



## University of Guelph Academic Misconduct Process Undergraduate Students

### Introduction/Overview

The following outlines the steps that an instructor should use if they suspect that one or more students have committed course-based academic misconduct. These steps do not refer to any of the preventative or educational measures that we encourage instructors to use to teach academic integrity and dissuade misconduct. For example, assessment tools (e.g., course outline, assessment guidelines, and rubrics) can often address incomplete attribution and incorrect citation of sources. Other preventative measures can be found on the Office of Teaching and Learning website (<https://otl.uoguelph.ca/teaching-learning-resources/assessment-student-learning/encouraging-academic-integrity-assessment>). The steps below are to be used when an instructor suspects academic misconduct has occurred.

This four-step process is a condensed version of the more detailed requirements outlined in the University of Guelph's [Academic Misconduct Policy](#). Additional information is also provided in the attached Frequently Asked Questions document.

### 1. Suspect Academic Misconduct

If a course instructor suspects an offense has occurred, they will gather information necessary to proceed with a formal investigation. If the offense is suspected by a teaching assistant (TA), they should bring it to the instructor's attention immediately and take no further action.

***Under no circumstances shall a TA or instructor make any assertions of academic misconduct.<sup>1</sup>***

After reviewing the relevant information<sup>2</sup>, instructors consult with their Chair/Director to determine if an allegation of academic misconduct is warranted. This determination should normally occur within 10 working days of the assessment due date, or by the 10th day of the following semester for end of term assessments.

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<sup>1</sup> Instructors may tell students that they had concerns about the integrity of their assessment and have passed their concerns to the Chair/Director. Associate Deans (Academic) (ADAs) will formally inform students that a suspicion of academic misconduct is being investigated at a later stage in the process as necessary.

<sup>2</sup> Relevant information may differ depending on the type of course-based misconduct suspected. Some examples of evidence include, but are not limited to, names of students, where they were sitting, copies of answers with similarities highlighted, Turnitin report with original author's submission and cross-referenced sources included whenever possible, Measure of Software Similarity (MOSS) report, lecture notes, student's final exams, etc.

If the Chair/Director believes there is sufficient evidence to support a charge of academic misconduct, the instructor completes the *Academic Misconduct Reporting Form* and adds the relevant information to it.

The assessment should be graded as though misconduct did not occur. Penalties may include a reduction of grades, therefore a grade on the assessment is necessary prior to academic misconduct considerations. Only the Associate Dean Academic's (ADA) office determines guilt and the penalty.

***Normally, materials related to suspected misconduct are not returned to the student. This includes feedback and/or grades.<sup>3</sup> However, the instructor should still assign a grade as if no academic misconduct was present. In the case of final grade submissions, a grade of MNR should be entered until such time the grade is resolved after the investigation.***

## **2. Review & Submit Evidence**

If the Chair/Director<sup>4</sup> believes there is enough evidence to allege academic misconduct, they will forward the *Academic Misconduct Reporting Form* which the instructor has completed, and all evidence gathered to the Associate Dean Academic (ADA) of the College in which the course<sup>5</sup> is offered within 10 working days of receipt of the allegation from the instructor.

If the ADA believes the allegation is warranted, they will notify the student by email to indicate that they are under investigation and to invite them to a meeting. The ADA also informs the instructor and Chair/Director of the investigation at this time.

## **3. Student Meeting & Additional Investigation**

The ADA will invite the student(s) to meet with them to discuss the allegation(s), normally within 10 working days of the receipt of the case from the Chair/Director. During the meeting the student will be shown all the evidence collected. Based on the student's response to the evidence, the ADA may further their investigation. The student will be made aware of any new evidence and will be given a chance to respond before a decision is made by the ADA.

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<sup>3</sup> Instructors may exercise discretion and return assessments related to suspected misconduct where appropriate provided that (1) the University maintains custody of the original version of the assessment, (2) no assertions of academic misconduct are made by the instructor within the returned assessment (3) the student is informed that the instructor had concerns about the integrity of their assessment and have passed their concerns to the Chair/Director.

