

CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity

Academic Dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York and is punishable by penalties, including failing grades, suspension, and expulsion, as provided herein.

I. DEFINITIONS AND EXAMPLES OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Cheating is the unauthorized use or attempted use of material, information, notes, study aids, devices or communication during an academic exercise.

The following are some examples of cheating, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

- Copying from another student during an examination or allowing another to copy your work
- Unauthorized collaboration on a take home assignment or examination
- Using notes during a closed book examination
- Taking an examination for another student, or asking or allowing another student to take an examination for you
- Changing a graded exam and returning it for more credit
- Submitting substantial portions of the same paper to more than one course without consulting with each instructor
- Preparing answers or writing notes in a blue book (exam booklet) before an examination
- Allowing others to research and write assigned papers or do assigned projects, including use of commercial term paper services
- Giving assistance to acts of academic misconduct/ dishonesty
- Fabricating data (all or in part)
- Submitting someone else's work as your own
- Unauthorized use during an examination of any electronic devices such as cell phones, palm pilots, computers or other technologies to retrieve or send information

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own.

The following are some examples of plagiarism, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

- Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source
- Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source
- Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the source
- Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments

Internet plagiarism includes submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the Internet without citing the source, and "cutting & pasting" from various sources without proper attribution.

Obtaining Unfair Advantage is any activity that intentionally or unintentionally gives a student unfair advantage in his/her academic work over another student.

The following are some examples of obtaining an unfair advantage, but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

- Stealing, reproducing, circulating or otherwise gaining advance access to examination materials

- Depriving other students of access to library materials by stealing, destroying, defacing, or concealing them
- Retaining, using or circulating examination materials, which clearly indicate that they should be returned at the end of the exam
- Intentionally obstructing or interfering with another student's work

Falsification of Records and Official Documents

The following are some examples of "falsification," but by no means is it an exhaustive list:

- Forging signatures of authorization
- Falsifying information on an official academic record
- Falsifying information on an official document such as a grade report, letter of permission, drop/add form, ID card or other college document

Adapted with permission from *Baruch College: A Faculty Guide to Student Academic Integrity*. The Baruch College document includes excerpts from University of California's web page entitled "The Academic Dishonesty Question: A Guide to an Answer through Education, Prevention, Adjudication and Obligation" by Prof Harry Nelson.

II. METHODS FOR PROMOTING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

- Orientation sessions for all new faculty (full and part-time) and students should incorporate a discussion of academic integrity. Packets containing information explaining the policy, the procedures that are in place and examples of infractions should be distributed. These packets should be readily available, throughout the academic year, in the appropriate offices of the college and the locations of those offices should be widely publicized. Colleges using additional resources to detect plagiarism should publicize these resources widely.
- All college catalogs, student handbooks, and college websites should include the CUNY and college academic integrity policy and the consequences of not adhering to it. The Policy on Academic Integrity, as adopted by the Board, shall be distributed to all students. All syllabi and schedules of classes should make reference to the CUNY and college's academic integrity policy and where they are published in full.
- A "Faculty Report" form should be used throughout the University to report incidents of suspected academic dishonesty. (It is strongly recommended that the faculty member should report all such incidents by completing and submitting the form to the chief student affairs officer, the Academic Integrity Committee if the college has established one (see recommendation below), or other appropriate academic integrity official whom the college may designate (collectively referred to hereinafter as the "Academic Integrity Official"). A follow-up form should be submitted to the student's academic integrity file by the adjudicating person or body once the suspected incident has been resolved pursuant to one of the methods described below. Although forms need not be uniform across the University, they need to be uniform within each college. The form should provide at least minimal information such as the name of the instructor and student, course name and number, date of incident, explanation of incident and the instructor's telephone/email contact information; it should be easy to use and process. Except as otherwise provided in the CUNY Procedures, the Academic Integrity Official of each college should retain the forms for the purposes of identifying repeat offenders, gathering data, and assessing and reviewing policies.

- CUNY will develop a website on Academic Integrity. This website will include suggestions for faculty, students and administrators to reduce cheating or plagiarism, resources on academic integrity and links to relevant sites. Future plans also include the development of an online training program to raise awareness about academic integrity.
- The Committee recommends that this CUNY Policy on Academic Integrity, dated Spring 2004, be adopted by the Board of Trustees.
- Colleges should adopt the "PEN" (Pending) grade to facilitate the implementation of the Procedures for Imposition of Sanctions. This grade already exists in the University's Glossary of Grades.
- Colleges may wish to consider issuing a Student Guide to Academic Integrity. An excellent example is a document that students at Baruch College developed called *Student Guide to Academic Integrity at Baruch College*. The Guide is in its final stages of approval.
- Each college should consider joining the Center for Academic Integrity.
- Colleges should consider subscribing to an electronic plagiarism detection service. Any college that does subscribe must notify every student each semester of the fact that such a service is available for use by the faculty.
- Colleges should consider establishing an Academic Integrity Committee, to serve in lieu of grade appeals committees in cases of academic dishonesty, which would hear and decide contested grade reductions that faculty members award because of students violations of the Academic Integrity Policy and collect and maintain files of Faculty Report forms of suspected and adjudicated violations of the Academic Integrity Policy.
- Establish a mechanism for preventing students from dropping a class in order to avoid an investigation and/or imposition of a sanction for a violation of academic integrity.

