

Graduate Student Honor Code Graduate Student Appeals Policy

**Northern Kentucky University
Highland Heights, KY**

**Submitted by:
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on behalf of the
Graduate Council**

**Submitted for approval by the:
NKU Board of Regents
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I. PREAMBLE

This document establishes a *Graduate Student Honor Code* (referred to as the Honor Code). The purpose of the Honor Code is to establish standards of academic integrity for graduate students at the university and provide procedures that offer assurances of fundamental fairness to any student accused of violating the Honor Code.

This document also provides a process for graduate students to appeal certain decisions to the Graduate Council. Covered under this section of the document are university regulations applicable to graduate students, but not regulations relating to admission decisions, grade appeals, or violations of the Graduate Honor Code.

The procedures set forth in this document are specific to graduate students at the university. As Northern Kentucky University students, graduate students are also subject to the provisions of the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities* as adopted by the Board of Regents. Where provisions or procedures set forth in the two documents differ or conflict, this document will prevail in cases involving graduate students. Grade appeals that do not relate to consequences for violations of the Graduate Honor Code are covered by the *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities*, Section VII. Academic Grievance Process.

It is incumbent upon graduate students to be aware of university regulations. Ignorance of these regulations does not excuse students from adherence to them.

II. DEFINITIONS

Dean of Graduate Studies - chief academic officer in charge of graduate programs. The Dean of Graduate Studies is the university official designated by the university to promote, create, interpret and enforce the *Graduate Student Honor Code* or to designate such enforcement to other individuals within the institution.

Expulsion – a permanent dismissal from the university. The expulsion will remain a permanent record within the graduate office and shall be reflected on the academic transcript.

Graduate Council -- the official university body which coordinates and oversees all policies, procedures, curricula, and regulations for all university graduate programs.

Graduate Honor Code Council - a standing committee appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies to conduct formal proceedings regarding violations of the Graduate Honor Code.

Graduate Student -- includes all persons enrolled at the university at the graduate level; includes non-degree graduate students and graduate certificate students but excludes Chase law students and post-baccalaureate students.

Policy - any published regulations of the university.

Program Director -- university official responsible for the administrative leadership of a graduate program.

Provost – senior academic affairs officer responsible for the administrative leadership of academic programs and academic support services at Northern Kentucky University.

Suspension – a temporary dismissal from the university for cause. If suspended for violations of the *Graduate Student Honor Code* a student may not enroll in courses or be an active member of the university during the suspension period. After the suspension is served a student may apply for reenrollment. The suspension will remain a permanent record within the graduate office.

University, Northern, or NKU – represents Northern Kentucky University

Working day – a day when the university is open for normal business, regardless of whether classes are in session.

III. GRADUATE STUDENT HONOR CODE: Academic Integrity

A. Preamble and Honor Code Pledge

This *Graduate Student Honor Code* (referred to as the Honor Code) is a commitment by graduate students of Northern Kentucky University, through their matriculation or continued enrollment at the university, to adhere to the highest degree of ethical integrity in academic conduct. It is a commitment individually and collectively that the graduate students of NKU will uphold professional standards of research, writing, assessment, and ethics in their areas of study.

The purpose of the Honor Code is to establish standards of academic integrity for graduate students at NKU and to provide a procedure that offers basic assurances of fundamental fairness to any person accused of violations of these rules. Each NKU graduate student is bound by the provisions of the Honor Code and is presumed to be familiar with all of its provisions. Students must conduct themselves in a manner that is consistent with the highest degree of ethical integrity in all matters, whether covered in the Honor Code or not. The success of this commitment begins in the diligence with which students uphold the letter and the spirit of the Honor Code.

By enrollment at Northern Kentucky University, all graduate students accept and acknowledge the following pledge:

"I do hereby acknowledge the existence of the Northern Kentucky University Graduate Student Honor Code. I understand that the Graduate Student Honor Code supports an environment that values integrity, honesty, and ethical conduct for all Northern Kentucky University students. I understand that by my enrollment at Northern Kentucky University, I confirm my agreement and understanding of the policies and procedures outlined in the Graduate Student Honor Code."

