

# Academic Policies

Academic Standing Committee; Absences; Health Withdrawals; Disability Services; Confidentiality of Student Records; Honesty in Academic Work; Procedures for Dealing with Dishonesty in Academic Work

## Academic Standing Committee

This committee, which meets regularly to determine the academic status of Cornell students and to consider student petitions for exceptions to academic requirements or policies, consists of four teaching faculty members, the Registrar, and the Dean of Students. Students with academic concerns or questions about their status should contact the Registrar or their academic advisor.

The status of each student whose grade point falls below 2.0 or who is not making normal progress towards graduation (see *Cornell Catalogue*) will be reviewed at the completion of each term. The committee may take one of the following actions:

**Warning:** Generally the first warning from the committee is an indication that improvement is necessary. When given an academic warning the student should contact his/her academic advisor, a member of the student affairs staff, or the Teaching and Learning Center for help in improving study habits, motivation, or acquiring a tutor.

**Probation:** A more serious warning, probation restricts students' academic prerogatives and indicates that the student must make substantial improvement in his/her academic performance. Failure to demonstrate improvement may result in suspension. The student should seek assistance.

**Suspension:** If the committee determines that a student's academic performance is such that it seems unlikely she or he will be able to graduate, the committee will suspend the student. A suspended student is not permitted to continue to attend classes, receive financial assistance, live in College housing, or participate in intercollegiate athletics or in any other College activities in ways not open to the general public. Students who are suspended are not guaranteed readmission. The conditions under which a suspended student will be considered for readmission are explained in the letter of suspension.

**Dismissal:** Students who are suspended, readmitted, and suspended a second time are ineligible for readmission and are permanently dismissed from the College.

**Readmission:** The Academic Standing Committee has the sole power to readmit students, and in making its decision the committee gives equal weight, regardless of the type of suspension or the reason for withdrawal, to all three of the following criteria: the applicant's academic achievement, campus citizenship, and financial responsibility while at Cornell and subsequently. If a condition for applying for readmission was imposed at the time of suspension or withdrawal, this condition must be met before the committee will consider the application, but the College does not guarantee readmission even if the condition is satisfied.

## Absences

**College-sponsored Trips:** Students who participate in a College-sponsored off-campus trip must make arrangements with their instructor in advance and make up whatever work is missed as directed by the instructor. Students who fail to make arrangements with their instructor before each trip are subject to whatever penalties the instructor would normally impose for an unexcused absence.

Medically Excused Absences: Consideration for recommendation of medical extensions is given to students who have missed class due to health reasons. Students must be seen by a health professional either on or off campus during the time of illness/injury before a medical extension is recommended. The faculty member for the student's course makes the decision about whether or not an extension will be granted.

## **Health Withdrawals**

A student who has a medical, psychological, or personal problem and is unable either to keep up in the course or to attend classes should notify the course instructor and/or academic advisor immediately to discuss options. To withdraw from or to receive an Incomplete in a course, a student must petition the Academic Standing Committee and submit a verification of the illness or emergency from the Dean of Students or a health professional, depending on the circumstances. They will not generally issue verification unless they have been consulted at or near the onset of the problem. Such verification does not automatically constitute a ground for Withdrawal or an Incomplete. The committee will also consider the instructor's evaluation of performance in class as well as the nature, treatment, and recuperative effects of the illness or emergency. The committee reserves the right to consult with anyone who may have information about the student's situation (e.g., health professional, counselor, or parent).

## **Disability Services**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that: "no otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall, solely by reason of the handicap, be excluded from the participation in, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance." (29 United States Code 794) Compliance with this law requires that academic institutions receiving federal financial aid, like Cornell College, provide opportunity for students with disabilities to achieve success in the classroom that is comparable to that provided to other students.

Qualifications for services: A student qualifies for disability services at Cornell College when:

- He or she obtains documentation of testing conducted within the past three years from a medical doctor (MD), educational or school psychologist (Ph.D.), or other individual licensed by the state of origin to diagnose learning or physical disabilities; and
- He or she presents such documentation to the Registrar's office where it is placed on file.

