

## **POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY (Modified May 2023)**

The University of the Incarnate Word is an academic community dedicated to the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge, and is committed to fostering an intellectual and ethical environment based on the principles of academic integrity. Academic integrity is essential to the success of the University's educational and research missions. Acts of academic dishonesty violate the principles of academic integrity expected of all members of the University community. The university expects its students pursue and maintain truth, honesty and personal integrity in their academic work. The university expects that all submitted work must be the student's original work unless sources are cited.

Academic dishonesty, in any form, constitutes a serious threat to the freedoms which define an academic community and constitute serious offenses against the entire academic community. The following definitions and guidelines are established to secure the maintenance of academic integrity within the academic community.

- I. Forms of Academic Dishonesty (these include, but are not limited to:)
  - A. **Cheating:** Cheating is the use of inappropriate or prohibited materials, information, sources, or aids in any academic exercise. It includes willful direct use of another's work on one's own submissions (e.g., looking off of another's quizzes, examinations, lab reports, etc.). Cheating also includes submitting papers, research results and reports, analyses, artworks, etc. as one's own work when they were, in fact, prepared by others.
  - B. **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the use of another person's words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate attribution. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and both direct quotation and paraphrasing must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course. Plagiarism may be willful, as when a student knowingly copies a source without attribution, or negligent, as when a student fails to cite sources properly. Both willful and negligent instances of plagiarism are subject to penalty—in part because professors must judge the result of a student's work, not his or her intentions, and in part because students are expected to know and follow the standards for proper citation of sources.

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

- i. The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
- ii. The reuse or repurposing of any previously submitted version of one's own work-product or data into a "new" product without requesting permission from the current instructor (also known as "self-plagiarism").
- iii. Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else or an artificial intelligence software program. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.

- iv. The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.
- C. Fabrication: Fabrication is the invention or falsification of sources, citations, data, or results, and recording or reporting them in any academic exercise. This includes but is not limited to making up or fabricating data as part of a laboratory, fieldwork, clinical documentation, or other scholarly investigation; knowingly distorting, altering or falsifying the data gained by such an investigation; stealing or using without the consent of the instructor data acquired by another student; representing the research conclusions of another as one's own; and undermining or sabotaging the research investigations of another person.
- D. Facilitation of Dishonesty: Facilitation of dishonesty is knowingly or negligently allowing one's work to be used by other students or colluding/unauthorized collaboration with another student without prior approval of the instructor or otherwise aiding others in committing violations of academic integrity. A student who facilitates a violation of academic integrity can be considered to be as culpable as the student who receives the impermissible assistance, even if the facilitator does not benefit personally from the violation.
- E. Falsification of Academic Records: Knowingly and improperly changing grades on transcripts, grade sheets, electronic data sheets, class reports, projects, or other academically related documents.
- F. Academic Sabotage: Academic sabotage is deliberately impeding the academic progress of others, which may include the destruction or disruption of another individual's work.
- G. Violation of Research or Professional Ethics: Violations in this category include both violations of the code of ethics specific to a particular profession and violations of more generally applicable ethical requirements for the acquisition, analysis, and reporting of research data and the preparation and submission of scholarly work for publication.
- H. Violations Involving Potentially Criminal Activity: Violations in this category include theft, fraud, forgery, or distribution of ill-gotten materials committed as part of an act of academic dishonesty.

## II. Levels of Violations

Any violation of academic integrity is a serious offense and is therefore subject to an appropriate sanction or penalty. Academic integrity violations at the University of the Incarnate Word are classified into two levels: non-separable and separable. Non-separable violations are less severe violations for which the possible sanctions do not include suspension or expulsion from the University; separable violations are more severe violations for which the possible sanctions include suspension or expulsion.

Whether a given violation is classified as non-separable or separable depends on a number of factors, including, but not limited to the nature and importance of the academic exercise; the degree of premeditation or planning; the extent of dishonest or malicious intent; the academic experience of the student; and whether the violation is a first-time or repeat offense.

The following sections include some examples of violations of separable and separable violations. This list is not exhaustive, and classification of a given violation as separable or non-separable is heavily dependent on the specific facts and circumstances of the violation.

