



CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, SACRAMENTO

UNIVERSITY POLICY MANUAL

Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures

Policy Administrator: Vice President for Student Affairs

Authority: PM-94, PM 04-01, EO 1098

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Index Cross-References: FS 0-71, FS 17/18-112

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ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

Policy Statement:

The policy establishes rules and responsibilities concerning academic dishonesty to protect and maintain the integrity of academic work and student grades. The policy delineates the responsibilities of students, the faculty, and the Student Conduct Officer (Student Affairs) in cases of academic dishonesty; provides an explanation of the two types of academic dishonesty--cheating and plagiarism--and establishes criteria that constitute each.

Who the Policy applies to:

Students, instructors, department chairs, College Deans, Academic Affairs, Student Conduct Officer, and the Registrar's Office.

Why the Policy is necessary:

The policy establishes rules and responsibilities concerning academic dishonesty to protect and maintain the integrity of academic work and student grades.

Responsibilities:

Students, instructors, and the Office of Student Conduct

Procedure:

Procedure are outlined in the policy.

Approved by: Robert S. Nelsen, President

Date: July 29, 2019

ACADEMIC HONESTY POLICY

I. General Principles

The principles of truth and honesty are recognized as fundamental to a community of scholars and teachers. California State University, Sacramento (hereafter referred to as Sacramento State) expects that both instructor and students will honor these principles, and in so doing, will protect the integrity of academic work and student grades. Sacramento State is a publicly-assisted institution legislatively empowered to certify competence and accomplishment in general and discrete categories of knowledge. The President and faculty of Sacramento State are therefore obligated not only to the world at large but also to California to guarantee that substantive knowledge is actually acquired and the ability to acquire it is actually demonstrated by those to whom they assign grades and whom they recommend for degrees. Academic dishonesty defrauds all those who depend upon the integrity of the University, its courses and its degrees. This fraud is accomplished to the extent that instructors, students or campus employees knowingly or unwittingly allow academic dishonesty to work its deception.

II. Definitions

For purposes of this policy the following definitions apply:

- A. **Academic Sanctions** are defined as actions related to coursework and grades and are to be determined by the instructor of record for the course.
- B. **Administrative Discipline** refers to discipline that results from Student Conduct Code proceedings as set forth in Executive Order 1098 or its successor and which relate to violations of Student Conduct (5 California Code of Regulations Section 41301 et seq.)
- C. **Grade Appeal Policy and Process** refers to the Sacramento State Grade Appeal Process.
- D. **Preponderance of the Evidence** means the greater weight of the evidence, i.e., that the evidence on one side outweighs, preponderates over, or is more than, the evidence on the other side.

III. Responsibilities of Students, Instructor, and the Office of Student Conduct

In order to prevent the integrity of learning from being compromised by acts of academic dishonesty, Sacramento State has assigned the following responsibilities:

A. Student Responsibilities

1. Knowing what constitutes academic dishonesty and taking steps to avoid it, including:
 - a. Understanding what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and seeking clarification when they are uncertain;
 - b. Taking responsibility for making sure academic work complies with Sacramento State's academic honesty standards whether working individually or as part of a group.
2. Not taking credit for academic work that is not their own.
3. Not knowingly encouraging or making possible cheating by others.
4. Knowing the policies and procedures regarding academic honesty as specified in this document.

5. Exercising their option, if so inclined, to inform the instructor or the Student Conduct Officer of alleged cheating.
6. Knowing and following the rules instituted to preserve academic honesty. This includes learning and following the particular rules and expectations for specific classes, exams, and course assignments. Ignorance of these rules is not a defense to academic dishonesty.

B. Instructor Responsibilities

1. Grading and evaluating academic work in a fair and consistent manner. This means following the grading guidelines set forth in the course syllabus and avoiding the assignment of grades that are arbitrary, capricious, discriminatory, harassing and/or retaliatory, or otherwise violate university policy [1].
2. Ensuring that students are aware that relevant academic honesty policies exist and that the consequences of violating those policies will vary with the seriousness of the offense.
3. To the best of their ability, designing and conducting class examinations and assignments in a way that will minimize the possibilities of academic dishonesty.
4. Serving as a resource in matters associated with policies developed by faculty, departments and colleges relating to cheating.

C. Responsibilities of the Office of Student Conduct

Oversight of Administrative Discipline.

1. Serving as a resource for instructors, staff and students on matters of academic honesty.
2. Maintaining centralized records for reports of academic dishonesty that may or may not result in Administrative Discipline.