III. PROCEDURES FOR IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS FOR VIOLATIONS OF CUNY POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

A. Introduction

As a legal matter, in disciplining students for violations of policies of academic integrity, CUNY, as a public institution, must conform to the principles of due process mandated by the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution--generally speaking, to provide notice of the charges and some opportunity to be heard. In the context of court-litigated violations, questions as to how much and what kind of process was "due" turn on the courts' judgment whether the decision on culpability was "disciplinary" (a question of fact) or "academic" (a question of the instructor's expert judgment). This distinction has proved difficult to apply on campus. Accordingly, these procedures provide for alternative approaches depending on the severity of the sanction(s) being sought. If the instructor desires solely an "academic" sanction, that is, a grade reduction, less process is due than if a "disciplinary" sanction, such as suspension or expulsion, is sought.

A faculty member who suspects that a student has committed a violation of the CUNY or the college Academic Integrity Policy shall review with the student the facts and circumstances of the suspected violation whenever possible. The decision whether to seek an academic sanction only, rather than a disciplinary sanction or both types of sanctions, will rest with the faculty member in the first instance, but the college retains the right to bring disciplinary charges against the student. Among the factors the college should consider in determining whether to seek a disciplinary sanction are whether the student has committed one or more prior violations of the Academic Integrity Policy and mitigating circumstances if any. It is strongly recommended that every instance of "suspected" violation should be reported to the Academic Integrity Official on a form provided by the college as described in the third Recommendation for Promoting Academic Integrity, above. Among other things, this reporting will allow the college to determine whether it wishes to seek a disciplinary sanction even where the instructor may not wish to do so.

B. Procedures In Cases Where The Instructor Seeks An Academic Sanction Only

1. Student Accepts Guilt And Does Not Contest The Academic Sanction

If the faculty member wishes to seek only an academic sanction (i.e., a reduced grade¹ only), and the student does not contest either his/her guilt or the particular reduced grade the faculty member has chosen, then the student shall be given the reduced grade, unless the college decides to seek a disciplinary sanction, see Section I above and IV below. The reduced grade may apply to the particular assignment as to which the violation occurred or to the course grade, at the faculty member's discretion.

Footnote 1. A reduced grade can be an "F," a "D-," or another grade that is lower than the grade that would have been given but for the violation.

2. Student Denies Guilt And/Or Contests The Academic Sanction

If the student denies guilt or contests the particular grade awarded by the faculty member, then the matter shall be handled using the college's grade appeals process, including departmental grading committees where applicable, or the Academic Integrity Committee. In either case, the process must, at a minimum, provide the student with an opportunity to be heard and to present evidence.

C. Procedures In Cases Where A Disciplinary Sanction Is Sought

If a faculty member suspects a violation and seeks a disciplinary sanction, the faculty member shall refer the matter to the college's Academic Integrity Official using the Faculty Report form, as described in the third Recommendation for Promoting Academic Integrity above, to be adjudicated by the college's Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee under Article 15 of the CUNY Bylaws. As provided for therein, the Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee may, among other things, investigate, conciliate, or hear evidence on cases in which disciplinary charges are brought.¹ Under certain circumstances, college officials other than the Academic Integrity Official may seek disciplinary sanctions following the procedures outlined above. For the reasons discussed in Item IV below, if a reduced grade is also at issue, then that grade should be held in abeyance, pending the Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee's action.

Footnote 2. Typically, disciplinary sanctions would be sought in cases of the most egregious, or repeated, violations, for example infraction in ways similar to criminal activity (such as forging a grade form; stealing an examination from a professor or a university office; or forging a transcript); having a substitute take an examination or taking an examination for someone else; sabotaging another student's work through actions designed to prevent the student from successfully completing an assignment; dishonesty that affects a major or essential portion of work done to meet course requirements. [These examples have been taken from a list of violations compiled by Rutgers University.]

D. Procedures In Cases In Which Both A Disciplinary And An Academic Sanction Are Sought

If a faculty member or the college seeks to have both a disciplinary and an academic sanction imposed, it is not advisable to proceed on both fronts simultaneously lest inconsistent results ensue. Thus, it is best to begin with the disciplinary proceeding seeking imposition of a disciplinary sanction and await its outcome before addressing the academic sanction. If the Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee finds that the alleged violation occurred, then the faculty member may reflect that finding in the student's grade. If the Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee finds that the alleged violation did not occur, then no sanction of any kind may be imposed. The decision whether to pursue both kinds of sanctions will ordinarily rest with the faculty member.

E. Reporting Requirements

1. By The Faculty Member To The Academic Integrity Official

In cases where a violation of academic integrity has been found to have occurred (whether by admission or a fact-finding process), the faculty member should promptly file with the Academic Integrity Official a report of the adjudication in writing on a Faculty Report form provided by the college as described above. The Academic Integrity Official shall maintain a confidential file for each student about whom a suspected or adjudicated violation is reported. If either the grade appeals process or the Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee finds that no violation occurred, the Academic Integrity Official shall remove and destroy all material relating to that incident from the student's confidential academic integrity file. Before determining what sanction(s) to seek, the faculty member or the Academic Integrity Official may consult the student's confidential academic integrity file, if any, to determine whether the student has been found to have previously committed a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy the nature of the infraction, and the sanction imposed or action taken.

2. By the Academic Integrity Official To the Faculty Member

Where a matter proceeds to the Faculty-Student Disciplinary Committee, the Academic Integrity Official shall promptly report its resolution to the faculty member and file a record of the resolution in the student's confidential academic integrity file, unless, as indicated above, the suspected violation was held to be unfounded, in which case all reporting forms concerning that suspected violation shall be destroyed.

ADOPTED BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES ON JUNE 28, 2004.