Student Responsibilities: A student is responsible for:

- Identifying him/herself to the Registrar, and providing the required documentation;
- Identifying him/herself to the instructor within the first three days of each term as a student with a learning disability that requires accommodation;
- Ordering special materials for class such as taped texts, if available, or requesting other accommodations from the instructor (e.g., extended test-taking time, test location with low distraction); and
- Initiating contact with tutors once they have been arranged.

For more information about accommodations for students with disabilities contact the Registrar.

## **Confidentiality of Student Records**

Academic freedom implies that the relationship between a student and the College is essentially private. Other than directory information (defined below), the student has a right to expect that information accumulated for the purpose of facilitating his or her education will not be used for any other purpose

without his or her consent. The responsibility for deciding what records should be disclosed outside the College lies with the student.

If the College is ever forced to report an individual to public authorities because of extreme danger, its own description of the situation shall become part of the confidential file.

Cornell College, therefore, has adopted these guidelines to be used in the control, collection, and dissemination of student records.

**Section A:** General Guidelines for Confidentiality

1. The College may release directory information as a matter of course without the prior consent of the student. Such information comprises the student's name, local and home addresses and telephone numbers, campus e-mail address, date and place of birth (only if the student is currently enrolled), major field of study, enrollment status (FT/PT), participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height (if a member of an athletic team), dates of attendance, academic level, degrees and awards received, the name of the most recent educational institution previously attended, the student's photograph, and the names of the student's parents. A student who does not wish the College to release any or all of the above information must notify the Registrar and the Dean of Students in writing of his or her preference. A form is available in the Registrar's Office.

2. When a request for confidential information concerning a student has been made and the student has formally consented to the release of that information, the College is obligated to respond to the inquiring agency. The response will be accurate and in keeping with the statements and guidelines of this policy.

3. In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, the College may also release personally identifiable information from a student's record to certain officials of the U.S. Department of Education, the Comptroller General, and state and local educational authorities, in connection with certain state or federally supported education programs, and to accrediting organizations to carry out their functions. In addition, the College is required to release confidential student information in response to a lawfully issued subpoena or judicial order.

4. Occasionally, the College is asked to make available information about students for research purposes. In releasing original data for research, the College shall take due care to protect the identity of the student. Whenever the limits of confidentiality are in question, the College shall obtain the formal consent of the student prior to using information about him or her for research purposes. Before submitting information from student records to the researchers, the College shall become assured that the research agency will follow acceptable standards of confidentiality.

5. Members of the faculty and administration who in the regular course of their duties need to access students' academic and/or personal records may do so.

6. Each student shall have access to his or her personal folder, academic records, disciplinary records, placement file, and health service file as described in sections B, C, D, F, and G. The only exception is that statements or letters that were solicited with the guarantee that they would remain confidential, and were placed in the student's file prior to January 1, 1975, and have not been used for purposes other than those for which they were specifically intended, will not be shown to the student.

7. A student or a person applying for admission to Cornell College may waive his or her right of access to confidential statements submitted after January 1, 1975

- a. respecting admission to any educational agency or institution;
- b. respecting an application for employment; and

c. respecting the receipt of an honor or honorary recognition.

Such waiver shall apply to confidential statements only if the student is, upon his/her request, notified of the names of all persons making confidential statements, and such statements are used solely for the purpose for which they were specifically intended. Such waivers may not be required as a condition for admission to, receipt of financial assistance from, or receipt of any other services or benefits from Cornell College. Those who are asked to submit confidential statements shall be notified by the College whether the student has waived his or her right of access.

8. A student has the right to inspect his or her records and to challenge any information contained therein. The College will have a maximum of 45 working days to respond to a request to inspect records. In the event of an unsuccessful challenge, a student has the right to place in his or her file a statement commenting on the contents of that file. These statements may be removed only at the request of the student except for the provision of the destruction of the files as described below.

9. A student shall have the right to obtain copies of his or her records, when failure to provide a copy of the record would prevent the student from inspecting and reviewing the record. If this is done at the student's expense, the cost shall not exceed the actual costs of reproducing such copies. Information on the cost is available from the Registrar's Office.

**Section B: Personal Folders**

1. A personal record for each student is started at the time of admission and is maintained in the Dean of Students office. This folder contains an application for admission, including biographical information, test scores, copies of all official correspondence, and current addresses of parents, guardians, or spouses. Information on religious and political preferences and activities is voluntary, and only that information voluntarily submitted shall be kept in the folder. These folders do not include confidential counseling records of any staff member.

