



COMMUNITY STANDARDS AND CONDUCT HANDBOOK



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Handbook Edition

This handbook was updated September 2018 and is subject to ratification by the Mailman School faculty before the end of the fall 2018 semester. However, the policies herein are applicable to all students enrolled with the Mailman School of Public Health.

Updates/Changes

Should updates be made to this handbook, notice of such changes will be appropriately communicated to the Mailman School community and cataloged below.

If you note an error, broken link, etc., please bring it to the attention of the Office of Student Affairs at mshp-osa@columbia.edu.

No updates/changes at this time.

Academic, Personal, and Professional Integrity

Personal and professional honesty is a keystone of excellence in academic pursuits, scientific research, and service. In 1978 the School Assembly drafted an Honor Code – heretofore known as the Code of Academic Integrity – relating specifically to student/faculty responsibilities in assuring academic integrity. In 1992 the School's Academic Standards Committee further defined students' responsibilities in assuring that academic integrity is maintained. These documents were reviewed and revised by specially appointed Honor Code Committees, with student and faculty members, in 2003 and 2008, and are described in full in the [Code of Academic Integrity](#) section below. This current version went into effect in late August, 2009.

As of May 24th, 2010, the Mailman School of Public Health actively uses the software program [Turnitin](#). This is one part of the School's comprehensive approach to its Code of Academic Integrity. This includes a focus on education and prevention but also encompasses detection of possible violations.

During the 2017-2018 academic year, the Office of Student Affairs included a [Community Standards](#) website meant to encompass the broad array of academic, personal, and professional expectations for all students and Mailman community members. Students are expected to review these webpages as well as this handbook, the handbooks of their respective departments and degree programs, and their matriculating class handbooks, all of which can be found on the [Student Handbooks](#) page of the Mailman School website. Below is a brief but non-exhaustive summary of many of these expectations.

Statement of Expectations

Mailman School of Public Health students have a responsibility to uphold a high standard of conduct and maintain academic, personal, and profession integrity. All students are required to review the Mailman School community standards herein and [online](#) and complete an assessment about academic integrity during the course of orientation. Students are also required to review other Mailman School and University-wide documents, videos, tutorials, etc. designed to inform students of the expectations of being a Columbian. All members of the Mailman community are responsible for reporting violations of academic, personal, and/or professional standards to a faculty member, the Office of Student Affairs, and/or another person of authority. Student may also make reports directly via web-forms found on the [Reporting and Disciplinary Process](#) page. The Mailman School of Public Health strongly believes in academic, personal, and professional integrity and maintaining a high standard of conduct. Any and all violations will be taken seriously and thoroughly addressed.

Professionalism and Personal Accountability

Outlined herein and within the [Community Standards webpages](#) are principles which are essential to ensure a student's suitability to become a public health professional. Students at the Mailman School are expected to demonstrate good judgment and a sense of responsibility, sensitivity, and compassion. These qualities are fundamental characteristics of ethical and professional public health practitioners and researchers. The [Expectations for Professionalism and Personal Accountability](#) provide standards which are essential to ensuring a student's suitability to become a public health professional. The understanding is that students will commit to the standard of professionalism when they are in the classroom, completing practica, working on and off campus (e.g., in a TA/RA position, etc.), serving as student leaders in various capacities, and any other role associated with being a part of the Mailman School and Columbia University communities.

By [signing](#) the Mailman School's Affirmation of Community Standards, students agree to abide by its tenets. Violations of the Community Standards, even those that arise from lack of awareness or understanding, may lead to disciplinary action for the offending student.

Students “sign” the Affirmation of Community Standards by completing the Student Handbook Review assignment found on their Orientation and Transition course page within CourseWorks (aka Canvas).

Conduct as a student-employee, student-leader, or when completing practicum

We expect the highest level of professionalism when students are in the role of employee (e.g., teaching assistant, research assistant, etc.), student-leader, or in the field during their practicum. A student must be in [good academic standing](#) to hold any of these roles, this includes one’s grades as well as upholding good conduct outlined throughout the [student handbooks](#) and [community standards pages](#). While in the role of student-employee or student-leader or while completing one’s practicum, students should keep in mind the following expectations. Though not an exhaustive list, any breach of the following could be considered grounds for disciplinary action and may prevent a student from participating in these roles.

A student must:

- represent the School with the highest ethical and moral standards
- fulfill job responsibilities as dictated by job or project descriptions
- not forego responsibilities without prior discussion with a supervisor, academic department, or the Office of Student Affairs
- attend required meetings as requested
- arrive to positions on time and complete tasks on time, unless previously discussed with supervisor

Academic Integrity

A violation of academic integrity compromises the intellectual foundation of our institution. To violate that principle is one of the most serious offenses a student can commit at Columbia University. Irrespective of the disciplinary outcome, faculty members reserve the right to assign grades as they deem appropriate. The Office of Student Affairs reserves the right to partner with the [Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards](#) (SCCS) when investigating matters of alleged academic misconduct. The following section in this handbook details the Mailman School’s expectations for academic integrity, the process by which the School addresses alleged academic misconduct, and the potential sanctions for students found in violation of the Code of Academic Integrity.

