



Academic Integrity And Appeals

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Policy Statement

BCIT supports and encourages integrity and ethical conduct in the areas of academic work, research, and scholarship. The Institute expects students to conduct themselves accordingly.

Academic integrity is expected and required in any and all settings, whether at any of BCIT's locations or at off-site locations such as practicum and co-op sites, workplace settings, or at home.

BCIT investigates suspected incidences of academic misconduct under this policy, and will apply penalties when reasonably justified. Penalties for academic misconduct incidents range up to and including suspension from the Institute.

BCIT prefers early intervention in matters of unacceptable conduct.

Ignorance of the policies of this institution does not constitute a defence against charges of breaching such policies.

Students have the right to appeal decisions on academic matters which affect them.

Purpose of Policy

This policy describes:

- BCIT's expectations and requirements regarding appropriate academic behaviour
- Consequences of inappropriate academic behaviour
- The procedure to follow when dealing with appeals of decisions affecting academic standing such as grade-related matters and academic misconduct.

This policy does not address student regulations (see BCIT Policy 5101) or inappropriate behaviour aside from academic issues, which is covered by BCIT Policy 5102, Student Code of Conduct (Non-Academic).

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Application

This policy applies to BCIT students, instructors, and other employees.

Related Documents and Legislation

BCIT policies:
 Policy 5101, Student Regulations
 Policy 5102, Student Code of Conduct
 Policy 5103, Student Evaluation
 Policy 6500, Research Ethics for Human Subjects
 Policy 6600, Integrity in Research
 Policy 7506, Copyright Compliance

BC College and Institute Act

Definitions

All terms and language used in this document are consistent with the Glossary of Definitions contained in Policy 5100, Glossary of Educational Policy Terms.

Other Information

Procedure documents associated with this policy include detailed information on the steps that are taken to review academic decisions, as well as the operation of the various appeal bodies.

1. Standards of Academic Integrity

1.1 Informing Students

While students are responsible for their own academic integrity, instructors have a duty to inform students of these expectations. As well, schools should make every effort to communicate information about Institute policies and procedures to students, utilizing media such as student handbooks, course outlines, calendars, etc. Schools should also inform and train faculty to recognize and respond appropriately and in a timely fashion to instances of alleged dishonesty.

1.2 Honesty

Honesty, which includes trustworthiness and adherence to facts, is expected and required of all students. Integrity in academic work is considered to be a central element of learning, and forms the basis of intellectual pursuits in any institute of higher learning.

Appropriate academic behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- Independently producing work submitted under one's own name
- Acknowledgement of any and all individuals who have contributed to a piece of work in any manner
- Properly and appropriately referencing all work
- Acknowledging all sources used
- Completing examinations without giving or receiving assistance, except for those students who have received authorization from the Institute to obtain accommodation because of a documented disability
- Respecting the integrity of examination materials and /or the examination process
- Respecting the integrity of computer security systems, software copyrights and the privacy of other's files

1.3 Research Ethics

The Institute expects all students engaged in research, whether funded or not, and whether a course requirement or not, to adhere to the principles prescribed by the Institute and contained in Policy 6500, Research Ethics for Human Subjects; and Policy 6600, Integrity in Research.

For students conducting non-funded research as part of their course of studies, allegations of misconduct in research will be dealt with through the procedures outlined in Policy 6600, Integrity in Research.

2. Prohibited Behaviours

2.1. Plagiarism

Academic integrity requires that persons do not falsely claim credit for the ideas, writing, or other intellectual property of others, either by presenting such works as their own or through impersonation.

2.2. Cheating and Other Prohibitions

The following activities are further examples (not all-inclusive) of breaches of this policy:

- Using cheat sheets or other sources of information in an examination, without authorization
- Communicating, in any way, with other students during an examination, to give or receive answers to exam questions
- Preparing work in whole or in part, with the expectation that this work will be submitted by another student for appraisal

- Offering for sale essays or other assignments, in whole or in part, with the expectation that these works will be submitted by a student for appraisal
- Submitting the work one has completed for one class, either at BCIT or elsewhere, for appraisal in a second class without prior authorization by the instructor
- Impersonating another student in an exam, test or interview
- Changing the score on an examination, test, or any assignment
- Encouraging, enabling or causing others to do or attempt any of the above

(This list is based in part on Senate policy on academic honesty, York University)

3. BCIT Investigates Academic Misconduct

BCIT will investigate suspected breaches of this policy and will lay charges if reasonable grounds exist.

