

III. Academic Conduct Policies and Procedures

POLICY ON ACADEMIC HONESTY

1. Introduction

As members of the academic community, students are expected to recognize and uphold standards of intellectual and academic integrity. The university assumes as a basic and minimum standard of conduct in academic matters that students be honest and that they submit for credit only the products of their own efforts. Both the ideals of scholarship and the need for fairness require that all dishonest work be rejected as a basis for academic credit. They also require that students refrain from any and all forms of dishonorable or unethical conduct related to their academic work.

The university's policy on academic honesty is published in the Faculty Handbook (<https://faculty.gsu.edu/faculty-handbook/>) and the Student Handbook, On Campus, which is available to all members of the university community (<http://studenthandbook.gsu.edu/>). Academic honesty is a core value of the university and all members of the university community are responsible for abiding by the tenets of the policy. Georgia State students, faculty, and staff are expected to report all instances of academic dishonesty to the appropriate authorities. The procedures for such reporting are outlined below and on file in the offices of the deans of each college, the office of the Dean of Students, and the office of the Provost.

Lack of knowledge of this policy is not an acceptable defense to any charge of academic dishonesty. In an effort to foster an environment of academic integrity and to prevent academic dishonesty, students are expected to discuss with faculty the expectations regarding course assignments and standards of conduct. Students are encouraged to discuss freely with faculty, academic Advisors, and other members of the university community any questions pertaining to the provisions of this policy. In addition, students are encouraged to avail themselves of programs in establishing personal standards and ethics offered by the university.

No instructor or department may impose academic or disciplinary penalties for academic dishonesty outside the parameters of this policy. This policy applies to all incidents of academic dishonesty, including those that occur before a student graduates but are not discovered until after the degree is conferred. In such cases, it is possible that the application of this policy will lead to a failure to meet degree completion requirements and therefore a revocation of a student's degree.

Many colleges and/or departments provide statements of what constitutes academic dishonesty within the context of their discipline and recommend penalties for specific types of academic dishonesty. As noted in the Faculty Handbook, all syllabi are required to make reference to the Academic Honesty Policy; syllabi should also include a link to departmental standards where they exist.

2. Definitions and Examples

The examples and definitions given below are intended to clarify the standards by which academic honesty and academically honorable conduct are to be judged. The list is merely illustrative of the kinds of infractions that may occur, and it is not intended to be exhaustive. Moreover, the definitions and examples suggest conditions under which unacceptable behavior of the indicated types normally occurs; however, there may be unusual cases that fall outside these conditions which also will be judged unacceptable by the academic community.

Plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting another person's work as one's own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student's work as one's own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of the paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else. The submission of research or completed papers or projects by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when that use is specifically forbidden by the faculty member. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. Any work, in whole or part, taken from the internet without properly referencing the corresponding URL (along with the author's name and title of the work, if available) may be considered plagiarism. Finally, there may be forms of plagiarism that are unique to an individual discipline or course, examples of which should be provided in advance by the faculty member. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.

Cheating on Examinations. Cheating on examinations involves giving or receiving unauthorized help before, during, or after an examination. Examples of unauthorized help include the use of notes, texts, or “crib sheets” during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member), or sharing information with another student during an examination (unless specifically approved by the faculty member). Other examples include intentionally allowing another student to view one’s own examination and collaboration before or after an examination if such collaboration is specifically forbidden by the faculty member.

Unauthorized Collaboration. Unauthorized collaboration means working with someone or getting assistance from someone (a classmate, friend, etc.) without specific permission from the instructor on any assignment (e.g., exam, paper, homework) that is turned in for a grade. It is also a violation of academic honesty to knowingly provide such assistance to another student. Collaborative work specifically authorized by a faculty member is allowed.

Falsification. It is a violation of academic honesty to misrepresent material or fabricate information in an academic exercise, assignment or proceeding (e.g., false or misleading citation of sources, the falsification of the results of experiments or of computer data, false or misleading information in an academic context in order to gain an unfair advantage).

Multiple Submissions. It is a violation of academic honesty to submit substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once without the explicit consent of the faculty member(s) to whom the material is submitted for additional credit. In cases in which there is a natural development of research or knowledge in a sequence of courses, use of prior work may be desirable, even required; however, the student is responsible for indicating in writing, as a part of such use, that the current work submitted for credit is cumulative in nature.

