

Appeals Relating to Violation of the Graduate Student Honor Code

PREAMBLE

This document establishes a Graduate Student Honor Code (referred to as the Honor Code). The purpose of the Honor Code is to establish standards of academic integrity for graduate students at the university and provide procedures that offer assurances of fundamental fairness to any student accused of violating the Honor Code. This document also provides a process for graduate students to appeal certain decisions to the Graduate Council. Covered under this section of the document are university regulations applicable to graduate students, but not regulations relating to admission decisions, grade appeals, or violations of the Graduate Honor Code.

The procedures set forth in this document are specific to graduate students at the university. As Northern Kentucky University students, graduate students are also subject to the provisions of the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities as adopted by the Board of Regents. Where provisions or procedures set forth in the two documents differ or conflict, this document will prevail in cases involving graduate students. Grade appeals that do not relate to consequences for violations of the Graduate Honor Code are covered by the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, Section VII. Academic Grievance Process. It is incumbent upon graduate students to be aware of university regulations. Ignorance of these regulations does not excuse students from adherence to them.

II. DEFINITIONS

- **Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Research, and Outreach** - chief academic officer in charge of graduate programs. The Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Research, and Outreach is the university official designated by the university to promote, create, interpret and enforce the Graduate Student Honor Code or to designate such enforcement to other individuals within the institution.
- **Expulsion**-a permanent dismissal from the university. The expulsion will remain a permanent record within the graduate office and shall be reflected on the academic transcript.
- **Graduate Council** -- the official university body which coordinates and oversees all policies, procedures, curricula, and regulations for all university graduate programs.
- **Graduate Honor Code Council** - a standing committee appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies to conduct formal proceedings regarding violations of the Graduate Honor Code.
- **Graduate Student** -- includes all persons enrolled at the university at the graduate level; includes non-degree graduate students and graduate certificate students but excludes Chase law students and post-baccalaureate students.
- **Policy** - any published regulations of the university.
- **Program Director** -- university official responsible for the administrative leadership of a graduate program.
- **Provost**-senior academic affairs officer responsible for the administrative leadership of academic programs and academic support services at Northern Kentucky University.

- **Suspension**-a temporary dismissal from the university for cause. If suspended for violations of the Graduate Student Honor Code a student may not enroll in courses or be an active member of the university during the suspension period. After the suspension is served a student may apply for re enrollment. The suspension will remain a permanent record within the graduate office.
- **University, Northern, or NKU**-represents Northern Kentucky University
- **Working day**-a day when the university is open for normal business, regardless of whether classes are in session.

III. GRADUATE STUDENT HONOR CODE: Academic Integrity

A. Preamble and Honor Code Pledge

This Graduate Student Honor Code (referred to as the Honor Code) is a commitment by graduate students of Northern Kentucky University, through their matriculation or continued enrollment at the university, to adhere to the highest degree of ethical integrity in academic conduct. It is a commitment individually and collectively that the graduate students of NKU will uphold professional standards of research, writing, assessment, and ethics in their areas of study.

The purpose of the Honor Code is to establish standards of academic integrity for graduate students at NKU and to provide a procedure that offers basic assurances of fundamental fairness to any person accused of violations of these rules. Each NKU graduate student is bound by the provisions of the Honor Code and is presumed to be familiar with all of its provisions. Students must conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the highest degree of ethical integrity in all matters, whether covered in the Honor Code or not. The success of this commitment begins in the diligence with which students uphold the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code.

By enrollment at NKU all graduate students accept and acknowledge the following pledge:

"I do hereby acknowledge the existence of the NKU Graduate Student Honor Code. I understand that the Graduate Student Honor Code supports an environment that values integrity, honesty, and ethical conduct for all NKU students. I understand that by my enrollment at NKU, I confirm my agreement and understanding of the policies and procedures outlined in the Graduate Student Honor Code."

B. Academic Dishonesty

Behaviors that constitute academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Engaging in any conduct involving academic deceit, dishonesty, or misrepresentation, including conduct during the application process for admission to NKU.