B. Academic Dishonesty

Behaviors that constitute academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Engaging in any conduct involving academic deceit, dishonesty, or misrepresentation, including conduct during the application process for admission to NKU.
2. Committing plagiarism on any examination, assignment or graduation requirement. Plagiarism is defined as taking the literary property or ideas of another, passing it off as one's own without appropriate attribution and reaping from its use any benefit from an academic institution. Accordingly, a graduate student must:
 - a) Acknowledge direct use of someone else's words.
 - b) Acknowledge any words he/she paraphrases from any source.
 - c) Acknowledge his/her direct use of someone else's ideas.
 - d) Acknowledge his/her source when the student's own analysis or conclusion builds on that source.
 - e) Follow any plagiarism policy adopted by an instructor for a course or program, of which the students in that course or program have been given adequate notice.¹
3. Writing, taking, researching, developing, preparing, or creating an examination, assignment, or graduation requirement for another student, in whole or in part.

¹ This Plagiarism Policy is adapted from the Chase College of Law Plagiarism Policy, as found in *The College of Law Honor Code*.

4. Submitting an examination, assignment, or graduation requirement written, taken, researched, developed, prepared, or created by another person, in whole or in part.
5. Submitting an examination, assignment, or graduation requirement for credit in two or more courses or activities, without written approval from the instructors in each of the courses or activities.
6. Preventing or interfering with the use of any library, laboratory, studio, field, or other course-related resource by other students or other users for the purpose of causing them a disadvantage.
7. Damaging or impairing any library, laboratory, studio, field, or other course-related resources or another student's completed assignments (for example, but not limited to, science experiments and technology-related assignments).
8. Taking or using the notes, papers, or other materials of another student or of a professor without express permission
9. Misrepresenting class or other activity attendance.
10. Misrepresenting information to postpone examination, assignment, graduation requirement, or other deadlines.
11. Misrepresenting or distorting academic or biographical data in connection with an application for criteria-based placements, course or program honors, or awards.
12. Engaging in any other fraudulent, deceptive, knowingly false or misleading act, or other dishonest action or inaction involving academic endeavors for the purpose of obtaining an advantage therein.

These prohibitions shall not preclude an instructor or department from assigning team projects, cooperative efforts, and other similar activities in a course or for a graduation requirement, nor shall they preclude graduate students from preparing for classes or examinations together or in study groups.

C. Research Misconduct

The university is fully committed to the ethical conduct of research. Misconduct in research is a serious deviation from the university's Honor Code and the professional practices within the disciplines. Research misconduct is defined as fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing or performing research, or reporting research results. Research includes not only intellectual activity designed to expand knowledge, but also activities in the creative and performing arts designed to interpret and create.

Behaviors that constitute research misconduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Falsifying or fabricating information or data.
2. Reporting results in a dishonest manner, whether by altering, revising, or selectively reporting data.
3. Representing another person's ideas, writing or data as one's own.
4. Releasing the ideas or data of others when such data have been shared in confidence.
5. Misrepresenting the nature of creative material or its originality.
6. Adding or deleting the names of authors on publications without permission.
7. Listing oneself or another individual as an author when his/her contribution does not warrant authorship.

D. Ethical Violations

Students are expected to adhere to the ethical and professional standards associated with their particular programs of study. These standards are generally communicated to students by instructors and are available through publications produced by the relevant professional organization(s). Unethical or unprofessional behavior will be treated in the same manner as academic dishonesty and research misconduct.

E. Consequences for Academic Dishonesty, Research Misconduct or Ethical Violations

1. A graduate student who violates the foregoing provisions may be subject to one or any combination of the following consequences:
 - a. An oral admonition or reprimand.
 - b. A written admonition or reprimand.

- c. Redoing the assignment or retaking all or part of the course or program in which the conduct occurred.
 - d. A grade reduction or a grade of "F" in the course, examination, or assignment.
 - e. Expulsion from the course.
 - f. Suspension from the university for the remainder of the current semester or session.
 - g. Suspension from the university for the semester or session following the current semester or session.
 - h. Suspension from the university for one or more years.
 - i. Expulsion from the university (with the word "expulsion" included on the student's transcript in order to prevent any reapplication).
2. Information about prior or multiple Honor Code violations by a graduate student is relevant and receivable in any hearing with regard to the consequences to be imposed for a violation of the Honor Code and is grounds for such additional or increased consequences as the circumstances may warrant.
 3. Withdrawal from a course or from the university shall have no effect on the application of the Honor Code.

