

## IX. Academic Conduct

All students entering Boston University are expected to maintain high standards of academic honesty and integrity. The Academic Conduct Committee of the College of Engineering concerns itself with matters related to academic conduct. The Committee consists of members of the faculty, undergraduate program staff and student representatives. When a violation of the Academic Conduct Code occurs, the Academic Conduct Committee evaluates the situation and recommends appropriate action to the Associate Dean.

All students receive a copy of the College of Engineering Academic Conduct Code at the time of their first registration at the College. All students should be familiar with the guidelines of ethical and appropriate behavior that have been established in the College of Engineering Academic Conduct Code, and by the Codes of Conduct of other schools at Boston University in which they are taking courses. These codes have been developed "to protect the integrity of the educational process."

Students are also responsible for knowing the specific restrictions for each class they are taking. The College of Engineering encourages instructors to discuss the specific collaboration policy for each course. If an instructor does not outline the specific collaboration for a particular course, then the general guidelines regarding what constitutes inappropriate academic conduct, as outlined in this handbook, are to be considered the collaboration policy for the course.

Dishonesty in representing one's academic accomplishments is a serious ethical violation and is of concern to all members of the academic community

Some examples of the situations that the Academic Conduct Committee has reviewed are:

1. Cheating on examinations -- including copying from another's papers, using notes when none are allowed, unauthorized collaboration with another student.
2. Gaining access to examinations before they are given out.
3. Plagiarism of any kind on examinations, laboratory assignments, homework assignments, papers, etc.
4. Unauthorized collaboration on homework, or computer programs.
5. Forgeries of signatures on assignments or University documents.
6. Theft of assignments from other students.
7. Grade tampering.

## A. College of Engineering Academic Conduct Code

### 1. Philosophy of Discipline

The College of Engineering enforces academic rules in order to promote an academic community in which learning can best take place. This atmosphere can be maintained only when every student believes that his or her academic performance is judged fairly and that he or she will not be disadvantaged because of the dishonesty of someone else. Penalties imposed are carefully determined so that they are no more or no less than required to maintain the desired atmosphere. In defining violations of this code, the intent is to protect the integrity of the educational process.

### 2. Definition of Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct occurs when a student intentionally misrepresents his or her academic work. Knowingly allowing others to represent your work as theirs is as serious an offense as submitting another's work as your own.

### 3. Violations of this Code

Violations of this code are acts that constitute an attempt to be dishonest or deceptive in the performance of academic work in or out of the classroom, to alter academic records, or to collaborate with another student or students in an act of academic misconduct. Violations include but are not limited to:

- a. Cheating on Examinations: Cheating is defined as any attempt by a student to alter his or her performance on an examination in violation of that examination's stated or commonly understood ground rules.
- b. Plagiarism: Plagiarism is any attempt by a student to represent the work of another as his or her own. This includes, but is not limited to, copying the answers of another student on an oral or written examination, copying or substantially restating the work of another person or persons in any oral or written work without citing the appropriate source (including web sources), or collaborating with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution, unless such collaboration is specifically permitted.
- c. Misrepresentation or Falsification of Data presented for surveys, experiments, and so on.

- d. Theft of an Examination: Theft is defined as stealing or otherwise discovering and/or making known to others the content of an examination that has not yet been administered.
- e. Forgery, Alteration, or Knowing Misuse of graded examinations, grade lists, or official University records or documents, such as transcripts, letters of recommendation, and so on, or alteration of examinations or other work after submission.
- f. Theft or Destruction of Examinations or Papers after submission for the purpose of covering up possible poor performance or to cause harm to another student.
- g. Submitting the same work in more than one course without the consent of the instructors involved.
- h. Failure to Comply with the Penalties imposed under the authority of this code.

#### 4. Penalties

The Academic Conduct Committee has jurisdiction in all cases involving violation of this code within the College of Engineering.