<sup>4</sup> For UNIV\*1200 courses, the director of the First Year Seminar (FYS) program fills the role of the department chair and the Associate Vice-President Academic (AVPA) fills the role of the ADA, in keeping with a standing delegation. The AVPA may also choose to involve a relevant ADA.

<sup>5</sup> For other interdisciplinary courses such as UNIV\* or HUMN\* the jurisdiction is normally determined by the College in which the student is registered. Deans have discretion to delegate, and the Dean of the College in which the student is registered can delegate a case to the ADA of the College of the faculty member offering the course.

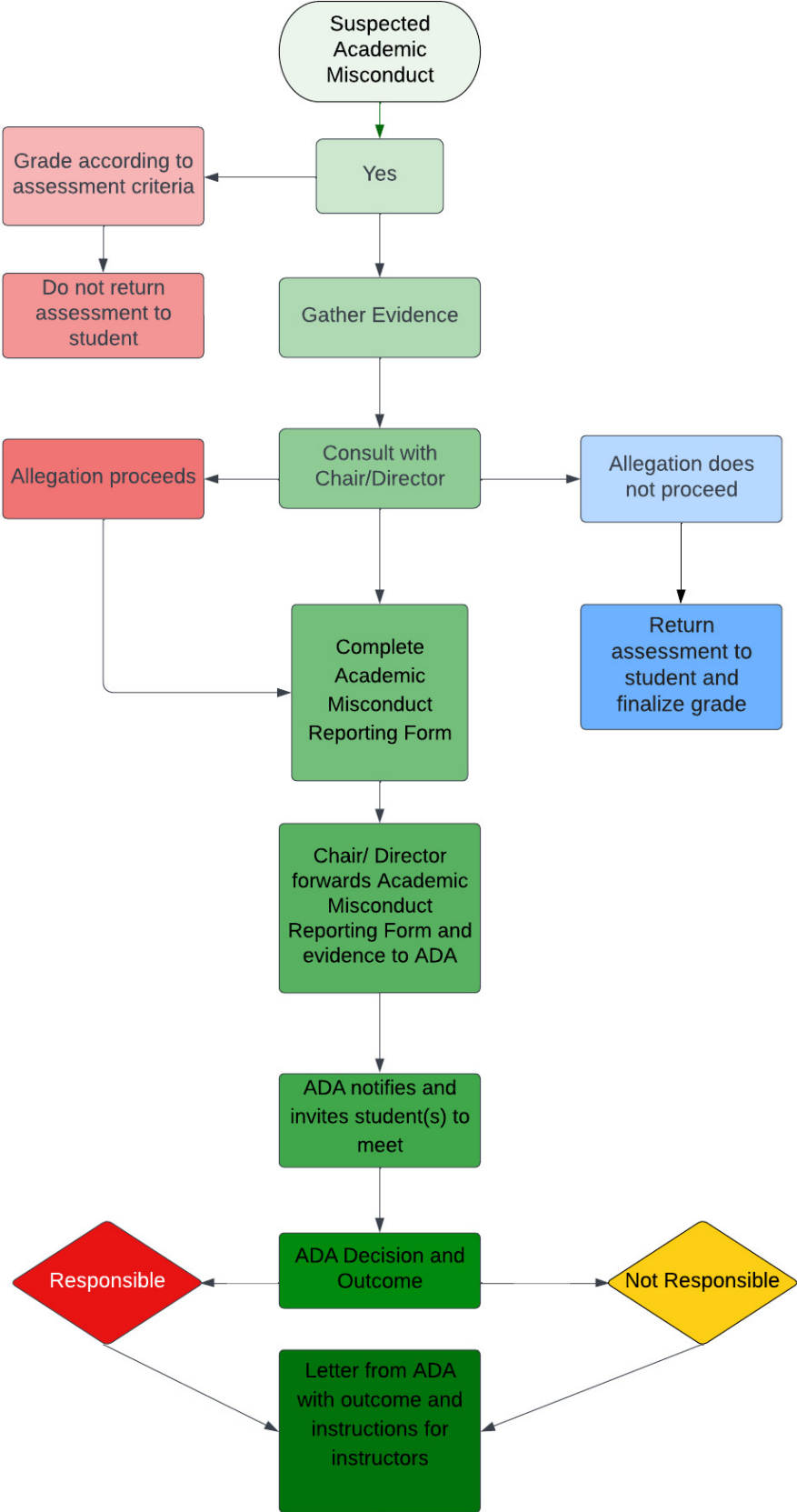
If there is no response from the student within 10 working days of this request, or if the student does not wish to meet, the ADA will make a decision using the information provided in the *Academic Misconduct Reporting Form*.