4. Consequences of Academic Misconduct

A charge of academic misconduct could lead to one or more of a range of penalties. Consequences depend on the nature of the offence. Students may be required to sign a Student Performance Contract, agreeing to specific terms and behavioural and performance requirements. Sanctions range up to and including suspension from the institute. See also Procedure 5100-PR1, Student Reports/Student Performance Contracts.

In cases of unacceptable behaviour outside of academic issues (e.g., threats or violence), see Policy 5102, Student Code of Conduct (Non-Academic), and Procedure 5102-PR1, Response to Violations of the Student Code of Conduct (Non-Academic).

All decisions involving academic misconduct will be preceded by an investigation into the matter by the relevant teaching associate dean.

5. Appeals and Decision Reviews

BCIT provides informal and formal mechanisms whereby a student may arrange for a review of decisions that affect their academic standing at the Institute. All levels of formal review will follow the principles of natural justice and are to be preceded by an appropriate investigative and decision-making process.

BCIT has a strong preference for disputes to be resolved at the appropriate level and as close to their source as possible with a minimum of formality, and in a way that a neutral observer would find reasonable. Referral and consultation with the appropriate resource groups is strongly recommended. These groups include: Counselling, Disability, Harassment and Discrimination, Medical, Safety and Security, etc.

5.1. Decision Types

Students may request a review of decisions affecting their status or academic standing at BCIT. The procedure to be used and the number of levels of appeal available depends on the type of decision to be reviewed:

- Grade-related decisions** such as but not limited to:
 - Failing grades
 - Required To Discontinue (RTD)
- Academic misconduct decisions** such as but not limited to:
 - Cheating on an exam
 - Plagiarism

iii. **Conduct-related decisions** such as but not limited to:

- Theft
- Misuse of BCIT computer resources
- Violence
- Harassment
- Drug or alcohol abuse

iv. **Disability-related decisions**

A more detailed description of the steps associated with a review of academic matters is included in Procedure 5104-PR1, Academic Decision Review Process.

The steps for each of these procedures are indicated in the chart below.

5.2. Levels of Appeal/Types of Hearings

A **marks reassessment** is initiated by the student and consists of an informal review of a student's grade, involving the student and instructor.

A **formal request for marks reassessment** is initiated by the student, if dissatisfied with the informal marks reassessment. The teaching associate dean decides on the matter.

A **decision review board (DRB)** will consist of a five member panel; the non-voting Chair, chosen by the office of Student Judicial Affairs; two or more instructors; and one or more students. The chair, plus a minimum of one other member of the panel, shall have had formal training in the principles of natural justice.

An **Institute appeal tribunal** will consist of five persons: two faculty members, one administrator, one student, and an ex officio chair to be appointed by the Chair of the Appeals Standing Committee of the Education Council.

No member of a decision review board or an appeal tribunal may have had any previous involvement in the matter of the student's appeal, or in the matters which led up to the appeal request. No member may have any conflict of interest or hold any biases regarding the disposition of the appeal. In this sense, all members should be disinterested parties.

The **Appeals Standing Committee** is a committee provided by Education Council. Committee members may or may not be members of the Council. The purpose of the Committee is to provide a pool of trained individuals for institutional appeal tribunals.

Approximately twenty persons will comprise the Appeals Standing Committee. The composition will mirror as closely as possible the composition of an appeal tribunal: 50% faculty, 25% students, and 25% administrators.

Decision Review Types/Levels of Appeal

Type of Decision	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Grade-related decisions	Informal marks reassessment or grade review (Student/instructor)	Formal marks reassessment (Teaching associate dean) (Procedure 5104-PR1, Academic Decision Review)	Decision review board hearing (Procedure 5104-PR2, Decision Review Boards)	Institute appeal Tribunal hearing. Availability is restricted to certain circumstances. (Procedure 5104-PR3, Institutional Appeal Tribunals)
Academic misconduct decisions	Investigation (Program associate dean)	Decision review board Hearing (Procedure 5104-PR2, Decision Review Boards)	Institute appeal Tribunal hearing. Availability is restricted to certain circumstances. (Procedure 5104-PR3, Institution Appeal Tribunals)	
Non-academic conduct-related decisions	Refer to Policy 5102, Student Code of Conduct (Non-Academic)			
Disability-related decisions	Refer to policy 4501, Accommodation for Students with Disabilities			

6. Retention of Hearing Documents

The BCIT Registrar will be the sole custodian of the record of an appeal. It will be the responsibility of the chair of an appeal panel or Institute appeal tribunal to prepare and forward the permanent record of the hearing to the Registrar at the conclusion of the hearing. This record will be the sole copy retained.