F. Procedures for Handling Alleged Violations of the Honor Code

1. Informal Proceedings

A course instructor who has sufficient information to believe that a graduate student has violated the Honor Code shall meet with the student within ten (10) working days from the date of discovery of the alleged violation. (For students enrolled in online programs who do not live in the immediate area, a telephone conference may take the place of an in-person meeting. For violations not related to a specific course (e.g., ethical violations), upon discovery of the alleged violation, the program director or his/her designee shall meet with the student.) If grades must be turned in during the meantime, the instructor shall give the student a grade of incomplete. At such a meeting, neither the instructor nor the student may be represented or accompanied by an attorney or any other advisor. At the meeting, the instructor will inform the student of the details of the alleged violation and present evidence of the violation. The student will be afforded the opportunity to respond to the allegations and may present evidence, provide additional relevant information, explain extenuating or mitigating circumstances, or acknowledge the violation.

If, after holding a meeting with the student, the instructor believes there is a preponderance of evidence that the student violated the Honor Code, the instructor may orally admonish or reprimand the student or may impose one or more of the following:

- 1) Written admonition or reprimand.
- 2) Redoing the assignment or retaking all or part of the course in which the conduct occurred.
- 3) A grade reduction or a grade of "F" in the course, examination, or assignment.

If the student declines to discuss the matter or attend a meeting with the instructor, or is unavailable for more than ten (10) working days, the instructor shall make a determination as to whether a violation of the Honor Code has occurred and what the appropriate consequences will be. The student will be notified accordingly.

In addition to the above sanctions, in cases where the instructor believes that the violation is sufficiently serious to warrant more severe consequences, the instructor shall refer the matter to the Dean of Graduate Studies for formal proceedings to consider the imposition of additional sanctions in accordance with subsequent provisions of this Code.

When the instructor decides to impose any consequence, the instructor will notify the student of this decision by sending a letter to the student both by regular mail and email, or by personal delivery to the student. A letter mailed will be sent to the student's address on file with the Registrar's Office. If the student disagrees with the instructor's decision, the student may appeal in writing to the Dean of Graduate Studies within ten (10) working days of receipt of the decision of the instructor. A mailed letter of decision

will be deemed received two (2) days following the date the letter is postmarked. A copy of the letter shall be made a part of the file on the violation maintained in the graduate office

If an appeal is not requested in the time allotted, the instructor's action shall be final and binding, subject to formal proceedings for additional sanctions in those cases where the instructor has referred the matter to the Dean of Graduate Studies.

2. Appeal of an Informal Proceeding

A student sanctioned for violation of the Honor Code may appeal the instructor's decision that a violation of the Honor Code has occurred and/or the sanction. The appeal must be received by the Dean of Graduate Studies within ten (10) working days of receipt of the instructor's decision. An appeal not made within the time limit will not be heard. The written statement of appeal must include: the name of the student appealing; the grounds or basis of the appeal; the name of the instructor who made the decision being appealed; the course name and number or program name if the alleged violation was not associated with a particular course; and the remedy which the student is seeking.

An appeal is not simply a rehearing of the original case. The purpose of the appeal is to decide if the decision of the instructor was so erroneous that it should be changed. An appeal must state one or more of the following grounds to be considered:

- a. The student was not afforded a fair hearing by the instructor, including notice of the alleged violation and an opportunity to present evidence;
- b. The sanction was not appropriate to the violation, and/or the sanctions were arbitrary or capricious;
- c. The decision was not supported by substantial evidence; and/or
- d. Significant newly discovered evidence is shown on appeal that was not available at the time of the hearing, could not have been obtained for presentation during the hearing by the student's exercise of reasonable diligence, and materially affects the finding of a violation or the imposition of consequences.

Upon receipt of a timely appeal, the Dean of Graduate Studies will refer the appeal to the formal proceedings stage as set forth in the provisions below.

3. Formal Proceedings

The proceedings and hearing process set forth in this section are applicable in the following cases:

- a. A student has filed a timely appeal of an instructor's decision that a violation of the Honor Code has occurred and/or the imposition of the sanctions for that violation.
- b. An instructor has referred the matter to the Dean of Graduate Studies for formal proceedings seeking additional sanctions because of the seriousness of the violation.

For these proceedings, the matter will be heard by the Graduate Honor Code Council (referred to as the Honor Code Council). The Honor Code Council will be a standing committee appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Honor Code Council shall be comprised of five to seven graduate faculty members, who will be appointed at the beginning of each academic year. The faculty will represent all colleges with programs covered by this document. In addition, two graduate students will be appointed to serve on the Honor Code Council at the time a hearing is requested. A member of the Honor Code Council will be excused from hearing a matter when the student or instructor involved is in that member's academic department or program, or when the Dean of Graduate Studies determines that a conflict of interest exists for other reasons. When members of the Honor Code Council are excused or absent, the members present shall hear and decide on the matter, providing that at least three faculty participate in the full hearing process.