In Summary

Students have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with all Columbia University and Mailman School policies and procedures, especially as they relate to conduct, professionalism, and academic integrity. The policies and procedures can be found within this document, on the Mailman School [Community Standards](#) pages, in the handbooks of students’ respective departments and degree programs, and the matriculating class handbooks, all of which can be found on the [Student Handbooks](#) page of the Mailman School website. All students will be held to the standards set forth throughout all of the above.

Code of Academic Integrity

Preamble

Public health practice requires the highest degree of responsibility and integrity. Violations of the Code of Academic Integrity are viewed very seriously by the Mailman School of Public Health. To prevent misunderstanding and to assure the highest possible standards of conduct, all Mailman faculty and students must agree to abide by the following tenets.

To promote academic integrity, all course requirements and expectations should be clearly specified by the instructor at the beginning of the course. Included should be attendance requirements; performance expectations in writing assignments, exams, and oral presentations; and criteria for evaluation. In addition, any deviations from the expectations outlined below should be explicitly addressed and clarified by the instructor. If there is any ambiguity in course requirements or expectations, it is the responsibility of the student to seek clarification from the instructor.

Academic Standards and Expectations

The following standards and expectations apply to all written assignments, examinations, and oral presentations, unless the instructor specifically directs otherwise. These rules should not, however, be construed as mandatory; variations from these rules are at the instructor's discretion, so long as variations are clearly stated in the course syllabus or other document (e.g., written instructions for a particular assignment). Individual faculty members may well experiment with alternate formats, being careful to present clearly the specifications in advance of the assignment.

With regard to any assignment

- If you use or paraphrase another person's ideas, you are to acknowledge the source in a proper citation.
- If you use the actual words or expressions of another person or source, including the Internet, you must indicate such use by incorporation of quotation marks and a proper citation. If questions arise concerning proper use of quotations, citations, or bibliography, students should contact instructors.
- You are to provide your own work, not someone else's, unless explicitly directed by the instructor. Examples of using someone else's work include: submitting essays, or portions of essays, written by other people as one's own; or collaborating with others on an assignment or examination without specific permission from the faculty member to do so.
- Students should obtain the permission of their instructor before seeking editorial assistance with assignments. In addition, if editorial assistance is received, the name of the person providing that assistance should be indicated in the academic work submitted.
- Students may not submit material prepared for one course to fulfill the requirements for a second course without having received prior written permission from both instructors.

With regard to written assignments

- Unless otherwise specified by the instructor, all written assignments (e.g., papers, essays, homework, theses, dissertations, and take-home examinations) are to be the original work of each student, being completed by the student alone, using only appropriate and approved resources. If there is any question as to what constitutes an approved resource or reference tool, the student should request clarification from the instructor.
- All sources must be referenced and quotations identified. If there is any doubt about proper procedures, students should consult the instructor.
- Students may not work with another student on any part of a written assignment, nor may they consult with any faculty member or other individual without the express permission of the course instructor.
- Written assignments should not be shared with fellow students or others prior to submitting the assignment to the instructor.
- Take-home examinations are to be considered "closed book" exercises (i.e., no course or outside materials are to be consulted), unless directed otherwise by the instructor.

With regard to assignments done in groups

- The amount of collaboration with others that is permitted in the completion of assignments can vary depending upon the policy set by the course instructor.

- Students must assume that collaboration in the completion of assignments is prohibited unless explicitly specified by the instructor.
- The onus is on the student to get clarification on instructors' policies pertaining to collaboration with peers.
- "Group work" is loosely defined as work for which all members of the group receive the same grade; for which preparation and submission of the material is completed by the group; and for which the group is permitted to discuss both the concepts and the final, submitted deliverable.
- Students must acknowledge any collaboration and its extent in all submitted work. This requirement applies to collaboration on editing as well as collaboration on substance.
- Unless otherwise specified, take-home examinations are given with the understanding that students may not consult other students.

With regard to in-class examinations

Unless otherwise specified by the instructor, no assistance may be sought or given by any student, and no notes, texts, or other written material may be consulted during the examination.

With regard to oral presentations

All audio-visual materials used in presentations must be appropriately referenced and sources/quotations identified.

Disciplinary Overview

The procedures outlined in this document constitute the formal administrative mechanisms by which the Mailman School of Public Health responds to alleged violations of the Code of Academic Integrity. Faculty and students are responsible for reporting any violations of the Code of Academic Integrity, observed or otherwise identified or suspected; but it is the responsibility of the School to pursue and investigate allegations and, where appropriate and necessary, impose sanctions. In the event of a suspected Code of Academic Integrity violation, the faculty member or student may, at their discretion, informally consult appropriate Mailman School of Public Health colleagues for advice, such as a faculty member, department chair, or a representative from the Office of Student Affairs. **It is, however, the obligation of all faculty and students to follow the procedures detailed in this document to respond to suspected infractions of the Code of Academic Integrity, rather than to attempt to resolve them on an individual or informal basis.**

- Confidentiality must be strictly maintained by all parties; only those with a legitimate need to know shall be informed.
- Professors must withhold assigning grades for any disputed assignments and the final course grade until the [Disciplinary Hearing Procedures](#) have been completed.
- A written complaint is required to initiate the process. If a student or faculty member suspects academic misconduct has occurred, that individual (hereafter referred to as the "complainant") must address a [written complaint](#) to the Dean of Students, describing the circumstances of the suspected infraction and the person believed to be responsible.

