Frequently Asked Questions by Students

I received a letter from the Office of Academic Affairs outlining alleged charges and instructing me to attend an appointment. What does this mean?

It means that you have been referred to the Office of Academic Affairs for an alleged violation of University policy. At this meeting, the Academic Misconduct Coordinator or Vice Provost will discuss your rights with you, the information that was presented in the referral, and ask for your side of the story.

A referral does not mean you are responsible. The violations are alleged and are pending until a full disciplinary investigation is completed.

What happens if I don't attend the meeting like the notification letter says?

A registration and/or transcript hold is placed on your student account preventing you from registering for future semesters and preventing the release of your transcript. This hold typically is not removed until the pending disciplinary matter is resolved.

What if I want to wait until I have to register to contact the office and attend a meeting? Generally this is a bad idea. If you wait until the last minute to try to resolve the issue, you run the risk of not being able to register on time. If you have a registration hold on your account, it will NOT be removed until you have attended a meeting and addressed the issue at hand.

What does Academic Affairs expect of me in this situation?

Cooperation and honesty. The disciplinary process is educational and requires that you own up to a mistake you may have made. You will be given all the information about how the process works and what you can expect during your initial meeting.

What are the different steps of the disciplinary process?

The process begins when the notification letter is sent. When you meet with Academic Affairs, you will first be asked to read and sign a form that explains your rights to you. You will also be asked to complete a section on this form that asks you whether or not you accept responsibility for the alleged violation(s). You and the Academic Affairs Officer will then discuss the situation. If further investigation is needed, you will be asked to schedule another appointment for a later date. If further investigation is not needed, and you want to go ahead and have an administrative hearing, the Academic Affairs Officer will hear your case and issue their finding (responsible, not responsible, and/or dismissed). If you are found responsible for any violation, appropriate sanctions (consequences) will be issued. If you are found not responsible or the charge(s) are dismissed, no sanctions are issued.

Can a parent or friend call on my behalf or attend my meeting for me? No. You may sign a FERPA(Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) form to release our staff to discuss your case with anyone of your choosing; however, you can not be represented by anyone. Our staff will not speak to anyone about your circumstances without a signed form on file in our office and under no circumstances will anyone be allowed to represent you in the disciplinary process.
Can I have witnesses speak for me? You are allowed to call fact witnesses during the disciplinary process. A fact witness is someone who was present during the incident in question and can provide direct information about what happened. The fact witness(es) will be asked questions by all parties involved. If you are found responsible for any violations, you are permitted to call a character witness during the sanctioning phase of the process. A character witness is someone who can speak to your character and what kind of person you are outside of this incident. A character witness will be asked to provide a statement about your character and will not be asked specific questions.

Do I need an attorney?
It is the choice of an individual student whether or not to retain an attorney. If you choose to have an attorney present, the attorney may only act as your advisor. The advisor's role is limited to advising the student. An advisor can not make opening statements, cross-examine witnesses, engage in argument, or represent the student in any way. The advisor is simply there to encourage, support, and guide the student.

Can I handle this by telephone or email? No. You are required to meet with a representative from our office. We do not conduct disciplinary meetings via any other means.

If I am found responsible, what kind of sanction will I receive? It depends on your individual circumstances. Sanctions at the university range from a verbal warning through expulsion from the institution. Generally the following factors are considered when sanctions are given: nature of the offense, previous disciplinary history, motivation for the behavior, mitigating and aggravating circumstances, sanctioning precedents, and the developmental and educational impact for the individual student and MTSU community.

Can I withdraw from school to avoid this? No. If you choose to withdraw before dealing with the disciplinary process, a registration hold will be placed on your student account. You will not be allowed to register for future classes until you go through the disciplinary process.