FACULTY AUTHORITY TO
ASSIGN GRADES AND
ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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.

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www.upenn.edu/almanac/v43/n03/codechar.html#faculty)