

Rutgers University

Policy on Academic Integrity¹

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey is an academic community dedicated to the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge. Essential to this pursuit is a commitment by each of its members to the principles of truth and academic honesty. Accordingly, the University has developed a formal *Policy on Academic Integrity* for students to clearly define its expectations and to inform the University community of those expectations.

The basic premises that inform the University's *Policy on Academic Integrity* are that academic integrity is primarily an academic and educational matter that is best addressed as a part of the teaching and learning process and that the assessment of academic work and the assignment of grades are a faculty responsibility.

The *Policy* is intended to serve faculty and students alike by establishing clear guidelines for academic integrity and by providing an efficient, effective, and equitable process for resolving allegations of academic dishonesty. The *Policy* does so by addressing academic dishonesty in an educational context in which the grade awarded is an important consideration. Only in more egregious instances of academic dishonesty, or in instances in which repeat offenses are involved, will cases be handled through the more formal University disciplinary process in which the penalties may include separation from the University. To ensure fairness, the *Policy* also provides for a timely and equitable review in those instances in which a student feels the faculty member's actions were not warranted by the facts of a particular case. The *Policy* also establishes a centralized recording system to identify repeat offenders.

Responsibilities of Faculty, Students, and the University

Each member of our community bears a responsibility for ensuring that the University's commitment to academic integrity is honored. Faculty members have a responsibility to fully inform students of the principles of academic integrity and the particular expectations within individual courses, including expected parameters of student collaboration and acceptable citation format. For purposes of this document faculty members are defined as tenured and non-tenured members of the professoriate, lecturers, teaching assistants, laboratory assistants, graders, internship and clinical supervisors, and all others who serve students in an instructional capacity. Faculty members should exercise reasonable care to establish effective learning environments and to create assessment mechanisms and course requirements that minimize opportunities for students to engage in academic dishonesty. Students have a responsibility to fully understand the principles of academic integrity and to abide by them in all their work at the University.

¹ Portions of this *Policy* are based on the academic integrity policies of The Pennsylvania State University, the University of Maryland at College Park, and the University of Pennsylvania. We gratefully acknowledge the assistance and guidance we have obtained from these policies.

The University is responsible for creating a positive learning environment in which the principles of academic integrity are an institutional priority and to provide faculty and students with educational support services to help them fully understand and address issues of academic integrity. The University also has a responsibility for establishing equitable and effective procedures to deal with academic integrity violations when they occur. The University should actively engage faculty and students in the implementation of the *Policy* and in the monitoring of its effectiveness. Only through a genuine partnership among students, faculty members, and staff will we be able to foster the fundamental commitment to academic integrity essential to a university community.

Acts of Academic Dishonesty

University expectations for academic integrity can be violated in various ways. The comments and examples given below will help students and faculty better understand University norms of academic integrity. However, they do not necessarily exhaust the full scope of these violations. This *Policy* governs all academic activities of the University, including any graduate or undergraduate course, independent study or research for academic credit, laboratory, internship, externship, clinical program, practicum, field placement, or other form of study or work offered in furtherance of the academic mission of the University. The *Policy* applies to all students of the University whether full-time or part-time. A person remains subject to the *Policy on Academic Integrity* and to its Review procedures even if that person leaves the University before a violation is discovered. Attempts to commit acts prohibited by this *Policy*, or assisting others to commit acts prohibited by this *Policy*, will be pursued in the same manner as completed violations and subject to the same range of sanctions.

Faculty members should state their expectations for each assignment or examination as clearly as possible. If a student is uncertain as to whether a particular activity would violate this *Policy*, it is the responsibility of the student to seek clarification from the appropriate faculty member or instructor or their designee prior to engaging in that activity.

A general description of acts of academic dishonesty follows. The comments and examples within each section provide explanations and illustrative material. A more detailed listing of specific offenses is provided later in this section.

A. Cheating

Cheating is the use of inappropriate and unacknowledged materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The use of books, notes, calculators and conversation with others is restricted or forbidden in certain academic exercises. Their use in these cases constitutes cheating. Similarly, students must not request others (including commercial term paper companies) to conduct research or prepare any work for them, nor may they submit identical work or portions thereof for credit or honors more than once without prior approval of the instructor or instructors involved.