IV. Academic Dishonesty (Prohibited Conduct)

A. Cheating. At Sacramento State, cheating is the act of obtaining or attempting to obtain credit for academic work through the use of any dishonest, deceptive, or fraudulent means. Cheating at Sacramento State includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Copying, in part or in whole, from another's test or other evaluation instrument.
- b. Using crib notes, "cheat sheets," or any other device, including electronic devices not permitted by the instructor as an aid in writing an examination.
- c. Submitting work previously graded in another course unless doing so has been approved by the course instructor or by department policy.
- d. Submitting work simultaneously presented in more than one course, unless doing so has been approved by the respective course instructors or by the department policies of the respective departments.
- e. Altering or interfering with grading or grading instructions.
- f. Sitting for an examination by a surrogate, or as a surrogate.
- g. Any act that interferes with a fair grading environment. Examples include talking, texting, or communicating during an exam; working past allotted time; helping another student to cheat; sharing or showing coursework to other students before submission; and stealing or interfering with other students' work.

h. Any form of dishonesty for academic advantage. Examples include false excuses for missed deadlines; falsified data or results; re-submitting an altered exam for a re-grade; submitting false information in a grade appeal; or forging a signature in an academic document.

i. Aiding or abetting in any of the actions described above.

B. Plagiarism. Plagiarism, as a form of cheating, is the use of distinctive ideas or works belonging to another person without providing adequate acknowledgement of that person's contribution. Regardless of the means of appropriation, incorporation of another's work into one's own requires adequate identification and acknowledgement. Plagiarism is doubly unethical because it deprives the author of rightful credit and gives credit to someone who has not earned it. Acknowledgement is not necessary when the material used is common knowledge. Plagiarism at Sacramento State includes but is not limited to:

1. The act of incorporating into one's own work the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, or parts thereof, or the specific substance of another's work without giving appropriate credit thereby representing the product as entirely one's own. Examples include not only word-for-word copying, but also the "mosaic" (i.e., interspersing a few of one's own words while, in essence, copying another's work), the paraphrase (i.e., rewriting another's work while still using the other's fundamental idea or theory); fabrication (i.e., inventing or counterfeiting sources), ghost-writing (i.e., submitting another's work as one's own) and failure to include quotation marks on material that is otherwise acknowledged; and

2. Representing as one's own another's artistic or scholarly works such as musical compositions, computer programs, photographs, paintings, drawing, sculptures, or similar works.

V. Instructor Evaluation and Reporting of Cases of Academic Dishonesty

A. Reports of alleged student misconduct [2], academic dishonesty, or student organizational misconduct can be reported on a secure online form: https://csus-advocate.symplicity.com/public_report/index.php/pid242180?

B. When an instructor has reason to believe that a student engaged in Prohibited Conduct, the instructor shall:

1. Evaluate and resolve the matter independently and in the process may seek consultation with the Office of Student Conduct, College Dean, or Department Chair; and

2. Refer the matter to Student Conduct to investigate.

C. When the matter is referred to the Student Conduct for investigation, Student Conduct will perform an initial review and/or investigation before returning the matter back to the instructor to proceed under Section VI.A.

VI. Investigation and Resolution by Instructor: If the instructor determines to investigate and resolve the matter independently either with or without consultation as described in V.B.1, the instructor shall follow this procedure:

A. Promptly notify the student of the instructor's concern about the student's conduct, the basis for the concern (evidence) and possible consequences, and offer the student an opportunity to respond (conference by phone or in-person) within a prescribed number of days (generally five (5) working days from the instructor's notice unless circumstances indicate a longer period of time is appropriate). This communication should be made in a private format (via email or during office hours). The time period in which the student must respond should, whenever practicable, be communicated in writing. Instructors should make sure any and all communications relating to any investigation or resolution of a concern of possible academic dishonesty are handled in a confidential manner consistent with the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). Pursuant to FERPA, instructors may not discuss specific

conduct giving rise to concerns relating to or a determination of academic misconduct with or in front of other students and should limit any other disclosure to only those individuals with a need to know in order to further instructor's determination, in consultation as described in V.B.1, or to the appropriate staff or administrator.

B. If an instructor and/or a proctor observe suspicious behavior that may indicate some form of academic dishonesty during an exam, they may re-seat a student but the student should be permitted to finish the exam unless a student is disruptive.

C. Determination without a student response: If the student does not respond to the instructor's notice within the time period specified by the instructor, the instructor must determine if a preponderance of evidence [3] supports a finding of that the student engaged in Prohibited Conduct based on the evidence available.