2. Information from student records shall not be sent to prospective employers or other educational institutions without the formal consent of the student involved. The student may waive his or her right of access to confidential statements (see A, 6, above). Individuals asked to write recommendations for a student shall be informed if the student has waived his or her right of access.

3. The College may disclose personally identifiable information from an education record to appropriate parties in connection with an emergency if knowledge of the information is necessary to protect the health or safety of the student or other individuals. However, when requests of this nature are received and the student's consent cannot be obtained, the institution shall release only the information necessary to fulfill its legal obligation.

4. A periodic evaluation of information placed in student personal records shall be conducted, and only information related to specific purposes of the institution will be collected and maintained. Upon graduation or withdrawal a student's records will be evaluated and all non-pertinent information will be destroyed. Records will then be maintained for a period of five years after graduation or withdrawal. If a student has requested access to his or her records they will not be destroyed without allowing the student an opportunity to review the information.

5. Information about a student who is being considered for a group membership should be obtained directly from the student.

**Section C: Academic Records**

1. Information about the academic achievement of a student will be available online to the student and to the student's academic advisor. Academic information may be released to the student's parents or guardian if the student gives permission to release this information. Permission to release confidential educational records must be provided in writing to the Registrar's Office. Parents may also have access to educational records if they send a notarized copy of the most recent federal income tax form proving that the parent has claimed the student as a dependent.
2. Grade point averages will be released to the groups of which a student is a member or is seeking membership only with the written consent of the individual. The College will indicate only whether or not the student has met minimum standards of the group.
3. The Registrar will at stated intervals submit to the Academic Standing Committee for its determination academic records concerning a student whose achievement has fallen below the minimum standards as outlined in the *Catalogue*.
4. Academic transcripts will be maintained in perpetuity. Other academic records will be maintained for a period of five years after graduation or withdrawal.

**Section D: Disciplinary Records**

1. Records of disciplinary decisions by Cornell College judicial bodies will be kept by the Dean of Students office. The disciplinary records are kept until a student graduates or five years after a non-graduate leaves the College.
2. Disciplinary records are for internal use and shall not be made available to persons outside the institution, except upon formal request of the student involved. Disciplinary actions shall not be indicated on academic transcripts. Intra-institutional use shall be restricted to the Dean of Students and members of Appeals Board when necessary to the discharge of their duties, and to student affairs staff members, who may interpret the meaning of notations to other officials in the institution when necessary to the discharge of the duties of these officials.

**Section E: Financial Assistance Records**

When applying for financial assistance, each student is normally required to submit a Financial Assistance Form. This statement and all other materials pertinent to a student's financial status will be kept in a separate file and shall be available only to those persons working directly with financial assistance. The records will be destroyed upon graduation except those required by law. Information on awards for scholarships, grants, and loans is considered confidential and will not be released to unauthorized persons.

**Section F: Placement File**

Students will have access to placement forms. The forms will be released only at the request of the student. Students will, however, not have access to confidential statements written prior to January 1, 1975, nor to recommendations for which they have waived the right of access, in accord with Section A, 5 and 6.

**Section G: College Health Service Records**

1. Medical records are privileged. A student will have access to these records, and information based on these records may be released only at the request of the student. Those diseases, conditions, or injuries that a physician is required by law to report would constitute exceptions to this policy.

2. A summary of pertinent information contained in the medical record may be released to designated persons only at the request of the student.

3. A copy of the entrance physical examination and a summary of pertinent information contained in a student's medical record may be sent to other educational institutions upon the request of the student. Such materials may also be sent to prospective employers, other physicians, insurance companies, and other persons or organizations at the request of the student.

#### **Section H: Hearing**

A student and his or her parents may request a formal hearing before the Dean of Students to challenge the content of such student's educational records in order to ensure that the records are not inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the privacy or other rights of the student.

### **Honesty in Academic Work**

The College considers Cornell students to be responsible persons whose maturity will develop in a community that encourages free inquiry. The College expects the highest degree of personal integrity in all relationships. Any form of dishonesty is a violation of this spirit and of College rules.