B. Fabrication

Fabrication is making up data or results and recording or reporting them in an academic exercise. It is improper, for example, to analyze one sample in an experiment and covertly invent data based on that single experiment for several more required analyses. It is also fabrication to make up a citation. The student must acknowledge reliance upon the actual source from which cited information was obtained. A writer should not, for example, reproduce a quotation from a book review and indicate that the quotation was obtained from the book itself.

C. Falsification

Falsification is manipulating research materials, equipment or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research is not accurately represented.

D. Facilitating Academic Dishonesty

Students who knowingly or negligently allow their work to be used by other students or who otherwise aid others in academic dishonesty are also committing acts of academic dishonesty even though they may not themselves benefit academically from that dishonesty.

E. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a footnote. Acknowledgment is required when material from another source stored in print, electronic or other medium is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, only materials that contribute to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography. Plagiarism can, in some cases, be a subtle issue. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.

F. Denying others access to information or material

It is a violation of academic integrity to deny others access to scholarly resources, or to deliberately impede the progress of another student or scholar. Examples of offenses of this type include: giving other students false or misleading information; making library material unavailable to others by stealing or defacing books or journals, or by deliberately misplacing or destroying reserve materials; or altering computer files that belong to another.

The following chart illustrates offenses that Rutgers considers to be presumptively non-separable, those presumptively separable and those for which faculty may exercise discretion as to the level of sanction to be considered (separable or non-separable). These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive. The offenses described in the chart are meant to guide faculty members and University officials in making judgments about those offenses that should be addressed as academic offenses by faculty members (i.e. non-separable offenses) and those that should be addressed as disciplinary offenses under the *Code of Student Conduct* (separable offenses). Cases of academic dishonesty fall along a continuum from minor to severe, and sanctions should be appropriate to the level of offense involved in each case.

The following factors will ordinarily be considered when assessing whether offenses in the Discretionary category should be adjudicated under the process for separable or non-separable offenses:

- i. The academic experience of the student may be used as a consideration in determining the gravity of the offense and the appropriate sanction. Upper-level undergraduates and graduate students should have developed a more keen appreciation of the academic values underlying this *Policy* and may properly face more severe penalties for violations.
- ii. Graduate and professional schools may determine to hold their students to a higher standard for reasons related to codes of professional ethics in the various professions and disciplines.
- iii. The overall context of the offense including but not limited to the extent to which students were clearly advised of the faculty member's expectations before violating them, the weight of the examination, assignment or course work in issue and the extent of the violation (e.g., the amount of plagiarized passages as compared to the extent of the student's own work).
- iv. A record of multiple violations committed by the student ordinarily will require consideration of more severe sanctions².

² The faculty member ordinarily will not have knowledge of any prior offenses by the student when imposing a sanction so that they are not unfairly prejudiced in their judgment. Consideration of more severe sanctions for a multiple offender will occur upon reporting of the matter to the appropriate student services office as more fully described below under "Implementation of Sanctions / A. Faculty Review".

Non-separable

Working with another student on a homework or laboratory assignment when such work is prohibited.

Failure to footnote or give proper acknowledgement in a very limited section of an assignment.

Quoting directly or paraphrasing, to a modest extent, w/o acknowledging the source.

Submitting the same work or major portions thereof to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without instructor permission.

Using data or interpretive material for a laboratory report without acknowledging sources or collaborators. All contributors to preparation of data and/or to writing the report must be named.

Receiving assistance from others, such as research, statistical, computer programming, or field data collection help that constitutes an essential element in the undertaking w/o acknowledging such assistance in a paper, examination or project.

Discretionary

Plagiarizing portions of a written assignment, including failure to cite in a footnote or end note, to give proper acknowledgment, to quote directly, or to paraphrase, without acknowledging the source.

Submitting a purchased term paper or other purchased materials to satisfy a course requirement.

Copying on tests or final examinations.

Acting to facilitate copying during an exam.

Using prohibited materials, e.g., books, notes, or calculators during an examination. This offense may include possessing prohibited materials in an examination room contrary to the instructions of the faculty member or proctor.

Fabrication of evidence, falsification of data, paraphrasing or quoting directly or without acknowledging the source, and/or presenting the ideas of another as one's own in a senior thesis, within a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, in scholarly articles submitted to refereed or non-refereed journals, or in other work represented as one's own as a graduate student.