Written complaints are submitted via an [Academic Integrity Violation Referral](#) hosted by Student Conduct and Community Standards (SCCS). These complaints are routed directly to the Mailman School Office of Student Affairs (OSA) for evaluation and prior to any investigation, which is often conducted by SCCS. OSA reserves the right to partner with the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (SCCS) when investigating matters of alleged academic misconduct.

Interpretation and Revision

The Faculty of the Mailman School will develop procedures for the administration of hearings that are consistent with provisions of the Code of Academic Integrity. The Dean of Students (or designee) may make minor modifications to procedure as necessary and will provide reasonable advance notice to the parties

involved, either by posting online and/or in the form of written communication to the student. The Dean of Students (or designee) may adjust procedures if a new law or regulation or a case presents complications that require policy or procedural alterations not reflected in the policy and/or procedures. Any question of interpretation of the policy/procedures may be referred to the Vice Dean of Education (or designee) whose interpretation is final.

Policies will be reviewed and updated annually under the direction of the Dean of Students (or designee).

Designees

The Dean of Students retains the authority to designate any member of the Student Affairs staff to manage any and all aspects of the investigation and adjudication of alleged academic misconduct. Students will be informed of the designee(s) via email correspondence from the Office of Student Affairs. The Dean of Students (or designee) reserves the right to partner with the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (SCCS) when investigating matters of alleged academic.

Investigating Allegations of Academic Misconduct

The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) reserves the right to partner with the [Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards](#) (SCCS) when investigating matters of alleged academic misconduct. At present, **SCCS acts only as an investigative body** for these types of matters but may suggest sanctions and outcomes for the School to consider. However, the Mailman School determines final outcomes and sanctions. The length of an investigation is dependent upon the nature and complexity of an alleged violation of the Code of Academic Integrity. OSA and/or SCCS will regularly keep students informed of the investigative timeline via email correspondence.

Disciplinary Hearing Procedures

Following receipt of a [written report](#) addressed to the Dean of Students, the Dean of Students (or designee) will contact the complainant, typically within five (5) business days, to discuss the report. The complainant is encouraged to describe the relevant facts, as well as impressions and thoughts regarding the gravity of the incident, its implications, and consequences. Based on this conversation and all relevant information, the Dean of Students (or designee) will determine whether the complaint warrants a formal disciplinary review.

Should the complaint warrant formal disciplinary review, the Dean of Students (or designee) will convene an Honor Board Committee – typically within ten (10) business days of the receipt of the written report – to begin the [initial review procedures](#), which may include [an investigation](#) by the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards.

Non-Punitive Outreach and Support

The Office of Student Affairs is cognizant of the fact that students embroiled in the academic misconduct process may experience a range of emotions from anxiety to frustration as well as others. The [Associate Director of Student Support](#) has been identified as a resource within OSA separate from the conduct process, who will pro-actively provide outreach and support to students accused of violating the Code of Academic Integrity.

Composition and Responsibilities of the Honor Board Committee

A full Honor Board Committee will consist of two (2) faculty members and two (2) students, each of whom is appointed by the Dean of Students (or designee). Two of the four members – one student and one faculty member – will serve as co-chairpersons. The co-chairs serve two important functions: first, they and the Director of Student Affairs (or designee) are responsible for reaching an [initial determination](#) on the case (described below); and, second, they serve as liaisons to the full Honor Board Committee regarding

administrative matters and scheduling. The co-chairs will make decisions jointly (e.g., on dates and on circumstances for meetings and hearings). The Director of Student Affairs (or designee) will serve as an ex officio member of the Honor Board Committee.

Initial Review Procedures

Once members of the Honor Board Committee are identified, subsequent Honor Board Hearing procedures can take two forms: (1) an abbreviated review by the co-chairpersons ([Initial Determination](#)), or (2) [hearing via a full Honor Board Committee](#).

Initial Determination

Following selection of the Honor Board Committee members, the Director of Student Affairs (or designee) will review the written complaint (and refer the matter to Student Conduct and Community Standards (SCCS) for investigation, if necessary). Subsequent to this review and prior to any investigation, a notification will be sent via Columbia University email to the student accused of violating the Code of Academic Integrity, typically within two (2) weeks of the initial receipt of the written report. Notification will include the nature of the complaint, by whom it was made, and the composition of the Honor Board Committee.

Concurrent to this notification, the Associate Director of Student Support may reach out to the accused student to offer guidance through the process and any necessary support.

Should an investigation be required, the notification will also include those details. The length of an investigation is dependent upon the nature and complexity of the alleged violation(s) of the Code of Academic Integrity. The Office of Student Affairs and/or SCCS will regularly keep students informed of the investigative timeline via email correspondence. Students are expected to respond to OSA/SCCS correspondences in a timely manner.

A date will then be set for the Initial Determination meeting of the co-chairpersons and the Director of Student Affairs (or designee) with the accused student, typically within two (2) weeks of the written notification to the accused student (or longer, if necessary, based on a schedule determined by an SCCS investigation).