It is expected that all allegations of academic misconduct will be brought to the attention of the Committee. Students will not be penalized for academic misconduct except through recommendations of the Committee. When allegations of academic misconduct are *sustained* by the committee, faculty members have the right to determine the appropriate grade for that work.

If the accused is found guilty, the following penalties may be recommended by the Academic Conduct Committee, in order of increasing severity.

- a. Reprimand: For violations of a minor nature or mitigated by extenuating circumstances
  - i. A copy of the reprimand shall be kept on file but shall not be recorded on the student's permanent academic record. Past reprimands may be considered in imposing sanctions for further offenses.
  - ii. Reprimands are not made public when records, transcripts, etc., are sent out.
  - iii. The reprimand places no restriction on the student's participation in academic or non-academic College or University activities.
- b. Disciplinary Probation: For violations deemed serious enough to warrant some abridgment of the student's rights and privileges.

- i. Probation is given for a specified period of time.
  - ii. Probation is recorded on the student's permanent internal academic record.
  - iii. Disciplinary probation prohibits the student from being an officer in any recognized all-University or College student organization and from participating in intercollegiate activities during the specified probation period.
  - iv. Probation may be coupled with appropriate disciplinary activity (i.e., community service work assignment) at the discretion of the Academic Conduct Committee.
- c. Suspension: For violations deemed serious enough to warrant separation of the student from the University community for a limited time but not serious enough to warrant expulsion.
- i. Suspension is given for a period from one to four terms. During the period of suspension, the student may not register for courses in any School or College within Boston University.
  - ii. Courses taken at another institution during the period of suspension will not be accepted for transfer credit.
  - iii. The student's suspension is recorded on the student's permanent academic record.
  - iv. Suspension may be coupled with appropriate disciplinary activity (i.e., community service work assignment), at the discretion of the Academic Conduct Committee.
- d. Expulsion: For extremely serious academic misconduct.
- i. Expulsion is recorded permanently on the student's academic records.
  - ii. Expulsion is permanent.
- e. Other penalties:
- i. For students who have completed or are near completion of their degree requirements at the time of the hearing, the Committee may recommend withholding the student's degree for a specified period of time.
  - ii. For fraudulent use of college transcripts or degree certificates or similar serious misconduct.
    - (a) Recommendations of the Committee may include withholding of transcripts or revocation of the degree.
    - (b) Action is recorded on the student's academic record for a specified period or permanently, as recommended.

f. Dissemination of information

- i. Notice of all penalties is sent to the parent or guardian of dependent students.
- ii. Dissemination of information is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA). Copies of this act are available in the Office of the Dean of Student Affairs.
- iii. Penalties imposed through the Academic Conduct Committee may be reported to graduate and professional schools to which a student seeks admission.

**B. Academic Conduct Committee**

1. Procedures

- a. The Committee consists of a chairman, four faculty members (one from each of the departments within the College) who are appointed by the Dean, a professional staff member from the Undergraduate Programs Office, and up to four undergraduate student members who are appointed by the College.

The Committee has jurisdiction over every alleged act of academic misconduct on the part of any student enrolled in a course taught in the College, whether that student is enrolled in the College or some other school at this University or any other college or university, and whether that course is taught during the regular academic year or in during the summer. The Committee also has jurisdiction over every alleged act of academic misconduct pertaining to documents of, or course credits earned in, the College by any person. This shall include any person who has received a baccalaureate from this University.

- b. Proceedings before the committee are initiated when a College of Engineering faculty member reports an instance of suspected academic misconduct to the chairman of the committee. The faculty member meets with the student suspected of academic misconduct together with the committee chair to discuss the matter. If the chairman determines that there is sufficient evidence to indicate that an infraction of the academic conduct code may have occurred, then the case is forwarded to the committee. If the student suspected of academic misconduct admits the misconduct prior to the hearing, the committee will meet only to determine an appropriate penalty.

