

# Augusta University

## Policy Library

### Academic Honesty Policy

**Policy Manager: Office of Faculty Affairs**

#### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Augusta University (“AU”) recognizes that academic honesty is essential to its academic function. The following regulations protect the equity and integrity of the University’s grades and degrees, and help students develop ethical standards and attitudes appropriate to academic and professional life. Violations of academic honesty include, but are not limited to, cheating of all kinds, plagiarism, research misconduct, collusion, and false statements made to avoid negative academic consequences. Each of these is defined in the Definitions section of this policy. All other acts of academic dishonesty are also prohibited. Other acts of academic dishonesty may be defined by the instructor in their course syllabus or other written instructions (e.g., assignment sheet, exam directions).

#### **Responsibilities**

**Faculty Responsibility:** It is the duty of the faculty and all instructors to practice and preserve academic honesty and to encourage it among students. The instructor must clarify in writing (for example, in the course syllabus) any situation peculiar to the course that may differ from the generally stated policy. Whenever possible, the instructor should make explicit the intent and purpose of each assignment so that the student may complete the assignment without unintentionally compromising academic honesty. It is the responsibility of the instructor to provide for appropriate oversight of assignments, examinations, internship components, and other course requirements. Finally, it is the responsibility of the instructor to provide written notice to the student of any suspected violations of the academic honesty policy as described in process and procedures below.

**Student Responsibility:** It is the duty of the student to practice and preserve academic honesty. Each student is responsible for knowing the specific policies that govern academic conduct for the program(s) and course(s) in which they are enrolled, as well as the appeals process for adjudicating such policies. If the student has any doubt about a course policy or the instructor’s expectations, they should consult the instructor or the course director. It is also the student’s responsibility to check daily their Augusta University email so that official notification to the student regarding academic dishonesty can be carried out in timely fashion. The following colleges handle disciplinary actions according to policies and procedures set forth in their respective conduct or honor codes:

Dental College of Georgia (DMD Students) – Student Conduct Code. Available upon request of the Associate Dean for Students, Admissions, and Alumni.

Medical College of Georgia (MD Students) – Medical College of Georgia Honor System. Available upon request by calling (706) 721-2231.

If the student is alleged to have engaged in non-academic misconduct, they should refer to the [Augusta University Student Code of Conduct](#) and the procedures outlined therein.

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**Office of Legal Affairs Use Only**

**Executive Sponsor: Associate Provost, Faculty Affairs**

**Next Review: 4/2028**

**AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS**

*Indicate all entities and persons within the Enterprise that are affected by this policy:*

- Alumni     Faculty     Graduate Students     Health Professional Students
- Staff     Undergraduate Students     Vendors/Contractors     Visitors
- Other:

**DEFINITIONS**

**Academic Review Panel** is a review body that may be constituted to hear academic honesty cases.

**Advisor** is the individual who assists a student with conduct hearing preparation. An advisor must be a full-time administrative official, faculty member, or student of the University. Student Conduct Board members who are not hearing a case are available to serve as Advisors.

**Business Day** is any day on which the academic and business offices of Augusta University are open to the general public.

**Cheating** is prohibited. Cheating includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Possessing, using, or exchanging improperly acquired information, written or oral, in the preparation of any assignment or examination;
- Copying from another student’s work;
- Using prepared materials, notes, or texts during an examination without permission from the instructor;
- Using any technological device to gain or provide advantage on an examination, lab practical, or other assignment without the permission of the instructor, including use of AI text generators;
- Substituting for another person during an examination or allowing someone else to substitute for you; and,
- Solicitation or bribery of any person to obtain examination information.

**Collusion is prohibited.** Collusion occurs when multiple students conspire to violate academic honesty by providing or accepting unauthorized assistance, written or oral, in the preparation or completion of any activity, assignment, or examination without permission from the instructor, even if one or more of the students is not enrolled in the course or context in which the collusion occurs. Ordinary study groups, general discussions to facilitate learning, assigned cooperative learning projects, and appropriate campus resources (e.g., the Center for Writing Excellence, the Academic Success Center) do not constitute academic misconduct except when these are explicitly prohibited by the instructor. Collusion may result in additional consequences beyond the action taken for each individual violation of academic honesty. If students have any doubt about which types of collaboration are permissible, it is their responsibility to ask the instructor.

**False statements are prohibited.** False statements include verbal or written declarations made to avoid

or mitigate negative academic consequences by misrepresenting, distorting, embellishing, or concealing facts pertaining to a student's academic conduct in a course or program of study.

**Plagiarism is prohibited.** Plagiarism occurs whenever someone uses another person's words or ideas, verbatim or paraphrased, without giving appropriate credit to the source. It includes reusing previously completed work (even one's own, i.e. self-plagiarism) without consulting the instructor in advance to confirm such use is permitted and to clarify the extent of revision needed to qualify for credit. It also includes presenting content generated by artificial intelligence as one's own. Students should not submit texts generated in part or full by artificial intelligence unless the instructor has granted explicit permission to do so (e.g. in the syllabus or on the assignment prompt). It is always assumed that all work produced or submitted in an academic context is the student's own and reflects original labor performed to satisfy the expectations assigned in that context, except when the student explicitly acknowledges indebtedness to another source. Such acknowledgment should occur whenever one quotes another person's words; uses or traces another person's ideas, opinions, or theories (even if paraphrased); or borrows facts, statistics, sounds, images, or other intellectual property or illustrative materials, unless the information is common knowledge. If students have any doubt whether a piece of information is considered common knowledge, it is their responsibility to ask the instructor.

