

**Division of Graduate Medical Sciences
Boston University School of Medicine
Academic Conduct Code and Disciplinary Procedures**

(Effective August 3, 2015)

I. INTRODUCTION

I.1 Purpose of the Academic Conduct Code: All students entering Boston University School of Medicine (BUSM) Division of Graduate Medical Sciences (GMS) are expected to maintain high standards of academic honesty and integrity. It is the responsibility of every GMS student to be aware of the contents of this Academic Conduct Code (“Code”), and to abide by its provisions. This Code deals specifically with disciplinary actions that may be taken against any student who engages in academic misconduct in any form or undermines the academic integrity of GMS.

This document supersedes all previous GMS Academic Conduct Code and Disciplinary Procedures documents. GMS reserves the right to revise and modify the Academic Conduct Code and Disciplinary Procedures at its sole discretion.

Students enrolled in GMS are also subject to discipline under the Boston University Code of Student Responsibilities (<http://www.bu.edu/dos/policies/student-responsibilities/>).

Special Note for MD/PhD and MD/MS students: MD/PhD and MD/MS students are unique in that they are initially matriculated into the Medical School where their academic conduct is covered by the Boston University School of Medicine Medical Student Disciplinary Code of Academic and Professional Conduct. However, when they join their research labs or MS degree program, they matriculate into the Division of Graduate Medical Sciences. Thus, during their PhD research or MS degree program years, their conduct is covered by this document until they move back to the Medical School to complete their clinical training. The misconduct codes of GMS and the Medical School are similar. However, the structure and mechanics of the committees that hear academic misconduct cases differ. Importantly, the Medical School and the Division of Graduate Medical Sciences share the information on MD/PhD or MD/MS student misconduct that occurs in either program.

I.2 Rationale for Academic Discipline: To ensure that the academic competence of students is judged fairly, and to promote the integrity of graduate education, GMS embraces two broad principles: (1) no honest student should be disadvantaged by the dishonesty of another student; and (2) penalties should be commensurate with the violation.

Students enrolled in dual degree programs are required to adhere to the guidelines of both degree granting bodies (i.e. the School of Medicine, Graduate School of Management, School of Public Health, College of Engineering, etc.)

II. ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Academic misconduct is conduct by which a student misrepresents his or her academic accomplishments, or impedes other students’ opportunities of being judged fairly for their academic work. Knowingly allowing others to represent your work as their own is considered to be as serious an offense as submitting another’s work as your own.

II.1 Violations of this Code: Violations of this Code include, but are not limited to, attempts to be dishonest or deceptive in the performance of academic work inside or outside the classroom, alterations of academic records, alterations of official data, or unauthorized collaboration or consultation. Violations include, but are not limited to, those listed in Appendix 1.

III. ACTION ON SUSPECTED VIOLATIONS

When an alleged violation by a GMS student occurs in a School or college other than the one in which the student is enrolled, the initial determination of misconduct will be made by the School or College where the alleged violation occurred; assessment of penalty will come from the GMS Committee on Academic Standards ("GMSCAS"), based upon recommendation of the Dean and Committee from the School or College in which the violation took place.

Academic Misconduct Procedural Overview

III.1 Faculty Level: A faculty member who believes that a student has violated this Code should notify the Chair of the GMSCAS, who will determine whether: (1) the student has previously signed a GMS Academic Conduct Code and Disciplinary Procedures form; and (2) the student has a record of academic misconduct in any College or School at Boston University. This notification should be made before the faculty member meets with the student. The Chair of the GMSCAS will notify the student's program director and advisor. The faculty member should then submit to the GMSCAS Chair a "Report of Student Academic Misconduct" and a statement of evidence upon which report is based. After receiving approval from the GMSCAS Chair, the faculty member should meet with the student to inform him/her of the suspected violation. The faculty member should document the student's response to the charge(s) and forward the response to the GMSCAS Chair.

III.2 Admitted Code Violations by First-time Offenders:

If the student admits to the violation of the Code, and has never been found guilty of an academic conduct violation at Boston University, the faculty member may seek authorization from the Program Director/Department Chair or GMSCAS Chair, as appropriate, to assess a grading penalty against the student, up to and including a failing grade in the course.

If the faculty member receives authorization to enter into an agreement with the student for a grading penalty, the faculty member will notify the student of this optional sanction. The student then has the option to accept the proposed grading penalty or request a hearing pursuant to the Code. By entering an agreement to accept a grading sanction, the student understands and agrees that he/she has relinquished any appeals available under the Code.

If the student agrees to a grading penalty, the Faculty Member, Program Director/Department Chair or GMSCAS Chair, as appropriate, will forward to the BUSM Registrar a signed copy of the Report of Academic Misconduct form.