CO-CHAIRPERSONS' INITIAL DETERMINATION

The two co-chairpersons review the written complaint and SCCS investigation findings (if applicable) and meet with the Director of Student Affairs (or designee) and the accused student to determine whether the infraction occurred, whether the accused student is responsible for the alleged infraction, and (if applicable) possible sanctions. Their determinations might include:

- The accused student is not responsible for the alleged violation of the Code of Academic Integrity
- Further evidence or information is required before the Initial Determination can be made (in this case, a continuation of the procedure is typically scheduled within one week)
- The accused student is responsible for the alleged violation of the Code of Academic Integrity
- A [full Honor Board hearing](#) is required.

Should the co-chairpersons determine that the alleged infraction did indeed occur and that the accused student is responsible, they may recommend a suitable penalty or course of action. (Commonly-imposed [sanctions](#) are listed below.) The outcome, including sanctions (if any), will be provided in writing to the student typically within five (5) business days of the Initial Determination meeting. (The decision process may extend beyond the typical timeline, especially in complex cases, and the co-chairs reserve the right to take more time if needed. This extension will be communicated to the student in a timely manner.) If the co-chairpersons recommend a penalty or course of action which is acceptable to the accused student, the matter ends there. The student has five (5) business days, however, to challenge the finding and/or sanction. If

the accused student does challenge the finding and/or sanction, then the Dean of Students will review the matter and either (1) recommend the case be referred to a full [Honor Board Hearing](#), (2) adjust the decision based on the student's appeal, or (3) reject the appeal and uphold the decision of the initial review.

GROUND(S) FOR APPEAL

The three grounds for appeal are:

- **Procedural error:** An appeal based on procedural error must identify with specificity each alleged error(s) within the investigative and/or hearing process and the ways in which the specified error(s) substantially affected the decision and/or sanction to the detriment of the student;
- **New information:** An appeal based on new information must explain why this information was not available or not provided at the time of the hearing or in a timely manner, and how this information would substantially alter the decision rendered. Additionally, if a party declined to participate or withdrew from the process, the new information that the party could have provided if they had fully participated in the process will not be considered;
- **Excessiveness of the sanction:** An appeal based on the imposed sanction must explain why a sanction is inappropriate based on the weight of the information provided during the investigation, hearing, and/or sanction phases of process.

Disagreement with the finding or sanction(s) is not, by itself, a ground for appeal. Moreover, the purpose of an appeal is not to initiate a review of substantive issues of fact.

Full Honor Board Hearing

The full Honor Board Hearing begins with one of the co-chairpersons presenting the available facts of the case to the other members of the Honor Board Committee. The Honor Board Committee will then hear testimony first from the complainant; then from the accused student, who may or may not be accompanied by a chosen [advisor](#). The complainant and the accused student will present to the Board separately with only Honor Board Committee members present. After hearing all of the testimony, the Honor Board Committee may recall those testifying (either separately or collectively) or other relevant witnesses for further questions or clarifications.

Following the Honor Board Hearing, the Honor Board Committee members will decide on a finding. Possible findings include:

- The accused student is not responsible for the alleged violation of the Code of Academic Integrity;
- The accused student is responsible for the alleged violation of the Code of Academic Integrity;
- The hearing is held open pending the acquisition of further evidence (in this case, a continuation of the procedure is typically scheduled within one week).

Should the Honor Board Committee, after hearing testimony from all concerned, determine that the alleged infraction did indeed occur and that the accused student is responsible, then the Honor Board Committee may recommend a suitable penalty or course of action. (Commonly-imposed [sanctions](#) are listed below.) The Director of Student Affairs (or designee) informs the accused student of the Honor Board Committee's determination (and any possible sanctions) in writing typically within five (5) business days of the full Honor Board Hearing. (The decision process may extend beyond the typical timeline, especially in complex cases, and the co-chairs reserve the right to take more time if needed. This extension will be communicated to the student in a timely manner.) If the full Honor Board Committee's finding and/or sanction is unacceptable to the accused student, then the accused student has the right to an appeal within five (5) business days of receipt of written notification of the Honor Board decision. See the subsequent section, [Appeal Proceedings](#).

Advisor

An accused student will be allowed, if requested, the presence in all proceedings of an advisor, chosen from the student body or faculty of the Mailman School. Note, however, that the disciplinary hearing procedures are not a legal proceedings. Lawyers are not permitted to attend the initial determination meeting or full Honor Board Hearings (but nothing shall prohibit the accused student from consulting a lawyer). No one other than members of the Honor Board Committee, those directly involved in a case, and their designated advisors, will be present at any meeting or hearing. All participants in meetings and hearings will be reminded that disciplinary hearing procedures are strictly confidential and should not be discussed with individuals who are not formally involved in the process.

Sanctioning Guidelines

If an accused student is found responsible for violation(s) of the Code of Academic Integrity, the Honor Board Committee will impose sanctions chosen to correspond to the seriousness of the accused student's offense. Sanctions are recommended by the members of the Honor Board Committee and are imposed after they have been reviewed by the Director of Student Affairs (or designee) with regard to precedent and the sanctions' severity. The Director of Student Affairs (or designee) informs the accused student of the Honor Board Committee's determination (and any possible sanctions) in writing typically within five (5) business days of such determination. (The decision process may extend beyond the typical timeline, especially in complex cases, and the co-chairs reserve the right to take more time if needed. This extension will be communicated to the student in a timely manner.) Professors must withhold assigning the final course grade and grades for any disputed assignments until the conclusion of the disciplinary hearing proceedings.