Duties and Responsibilities

Teaching Associate Deans

Following Procedure 5104-PR1, teaching associate deans will receive requests from students for reassessment of grades, appoint a reassessor, make decisions on the matter, and inform the Registrar of the outcome.

Chairs of Appeal Panels and Chairs of Appeal Tribunals

The chair of an appeal panel or Institute appeal tribunal will prepare and forward the record of a hearing to the Registrar at the conclusion of the hearing.

Chair, Academic Appeals Standing Committee

The Chair of the Academic Appeals Standing Committee selects individuals to make up appeal tribunals from the Standing Committee.

Deans of schools

Deans receive applications from students for decision review board hearings, or to appeal grade-related or academic misconduct decisions. The dean passes all documents to the office of Student Judicial Affairs. Expenses associated with the conduct of the hearing will be borne by the relevant school.

Student Judicial Affairs

Receives applications for decision review board from the deans and makes all arrangements for the conduct of the hearing. Student Judicial Affairs will also populate the appeal panels and appoint the chair of each panel.

Decision Review Board

A decision review board will review a grade reassessment made by a teaching associate dean if a student is dissatisfied with the decision.

A decision review board will review the procedures taken and decision made by a program associate dean regarding allegations of academic misconduct, if a student is dissatisfied with the decision. See Procedure 5104-PR2, Decision Review Boards.

Institute Appeal Tribunal

An Institute appeal tribunal will consider the cases of students who are dissatisfied with the results of a decision review board hearing, either on the matter of grades reassessments, or on the matter of decisions made regarding academic misconduct. There are limited grounds for requesting an Institute appeal tribunal; these are described in Procedure 5104-PR1 and 5104-PR3, Institutional Appeal Tribunals.

Instructors

Instructors have a duty to inform students of the Institute’s expectations, policies, and procedures regarding academic integrity.

Instructors will conduct informal grade reviews with students upon request.

Instructors will report suspected instances of academic misconduct to their program associate dean.

Program Associate Deans

The program associate dean receives reports regarding academic misconduct, and conducts an investigation into the matter in tandem with the teaching associate dean (if a different person from self). The program associate dean makes the decision in the matter, keeps the involved student informed throughout the process, and reports the results to the dean and the Vice-President, Education. See Procedure 5104-PR1 for details.

The Registrar

The Registrar keeps any grade reassessment correspondence as part of the student’s permanent record. The Registrar is the sole custodian of the record of an appeal.

Researchers

Anyone carrying out research at BCIT is responsible for high standards of conduct in research and scholarship.

The Institute expects all students engaged in research, whether funded or not, and whether a course requirement or not, to adhere to the principles prescribed by the Institute and contained in policy 6500, Research Ethics for Human Subjects; and policy 6600, Integrity in Research.

Prior to the commencement of any project, it is the responsibility of the individual conducting the research to determine whether formal ethics approval is required.

Schools

Schools should make every effort to communicate information about Institute policies and procedures to students, utilizing media such as student handbooks, course outlines, calendars, etc.

Schools should help faculty to be well informed regarding BCIT policies and procedures, and should encourage as many staff and faculty as possible to take appropriate training in courses such as BCIT 0005, Academic Appeals in the Post-secondary Sector.

Students

Students are responsible for becoming familiar with BCIT policy, and are expected to meet all standards of academic and research integrity as indicated in this policy.

Students seeking amendments to their grades, or who are dissatisfied with decisions regarding allegations of academic misconduct, must follow the processes for review and, if necessary, appeal, as described in Procedures 5104-PR1, 5104-PR2, and 5014-PR3.

Vice-President, Education

The office of the Vice-President, Education, will receive and consider applications for Institutional appeal tribunals from students who are dissatisfied with the results of a decision review board hearing. The office of the Vice-President, Education will also coordinate the proceedings as described in Procedure 5104-PR1.

Procedures Associated With This Policy

- 5104-PR1, Academic Decision Review Process
- 5104-PR2, Decision Review Boards
- 5104-PR3, Institutional Appeal Tribunals
- 5100-PR1, Student Reports/Student Performance Contracts

Forms Associated With This Policy

See Procedures 5104-PR2 and 5104-PR3

Special Situations

None.

Amendment History

Policy 5002 was retired January 2009, and this policy 5104 is one of a series of policies and procedures created to replace it.

- 1. Created 2009 Jan 27
- 2. Amended 2010 May 25

Scheduled Review Date

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