

Frequently Asked Questions By Faculty

(rev. September 2019)

How do I report an alleged violation of Academic Integrity to the Director of Academic Integrity?

By visiting our website and following the referrals link for Academic Integrity. The information we MUST have to process a case is the student's full name and M number along with a detailed account of the behavior in question and any supporting documentation necessary to prove the case.

Can I email the Director of Academic Integrity a referral or send a referral via campus mail?

No. All Academic Integrity referrals must be submitted electronically through the Maxient program. This program enables us to track all submitted cases and is very user friendly. The Maxient referral form can be found here: https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?MiddleTNStateUniv&layout_id=10

Why can't I just do what I want to the student and not go through the judicial process for academic integrity violations?

The Director of Academic Integrity tracks all alleged academic integrity violations in Maxient. This way we can keep track of how many times an individual student has been referred. Faculty members typically do not know if a student has previously been accused or found responsible for academic integrity violations by another instructor in another class. We are able to track if we have a student who made a one-time mistake or a student who consistently makes the same "mistake" across campus. Also, the academic integrity process allows a certain amount of protection to you as a faculty member. All students are required by law to have due process protection rights in cases of misbehavior, including academic integrity. This due process is guaranteed through our office and shifts the burden to us to manage the student and subsequent case.

How much evidence do I need to accuse a student of an academic integrity violation?

Generally, if you are suspicious, you have enough evidence to make a referral, although the student may ultimately be found not responsible for a rules violation. We believe students who go through the process are positively influenced regardless of the outcome. The larger the amount of concrete evidence available, the increased chance that the student will be found responsible for violating our rules. Cases of plagiarism should be submitted with a copy of the sources the paper was plagiarized from. Crib notes, cheat sheets, etc. should also be turned in as evidence. The stronger the evidence, the quicker the case is typically resolved.

What happens when I refer a student for academic integrity? The student will be sent an email from the Director of Academic Integrity informing them that they have been accused of violating the University's academic integrity policy and informing them of their scheduled meeting time. If the student does not attend the meeting, the case can be heard in absentia and a hold could be placed on their student account preventing the student from making any changes to their schedule and/or registering for new classes. During the meeting, the student is notified of their rights in the process, the procedures, and the evidence that is against them. If the student accepts responsibility, the case is handled administratively. If there is a discrepancy of facts or the student feels they have been erroneously accused, a hearing before the Academic Integrity Committee will be arranged. The instructor will be notified of the finding at the conclusion of the disciplinary process via email. If the case is referred to a committee, the time required to complete the case will vary. If the instructor is not

notified, it means the case is pending and/or there has been some other kind of delay. If a faculty member has questions about the case, they can always contact the Director of Academic Integrity to determine the status of the case.

Will a student found responsible for an academic integrity violation automatically fail the course?

The faculty member determines the grade the student receives if the student is found responsible for academic integrity violations. It is important to be consistent with the action stated in your course syllabus. You may choose to penalize the work in question, deduct points from the total grade, allow a rewrite, and/or fail the student for the class.

Will I be able to find out what happens to the student I refer?

Yes and no. We will inform the instructor of whether or not the student was found responsible for a rules violation. We are not permitted to release all sanctions due to FERPA restrictions. We ARE permitted to release disciplinary sanctions on a need-to-know basis. Decisions on what information may be released are made on a case by-case basis.

When a student is found responsible for a rules violation, are they automatically suspended or expelled from MTSU?

No. We deal with violations on a case-by-case basis. Suspension and expulsion are two possible sanctions, but other sanctions may also include a written reprimand, probation, and/or various educational sanctions such as research assignments and papers. For academic integrity cases, if we are dealing with an inexperienced student, the sanctions are lighter than they are for a seasoned student.

Will this process require a lot of my time?

Typically, it only requires the amount of time that it takes for you to fill out the referral form and gather any supporting information/documentation. At times, a staff member may call or email you for additional details and information. If the case goes before the Academic Integrity Committee, you may be asked to appear as the complainant.

What should I do if a student I referred drops the course? You should still refer the student. Our office will still follow up on the case.

Am I required to meet with the student?

It is always best to communicate clearly with your students including your concerns. If you decide to send a referral, you should attempt to inform the student of the allegation and notify the student that the information has been forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. In cases of academic integrity violations, we highly recommend the faculty to meet with the student as we believe this is where the real learning occurs for the student. Should you decide to meet with the student, you are required to comply with the following procedures: 1. the student will be provided notice that he/she is believed to have committed an act or acts of academic integrity violations; 2. the student will be presented with all evidence in the knowledge or possession of the instructor which tends to support the allegation(s) of academic integrity violation; and 3. the student will be given an opportunity to present information on his/her behalf.

Is the student allowed to stay in class while the case is under investigation?

YES. The student may stay in class pending a hearing if the faculty member determines that the student's presence in the class does not interfere with the instructor's ability to teach the class or the ability of other class members to learn.

Can I permanently remove a student from class?

You are authorized to TEMPORARILY remove a student from class. It is best to discuss the removal with the student and explain the basis for the temporary removal. If you wish to remove them PERMANENTLY, you must make a referral through the Office of Academic Affairs and indicate that you want the student permanently removed. You must also clearly instruct the student to NOT RETURN to class until the case is resolved through Academic Affairs.

Where can I learn more about the Academic Integrity policy?

You can read the academic integrity policy at: <http://www.mtsu.edu/policies/academic-affairs-students/312.php>