DEALING WITH A SUSPICION OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

IMPORTANT RESOURCES:
- Academic Integrity Website: [www.ryerson.ca/ai](http://www.ryerson.ca/ai)
- Academic integrity Officer: Donna Bell contact at [dbell@ryerson.ca](mailto:dbell@ryerson.ca) or (416) 979-5000 ext: 7800
- AIO Automated System – Faculty Resources: [https://runner.ryerson.ca/studentworkshops/instructor](https://runner.ryerson.ca/studentworkshops/instructor) (AIO automated system used by faculty for notifying students of suspicions, requesting facilitated discussions, supplying decision letters and assigning workshops)

INFORMATION FOR FACULTY
- If you are familiar with the process then you can go to the misconduct referral sub tab option

DEALING WITH SUSPICION OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT CHECKLIST FOR FACULTY
To ensure consistency across the University, the following guidelines should be followed when academic misconduct is suspected. Ignorance cannot be an excuse for misconduct. Do not assume students know how to cite appropriately or even how to write a research paper. You should spend time on these issues and on explaining what plagiarism is before you hand out your assignments. Tell students which citation style to use and ensure they know the specifics. This invested time can make a world of difference to your students and to you when it comes time to marking.

Remember, we are not out to catch students; our aim is to educate them.

The academic integrity website is a great resource for faculty and students. There are also fun and educational episodes and quiz questions which you may assign to your students: [www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity).

If you suspect academic misconduct, you must have a discussion with your students about your concerns. The discussion may be held in one of two ways:
- A facilitated discussion with the Academic Integrity Officer or designate.
- A discussion without the Academic Integrity Officer.

Please see an explanation of these options in the Student Code of Academic Conduct as linked: [www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf).

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:
- If the suspected misconduct involves group work or a group of two or more students, the Academic Integrity Officer must be contacted to determine a fair process.
- A student is unable to drop a course in which he/she is under suspicion of academic misconduct. If he/she attempts to, he/she will automatically be re-enrolled.
- **If marks are due** for submission and you have not yet met with the student, or have not yet issued your decision, you are to **assign a grade of DEF (deferred) until a decision is made.** Please ensure that you follow up on the DEF and submit the appropriate grade to Enrollment Services and Student Records.
- Even if you choose a discussion without the Academic Integrity Officer, a student has the right to request a facilitated discussion if he/she so wishes. Instructors will be informed by the student if this is the case.
- If you wish to recommend a penalty higher than an F, please consult with the AIO.

If you have any questions or need assistance/support in this area, please do not hesitate to contact Donna Bell, the Academic Integrity Officer. E-mail your questions to [dbell@ryerson.ca](mailto:dbell@ryerson.ca) or call (416)979-5000 ext: 7800.
IF YOU CHOOSE A FACILITATED DISCUSSION WITH THE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY OFFICER, PLEASE SEE PROCEDURES BELOW:

☐ Notification Letter

Go to Misconduct Referral sub tab found under the Misconduct tab, submit the information and select facilitated discussion.
- You should request the discussion as soon as possible and the discussion should be held before the work is returned to the student.
- The Academic Integrity Office (AIO) arranges room and sends notification letter to the student.

☐ Discussion

The discussion is to be an open, informational and non-confrontational conversation between the instructor and the student, facilitated by the Academic Integrity Officer or designate.
- Allow the student time to answer the questions.
- Even if you believe that the student is lying, do not accuse. You accept what he/she says. You will have time to make your decision after the discussion.
- The details of the discussion will be documented on a Summary of Discussion Form by the Academic Integrity Officer or designate.
- The instructor is to come to the discussion prepared to discuss the details of the suspected misconduct.

Below are some suggested strategies, based on the type of misconduct.

Student Suspected of Plagiarism:
- The aim is to understand the student’s work and the process that he/she used to complete it.
- Show documents supporting the suspicion to the student.
- You may choose to ask probing questions such as:
  - How did the student do research?
  - What resources were used?
  - How did the student keep track of information and the sources?
  - Did anyone assist the student? How?
  - Ask questions of content to test understanding of the topic.

