

DRAFT DOCUMENT
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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

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I. Standards of Academic Conduct

As an academic institution committed to the discovery and dissemination of truth, William Paterson University expects that all members of the University community shall conduct themselves honestly and with professional demeanor in all academic activities.

William Paterson University has established standards of academic conduct because of its belief that academic honesty is a matter of individual and university responsibility and that, when standards of honesty are violated, each member of the community is harmed.

All members of the University community – students, faculty, and staff - are expected to acknowledge their individual responsibility to be familiar with and adhere to the Academic Integrity Policy.

The purpose of this document is to set forth the terms of the University's academic integrity policy in the event of violations. It details:

- the categories of academic dishonesty and examples of violations within each category;
- the process of reporting academic integrity violations, including the potential parties to any investigation, the rights and responsibilities of each party, the documentation requirements, and the timeframe for the resolution of investigations;
- the potential penalties for academic integrity violations and how those penalties are imposed

II. Violations of Academic Integrity: Categories of Academic Dishonesty

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy will include, but not be limited to, the following categories:

A. Cheating: Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents his or her mastery of material on a test or other academic exercise. Examples of cheating are:

- Copying from another student's work
- Allowing another student to copy your work

- Using unauthorized materials such as a textbook or notebook during an examination
- Using specifically prepared materials such as notes written on clothing or other unauthorized notes, formula lists, etc., during an examination
- Collaborating with another person during an examination by giving or receiving information without authority.

B. Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the copying from a book, article, notebook, video, or other source material, whether published or unpublished, without proper credit through the use of quotation marks, footnotes, and other customary means of identifying sources, or representing as one's own the ideas, words, writings, programs, and experiments of another, whether or not such actions are intentional or unintentional.

To avoid a charge of plagiarism, a student should be sure to include an acknowledgment of indebtedness:

- Whenever he or she quotes another person's words directly
- Whenever he or she uses another person's ideas, opinions, or theories, even if they have been completely paraphrased in one's own words
- Whenever he or she uses facts, statistics, or other illustrative material taken from a source, unless the information is common knowledge.

C. Fabrication: Fabrication refers to the deliberate use of invented information or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive. Examples of fabrication are:

- Citation of information not taken from the source indicated
- Listing of sources in a bibliography or other report not used in that project
- Fabricating data or source information in experiments, research projects, or other academic exercises
- Falsifying information or signatures on registration, withdrawal, or other forms.

D. Academic Misconduct: Academic Misconduct is any other act of academic dishonesty that does not specifically fall in one of the above categories. It includes the alteration of grades; involvement in the acquisition or distribution of unadministered tests; denying others access to scholarly resources; and the unauthorized submission of student work in more than one class. Examples of academic misconduct are:

- Changing, altering, falsifying, or being the accessory to the changing, altering, or falsifying of a grade report or form, or entering any College office or building for that purpose;
- Stealing, buying, selling, giving way, or otherwise obtaining all or part of any unadministered test or entering any College office or building for the purpose of obtaining an unadministered test;
- Making library material unavailable to others by stealing or defacing books or journals, or by deliberately misplacing or destroying reserve materials;
- Submitting written work to fulfill the requirements of more than one course without the explicit permission of both instructors.

III. Violations of Academic Integrity: Levels

Although any violation of academic integrity is a serious matter, it may be helpful to those responsible for enforcement of the policy to consider specific violations in terms of a hierarchy of severity. These can provide guidance when considering the enforcement process and the application of specific penalties. It is expected that in the majority of cases individual faculty members will be the first to identify or have referred to them suspected or alleged cases of academic integrity violations. This classification is therefore intended primarily for faculty assistance.

Level One Violations - Level One violations may occur because of inexperience or lack of knowledge of principles of academic integrity on the part of persons committing the violation. These violations are likely to involve a small fraction of the total course work, are not extensive, and/or occur on a minor assignment. They are also likely to occur in the initial semesters of a student's enrollment.