**Research Misconduct** is misrepresentation of data collection and analysis, including falsification, fabrication, or omission of data. Augusta University's Policy for Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct applies to students.

**Student** is anyone who has been notified of acceptance for admissions; anyone who is taking courses at the University, either full-time or part-time; and anyone who withdraws after allegedly violating the Student Code of Conduct, or is not officially enrolled for a particular term, but who has a continuing relationship with the University.

## **PROCESS & PROCEDURES**

The following procedures apply whenever accusations of academic misconduct are made by a student, instructor, administrator, or university employee. In all cases, the expectation is that instructors, chairs, and deans will take action within a reasonable time of the instructor becoming aware of the alleged violation, usually within five (5) business days. In some cases, it will not be possible for the faculty member or university official to gather all the necessary information to make a response within this time limit. In those cases, the faculty member or university official must notify the student within five (5) business days about the delay and provide a timeline for the formal response. In cases that exceed the timeframe of a traditional semester, faculty will assign the student a grade of "NR" until the case is decided. At that time, a grade reflecting the decision will be entered.

### **1. Instructor Procedure for Reporting Violations of Academic Honesty**

When a violation of Academic Honesty occurs, the instructor should do the following:

**1.1 Meet with the student to discuss the concern and allow the student to respond.** The purpose of this meeting is to determine if a violation has occurred and allow the student to explain any factors that may be relevant when determining the action to be taken. If the student declines to meet or does not respond to the initial meeting request within five (5) business days, the instructor should notify the student that the process will proceed without their response and move to the next step.

NOTE: In cases when collusion is confirmed or strongly suspected, see Section 4 below.

**1.2 Decide on the appropriate action to be taken, if any.** The severity of this action should be based on careful consideration of the nature of the violation, any response offered by the student, and relevant program or department standards. Possible actions may include a “zero” grade for the assignment or test, reduced credit, a requirement to redo the assignment or to complete additional work, or other such penalties up to a maximum penalty of withdrawing the student from the course with a withdrawal failing (“WF”) grade. When making this decision, the instructor may confer with the program director, department chair, dean, or section chief in which the course is housed.

**1.3 Provide written notice to the student via email** to the student’s AUGUSTA.edu address. This notice must include:

- the specific charge(s) of academic dishonesty, including a concise summary of the incident and the specific course, section, term, and assignment or activity in which the violation(s) occurred;
- a summary of the student's response to the charge(s);
- the action to be taken as a result of the violation(s), if any, with a brief rationale; and
- notice of the student’s right to appeal the decision as described in Section 2 of this policy below.

**IMPORTANT:** If the action taken is to impose a “WF” grade for the course, the instructor should fill out completely and sign a Withdrawal Form with the intended “WF” and a clear rationale; however, this form should be sent to the Associate Provost of Faculty Affairs to be held (i.e., not processed) until after all potential appeals of the instructor’s decision have expired. See Section 3 below for additional details.

**1.4 Send a copy of all documentation to the department chair, dean, and Office of Faculty Affairs** ([aufacultyaffairs@augusta.edu](mailto:aufacultyaffairs@augusta.edu)), including the written notice to the student and all evidence of the incident (e.g., copies of papers, exams, notes, correspondence with the student or persons consulted, etc.).

## 2. Student Right to Appeal Decisions Pertaining to Academic Honesty

The student has the right to appeal decisions and/or consequences imposed by the instructor whenever the student believes these do not show satisfactory regard for the facts of the incident or that the consequences imposed are unfair. In such cases, the following process shall apply:

**2.1 The student should appeal, in writing, to the next administrative level within five (5) business days of receiving the written notice from the instructor.** Typically, the next administrative level is the department chair; however, if the instructor is the department chair, or the unit does not have departments, the appeal should be directed to the dean (or dean's designee) instead. The written appeal must explain the basis for the appeal and the facts that support it, including a summary of the steps that have already been taken to resolve the disagreement, reasons why the student finds the resolutions unfair or unsatisfactory, and a statement of the desired remedy.

**2.2 The administrator shall render a decision to the student within five (5) business days of receiving the appeal.** In some cases, it will not be possible for the administrators to gather all the necessary information to make a response within this time limit. In those cases, the administrator must notify the student within five (5) business days about the delay and provide a timeline for the formal response. This decision shall be communicated in writing to the student's AUGUSTA.edu email address, and shall include notice of the student's further right to appeal as described below.

**2.3 The student may appeal the administrator's decision to the next administrative level within five (5) business days of receiving the written decision.** After the chair, the next level of appeal is the dean of the college, in which case the same process described in 2.1 and 2.2 shall be followed. After the dean, the next level of appeal is the Associate Provost of Faculty Affairs, in which case the Formal Grievance process described in Section 5 of the Student Academic Grievance policy shall be followed.