Collaborating before an exam or test to develop methods of exchanging information and implementation thereof.

Willful violation of a canon of the ethical code of the profession for which a professional school or graduate student is preparing.

Fabricating data by inventing or deliberately altering material. (This includes citing "sources" that are not, in fact, sources.)

Using unethical or improper means of acquiring data.

Separable

Acquiring or distributing a test or examination from unauthorized sources prior to the test or examination.

Submitting a purchased term paper or other purchased materials to satisfy a major course requirement.

Removing posted or reserved material or preventing other students from having access to it.

Acts of academic dishonesty in forms similar to criminal activity (such as forging a grade form, stealing an examination from a professor or from a university office; buying an examination; stealing a paper or data from another student; or falsifying a transcript).

Having a substitute take an examination or taking an examination for someone else.

Altering examinations for the purpose of having the original grade reconsidered by the instructor.

Sabotaging another student's work through actions designed to prevent the student from successfully completing an assignment.

Review Process for Non-separable Offenses

The *Policy on Academic Integrity* places academic integrity in the context of the educational process at the University. It is based on the assumption that the assessment of academic work and the assignment of grades are primarily faculty responsibilities.

When academic dishonesty is suspected, faculty members have the authority to make academic decisions up to and including the assignment of a failing grade in the course. If a student disputes the faculty member's finding, the finding is subject to review, as described below. Faculty members do not have the authority to require a student to withdraw from a course. Violations of the *Policy* addressed directly by faculty members under these procedures for Non-separable offenses should always be reported to the office responsible for student judicial affairs so as to support identification of students who commit multiple violations of this *Policy*. As noted above, violations that would ordinarily be handled as non-separable offenses may escalate to a separable offense if the student has previous violations of record.

Faculty / Student Review

A member of the faculty who believes that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty will notify the student and provide the student with an opportunity to respond and discuss the allegation. Ordinarily, this discussion will take place within two weeks of the time the faculty member recognizes a possible violation of this *Policy* by the student. The purpose of this discussion is to provide the student with the opportunity to respond to the allegation(s). Once a student has been informed that academic dishonesty is suspected, the student may not drop the course during the adjudication process.³

If, after meeting with the student, the faculty member determines that there has not been a violation of the *Policy*, the matter will be closed.

If the faculty member determines that the matter is a separable offense as defined in this *Policy*, (either because the offense is presumptively separable or because the faculty member is electing to treat a discretionary offense as separable), the faculty member will refer the case to the Office of Compliance, Student Policy and Judicial Affairs for review under the University *Code of Student Conduct*.

If the faculty member determines that the student has committed a non-separable act of academic dishonesty (presumptively non-separable or a discretionary offense the faculty member is electing to treat as non-separable), the faculty member will impose a sanction and inform the student in writing using a form to be made available to all faculty members under this *Policy*. This written notice will be provided to the student either via hand-delivery or through e-mail notification. The faculty member may impose only academic sanctions (e.g., grade penalties for assignments or course) and/or educational sanctions from the approved list provided under this

³ Any drop or withdrawal from the course during this time will be reversed. A student who has received an academic sanction as a result of a violation of academic integrity may not drop or withdraw from the course at any time.

Policy. A faculty member may not impose disciplinary sanctions, which are available only under the *Code of Student Conduct*.

The form notifying the student of the faculty member's determination will afford the student the opportunity to request review by the Academic Integrity Committee. The student may request review of either or both the finding and the sanction. A request for review must be received within ten (10) calendar days of the date of the notice to the student. Otherwise, the faculty member's determination is final and not subject to review.

Academic Integrity Committee

The Academic Integrity Committee ("AIC") shall be a standing committee of trained faculty, students, and administrative investigators who will advise the chief academic officer (CAO) on each campus (the Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs in New Brunswick-Piscataway and the Camden and Newark Provosts) concerning student requests for a review of a faculty member's determination of responsibility and/or the sanction imposed for non-separable offenses under this *Policy*.