Proceedings may also be initiated by any member of the College of Engineering community who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic misconduct in connection with a course or program at the College. In such circumstances, the Chair of the Academic Conduct Committee should be contacted.

- c. Prior to the hearing, the College shall inform the student in writing of the following matters:
  - i. The charges, including a copy of the report submitted by the faculty member to the chairman of the committee outlining the alleged academic misconduct and all supporting evidence;
  - ii. The date, time, and location of the hearing;
  - iii. The fact that he or she may be accompanied by an advisor of his or her choice, who may or may not be an attorney, but that, other than making a statement on behalf of the student, the advisor may not participate directly in the hearing.
  - iv. The fact that s/he has the right at the hearing to question the person bringing the charges and all witnesses and examine all documents which are introduced as evidence;
  - v. The fact that s/he has the right to present evidence in his/her defense. The student is encouraged to present any supporting documentation to the Undergraduate Programs Office at least two days in advance of the hearing to allow committee members the opportunity to review such documentation before the hearing.
  
- d. Hearings
  - i. A member of the committee shall be excused if the case might involve a conflict of interest.
  - ii. The Dean may appoint *pro tempore* members to replace regular members who are unable to attend or have been excused.
  - iii. A representative from the home college of any non-ENG student shall be invited to attend the hearing and the committee deliberations, but will not vote.
  - iv. The quorum for hearings shall be five voting members of the committee, at least three of whom shall be faculty members.
  - v. The chairman shall be counted as a voting member, but shall cast his or her vote only in order to break a tie vote.
  - vi. A hearing shall proceed in the absence of the accused student only if the committee is satisfied that proper notice was given and that there is no legitimate cause for the absence.
  - vii. An audio recording shall be made. The records will be preserved for at least one year.
  - viii. The chairman will preside at the hearing and may make such rulings as s/he deems necessary for the orderly conduct of the hearing. The hearing will be closed to the public. However, the chairman will have the discretion to admit parents, relatives, or friends of the student where, in the judgment of the chairman, the presence of such persons will not jeopardize the decorum of the hearing.
  - viii. The order of the hearing shall be as follows:
    - (a) Presentation of charges and evidence by the accusing instructor.

- (b) Examination of material evidence and/or witnesses by the committee and by the accused student.
  - (c) Statement by the accused student and/or his or her advisor.
  - (d) After excusing the accused student, advisor, witnesses, and the accusing instructor, deliberation of the committee will involve:
    - (i) Formulation of the judgment by a majority vote of the members present.
    - (ii) Assessing the appropriate penalties if a judgment of guilty has been rendered or if the student admits guilt.
  - ix. Because the hearing is not a court hearing, the committee is not bound by legal rules of evidence. However, every effort will be made to conduct the hearings as fairly and expeditiously as possible.
  - x. The hearing shall not be public and information gained at the hearing shall be treated as privileged information by all participants. This rule does not bar disclosing of the findings and recommendations of the committee to those authorized to receive such information.
  - xi. The hearing shall be conducted with proper decorum. The hearing may be recessed at the option of the chairman if:
    - (a) Additional evidence or witnesses are needed.
    - (b) It is apparent that a fair hearing cannot be held because of disturbances, illness, or similar causes.
  - xii. The chairman of the committee shall, from time to time, but in no case less frequently than once a year, make public the facts and decisions of all cases that come before the committee. In no case shall the chairman reveal the name of any student, professor, instructor, or course involved in a case that has been heard by the committee. The names of the members of the committee may be included in the chairman's report.
- e. Committee's Recommendation

The complete recommendation, including a statement of the charges, evidence, and judgment, shall be transmitted to the Associate Dean in a timely fashion. The Associate Dean shall review the appropriateness of the recommended penalties. In case of doubt, s/he may refer the matter back to the committee for further consideration and/or elaboration, or request the recording of the hearing and/or evidence. However, the findings of the committee shall not be replaced by more severe findings unless the Associate Dean has submitted new evidence for a re-hearing. Similarly, the Associate Dean shall not impose more severe sanctions than those recommended by the Committee.