At each level of appeal, the written appeal must include the details specified in 2.1 above. Likewise, each administrative level shall respond to each appeal within five (5) business days of receiving it. In some cases, it will not be possible for the administrators to gather all the necessary information to make a response within this time limit. In those cases, the administrator must notify the student within five (5) business days about the delay and provide a timeline for the formal response.

## 3. Additional Procedures for a Withdrawal Failing (WF) Grade

If the action is to assign a "WF" grade for the course, the instructor shall initiate the Withdrawal Form with a "WF" and a clear rationale, but shall send this form to the APFA to be held until after all potential appeals of the instructor's decision have expired.

- 3.1 If the student appeals, the Withdrawal Form shall not be processed until the appeal process has run its course. The student is expected to continue to abide by the syllabus for the course in which the academic misconduct is alleged to have occurred during the appeals process.
- 3.2 If no appeal is made, or if the appeals stop before reaching the dean's level, the dean shall notify the APFA. The APFA will send the withdrawal form to the University Registrar to be recorded on the student's academic transcript. An automatic notification of the withdrawal will be sent to the student and instructor's AUGUSTA.edu email addresses.

#### 4. Additional Procedures for Collusion

If collusion (as defined above) is confirmed or strongly suspected, **the instructor shall notify the Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs (APFA) immediately.** In such cases, the APFA shall confer with the instructor to determine what evidence of collusion is available, and based on that discussion, may do any of the following:

- 4.1 Recommend additional action(s) to be taken against the student in light of this collusion. In such cases, the APFA's recommendation and any consequences applied shall be incorporated and clearly described in the instructor's written notice to the student as described in 1.2 above.
- 4.2 Advise the instructor to proceed in treating the incident as an individual offense according to the regular procedure described above, waiting until after the appeals process has run its course to initiate an investigation into the matter of collusion and determine appropriate additional actions, if any. In such cases, the findings of the APFA's investigation and any actions to be taken shall be communicated by written notice to the student's AUGUSTA.edu email address, with a copy provided to the relevant instructor, chair, and dean of the academic context in which the incident occurred.

Potential actions to be taken for collusion may include, but are not limited to, revocation of academic credit for the course(s) in which the incident(s) occurred, suspension, or expulsion.

When collusion pertains to a student enrolled in a program housed in The Graduate School, the APFA will report the incident to the Dean of the Graduate School and provide to the dean the written notice and all accompanying materials and evidence.

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The APFA retains the right to notify other offices as appropriate for any academic honesty violation, in accordance with regulations outlined by FERPA.

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## 5. **Additional Procedures for Repeat Offenses**

The APFA's Office will maintain a record of all academic honesty violations for a period of ten (10) years. If, upon receiving written notice from an instructor as described in Section 1.4 above, the APFA finds that the violation meets the definition of a repeat offense (as defined above), the student(s) will be notified within five (5) business days and provided with an explanation of the process for addressing repeat offenses. Specifically:

- 5.1 In the event the student incurs a second "WF" for academic dishonesty, the student shall be dismissed from Augusta University without an additional hearing related to the Repeat Offense (as described in 5.2 below). The APFA shall direct the University Registrar to enter the phrase "Ineligible to Register" on the student's academic transcript. The student may appeal the dismissal as described in Section 9 of the Student Academic Grievance policy.
- 5.2 For any other Repeat Offense, the APFA will wait until the appeal process for the current offense has run its course and then convene an Academic Review Panel as described in Section 6 of the Student Academic Grievance policy. The sole purpose of the Panel in this instance will be to determine sanctions for the student who has committed a Repeat Offense. The Panel will not render a decision as to the innocence or guilt of the student in any of the cases presented for this student. The APFA will notify the student(s) of the process, provide to the student the official files from all related cases, and provide an opportunity for the student to submit additional materials for review by the Panel. Once this exchange of information occurs, the APFA will initiate the Hearing process as described in Section 5 of the Student Academic Grievance policy.

## 6. **Additional Procedures for Reporting Academic Honesty Violations after Final Grades in the Course have been Recorded**

- 6.1 **In cases where the student is still a student at Augusta University, the regular process will apply.** After the official notice has been sent to the student, and the student has declined to appeal or has exhausted all appeals, the instructor will process a grade change. It will be possible to change the course grade to an "F."
- 6.2 **In instances where the student is no longer a student at Augusta University, the instructor will still report the allegation with a written record.** The instructor will file documentation with the chair, dean, and Office of Faculty Affairs detailing the incident of academic misconduct. It is at the discretion of the APFA to convene an Academic Review Panel to review any further sanctions.

**REFERENCES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS**

[AU Student Code of Conduct](#)

[Withdrawal Form](#)

**RELATED POLICIES**

[USG Board of Regents 6.26 Application for Discretionary Review](#)

[Augusta University Grading System Policy](#)

[Augusta University Responding to Allegations of Research Misconduct Policy](#)

**APPROVED BY:**

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Augusta University

Date: 7/17/2023

President, Augusta University

Date: 7/18/2023