student the form to consider and explain the process.
 - They have two days to consider whether to sign the form, and are welcome to consult with their advisor, trusted mentors and friends, *etc.*
 - Valid reasons for them to not sign the form: (1) they claim that they didn't do what you accuse them of; (2) they don't agree what they did was a violation of academic integrity; or (3) they think the proposed sanction is unreasonably harsh.
 - If they don't sign, they have the right to an Academic Integrity Committee conference, where an impartial panel of faculty and their peers will decide the case.

DON'T

- Force them to sign the form in front of you. They should have time to consider and discuss with trusted friends and mentors.
- Try to manipulate them into confessing or signing the form, *e.g.* by playing coy or using the committee as a "bad cop":
 - "Why do you think I wanted to meet with you today?"
 - "Is there anything you'd like to tell me about this assignment?"
 - "If this goes to the Academic Integrity Committee, the penalty might be even worse."
- Be unduly swayed in the moment by their arguments or emotional reaction.
 - Unfortunately, some students are excellent liars and manipulators.
 - You should give yourself time to consider and discuss with friends and mentors, just as they have.

Communicate with the committee chair

At this point you should communicate with the committee chair.

- In an ideal world, the contrite student has signed the form and returned it to you. In that case, just forward the form to the committee chair. You may optionally forward any evidence you have collected but it's not as important in this case. You are now done!

- If the student has not signed the form after two days, simply forward the un-signed form to the committee chair along with any collected evidence. The chair will then be in touch about scheduling a conference.
- If you have any questions about the process, or want advice, you are welcome to contact the committee chair at any point.