Sanctions include but are not limited to:

- A notation of Disciplinary Probation in the student's file (to be destroyed upon graduation).
- A notation of Disciplinary Probation in the student's permanent record. (The permanent record is not destroyed and is used for references and clearances post-graduation.)
- A notation of Disciplinary Probation on the student's transcript.
- A notation of Deferred Suspension in the student's file (to be destroyed upon graduation).
- A notation of Deferred Suspension in the student's permanent record (The permanent record is not destroyed and is used for references and clearances post-graduation).
- A notation of Deferred Suspension on the student's transcript.
- A requirement that the student complete an educational activity, to underscore the nature of the infraction and its implications (for example, writing a 7-page paper on the professional consequences of plagiarism to be reviewed by the Honor Board Committee, passing a course in research ethics or scientific writing, etc.).
- A recommendation to the professor to assign a grade of "F" for a particular paper or assignment, or even as the final grade for the course.
- Suspension from the Mailman School of Public Health for a designated time, noted in the student's file (to be destroyed upon graduation).
- Suspension from the Mailman School of Public Health for a designated time, noted in the student's permanent record. (The permanent record is not destroyed and is used for references and clearances post-graduation.)
- Suspension from the Mailman School of Public Health for a designated period of time, noted on the student's transcript.
- Expulsion from the Mailman School of Public Health noted in the student's permanent record and transcript.

The Sanctioning Guidelines section applies to all stages of the disciplinary hearing proceedings (including the Initial Determination by co-chairpersons, full Honor Board Hearing, or appeals process).

Appeal of a Full Honor Board Hearing

An accused student may appeal the decision of the full Honor Board Hearing in writing to the Dean of Students within five (5) business days of receipt of a decision. If no appeal is brought within that 5-day period, the decision of the Honor Board Committee is final and no longer subject to appeal.

Upon receipt of a request for appeal, the Dean of Students convenes a Final Appeal Committee comprised of the Mailman School of Public Health Dean, the Vice Dean for Education, and the Dean of Students. All materials from prior hearings are submitted to the Final Appeal Committee for review. The committee may choose to call the accused student or others to give further testimony, but this is not required and is left at the discretion of the members of the Final Appeal Committee. The Final Appeal Committee reviews the case and makes the final determination.

This appeal process applies only to decisions rendered by the full Honor Board Hearing. Procedures for appealing the Initial Determination by the Honor Board Committee co-chairpersons are detailed in the [Initial Review Procedures](#).

Grounds for Appeal

The three grounds for appeal are:

- **Procedural error:** An appeal based on procedural error must identify with specificity each alleged error(s) within the investigative and/or hearing process and the ways in which the specified error(s) substantially affected the decision and/or sanction to the detriment of the student;
- **New information:** An appeal based on new information must explain why this information was not available or not provided at the time of the hearing or in a timely manner, and how this information would substantially alter the decision rendered. Additionally, if a party declined to participate or withdrew from the process, the new information that the party could have provided if they had fully participated in the process will not be considered;
- **Excessiveness of the sanction:** An appeal based on the imposed sanction must explain why a sanction is inappropriate based on the weight of the information provided during the investigation, hearing, and/or sanction phases of process.

Disagreement with the finding or sanction(s) is not, by itself, a ground for appeal. Moreover, the purpose of an appeal is not to initiate a review of substantive issues of fact.

Enforcement and Recording of Honor Board Determinations

Responsibility for enforcing recommendations of the Honor Board Committee and/or the Final Appeal Committee shall rest with the Dean of the School.

Links to Related Policies and Procedures and Online Resources for Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism

Links to Related Policies and Procedures:

- [Mailman School of Public Health Grading System](#)
- [Policy on Access to Student Records \(FERPA\)](#)
- [Other Mailman School Policies for Students](#)

Online Resources for Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism:

- [Office of Research Integrity, US Department of Health & Human Services](#)
- From [Purdue University](#)
- From [Indiana University](#)

Dean's Discipline at the Mailman School

The Mailman School of Public Health believes that as members of the Columbia University community, all students are expected to uphold the highest standards of respect, integrity, and civility. These core values are key components of the University/School experience. Students are therefore expected to conduct themselves in an honest, civil, and respectful manner in all aspects of their lives.

The purposes of the [Mailman School's Community Standards](#) – including the [Affirmation of Community Standards](#) and [Guidelines on Professionalism](#) – are to provide fundamental standards and expectations, which ensure students suitability to become public health professionals. Behavioral misconduct that disregards the Affirmation of Community Standards and Professional Guidelines, ethical expectations, or individual rights are examples of such ethical and professional infractions. Students alleged to be in violation of these standards are subject to Dean's Discipline, as outlined below.

Dean's Discipline is the process used to investigate and respond to allegations of behavioral misconduct. Through this process, the Mailman School (or designee) communicates the expectations outlined in the [Community Standards](#), and other University policies, namely, the [Standards and Discipline](#). Dean's Discipline is not meant to be an adversarial or legal process, but instead aims to educate students about the impact their behavior may have on their own lives and the greater community.