The Chair of the Honor Code Council, as designated by the Dean of Graduate Studies, will hold a preliminary meeting with the graduate student and the instructor. This preliminary meeting will explain the hearing process and the rights of the accused student. The Chair will convene a hearing within a reasonable time period (not to exceed 20 working days) after the matter is forwarded from the Dean of Graduate Studies, unless extenuating circumstances prevent otherwise or unless the instructor and student both agree to a delay. The Chair of the Honor Code Council shall determine all procedural matters relating to the hearing process.

If the matter involves an appeal by the student of the instructor's decision, the Honor Code Council shall first determine whether the student has stated a ground for appeal as listed in section F.2. An appeal that does not state such a ground for appeal will be denied, and the decision and consequences being appealed will stand.

The student and instructor will be allowed an opportunity to address the Honor Code Council and provide testimony at an appeal hearing or at a hearing to consider the imposition of additional sanctions for serious violations. Both the student and instructor may bring supporting witnesses to the hearing. The student may have an advisor of the student's choice present at the hearing. If the student's advisor is an attorney, the student must notify the Chair of the Honor Code Council at least five (5) days in advance of the hearing. The advisor's role is limited to providing advice to the student. The advisor is not permitted to ask or answer questions or make oral arguments. Any case presented must be made by the student.

In the case of an appeal, the Honor Code Council will deliberate and vote on whether the instructor's decision was so erroneous that the remedy sought by the appeal should be granted or that the decision or consequences should otherwise be modified. In cases where the matter has been referred to the Honor Code Council because of the seriousness of the violation, the Honor Code Council will deliberate and vote on whether the violation has occurred and on the sanctions to be imposed, up to and including suspension or expulsion. The Dean of Graduate Studies shall provide the Honor Code Council with information about other Honor Code violations by the student in connection with their deliberations on any sanctions to be imposed. A majority vote shall be required to sustain a violation and to impose sanctions.

The Honor Code Council will make a written report of its decision to the Dean of Graduate Studies within ten (10) working days of the hearing, unless there is good cause for delay, in which case such delay shall be communicated and justified to, and approved by, the graduate dean. The Dean of Graduate Studies will provide written notification of the decision to the student and the instructor, with a copy to the graduate program director and the department chair, within five (5) working days. The Honor Code Council's decision will be final and binding, except in the cases of suspension or expulsion. There shall be no further appeal in any case not involving suspension or expulsion.

In a case where the Honor Code Council determines that a violation of the Honor Code has not occurred, all parties shall be bound by that determination.

4. Appeals

In cases of suspension or expulsion, the student may file an appeal to the Provost, limited to the question of suspension or expulsion. The appeal to the Provost must be in writing and must be based on grounds listed in Section F.2. The appeal must be submitted within ten (10) working days of the student's receipt of the decision of the Honor Code Council. Upon receiving the appeal, the Provost will obtain the entire file from the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The Provost will review the appeal within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the file, and determine whether to uphold the recommended sanction or a lesser sanction. The Provost will notify the Dean of Graduate Studies of his/her decision in writing, and will return the file to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Dean of Graduate Studies will communicate the Provost's decision to the student. The communication will be in writing with a copy to the graduate program director and the department chair. The Provost's decision shall be final and binding unless the student submits a timely appeal to the President.

If the student is dissatisfied with the Provost's decision in a case of suspension or expulsion, the student may file an appeal to the President limited to the question of suspension or expulsion. The appeal to the President must

be in writing and must be based on grounds listed in Section F.2. The appeal must be submitted within ten (10) working days of the student's receipt of the decision of the Provost. Upon receiving the appeal, the President will obtain the entire file from the Dean of Graduate Studies.

The President will review the appeal within fifteen (15) working days of receipt of the file, and determine whether to uphold the recommended sanction or a lesser sanction. The President will provide written notification to the Dean of Graduate Studies of his/her decision, and will return the file to the Dean of Graduate Studies. The Dean of Graduate Studies will communicate the President's decision to the student. The communication will be in writing with a copy to the graduate program director and the department chair. The President's decision shall be final and binding unless the student submits a timely appeal to the Board of Regents.

If the student is dissatisfied with the President's decision in a case of suspension or expulsion, the student may appeal to the Board of Regents. The appeal to the Board of Regents must be in writing and must be based on grounds listed in Section F.2. The appeal must be submitted within ten (10) working days of the student's receipt of the President's determination. The Board of Regents will review the file and determine whether to uphold the recommended sanction or a lesser sanction. The Board of Regents will provide written notification to the President or the Provost and to the Dean of Graduate Studies of their decision. The Dean of Graduate Studies will communicate the decision to the student. The communication will be in writing with a copy to the graduate program director and the department chair. The Board of Regents' determination will be final and binding.

