



UGHE

STUDENT CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Policy Number:
AP-CD 02

Policy group:
Academic Misconduct and
Discipline

Effective:
01/11/2024

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PURPOSE

This Student Conduct and Discipline policy is guided by the regulations of the Higher Education Council of The Ministry of Education in Rwanda and outlines the guidelines to maintain a positive and respectful learning environment, fostering academic integrity, personal responsibility, and the well-being of the UGHE community. It aims to establish clear guidelines to ensure that disciplinary matters are dealt with fairness and transparent manner. The emphasis should be on the identification and correction of problems rather than on punishment.

DEFINITIONS

Criminal misconduct: actions that constitute a criminal offense under Rwandan law. They include but not limited to theft; assault or physical harm on another person, fraudulent activities that may involve financial illegality or misappropriation of funds, substance abuse that violates local or national laws, cybercrimes such as hacking or unauthorized access to computer systems, etc.

Gross misconduct: severe and unacceptable behavior that goes beyond minor infractions, posing a significant threat to the well-being of individuals or the university community as a whole. They include, but is not limited to:

- engaging in activities that pose a serious threat to the safety of others,
- bullying and harassment of a student or a staff member,
- discriminatory behavior on the grounds of gender identity, marital status, disability, race, ethnic origin, nationality, age, religious or political beliefs or socio-economic background,
- incapability on campus through alcohol or being under the influence of illegal drugs,
- negligence which causes or risks unacceptable loss, damage or injury,
- continued refusal to carry out a reasonable request or instruction,
- disregard of or failure to comply with the provisions of a final written warning for repeated less serious misconduct,



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- plagiarism in academic assignments or research, cheating during examinations, falsification of academic records or credentials, intentional destruction of university property or vandalism.

Minor offences: relatively minor infractions that may include tardiness, minor disruptions, or other non-severe violations of university policies like failure to comply with specified dress codes, disruption of lectures, seminars, or other academic or non-academic activities, failure to adhere to university event guidelines, use of mobile telephones in lecturers or other teaching sessions, in the library or during examinations; misuse of institutional facilities; contravention of the institution's rules and/or regulations; willful refusal to carry out a reasonable request or instruction; etc.

Disciplinary Committee: A body responsible for reviewing alleged violations and recommending appropriate actions. Different types of violations are handled by different disciplinary committees. A student will at all stages have the right to be accompanied by a friend not acting in a professional capacity, and the Student Council shall have the right to send a representative to any disciplinary hearing.

Disciplinary action: refers to any measure taken by UGHE in response to a student's violation of rules, regulations, or code of conduct. They include but not limited to:

1. **Verbal warning:** A formal notice from a faculty member, chair of an Academic Unit, or Dean about the violation and its consequences.
2. **Written reprimand:** A formal document outlining the violation, the consequences, and any required steps for improvement.
3. **Probation:** A period of monitoring during which the student must adhere to.
4. **Suspension:** Temporary removal from the university, typically for a specific period.
5. **Expulsion:** Permanent removal from the university.
6. **Withholding of academic credit:** Denial of credit for a course due to academic dishonesty or misconduct.

SCOPE



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This policy applies to all students enrolled at UGHE, encompassing on-campus activities, off-campus academic locations including clinical students spread across different sites and online interactions related to academic pursuits.

PROCEDURE

CHAPTER 1: STAFF GRIEVANCE AGAINST A STUDENT

The following procedures detail the procedures taken when staff or faculty raise grievances against students.

Criminal misconduct

In the case of criminal misconduct, the following procedure will be followed:

1. Initial Report:

If a staff member receives an allegation of criminal misconduct against a student, they must immediately record the details without investigation or verification.

2. Escalation:

The reporting staff member alerts the Chair of the Academic Unit immediately, who then informs the UGHE Security Manager, Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Research (DVC-AR) and the UGHE lawyer.

3. External investigation:

The DVC-AR, after consulting the Vice Chancellor (VC), informs the UGHE Legal Counsel to submit a formal report to the Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) for a full investigation as required.

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The entire process, from the initial report to RIB submission, must be completed with utmost urgency within 24 hours.

4. Cooperation with Authorities:

If the RIB/police decide to proceed with formal investigations, the entire UGHE community must fully cooperate and comply with the investigation process.

No internal investigation shall occur until the RIB completes their work.

5. Removal in case of danger:

If the UGHE leadership assesses a potential danger to staff/students and the UGHE community seems likely, the VC or DVC-AR shall remove the accused from campus within 24 hours and issue a suspension notice.

6. Internal follow-up:

Decision by VC:

- When the RIB concludes their investigation or declines to proceed, the VC, in consultation with the DVC-AR shall make a final decision whether to proceed with further internal disciplinary procedures or not.
- This decision considers the strength of the evidence, the seriousness of the offense, and the student's disciplinary record.
- The VC and consulted parties shall assess the severity of the student's behavior, taking into account the criminal charges and their outcome.

