

Selection of Program Members to Participate in an Academic Conduct Hearing

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

Link: TBA

Normally, the Appeals and Academic Honesty Committee (AAHC) will only call for a formal academic conduct hearing in cases of a dispute that a breach of academic conduct has occurred.

When a formal hearing is required, AAHC through the [Faculty of Graduate Studies' \(FGS\) Graduate Academic Affairs unit](#) shall endeavour with the Graduate Program Director (GPD) to secure the participation of two faculty members (minimum one) and one graduate student from the graduate program of the student in question. These program members would become voting members of a now augmented committee for the purposes of an academic conduct hearing facilitated by FGS to add discipline-specific expertise to the deliberations.

Relevant Background

Faculty of Graduate Studies Academic Conduct Procedures (link TBA) outline:

- All committee members are expected to act with impartiality, meaning freedom from bias or prejudice, ensuring fairness and neutrality in the application of the [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct](#) and associated procedures.
- Role of Augmented Committee Members in a Hearing:
 - Consider the facts and circumstances of the case and make informed decisions based on the evidence and other relevant information presented
 - Be prepared to ask questions to learn new information or seek clarification
 - For program members of the student in question, add discipline-specific expertise to the deliberations
 - Consider the inherent power imbalance and associated unconscious biases involved in situations of academic dishonesty to inform decision making
 - Are voting members for the purposes of the hearing
 - Maintain confidentiality on the matter

The [Senate Policy on Academic Conduct](#) outlines the following definitions:

- *Bias*: means the existence of a lack of neutrality, which may have the outcome of influencing or affecting the application of this Policy and its associated procedures in an unfair manner.
- *Impartiality*: means freedom from bias or prejudice, ensuring fairness and neutrality in the application of this Policy and its associated procedures.
- *University Community*: means students, faculty, instructors, staff, and invigilators, all of whom have responsibility for the cultivating and upholding good academic conduct in all elements of academic life, including research, teaching, learning and administration.

Faculty of Graduate Studies Conflict of Interest Disclosure with Respect to Graduate Student Education procedures outline:

- Individuals involved in processes of evaluation or adjudication in the Faculty of Graduate Studies are responsible for ensuring that, when required by the relevant activity, process or policy, they do not have a real, perceived, or potential conflict of interest that may impact the integrity of their activities arising from current, previous, or foreseen future relationships with the parties in question.
 - As required, these individuals must ensure they are at arm’s length from parties in question. **“Arm’s length” refers to a relationship which is “conducted between parties that have no corporate or other direct connections, familial or financial relationships with each other, and thus act each in its own self-interest.”**

Guidance for the Selection of Program Members

In keeping with the selected policy and procedure excerpts outlined, GPDs should approach members of their faculty/student community with an eye towards individuals that have demonstrated a sustained commitment to upholding collegial program governance for effective program functioning. GPDs are to refrain from sharing specifics regarding the academic conduct case during the canvassing for participation stage.

Faculty Member Participation

- Where relevant, engage with active and past members of the program’s Executive Committee in the first instance
- Consider an individual with specific expertise in the subject matter at issue

Student Participation

- Where relevant, engage with the program’s local Graduate Students’ Association in the first instance
- Consider an individual nearing the completion of the program, with preference towards a member outside of the cohort of the student in question

Confidentiality

All individuals approached for possible participation in an academic conduct hearing are expected to maintain confidentiality on the matter regardless of their eventual participation status in the proceedings.