1. If the instructor determines the preponderance of the evidence does not support a finding that the student engaged in Prohibited Conduct, the matter is closed and no further action is required. Under such circumstances, the instructor may, if appropriate, informally counsel the student about the conduct which gave rise to the concern in an effort to educate the student.

2. If the instructor determines the preponderance of the evidence supports a finding that the student engaged in prohibited conduct under Section IV, the instructor shall:

- a. Impose a grading sanction, if appropriate, under the standards described in Section VIII of this policy;
- b. Counsel the student, as appropriate; and
- c. Submit either a Notice of Action Report or a Disciplinary Referral Report to the Student Conduct Administrator.

D. Determination with a student response: After considering the evidence available including the student response, the instructor must determine if a preponderance of evidence supports a finding that the student engaged in Prohibited Conduct.

1. If the instructor determines the preponderance of the evidence does not support a finding that the student engaged in Prohibited Conduct, the matter is closed and no further action is required. Under such circumstances, the instructor may, if appropriate, informally counsel the student about the conduct which gave rise to the concern in an effort to educate the student.

2. If the instructor determines the preponderance of the evidence supports a finding that the student engaged in prohibited conduct, the instructor shall:

- a. Impose a grading sanction, if appropriate, under the standards described in Section VII of this policy;
- b. Counsel the student, as appropriate; and
- c. Submit either a Notice of Action Report or a Disciplinary Referral Report to the Student Conduct Administrator.

VII. Required Reporting to Student Conduct and Compliance Review.

Instructors must report any and all findings they make that a student engaged in Prohibited Conduct to the Student Conduct Administrator. This requirement allows for centralized record keeping and enables the Office of Student Conduct to identify patterns in behavior. Instructors have two reporting options: a *Notice of Action Report* and a *Disciplinary Referral Report*. Instructors are not required to notify a student reported in a Notice of

Action Report or Disciplinary Referral; the Office of Student Conduct shall notify any student reported in a Notice of Action Report or Disciplinary Referral Report upon receipt.

A. Definitions of *Notice of Action and Disciplinary Referral Report*

1. A Notice of Action report permits an instructor to resolve a case independently and record the resolution in the conduct records system *without* Administrative Discipline. The Notice of Action report will be filed and no further action will be taken by the Office of Student Conduct with regards to the student. Except when the same student has previously been the subject of Administrative Discipline or been the subject of one or more *Notice of Action*, Administrative Discipline charges will not result from a Notice of Action report.
2. A Disciplinary Referral report is a request by an instructor for the Office of Student Conduct Administrator to evaluate the conduct for Administrative Discipline through the student conduct process set forth in Executive Order 1098 or its successor,⁴ educational and remedial measures or both. The instructor may recommend specific Administrative Discipline in any case in which the recommendation seems warranted.

If the Office of Student Conduct discovers evidence in the student conduct process that would exonerate a student who an instructor determined engaged in Prohibited Conduct and/ or mitigate the severity of an Academic Sanction imposed by an instructor, Student Conduct shall invite the instructor to reconsider the determination that Prohibited Conduct occurred and/or the nature of the Academic Sanction. The instructor shall then reconsider the determination and/or Academic Sanction in light of the additional evidence and decide whether to:

- a. Reach a different determination as to whether Prohibited Conduct occurred;
- b. Impose a less severe Academic Sanction; or
- c. Maintain the determination and/or the Academic Sanction.

B. Upon receipt of either a Disciplinary Referral or a Notice of Action report, described in VII.A. the Office of Student Conduct will review the report to determine whether the reporting instructor substantially followed the process outlined under section VI. In conducting this review, the Office of Student Conduct may contact the instructor for clarification. If the Office of Student Conduct identifies a substantive failure to comply with the process, it will return the report to the instructor and request compliance and the Academic Sanction will be held in abeyance. The Office of Student Conduct will notify the student that the report has been returned to the instructor and the Academic Sanction is being held in abeyance until such time as the instructor notifies the student and the Office of Student Conduct of the final determination.

C. If a student believes the instructor substantially failed to comply with the process under this policy, the student may notify the Office of Student Conduct within ten (10) working days of the day the course grade is posted for the class in question. Once notified, the Office of Student Conduct will review the student's concerns and notify the student whether there was such a failure and, if so, that the instructor has been notified of the failure and the Academic Sanction is held in abeyance until the instructor complies with the process and makes a final determination. If the Office of Student Conduct determines the instructor substantially complied with the procedures in the policy, it will notify the student within ten (10) working days Sanction will proceed. For course grades held in abeyance, the University Registrar shall enter a grade of "Reporting Delayed" (RD) during the period of review.