Level Two Violations - Level Two violations are characterized by dishonesty of a more serious character or which affects a more significant aspect or portion of the course work.

Level Three Violations - Level Three violations include dishonesty that affects a major or essential portion of work done to meet course requirements, or involves evidence of premeditation, or is preceded by one or more violations at levels one and two.

IV. Responsibilities for Upholding the Academic Integrity Policy

All members of the University community are expected to be familiar with the academic integrity policy and are urged to refer students to the full text of the policy. Each faculty member will inform students of the applicable procedures and conditions early in each semester before the first examination or assignment is due.

V. Student Due Process Rights in Academic Integrity Investigations

Due Process refers to the concept of fair treatment in the disciplinary process. This includes information on student expectations, providing notice of disciplinary charges, decisions that are made, and the right to appeal. In cases of academic integrity violations, the due process rights of students are as follows.

- Written or oral notice of the charges.
- An explanation of the evidence against them.
- An opportunity to present their side of the story.
- Notice of sanctions(s) imposed.
- An opportunity to appeal the charge(s) and/or the sanction(s) in succession as detailed below.

VI. Reporting, Investigation and Resolution of Academic Integrity Policy Violations

Faculty members are usually the first individuals to encounter evidence of possible academic integrity violations in their own classes, although other members of the academic community, including students, may present such evidence to faculty members, department chairs or deans. In all cases the evidence

should be communicated to the relevant course instructor for initial review and investigation. Cases that are not resolved through an initial investigation will move to succeeding stages of adjudication, as detailed below.

First Stage Investigation and Resolution / Meeting with Instructor

If a faculty member has sufficient reason to believe a violation may have occurred on any work submitted for a grade, he/she must attempt to discuss this matter with the student no more than ten (10) working days after the discovery of a possible violation. Prior to this discussion the faculty member will contact the Office of the Dean of Students to inquire about any previous record of violations for the student.

In discussing this matter with the student, the faculty member will present relevant evidence and argument supporting an academic integrity violation charge. If the student admits to the violation, the faculty member will propose an appropriate penalty. Depending on circumstances, as assessed by the faculty member who has discussed the matter with the student, the following penalty could be imposed:

1. Resubmission of the assignment;
2. Failure of the assignment;
3. Failure of the course;
4. Forced withdrawal from the course with no credit received;
5. Impose other appropriate penalties with the consent of the student;
6. Recommendation to the president of suspension or expulsion from the University;

If the student accepts the proposed penalty, the student waives his/her right to a hearing. The faculty member will then prepare a brief written report of the incident, to be signed by the faculty member and the student. A copy of the report will be provided to the student and another copy will be filed with the Office of the Dean of Students. The report will include:

- the student's name and ID number
- the faculty member's name
- the course title and section, and the semester of enrollment
- a summary of the violation, including the date the student work was submitted, the date of the meeting with to discuss the matter, and the date the penalty was agreed to by the student
- the penalty
- the date of the report

The faculty member must complete the report no more than ten (10) working days following the student's acceptance of the proposed penalty. Once the report is signed and transmitted to the Dean of Students' office the violation will be considered resolved. The Dean of Students' office will maintain its copy of the report with the student's departmental file and it will be destroyed when the student graduates or after six years of consecutive non-enrollment by the student. If the student is accused of another academic integrity violation before graduating or before six years of consecutive non-enrollment, the Dean of Students' office may provide information regarding the incident or the resulting agreement identifying an individual student to a faculty member investigating a subsequent suspected violation.