III.3 Disputed Code Violations: If the student disputes the alleged Code Violation or if the Program Director/Department Chair or GMSCAS Chair denies the faculty member's request to impose a grading penalty, the charges and supporting evidence shall be forwarded to the student's Department/Program level.

III.4 Department/Program Level: Department or Program action is required if the student accused of a Code violation is not a first-time offender, or the Director/Department Chair or GMSCAS Chair does not authorize a simple grading penalty.

The faculty member alleging a Code violation must provide written notification of the suspected violation to the Department Chair or Program Director. Within fourteen (14) days of notification, the Department Chair or Program Director will convene a 5 or more member committee (the “Department Committee”) to investigate and adjudicate the alleged Code violation. The Department Committee may contain faculty from other departments and graduate student participation as voting members of the committee is encouraged. The Department Committee shall include representatives from the student’s Program(s) and/or home Department, though they need not be voting members. The Department Committee Chair will notify the accused in writing of the nature of the charge(s) and the right to appear before a Department Committee. The accused has the right to be accompanied by a representative of his or her choice, who is not permitted to participate in the hearing except as permitted by the Chair of the Department Committee.

The Department Committee shall hold a meeting to hear all parties involved; a decision shall be made based on majority vote, and the Chair of the Department Committee will vote only in case of a tie. The actions a Department Committee may take are:

1. No Code violation;
2. Recommend a change of grade;
3. Impose sanctions on the student (the nature of which may be determined by the department or program); and
4. Refer to the next level of action, the GMS Committee on Academic Standards

The Department Chair/Program Director will notify the accused and the GMSCAS Chair in writing of the Department Committee’s findings and sanctions, if any, as soon as possible but no longer than fourteen (14) days after the hearing.

III.5 Division of Graduate Medical Sciences (GMS) Level: When a student seeks an appeal of the Department Committee’s decision, or if the Department Committee recommends a penalty other than those outlined in Section III.4, above, the case is referred by the Department Committee Chair to the GMSCAS Chair and the GMS Committee on Academic Standing will be convened. The GMS Committee will be composed of at least five members: four faculty from the Committee on Academic Standards and one Graduate Student from GMS. The GMS Committee shall include representatives from the student’s Program(s) and/or home Department, though they are not voting members. The GMS Committee Chair will notify the accused in writing of the nature of the charge(s) and the right to appear before a GMS Committee. The accused has the right to be accompanied by a representative of his or her choice, who is not permitted to participate in the hearing except as permitted by the Chair of the GMS Committee.

At the meeting decision shall be made based on majority vote, and the Chair of the GMS Committee will vote only in case of a tie.

The GMSCAS may take the following actions (details provided in Appendix 2):

1. No violation;

2. Reprimand;
3. Grading penalty;
4. Probation for a fixed terms;
5. Suspension for a fixed term;
6. Expulsion from GMS; or
7. Recommendation of revocation of degree

The Associate Provost of GMS will review the proposed sanction before written notice of the decision is sent to the student and Department Chair/Program Director.

IV. APPEALS

A student may appeal a decision of the GMSCAS to the Associate Provost of GMS (Level I), to the Dean of the Medical School (Level II), and finally to the University Provost (Level III).

IV.1 Appeal to the Associate Provost of GMS (Level I): The student may file an appeal to the Associate Provost of GMS no later than fourteen (14) days after the date of the written notification of the decision GMS Committee and/or sanctions.

Filing an appeal will not stay any sanction imposed. However, the written appeal petition may request a stay or modification of any sanctions pending determination of the appeal, stating the reasons for such request.

Upon receipt of a timely appeal petition, the Associate Provost will request the relevant record from the GMS Committee Chair. The decision of the Associate Provost will be in writing, and will include the procedure for an appeal to the Dean of the School of Medical, with copies provided to the GMSCAS.

The Associate Provost or his /her designee may:

1. Affirm, modify (to increase or decrease), or reverse the findings of the GMSCAS.
2. Remand the matter to the GMSCAS for additional investigation, a new hearing, or a reopening of the hearing. If a case is remanded, the Associate Provost's decision will specify whether the sanctions are to be maintained, modified, suspended, or reversed pending resolution of the matter.

IV.2 Appeal to the Dean of the Medical School: The student may file an appeal to the Dean of the School of Medicine of the findings of or sanctions imposed by Associate Provost of GMS no sooner than receipt of the Provost's notification of findings and sanctions and no more than fourteen (14) days after receipt.

The appeal may request the Dean of the School of Medicine to stay or modify the sanctions pending determination of the appeal, stating the reasons for such request.

Upon receipt of a timely appeal, the Dean of the Medical School will request the relevant record from the Associate Provost of GMS. Any written response by the Associate Provost of GMS to the student's appeal to the Dean of the Medical School must be copied to the student.