2. Committing plagiarism on any examination, assignment or graduation requirement. Plagiarism is defined as taking the literary property or ideas of another, passing it off as one's own without appropriate attribution and reaping from its use any benefit from an academic institution. Accordingly, a graduate student must:

1. Acknowledge direct use of someone else's words.
 2. Acknowledge any words he/she paraphrases from any source.
 3. Acknowledge his/her direct use of someone else's ideas.
 4. Acknowledge his/her source when the student's own analysis or conclusion builds on that source.
 5. Follow any plagiarism policy adopted by an instructor for a course or program, of which the students in that course or program have been given adequate notice. (This Plagiarism Policy is adapted from the Chase College of Law Plagiarism Policy, as found in The College of Law Honor Code.)
3. Writing, taking, researching, developing, preparing, or creating an examination, assignment, or graduation requirement for another student, in whole or in part.
 4. Submitting an examination, assignment, or graduation requirement written, taken, researched, developed, prepared, or created by another person, in whole or in part.
 5. Submitting an examination, assignment, or graduation requirement for credit in two or more courses or activities, without written approval from the instructors in each of the courses or activities.
 6. Preventing or interfering with the use of any library, laboratory, studio, field, or other course-related resource by other students or other users for the purpose of causing them a disadvantage.
 7. Damaging or impairing any library, laboratory, studio, field, or other course-related resources or another student's completed assignments (for example, but not limited to, science experiments and technology-related assignments).
 8. Taking or using the notes, papers, or other materials of another student or of a professor without express permission
 9. Misrepresenting class or other activity attendance.
 10. Misrepresenting information to postpone examination, assignment, graduation requirement, or other deadlines.

11. Misrepresenting or distorting academic or biographical data in connection with an application for criteria-based placements, course or program honors, or awards.

12. Engaging in any other fraudulent, deceptive, knowingly false or misleading act, or other dishonest action or inaction involving academic endeavors for the purpose of obtaining an advantage therein.

These prohibitions shall not preclude an instructor or department from assigning team projects, cooperative efforts, and other similar activities in a course or for a graduation requirement, nor shall they preclude graduate students from preparing for classes or examinations together or in study groups.

C. Research Misconduct

The university is fully committed to the ethical conduct of research. Misconduct in research is a serious deviation from the university's Honor Code and the professional practices within the disciplines. Research misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing or performing research, or reporting research results. Research includes not only intellectual activity designed to expand knowledge, but also activities in the creative and performing arts designed to interpret and create.

Behaviors that constitute research misconduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Falsifying or fabricating information or data.
2. Reporting results in a dishonest manner, whether by altering, revising, or selectively reporting data.
3. Representing another person's ideas, writing or data as one's own.
4. Releasing the ideas or data of others when such data have been shared in confidence.
5. Misrepresenting the nature of creative material or its originality.
6. Adding or deleting the names of authors on publications without permission.
7. Listing oneself or another individual as an author when his/her contribution does not warrant authorship.

D. Ethical Violations

Students are expected to adhere to the ethical and professional standards associated with their particular programs of study. These standards are generally communicated to students by instructors and are available through publications produced by the relevant professional

organization(s). Unethical or unprofessional behavior will be treated in the same manner as academic dishonesty and research misconduct.

E. Consequences for Academic Dishonesty, Research Misconduct or Ethical Violations

1. A graduate student who violates the foregoing provisions may be subject to one or any combination of the following consequences:

1. An oral admonition or reprimand.
2. A written admonition or reprimand.
3. Redoing the assignment or retaking all or part of the course or program in which the conduct occurred.
4. A grade reduction or a grade of "F" in the course, examination, or assignment.
5. Expulsion from the course.

6. Dismissal from the program.
7. Suspension from the university for the remainder of the current semester or session.
8. Suspension from the university for the semester or session following the current semester or session.
9. Suspension from the university for one or more years.
10. Expulsion from the university (with the word "expulsion" included on the student's transcript in order to prevent any reapplication).

2. Information about prior or multiple Honor Code violations by a graduate student is relevant and receivable in any hearing with regard to the consequences to be imposed for a violation of the Honor Code and is grounds for such additional or increased consequences as the circumstances may warrant.

3. Withdrawal from a course or from the university shall have no effect on the application of the Honor Code.

F. Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of Honor Code

A student sanctioned for violating the Graduate Student Honor Code, including plagiarism and other academic misconduct, may appeal the decision that a violation has occurred and/or the sanction. Students must follow the appeal procedures set forth in the Graduate Student Honor Code.