3. Information and Burden of Proof

In determining whether or not academic dishonesty has occurred, the standard which should be used is that guilt must be proven by a preponderance of the information. This means that if the information which indicates that academic dishonesty occurred produces a stronger impression and is more convincing as to its truth when weighed against opposing information, then academic dishonesty has been proved. In other words, the information does not have to be enough to free the mind from a reasonable doubt but must be sufficient to incline a reasonable and impartial mind to one side of the issue rather than to the other. Information as used in this statement can be any observation, admission, statement, or document which would either directly or circumstantially indicate that academic dishonesty has occurred.

4. Procedures for Resolving Matters of Academic Honesty

The following procedure is the only approved means for resolving matters of academic dishonesty, except for matters arising in the College of Law, which has its own Honor Code for handling such matters. It is available to all members of the academic community who wish to pursue an action against a student for academic dishonesty. A brief summary of the procedures is presented here; details of these procedures are found in the following sections.

- 1) The faculty member should discuss the incident with the student before filing a charge of academic dishonesty. The faculty member, in consultation with the department chair, prepares the Notice of Academic Dishonesty. The chair forwards the notice to the college dean, who sends the notification to the student by university email or by certified mail.
- 2) The student must appeal in writing to the College Dean within 10 business days of the date the email was sent or the certified mail was received if the student wishes to deny the finding of academic dishonesty.
- 3) If the student does not appeal within 10 business days, the College Dean forwards the notice of academic dishonesty to the Dean of Students.
- 4) If the student appeals the charges, a College Hearing Committee conducts a hearing and reports its findings to the College Dean regarding guilt or innocence. If the student is found not guilty, the faculty member is notified to assign an appropriate grade. If the student is found guilty, the dean forwards the notice of academic dishonesty to the dean of students.
- 5) Any recommendation for a disciplinary penalty and a challenge of that disciplinary penalty submitted by the student, if any, is reviewed by the University Senate Committee on Student Discipline. Based on the committee's recommendation, the provost makes a decision and takes action regarding any disciplinary sanction.

- 6) The dean of students maintains the disciplinary records on all findings of academic dishonesty and is responsible for forwarding notice of multiple findings to the Senate Committee on Student Discipline for review. Multiple findings may result in a disciplinary penalty even if one was not recommended by the faculty member.

5. Initiation of Action

If a member of the academic community believes that a student has engaged in academic dishonesty in a course, on a test, or as a part of an academic program, that individual is responsible for initiating action against the student or bringing the matter to the attention of an individual who may initiate action against the student (i.e., complete and submit a notification of academic honesty). In allegations of academic dishonesty involving course requirements, the course faculty member is required to initiate the action. If the alleged violation involves a departmental program requirement (e.g., comprehensive examination or language competency examination) or an institutionally-required test (e.g., test of Georgia/United States history or Georgia/United States constitutions), or if the individual who discovers the incident is not a faculty member, the individual should bring the matter to the attention of the faculty member and administrator who has responsibility of overseeing the activity (e.g., departmental chair, director of the Testing office). If that administrator decides to bring charges of academic dishonesty against the student, then that administrator becomes the initiator. (Test proctors, laboratory assistants, and other individuals who are not course faculty members should bring any instances of alleged academic dishonesty to the attention of the course faculty member or their administrative superior. That individual, after weighing the information, may become the initiator by formally charging the student with academic dishonesty.)

The channel of review, recommendation, and decision-making follows the administrative lines associated with the course or program requirement involved. In any instance, however, when the alleged incident does not occur within the context of a course, and when it is unclear which college should have jurisdiction in review and decision-making, any unit may initiate the case.

For the sake of brevity, the following processing procedures are written from an academic unit/college perspective. Nonacademic units (i.e., Testing Center) would substitute appropriate supervisory personnel at the respective levels. Herein the initiator will be referred to as faculty member and the administrative unit head will be referred to as chair, designating the departmental chair. Dean will refer to appropriate administrative supervisory personnel at the overall college or division level.

When an allegation of academic dishonesty is made, the relevant dean will inform the office of the Registrar to place a grade of GP (grade pending) for the student in the course involved. Withdrawal from a course does not preclude the imposition of penalties for academic dishonesty. While the matter of academic dishonesty is pending, the student will be allowed to continue in the course and register for upcoming semesters.

