

## Procedure for Graduate Scholastic Offences

**Governing Policy:** Scholastic Offences

**Subsections:** [Introduction](#); [Part I: Program-Related Offences](#); [Part II, Offences Not Related to a Program](#); [Penalties](#), [Appeal to SRBA](#); [Offence Record](#); [Release of Information Concerning Scholastic Offences](#)

**Officer(s) Responsible for Procedures:** Provost & Vice-President (Academic)

**Effective Date:** September 1, 2025

**Supersedes:** (NEW)

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

If a student is suspected of a scholastic offence, the University will investigate and if it is satisfied that the student has committed a scholastic offence it may impose penalties, up to and including expulsion from the University. The procedures that the University will follow are set out in this section.

Throughout these scholastic offence regulations, reference to “Vice-Provost” is to be interpreted as “Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) or their designate” and reference to “Chair” is to be interpreted as “Graduate Chair or their designate”. If the matter has been designated by the Vice-Provost (Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies) or a Chair to another person(s), that person(s) is authorized to make the School’s or Program’s final decision on the matter.

To learn more about the request for relief and appeals process, students may contact the Office of the Ombudsperson.

### 2.0 PART I: PROGRAM-RELATED OFFENCES

If evidence of a possible scholastic offence is brought to the attention of, or discovered by, an instructor or member of a student’s thesis supervisory committee, normally they will meet with the student to discuss the allegation if practicable and appropriate in such case.

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The student's Chair will be notified if there is evidence of a scholastic offence.

### 2.1 Decision by Chair

- 1) If the Chair agrees that there is evidence to support the allegation, they will advise the student of the allegation and the information supporting the allegation.
- 2) The student will be given a reasonable opportunity to respond and submit evidence and a reasonable opportunity to meet with the Chair before a decision is made.
- 3) If the Chair decides that the student has committed a scholastic offence, they will determine the appropriate penalties in consultation with the instructor or the student's supervisor, as appropriate.
- 4) The Chair's decision, including any penalties and any recommended penalties (per Section 4.0), will be communicated to the student in writing with a copy to the Vice-Provost. The letter will also advise the student of their right to submit a request for relief regarding the finding of misconduct and/or any penalties imposed by the Chair to the Vice-Provost.

### 2.2 Request for Relief to Vice-Provost

- 1) A student may submit a request for relief regarding a Chair's finding of misconduct and/or penalties imposed by the Chair to the Vice-Provost. A completed request for relief application together with all supporting documents must be submitted to the Office of the Vice-Provost within four (4) weeks of the issuance of the Chair's decision.
- 2) The Vice-Provost will review the evidence provided by both the student and the Chair and may investigate further. The Vice-Provost will give the student a reasonable opportunity to meet with them before making a decision.
- 3) The Vice-Provost may affirm, vary, or overturn any decision made by the Chair and may impose other penalties. If the Vice-Provost is considering imposing a penalty or penalties that were not imposed by the Chair, they shall notify the student and give the student a reasonable opportunity to file written submissions on the issue of penalty.
- 4) The Vice-Provost's decision will be communicated to the student in writing with a copy to the Chair. The decision letter will also inform the student whether there will be a notation on the student's academic record, if any policies will be triggered by the penalty, and will inform the student of their right to appeal a negative decision to the Senate Review Board Academic (SRBA).

### 2.3 Review by Vice-Provost

- 1) If a student does not submit a request for relief regarding a Chair's decision, the Vice-Provost will review the evidence presented and the penalties imposed by the Chair, if any, and may vary the Chair's penalties and/or impose other penalties.
- 2) If the Vice-Provost does not vary the Chair's decision or impose other penalties, no further action will be taken and there is no right of appeal to SRBA.
- 3) If the Vice-Provost is considering varying the Chair's decision or imposing other penalties, they shall notify the student and give the student a reasonable opportunity to file written submissions on the issue of penalty. The Vice-Provost's decision will be communicated to the student in writing, with a copy to the Chair. The decision letter will also inform the student whether there will be a notation on the student's academic record, if any policies will be triggered by the penalty, and of their right to appeal the additional penalties imposed by the Vice-Provost to SRBA.