If a student wishes to appeal an honor code violation, the student must provide a written statement (email or letter) detailing the alleged violation.

Appeals must first be taken to the instructor and shall move up the levels below as needed.

1. Instructor Level Appeal: The student must provide their appeal to their instructor within ten (10) working days after notice of the violation from the instructor. The instructor must respond to the student within five (5) working days from the receipt, stating whether the appeal is granted and stating the instructor's rationale for the decision. If the student is unable to reach the course instructor or the initial appeal is not resolved, the student may move the appeal forward in the process.

2. Program Director Level Appeal: If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of Step 1, they may take their appeal to the program director of the department/school in which the course was offered within five (5) working days of the receipt of the instructor's decision. After consultation with the student and the instructor, the program director will provide a response to the student and instructor within five (5) working days of receiving the appeal. The instructor shall respond within five (5) working days indicating whether they agree with the recommendation of the program director.

3. Department Chair Level Appeal: If the student is not satisfied with the outcome of Step 2, they may take their appeal to the chair/director of the department/school in which the course was offered within five (5) working days of the receipt of the Program Director's decision. After consultation with the student, the instructor, and the Program Director, the chair will provide a response to the student and instructor with five (5) working days of receiving the appeal. The instructor shall respond within five (5) working days indicating whether they agree with the recommendation of the chair.

4. Dean Level Appeal: If no mutually satisfactory decision was reached at Step 3, the student may appeal to the dean of the college (or designee) that houses the course within five (5) working days of receipt of the chair/director's response. The dean (or designee) shall review the documentation and provide a response to all parties within five (5) working days following receipt of the written appeal. The instructor shall respond within five (5) working days as to whether they agree with the recommendation of the dean (or designee).

5. Vice Provost Appeal: If the student is dissatisfied with the results of the appeal in Step 4, the student may appeal to the Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Research, and Outreach within five (5) working days of the instructor's response to the dean's or designee's recommendation. The Vice Provost will review the materials within five (5) working days and deliver a determination of merit. Should the appeal be found meritorious, the Vice Provost will convene an Honor Code Appeals Panel as soon as is practical. Should the appeal be found without merit, the appeal process will be permanently halted. All parties will be notified within two (2) working days of the decision.

6. Honor Code Appeals Panel: Pending the ruling in Step 5, the Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Research, and Outreach (or designee) may convene a Grade Appeals Panel to hear the student's case. The panel will be guided by the procedures below.

Honor Code Appeals Panel

The Honor Code Appeals Panel shall be composed of the following members:

- a dean or designee not involved in the appeal process
 - two faculty members from graduate programs other than the one involved in the appeal (selected by the Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Research, and Outreach)
 - two graduate students (selected by the Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Research, and Outreach).
 - the Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Research, and Outreach (or designee) serves as a non-voting member.
1. **Determination of Merit:** The Honor Code Appeals Panel shall receive copies of the written appeal and all prior documentation. Thereafter, neither new evidence nor changes shall be introduced before the Honor Code Appeals Panel. The Honor Code Appeals Panel shall review the file to determine if the student's case meets any of the grounds for appeal. If the panel determines that the appeal does not meet any of the grounds, the appeal will not be considered. The ruling of the Honor Code Appeals Panel is final and must be communicated to all parties within two (2) working days of the decision.
 2. **Hearing Meeting:** If the Honor Code Appeals Panel determines that the case meets any of the grounds for appeal, the Panel will proceed to a full hearing of the appeal. All previously involved parties (instructor, student, program director, chair/director, and dean or designee) have the right to attend the meeting and offer evidence or rebuttal. Both student and instructor may request to be accompanied by advisors during the hearing. Advisors may only consult and interact privately with the student and instructor during the hearing and will not be allowed to address the Honor Code Appeals Panel. The Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Research, and Outreach or designee will notify the parties of the exact date, time, and location of the hearing at least five (5) working days before the hearing. During the hearing, both student and instructor shall be granted time to present their case.
 3. **Deliberation and Decision:** The Honor Code Appeals Panel shall deliberate confidentially and arrive at a decision by majority vote. If the Honor Code Appeals Panel finds that an academic evaluation based upon anything other than a good-faith judgment of a student's work has been proved, it will approve a grade change to the academic record. The Grade Appeals Panel shall provide a written report of its ruling to the student, the instructor, the department chair/school director, and the dean of the college within five (5) working days of the hearing. The decision of the Honor Code Appeals Panel is final and binding. If a grade change is approved, the Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Research, and Outreach will forward the information to the Registrar's Office.

