

# Administrative Guidelines for the Academic Honor Code 2012-2013 MBA and Executive MBA Programs

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## Definition of Terms

*Academic Integrity Officer* – The Faculty Director or a person appointed by the Dean to aid in the promotion of academic integrity and the implementation of the Academic Honor Code.

*Academic Sanction* – An Academic Sanction is a punishment imposed by the Review Board against a violator of the Academic Honor Code. No Academic Sanction will be imposed without a Hearing.

*Accused Student* – An Accused Student is a student who is formally accused of violating the Academic Honor Code.

*Accusing Party* – The Accusing Party is the person who submits an Alleged Violation Report; there may be more than one Accusing Party.

*Advisor* – Any student, faculty, or staff member from the Smeal College of Business whom the Accused Student wishes to have assist in preparing his/her case for the Review or Appeal Board.

*Alleged Violation Report* – An Alleged Violation Report is a formal report submitted to the Academic Integrity Officer of a potential Infraction against the Academic Honor Code.

*Appeal Board* – An Appeal Board is a panel appointed by the Academic Integrity Officer to hear the appeal of an Accused Student who is contesting an Academic Sanction determined by a Review Board. An Appeal Board consists of three students and two faculty members from the Pool. The Appeal Board is chaired by the Academic Integrity Officer, who is a non-voting member. In addition, a professional staff member of the College will serve as the secretary of the Board and will record minutes of the proceedings.

*Disciplinary Sanction* – A Disciplinary Sanction is a punishment determined by and handed down by the Pennsylvania State University, Office of Student Conduct under the University's Code of Conduct (<http://studentaffairs.psu.edu/conduct/>).

*Hearing* – A Hearing is a formal review of the merits of the Infraction alleged in an Alleged Violation Report. Hearings held by the Review and Appeal Boards are formal hearings under the procedures defined herein, but are not legal proceedings. A Hearing will result in a decision by the Board about the responsibility of the Accused Student for an Infraction and the determination of an Academic Sanction.

*Infraction* – Infractions are violations of the Academic Honor Code. Additionally, any student who has knowledge of an Academic Honor Code violation, but who does not report the violation, has committed an Infraction.

*Pool* – The Pool is a set of students and faculty members who are trained to participate in Review and Appeals Boards.

*Review Board* – A Review Board is a panel appointed by the Academic Integrity Officer to investigate an Alleged Violation Report, decide on the merits of the Alleged Violation Report,

determine responsibility for Infractions outlined in the Alleged Violation Report, and choose the Sanction, if any, to be applied. A Review Board consists of two students and one faculty member from the Pool. The Review Board is chaired by the Academic Integrity Officer, who is a non-voting member. In addition, a professional staff member of the College will serve as the secretary of the Board and will record minutes of the proceedings.

*Violation Disclosure* – All Infractions heard by Review and Appeal Boards will be reported to the Smeal College community through an AI Violation Disclosure. Violation Disclosures will report in writing the general nature of any Hearing and the outcome of the Hearing. To protect the rights of an Accused Student, Accused Students will not be identified nor will there be sufficient information to allow other parties to identify an Accused Student. Violation Disclosures will generally occur at the end of each semester and will summarize the results of all Investigations held during that semester. Violation Disclosure release dates, however, may vary due to case specific details and appeal procedures.

*Witness* – A Witness is any individual who can provide information about an Alleged Violation Report.

## **Academic Integrity Process (AI)**

### **Nature of the Faculty-Student Relationship**

The primary relationship in education is that between the faculty member teaching a course and the student taking the course. The AI process is not intended to diminish this relationship in any way. Faculty members are encouraged to confront students about potential academic integrity violations. Faculty members are asked, however, to report all potential violations to the appropriate Academic Integrity Officer so that a Review Board can be appointed to review and determine if the case warrants an Academic Sanction. This reporting will ensure both consistency in the administration of sanctions and transparency in the reporting of violations.

### **Selection from the Pool**

The Pool is the set of all students and faculty who have undergone academic integrity training; these students and faculty are eligible to serve on a Review Board or an Appeal Board. It is expected that all students and faculty in the Penn State Smeal MBA program will have academic integrity training. The Academic Integrity Officer must choose people who have been trained to serve on Boards; service on a Board will be encouraged but not required.

### **Submission of Alleged Violation Reports**

The academic integrity process begins with the submission of an Alleged Violation Report to the Academic Integrity Officer. Any party (student, faculty, staff, or administrator) who observes a perceived Infraction against the Academic Honor Code may make such a submission. Additionally, students may self-report infractions against the Academic Honor Code.

Students witnessing or aware of an academic integrity Infraction by another student (or students) are encouraged, but not required, to confront their classmate(s) or hold a confidential meeting with the Academic Integrity Officer before filing a formal Alleged AI Violation Report. Any student determined to have knowledge of an Infraction who does not report it is in violation of the Academic Honor Code.