### 3.0 **PART II: OFFENCES NOT RELATED TO A PROGRAM**

- 1) If an allegation of misconduct does not relate directly to the student's program (e.g., a course or thesis), the allegation will be referred to the Vice-Provost.
- 2) If the Vice-Provost decides that there is evidence to support the allegation, the Vice-Provost will advise the student of the allegation and the information supporting the allegation.
- 3) The student will be given a reasonable opportunity to respond and submit evidence and a reasonable opportunity to meet with the Vice-Provost before a decision is made.
- 4) If the Vice-Provost decides that the student has committed a scholastic offence, they will determine the appropriate penalties.
- 5) The Vice-Provost's decision, including the penalties, will be communicated to the student in writing. The letter will inform the student whether there will be a notation on the student's academic record, if any policies will be triggered by the penalty, and of their right to appeal the decision to SRBA.

### 4.0 PENALTIES

- 1) A student guilty of a scholastic offence may be subject to one or more penalties, examples of which are:
  - a) Reprimand.
  - b) Requirement that the student repeat and resubmit the assignment.
  - c) A failing grade in the submitted work.
  - d) A failing grade in the course in which the offence was committed.
  - e) Withdrawal from the program.
  - f) Suspension from the University for up to three (3) academic years.
  - g) Expulsion from the University.

A Chair may impose penalties 4.0(1)(a) through (d). Only the Vice-Provost may impose penalties 4.0(1)(e), (f), and (g).

A Chair also can recommend a more severe penalty (e.g., withdrawal, suspension, expulsion) to the Vice-Provost in addition to penalty(ies) imposed at the program level.

In determining what penalties are warranted in a given case, the Vice-Provost will consider the gravity of the offence, any Offence Record, any recommendations of the Chair, and the need for consistency in standards of discipline across the School.

- 2) The Vice-Provost may require a notation of the scholastic offence (e.g., "Scholastic Offence recorded in...") on a student's internal, electronic record for penalty 4.0 (1)(d). On the successful completion of the student's program, the student may request that the notation be removed. The Vice-Provost, after consulting with the Chair, will decide whether to grant the request.

The penalties of suspension and expulsion are recorded as notations on the student's official transcript.\*

\* For the Senate regulation on removal of suspension and expulsion notations from academic transcripts, see "Transcript Notations" under *Academic Records and Student Transcripts* policy.

### 5.0 APPEAL TO SRBA

A student may have a right of appeal to SRBA if the decision falls within its jurisdiction. Appeals to SRBA must be made **within six weeks of the date of the Vice-Provost's decision**.

The decision of the Vice-Provost or their designate remains in full force and effect unless and until overturned or modified by SRBA.

See the *Senate Review Board Academic Appeals* policy and *Procedure for Senate Review Board Academic Appeals* for further information.

### 6.0 OFFENCE RECORD

The Offence Record is held in the Vice-Provost's Office and is kept separate from the student's academic file. If a student is subsequently found not to have committed the offence in question, the record of that charge will be destroyed in accordance with Western's Records Retention and Disposal Schedules. The Student Affairs records retention and disposal schedule can be found on the Western Libraries Retention Schedules website.

Apart from the student, no one outside the Vice-Provost's Office shall have access to an Offence Record, except in the event of an appeal by the student to SRBA against the decision or the penalty (or penalties) imposed or except as set out in "Release of Information Concerning Scholastic Offences" below.

### 7.0 RELEASE OF INFORMATION CONCERNING SCHOLASTIC OFFENCES

In the event that the penalties imposed are to be reflected in the student's academic record, either on the official transcript or the internal electronic record, a copy will be sent to the Registrar. If a student transfers to another Faculty, or to an Affiliated University College of this University, the offence record will be transferred to the Dean's Office of that Faculty or College. Otherwise, information may be released with the written permission of the student or if required by a court order. Under all other circumstances, the information contained in a student's offence record shall be considered confidential and, unless the offence is to be recorded on the student's transcript, no information about the student's offence record shall be provided to any person or institution outside the University.

#### 7.1 Report to Senate

The School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies prepares an annual summary of scholastic offences committed by students registered in the School. The summary

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will set out the nature of the offence and the penalties, with students' names removed. The Vice-Provost will report the summary annually to Senate for information.

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**Last Reviewed:**

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