In the case of non-ENG students, the Associate Dean shall transmit the Committee recommendations to the Dean of the student's college. In the event that the Dean

of said college shall deviate substantially from the recommendation of the Associate Dean of ENG, the latter may, upon the recommendation of the Committee and after consulting with the Dean of the other college, prohibit the student in question from taking courses in the College of Engineering for a period of time that shall reflect the intent of the original recommendation.

- f. The College shall notify the student by certified letter (or equivalent) of the judgment and penalty imposed. The letter shall also inform the student of the procedure for appeal, as discussed in section II.
- g. Violations by ENG students in non-ENG courses

When ENG students are called before the academic conduct committee of another college in the University:

- i. An ENG representative should be present at the hearing and deliberations.
- ii. After the hearing, the Dean of the relevant college reviews the report and judgment and refers the case to the ENG Associate Dean. Unless special problems are apparent which should be discussed by the ENG Academic Conduct Committee, the ENG Associate Dean reaches a judgment and assesses an appropriate penalty.
- iii. The ENG Associate Dean notifies the ENG student by registered letter with return receipt, of the judgment and penalty imposed. The letter will also inform the student of the procedure for appeal. A copy of this letter will also be sent to the Dean of the college in which the hearing was held.

## 2. Appeals

- a. Within two weeks of receipt of the Associate Dean's letter a student may appeal the judgment or penalty. This appeal must be in writing, setting forth the basis of the appeal and whether the student is appealing the judgment, the penalty or both.
- b. The Associate Dean will review the documentation or refer the appeal to the Academic Conduct Committee for clarification and comments.
- c. Appeals are *only* considered when there is evidence that was not considered by the Committee during the hearing, or if the hearing was not conducted properly.
- d. The Associate Dean reserves the right to require a re-hearing if he or she feels it is appropriate. The procedure at a re-hearing is the same as at the original hearing.

- e. Before making a decision concerning the appeal, the Associate Dean may conduct his own investigation.
- f. Based on the new evidence considered or investigation conducted during the appeal, the Associate Dean has the right to dismiss the charges, increase or decrease the sanction, or uphold the original finding.
- g. Appeals that have been denied by the Associate Dean may be addressed to the Provost of the University. All appeals to the Provost must be submitted within two weeks of the notification from the Associate Dean.

### 3. Request for Reinstatement

Requests for reinstatement after suspension must be directly to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs. A readmitted student is normally placed on disciplinary probation during the first semester of his or her return and removed from probation at the end of the term. The student seeking reinstatement shall inform the Dean of his or her activities during the time of suspension, indicate what steps have been taken to satisfy any conditions imposed during the time of suspension, and state his or her future plans.

## C. Boston University Conditions of Use and Policy on Computing Ethics

### Conditions of Use

**Notice to All Users:** Users of the University's computing facilities, including University-supported electronic mail, are on notice, and by using these facilities agree, that no representation has been made to them as to the privacy of any communication or data stored on or sent through these facilities; that the University has reserved the rights set forth below and in the Boston University Information Security Policy and Policy on Computing Ethics; and that the use of these facilities is restricted to University-authorized purposes.

The use of the University's computing facilities in connection with University activities and *de minimis* personal use is a privilege extended to various members of the University community; it is not a right. Users of the University's computing facilities are required to comply with, and by using such facilities agree that they are on notice of and agree to comply with, be subject to, and grant the University the right to implement, the Boston University Information Security Policy, the Policy on Computing Ethics and these Conditions of Use. Users also agree to comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws and to refrain from engaging in any activity that is inconsistent with the University's tax-exempt status or that would subject the University to liability. The University reserves the right to amend these Conditions and Policies at any time without prior notice and to take such further actions as may be necessary or appropriate to comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

To protect the integrity of the University's computing facilities and its users against unauthorized or improper use of those facilities, and to investigate possible use of those facilities in violation of or in aid of violation of University rules and policies, Boston University reserves the right, without notice, to limit or restrict any individual's use, and to inspect, copy, remove or otherwise alter any data, file, or system resource which may undermine the authorized use of any computing facility or which is used in violation of University rules or policies. Boston University also reserves the right periodically to examine any system and any other rights necessary to protect its computing facilities.

