Best Practices for Documenting Behavior

- Keep a log of any suspected academic misconduct, starting with the first incident.
- Not every documented incident will be referred to Academic Affairs.
- Understand the Student Code of Conduct and the disciplinary offenses at MTSU.

Making a Referral to Academic Affairs

All referrals require DOCUMENTATION.

The amount of relevant information available will strengthen the referral.

Documentation should include the student’s full name, M#, phone number, and details describing the behavior in question.

The documentation must also include the name and current contact information for the person referring the student for discipline.

A referral means that the matter will be reviewed by Academic Affairs and may result in a disciplinary case being opened against a student.

Referrals should only occur when there is a good faith belief that academic misconduct has transpired.

The Office of Academic Affairs does NOT open cases against faculty members or professional staff members unless those individuals are also students enrolled at MTSU. Academic Affairs also does not open cases against non-students.
PURPOSE
This policy sets out the procedure to be followed when a faculty member believes a student has engaged in academic misconduct. If the accused student does not admit responsibility, an Academic Misconduct Committee shall convene a hearing and determine whether academic misconduct occurred or not and, if so, whether additional disciplinary sanctions should be imposed. If no academic misconduct is found, the Committee will direct any grade assigned by the faculty member as a consequence to be changed.

SCOPE
This policy applies only to situations where a faculty member charges a student with academic misconduct. Any allegations of misconduct related to research or other scholarly activity should first be evaluated under MTSU Policy II:01:10, Misconduct in Scholarly Activities and Research. Students wishing to appeal final course grades must do so through the process set out in MTSU Policy III:00:09, Student Appeal of Grades.

DEFINITIONS
A. Academic exercise: all forms of work submitted by a student for credit or hours.

B. Academic Misconduct: may consist of acts of plagiarism, cheating, or fabrication
   - Plagiarism is the adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images, or works of another person as one’s own without proper attribution.
   - Cheating is using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or aids in any academic exercise or test/examination.
   - Fabrication is unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

C. Academic misconduct Committee refers to the committee established under MTSU policy I:01:02 University Committees.

I. Institution Policy Statement
A. Students enrolled in Middle Tennessee State University ("MTSU," "the Institution" or "the University") are citizens of their civic communities as well as the academic community. As such, they are expected to conduct themselves as law-abiding members of each community at all times. Admission to an institution of postsecondary education carries with it special privileges and imposes special responsibilities apart from those rights and duties enjoyed by non-students. In recognition of the special relationship that exists between the institution and the academic community which it seeks to serve, the Tennessee Board of Regents ("TBR" or "the Board") has authorized the President of MTSU to take such action as may be necessary to maintain campus conditions and preserve the integrity of the Institution and its educational environment.

B. Pursuant to this authorization and in fulfillment of its duties to provide a secure and stimulating atmosphere in which individual and academic pursuits may flourish, the Institution has developed the following policy which is intended to govern student conduct. This policy is implemented consistent with directives of the TBR and is subject to Board approval. In addition, students are subject to all federal, state and local laws and ordinances. If a student’s violation of such laws or ordinances also adversely affects the Institution’s pursuit of its educational objectives, the Institution may enforce its own regulations regardless of the status or outcome of any external proceedings instituted by other civil or criminal authorities.

C. With the exception set out in (D) below, the responsibility for the administration of student discipline at MTSU is a function of the Dean of Student Life's office and/or the appropriate adjudicating body. The Dean of Student Life’s designee is the Office of Judicial Affairs and Mediation Services, specifically the Assistant Dean for Judicial Affairs and the Judicial Coordinator ("University officials"). The Assistant Dean and/or Judicial Coordinator is authorized to make the determination and/or recommendation of the method of hearing each complaint or allegation and to provide other opportunities for conflict resolution outside of the judicial process consistent with these rules. The Assistant Dean and/or Judicial Coordinator shall implement policies and procedures for the administration of the judicial program and procedures for the conduct of hearings which are consistent with those in the General Regulations on Student Conduct.

D. Matters concerning academic misconduct are the responsibility of the Office of the University Provost and/or the Academic Misconduct Committee. This process is set out in detail in MTSU Policy III:00:08, Academic Misconduct.