

**Graduate Student Code of Rights and Responsibilities**  
**Major Revision: July 2006**  
**Updated: January 2009**

The Graduate Student Code describes procedures for channeling graduate student complaints, grievances, and concerns to faculty, staff and administrators for appropriate action. In conjunction with this code, graduate students must adhere to University policies outlined in Appendix A to this code. While this code of rights and responsibilities outlines the complaint process, students are encouraged to use the Graduate School Deans for guidance and advice on conflicts that may arise at any point during their course of study at the University.

This code covers policies and guidelines pertaining to academic advancement and grievances only. Student disciplinary proceedings for misconduct including plagiarism and cheating are covered by the policies and procedures in the Washington Administrative Code and in the Student Conduct Code. For disciplinary matters, please view on-line the information at the following links:

Student Conduct Standards:

<http://www.conduct.wsu.edu/default.asp?PageID=338>

Student Conduct Policy Violations:

<http://www.conduct.wsu.edu/default.asp?PageID=339>

Student Conduct Code Procedures:

<http://www.conduct.wsu.edu/default.asp?PageID=341>

Academic Integrity Standards and Procedures:

<http://www.conduct.wsu.edu/AI>

Alcohol and Drug Policy:

[http://www.wsu.edu/~forms/HTML/EPM/EP20\\_Alcohol\\_and\\_Drug\\_Policy.htm](http://www.wsu.edu/~forms/HTML/EPM/EP20_Alcohol_and_Drug_Policy.htm)

In all instances, the University seeks fair and expeditious action on academic and conduct issues. Resolutions must uphold the highest standards of academic freedom and integrity, while honoring the rights and dignity of all individuals in the University community.

**Part 1: Students with Disabilities.**

The Graduate School is committed to providing equal opportunity in its services, programs, and employment for individuals with disabilities. The Graduate School is proactive in promoting an attitude of respect for and sensitivity to the needs and abilities of persons with disabilities. Academically qualified students with disabilities will be provided with access to the individualized assistance that is consistent with the student's needs and the essential requirements of the program or course of study in which the student is enrolled.

The Graduate School is committed to providing appropriate assistance to help graduate students be successful in the curriculum. Reasonable accommodations are available for students with a documented disability. **Students are responsible for initiating requests for reasonable accommodations and services that they need.**

### **Requesting Reasonable Accommodations**

Graduate students with identified disabilities should contact the Disability Resource Center before the semester that they plan to attend to initiate the accommodations process.

Accommodations are unique for each individual and some require a significant amount of time to prepare for, so it is essential that students notify the DRC as far in advance as possible. Students with a disability that is identified during the semester should contact the DRC as soon as possible to arrange for an appointment and a review of their documentation by a disability specialist. All accommodations must be approved through the DRC located on each campus (Pullman: Washington Building, Room 217, and Spokane: Student Affairs in the Student Academic Center, Room 130). All students requesting reasonable accommodation must meet with the instructor prior to or during the first week of the course to review all proposed accommodations in relation to course content and requirements. Exceptions to this time frame will be granted only upon a showing of good cause.

### **Working with the Disability Resource Center**

- Submit [documentation](#) of disability to the DRC; if you have questions about what type of documentation is needed, please call to speak with a [Disability Specialist](#).
- Schedule an appointment with the Disability Specialist following the submission and review of your documentation to determine appropriate accommodations.
- **Promptly notify the DRC of any problems in receiving the agreed-upon accommodations.**
- Stop by at least once each semester to keep your registration with the DRC and your accommodations current.

The DRC can be reached at (509) 335-3417 or [drc@wsu.edu](mailto:drc@wsu.edu). The website has additional information regarding documentation guidelines & types of accommodations. **Website:** <http://www.drc.wsu.edu/>

## **Part 2: Complaints by and/or against Members of the University Faculty Administration or Students.**

Any graduate student who believes that he or she has been subjected to unlawful discrimination, including sexual harassment, or who believes his or her rights have been violated by a member of the academic community, is strongly encouraged to contact the Center for Human Rights (<http://www.chr.wsu.edu/>). If the complaint involves discrimination or harassment by a student, a complaint also may be filed with the Office of Student Conduct (<http://www.conduct.wsu.edu/>).