In a case where the Provost, the President, or the Board of Regents finally determines that a violation of the Honor Code has not occurred, all parties shall be bound by that determination.

5. Proceedings on Appeals in Cases of Suspension or Expulsion

The Provost, the President or the Board of Regents reviewing an appeal in the case of suspension or expulsion will first determine whether the student has stated a ground for appeal listed in section F.2. An appeal that does not state such a ground for appeal will be denied, and the decision and consequences being appealed from will stand.

The Provost, President or the Board of Regents may approve, reject, or modify the decision or the consequences recommended or imposed. The Provost or President should make a decision on the appeal within fifteen (15) working days after all the documentation was received, or he/she may postpone a decision for good cause. The Board of Regents should make a decision on the appeal at the next meeting on which the appeal may be placed on its agenda in a timely manner, or it may postpone a decision for good cause.

G. Confidentiality and Record Keeping

All proceedings under the Honor Code shall be confidential, and information about a student shall be provided only to a person or persons who have responsibilities for the proceedings in a case involving that student.

The Dean of Graduate Studies shall maintain records on proceedings and decisions under the Honor Code sufficient to preserve the information needed for determinations of multiple or subsequent violations and responses by or on behalf of the university in connection with requests from authorized agents. In the case of expulsion from the university, the Dean of Graduate Studies shall preserve the information needed to support the expulsion notation on the student transcript.

IV. STUDENT APPEALS TO GRADUATE COUNCIL

The Graduate Council is authorized to hear appeals from graduate students on university graduate regulations, excluding admission decisions, grade appeals, and violations of the Honor Code. When a graduate student

wishes to appeal the application of a university rule or regulation relating to graduate students (e.g., time limits for graduation, limits on transfer credits, limits on hours taken as a non-degree student that may apply to a graduate degree) the graduate student should adhere to the following procedure:

A. Formal Written Request

The graduate student will submit a formal written request/appeal to his/her program director identifying the rule or regulation at issue and stating the basis for the request that the rule or regulation be waived or otherwise modified in the student's particular case. The written request should include any relevant supporting documentation.

B. Program Director Response

The graduate student's program director will prepare, in a timely manner, a written response to the student's request/appeal, which will provide a recommendation that the student's request be approved, modified or denied. The program director's response will provide a rationale for his/her recommendation and will include any relevant supporting documentation.

C. Graduate Council Agenda

The program director will forward the graduate student's request/appeal, the program director's recommendation, and all supporting documentation ("the appeal file") to the graduate office for action by the Graduate Council. For the appeal to be heard at a specific Graduate Council meeting, the appeal file must be received by the graduate office at least 14 days prior to the Graduate Council meeting and prior to the time when the agenda for that meeting is scheduled to be set by the Graduate Council's Executive Committee.

D. Graduate Council Executive Committee

The Graduate Council Executive Committee will first consider the appeal to determine whether or not the appeal file is complete. If the Executive Committee determines that the file is complete, the appeal will be placed on the next regular Graduate Council meeting agenda, or alternatively, on the agenda of a future meeting that is agreeable to both the student and the program director. If the appeal file is not complete, the appeal will be referred back to the program director with an indication of what documents are needed to complete the file. After taking the necessary action to complete the file, the program director will resubmit the appeal to the graduate office for referral back to the Executive Committee.

E. Graduate Council Action

After the Executive Committee has reviewed the appeal and placed it on a Graduate Council meeting agenda, a complete copy of the appeal file will be provided to each Graduate Council member prior to the meeting where the appeal will be considered. The graduate office will notify the student of the date/time/place when the appeal will be considered by the Graduate Council. The student is entitled, but not required, to be present when the appeal is considered, to make a statement and/or answer questions about the basis for the appeal. The student may not be represented or accompanied by an attorney or any other advisor at the appeal. The Graduate Council may discuss the merits of the appeal while the student is present, but the student may not be present during final deliberations or during the time when the Graduate Council votes on the appeal. The Chair of the Graduate Council will notify the student and program director in writing of the decision of the Graduate Council. Program representatives will abstain in cases involving appeals from their respective programs.

F. Summer Appeals

During the summer or at other times when the Graduate Council is not meeting, the Graduate Council Executive Committee, as currently formed, is authorized to act on student appeals in accordance with the other provisions of this policy.