A student is expected to explicitly acknowledge ideas, claims, observations, or data of others, unless generally known. When a piece of work is submitted for credit, a student is asserting that the submission is her or his work unless there is a citation of a specific source. If there is no appropriate acknowledgement of sources, whether intended or not, this may constitute a violation of the College's requirement for honesty in academic work and may be treated as a case of academic dishonesty.

Dishonesty in academic work includes both cheating and plagiarism.

**Cheating** refers to the use of unauthorized sources of information on examinations or any attempt by students to deceive the evaluator of an examination, paper, or project.

**Plagiarism** is the act of taking the work of another and presenting it as one's own, without acknowledgement of the original source.

There is not one set of rules for the acknowledgement of sources that is appropriate across all disciplines. For this reason, students are always encouraged to consult their professors and guidelines included in their syllabi. However, in general the appropriate acknowledgement of sources involves meeting the following requirements:

**Quotations and Paraphrasing.** All direct quotations, even if mingled with original words and ideas, must be placed within quotation marks and accompanied by a specific citation for the source of the quotation. Unless the information is generally known, all phrases that are not original to the author - even two or three words - must be placed in quotation marks and cited. If an existing idea is used but paraphrased or summarized, both the original author's words and sentence structure must be changed and a specific citation for the source must still be made. It is always the responsibility of the student to provide precise sources for all ideas, information, or data he or she has borrowed or adapted. Simply listing sources in a bibliography is not sufficient. Students who use information from the World Wide Web are expected to follow these same guidelines for the citation of sources.

Failure to cite sources properly constitutes academic dishonesty, whether the omission is intentional or not.

**Ideas and Data.** All students are required to acknowledge the ideas of others. Every student is expected to do her or his own work in the completion of an assignment or an examination unless either (a) the sources for these ideas are explicitly cited, or (b) the instructor explicitly allows such collaboration. In addition, a person giving unauthorized assistance to another on an examination is just as guilty of cheating as the person who accepts or solicits such aid.

Submitting revisions of academic work previously submitted, either in the current course or in previous courses, qualifies as academic dishonesty unless the student obtains the explicit permission of all of the instructors involved.

All data sources must be cited accurately. It is dishonest to fabricate or alter research data included in laboratory reports, projects, or other assignments.

A safe guide is to provide a full citation for every source consulted. Sources may include, but are not limited to, published books, articles, reviews, Internet sites, archival material, visual images, oral presentations, or personal correspondence. In addition, students should always keep previous drafts of their work in order to provide documentation of their original work. Finally, due to disciplinary differences, students should consult their professor, a librarian, and/or the Teaching and Learning Center for specific instructions on properly providing citations for sources.

### **Procedures for Dealing with Dishonesty in Academic Work**

If an instructor judges that a student has violated the College's policies on academic honesty, the student may be charged with academic dishonesty and assigned an F either for the particular examination, paper, report, or project, or for the course. The instructor shall notify the student in writing of the charge and the penalty and shall include a statement of the circumstances which precipitated the action. A copy of the instructor's letter along with a copy of the paper shall be sent to the Registrar. The Registrar shall then advise the student in writing of the right to appeal. Within ten (10) days of notification, the student may appeal the charge and/or the penalty by submitting a letter to the Dean of the College requesting that he or she appoint an ad hoc committee consisting of three (3) faculty members, one of whom may be nominated by the student. The recommendation of this committee is advisory only and is not binding upon the instructor.

All material and information relative to the charge of academic dishonesty shall be kept by the Registrar in a special file during the period in which the student is enrolled at Cornell College, serving only as a statement of record if the student is charged a second time with academic dishonesty. In the case of an appeal after the first offense, the file shall be destroyed if the committee finds the student not guilty and the instructor concurs; otherwise, the recommendation of the committee shall be inserted into the special file. If there are no further charges, the file will be destroyed at the time of the student's graduation from Cornell.

Should a subsequent charge of academic dishonesty be brought against a student, the Registrar shall again advise the student in writing of the aforementioned right to appeal under the same procedures. Should the second charge be sustained by the instructor, the Registrar shall notify the Dean of the College who shall convene a committee consisting of the Dean of the College, the Dean of Students, and the Chair of the Academic Standing Committee, who shall determine the status of the student. The normal penalty for a second offense is indefinite suspension from the College.