

## Policy 60: Academic Integrity

### Pursuing a Suspicion of Academic Misconduct

This is a summary for decision makers. For a full description of the policy, procedures and guidelines, please see: <https://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/students/ryersons-academic-integrity-policy-policy-60/>

The fundamental values of Academic Integrity are to foster and uphold the highest standards of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. These values are central to the development and sharing of knowledge. All members of the Ryerson community, including faculty, students, graduate assistants, and staff, have a responsibility to adhere to and uphold these values in their teaching, learning, evaluation, scholarly research and creative activity. This includes a responsibility to take action if they have reasonable grounds for suspecting that academic misconduct may have occurred.

One of the central values of *Ryerson University's Policy 60: Academic Integrity* is recognizing that Ryerson has a role in fostering academic integrity by providing students and faculty with information and learning opportunities about the nature and importance of academic integrity. As faculty involved in applying this policy, you are asked to keep this emphasis in mind at all stages of the process as described in the policy, procedures and guidelines.

### Suspicion of Academic Misconduct

If you have a suspicion that academic misconduct may have occurred, you should investigate. The purpose of the investigation is to see whether there is a sufficient basis to support a reasonable belief that misconduct may have occurred. This involves collecting information regarding the suspected misconduct by means such as examining work submitted, or checking work for originality by various means (e.g. Internet searches, text comparison, use of originality detection tools, websites, clarifying what an invigilator may have observed or discovered, etc.). In unusual cases, or where investigators have questions or concerns regarding how to proceed, they should consult with the Academic Integrity Office (AIO) and/or the Policy 60 Faculty Advisor, please see <https://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/faculty/reporting/>

Along with any collection or verification of evidence, the eligible investigator may consult, in confidence, with various parties, including their Chair/Director, Program Director (required in the case of supervised research activities), and/or the AIO. Throughout all such consultations, confidentiality and the privacy of those involved are to be fully respected and protected.

For more information please see Policy 60 <https://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/students/ryersons-academic-integrity-policy-policy-60/> and/or contact the Academic Integrity Office (AIO) ext. 553273.

If there is a reasonable belief that academic misconduct may have occurred, then, as per Policy 60, the decision maker has two options:

- A) Continue as the decision maker and choose a facilitated discussion (FD) or a non-facilitated discussion (NFD).
- B) Refer the decision making to a Designated Decision Maker (CUPE 1 & 2 only).

## Register your suspicion

Policy 60 states that all faculty/instructors who suspect academic misconduct must use the Academic Integrity Office Automated System: <https://ccs.cf.ryerson.ca/studentworkshops/instructor/>

### Important Reminders

- There are different requirements if the suspicion falls under course-related activities versus non-course related activities. Please see the process to be followed in Policy 60, Procedures and Guidelines or contact the AIO.
- If the suspected misconduct involves group work or a group of two or more students, the Academic Integrity Office can be contacted to determine a fair process and/or see Guidelines, Section 1.3.
- A student is unable to drop a course in which they are under suspicion of academic misconduct. If they attempt to, they 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, see [Guidelines, Section 3.1 "Implications to grading roster while investigating a suspicion of academic misconduct."](#) In most cases, 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.
- If you choose a discussion without the Academic Integrity Office facilitator, a student has the right to request a facilitated discussion (as per Policy 60).
- A facilitated discussion (vs. non-facilitated discussion) must be conducted for suspicions for supervised research, all graduate students and group discussions.

