Policy Statement on Academic Misconduct

School of Computing
University of Utah

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1 Background

This document describes the policies and procedures used by the School of Computing (SoC) relating to academic misconduct of any student enrolled in a SoC course (e.g. CS 4710) or any course that is cross-listed with a SoC course (e.g. ECE 4710).

University of Utah policy as defined in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities[1] and College of Engineering policy as defined in the Academic Appeals and Misconduct Policy[2] also apply.

Computer Science is a professional discipline and almost all of our graduates pursue a career path where the computer science skills that they develop at the University form the very foundation of their skill set. While grades are the normal academic metric, good grades are not the end goal. The long-term key to success is mastery of some aspect of the discipline. Mastery and cheating are diametric opposites. In the workplace, copying without proper attribution has dire consequence. The result is significant financial liability for the company, as well as termination of the offender. In addition, the lack of mastery leads to poor craftsmanship. Consider the life threatening consequences of poor craftsmanship in safety critical systems that are pervasive in medicine, transportation, manufacturing, etc. Large corporations develop and continually refine their codes of professional ethics and employees are typically required to take a refresher course on an annual basis. It is our job to prepare our students to succeed and hopefully to even lead in their chosen profession. This requires developing both technical and ethical skills. The rules are simple: work hard, master the topic, and don't cheat. If you cheat the consequences will be severe, just as they will be in the workplace.

2 SoC Academic Misconduct Policy

Any student who receives two failing grade sanctions in SoC courses due to academic misconduct, or courses cross-listed with SoC courses will be subsequently barred from registering for any additional SoC courses. Any student pursuing any SoC degree who receives two such sanctions will be immediately dropped from their degree program and will not be admitted to any future SoC program.

Any failing sanction due to academic misconduct can be appealed. If the appeal is successful then the failing sanction will be lifted. Hence this policy applies only to failing grade sanctions which are not successfully appealed.

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[1] http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/guides/students/studentRights.html
[2] http://www.coe.utah.edu/current-undergrad/appeal.php

3   Definition of academic misconduct

As defined in the University Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, cheating, misrepresenting one's work, inappropriately collaborating, plagiarism, and fabrication or falsification of information. It also includes facilitating academic misconduct by intentionally helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct.[1] A primary example of academic misconduct would be submitting as one's own, work that is copied from an outside source.

Detailed information on what constitutes academic misconduct for a specific class can be found in the course syllabus. If a student has questions about the syllabus they should seek clarification from the instructor. An individual's academic misconduct is tracked by the School of Computing across all CS courses. Information about prior offenses is available to the Director of Undergraduate Studies, the Director of Graduate Studies, and the SoC Director. CS course instructors will not have access to this information to avoid undue scrutiny to previous academic misconduct offenders.

4   Training and acknowledgment of policy

All students will be notified of the SoC academic misconduct policy both in the course syllabus and by the instructor during the first lecture in any CS or cross-listed course. Further, each student must print, sign, and submit the form[3] acknowledging the SoC academic misconduct policy to the academic advisor. A link to this form will be available on the course web page. This form must be submitted by the end of the second week of any semester in which a student is enrolled in a CS course. Failure to submit the form by this date will result in dismissal from the course. Once submitted, the form will stay on file and acknowledge that the student knows that the SoC policy spans all CS courses. For undergraduate students, full-major applications will not be accepted without submission of the policy acknowledgment form. For graduate students, due progress forms will not be accepted without the submission of the policy acknowledgment form.

5   Sanctions and appeals at the course level

If an instance of academic misconduct is discovered, two options apply.

Fail-the-course option
> The default sanction for an offense of academic misconduct is failure for the course.

Less-than-fail option
> In the syllabus document of a course, or due to instructor discretion, an academic misconduct sanction may be relaxed from a failing grade. Records of a relaxed sanction will also be kept in the student's permanent file but will not count towards dismissal from the degree program or CS course enrollment restrictions.

For either type of academic misconduct sanction, the procedure is illustrated in Figure 1.
For more information on the appeal process, see the University of Utah Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities[4].