7. Disciplinary options:

Independent of the legal outcome, the University may impose disciplinary actions against the student based on the severity and available evidence. These actions may include:

- **Impose Disciplinary sanctions:** such as issue a warning letter or verbal warning, probation, suspension or expulsion.
- **Restitution:** Requiring the student to compensate for any damages or losses incurred.

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- **Counseling or support services:** Mandating participation in counseling programs to address the underlying behavior.

Gross misconduct

In the case of gross misconduct, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The VC will establish a Disciplinary Committee consisting of the following members:

- Chair of the Committee – to be appointed by the VC
- Academic Registrar (Secretary)
- Campus Security Manager
- Campus Operations Director
- Deputy Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs and Research
- Dean, Research, Innovation and Quality
- Chair, Education, Quality and Development Centre
- Legal Counsel
- Faculty representative appointed by the VC
- Students' Council Representative
- The student under investigation
- A friend of the student under investigation (only invited to the hearing)

2. Potential suspension and expulsion of students alleged of gross misconduct

If a student is alleged of gross misconduct, the DVC-AR can suspend them from campus after consulting the Legal Counsel. This suspension is temporary until a hearing determines the appropriate action.

The hearing will be held as soon as possible, but no later than **5 calendar days** after the suspension.

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Any student suspended for alleged gross misconduct will receive a written notification within 3 calendar days explaining the reasons for the suspension.

Suspension is typically used when investigations are hampered or when students or staff are at risk.

3. Hearing and possible disciplinary actions:

The disciplinary committee established by the VC to hear the matter shall complete its function in 7 calendar days.

If the committee finds the accused student guilty, the student may face one or more of the following sanctions:

- Final written warning
- Complete suspension from all academic activities for up to one year
- Suspension of all non-academic utilities such as accommodation, dining and food services for up to **one year**
- Complete dismissal from the university

Minor offenses

In case of minor offenses, the following procedures will be followed:

1. The DVC-AR will establish a disciplinary and hearing committee consisting of:

- a. Chair of the committee: appointed by the DVC-AR
- b. Chair of the Academic Unit of the program the students is enrolled (Secretary)
- c. Head of Campus Security
- d. Head of Campus Operations
- e. One senior faculty
- f. Students' Council Representative

2. The disciplinary committee established by the Dean to hear the matter shall complete its function in 7 calendar days.



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3. If the committee finds the accused student guilty, the student may face one or more of the following sanctions:

- **Oral warning:** a formal oral warning will be issued by the Dean and recorded on the students' file.
- **Written warning:** a formal written warning will be issued by the Dean outlining the offense and required actions.
- **Final warning and appeal:** a final written warning is issued by the Dean outlining the offense and the required actions.

Appeals against disciplinary actions are addressed to the VC within **7 calendar days** after notification of disciplinary decision.

The appeal is processed based on valid grounds such as procedural irregularities or new evidence etc.

CHAPTER II: STUDENT GRIEVANCE AGAINST ANOTHER STUDENT OR OTHER INDIVIDUAL

A student considering lodging a grievance against another student or other individual should attempt to resolve the issue informally.

The relevant UGHE management and leadership such as campus operations, academic unit heads and the DVC-AR's office can be involved in the process.

If the grievance cannot be resolved satisfactorily, the student may, at their discretion, seek resolution via the formal procedure outlined below.

1. Filing a formal grievance complaint

A formal grievance is a complaint in writing from the student to the Office of the Registrar, asking for further procedural support in regard to their case.

If the complaint is against any member of the UGHE Academic Commission, the written complaint goes directly to the VC.



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The written complaint should be filed within 14 calendar days of the event to which it refers.

The written complaint should include the following, as appropriate:

- Statement of the allegation
- Description of the alleged series of events
- Summary of steps the student already has taken in attempt to resolve the problem
- Name(s) of the person(s) thought to be responsible for the alleged events
- Other information considered to be pertinent to the case
- Signature of the student initiating the complaint

2. Forming ad hoc grievance committee

The Registrar (or the DVC-AR as the case maybe) will appoint an ad hoc grievance committee and the chairperson of the committee.

This ad hoc grievance committee is appointed and convened within **3 calendar days** of receipt of the written complaint, or sooner if immediate action is required.

Membership of the committee shall be:

- a. Chair of the committee – appointed by the Registrar or the DVC-AR
- b. A faculty representative
- c. One senior staff or faculty of UGHE
- d. A student representative – chosen by the Student Council

A quorum requires that all members be present.

3. Investigation

The ad hoc grievance committee investigates the grievance. This investigation may include but need not be limited to:

- Meeting/s with the person aggrieved and the person/s (or representatives of the department) grieved against.

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- Consultation with such others as the ad hoc grievance committee deems necessary to provide a thorough investigation of the grievance, including mitigating or extenuating circumstances that bear upon the situation.