A student charged with disciplinary infraction subject to "Dean's Discipline" is entitled to notice of the charges, an opportunity to be heard and an opportunity to appeal a disciplinary decision to the Dean of Students of the School of Public Health.

Ordinarily, a disciplinary proceeding begins with written communication from the Office of Student Affairs requiring the accused student to attend a disciplinary hearing to respond to a specified charge. (In rare cases, the proceeding may begin with an oral communication requiring the presence of the student at a hearing.) The hearing is held before the Director of Student Affairs (or designee) and two (2) other members of the Faculty of the School of Public Health, appointed by the Dean of the School of Public Health (or designee). The hearing is a fact-finding, not an adversarial courtroom-type, proceeding; the accused student need not be present to hear other witnesses, and there is no formal cross examination or objection to evidence. In addition, although an accused student is always free to consult an attorney, the accused student may not have an attorney present during a disciplinary hearing or at any appeal.

The accused student is informed of the evidence that led to the charges against him or her and asked to respond. The accused student may offer his or her own evidence. This includes the accused student's own appearance at the hearing and may include the appearance by others (witnesses) on his or her behalf and any written submission or relevant documents that the accused student may wish to submit.

After hearing the accused student and others and considering all the evidence, the hearing body reaches a determination and notifies the accused student in writing of the decision. If the accused student is found to have committed a disciplinary infraction, the penalty may include, but is not limited to, censure, probation, suspension and dismissal.

The accused student has the right to appeal a decision that results from a disciplinary hearing to the Dean of Students of the School of Public Health. The appeal must be made in writing within seven (7) business days of the time he or she is notified of the decision, and it must clearly state the grounds for appeal. Such appeal should be sent to the Dean of Students via email.

Normally, on such an appeal, the Dean of Students relies solely upon the written record and does not conduct a new factual investigation. Moreover, the Dean of Students focuses upon whether, in the Dean's view, the decision made and the discipline imposed are reasonable under all of the circumstances of the case. There is no further appeal within the University.

Please note, these exceptions:

- For cases of alleged academic misconduct, the Mailman School utilizes their internal process detailed above in the [Code of Academic Integrity](#).
- For cases that involve allegations of gender-based misconduct (such as sexual harassment, sexual assault, gender-based harassment, stalking and domestic violence), students should consult the [Gender-Based Misconduct Policy and Procedures for Students](#).
- The University-wide [Rules of University Conduct](#) govern misconduct incident to demonstrations, rallies, and picketing and displace "Dean's Discipline."

Grievance Procedures Regarding Academic Freedom in the Classroom

At the request of the President, the Mailman School of Public Health reviewed its procedures by which students may express grievances regarding improper treatment by faculty. While the School provides many avenues for addressing non-academic concerns, its formal student grievance procedures focus solely on grade appeals.

In light of the President's request, other possible areas of student academic grievance were considered. It was recognized that the School's grievance procedures must take into account and balance basic understandings of academic freedom and academic obligation. The Mailman School is an academic community committed to fostering intellectual inquiry in a climate of academic freedom and integrity. Its members – students and faculty alike – are expected to uphold these principles and exhibit tolerance and respect for others.

The application of any grievance policy also must take into account key attributes and principles of public health and the nature of the education that we value. Specifically, there are sharp societal divides associated with many of the topic areas of public health. Some of the most important work in public health has questioned widely held assumptions and has resulted in ideas that are unsettling and offensive to many. Ours is a school in which advocacy in the arena of public health is respected. The robust and uninhibited debate that the School values as an indication of intellectual vitality must not be constrained. Finally, and of central importance, students and faculty members of the Mailman School of Public Health must not be put in a position of fearing reprisals of any kind for expressing unorthodox or unpopular political views.

In terms of the process for changing student academic grievance procedures, any change in the School's grievances policies requires the participation and concurrence of the School's faculty. The Dean appoints a committee of faculty and others to draft new policy on student grievances for presentation to the faculty. In the interim, and in response to the President's request, the Dean has put in place procedures to address student grievances concerning professional misconduct by faculty. Students and faculty are welcome to comment on these procedures or suggest ways in which they can be improved. Student comments should be emailed to the Dean of Students and faculty comments should be emailed to the Vice Dean for Education.

The University Statutes and the general policies of the University describe the roles and responsibilities of faculty in their teaching and research. A full description of faculty rights and obligations may be found in the [Faculty Handbook](#). Faculty have a right to expect freedom in the classroom to discuss their subjects and not to be penalized for their private opinions. Faculty also have obligations arising from their position in the

academic community, and should refrain from conduct in the classroom that adversely affects the learning environment. Chapter 7 of the Faculty Handbook reads in pertinent parts:

The University's commitment to the principle of academic freedom is defined in Section 70a of the University Statutes. That commitment assures officers of the freedom to determine the content of what they teach and the manner in which it is taught and the freedom to choose the subjects of their research and publish their results. It also guarantees that they will not be penalized for expressions of opinion or association in their private or civic capacity.

In conducting their classes, faculty should make every effort to be accurate and should show respect for the rights of others to hold opinions differing from their own. They should confine their classes to the subject matter covered by the courses and not use them to advocate any cause.

