

Frequently Asked Questions by Students

(rev. Dec 2018)

I received an email and/or letter from the Director of Academic Integrity outlining alleged charges and instructing me to attend an appointment. What does this mean?

It means that you have been referred to the Director of Academic Integrity for an alleged violation of University policy. At this meeting, the Director of Academic Integrity will discuss your rights with you, the information that was presented in the referral, and ask for your side of the story. A referral does not mean you are responsible. The violations are alleged and are pending until a full disciplinary investigation is completed.

What happens if I don't attend the meeting like the notification letter says?

The case can be heard in absentia without your input and a decision made by the Director of Academic Integrity. In addition, a registration and/or transcript hold can be placed on your student account preventing you from registering for future semesters and preventing the release of your transcript. This hold typically is not removed until the pending disciplinary matter is resolved.

What if I want to wait until I have to register to contact the office and attend a meeting?

Generally this is a bad idea. If you wait until the last minute to try to resolve the issue, you run the risk of not being able to register on time. If you have a registration hold on your account, it will NOT be removed until you have attended a meeting and addressed the issue at hand.

What does the Director of Academic Integrity expect of me in this situation?

Cooperation and honesty. The disciplinary process is educational and requires that you own up to a mistake you may have made. You will be given all the information about how the process works and what you can expect during your initial meeting.

What are the different steps of the disciplinary process?

The process begins when the notification letter is sent. When you meet with the Director of Academic Integrity, you will first be asked to read and sign a form that explains your rights to you. You and the Director of Academic Integrity will then discuss the situation. If further investigation is needed, you will be asked to schedule another appointment for a later date. If further investigation is not needed, you will be asked whether or not you accept responsibility for the alleged violation(s). If you accept responsibility, the Director of Academic Integrity will issue appropriate sanctions and the case is closed. If you do not accept responsibility, your case will be sent to the Academic Integrity Committee for a hearing. When the Academic Integrity Committee hears your case, they will review all evidence, speak with you and any witnesses, and issue a finding (responsible, not responsible, or dismissed). If you are found responsible for any violation by the Academic Integrity Committee, the committee will issue appropriate sanctions. If you are found not responsible or the charge(s) are dismissed, no sanctions are issued.

May a parent or friend call on my behalf or attend my meeting for me?

No. You may sign a FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) form to release our staff to discuss your case with anyone of your choosing; however, you cannot be represented by anyone. Our staff will

not speak to anyone about your circumstances without a signed form on file in our office and under no circumstances will anyone be allowed to represent you in the disciplinary process.

Can I have witnesses speak for me?

You are allowed to call fact witnesses during the disciplinary process. A fact witness is someone who was present during the incident in question and can provide direct information about what happened. The fact witness(es) will be asked questions by all parties involved

Do I need an attorney?

It is the choice of an individual student whether or not to retain an attorney. If you choose to have an attorney present, the attorney may only act as your advisor. The advisor's role is limited to advising the student. An advisor cannot make opening statements, cross-examine witnesses, engage in argument, or represent the student in any way. The advisor is simply there to encourage, support, and guide the student.

May I handle this by telephone or email?

No. You are required to meet with a representative from our office. We do not conduct disciplinary meetings via any other means.

If I am found responsible, what kind of sanction will I receive?

It depends on your individual circumstances. Sanctions at the university range from a Reprimand (a warning about the behavior) through expulsion from the institution. Generally the following factors are considered when sanctions are given: nature of the offense, previous disciplinary history, motivation for the behavior, mitigating and aggravating circumstances, sanctioning precedents, and the developmental and educational impact for the individual student and MTSU community.

May I drop the class or withdraw from school to avoid this?

No. Until the academic integrity case is resolved, a student cannot drop the class in which an alleged case of academic integrity has occurred.

If you choose to withdraw before dealing with the disciplinary process, a registration hold will be placed on your student account. You will not be allowed to register for future classes until you go through the disciplinary process.

Where can I learn more about the Academic Integrity policy?

You can read the Academic Integrity policy at: <http://www.mtsu.edu/policies/academic-affairs-students/312.php>