
Academic Integrity

Policy Number:	E-1.08
Category:	Educational
Effective Date:	May 1, 2021
Approval Process:	Section 24
Approval Date:	April 28, 2021
Date Last Reviewed:	April 28, 2021

POLICY

Intellectual or academic integrity is the foundation for the development and acquisition of knowledge. Therefore, it is essential for all members of the Northern Lights College community to abide by the principles of academic integrity and contribute to maintaining those principles. The College reserves the right to take actions that maintain the principles of academic integrity.

The concept of academic integrity involves relying on one's own work for academic success and progress, in accordance with college policies and procedures. All suspected contraventions of academic integrity will be investigated.

There are three general ways to demonstrate a lack of academic integrity: fraud, cheating, and plagiarism. Disciplinary action may vary depending on the situation.

The College has a responsibility to establish and maintain an Academic Integrity Standing Committee. The mandate of this committee is to provide adjudication, interpretation, maintenance of the appendices, and support in the application of this policy.

PURPOSE

This policy aims to fortify and maintain the academic integrity of Northern Lights College while respecting fairness to students.

SCOPE

This policy applies to any student, past or current, of Northern Lights College.

PROCEDURE

- I. Investigation
 - a. Given the diversity of infractions (fraud, cheating, plagiarism), there are three key components required during the investigation of a suspected infraction that occurs within a course:
 - The instructor or employee (e.g., invigilator) will work with the Chair to establish the validity of the suspicion. The Chair will consult the repository.

- Instructors are responsible for communicating with the student during the investigation (e.g., D2L, email, verbal conversation, notation on a submitted document), and maintaining a written record of the communication.
 - Note: the instructor's communication is not required to disclose any details regarding the investigation, if there is a rationale for this omission.
 - Note: if the student is exonerated during the investigation, the instructor will notify the student.
- Students are responsible to cooperate in a timely fashion with the investigation and provide any evidence which could exonerate them. After two business days with no student response, the process will continue with the assumption that there is no exonerating evidence.
- b. Infractions that occur outside of a course, such as when an individual contributes to infractions made by active students, will be investigated by the Chair.
- c. If the Chair and instructor cannot decide whether an infraction occurred, the Chair will consult the Academic Integrity Standing Committee for advice.

II. Adjudication

Once an infraction has been established, the Chair (and instructor if applicable) will use Appendix A to determine severity.

- a. If the severity of the infraction is deemed a Lesser Infraction, the Chair, in consultation with the instructor, will determine and apply the penalty using Appendix B.
- b. If the severity of the infraction is deemed a Serious Infraction, the penalty will be determined by the Academic Integrity Standing Committee using Appendix B.
 - The Committee may request the Chair (and instructor if applicable) do further investigation.
 - The Committee may choose to assign no penalty. Note that a record of the incident will be recorded in the Repository.
 - If the penalty is an in-course penalty, the Standing Committee will direct the Chair and Instructor to execute the penalty.
 - If the penalty is a failing grade due to discipline (FD) and/or suspension, the Standing Committee will recommend the penalty to the Dean.
 - If the penalty is expulsion, the Standing Committee will recommend the penalty to the Vice-President Academic.
- c. If the Chair and instructor cannot establish the severity of the infraction, the Chair will direct the matter to the Academic Integrity Standing Committee for adjudication.

If, during the investigation, it is discovered that the integrity of an evaluation tool has been compromised:

- a. The Chair can recommend to the Dean that the results of the evaluation tool be considered null and void.
- b. The Dean may then require the crafting of a new evaluation tool; and
- c. The Dean may then require all students to complete the new evaluation tool;
- d. Time is of the essence; however, submission of final grades may be delayed.

III. Notification

- a. The student will be notified in writing:
 - i. by the Chair if the penalty is in-course.
 - ii. by the Dean if the penalty is a failing grade due to discipline (FD) and/or program withdrawal and/or directions to cease and desist.
 - iii. by the President or their designate if the penalty is suspension or expulsion.
- b. A copy of this notification will be kept in a repository of Academic Integrity infractions.
- c. The Registrar's Office will be notified of any penalties that include failing grade due to discipline (FD), suspension or expulsion, and these notations will form part of the student's formal record (transcript).
- d. The student will be informed of all appeal policies that apply to the resulting decision.

APPEAL

Students have the right to appeal decisions implemented through this policy.

Appeals regarding in-course decisions must follow the Academic Appeal (grade) policy.

Appeals regarding course failures due to discipline and program withdrawal must follow the Student Appeal policy and must be submitted within five working days of notification.

The President's disciplinary decisions are appealed to the College Board.

DEFINITIONS

Academic Integrity – the moral code or ethical policy of academia. This includes values such as honesty in all academic pursuits: avoidance of cheating or plagiarism; maintenance of academic standards; honesty and rigor in research and academic publishing.

Cheating – obtaining or attempting to obtain, or aiding another to obtain credit for work, or any improvement in evaluation of performance, by any dishonest or deceptive means including infraction of stated evaluation protocols.

Deduction – a deduction is derived by subtracting the penalty from an existing grade, in order that the impact of the penalty is consistent to all students, regardless of assessed performance. For example, a 40% penalty on an assessment tool that was awarded 62% would result in a grade of 22%.

Expulsion – a requirement to no longer attend programs delivered by the College for a period greater than one calendar year. Expelled students may seek written approval from the President or their designate to begin attending College programs again, only after the completion date of their expulsion.

Evaluation tool – any assessment method that is graded. Examples may include observations, self-assessments, assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams, projects, oral and written reports, reviews of performance, and portfolios.

Fraud – an act of deception committed for the purpose of gaining an unauthorized benefit or depriving the College of a benefit.

In-course – penalties and decisions that do not automatically result in course failure.

Lesser infractions – typically initial infractions and lack intent. See Appendix A for examples.

Plagiarism – involves using someone else’s ideas, words, and works and not giving them credit for it.

Reduction – a reduction is derived by multiplying the penalty against the existing grade and subtracting the penalty from the existing grade. For example, a 40% penalty on an assessment tool that was awarded 62% would result in a grade of 37.2%. This method results in inequitable penalty assessment so is not used in the context of this policy.

Repository – an informal database accessible to the Chairs (and others) that houses all adjudications issued to students. Records are no longer relevant after a period of ten years of non-attendance at the College.

Serious infractions – typified by a student who behaves with an intent to receive a benefit they, or others, have not earned. See Appendix A for examples.

Suspension – a temporary requirement to cease attending any program delivered by the College. Suspensions can be effective immediately and be for a maximum of one year. Courses unrelated to the punitive event and in progress will be recorded as required to withdraw (RW).

STAKEHOLDERS

Northern Lights College Board of Governors
Northern Lights College Executive
Northern Lights College Faculty and Staff
Northern Lights College Students

RELATED POLICIES AND REFERENCES

A-5.04 Student Non-Academic Code of Conduct
E-1.01 Academic Appeal
E-1.07 Evaluating Student
E-1.14 Withdrawal
E-2.10 Student Appeals
E-4.05 Student Rights and Responsibilities
A-5.16 Copyright

History

Created/Revised/Reviewed	Date	Author	Approved By
Revised	May 2012		
Revised	May 2020	Policy Subcommittee	Education Council
Revised	April 2021	Policy Subcommittee	Education Council

Next Scheduled Review Date

April 2026