## **Discrimination and Harassment**

The University's policy prohibiting discrimination and sexual harassment can be found at: [http://www.wsu.edu/~forms/HTML/EPM/EP15\\_Discrimination\\_and\\_Sexual\\_Harassment.htm](http://www.wsu.edu/~forms/HTML/EPM/EP15_Discrimination_and_Sexual_Harassment.htm)

## **Academic Dishonesty**

Students and faculty share in the responsibility of upholding and protecting academic honesty standards within the University. At Washington State University, all cases of academic dishonesty or academic misconduct, including cases of plagiarism, will be handled according to the process in Washington Administrative Code (<http://www.conduct.wsu.edu/AI>.) Through this process, the offending student will get notice of his or her offense and an opportunity to respond. The Code of Student Conduct covers cheating, plagiarism, or other forms of academic dishonesty including but not limited to the following:

- unauthorized collaboration on assignments,
- facilitation of dishonesty including not challenging academic dishonesty,
- obtaining unauthorized knowledge of exam materials,
- unauthorized multiple submission of the same work or sabotage of others' work,
- knowingly furnishing false information to any University official, faculty member, or office,
- forgery, alteration, or misuse of any University document, record, or instrument of identification.

For a complete definition of academic dishonesty, see <http://www.conduct.wsu.edu/AI>.

With the advent of the internet and other information sources, further discussion of plagiarism is warranted. Webster's New World Dictionary defines plagiarism as taking "the ideas, writings, etc. from another and pass(ing) them off as one's own". Doing this is a clear example of academic dishonesty and, in fact, is a type of stealing. The person who wrote the original material worked hard to gain the appropriate expertise and also worked hard to express these ideas cogently. Furthermore, if you copy or plagiarize another's work, you are not learning and you are not advancing your own academic pursuits. Failure to properly cite other work is another form of plagiarism. If you cite other work, even when you rephrase it in an independent manner, you must follow conventional practices of good scholarship with proper citations. Your professors can help with this, if they are asked. It is, however, your responsibility as a graduate student to learn the proper manner to cite references and other sources of information in your discipline. The consequences of plagiarism are typically harsh as it is considered a form of cheating.

In the event that a graduate student becomes aware of any incidents of academic dishonesty, the graduate student should report the incident to the appropriate faculty member. The faculty member is then responsible for contacting Student Conduct for appropriate due process to determine whether a violation took place and the sanction(s) to be imposed. Sanctions imposed may include failure of the class or dismissal from the graduate program. Cases of academic dishonesty may also be reported to the Graduate School at 335-6424.

### **Part 3: Graduate and Professional Student Grievance Procedures for Academic Progress and Other Complaints.**

The graduate student grievance process may involve several steps depending on the nature of the grievance. There are many avenues available to Washington State University graduate and professional students to resolve differences that may arise during the pursuit of an advanced degree. In general, the operational principal that should be followed is to maintain open communication at the most immediate point of access and to work upwards from there when appropriate. This means that the student should work with their major professor or advisor to resolve matters if possible. The next level would be the Department Chair or School Director. There are cases, of course, where this is difficult. In these cases, graduate and professional students should make an appointment with one of the Associate Deans of the Graduate School for further advice. An important role of the Graduate School is to serve as an impartial arbitrator in these matters and to provide advice to both students and faculty that will result in the student continuing in good academic standing.

#### **Preliminary Grievance Procedures**

- 3.1 Students are encouraged to first consult with their faculty advisor.
- 3.2 If the advisor is unable to resolve the problem the student is encouraged to discuss the problem with the department/program chair, director, and/or faculty liaison.
- 3.3 If the grievance cannot be resolved at the department or program level, the student should contact one of the Associate Deans of the Graduate School, or any person of the Graduate School designated by the Dean to hear student grievances (the Dean's designee).
- 3.4 The Associate Dean or Dean's designee will review the grievance and, at his or her discretion, will recommend possible actions for resolution to the student as well as to the department/program chair, director, and/or faculty liaison. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution, he/she may file a formal grievance.

#### **Formal Grievance Procedures**

In some instances such as those related to academic and employment issues (e.g. failed examinations, termination of assistantship, etc.), the student may wish to appeal a specific academic decision made by the departmental or program faculty.