### **A. Facilitated Discussion (FD) with a trained staff member from the Academic Integrity Office or Non-Facilitated Discussion (NFD)**

- The discussion should happen as soon as possible (normally within five (5) business days of the notification) and the discussion should be held before the work is graded and/or returned to the student.
- For an FD, the Academic Integrity Office (AIO) will arrange the room and send a notification letter to all parties. For NFDs, the AIO automated system will provide you with a notification letter template. This template has been created to adhere to Policy 60, please do not alter.
- The notification to the student of a suspicion must include a summary of the basis for the suspicion to enable the student to prepare for the discussion. For example, if "plagiarism" is the suspected misconduct, the nature and extent of the plagiarism should be described.
- For an FD, when the decision maker submits a suspicion of academic misconduct, they will upload, to the AIO automated system, the evidence that forms the basis of their suspicion. The AIO will review the evidence and determine, with the decision maker, what evidence is appropriate to send to the student, what may need redacting and what is for the AIO file only. The AIO will send the evidence provided to the student and the facilitator. For an NFD, the decision maker will send any evidence (if appropriate) to the student electronically, in advance of the discussion.
- Indicate if a student should bring notes, rough drafts or other documents to the discussion.
- If the student prefers an FD to an NFD, this request to the AIO will be granted.

## Discussion (FD/NFD)

The purpose of the discussion is to inquire into the basis of the suspicion(s), and to give the student an opportunity to answer questions and to articulate their perspective on the facts. The meeting is not to be accusatory in nature, but investigative and non-adversarial. The student may be accompanied by a support person and/or a RSU/CESAR student advocate. Students are, however, expected to speak on their own behalf, whenever possible. The AIO facilitator will ensure that the discussion is investigative, non-adversarial and educational (when possible) and that both parties are given an opportunity to voice their concerns and articulate their perspectives on the facts. No decision is to be made in the discussion.

When participating in a discussion, please consider the following:

- The details of the discussion must be documented on a *Summary of Discussion Form*. For an FD this is done by the AIO facilitator; for an NFD the details of the discussion should be recorded on the AIO [Summary of Discussion Form](#). This is the official record of the main points of what is discussed. The student will be provided a copy of the completed form.
- All parties will be provided with a copy of this form, either from the AIO for an FD, or from the decision maker (for an NFD) in a timely manner, once the discussion has been completed.
- Allow the student time to answer your questions.
- Even if you believe that the student is not being truthful, do not accuse them. You can listen to what they say without agreeing with them. You will have time to make your discussion after the discussion.
- The instructor is to come to the discussion prepared to discuss the details of the suspected misconduct; this includes providing the evidence of the suspicion.
- No decisions related to the suspected academic misconduct shall be made or communicated during a discussion.

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

Student Suspected of “Plagiarism” (see Policy 60 Appendix A, Section 1)

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

Student Suspected of “Cheating” (see Policy 60 Appendix A, Section 3)

- Outline circumstances leading to the suspicion and ask for an explanation. Read/Show them the invigilators report
- If appropriate you may wish to:
  - Inquire about what and how they studied and if they could answer the same or similar questions
- If the student was found to have inappropriate/not approved materials, devices, etc. but states they did not “cheat” or do anything wrong, hear what they have to say; do not argue. You do not have to come to agreement and you ultimately make your decision based on a balance of probabilities.

## After the Discussion: determining a decision of Academic Misconduct or no Academic Misconduct

The aim of the facilitated/non-facilitated discussion is to obtain answers to all of your questions. If the decision maker needs to do further investigation, then the discussion can be ended, and a follow-up discussion convened once the required information is obtained.

### Has Academic Misconduct Occurred?

According to Policy 60, Academic Misconduct is: “any behaviour that undermines the University’s ability to evaluate fairly students’ academic achievements or any behavior that a student knew, or reasonably ought to have known, could gain them or others unearned academic advantage or benefit, counts as academic misconduct” (Policy 60, Section 3.1). Decisions are made by the standard of proof, on “a balance of probabilities.” This means that in order for students to be found to have engaged in academic misconduct, it must be shown that it is more likely than not that the student engaged in misconduct. This includes taking into consideration the relevance and reliability of the evidence presented.