The current student grievance procedures are to be used when a student believes that a faculty member has failed to meet these standards in one of their classes. The procedures provide students with avenues for informally resolving complaints about the School's faculty and for seeking formal redress from the Dean of the School if those efforts at mediation fail. The grievance procedures also provide for an appeal of the Dean's decision by either the student or faculty member to the Executive Vice President for Health and Biomedical Sciences and to the Provost.

These procedures do not take the place of the grievance procedures already established to address disputes over grades. Students also should use alternative procedures in the following situations:

- If the alleged misconduct involves discrimination and/or sexual harassment, a student should file a complaint with the Associate Provost for Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. The procedures for handling such complaints and further resources can be found on the [Essential Policies for the Columbia Community](#) webpage.
- Complaints against the School's faculty that allege scientific or scholarly misconduct also are evaluated using other procedures. These are contained in the statement Guidelines for Review of Misconduct in Science for the Columbia University's Health Sciences.

Informal Conflict Resolution

A grievance might surface through a faculty member or a department chair that a student chooses to approach. In many cases the matter can be resolved informally at that level, if both parties are in agreement. The staff in the Office of Student Affairs is available to support students in their discussions at this stage.

For disputes that cannot be resolved, the student should be referred to the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students may discuss the situation with the Vice Dean for Education. Some complaints stop here through a process of counseling and evaluation if both parties feel that the matter can be addressed at this level. Accurate assessment and mutual solution are the goals at this stage of the proceedings. Students are advised of their options. They include, but are not limited to:

- Taking no action. (Sometimes discussion is the goal.);
- Role playing or problem solving should a student wish to have a conversation with the faculty person in question;
- The Dean of Students, serving as an intermediary between the faculty member and the student, mediating the concerns;
- The Dean of Students speaking to the relevant department chair.

Students also may bring their problems to the University's Ombuds Officer, who serves as an informal, confidential resource for assisting members of the University with conflict resolution. The Ombuds Officer provides information, counseling and referrals to appropriate University offices. The Ombuds Officer also will

mediate conflicts if both parties agree, but does not have the authority to adjudicate disputes and does not participate in any formal University grievance proceedings.

[Columbia University Ombuds Office.](#)

Formal Grievance Procedures

Students are encouraged but not required to seek an informal resolution to their complaints. They may elect, instead, to ask for a formal grievance hearing. They may also seek a grievance hearing if informal mediation fails. The grievance procedures that students should follow will depend upon the school within which the faculty member is appointed and the nature of the alleged misconduct.

If the faculty member holds an appointment in the Mailman School of Public Health, students may use the procedures described in this statement to address faculty misconduct in relation to the standards quoted above from the Faculty Handbook. If the faculty member belongs to another school, students must use that school's procedures. Students may, however, ask for help from the Mailman School's department chairs and the deans in identifying and understanding the appropriate procedures.

Any student currently enrolled in the University and directly affected by the behavior of a faculty member of the Mailman School of Public Health may ask for a grievance hearing under the procedures in this current grievance procedure.

The student initiates the hearing by submitting a written statement to the Dean of the School documenting the grievance. The request must be submitted no later than thirty (30) days after the end of the semester within which the misconduct was alleged to have occurred.

The Dean will review the complaint to determine if there are sufficient grounds to proceed with a hearing or if the issues raised by the student can be resolved in another manner. If the Dean determines that a hearing is warranted, the Dean will appoint an ad hoc advisory committee to operate as a fact-finding body and report back on whether the complaint is justified. When appropriate, the committee also may recommend remedies to the student's complaint and disciplinary action against the faculty member. The composition of such an ad hoc advisory committee cannot be determined before the event. It is selected by the Dean for its expertise in meeting the issues raised. The membership will normally consist of faculty members and, at the discretion of the Dean, could include a student and/or senior administrator.

The accused faculty member is given the student's letter of complaint and invited to provide the ad hoc advisory committee with a written response. The committee reviews both statements and is given access to any other written documents relevant to the complaint. It will normally interview both the grievant and the faculty member and may, at its discretion, ask others to provide testimony.

The ad hoc committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Dean of the School. The committee is expected to complete its investigation in a timely manner and submit a written report to the Dean who may accept or modify its findings and recommendations. Any actions taken by the Dean, including faculty discipline, will be imposed in a manner that is consistent with the University's policies and procedures. The Dean will inform both the student and the faculty member of this decision in writing.

The Committee ordinarily convenes within ten (10) business days of being appointed by the Dean and ordinarily completes its investigation and sends the Dean its report within thirty (30) business days of convening. The Dean normally issues a decision within thirty (3) business days of receiving the committee's report.

Appeal

Either the student or the accused faculty member may appeal the Dean's decision. Findings of fact, remedies granted the students, and penalties imposed on the faculty member are all subject to appeal.

There are two possible levels of appeal. The student or faculty member should first appeal to the Executive Vice President for Health and Biomedical Sciences by submitting a written request within fifteen (15) business days of the date of the letter informing them of the Dean's decision. If either is dissatisfied with the outcome of the appeal to the Executive Vice President, he or she may ask for a further review by the Provost. To exercise that right, they must write to the Provost within fifteen (15) business days of the date of the letter informing them of the Executive Vice President's decision.

