

# DEAN'S DISCIPLINE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

## Preface to Procedures

Continuously reviewing University policies and practices, federal laws, new and unanticipated situations, and other considerations may result in changes in the policies, rules, and regulations applicable to students. Therefore, the Faculty of the School of International and Public Affairs (SIPA) reserves the right to amend these policies at any time. These changes may affect such matters as tuition and all other fees, courses, degrees, programs offered (including the modification or possible elimination of programs), degree and other academic requirements, areas of concentration, academic policies, rules pertaining to student conduct, and discipline and regulations applicable to students.

The authoritative version of the School of International and Public Affairs Academic and Disciplinary Policies is updated annually and published online. It is also available in printed form. In case of any discrepancy, the version published on the SIPA website is authoritative. Students are expected to be familiar not only with SIPA policies but also with the rules and regulations of the University as well as those specific to their degree program(s).

## Procedures

Disciplinary procedures apply when students or student organizations are found to violate University or SIPA policies, including the Code of Academic and Professional Conduct. In certain cases, SIPA's disciplinary procedures are superseded by the Rules of University Conduct, which cover alcohol and drug use, sexual assault, equal opportunity, and nondiscrimination conduct, such as demonstrations, rallies, picketing, and the circulation of petitions. The Rules of University Conduct can be found at <https://universitylife.columbia.edu/cu-rules-of-conduct>. All suspected violations of University or SIPA policies should be reported to the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, who will receive the complaint and, if necessary, initiate proceedings as described below or refer the matter to another university office, which may include Columbia's Center for Student Success and Intervention (<http://studentconduct.columbia.edu/>), among others (when cases are referred to other universities offices the published procedures of those offices govern the proceedings). Students, staff, or faculty may submit complaints regarding the conduct of SIPA students. All members of the SIPA community are expected to report actions inconsistent with the Code of Academic and Professional Conduct and University policies. The Associate Dean will assess reports to ensure that possible violations are reviewed in the appropriate venue and according to applicable disciplinary procedures.

## Informal Resolution

In many cases, charges of misconduct are resolved by the individual faculty member and the student involved. Either party may wish to involve the Associate Dean for Students at the outset of the resolution process.

## Informal Procedures

Evaluation of student performance is the exclusive province of the faculty. If, in the faculty member's opinion, there is evidence the student has committed an act of academic misconduct, the faculty member is responsible for taking appropriate action. The burden of proof rests with the faculty member, who will gather the available information

and supportive documents. Whenever possible, the faculty member will discuss their allegations with the student(s) as soon as possible, allowing the student(s) to explain. Upon determination that an infraction did occur, the faculty member must report the act of dishonesty to the Associate Dean of Student Affairs, who will contact the student(s) to provide information about the charges and schedule a meeting to discuss the alleged infraction. The Associate Dean will also counsel the relevant faculty member on the appropriate sanction to be applied; prior infractions may result in harsher penalties.

The faculty member in whose course the infraction has occurred may elect to assign a lower or failing grade for an assignment, examination, or the entire course. The faculty member will notify the Associate Dean of their decision and may recommend that additional sanctions be considered. The Associate Dean will notify the student in writing of all sanctions imposed as a result of the infraction. All records of academic dishonesty shall be maintained for five (5) years; in cases of severe infractions, the record may be maintained for a longer period or permanently.

## Formal Resolution

Incidents of Academic and/or Non-Academic (behavioral) misconduct involving SIPA students in which the alleged violation, due to its severity, cannot be resolved informally result in formal disciplinary proceedings under the direction of the Associate Dean for Student Affairs. Such misconduct includes, but is not limited to, egregious acts of cheating or plagiarism or behavioral misconduct such as theft, acts of violence, and offensive or disruptive behavior that interferes with normal academic and community activity.

## Investigation Phase

When a SIPA student is charged with violating University or SIPA policy, including the Code of Academic and Professional Conduct, the Associate Dean makes a preliminary inquiry into the case and determines whether there is sufficient cause to bring a formal complaint. If there is sufficient cause for a formal complaint, the student is notified in writing and provided with a copy of the disciplinary procedures.

## Disposition of the Complaint

If the Associate Dean determines that a formal complaint is warranted, the Associate Dean: (1) may issue a letter of warning, which becomes a part of the student's file until graduation; or (2) may convene a Discipline Hearing Panel, notifying the student of this in writing. Upon receipt of a letter of warning, the student may request that the Associate Dean convene a Discipline Hearing Panel.

## Discipline Hearing

All complaints not disposed of informally or by uncontested letter of warning from the Associate Dean for Student Affairs, or referred to another university office, must be reviewed by a Discipline Hearing Panel. A panel is assembled for each case, comprised of two students, an Assistant Dean of Student Affairs, and two faculty members, all of whom are selected by the Associate Dean of Student Affairs. All members chosen for the panel are expected to recuse themselves if they have a relationship with the accused student that may affect their ability to hear the case objectively.

The Discipline Hearing Panel informs the student of the charges made and asks them to respond in writing. The panel members are charged with fact-finding and designate one panel member to document all testimony and proceedings carefully. The student has the opportunity to present information on their behalf, which may include testimony

by witnesses, written information, or other evidence, but may not have an attorney or other advisor present at the hearing. Witnesses giving testimony must have direct knowledge of the situation being investigated; character witnesses are not allowed in disciplinary hearings. The student is not present to hear witnesses, and there is no cross-examination or adversarial aspect to the hearing process. The Associate Dean is present at the hearing to present the facts of the case and is also available to the student to answer questions and provide information about the hearing process. The Associate Dean is not a voting member of the hearing panel.

After hearing all the evidence and reviewing the facts, the Hearing Panel decides whether a violation has occurred and, if so, imposes appropriate disciplinary measures. Sanctions may include a warning or censure to be placed in the student's file, notation on the student's transcript, loss of certain rights and privileges, reduced or failing grade, probation, suspension, or expulsion from the school. The Hearing Panel's decision is determined by a majority vote.

The Hearing Panel notifies the student of its findings via email and letter within 24 hours of its decision. At the same time, a copy of the findings and a written report of the proceedings, including relevant documents and evidence, are forwarded to the Dean of SIPA.

## **Appeal Process**

If the Associate Dean for Student Affairs or a Discipline Hearing Panel finds a student to have violated University or SIPA policy, the student may appeal the decision and disciplinary sanction to the Dean of SIPA. Appeals must be made in writing within five working days of the student's receipt of the decision of the Discipline Hearing Panel and must clearly state the grounds for the appeal.

In reviewing the appeal, the Dean relies on the written record and does not conduct further actual investigation, except in instances where the Dean determines that further information is needed. The purpose of the appeal process is to determine if the decision made and the disciplinary sanctions imposed are reasonable. The Dean notifies the student of the decision in writing. There is no further appeal within the University.

## **Records**

The Associate Dean for Student Affairs will retain the detailed record of each disciplinary case and the proceedings of the Hearing Panel for access by future hearing panels. The Student Affairs Office will retain all records related to complaints brought, and both confirmed and unconfirmed violations, in a secure file. All records will be kept secure and confidential, and names will be kept confidential, regardless of the finding. The Dean may release general information about cases and proceedings as long as this information does not violate the individuals' right to privacy. All disciplinary cases are retained on file for five (5) years.