Student Suspected of Cheating:
- Outline circumstances leading to the suspicion and ask for an explanation.
- If appropriate you may wish to:
  - Get student to answer the same or similar question. (If he/she studied, there should be an understanding of the topic.)
  - Inquire about what and how he/she studied.

Student Caught Cheating:
- This discussion is a chance for the student to explain what happened.
- If the student was caught with inappropriate materials but denies cheating or doing anything wrong, hear what he/she has to say; do not argue. You ultimately make your decision based on a balance of probabilities.

The standard of proof in all decisions shall be “a balance of probabilities”. This means that it is more likely than not that the misconduct occurred.

☐ Decision

The aim of the facilitated discussion is to acquire answers to all of your questions. After the discussion, you will be given time to make your decision. If the instructor needs to do further investigation, then the discussion can be adjourned and a follow-up discussion convened once the required information is obtained.
- After a facilitated discussion, the instructor has 3 (three) business days to provide a decision to the AIO. The AIO will then distribute the decision within 2 (two) business days.
There are four (4) possible outcomes from the discussion:

Option 1: The determination of academic misconduct has not occurred - no charge is warranted;

Note: The Academic Integrity Tutorial can be assigned for educational purposes.

Option 2: The determination of academic misconduct is accepted by the student (no appeal is submitted by the student);

Option 3: The determination of academic misconduct is accepted by the student, however, instructor and student do not agree on a penalty;

(Used only where a penalty greater than "0" on the assignment is imposed);

Option 4: The determination of academic misconduct is not accepted by the student. The decision of the instructor stands and the student appeals.

The AIO will follow up with a formal decision letter including any other follow-up information that may be needed (tutorial information and/or appeal process with deadlines).

IF YOU CHOOSE A DISCUSSION WITHOUT THE ACADEMIC INTEGRITY OFFICER< PLEASE SEE PROCEDURES BELOW:

Note: notifying the student, the decision letter and assigning any workshops can be done through this Academic Integrity on-line system.

- **Notification Letter**
  Using the Misconduct Referral tab which is a sub tab of the Misconduct tab - submit the information and select non-facilitated. Based on the information provided, a notification letter will be e-mailed to the student cc'ing all relevant parties.

  *When to Have the Discussion:*
  - The discussion should be held as soon as possible (normally within 5 working days of the notification) while the details of what happened are fresh in the student’s mind

- **Grades Due**
  If grades are due before the investigation of the suspicion has been completed, then a DEF should be submitted, as the grade is deferred until the investigation is complete.

- **Discussion**
  The discussion is to be an open, informational and non-confrontational dialogue. No decision is to be made in the discussion.
  - If it is mutually agreed upon, a third party (not the Chair/Director or advocate) may attend the discussion. A third party does not participate in the discussion; but, may be the note taker.
  - The instructor is to come to the discussion prepared to discuss the type of suspected misconduct and the reasons for the suspicion.
  - The student may bring notes, drafts, or any relevant documentation to the discussion.
  - The goal of the discussion is to get all the information/explanations needed to make a fair and appropriate decision.
  - Allow the student time to answer the questions.
  - Even if it is clear to you that the student is lying, do not accuse. You accept what they say. You will make your decision after the discussion based on the information you received.
  - The details of the discussion are to be documented on a Summary of Discussion Form.
Below are some suggested approaches/questions to illicit information to understand what has occurred.

Student Suspected of Plagiarism

- Show the student the “evidence” that plagiarism may have occurred. Ask the student to explain any similarities to another student’s work, article or book.
- To get additional information you might ask:
  - questions of content to see if the student knows the material,
  - how they did their work,
  - where they researched their work,
  - what they learned from doing this work,
  - if anyone had influenced their work or assisted them in completing their work.

Student Suspected of Cheating:

- Ask student to explain the circumstances leading to the suspicion.
- Get the student to answer the same question or a similar one with you either verbally or on paper. If this technique is not suitable, ask them questions about what they studied, how they felt the exam was etc…See what knowledge they have of the topic. If they studied, they would have an understanding of the information.