D. Once notified of a substantial failure to comply with the process in this policy, the instructor will correct any non-compliance and determine whether any new evidence has come to light that impacts the determination previously made. The instructor will communicate to the student and the Office of Student Conduct whether the previous determination and/or Academic Sanction will be modified. The determination and Academic Sanction will then be considered final.

VIII. Academic Sanctions

A. In addition to any Administrative Discipline administered under Section VII, Academic Sanctions may be imposed if an instructor determines a student has engaged in Prohibited Conduct.

B. Academic Sanctions shall be proportional to the offense against academic honesty that has occurred. If a student believes a grossly disproportionate grade penalty for academic dishonesty has been issued, the student may file an appeal of the grade under the Sacramento State Grade Appeal Policy and Process only after the academic dishonesty review process has been concluded. [5]

Academic sanctions may include:

1. An oral reprimand.
2. Reduction in an assigned grade.
3. A referral for administrative sanctions. An instructor may choose to make a Disciplinary Referral and refer a student to the Office of Student Conduct in lieu of or in addition to any Academic Sanction.

C. An instructor may assign a failing grade or a grade less than a failing grade to any assignment or to performance in the course as a whole so long as the assigned sanction is not grossly disproportionate to the offense and therefore arbitrary. Instructors are advised to adjust the relative severity of the sanction to their estimation of the relative gravity of the offense in the particular situation before them.

D. In cases where allegations of academic dishonesty are founded and supported by evidence and a final grade is submitted to the student's record, if the student's final grade is a C- or below, the student may repeat the course; however, grade forgiveness shall not be applied. The University's Repeat Policy provides additional guidance. [6]

IX. Student Rights

Nothing in this policy is intended to deny students who come within its scope appropriate due process, including the right to be informed of the allegations of academic dishonesty, the nature of the evidence supporting the allegations of academic dishonesty, and the right to have a meeting with the instructor, the Student Conduct Officer, or other decision-maker, at which time statements and evidence on behalf of the student may be submitted. The student also has the right to a determination of the facts of the case based on a preponderance of the evidence presented. Nor is anything in this policy intended to deny the right to appeal, through appropriate University channels, any decision resulting from such a meeting. As mentioned in several places throughout this policy, in the case where an appeal is made alleging that the grade-sanction was not proportional to the offense and therefore arbitrary, the appeal is governed by the Grade Appeal Process.

XI. Grade Submissions for Unresolved Incidents

In cases where an academic sanction for cheating has been referred to the Office of Student Affairs for review (see below), the academic calendar may require the instructor to submit a course grade before the review is complete. If a determination relating to suspected misconduct has not been made by the end of a semester, the instructor shall request that the University Registrar submit an RD (Report Delayed) grade for the student until the academic dishonesty review process has been concluded and the effect of the sanction, if any, on the student's course grade can be determined. Once the review process has been concluded and an RD grade is changed to reflect the student's final grade in the course, the student may then proceed with the Grade Appeal Process if the student believes that a grossly disproportionate grade penalty for academic dishonesty has been issued.

X. Distribution of Information

This policy shall be published in its entirety on the university's web site. Copies of this policy shall also be available for consultation in every department office and for distribution in the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs. General information regarding this policy and locations where copies can be obtained shall be published in the Schedule of Classes for each semester and in the University Catalog.

Publication of this policy, procedures, and its distribution shall be the responsibility of the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.

The Vice President for Student Affairs shall submit to the Faculty Senate and the Associated Students, Inc. (ASI) annually a statistical report of the number and type of cases of academic and actions taken. This report shall reflect the reports submitted by instructor in the discharge of their responsibility as specified in section IV.B above.

[1] See Section V. of the Grade Appeal Policy and Process.

[2] The following policy addresses student misconduct in the classroom: Dealing with Disruptive Student Behavior in the Classroom Policy, <https://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/stu-0112.htm>

[3] Preponderance of the evidence means the greater weight of the evidence, i.e., that the evidence on one side outweighs, preponderates over, or is more than, the evidence on the other side.

[4] Student Conduct Procedures, Executive Order 1098, Revised June 23, 2015, <http://www.calstate.edu/eo/EO-1098-rev-6-23-15.html>

[5] The Student Grade Appeal Process (2017) can be found by clicking here: <https://www.csus.edu/academic-affairs/internal/grade-appeals.html>

[6] Repeat Policy, <https://www.csus.edu/acaf/academic%20resources/policies%20and%20procedures/repeat%20policy.html>