Second Stage Investigation and Resolution / Student Appeal to the Department

If, after discussing an alleged academic integrity violation with a faculty member, a student does not admit to a violation or disagrees with the proposed penalty he/she must:

1. Speak directly to the faculty member within ten (10) working days of being informed of a violation or of the proposed penalty. If, after repeated attempts, the student is unable to reach the faculty member within ten (10) working days, the student must notify the department chairperson in writing within that ten (10) day period.
2. If, after discussion with the faculty member, the student is dissatisfied with the outcome, the student must notify the department chairperson presenting a dated, written, and signed statement describing the specific basis for the complaint. At this time, the student will also provide the faculty member with a copy of these written materials.
3. The department chairperson will try to resolve the issue by reaching a settlement that is agreed upon by both the student and the faculty member. If the issue is resolved at this time, the student, the faculty member, and the department chairperson will sign a violation report containing the details of the agreement. A copy of the report will be provided to the student and another copy will be filed with the Office of the Dean of Students, at which point the violation will be considered resolved. If the issue is not resolved at the chairperson's level, the student must request that the chairperson convene the Department Executive Council (or other appropriate department committee) - excluding the faculty member involved - to hear the appeal. The faculty member will submit to the council/committee a copy of the original violation report, along with any material evidence supporting the charge and (if appropriate) a written supplement to the violation report containing additional relevant information obtained since the initial investigation. The student will submit to the council/committee a written, dated, and signed statement describing the basis of the complaint, along with any material evidence supporting the complaint. These materials must be submitted no more than ten (10) working days after the request is made to convene the council/committee. The accuser will assume the burden of proof. When in these cases the faculty member who initiated the charge is the chairperson, the student must request that the Dean of the college convene the Department Executive Council (or other appropriate department committee). The Department Executive Council/Committee will submit its decision in writing to the chairperson (or college Dean, if the faculty member involved is the chairperson), and this decision will be transmitted to the student and faculty member. If the issue is resolved at this time, the student and faculty member will sign the Department Executive Council/Committee's decision statement. A copy of this document will be provided to the student and another copy will be filed with the Office of the Dean of Students, at which point the violation will be considered resolved.

Third Stage Investigation and Resolution / Student Appeal to the College

If not satisfied with the Department Executive Council's (or other appropriate department committee's) decision, the student will ask the Dean of that college to bring the matter to the College Council. The department chairperson will submit to the College Council a copy of the original violation report, along with any material evidence supporting the charge and (if appropriate) a written supplement to the violation report containing additional relevant information obtained since the initial investigation. The faculty member will also submit a copy of the Department Executive Council's decision. The student will submit to the College Council a written, dated, and signed statement describing the basis of the complaint,

along with any material evidence supporting the complaint. These materials must be submitted no more than ten (10) working days after the request is made to convene the College Council. The accuser will assume the burden of proof. The chairperson of the department concerned will not take part in the final vote. The College Council’s decision will constitute the University’s final decision regarding the substantive nature of the case, and a copy of the decision will be transmitted to the Office of the Dean of Students, at which point the violation will be considered resolved. Future appeals based on violations of due process are permitted to the limit of the law.

Deadlines and the General Time Frame for Appeals / Provision of this Policy to Students

Appeals by students during this process must be initiated in writing no more than ten (10) working days after receiving decisions by the faculty, the department chairperson, the Department Executive Council/Committee, or the College Council response. Student appeals must be dated, written, and signed statements at each step. Likewise, at each level, the faculty member(s), chairperson, Department Executive Council/Committee or College Council must complete a review of all pertinent written materials prior to rendering a decision, in writing, within ten (10) working days of receipt of complaint materials, or, in the cases of the Department Executive Council/Committee and College Council, communicate to the student and faculty member the date when that body will be convened to review the complaint materials. In instances of extenuating circumstances affecting students or faculty, it is understood that the student’s right to appeal will not be jeopardized and the time constraints will be extended. Nevertheless, it will be the policy of the University to expedite the resolution of academic integrity complaints without undue delay, keeping in mind the constraints of the academic calendar. Due process must be followed at every step of this procedure. No penalty will be changed by anyone other than the faculty member who assigned it unless there is convincing evidence that the penalty was inconsistent with professional standards of the discipline.

Each student who registers a complaint with a department chairperson must be given a copy of this policy. A copy must be attached to the appeal and signed by the student to indicate that he/she has been given a copy of the procedure, read it, and understands it before the appeal can proceed.

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