All requests for review will be referred to the AIC. AIC reviews will be conducted by a three-person AIC Panel consisting of one faculty member from the AIC, one student member from the AIC and an Administrative Investigator.⁴ Simple majority vote will determine the outcome on all matters before a Panel. Determinations by AIC Panels shall be in the form of a recommendation to the appropriate CAO, whose decisions in the matter of non-separable offenses shall be final. Prior to AIC review, the Administrative Investigator will gather information pertaining to the academic dishonesty charge(s) as necessary to permit the AIC Panel to make an informed decision. This fact-finding process will usually include direct contact with the faculty member(s) and student(s) involved and review of other relevant information.

AIC Panels will review matters on the basis of the information presented through the Administrative Investigator. The student and faculty member will not attend AIC reviews, and AIC Panels will not take direct testimony. If a Panel needs more information to reach a recommendation concerning the matter under review, the Administrative Investigator will continue fact-finding, and a decision will be deferred for a reasonable time.

When the only issue under review by an AIC Panel is the sanction imposed by the faculty member, the report of the Administrative Investigator will be brief and limited to information related to the appropriateness of the sanction. The Panel and CAO will give deference to the determination of the faculty member regarding sanctions.

The AIC Panel may recommend the change of a determination that the student violated the *Policy* only when it finds that the faculty member's judgment was clearly erroneous, or if new information becomes available that materially changes the weight of the evidence.

⁴ When the student requesting review is a graduate student, the student member of the AIC will be a graduate student whenever possible.

The AIC Panel may only recommend, and the CAO may only impose, academic or educational sanctions and may not impose disciplinary sanctions for non-separable offenses under this *Policy*, which are available under the *Code of Student Conduct*. The AIC Panel may recommend additional educational sanctions beyond those imposed by the faculty member when a student requests a sanction review if the AIC Panel determines the sanction proposed by the faculty member is disproportionately lenient in comparison to the penalty typically imposed for similar offenses.

Implementation of Sanctions

The Office of Compliance, Student Policy, and Judicial Affairs (“OCSPJA”) will implement sanctions for violations of this *Policy* and maintain all records of violations.

- A. **Faculty Review.** If a student and faculty member resolve a violation directly, the faculty member shall notify OCSPJA on a standard form. OCSPJA will determine if the student has any prior violations of the *Policy*. If the student has no prior violations, OCSPJA will implement the faculty member’s recommended sanction, create a record of the violation, and notify appropriate University officials. If the student has a prior offense, after consultation with the faculty member, OCSPJA may refer the matter for sanction review, and a possible increase in sanction, either to the AIC or to Judicial Affairs for adjudication under the *Code of Student Conduct*, depending on the severity of the cumulative record.
- B. **Academic Integrity Committee Review.** For those matters in which the finding and/or sanction has been referred to the AIC, the OCSPJA will implement the finding and sanction of the CAO, create a record of the violation and notify appropriate University officials of the final outcome. If the CAO changes a faculty determination that the student violated the *Policy*, based either on a finding that the faculty member’s judgment was clearly erroneous or new information becomes available that materially changes the weight of the evidence, OCSPJA will not maintain any record of the violation and will make reasonable efforts to insure that the student is not harmed by the charge.
- C. For those matters referred for adjudication under the *Code of Student Conduct*, the implementation of any determinations will be governed by the same procedures as any other case heard under the *Code*.

Records and Files

Non-separable offenses are considered to be academic matters and not student discipline that warrants creating a disciplinary record. The purpose of reporting to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs is for maintaining a central repository of data and for tracking repeat offenders who may be referred to the student disciplinary process.

For separable offenses, Disciplinary Files and Records will be handled as described in Sections 75 through 77 of the *Code of Student Conduct*.

Amendments/Review of Academic Integrity Policy

Individual schools within the University may request permission to make minor modifications in this *Policy* to accommodate the unique circumstances of their discipline(s) and/or to meet required accreditation standards. Such requests will be granted only in rare cases and should be directed to the Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs or the Provost in Camden or Newark. The EVPAA and the Provosts in Camden and Newark will normally consult with the Academic Integrity Committee before approving such requests.

The Academic Integrity Committee shall be responsible for reviewing this *Policy*, suggesting appropriate amendments or modifications, and advising the University administration on issues pertaining to academic integrity. It will be the responsibility of the administration to inform the University Senate, the President, and the Board of Governors on such issues. The first review of this *Policy* should occur no later than two years after its initial implementation and then at regular intervals not to exceed five years.