

Faculty of Engineering and Computer Science

Academic Integrity Investigations Procedure – Graduate

Please note that updates to the UVic Policy on Academic Integrity are expected in 2025 – at the time the updates take effect, the UVic Policy on Academic Integrity will take precedence and this document will be updated to complement the Policy.

Stage 1: Instructor or Supervisor Investigation

The Instructor or Supervisor determines whether to report a suspected violation of the Policy on Academic Integrity to the Chair, Director, or delegate.

1. For graded work, grade the work and record the grade as normal under a presumption of innocence. If there is a conclusion that a violation has occurred, the grade can be changed at that time according to the assigned penalty. **In no case should an N grade be entered as a placeholder final grade while awaiting the Chair/Director/delegate or Associate Dean's decision.** N grades indicate required work was not submitted and opens the possibility for the student to request a range of academic concessions. In extreme cases, an N grade on record may provide grounds for a student to withdraw from the course.
2. Review the [Policy on Academic Integrity](#).
3. Articulate to yourself what makes you suspect a violation. Note what it is about the work or situation that has raised the suspicion.
4. Look for evidence that can confirm or disconfirm whether a violation has occurred.
 - a. If the evidence you find is ambiguous, go back to your initial reasons for suspecting a violation. Do the features of the work that led you to believe that there may be a violation still lead you to that conclusion?
5. Determine whether to report or not.
 - a. **No violation suspected:** If after further investigation you no longer believe that a violation has occurred, do not report that you suspected a violation. The investigation ends here.
 - b. **Violation suspected or unsure:** If you suspect a violation or if you are unsure, contact the Chair/Director/delegate and report your findings.
 - i. Provide the Chair/Director/delegate with the evidence you have gathered and any notes you have taken during the process. As applicable, include any written instructions or syllabus rules that clarify the boundary that the student's work is suspected to have transgressed.
 - ii. If you believe that another explanation may be plausible (for example, that the student has misunderstood proper citation practice so that what you are looking at is poor scholarship rather than plagiarism), let the Chair/Director/delegate know.
 - iii. The Chair/Director/delegate will continue the investigation in Stage 2. Participate in a meeting with the student only as requested by the Chair/Director/delegate. These interactions may be in person, over video conferencing, or in writing.



Stage 2: Chair, Director, or Delegate Investigation

The Chair, Director, or Academic Integrity delegate of the unit determines whether there has been a violation of the Policy on Academic Integrity.

If the Instructor is also the Chair/Director/delegate of the unit, an alternate must be designated to perform the Chair/Director/delegate's functions. This may be another Chair/Director/delegate, or it may be the Associate Dean Undergraduate Programs.

1. Review the pertinent sections in the [Policy on Academic Integrity](#).
2. Review the Instructor/Supervisor's report, including the evidence and notes that have been provided.
3. Gather additional evidence as necessary. This may include clarifying elements in the Instructor/Supervisor's report or seeking additional materials from the Instructor/Supervisor.
4. Determine whether there is sufficient evidence that a violation has occurred to proceed with the case.
 - a. If you believe that the case **does not merit determination of a violation**, inform the Instructor/Supervisor that the investigation won't proceed any further and that the grade awarded will stand. The investigation ends here.
 - b. If you believe there is **sufficient evidence of a violation**, continue the investigation.

Sufficient evidence of a violation

1. Determine which evidence can be shared directly with the student and anonymize it if necessary. If there is key evidence that cannot be shared directly for reasons of privacy or confidentiality, create a written description of the content of the evidence with a note about why the evidence could not be shared directly. The goal is to provide the student with sufficient evidence so that they can understand how the suspicion of a violation occurred.
2. Inform the student in writing that you have received possible evidence of a violation of academic integrity. In your communication, include the components detailed in Appendix A in order to contribute to a fair process for the student.
3. Connect with the student via a real-time meeting or email communication. Both you and the student may bring an additional person to any real-time meetings. You may wish to bring an additional person (e.g., a staff member experienced with handling confidential information) to act as a witness and additional notetaker for the proceedings. When connecting with the student, include the following information:
 - a. Review the relevant portion of the Policy on Academic Integrity and these Investigation Procedures,
 - b. Explain the Instructor/Supervisor's findings,
 - c. Go over evidence and
 - d. Give the student an opportunity to respond.
4. If necessary, schedule a follow-up meeting, or set a timeframe of at least 2 weeks for the written submission of any additional evidence or written explanation that you or the student believes to be relevant.
5. Review all of the information received from both the Instructor/Supervisor and the student. Consider the credibility and balance of probabilities of the information provided – if the Instructor/Supervisor and student offer conflicting information, what version of events is more likely? In order to conclude that a violation occurred, you must be satisfied that on a balance of probabilities (more than 51% likelihood), the violation occurred as described. Record your reasoning for your decision.

Conclusion of no violation after investigation

If you conclude that the Policy on Academic Integrity **has not been violated** after meeting with the student and examining any additional evidence or explanation:

1. Inform the student in writing of your finding. The Instructor/Supervisor should be copied on the communication. Do not copy anyone else on the communication.
2. Explain the basis of your finding to the Instructor/Supervisor and confirm that any graded awarded will stand. The investigation ends here.

Conclusion of violation after investigation

If you conclude that the Policy on Academic Integrity **has been violated** after meeting with the student and examining any additional evidence or explanation, email the Office of the Registrar at academicintegrity@uvic.ca to determine whether this is a first offence. The email should contain the student's name, student number, and the fact that you are checking for a prior offence.