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[3]TBD
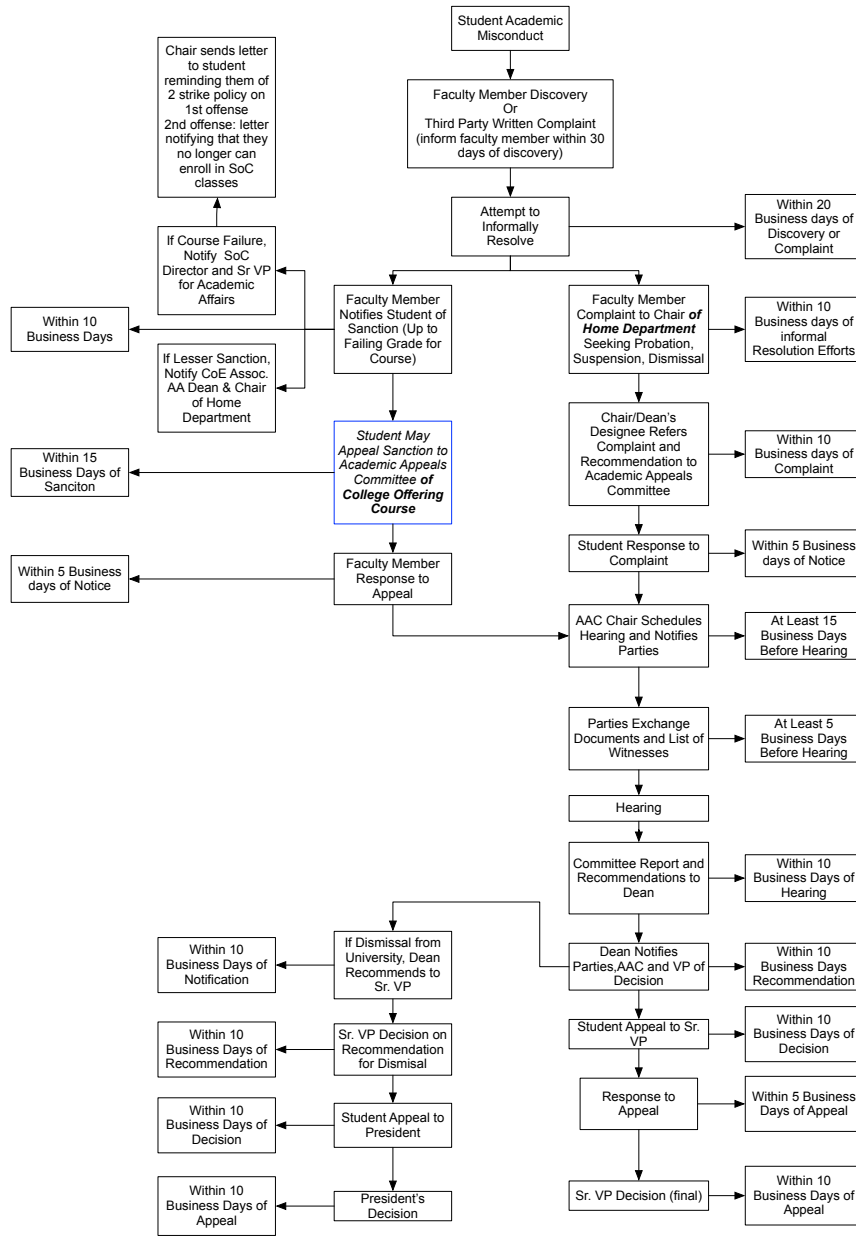[4]http://www.regulations.utah.edu/academics/6-400.html#section_4   Section IV.B

Figure 1: Academic Misconduct Process Illustrated

Should a student need advice or guidance about his/her appeal, the Director of Undergraduate or Graduate Studies can serve as an informal advisor, and the student is encouraged to seek such help.

6 Instructor Responsibilities

1. It is the responsibility of all instructors teaching SoC courses to clearly articulate what constitutes academic misconduct in the syllabus for their course. The syllabus must also provide a link to this policy and to the academic misconduct acknowledgment form.

2. The instructor must make the syllabus available on the course web page prior to the first class meeting.

3. The instructor must discuss the Socks academic misconduct policy and the definition of academic misconduct for a particular course in the first lecture that course and provide the URL for the course web page. The instructor must clearly notify the students of the need to read this policy and to return the acknowledgment form to the appropriate academic advisor by the end of the second week of the term.

7 Student Responsibilities

1. Students are required to understand this policy and to not engage in any activity that could constitute academic misconduct as defined in this policy.

2. Students must fill out the acknowledgment form in the first two weeks of any CS (or cross-listed course) by the end of the second week of class.