## Review of Alleged Violation Reports

The Academic Integrity Officer will review the Alleged Violation Report to determine if sufficient evidence supports moving forward to a Review Board. This review may be done in conjunction with an elected student who shares responsibility for the academic integrity process in a program.

## Review Board

Within one week of receipt of the Alleged Violation Report, the Academic Integrity Officer will appoint a Review Board; the Academic Integrity Officer will chair the Review Board and determine the time and place of the Review Board Hearing.

During the Hearing, the Review Board will investigate the Alleged Violation, determine if the Accused Student is responsible for the alleged Infraction(s), and, if necessary, choose an Academic Sanction. The investigation should begin with a thorough reading and understanding of the Alleged Violation Report. With the aid of the Academic Integrity Officer, the Review Board members may gather whatever information they need to determine the merits of the Alleged Violation Report, including questioning the Accused Student, the Accusing Party(ies), and any witnesses. The Review Board may call any Witnesses necessary and may question such Witnesses about the alleged Infraction. Witnesses will not be allowed to sit in on the Hearing apart from the time in which they are giving their testimony. Should the Review Board have any additional questions of the Accusing Party(ies), those questions will be presented following the questioning of Witnesses. The Review Board will also discuss the alleged Violation with the faculty member of the course in which the alleged Violation occurred to obtain any information the faculty member may have and also the faculty member's recommendation of what Sanction might be appropriate if the alleged Violation is found to have occurred.

On the basis of the information gathered, the Review Board will make a determination whether the Accused Student is responsible for the Alleged Violation. In cases where the Accused Student admits responsibility, this determination is automatic.

Once a decision has been made about responsibility, the Review Board will determine an Academic Sanction. At this point, the Academic Integrity Officer will reveal whether the Accused Student has prior academic integrity violations as determined by records kept with the College/Program and/or by the Office of Student Conduct. The Review Board will use the [Penn State Sanctioning Guidelines](#) plus the information provided about previous violations to determine an Academic Sanction. The Review Board may also conclude that the Accused Student has committed an Infraction that could call for a Disciplinary Sanction. In such instances, the Review Board will refer the matter to the Professionalism and Conduct Process and/or Penn State's Office of Student Conduct, which will handle the disciplinary case under its own procedures. The Review Board can, however, recommend a Disciplinary Sanction. Any Academic Sanction imposed by the Review Board will take effect regardless of other actions by the Program or the Office of Student Conduct.

Sanctions available to the Review Board are Academic Sanctions up to and including termination from the Penn State Smeal MBA program. A Review Board requires a majority to recommend an Academic Sanction; termination from the Smeal program, however, requires a unanimous decision. The Review Board may not impose Disciplinary Sanctions such as expulsion from Penn State University.

Once the Review Board has determined the Academic Sanction, the Academic Integrity Officer will meet with the Accused Student as soon as possible to explain the decisions of the Review Board regarding responsibility and the possible sanctioning. If the Accused Student accepts the decisions of the Review Board, the student will sign a form acknowledging acceptance; if the Accused Student disagrees with these decisions, the student may appeal to an Appeal Board.

### **Appeal Board**

If an Accused Student does not accept the decisions of a Review Board, the Academic Integrity Officer will appoint an Appeal Board; the Academic Integrity Officer will chair the Appeal Board and determine the time and place of the Appeal Board proceedings. The Appeal Board shall have discretion about the exact manner in which it conducts the review. The decision of the Appeal Board is final except when the recommended sanction is termination from the program; in such cases, the Accused Student may appeal to the Dean of the College whose decision about dismissal will be final.

### **Rights of an Accused Student**

The Accused Student will have the right to appear before a Review or Appeal Board. The Accused Student will be given the opportunity to see all information collected for a Review Board. The Accused Student will be allowed to present his/her defense at the Review Board, including questioning the Accusing Party(ies). However, the Review Board will closely monitor the questioning of the Accusing Party(ies) by the Accused Student and may stop the Accused Student's questioning if it becomes inappropriate or irrelevant to the proceeding. The Accused Student is allowed to bring an Advisor to a Board, but no additional parties will be allowed in a closed hearing.

### **Faculty Involvement in Hearings**

No faculty member in whose course an Infraction occurs may take part in the review of that Infraction. The faculty member to whose course the Alleged Violation Report relates will be asked to submit his/her recommendation as to an appropriate Sanction should the Review Board find that the Accused Student in fact committed the Infraction.

### **Disclosure of Outcomes**

In order to foster a transparent environment in the Smeal College, outcomes of Review Board Hearings will be periodically disclosed. Such disclosures will generally take place at the end of every semester and will be written to provide information to the community without releasing information that identifies the people involved in the incident. The information which can be released includes the nature of the Infraction and the results from the Review Board about whether a violation was judged to have occurred and any sanction that was given.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

The Academic Integrity Officer will notify an Accused Student of the composition of the Review Board two weeks before the Review Board will meet. The Accused Student has the right to challenge any member of the Review Board based on bias against the Accused Student. The Academic Integrity Officer will make the decision on the merits of the challenge; this decision by the Academic Integrity Officer is final.