Proceedings on Appeals in Cases of Suspension or Expulsion

The Provost, the President or the Board of Regents reviewing an appeal in the case of suspension or expulsion will first determine whether the student has stated a ground for appeal listed in section F.2. An appeal that does not state such a ground for appeal will be denied, and the decision and consequences being appealed from will stand.

The Provost, President or the Board of Regents may approve, reject, or modify the decision or the consequences recommended or imposed. The Provost or President should make a decision on the appeal within fifteen (15) Days after all the documentation was received, or he/she may postpone a decision for good cause. The Board of Regents should make a decision on the appeal at the next meeting on which the appeal may be placed on its agenda in a timely manner, or it may postpone a decision for good cause.

G. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

All proceedings under the Honor Code shall be confidential, and information about a student shall be provided only to a person or persons who have responsibilities for the proceedings in a case involving that student.

The Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Research, and Outreach shall maintain records on proceedings and decisions under the Honor Code sufficient to preserve the information needed for determinations of multiple or subsequent violations and responses by or on behalf of the university in connection with requests from authorized agents. In the case of expulsion from the university, the Vice Provost for Graduate Education, Research, and Outreach shall preserve the information needed to support the expulsion notation on the student transcript.

IV. STUDENT APPEALS TO GRADUATE COUNCIL

The Graduate Council is authorized to hear appeals from graduate students on university graduate regulations, excluding admission decisions, grade appeals, and violations of the Honor Code. When a graduate student wishes to appeal the application of a university rule or regulation relating to graduate students (e.g., time limits for graduation, limits on transfer credits, limits on hours taken as a non-degree student that may apply to a graduate degree) the graduate student should adhere to the following procedure:

1. Formal Written Request

The graduate student will submit a formal written request/appeal to his/her program director identifying the rule or regulation at issue and stating the basis for the request that the rule or regulation be waived or otherwise modified in the student's particular case. The written request should include any relevant supporting documentation.

2. Program Director Response

The graduate student's program director will prepare, in a timely manner, a written response to the student's request/appeal, which will provide a recommendation that the student's request be approved, modified, or denied. The program director's response will provide a rationale for his/her recommendation and will include any relevant supporting documentation.

3. Graduate Council Agenda

The program director will forward the graduate student's request/appeal, the program

director's recommendation, and all supporting documentation ("the appeal file") to the graduate office for action by the Graduate Council. For the appeal to be heard at a specific Graduate Council meeting, the appeal file must be received by the graduate office at least 14 days prior to the Graduate Council meeting and prior to the time when the agenda for that meeting is scheduled to be set by the Graduate Council's Executive Committee.

4. Graduate Council Executive Committee

The Graduate Council Executive Committee will first consider the appeal to determine whether or not the appeal file is complete. If the Executive Committee determines that the file is complete, the appeal will be placed on the next regular Graduate Council meeting agenda, or alternatively, on the agenda of a future meeting that is agreeable to both the student and the program director. If the appeal file is not complete, the appeal will be referred back to the program director with an indication of what documents are needed to complete the file. After taking the necessary action to complete the file, the program director will resubmit the appeal to the graduate office for referral back to the Executive Committee.

5. Graduate Council Action

After the Executive Committee has reviewed the appeal and placed it on a Graduate Council meeting agenda, a complete copy of the appeal file will be provided to each Graduate Council member prior to the meeting where the appeal will be considered. The graduate office will notify the student of the date/time/place when the appeal will be considered by the Graduate Council. The student is entitled, but not required, to be present when the appeal is considered, to make a statement and/or answer questions about the basis for the appeal. The student may not be represented or accompanied by an attorney or any other advisor at the appeal. The Graduate Council may discuss the merits of the appeal while the student is present, but the student may not be present during final deliberations or during the time when the Graduate Council votes on the appeal. The Chair of the Graduate Council will notify the student and program director in writing of the decision of the Graduate Council. Program representatives will abstain in cases involving appeals from their respective programs.

6. Summer Appeals

During the summer or at other times when the Graduate Council is not meeting, the Graduate Council Executive Committee, as currently formed, is authorized to act on student appeals in accordance with the other provisions of this policy.