

IV.D FACULTY AUTHORITY TO ASSIGN GRADES AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

(Source: Office of the Provost, Almanac, September 10, 1996 (<https://almanac.upenn.edu/archive/v43/n03/codechar.html#faculty>))

The Student Disciplinary Charter is based on the assumption that it is the obligation and right of faculty members to assign grades for academic work submitted to them by students under their supervision and that faculty members should grade student work, using their best judgment about the quality and propriety of that work, independently of disciplinary procedures. The present statement makes clear the relationship between grading and disciplinary action in cases in which a faculty member believes that a student did not fulfill an assignment in accord with the Code of Academic Integrity.

The Disciplinary Charter rests on the principle that faculty members have wide authority to judge the academic work of students and have a general responsibility for the academic progress of students, so much as lies within the power of faculty. Furthermore, the charter assumes that violations of the norms of academic integrity fall along a continuum from minor to major and that not all violations need to be treated as disciplinary cases. The authority and responsibility of faculty members require them to judge the relative severity of a violation. Good individual judgment and institutional practice will help faculty members make the judgment about when to treat a case as requiring disciplinary action.

The distinction between academic evaluation and disciplinary action is also important. Faculty members have the authority to make academic judgments in relation to their students and to make decisions in the interests of furthering their students' education. Only the institution, acting through its formal processes, may discipline a student. Grades are not sanctions, even if they arise from a judgment that a student has violated a norm of academic integrity. In such cases, the grade may reflect the faculty member's view that a piece of work was done inappropriately, but it represents a judgment of the quality of the work, not a record of discipline for the behavior. There are many ways to do work inappropriately or badly, resulting in low or failing grades. The policy of the charter is to preserve the faculty member's right to grade work on the basis of all of its qualities and to make the decision to pursue disciplinary action a separate matter.

Students who believe that they have been graded unfairly have recourse of appeal through the grade appeal procedures established by each school. The charter explicitly recognizes the right of students to appeal grades. The appeal of a grade given because a faculty member believed that the student violated the norms of academic integrity is, for the purposes of the charter, no different from other grade appeals.