

UNI Academic Ethics Policies

Students at the University of Northern Iowa are required to observe the commonly-accepted standards of academic honesty and integrity. Except in those instances in which group work is specifically authorized by the instructor of the class, no work which is not solely the student's is to be submitted to a professor in the form of an examination paper, a term paper, class project, research project, or thesis project.

Cheating of any kind on examinations and/or plagiarism of papers or projects is strictly prohibited. Also unacceptable are the purchase of papers from commercial sources, using a single paper to meet the requirement of more than one class (except in instances authorized and considered appropriate by the professors of the two classes), and submission of a term paper or project completed by any individual other than the student submitting the work. Students are cautioned that plagiarism is defined as the process of stealing or passing off as one's own the ideas or words of another, or presenting as one's own an idea or product which is derived from an existing source.

It is not acceptable for the work or ideas of another scholar to be presented as a student's own or to be utilized in a paper or project without proper citation. To avoid any appearance of plagiarism or accidental plagiarism, it is important that all students become fully cognizant of the citation procedures utilized in their own discipline and in the classes which they take. The plea of ignorance regarding citation procedures or of carelessness in citation is not a compelling defense against allegations of plagiarism. A college student, by the fact that s(he) holds that status, is expected to understand the distinction between proper scholarly use of others' work and plagiarism.

A student who is found to have improperly used others' work must expect to be penalized for such action -- even if the argument is made that the action was taken with innocent intention -- and the student's instructor will normally judge such work "unacceptable." But it should be noted that the assignment of a low or failing grade for unacceptable work is not in itself a **disciplinary** action -- even if the assignment of such a grade results in the student's receiving a lower grade in the course, including "F", than s(he) would otherwise achieve. Such a response by an instructor is part of the normal grading process; if a student feels that s(he) has grounds to protest a grade received through this process, the student has access to the academic grievance procedure which the university has developed to deal with all student academic grievances.

On the other hand, cheating and plagiarism are issues which can affect a student's status at the university in more serious ways. As an educational institution, the university maintains standards of ethical academic behavior, and recognizes its responsibility to enforce these standards. Therefore, the following procedures of **academic discipline** prevail at the University of Northern Iowa.

If a student is determined by an instructor to have committed a violation of academic ethics, the instructor may take additional **disciplinary** action including, but not limited to, grade reduction for the course in which the infraction occurs, even if the reduction is over and above the normal consequences resulting from the grade merited by the unacceptable work.

In cases where such disciplinary action is taken, the instructor is obliged to report the action in writing, to the student, to the instructor's department head, (and, if the student is from a different department, to the head of the student's department), and to the Office of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will notify the student in writing that such action has been taken, and will maintain a file for each student so disciplined. (This file is confidential and is independent of the student's normal university records.)

A student wishing to appeal or dispute the disciplinary action taken may seek redress through the university academic grievance structure. In the case of a successful grievance, the evidence of the disciplinary action taken by the instructor will be expunged from the student's file by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs.

In cases of particularly flagrant violations of academic ethics relating to cheating or plagiarism, the instructor may feel obliged to recommend suspension from the University of Northern Iowa for a period ranging from the term in which the infraction occurs (with a loss of all credit earned during that term) to permanent suspension from the university.

Such recommendations are sent in writing to the department head and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, the latter of whom informs the student in writing that the recommendation has been made. In such cases, the academic appeals procedure is automatically invoked by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Until the mandatory academic appeal in such cases has been completed, the recommended suspension is not in effect. In cases of a successful appeal to such action, the materials relating to the successfully grieved disciplinary action will be expunged from all university records.

Finally, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will regularly monitor all files relating to disciplinary action taken against specific students. If the monitoring reveals a history of disciplinary actions taken against a particular student (excluding any actions which have been successfully grieved) such that there are three or more instances of such action subsequent to any academic grievances generated by such actions, the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs will, as a matter of course, institute proceedings for permanent suspension of that student. The procedures demand that the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs notify the student in writing that suspension procedures have been invoked, and there is an automatic appeal to the university academic grievance structure in all such cases.

All parts of the academic grievance structure (including those stipulated in the immediately preceding paragraph) apply in such cases, except that the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, as the disciplinary officer, functions in the role of the instructor in an academic grievance relating to a specific class.