Normally, the Executive Vice President and the Provost will each take no longer than thirty (30) business days to complete their evaluation of an appeal. They normally confine their reviews to the written record but reserve the right to collect information in any manner that will help them make their decisions on the appeal.

The Executive Vice President and the Provost will inform both the student and the faculty member of their decisions in writing. Any actions taken by the Provost will be imposed in a manner that is consistent with the University's policies and procedures. With the exception of actions that are accorded further review by the University statutes, the decision of the Provost is final and not subject to further appeal.

Confidentiality

All aspects of an investigation of a student grievance are confidential. The proceedings of the grievance committee are not open to the public. Only the student grievant and the faculty member accused of misconduct receive copies of the decisions of the Dean and the Provost. Everyone involved with the investigation of a grievance will be instructed to treat the process with utmost respect and confidentiality.

Responsible Use of Electronic Resources

Use of Copyrighted Material on Columbia's Computer Systems and Network

As members of the Columbia University community, students are held liable to the University's policies and the law on use of electronic resources, including computers, networks, email, and online information resources, and the use of copyrighted material on Columbia's computer systems and network.

Columbia University receives a number of complaints each year alleging students of illegal possession and distribution of copyrighted materials. Peer-to-peer file sharing technology has made it much easier for individuals to make and share unauthorized copies of copyrighted works, such as music and motion pictures. Such activity is against the law and exposes both the individual and the University to legal liability. This notice is part of a broader concerted effort to deal with the problem of copyright infringement by informing our community about appropriate use.

You may be held legally liable if you have downloaded music, movies or other files without permission from the copyright owner.

Copyright Law and Policy.

To copy, distribute, share, or store any information or material on the Internet will infringe the copyright for that information or material, unless the user has the express permission of the copyright owner or the user qualifies for a legal exception under the law.

All network users must comply with federal copyright law. Violations of copyright law are also violations of University policy. Copyright protection covers any original work of authorship that is fixed in some tangible medium of expression. A work is protected from the moment it is created, and it does not have to contain a copyright notice to qualify for protection. What this broad protection means is that just about any work one come across, including software, books, music, film, video, articles, cartoons, pictures, and email, whether on the Internet, a CD, DVD, or tape, is likely to be protected by copyright. While there are exceptions under the law that allow the copying or distribution of copyrighted works, it is fair to say that the use of peer-to-peer software programs to make and share copies of copyrighted music and movies, without permission of the copyright owner, would virtually never qualify for an exception.

Responsibility

By using University electronic resources and services, whether from the library, a lab, a public workstation, or one's residence, etc., students assume personal responsibility for their appropriate use and agree to comply with all relevant University policies, as well as State and Federal laws and regulations.

Please see [Columbia University IT Policies](#) for more on copyright and the University's compliance with the Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Essential Policies for the Columbia Community also includes [information technology policies](#).

Abuses of network privilege are a matter of student conduct and are dealt with by the Office of Student Affairs.

Copyright Abuse

The University must take immediate action when notified of copyright infractions. Students will be notified of alleged illegal activity and their network access will be terminated until they have corrected the problem.

Students are personally responsible for any violation and subject to legal action on the part of the copyright holder. A copyright owner can request a subpoena requiring the University to identify a person engaging in unauthorized copying, downloading or sharing. Copyright violations that occur on the University's network may also create liability for the University.

Repeated copyright violations by any network user will result in permanent termination of network access. Such action on the part of the University is required by law.

Use of Services

The University provides an array of electronic resources and services for the primary purpose of supporting the business of the University and its missions of education, research, and service. In addition, University Internet connections are shared with the Morningside campus and with New York Presbyterian Hospital to support its mission of patient care. Uses that threaten any of these activities or threaten the integrity of the systems are prohibited.

The University recognizes the growing dependence of students on the services and resources the network delivers in support of education. Students have a right to access and appropriately utilize the network in pursuit of their education. However, personal use of the network for recreation is, at best, a privilege. When such use violates copyright law it is strictly prohibited by University policy as well as illegal under federal law. When such use impinges on the primary activities of the University, limits on use, even use that does not violate any laws, will be enforced.

Monitoring

The various technology offices on campus do not monitor the network for content, only for volume of use. However, third-party enforcement agencies acting on behalf of copyright holders, such as MGM, Time-Warner and the Recording Industry Association of America, do routinely survey networked computers looking for individuals who, by providing video, music, or software files for download, are in violation of copyright laws. Students may be in violation just by storing illegally obtained copies of such material. Even unintentional infringement violates the law.

[More information about file sharing programs.](#)

Network Abuse

Note that file-sharing programs typically consume large amounts of network bandwidth. The University will automatically limit Internet access for computers generating excessive network traffic. If such abuse threatens the missions and activities of the University, access to the network may be suspended.

Check your [current limit](#).

Procedures

Please note that Columbia University and the Mailman School of Public Health take any infraction of copyright seriously. The Office of Student Affairs will be notified by the CUMC Chief Information Officer of any infractions. Actions may include invalidation of an e-mail account and disconnecting a network port. In the case of repeat infringers, the University is required under the law to take away the infringer's computer account and terminate all access to our network.