Policy 60: Academic Integrity

Pursuing a Suspicion of Academic Misconduct

(This is a summary from a decision maker perspective. Please see Policy 60: Academic Integrity for a full description of the policy and procedures: www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf)

The fundamental values of Academic Integrity (AI) are to foster and uphold the highest standards of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, courage, as well as trustworthiness. 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 in their teaching, learning, evaluation, scholarly research and creative activity. This includes a responsibility to take action if they have reasonable grounds for thinking that academic misconduct has 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 described in the policy and procedures.

Reporting
You must first decide if there is a sufficient basis to support a reasonable belief that misconduct may have occurred. If in doubt, please see Policy 60 www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf and/or contact the Academic Integrity Office (AIO) ext. 553273.

If there is a reasonable belief, then a non-adversarial discussion must be had with your student about your concerns. This discussion may be held in one of three ways:

1. A discussion facilitated by a trained staff member from the Academic Integrity Office
2. A discussion without the facilitator from the Academic Integrity Office
3. Referral to a Designated Decision Maker

Important Reminders:

- If the suspected misconduct falls under academic misconduct in course related activities, decision makers are to follow the process in Policy 60, Section 6.1. For academic misconduct in supervised research activities, the process to be followed is described in Policy 60 Procedures, Section 1.5.
- If the suspected misconduct involves group work or a group of two or more students, the Academic Integrity Office (ext. 553273) must be contacted to determine a fair process.
- 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, 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 Office facilitator, a student has the right to request a facilitated discussion.
• A Facilitated Discussion (vs. Non-Facilitated Discussion) must be done for suspicions for supervised research, all graduate students and group discussions.

1. Facilitated Discussion (FD) by a trained staff member from the Academic Integrity Office (AIO):

   **Important Note:** All Faculty/Instructors who suspect academic misconduct must use the Academic Integrity Office Automated System:

   • The discussion should happen as soon as possible (normally within 5 business days of the notification) and the discussion should be held before the work is returned to the student.
   • The Academic Integrity Office (AIO) will arrange the room and send notification letter.
   • 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 Facilitated Discussion. For example, if “plagiarism” is the suspected misconduct, the nature and extent of the plagiarism should be identified.
   • The decision maker must be prepared to present the evidence in support of their suspicion (e.g. course outlines, assignment guidelines, plagiarism detection reports).
   • Notify the AIO if student should bring notes, rough drafts or other documents to the discussion.

**Discussion:**

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 reasonably 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.

• Allow the student time to answer the 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 decision after the discussion.
• The details of the discussion must be documented on a Summary of Discussion Form by the Academic Integrity Office facilitator.
• The instructor is to come to the discussion prepared to discuss the details of the suspected misconduct; this includes providing evidence of the suspicion.
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 of 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:
  - Ask the student to answer the same or similar question. (If they studied, there should be an understanding of the topic.)
  - Inquire about what and how they studied.
- If the student was found to have inappropriate/not approved materials, devices, etc. 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.

**Decision:**

The aim of the 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 adjourned and a follow-up discussion convened once the required information is obtained.

The decision will be based on the information available, applying a “balance of probabilities” standard of proof, whether academic misconduct has occurred. This means that it is more likely than not that the misconduct occurred. You will communicate your decision through the AIO Automated System within 3 days. The AIO will review your finding. Additional edits may be made by the AIO to ensure consistency with Policy 60. The AIO will then notify the student and all relevant parties, as applicable, of the finding, penalties, workshop(s)/quiz assigned, the right to appeal and the appeal deadline.

There are four (4) possible outcomes from the discussion:

**Option 1:** No finding of academic misconduct has occurred - no penalty is warranted.

*Note: The Fundamentals of Academic Integrity Quiz and Student Learning Services/RULA workshops 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).
Academic Integrity Office

Option 3: The determination of academic misconduct is accepted by the student, however, the student does not agree with the penalty assigned. The decision of the instructor stands and the student appeals. *(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.

Penalties/Consequences:

**No Finding of 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 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). Failure to complete these requirements may result in the student being prevented from registering in courses in the following semester.
- Please ensure that you follow up on the ‘DEF’ and submit the appropriate grade change form.

**Finding of Academic Misconduct. A penalty must be determined.**

- The minimum penalty for academic misconduct on any assignment or other form of evaluation in a course is a grade reduction which can include a zero (0) on the work. The minimum penalty for a graduate student is a grade of zero (0) on the work.
- A grade of “F” in the course may be assigned.
- Temporary or permanent removal from a co-op program option, placement, internship or practicum in which the student is currently enrolled may be assigned.
- For academic misconduct outside of a course, the minimum penalty is a Disciplinary Notification (DN) on the academic record, but an initial decision maker may recommend additional penalties as outlined in Policy 60, Section 7.2.
- When appropriate, a decision maker may assign a “Fail” or “Unsatisfactory”.
- A course-grade reduction greater than a grade of “zero” (0) on the work but less than an “F” in the course may be assigned. Note: This can only be applied to course components worth 10% or less, and any additional penalty cannot exceed 10% of the final course grade. Students must have been given prior notice that such a penalty will be assigned (e.g. course outline, assignment, etc.).
- A Disciplinary Notification (DN) is automatically placed on the student’s record. This is not a penalty, but a consequence placed by the Registrar’s office.
- The student may also be assigned the Fundamentals of Academic Integrity Quiz.
- You may also assign a maximum of 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).
• 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 follow up on the “DEF” and submit the appropriate grade to Enrollment Services and Student Records.