A. Penalties to be Imposed

Penalties to be imposed in incidents of academic dishonesty are classified as academic or disciplinary. Academic penalties include assignment of a failing grade for a particular course requirement, or for the course itself, or for other tests or program assignments. They are set by the faculty member, in consultation with the department chair.

Disciplinary penalties can be sought in addition to those considered academic and could include, but are not limited to, the following: suspension, expulsion, transcript annotations (temporary for a period of five years or permanent, as designated). Course credit earned at other institutions while on suspension may not be transferred to Georgia State University. Disciplinary penalties can be requested by the faculty member, in consultation with the chair; they must be reviewed by the University Senate Committee on Student Discipline and they are set by the provost.

B. Action at Administrative Unit (Department and College Level)

As soon as possible after the alleged incident, the faculty member should discuss the matter with the student. This discussion should be conducted in a manner which protects the rights and confidentiality of students. If the faculty member believes that academic dishonesty has occurred, the faculty member, in consultation with the department chair, will determine the appropriate academic penalty. The faculty member and the chair will complete a notice of academic dishonesty form describing the incident and indicating the academic penalty imposed and any recommended disciplinary penalty. The chair will forward the notice of academic dishonesty, which includes a statement of the right to appeal, to the dean of the college, who delivers it either through the student's official university email address or by certified mail.

C. Student Action

The student will have 10 business days after receipt of the notice of charges of academic dishonesty (i.e., the date that the email was sent or that the certified mail was received) to submit a written appeal denying the charges and providing any rationale for the appeal. The appeal should be addressed to the college dean of the initiator. In the event the student is found guilty of academic dishonesty, the student does not have the right to appeal the academic penalty assessed by the faculty member, unless the student can prove that such penalty was arbitrarily imposed or applied in a discriminatory manner.

If the student wishes to challenge a disciplinary penalty, the student must submit a written rationale for challenging the disciplinary penalty within 10 business days of receipt of the notice of charges of academic dishonesty. The statement of challenge should be addressed to the college dean. The college dean will forward the challenge to the dean of students for inclusion in the review of the disciplinary penalty by the University Senate Committee on Student Discipline. All disciplinary penalties are automatically reviewed by the University Senate Committee on Student Discipline, regardless of student appeal.

If the student has also filed an appeal denying the charges of academic dishonesty, any review of disciplinary penalty recommended will be delayed pending review of the charges of academic dishonesty by the college hearing committee.

D. College Action

1. No Appeal by the Student. If the student does not submit a written appeal to the college dean or challenge the disciplinary penalty within 10 business days, the college dean will notify the chair/faculty member to post any pending grade(s) immediately. The college dean will then forward the notice of academic dishonesty to the dean of students for inclusion in the student's disciplinary file. Any recommendation of a disciplinary penalty will also be forwarded to the dean of students for appropriate review by the Senate Committee on Student Discipline.
2. Appeal by the Student.
 - a. If the student submits a written appeal of the charges of academic honesty, the college dean will forward the charges to the chair of a college hearing committee and will notify the faculty member to set forth in writing a comprehensive response describing the incident of academic dishonesty. This statement will be presented to the committee and to the student at least five (5) business days prior to the hearing.
 - b. If the student wishes to challenge the disciplinary penalty without appealing the charges of academic honesty, a college hearing committee will not be convened; instead, the college dean will forward the challenge to the dean of students for inclusion in the review of the disciplinary penalty by the University Senate Committee on Student Discipline.
3. Student Hearing Committee Process. Guidelines that Govern the Hearing of the Appeal by the College Student Hearing Committee
 - a. Within ten (10) business days after the committee receives the charges of academic dishonesty, a hearing date will be determined. The committee will notify the faculty member and the student of the time, date, and the place of the hearing. Copies of all charges of academic dishonesty and related materials for the hearing will be provided to the student at least five (5) business days in advance of the hearing.
 - b. The faculty member and the student will be allowed to make oral presentations, call Witnesses, and present any documentary information regarding the incident in question. The hearing will be recorded on audio tape. The hearing will not be open to observers.
 - c. At the conclusion of the hearing, the committee will meet in closed session and will make its recommendation as to the guilt or innocence of the student based on a Preponderance of Information with respect to the charge of academic dishonesty. The committee chair will forward to the college dean its findings and recommendations in a written report within five (5) business days of the hearing.