4. Investigation report

The ad hoc grievance committee considers the facts of the case and presents a report to the registrar or the Dean of Academic Affairs.

The report includes findings of facts and recommendations, if any.

Every precaution is taken to ensure the confidentiality of information obtained at meetings of the ad hoc grievance committee.

The Committee makes an effort to conclude the investigation promptly and clearly summarizes its recommendations to the Registrar or the DVC-AR.

5. Action

Upon receipt of the report from the ad hoc grievance committee, the Registrar or the DVC-AR may implement the following options:

- Use the report to decide whatever action is warranted.
- Return the matter to the ad hoc grievance committee for further action.
- The Registrar or Dean of Academic Affairs will communicate the final decision to both the person aggrieved and the person/s (or department) grieved against.

The final action constitutes the formal completion of the grievance procedure. However, the aggrieved party may appeal to the VC within **7 calendar days**.

Once the procedure is completed, all records of the meetings of the ad hoc grievance committee and the final report of the committee remain in the possession of the Registrar and are treated with appropriate confidentiality.

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6. Exception

Any requests for exceptions to the above points should be addressed to the DVC-AR.

By mutual agreement of the DVC-AR, and the student, the stated formal procedure may be waived in favor of a procedure more appropriate to a particular circumstance.

CHAPTER III: RIGHT TO APPEAL

Students have the right to appeal disciplinary decisions within 7 calendar days after notification of disciplinary decision.

The appeal is accepted based on valid grounds such as procedural irregularities or new evidence etc.

All appeals must be directed to the Office of the VC.

An appeal hearing will be held at a time mutually agreed, but not later than **ten calendar days (10)** following the notification of appeal. The appeal will be held in accordance with the format for Disciplinary Hearings as per the guidelines set below and shall be conducted by the VC.

Appeals against final formal written warnings or removal from campus shall be heard by the VC. In the case of an appeal against a decision to remove the student from campus, the removal shall not take effect until the appeal has been determined.

The written appeal should include the following, as appropriate:

- Reason for appeal
- Other information that the student feels were not considered during investigation
- Signature of the student initiating the appeal

Student appeals committee guidelines: The following format outlines the sequence of events, which should be followed once an appeal letter is received by the VC.



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1. Receiving the appeal:

Upon receiving an appeal letter from a student, the VC's office will acknowledge receipt within **2 calendar days**.

2. Initial review:

The VC's Office will conduct a preliminary review to ensure whether the appeal falls within the Committee's jurisdiction and adheres to deadlines.

If ineligible, the VC's Office will inform the student within **2 calendar days**, explaining the reason and offering guidance on alternative avenues.

If eligible, the VC's Office will assemble the appeal file with relevant documents and background information.

3. Committee convening:

The VC will convene the Committee within 10 calendar days of receiving the complete appeal file.

The student will be notified of the hearing date and time at least 10 calendar days in advance.

The student has the right to be present at the hearing, accompanied by a friend if desired.

The VC will appoint an appeals committee consisting of:

- Vice-Chancellor (Chair)
- DVC-AR or Registrar (if not involved in the first disciplinary committee)
- Chair, Education, Quality and Development Centre
- Legal Counsel
- Faculty representative appointed by the VC
- Students' Council Representative
- A friend of the student under investigation



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4. Hearing and deliberation:

The hearing will be conducted in a fair and impartial manner.

The student will have the opportunity to present their case, answer questions, and submit evidence.

The Committee will deliberate in private, considering all presented information and relevant policies.

The deliberation period should not exceed 3 calendar days following the hearing.

5. Decision and communication:

The Committee will reach a final decision on the appeal and inform the students and relevant parties within 5 calendar days of deliberation.

The decision will be communicated in writing, outlining the rationale and any further actions required.

Appeal procedure of UGHE decision

In circumstances where all the University's internal procedures have been exhausted and where the student is still dissatisfied, they should refer the case to the Office of the Ombudsman of Rwanda which has responsibility for investigating complaints against the University.

Documentation:

All stages of the disciplinary process are documented in a confidential and secure manner.

Records are maintained by the Office of the Registrar for future reference and to ensure consistency in the application of disciplinary measures.

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Communication:

The decisions and outcomes of the disciplinary process are communicated promptly and confidentially to the parties involved.

Privacy and confidentiality are maintained to the extent possible within legal and policy constraints.

RESPONSIBILITY

Student Conduct and Discipline is the responsibility of all students, faculty, and staff at UGHE.

REVISION/REPLACING

This policy shall be subject to review in **five** years (01/11/2029).

EFFECTIVE DATE OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE POLICY

This policy shall come into effect on the date of its approval by the Academic Commission of the University of Global Health Equity.

Approved by:

Date: 07/11/2024

Abebe Bekele



Professor Abebe Bekele, MD, FCS, FACS, MAMSE

Professor of Surgery

Deputy Vice Chancellor, Academic Affairs and Research

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