Student Caught Cheating:

- Ask the student to explain what happened.
- If the student was caught with inappropriate materials but denies cheating or doing anything wrong, hear what they have to say; do not argue. You ultimately make your decision based on a balance of probabilities.

The standard of proof in all decisions shall be “a balance of probabilities”. This means that it is more likely than not that the misconduct occurred.

Decision

A decision letter is normally sent out within five (5) working days of the discussion. To generate a decision letter - go to the Non-Facilitated tab select the Final Decision sub tab and submit the information requested. You will prompted with an e-mail to verify and modify if necessary and then send. This will send the decision letter to all relevant parties as required by the University.

- Decide if the issue is a case of misconduct or not. If it is a group assignment, it must be determined which members of the group are accountable.
- Student not charged with misconduct:
  - If no charge is warranted, but education is needed, the student may be assigned the Academic Integrity Tutorial as a course requirement.
  - If you are assigning the Academic Integrity Quiz - you will assign this on the decision form. If you are assigning Academic Integrity Workshops you will assign these on the Assign Workshop tab. It will allow you to assign a maximum of 3 workshops. The student will receive the notification by e-mail that you have assigned these workshops. When the student completes the workshops you will be notified of completion.
  - If grades are due before the student completes the tutorial, an INC is submitted instead of the grade.
- Student charged with misconduct:
  - A penalty must be determined. The minimum penalty is a “0” on the work. This is not optional.
  - Also, a DN (Disciplinary Notice) is automatically placed on the student’s record. This is not a penalty, but a consequence placed by the Registrar’s office.
  - You may also assign an “F” in the course.
The student may be assigned the Academic Integrity Tutorial as a course requirement (see “No charge warranted” above)

- Failure to complete the tutorial by the indicated date will result in the student being prevented from registering in courses in the following semester.

- If you believe the misconduct is serious enough, you may recommend Disciplinary Suspension (DS), Disciplinary Withdrawal (DW) or Expulsion from the University. Please speak to the Academic Integrity Officer before recommending such a penalty.

### Previous Offenses

Once the decision letter charging a student with misconduct has been issued, it is the Academic Integrity Officer's responsibility to confirm if this was the student’s first offence.

If the student has had previous offences, the AIO, after any appeals process is concluded, will inform the Academic Integrity Council (AIC) and a panel to determine the penalty will be convened.

### Academic Integrity Tutorial Workshops

Visit the Academic Integrity Website at [https://runner.ryerson.ca/StudentWorkshops/aio_public.cfm](https://runner.ryerson.ca/StudentWorkshops/aio_public.cfm) for a complete list of workshops and their descriptions.

### List of URLs of Relevant Policies & Guidelines

- Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities - [www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol159.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol159.pdf)
- Academic Integrity information and process for Reporting – [https://runner.ryerson.ca/studentworkshops/instructor](https://runner.ryerson.ca/studentworkshops/instructor)
- Academic Integrity Website – [www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity](http://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity)
- Accommodation of Student Religious Observance Obligations - [www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol150.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol150.pdf)
- Appeals and Code of Conduct forms – [www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/index.html#appeals](http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/forms/index.html#appeals)
- Course Management Policy - [www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol145.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol145.pdf)
- Email Policy - [www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol157.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol157.pdf)
- Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) FAQs for Faculty - [www.ryerson.ca/senate/documents/fippafaqs.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/documents/fippafaqs.pdf)
- GPA Policy – [www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol46.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol46.pdf)
- School of Graduate Studies  Academic Appeals Policy
  [http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol152.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol152.pdf)

- Student Code of Academic Conduct - [www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf)

- Student Code of Non-Aademic Conduct - [www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol61.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol61.pdf)

- Undergraduate Academic Consideration and Appeals Policy -
  [www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol134.pdf](http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol134.pdf)