OFFICE of the UNIVERSITY **Ombudsperson**

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.

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 possible 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
- Smith Engineering
- Graduate Studies
- Health Sciences - BHSC
- School of Nursing
- DBMS, DPHS, DPMM
- Law

FAQ's

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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. In all meetings, the Office of the University Ombudsperson encourages students to 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 the student should review all the evidence provided and consider their response in advance of the meeting. 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 notes with the key points to cover clearly articulated. That way you can be sure you will cover the points you wish to highlight in the meeting. Remember to be clear, concise, and honest and clearly explain what happened

Can someone from the Office attend the meeting with me as my advocate and/or support person?
A key tenet of our Office is to remain impartial and unbiased in all university decision-making, therefore we cannot act as a support person or advocate for any member of the Queen's community. Anytime a student is meeting with an academic decision-maker they can always make the choice to be accompanied by a support person. A "support person" is an individual whose role is to provide emotional support and assistance but does not advocate on behalf of a student. A support person can be anyone of the student's choice, whether that be a friend, colleague, or parent.

Can I be assigned an Ombuds Academic Appeal Advisor at the Notice of Investigation stage?
Ombuds Academic Appeal Advisors are assigned at the discretion of the Office of the University Ombudsperson to assist students who are typically facing serious adverse academic consequences at the appeal stage of the academic integrity process. Ombuds Academic Appeal Advisors do not assist at the NOI meeting stage of Academic Integrity investigations.

Do I need legal counsel present during the investigation process?
You do not need legal counsel or paralegal support, but you may have representative counsel or paralegal support with you at the meeting(s) and/or in preparing your response. If you decide to bring legal support to the meeting(s), you must advise the instructor in advance.

Do decisions have to be provided to me in writing?
Yes! Regardless of the outcome you will receive a written decision letter. It is important to carefully read the decision letter provided by the instructor. It will clearly explain the finding, and the decision that was reached as a result of the investigation. The options are either responsible for a breach of academic integrity, or not responsible for a breach of academic integrity. If there is a finding of responsible a sanction will be assigned. If there is a finding of not responsible the decision will be communicated to you in writing.

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.

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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PROCESS

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)**

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

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

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3 **Evidence merits further investigation**

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

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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)**

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

- 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

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

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

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

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8a **Instructor Sanctions* (Sec. 3.4.2)**

8b **AI Lead Sanctions (Sec. 3.4.3)**

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9 **Sanctions Imposed**
*The instructor may refer the case to the Faculty/School for sanctioning in certain circumstances **(3.4)**

- 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