No record of previous violation

For work not relating to doctoral candidacy exams or graduate dissertations, theses, or final projects

1. If there is **no record of a previous violation for work not relating to doctoral candidacy exams or graduate dissertations, theses, or final projects**, review the [Policy on Academic Integrity](#) to consider the appropriate penalty.
 - a. The Policy describes a possible penalty in each case – if there are extenuating circumstances relevant to the case, you may determine that the appropriate penalty is lesser than the penalty described in the Policy.
2. Issue a letter to the student stating your finding that the Policy on Academic Integrity has been violated and the penalty that will be imposed. In your letter, include the components detailed in Appendix B in order to contribute to a fair process for the student. **Important: Copy the Office of the Registrar (academicintegrity@uvic.ca) when this letter is sent to the student.**
3. Inform the Instructor/Supervisor of the result of the investigation and the penalty applied. If a final course grade has already been submitted, request that the Instructor submit an Undergraduate Grade Change Form to adjust the final grade.

For work relating to doctoral candidacy exams or graduate dissertations, theses or final projects

1. If there is **no record of a previous violation for work relating to doctoral candidacy exams or graduate dissertations, theses, or final projects**, issue a letter to the student stating your finding that the Policy on Academic Integrity has been violated and that the case has been referred to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for determination of the penalty because the work relates to doctoral candidacy exams or a graduate dissertation, thesis, or final project. The Faculty of Graduate Studies Dean (graddean@uvic.ca) and the Office of the Registrar (academicintegrity@uvic.ca) should be copied on the communication.
2. Inform the Faculty of Graduate Studies Dean (graddean@uvic.ca) of your finding and forward the evidence on which your finding was based.

In the case of a particularly unusual or serious violation (e.g., falsification of research results), the Chair may refer the case to the Dean of Graduate Studies with a recommendation for a penalty more severe than those normally imposed for a first violation.

Record of previous violation

1. If there is a **record of previous violation**, issue a letter to the student stating your finding that the Policy on Academic Integrity has been violated and that the case has been referred to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for determination of the penalty because there has been a previous violation. The Faculty of Graduate Studies Dean

(graddean@uvic.ca) and the Office of the Registrar (academicintegrity@uvic.ca) should be copied on the communication.

2. Inform the Faculty of Graduate Studies Dean (graddean@uvic.ca) of your finding and forward the evidence on which your finding was based. If the case does not involve doctoral candidacy exams or graduate dissertations, theses, or final projects, indicate the penalty you would have applied were this a first violation. If you have a recommendation regarding the penalty, state this as well.

Appendix A

Chair, Director, or delegate's initial letter to student upon suspicion of violation

The Chair, Director, or delegate's initial letter upon suspicion of a violation must include the following information and components:

- If applicable, course number, name, and term in which the course took place
- Details of the suspected violation:
 - Mention who made the allegation (e.g., the Instructor or Supervisor's name).
 - Include a link to the [Policy on Academic Integrity](#) and a precise statement describing the allegation with reference to the specific section of the Policy under which the suspected violation occurred.
 - Provide comprehensive details of the allegation – there must be sufficient detail to enable the student to understand and respond to the allegation.
- A copy of evidence
 - Determine which evidence can be shared directly with the student and anonymize it if necessary. If there is key evidence that cannot be shared directly for reasons of privacy or confidentiality, create a written description of the content of the evidence with a note about why the evidence could not be shared directly. For example, in the case of copying the work of another student, the student under suspicion of a violation should be provided a copy of their own work as evidence plus a statement that the work of another student is extremely similar.
 - The goal is to provide the student with sufficient evidence so that they can understand how the suspicion of a violation occurred.
- Timeline for response: students should be allowed at least 2 weeks to respond
- The options for the student to engage with the process: meeting in person, meeting online, and/or communicating in writing via email
- An invitation for the student to bring a support person to any meetings
- Support resource: Refer them to the [UVic Office of the Ombudsperson \(ombuddy@uvic.ca\)](mailto:ombuddy@uvic.ca). In the case of Academic Integrity investigations, the Ombudsperson can review the allegation with the student, help the student understand the situation better, explain how the university defines and deals with concerns of academic integrity, and clarify a student's rights and responsibilities.

Appendix B

Chair, Director, or delegate's letter to student upon conclusion that a first violation (not related to doctoral candidacy exams or a graduate dissertation, thesis, or final project) occurred

The Chair, Director, or delegate's letter upon conclusion that a first violation **not** related to doctoral candidacy exams or a graduate dissertation, thesis, or final project occurred must include the following information and components:

- If applicable, course number, name, and term in which the course took place
- Details of the violation:
 - Include a link to the [Policy on Academic Integrity](#) and a precise statement describing the violation with reference to the specific section of the Policy under which the violation occurred.
 - Provide comprehensive details of the violation.
- A copy of the evidence for the finding – the goal is to provide sufficient evidence for the student to understand why there was a conclusion that a violation occurred
- Rationale for the finding

- Provide sufficient detail to enable the student to understand how and why the decision was made. Include both the student's and Instructor/Supervisor's versions of events, if contested, and explain why the balance of probabilities resulted in the final decision.
 - Penalty applied based on the [Policy on Academic Integrity](#) and any relevant extenuating circumstances. Provide a rationale and the factors considered in the decision to apply this penalty.
 - Appeal process: if the student believes the decision to be mistaken or to have been arrived at improperly, it may be appealed by writing a letter of appeal to the Faculty of Graduate Studies Dean (graddean@uvic.ca) within 21 working days of the decision.
 - Support resource for appeal process: Refer them to the [UVic Office of the Ombudsperson](#) (ombuddy@uvic.ca). In the case of Academic Integrity investigations, the Ombudsperson can review the allegation with the student, help the student understand the situation better, explain how the university defines and deals with concerns of academic integrity, and clarify a student's rights and responsibilities.
- *Copy the Office of the Registrar (academicintegrity@uvic.ca) when sending the letter to the student.