4. College Decision on Appeals. Within five (5) business days of receiving the committee's written report, the college dean will make the final decision regarding guilt or innocence. The college dean will notify all appropriate parties of the decision.

If the college dean finds the student not guilty, the matter will be terminated, and no notice of charges will be filed with the dean of students. The college dean will notify the chair to post the pending course grade promptly and will notify the registrar to remove the GP (grade pending) on the student's transcript.

If the college dean finds the student guilty, the notice of charges of academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the dean of students for inclusion in the student's disciplinary file. The academic penalty stipulated by the faculty member will be imposed. The college dean will notify the chair to insure that any pending grade is posted promptly. The college dean will notify the registrar to remove the GP (grade pending) on the student's transcript if only an academic penalty was involved.

If a disciplinary penalty has been recommended, the college dean will notify the registrar to continue the GP (grade pending) annotation until the disciplinary penalty can be reviewed by the University Senate Committee on Student Discipline.

5. Appeal of the Decision of the Dean. If the student or initiator wishes to appeal the decision of the college dean regarding guilt or innocence of the charges of academic dishonesty, the student or initiator may appeal to the provost. The subsequent appeal route would be to the president and then the Board of Regents. The student or initiator must submit a written statement of appeal to the provost within 10 business days of notification of the dean's decision. The basis of the appeal must be on the grounds that the decision was arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory.

E. UNIVERSITY SENATE COMMITTEE ON STUDENT DISCIPLINE ACTION

In cases where a disciplinary penalty has been recommended, the Senate Committee on Student Discipline will conduct a hearing to review the disciplinary penalty. The committee will review the faculty member's notice of academic dishonesty and the student's statement of challenge of the disciplinary penalty, if any. The faculty member and the student will be allowed to appear at the hearing to discuss the imposition of disciplinary penalties. Only the recommendation concerning the disciplinary penalty to be imposed will be considered by this committee. Issues of guilt or innocence are determined at the college level (see II.4 C and D above).

The Senate Committee will conduct the hearing in accordance with its regular hearing procedures. Copies of these procedures may be obtained from the Provost's office.

The Senate Committee on Student Discipline will provide its recommendation within five (5) business days of its hearing to the provost regarding appropriateness of the disciplinary penalty recommended by the college and/or whether other disciplinary penalties are to be imposed in addition to or in lieu of those already recommended by the college.

F. PROVOST ACTION

1. Decision of the Provost. The role of the provost in handling student appeals regarding the charge of academic honesty has been explained (see II.E.5 above). Based on the recommendation, the Provost will render a decision within ten (10) business days of receipt of the recommendation of the Senate Committee. The provost will notify the student, the referring dean, the department chair and the faculty member of the Senate Committee's recommendations and of the provost's decision. At that time the provost will also notify the registrar to annotate the student's transcript, if necessary.
2. Appeal of the Decision of the Provost. If the student wishes to appeal the decision of the provost regarding the imposition of a disciplinary penalty, the student may appeal to the president, and then to the Board of Regents. The student must submit a written statement of appeal to the president within ten (10) business days of notification of the provost's decision. The basis for such an appeal must be on the grounds that the decision was arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory.

G. STUDENTS INVOLVED IN TWO OR MORE INCIDENTS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

A student is subject to disciplinary action in addition to any already undertaken once it is determined that the student has been found guilty in a previous incident of academic dishonesty. In such cases, the dean of students will forward a report to the University Senate Committee on Student Discipline regarding the incidents of academic dishonesty which have been reported. The dean of students is responsible for initiating this report within ten (10) business days of notification of the proceedings of any subsequent finding of academic dishonesty.

The University Senate Committee on Student Discipline will review the report of the dean of students. The student may submit supplemental written documents for the committee's review and may request to appear before the committee in its deliberations. After reviewing the matter, the committee will send a report to the provost with the recommendation for disciplinary penalty to be imposed. The provost will proceed as in G above.

H. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES FOR ACADEMIC MATTERS

1. Each of the undergraduate colleges has stated policies for settling grievances of students for academic matters. Refer to the office of the dean of each college for policies.
2. Obligation to Report Suspected Violations. Members of the academic community, students, faculty and staff are expected to report all instances of academic dishonesty to the appropriate authorities. The procedures for such reporting are on file in the offices of the deans of each college.
3. Penalties. The university takes the matter of academic honesty most seriously. Penalties for violations vary but include both suspension and permanent expulsion from the institution.

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