



The Academic Integrity Appeals Process Policy Guidelines

Revised

October 15, 2019

Office of the Provost

Approved by the Faculty Senate

Simmons University Appeals Process for Academic Integrity Violations

When students charged with alleged academic integrity violations receive a final outcome & sanctions letter for their case, they will also be notified of their option to file an appeal should they choose not to accept the sanctions. The steps for an appeal are as follows.

Track I: For sanctions that do not include separation from the University

A. **First Level Appeal** (for determinations made by faculty and program directors; these sanctions do not include suspension or dismissal from the university),

- The student may appeal faculty sanctions to the School/Program Review Board/Committee (“Local Committee”) by sending a formal Letter of Appeal to the Local Committee within five (5) business days of receiving the final sanctions letter. If the student fails to submit the letter within the specified time, the findings and sanctions will stand—not subject to an appeal.
- The student should include in the appeal letter a summary of the academic integrity incident, the nature of the allegations, the supporting evidence and the reasons they are challenging the findings and/or sanctions.
- The Local Committee will review all the extant evidence and make a determination only on the evidence and written record used to determine the original findings and sanctions.
- The Local Committee may:
 - Uphold the findings and the sanctions
 - Uphold the findings but modify the sanctions
 - Reject the findings and dismiss the case altogether

If the findings and sanctions are upheld or modified, they are effective immediately upon the decision of the Local Committee, and the committee chair will send a notification to the student, instructor, College Dean, and Director of Academic Integrity (DAI).

If the findings are dismissed, the student’s record will show no evidence of the allegation of academic integrity violations for that particular case.

B. **Second Level Appeal** (for determinations made by the Local Committee, these sanctions do not include suspension or dismissal from the university):

- A student who *does not accept responsibility* for the academic integrity violation may appeal the Local Committee’s decision to the College Dean by writing a formal Letter of Appeal to the Dean within five (5) business days of receiving the Local Committee’s response to the initial appeal letter. If the student fails to submit the letter within the specified time, the findings and sanctions will stand—not subject to an appeal.

The Appeal will be accepted for review only after satisfying one of the three following conditions:

- Presentation of relevant new evidence that was previously unavailable
- Submission of evidence that the findings were not based on the facts presented
- Presentation of a procedural error that compromised the fairness of the process

The student should address in the appeal letter the nature of the allegations, the supporting evidence, the findings, the sanctions, and/or any presumed error in due process.

- A student, who *has accepted responsibility* for the academic integrity violation, can appeal only the actual sanctions (*A sanction is reconsidered only if there is clear evidence of bias or if the sanction is unusually disproportional to the infraction*).
- The Dean will review all of the extant evidence and make a determination concerning the reasonableness of the findings and sanctions.
- The Dean may:
 - Uphold the findings and the sanctions
 - Uphold the findings but modify the sanctions
 - Reject the findings and dismiss the case altogether

If the findings and sanctions are upheld or modified, they are effective immediately upon the decision of the Dean, and the Dean will send a notification to the student, instructor, and DAI.

If the findings are dismissed, the student's record will show no evidence of the allegation of academic integrity violations for that particular case.

C. Third Level Appeal (for determinations made by the College Dean, these sanctions do not include suspension or dismissal from the university):

- A student who has *not accepted responsibility* for the academic integrity violation may appeal the decision of the College Dean to the Academic Integrity Board (AIB) by writing a formal Letter of Appeal to the AIB within five (5) business days of receiving the Dean's response to the second appeal letter. If the student fails to submit the letter within the specified time, the findings and sanctions will stand—not subject to an appeal.

The Appeal will be accepted for review only after satisfying one of the three following conditions:

- Presentation of relevant new evidence that was previously unavailable

- Submission of evidence that the findings were not based on the facts presented
- Presentation of a procedural error that compromised the fairness of the process

The student should address in the appeal letter the nature of the allegations, the supporting evidence, the findings, the sanctions and/or any presumed error in due process.

- A student, who *has accepted responsibility* for the academic integrity violation, can appeal only the actual sanctions (*A sanction is reconsidered only if there is clear evidence of bias or if the sanction is unusually disproportional to the infraction*).

The AIB will review all of the extant evidence and make a determination concerning the reasonableness of the findings and sanctions.

- The AIB may:
 - Uphold the findings and the sanctions
 - Uphold the findings but modify the sanctions
 - Reject the findings and dismiss the case altogether

If the findings and sanctions are upheld or modified, they are effective immediately upon the decision of the AIB, and the DAI will send a notification to the student, instructor, and college Dean.

If the findings are dismissed, the student's record will not show no evidence of the allegation of academic integrity violations for that particular case.

The decision of the AIB is final.

Track II: For sanctions that may include separation from the university

A. First Level Appeal (for determinations made by the AIB; these sanctions may include suspension or dismissal from the university):

- A student who *does not accept* responsibility for the academic integrity violation may appeal the decision of the AIB to the College Dean by writing a formal Letter of Appeal to the Dean within five (5) business days of receiving the final sanctions letter. If the student fails to submit the letter within the specified time, the findings and sanctions will stand--not subject to an appeal.
- The student should include in the letter a summary of the academic integrity incident, the nature of the allegations, the supporting evidence, and the reasons they are challenging the findings and/or sanctions.

- A student who *has accepted responsibility* for the academic integrity violation can appeal only the sanctions (*A sanction is reconsidered only if there is clear evidence of bias or if the sanction is unusually disproportional to the infraction*).
- The College Dean will review all the extant evidence and make a determination only on the evidence and written record that was used to determine the original findings and sanctions.
- The College Dean may:
 - Uphold the findings and the sanctions
 - Uphold the findings but modify the sanctions
 - Reject the findings and dismiss the case altogether

If the findings and sanctions are upheld or modified, they are effective immediately upon the decision of the Dean, and the Dean will send a notification to the student, instructor, and DAI.

If the findings are dismissed, the student's record will show no evidence of the allegation of academic integrity violations for that particular case.

B. Second Level Appeal (for determinations made by the College Dean; these sanctions may include suspension or dismissal from the university).

- A student who *does not accept* responsibility for the academic integrity violation may appeal the decision of the College Dean to the University Provost by writing a formal Letter of Appeal to the University Provost within five (5) business days of receiving the Dean's response to the initial appeal letter. If the student fails to submit the letter within the specified time, the findings and sanctions will stand--not subject to an appeal.

The Appeal will be accepted for review only after satisfying one of the three following conditions:

- Presentation of relevant new evidence that was previously unavailable
- Submission of evidence that the findings were not based on the facts presented
- Presentation of a procedural error that compromised the fairness of the process

The student should address in the letter the nature of the allegations, the supporting evidence, the findings, the sanctions, and/or any presumed error in due process.

- A student who *has accepted responsibility* for the academic integrity violation can appeal only the sanctions (*A sanction is reconsidered only if there is clear*

evidence of bias or if the sanction is unusually disproportional to the infraction).

- The Provost will review all of the extant evidence and make a determination concerning the reasonableness of the findings and sanctions.
- The Provost may:
 - Uphold the findings and the sanctions
 - Uphold the findings but modify the sanctions
 - Reject the findings and dismiss the case altogether

If the findings and sanctions are upheld or modified, they are effective immediately upon the decision of the Provost, and the Provost will send a notification to the student, instructor, dean, and DAI.

If the findings are dismissed, the student's record will show no evidence of the allegation of academic integrity violations for that particular case.

The decision of the Provost is final.