Academic integrity ensures equity and fairness for student learning. Despite the hope that all students demonstrate academic integrity, one of the most challenging classroom issues is academic dishonesty. Whether a student is involved in cheating, plagiarism, or other academic misconduct, instructors are often put in the difficult position of trying to figure out what happened and how best to proceed. Below, the Office of Student Affairs has provided some clear steps to follow if you suspect that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty.

1. **Figure out what happened.** First, ask, “Does the conduct that you suspect the student engaged in violate the Code of Conduct?” If so, what are the facts? Set up a time to talk with the student directly in a conversation rather than an interrogation. Tell the student what you suspect she or he did and ask the student to tell you his or her side of the story. Ask open-ended and focused questions to find out the details (who, what, when, where, and why). Ask follow-up questions if the answers are evasive or incomplete, or if you think there are problems with the student’s story (e.g., things don’t make sense or seem odd). If the student doesn’t seem to understand a question, ask the question another way. Take notes to help you remember what the student said and to help you prepare a report later if you need to do that. If there are additional potential witnesses, talk to them and find out what they know. After you evaluate the facts and apply your professional judgment, ask yourself whether you believe that the student engaged in conduct that violates the Code of Conduct. If the answer is “no,” you’re done.

2. **If you believe the student violated the Code of Conduct, you can impose a sanction.** As an instructor, you have the choice to decide what sanction, if any, to impose (i.e., reduced grade, zero on assignment, grade of F, etc.). The UNL Academic Integrity Report Form (link below) lists potential sanctions. If you are not sure about the norms for sanctions in your department or field, consult with your department chair.

3. **If the sanction you impose might affect the student’s final grade, you MUST submit a report.** If you impose a sanction, you need to decide if you believe there is a realistic likelihood that the sanction might affect the student's final grade in the course. If the answer is “yes,” submit a report detailing the facts of the case and the sanction you imposed using the form on the Student Conduct and Community Standards website. The Academic Integrity Report Form allows faculty to document important and relevant facts about the alleged academic misconduct, identify steps taken to respond to the misconduct, and recommend an additional response from the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards. Often, a student who has engaged in academic misconduct has done so in more than one class. Submitting a report enables the Conduct Committee to collect all the facts across the institution, which is important for addressing the individual student and to observe patterns of academic integrity issues across the campus. The completed form should be emailed to Student Conduct and Community Standards (studentconduct@unl.edu) and copied to your department chair.

**Sources and Resources:**

UNL Student Code of Conduct:
https://studentconduct.unl.edu/student-code-conduct

UNL Student Conduct Report Form:
https://studentconduct.unl.edu/forms/Academic%20Integrity%20Report%20Form_Fillable.pdf

UNL Libraries Plagiarism and Citation Tools:
http://unl.libguides.com/plagiarism

If you have questions or need some help, call UNL's Student Conduct Office at 402-472-2021 and check out their website: https://studentconduct.unl.edu