- 3.5 The student must make a formal grievance request to the Dean of the Graduate School in writing, with signature (email is not sufficient). Formal appeals must be filed within 15 (fifteen) calendar days following a notice of decision or within 15 calendar days after completing the Preliminary Grievance Procedures. The original decision will be held in abeyance while under appeal.
- 3.6 The Dean will assign these formal appeals to one of the Associate Deans for full consideration and recommendation.
- 3.7 If the Associate Dean deems it appropriate, the matter will be referred to an independent Committee on Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (CGSRR) for consideration and formulating recommendations of action to the Dean of the Graduate School. The CGSRR will operate with due respect to the rights of graduate students, faculty, and administrators including the conduct of interviews,

the right of all parties to review and address allegations, and the right to a fair hearing. The CGSRR will deliberate and render a recommendation to the Dean of the Graduate School or the Dean's designee within 60 days of being formed.

- 3.8 Recommendations for resolution of formal grievances will be acted upon by the Dean or the Dean's designee. A final decision will be made by the Dean of the Graduate School. The decision made by the Dean on academic matters is final.

### **Appeals**

The graduate or professional student may appeal the final decision of the Dean of the Graduate School to the Provost if the appeal is based on procedural irregularities. The Provost will not reopen cases for the purpose of re-investigating the grievance.

The student can seek judicial review within 30 days from the date of the final decision pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act, RCW 34.05.010 *et. seq.*

### **Professional Student Grievances**

Professional students within the College of Veterinary Medicine and the College of Pharmacy will follow College policies and procedures for the review of academic issues. Appeal of College level decisions can be made to the Graduate School.

#### College of Veterinary Medicine Policies

<http://www.vetmed.wsu.edu/academic/studentsCurrent.aspx>

#### College of Pharmacy Policies

<http://www.pharmacy.wsu.edu/administration/AcademicPoliciesandProceduresfinal.5.10.06.pdf>

Other programs also may have their own grievance procedures that should be followed before utilizing the Graduate School's grievance procedures.

## **Part 4: Satisfactory Progress towards Degree**

Graduate students are expected to make satisfactory progress in their studies and are responsible for meeting the Graduate School's continuous enrollment policy, general academic requirements, and the specific requirements associated with their degree (see the Graduate School's Policies and Procedures Manual). Programs may have additional requirements, and students are expected to contact their program director and/or faculty advisor for information on these requirements.

## **Part 5 Scholarship and Research**

The following is information regarding data that graduate students may collect during their research. (For Responsible Conduct of Research training, visit <http://myresearch.wsu.edu>).

### **Data Ownership**

In general all data collected at WSU is the property of WSU. It is useful to distinguish between grants and contracts. Data collected with grant funds remains under the control of

WSU. Contracts typically require the researcher to deliver a product or service to the government or industry sponsor, and the product or service is then owned and controlled by the sponsor (government or industry). WSU and principal investigators have responsibilities and obligations regarding research funds and data collection.

- 4.1 Before data is collected the PI and project personnel should clearly understand who owns the data, who has the right to publish, and what requirements or obligations are imposed on the researcher or WSU.
- 4.2 Whenever a graduate student or postdoc leaves the lab a similar agreement should be negotiated between the PI and the graduate student or postdoc.
- 4.3 Collaborative research agreements regarding data ownership and use should be agreed to (in writing) prior to the collection of the data. In general, each member of the team should have continued access to the data/materials (unless a prior agreement was negotiated).

### **Data Collection**

Data collection must be well-organized and detailed. The laboratory notebook (bound sequentially numbered pages, with signatures and dates) is often key to keeping daily records. Detailed records help establish good work practices, provide a history of your ideas, avoid fraud or misconduct charges, defend patents, and provide a valuable resource for your own work.

### **Data Storage and Protection**

Once data has been collected it must be stored and protected to be of future use. Data storage must be done in such a way that results and conclusions can be clearly discerned from the data and materials that have been archived. The data and materials must be protected so that research findings can be confirmed and/or reanalyzed by others. If data and materials are not properly stored and protected they could significantly reduce the value of the research (or even render the research worthless).

For additional information on the Universities data policies see [http://www.wsu.edu/~forms/HTML/EPM/EP8\\_University\\_Data\\_Policies.htm](http://www.wsu.edu/~forms/HTML/EPM/EP8_University_Data_Policies.htm) .