The University disclaims responsibility for loss of data or interference with resulting from its efforts to maintain the privacy and security of those computing facilities or from system malfunction or any other cause. As used herein and in the Policy on Computing Ethics below, the term "computing facility" means, refers to, and includes any and all forms of computer-related equipment, tools, and intellectual property, including computer systems, personal computers, computer networks, and all forms of software, firmware, operating software, and application software, which are owned or leased by the University or are under the University's possession, custody, or control.

## Policy on Computing Ethics

Thousands of users share the computing facilities at Boston University. These facilities must be used responsibly by everyone, since misuse by even a few individuals has the potential to disrupt University business or the work of others. You are therefore required to exercise responsible, ethical behavior when using the University's computing facilities. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. You must use only those computer resources which you have been authorized to use by the University. The unauthorized use of computer resources, as well as the providing of false or misleading information for the purpose of obtaining access to computing facilities, is prohibited and may be regarded as a criminal act and treated accordingly by the University. You must not use University computing facilities to gain unauthorized access to computing facilities of other institutions, organizations, or individuals.
2. You may not authorize anyone to use your computer accounts for any reason. You are responsible for all use of your accounts. You must take all reasonable precautions, including password maintenance and file protection measures, to prevent use of your account by unauthorized persons. You must not, for example, share your password with anyone else, and you should change your password regularly.
3. You must use the University's computer resources only for the University-related purposes for which they were authorized. As with all University equipment, use of the computer facilities, including the Campus Network, for private or commercial purposes is prohibited, except as expressly authorized. You must not use the University's computer resources for any unlawful purpose, such as the installation or distribution of fraudulently or illegally obtained software. Use of external networks connected to the University's networks must comply with the policies of acceptable use promulgated by the organizations responsible for those networks.
4. You must not access, alter, copy, move or remove information, proprietary software or other files (including programs, members of subroutine libraries, data, and electronic mail) without prior authorization from the appropriate University data trustee, security officer, or other responsible party. You must not copy, distribute, display, or disclose third-party proprietary software without prior authorization from the licensor. Proprietary software must not be installed on systems not properly licensed for its use.
5. You must not use any computing facility irresponsibly or in a way that might needlessly interfere with the work of others. This includes transmitting or making accessible offensive, annoying, or harassing material, or materials such as chain letters,

unauthorized mass mailings, or unsolicited advertising; intentionally, recklessly, or negligently damaging any system, material, or information not belonging to you; intentionally intercepting electronic communications or otherwise violating the privacy of information not belonging to or intended for you; intentionally misusing system resources or making it possible for others to do so; or loading software or data from untrustworthy sources, such as freeware, onto administrative systems.

6. You are encouraged to report any violation of these guidelines by another individual and any information relating to a flaw in or bypass of computing facility security to Information Technology, University Information Systems, or the Office of Internal Audit.

The unauthorized or improper use of Boston University's computer facilities, including the failure to comply with the above guidelines, constitutes a violation of University policy and will subject the violator to disciplinary and/or legal action by the University, and, in some cases, criminal prosecution. In addition, the University may require restitution for any use of service which is in violation of these guidelines. Any questions about this policy or of the applicability of this policy to a particular situation should be referred to Information Technology, University Information Systems, or the Office of Internal Audit.

*Boston University Information Security Policies and Guidelines* can be accessed on the World Wide Web at [www.bu.edu/security](http://www.bu.edu/security)