



Description of the Committee on Academic Misconduct

Under Ohio State's Faculty Rules, the Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) is charged with investigating suspected cases of academic misconduct, arriving at findings, and if the committee determines a student has violated the university's Code of Student Conduct, levying appropriate sanctions. The Committee's work is essential to the academic integrity of the university: the integrity of course work and grades; of students' learning and education; of the certification of knowledge and competence that an Ohio State degree provides and represents. Although the process of notification, advising, and hearing is certainly daunting to students accused of violating the university's code of conduct, it is also intended to be a civilized and humane process, provided to ensure that students receive *due process*: that a suspicion is heard and examined objectively, not arbitrarily and informally, in a process common to all such cases—a process that aims to guarantee fair and common standards of proof, as well as sanction.

The process is an educational process that aims to hold students accountable for their actions in fair, reasonable, and proportional ways (considering the gravity and the particular circumstances of the case) when they have committed actions, whether knowingly or unwittingly, that compromise the academic integrity of the institution, its courses, its programs. In striving to ensure that sanctions are proportional under comparable circumstances, the committee must also recognize that each case is individual—no two are exactly the same. The work of the committee is not “piecework,” and each panel must always consider the particulars of the course and the assignment, and the circumstances of the individual student—the reasons for the student's actions, for example, and the extent to he or she accepts responsibility and seems to have learned from a mistake.

After the Committee has made its determinations, students have recourse to a formal appeal process (a written appeal, for limited kinds of reasons) through the Provost. At that time, all the facts of the case are reviewed, to ensure that the finding and sanctions are just and appropriate

Time Commitments for Faculty and Student Members of COAM

Panels consist of three faculty and two students from USG or CGS. The faculty and students serving on a panel cannot be from the same college as the student in the case being heard. All members are asked to give a minimum of seven (7) to ten (10) available dates per semester to serve on a hearing panel. The Hearings are held in Room 105, 33 W. 11th Avenue. Hearings are typically held in two-hour sessions with approximately a 30-minute preparation time prior to the hearing to read over the evidence for each case. One to four cases can be heard per hearing segment depending upon the complexity of the case, the number and/or rank of the students involved and the nature or importance of the case as to how much thought, intention and deliberation may be required. COAM holds a business meeting each spring and elects a Chair; all COAM members are urged, but not required, to attend this meeting.