The Dean of the Medical School or his or her designee may:

1. Affirm, modify, or reverse the findings and sanctions of the GMSCAS or Associate Provost of GMS.
2. Remand the matter to the Associate Provost of GMS, to the GMSCAS for a new hearing, or a reopening of the GMSCAS hearing.

3. Take such other action as the Dean of the School of Medicine may deem appropriate. The decision of the Dean of the School of Medicine will be in writing, with copies provided to the student, Associate Provost of GMS, and the GMSCAS.

IV.3 Appeal to the University Provost (Level III): The student may file an appeal to the University Provost of the findings of or sanctions imposed by the Dean of the Medical School no sooner than receipt of the Dean of the School of Medicine's notification of findings and sanctions and no more than fourteen (14) days after receipt.

The appeal may request the University Provost to stay or modify the sanctions pending determination of the appeal, stating the reasons for such request.

Upon receipt of a timely appeal, the University Provost will request the relevant record. Any written response by the Dean of the School of Medicine to the student's appeal to the University Provost must be copied to the student.

The University Provost, or his or her designee, may:

1. Affirm, modify, or reverse the findings of guilt and sanctions.
2. Remand the matter to the Dean of the Medical School, the Associate Provost, the GMSCAS for a new hearing, or a reopening of the Academic Standards hearing.
3. Take such other action as the University Provost may deem appropriate. The decision of the University Provost will be in writing, with copies provided to the student, Associate Provost, and the GMSCAS.

APPENDIX 1

Academic and professional misconduct includes, without being limited to, the following, when committed knowingly, intentionally or with reckless disregard for others and proved by a preponderance of the evidence:

1. **Cheating:** Any attempt by a student to alter his or her performance on an examination, assignment or exercise in violation of stated or commonly understood rules including, but not limited to unauthorized communication during examinations, collaboration with (copying the answers of) another student or students or using notes, books or electronic sources during the course of an examination. Any unauthorized communication may be considered *prima facie* evidence of cheating.
2. **Plagiarism:** Representing the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the following: copying or restating the work or ideas of another person or persons in any oral or written work (printed or electronic) without citing the appropriate source. Plagiarism also includes collaborating with someone else in an academic endeavor without acknowledging his or her contribution.

3. **Theft or Destruction of an Examination or Exam Materials:** Accessing or otherwise discovering and/or making known to others the contents of an examination that has not yet been administered or prior exams that are not intended for distribution.
4. **Assigned Exam Seating:** Failure to sit in specifically assigned seat during examinations.
5. **Misrepresentation or Falsification of Data:** Presenting incorrect information for surveys, experiments, reports, etc., including but not limited to, citing authors that do not exist, citing interviews that never took place, or citing work that was not completed.
6. **Research Misconduct:** Fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. Research misconduct does not include honest errors or differences of opinion.
7. **Allowing Misrepresentation of Individual Work:** Knowingly allowing another student to represent your work as his or her own, including but not limited to, providing a copy of your paper or work to another student without the explicit permission of the instructor(s).
8. **Work Submission in Multiple Courses:** Using the same material for two or more classes without the consent of the instructor(s).
9. **Alteration or Destruction of Another's Work:** Altering records of any kind, removing materials from libraries or offices without consent, or in any way interfering with the work or research of others so as to impede their academic performance.
10. **Violation of the Rules Governing Teamwork:** Unless the instructor of a course specifically provides instructions to the contrary, the following rules apply to teamwork: (a) no team member shall intentionally restrict or inhibit another team member's access to team meetings, team work-in-progress, or other team activities without the express authorization of the instructor; and (b) all team members shall be held responsible for the content of all teamwork submitted for evaluation as if each team member had individually submitted the entire work product of their team as their own work.
11. **Forgery, Alteration, or Misuse of Official Documents:** Including, but not limited to, transcripts from any institution, letters of recommendation, degree certificates, examinations, quizzes, or other work after submission.
12. **Unprofessional Conduct in Field or Off Campus Assignments:** Conduct in a professional field assignment that violates the policies and regulations of the host school or agency, or agreed-upon protocols for arrangements between medical campus programs and outside entities.
13. **Violation of Patient Confidentiality:** Students are expected to adhere to the ethical code of conduct with regard to patient confidentiality *with all forms of communication*, including online and social networking activity. Students **may not** describe, discuss, or refer to patients/clients they, colleagues, supervisors, or instructors have seen or discussed in a professional context. Students may not conduct any professional services through use of electronic media (i.e. handheld

devices, cellular phones, email, Skype, etc.) without official approval of the person to whom they report for their work.

