RESPONDING TO A NOTICE OF INVESTIGATION

Receiving a Notice of Investigation can be distressing. To help in understanding what a Notice of Investigation is, and how the process of an Academic Integrity investigation works, the Office of the University Ombudsperson has put together some information to help you through the process.

1. Don’t panic! Take a deep breath, then another, then one more.

2. Understand the process.

3. Participate in the process.

4. Understand the decision.

5. Consider an appeal of the decision if appropriate.

What is a Notice of Investigation?
• A formal notification from the instructor to the student
• Lets the student know that evidence exists to indicate that there has been a departure from Academic Integrity
• The instructor is required to provide the student with a Notice of Investigation form, including the evidence the instructor is aware of
• In a Notice of Investigation a student is invited to a meeting with the instructor, or invited to respond in writing if a meeting is not possible
• The meeting is the student’s opportunity to tell their side of the story and ask questions

LINKS TO ACADEMIC INTEGRITY REGULATIONS

- Arts & Science
- Smith School of Business
- Education
- Engineering & Applied Science
- Graduate Studies
- Health Sciences - BHSC
- School of Nursing
- Health Sciences - Rehab Therapy
- Law

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What are the expectations of a student when responding to a Notice of Investigation?
Anyone who receives a Notice of Investigation is expected to participate in the process. This means a timely response to emails, attending meetings or requesting an alternate meeting date if you are not available at the proposed time. Be aware of all deadlines and meeting dates, participate in the process and be clear, concise, and honest. This is your opportunity to clearly explain what happened.

How can I prepare for a Notice of Investigation meeting?
Prior to the meeting you should review all evidence provided and consider your response. It can be helpful to gather any additional evidence available to support the information you wish to present at the meeting. This may include rough drafts, notes, screenshots, supporting documentation, and anything you would like the instructor to be aware of when considering the situation. Many students find it helpful to bring clearly articulated notes with the key points to cover. Remember to be clear, concise, and honest and clearly explain what happened.

Can the Office of the University Ombudsperson provide an Advisor to meet with me to explain the Notice of Investigation process and then attend the meeting?
Due to the number of Notices of Investigation that are provided to students across the University, the Office is unable to provide Ombuds Academic Appeal Advisors to assist students in responding to a Notice of Investigation. We encourage you to talk through the situation with someone you trust and you’re welcome to bring a support person with you to the meeting.

Do decisions have to be provided to me in writing?
Yes, all decisions that result from a Notice of Investigation meeting must be provided to the student in writing. It is important to carefully read the decision letter provided by the instructor. The instructor shall decide whether to make a finding of a departure from academic integrity or to dismiss the case. If there is a finding of departure from academic integrity a sanction will be assigned.

I disagree with the finding or the sanction can I appeal?
Yes, if you meet the grounds for an appeal you may appeal either the finding, the sanction assigned, or both. Carefully review Appeal Regulations from your home faculty to learn more about your appeal options including the grounds for an appeal.
Review Section 3 Instructor Process: Sequence of events of the Senate Academic Integrity Procedures - Requirements of Faculties & Schools.

The following chart outlines the general process for handling departures from academic integrity.

1. Potential issue comes to the attention of instructor and initiates the investigation (Sec. 3.1)

2. Instructor assembles all evidence (Sec. 3.1.2) (student identity remains confidential)

3. Evidence merits further investigation

4. Instructor completes the Notice of Investigation Form (NOI) and sends notice & relevant documents to the student (Sec. 3.2.1)

5. Student responds to NOI within 10 business days
   Indicate wish to meet with instructor (Sec. 3.2.3)
   or wish to provide a written response (Sec. 3.2.4)

6. Meeting with instructor and student (student may choose to provide written statement instead of attend meeting)

7. Instructor assesses all information & makes decision (Sec. 3.3)

8. Departure from academic integrity has been found (Sec. 3.3.2) & (Sec. 3.4)

8a. Level 1 Departure? (Sec. 3.4.3.1)

8b. Level II Departure? (Sec. 3.4.3.2)

9. Sanctions Imposed (Sec. 3.4.2) & (Sec. 3.4.4.1*)
   *The instructor may refer the case to the Faculty/School for sanctioning in certain circumstances (3.4.4)

Evidence is insufficient & investigation is ended (all documents destroyed) (Sec. 3.1.4)

No departure from academic integrity, investigation is ended, student notified in writing (all documents destroyed) (Sec. 3.3.1)

- Investigatory in nature
- Be clear, concise, and honest and clearly explain what happened
- Include how the information in question came about, and students' line of thinking in preparing the work the way they did
- Provide copies of earlier drafts of the work or other relevant documentation
- Student may invite an advisor such as a friend, family member, support person, or legal counsel to accompany them at the meeting

- Finding of a Departure from Academic Integrity Form is completed
- Finding of Departure Form is sent to the student
- All original documents related to an academic integrity investigation, including the submitted work, correspondence, a written response from the student, and the NOI and Finding forms, must be forwarded to the Faculty/School AI Administrator to be filed, maintained and released as required under Sec. 1.7
- Student informed of appeal options & deadlines