For other penalties/consequences that may be recommended, see Policy 60: Academic Integrity
http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf

2. Non-Facilitated Discussion (NFD) using the Academic Integrity Office (AIO) Automated System:

Important Note: All Faculty/Instructors who suspect academic misconduct must use the Academic Integrity Office Automated System: https://cas.ryerson.ca/login?service=https://ccs.cf.ryerson.ca/studentworkshops/instructor

• The discussion should be held as soon as possible (normally within 5 business days of the notification) and before the work is returned to the student.
• 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 identified.
• The Faculty must be prepared to present the evidence in support of their suspicion (e.g. course outlines, assignment guidelines, plagiarism detection reports).
• The student has the right to request a Facilitated Discussion rather than having a Non-Facilitated Discussion. Students wishing to request a Facilitated Discussion should contact the AIO directly once they receive notification of a Non-Facilitated Discussion, and before the time/date at which the Non-Facilitated Discussion is scheduled to be held.

Discussion:

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. No decision is to be made in the discussion.

Please record the details of the discussion on the AIO Summary of Discussion Form:
www.ryerson.ca/academicintegrity/for_faculty

• 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 student is to come to the discussion prepared to discuss the type of suspected misconduct, the reasons for the suspicion and any evidence they may have.

The student may be accompanied by a support person and/or a RSU/CESAR advocate. Students are, however, expected to speak on their own behalf whenever reasonably possible.

Allow the student time to answer the 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 decision after the 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 of 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.
- If appropriate, you may wish to:
  - Ask the student to answer the same or similar question. (If they studied, there should be an understanding of the topic.)
  - Inquire about what and how they studied.

- If the student was found to have inappropriate/not approved materials, devices, etc. 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.

**Decision:** The aim of the discussion is to obtain answers to your questions. After the discussion, you will have 3 days to make your decision. If you need to do further investigation, then the discussion can be adjourned and a follow-up discussion convened once the required information is obtained.

You must register your decision through the AIO Automated System.

The decision will be based on the information available, applying a “balance of probabilities” standard of proof, whether academic misconduct has occurred. This means that it is more likely than not that the misconduct occurred.

There are four (4) possible outcomes from the discussion:
Option 1: No finding of academic misconduct has not occurred - no penalty is warranted. 

*Note: The Fundamentals of Academic Integrity Quiz and Student Learning Services workshops 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, the student does not agree with the penalty assigned. The decision of the instructor stands and the student appeals. (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 Automated System email decision letter will be sent 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.
- Please ensure that you follow up on the “DEF” and submit the appropriate grade change form.

**Penalties/Consequences:**

**Finding of No Academic Misconduct**

- If education is determined to be needed, the student can be assigned the Fundamentals of Academic Integrity Quiz and/or Student Learning Support workshop(s). You can assign a maximum of 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).
- Failure to complete the Quiz and/or Workshop(s) may result in the student being prevented from registering in courses in the following semester.
- Please ensure that you follow up on the ‘DEF’ and submit the appropriate grade change form.

**Finding of Academic Misconduct. A penalty must be determined.**

- The minimum penalty for academic misconduct on any assignment or other form of evaluation in a course is a grade reduction which can include a zero (0) on the work. The minimum penalty for a graduate student is a grade of zero (0) on the work.
- A grade of “F” in the course may be assigned.
- Temporary or permanent removal from a co-op program option, placement, internship or practicum in which the student is currently enrolled may be assigned.
- For academic misconduct outside of a course, the minimum penalty is a DN on the academic record, but an initial decision maker may recommend additional penalties as outlined in Section 7.2.
- When appropriate, a decision maker may assign a “Fail” or “Unsatisfactory”.
• A course-grade reduction greater than a grade of “zero” (0) on the work but less than an “F” in the course may be assigned. Note: This can only be applied to course components worth 10% or less, and any additional penalty cannot exceed 10% of the final course grade. Students must have been given prior notice that such a penalty will be assigned (e.g. course outline, assignment, etc.).
• A Disciplinary Notification (DN) is automatically placed on the student’s record. This is not a penalty, but a consequence placed by the Registrar’s Office.
• The student may also be assigned the Fundamentals of Academic Integrity Quiz.
• You may also assign a maximum of 3 workshops. A list of the workshops can be found at: https://ccs.cf.ryerson.ca/studentworkshops/aio_public.cfm.
• 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 follow up on the “DEF” and submit the appropriate grade to Enrollment Services and Student Records.

For other penalties/consequences that may be recommended, see Policy 60: Academic Integrity http://www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf

3. Designated Decision Maker from the Academic Integrity Office

Important Note: All Faculty/Instructors who suspect academic misconduct must use the Academic Integrity Office Automated System: https://cas.ryerson.ca/login?service=https://ccs.cf.ryerson.ca/studentworkshops/instructor.

If you do not wish or are unable to pursue the 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 reassess the Use of a third party to complete work, with or without payment, for a student, who then submits the work as their own, where such input is not permitted. The matter and proceed if they decide proceeding is warranted.

Once the DDM decides to proceed, they will then arrange to have either a Facilitated Discussion (FD) or Non-Facilitated Discussion (NFD) with the student.