### Penalties/Consequences

#### Finding of No Academic Misconduct

- If education is determined to be needed, the student can be assigned the Fundamentals of Academic Integrity (FAI) Quiz and/or Student Learning Support/RULA workshop(s). You can assign a maximum of three (3) workshops. A list of workshops can be found at: [https://ccs.cf.ryerson.ca/studentworkshops/aio\\_public.cfm](https://ccs.cf.ryerson.ca/studentworkshops/aio_public.cfm). If the decision maker requires it, failure to complete these requirements may result in the student being prevented from registering in courses in the following semester.
- Please ensure that you update the student’s grade. If grades have already been posted, an “[Exception Grade Revision](#)” form must be completed.

#### Finding of Academic Misconduct

A penalty must be determined. Please see Policy 60, Section 7 and/or the Penalty Guidelines:

<https://www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/faculty/about-academic-integrity-and-misconduct/#penalty>

#### Important Reminders

- A Disciplinary Notification (DN) is automatically placed on the student’s record. Although the DN is not a penalty, a consequence of a DN is that a student cannot be on a Dean’s List or be nominated for other internal awards or scholarships in the academic year that the misconduct occurred.
- The student may be assigned the Fundamentals of Academic Integrity Quiz.
- They may be assigned a maximum of three (3) workshops. A list of workshops can be found here: [https://ccs.cf.ryerson.ca/studentworkshops/aio\\_public.cfm](https://ccs.cf.ryerson.ca/studentworkshops/aio_public.cfm).
- If the decision maker requires it, failure to complete the FAI Quiz may result in the student being prevented from registering in courses in the following semester or graduating; failure to complete the workshops may result in a student being unable to graduate.
- Please ensure that you update the student’s grade. If grades have already been posted, an “[Exception Grade Revision](#)” form must be completed.

Possible outcomes for findings of academic misconduct

1. Finding of academic misconduct. No appeal is submitted by the student.
2. Finding of academic misconduct. The finding of academic misconduct is not appealed, the penalty is appealed (minimum penalty not appealable).
3. Finding of academic misconduct. Finding is appealed by student.

## **Communicating your decision**

You will communicate your decision through the AIO Automated System. For a FD, within three (3) business days of the discussion. The AIO will issue the decision letter within five (5) business days of the discussion to the student and all relevant parties, as applicable, of the finding, penalties, workshop(s)/quiz assigned, the right to appeal and the appeal deadline. For a NFD, within five (5) business days of the discussion, the decision maker will complete the decision template on the AIO automated system. This will be sent to all relevant parties as applicable, of the finding, penalties, workshop(s)/quiz assigned, the right to appeal and the appeal deadline.

## **B. Designated Decision Maker from the Academic Integrity Office**

Important Note: As per Policy 60, all faculty/instructors who suspect academic misconduct must use the Academic Integrity Office Automated System: <https://ccs.cf.ryerson.ca/studentworkshops/instructor/>

If you do not wish, or are unable to pursue a suspicion of academic misconduct, you may refer the basis of the suspicion of misconduct (i.e. all the relevant information known to you) to the Academic Integrity Office (AIO) and request that another decision maker be appointed. A Designated Decision Maker (DDM) will then be assigned, by the Chair of the Designated Decision Makers' Council (DDMC), in conjunction with the AIO, to pursue the matter and be the decision maker with respect to any finding regarding academic misconduct. The DDM may subsequently contact you to clarify the forwarded information if need be. You may also be requested to submit a recommendation regarding appropriate penalty should the DDM make a finding of academic misconduct.

Once you refer the suspicion of academic misconduct to a DDM, you will have given all decision-making authority with respect to whether academic misconduct has occurred to the DDM. You may not appeal either the decision of the DDM or any penalty or consequences assigned or recommended. You may, however, still be called as a witness in the event of an appeal.

In cases where a DDM has decided not to proceed with formally registering a suspicion and further information relevant to the matter later becomes known, you can forward this to the AIO. A DDM will be assigned (the same or other) to re- assess the matter and proceed if they decide proceeding is warranted.

Once the DDM decides to proceed, they will then arrange a facilitated discussion (FD) with the student.