- 14. Falsifying Credentials:** providing misleading or deceptive information regarding training, competence, or credentials, such as describing oneself as a licensed provider or with a title not yet earned by degree.
- 15. Violation of Public Law:** Conduct in violation of public law that occurs outside or inside the University that directly affects the academic or professional status of the student.
- 16. Improper Influence of Awards:** Any attempt to improperly influence the award of any credit, grade, or honor.
- 17. Intentional False Statements:** Intentionally making false statements or presenting false information to any faculty member or to the GMS Academic Standards Committee.
- 18. Failure to Comply with Sanctions Imposed Under this Code:** Failure to comply with the sanctions imposed under the authority of this Code.

APPENDIX 2

The Chair of the Department/Program Committee and the GMSCAS Chair may take appropriate rulings to safeguard the integrity and fairness of any hearing. The hearings of the GMS Committee will be audio recorded and the student will have the right of access to a copy of the recording without cost and to obtain a copy of the recording at his or her expense. The deliberations by the Committee are not recorded.

The student may be accompanied by an advisor of his or her choice; however, except to the extent permitted by the Chair, the advisor may not participate directly in the hearing. In the face of pending criminal charges arising from the same events, legal counsel for the student may be present to safeguard the rights of the student relating to the criminal charges but cannot participate in the proceedings.

Description of the Penalties

Students who admit to misconduct and sign the Report of Academic Misconduct

A student who admits to an alleged violation of this Code and signs the Report of Academic Misconduct shall receive the grading penalty noted on the Report of Academic Misconduct form. The student will also receive a letter of reprimand from the Associate Provost of Graduate Medical Sciences or his/her designee. The form and the letter of reprimand will be placed in the student's GMS Registration file, but will not be recorded on the student's official GMS transcript. The reprimand will not be made public when records or transcripts are sent out. However, the reprimand may be considered when reviewing the student's eligibility for Boston University programs and when considering future offenses. It may also be reported in response to a direct question about past academic misconduct or disciplinary sanctions from an undergraduate, graduate, or professional school to which the student seeks admission or from other authorized entities. The record of misconduct will be destroyed upon graduation if there is no additional misconduct.

Students whose cases are referred to the Department/Program Committee or GMS Committee

A student who is ineligible for grading penalty or who has elected to appear before a Department or Program level hearing committee may receive the sanctions noted under Program/Department Level in Section III.4, above. If applicable, a faculty member may assign a grade of "MG" in a course while a matter is pending before the Department/Program or GMS Committee.

If the GMS Committee on Academic Standards finds a Code violation.

The GMSCAS may recommend any appropriate penalty. The penalty will generally be one or more of those listed below.

1. No Penalty.
2. Written Reprimand
 - a. For violations of a minor nature or mitigated by extenuating circumstances.
 - b. A copy of the reprimand shall be placed in the student's file but shall not be recorded on the permanent academic record. Past reprimands may be considered in imposing sanctions for future offenses.
 - c. Reprimands are not to be made public when records, transcripts, etc. are sent out, but may be reported in response to a direct question about past academic misconduct or disciplinary sanctions from an undergraduate, graduate, or professional school to which the student seeks admission or from other authorized entities.
 - d. Reprimands may place limits on the student's participation in academic or nonacademic School/College or all-University activities.
3. Probation
 - a. For violations deemed serious enough to warrant some abridgement of the student's rights and privileges.
 - b. Given for a specified period of time.
 - c. Recorded on the student's permanent internal record.
 - d. Prohibits the student from being an officer in any recognized all-University or School/College student organization, and from participating in intercollegiate activities during the specified probation period.
4. Suspension
 - a. For violations deemed serious enough to warrant separation of the student from the University community for a limited time, but not serious enough to warrant expulsion.
 - b. Given for a period of one to three semesters.
 - c. Recorded on the student's permanent internal record and transcript; the student's external record shall carry the statement "withdrawn."
 - d. The student must apply in writing to the Associate Provost of the Division of Graduate Medical Sciences for readmission, making a satisfactory statement concerning his or her interim activities and his or her intended future conduct.
 - e. No academic coursework may be undertaken for Boston University credit, nor may any Boston University degree be conferred, during the period of suspension.
5. Expulsion
 - a. For serious academic misconduct.
 - b. Recorded permanently on the student's academic record.
 - c. Expulsion is permanent.
6. Other Sanctions

- a. For serious misconduct, including but not limited to misconduct that occurred while the student was enrolled at the University but was discovered after graduation or conduct involving fraudulent use of University transcripts or degree certificates after graduation, or similar serious misconduct, recommendation of the Committee on Academic Standards may include withholding transcripts and/or revocation of the degree.

These procedures were approved by the Faculty of the Division of Graduate Medical Sciences on July 13, 2015.

My signature attests to the fact that I have read and understand the above Academic Conduct Code and Disciplinary Procedures governing academic conduct in Boston University School of Medicine's Division of Graduate Medical Sciences.

Print Name

BU ID Number

Signature and Date