#### **4. Decision and Outcome**

Typically, within 10 working days of meeting with the student, or from the final communication with them, the ADA will inform the student, instructor, Chair/Director, and Registrar (via their UoG email) of the decision and penalty (if applicable) regarding the case. If the student is registered in a college other than the college in which the course is offered, the ADA of the student's College of registration should also be informed.

If the penalty includes a grade change, the instructor will be asked to change the grade or submit a grade change form if final grades have been submitted.

### Academic Misconduct Process Flowchart for Instructors



## **Frequently Asked Questions about Academic Misconduct**

### **I'm not sure if this is academic misconduct or not. What should I do?**

- Gather evidence. What makes you suspect that it is academic misconduct? What are you doubting? Putting this together to take to the Director/Chair will help you (and them) determine whether an allegation is warranted. For example, the student may have a high Turnitin similarity score which alerted you to a potential problem. Once you 'dig in' to the Turnitin report, you can see where there is similarity with other works. If it is a case of incomplete paraphrasing (i.e., the student only changed a few words from the original source but cited it), this is not academic misconduct and can be handled by the grading criteria (such as a grading rubric) and taken as a teaching opportunity to direct students to resources to assist them with [appropriate paraphrasing and associated citation practices](#). If, for example, you notice that the student's work has similarity to another student's assignment, code, discussion post or that ideas, resources, or arguments from someone else has been used without any attribution, that warrants an academic misconduct report to be filed.

### **What can we say if a student asks why they their assessment and/or grade was not returned to them?**

- Instructors may tell students that they had questions about the integrity of their assignment and passed their concerns to the Chair/Director. For example, "I had concerns about the sources used in your assignment" or "I had concerns that your assignment was quite similar to another students'". This does not assert misconduct but is still honest and transparent with the student.

### **How can I grade the assessment as though no misconduct occurred?**

- Because instructors may not determine whether misconduct has occurred, it is important to assign a grade as though academic misconduct did not occur. The [Academic Misconduct Policy in the Undergraduate Calendar](#) outlines guidelines for penalties. For minor first offences, loss of grades on the assessment is the standard penalty and therefore a mark on the assessment must be submitted by the instructor /TA.
- We recognize that it can be difficult to assign a grade as though misconduct did not occur! However, grading criteria (i.e., assignment instructions, grading rubric, answer key, etc.) and learning outcomes can make it easier to assess the student. If grades are assigned that consider the need to cite material appropriately, and if the student did not provide this information, then their grades would reflect this.

### **How long do I have to submit the *Academic Misconduct Reporting* form and associated evidence of academic misconduct to my Chair/Director?**

- While the policy recommends that you complete your evidence gathering within 10 working days of the due date for the assessment the broader principle inherent in the policy is that academic misconduct should be dealt with in a timely manner and at the time of detection. The 10 working day timeline is there to give everyone a sense of what that means in practice, but it is a normal expectation and not an absolute rule.
- An instructor should not wait until the end of the semester to submit an allegation about an assignment that was due in week 4, for example. However, if there is a reasonable justification for a delay, such as the grading took longer than 10 days, that is not a concern.

**What is a working day?**

- A working day is a day that the University is open, which is generally any day that is not a holiday or a closure day. Study Break Days and Reading Week are working days, however instructors would generally be justified in waiting until after a Study Break Day or Reading Week to proceed with an academic misconduct allegation.

**Who should fill out the *Academic Misconduct Reporting Form*?**

- The instructor or course director is responsible for gathering evidence and completing the form.
- Teaching assistants may be consulted as part of the evidence gathering, but they should not be tasked with gathering evidence or filling out and submitting the form.