A. Non-separable Violations

Non-separable violations are less severe violations which, if a first offense, typically do not include suspension or expulsion from the University. They may occur because of inexperience or lack of understanding of the principles of academic integrity and are often characterized by a relatively low degree of premeditation or planning and the absence of malicious intent on the part of the student committing the violation. These violations are generally quite limited in extent, occur on a minor assignment or quiz, constitute a small portion of a major assignment and/or represent a small percentage of the total course work. Below are a few examples of violations that are most often considered non-separable:

- Improper citation without dishonest intent.
- Plagiarism on a minor assignment or a very limited portion of a major assignment.
- Unpremeditated cheating on a quiz or minor examination.
- Unauthorized collaboration with another student on a homework assignment.
- Citing a source or sources that one has not read on a minor assignment.
- Making up a small number of data points on a laboratory exercise.
- Facilitating dishonesty by another student on a minor examination or assignment.
- Signing in for another student via attendance sheet or clicker in a course in which attendance counts toward the grade.
- Any other activity considered a non-separable violation of academic integrity as determined by the faculty.

A pattern (which is more than one) of non-separable violations may be treated as a separable violation. Moreover, some violations that would be considered non-separable for an undergraduate student may be treated as separable for a graduate student.

B. Separable Violations

Separable violations are egregious violations of academic integrity that may lead to separation from the discipline/program, separation for the University, or direct external legal action. These violations affect a more significant portion of the coursework compared to non-separable violations. Separable violations are often characterized by substantial premeditation or planning and clearly dishonest or malicious intent on the part of the student committing the violation.

- A pattern of non-separable violations.
- Substantial plagiarism on a major assignment.
- Copying or using unauthorized materials, devices, or collaboration on an examination.
- Having a substitute take an examination.

- Making up or falsifying evidence or data or other source materials for a major assignment, including falsification by selectively omitting or altering data that do not support one's claims or conclusions.
- Knowingly facilitating dishonesty by another student on an examination or assignment.
- Intentionally destroying or obstructing another student's work.
- Knowingly violating research or professional ethics.
- Any violation involving potentially criminal activity.
- Any other activity considered a separable violation of academic integrity as determined by the faculty.

### III. Possible Sanctions

The recommendations for sanctions at each level are not binding but are intended as guidelines for the University community. For both non-separable and separable violations, the severity of the sanction(s) imposed should be proportional to the severity of the violation committed.

Violations of academic integrity by graduate and professional students will normally be penalized more severely than the same violations by undergraduate students. For example, violations that would be considered non-separable for an undergraduate student may be treated as separable for a graduate or professional student.

Professional schools or programs may have codes of professional conduct with sanctions for violations that may be more severe than those recommended under this Policy. Students in those programs will adhere to those standards.

#### A. Non-separable Violations

Sanctions for non-separable violations include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- No credit for the original assignment.
- A failing grade on the assignment.
- A lower grade on the assignment.
- A replacement or resubmission of the assignment.
- Required participation in a noncredit workshop or seminar on ethics or academic integrity.
- An assigned paper or research project related to ethics or academic integrity.
- Disciplinary warning or probation.
- A failing grade for the course.

#### B. Separable Violations

Sanctions for separable violations include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following, and may, but need not, involve suspension or expulsion:

- A failing grade for the course.

- Loss of eligibility for University-related curricular, co-curricular and employment opportunities.
- Enforced withdrawal from the university.
- Dismissal from a discipline or program.
- Disciplinary suspension for one or more semesters.
- Permanent expulsion from the University with a permanent notation of disciplinary expulsion for violation of academic integrity on the student's transcript.

#### IV. Reporting Violations of Academic Integrity

- A. When a faculty member encounters a violation of academic integrity, they should address the matter with the student, after collecting whatever evidence may be available and relevant. The faculty has the right to ask the student to provide evidence about the sources used or other reasonable requests to establish the boundaries of the violation based on the work conducted by the student.
- B. The initial determination as to whether a non-separable violation of academic integrity has occurred and the sanctions that are to be imposed are at the discretion of the faculty member when the violation occurs within the context of a course. A faculty member may impose course-related sanctions, as outlined in Section III.A above.
- C. If the faculty member determines a violation of academic integrity has occurred, and has imposed a sanction, the faculty member must provide the student with appropriate documentation of the incident and file a report utilizing the university centralized reporting system. The report should be filed as soon as possible, and no later than five business days after sharing the decision with the student.
- D. Once a report is filed, copies of the report will be shared with the Academic Dean of the college/school where the course was taken and the Academic Dean of the student's college/school.

#### V. Adjudication Process After a Finding of an Academic Integrity Violation

- A. Procedures for Investigating Claims of Academic Dishonesty and Assessing Sanctions

##### Sanction Assessed by Faculty.

Before any sanction by a faculty member is assigned, the instructor must meet with the student about the violation (see Section IV-C).

If a student who is confronted by a faculty member for engaging in academic dishonesty openly admits to wrongdoing, the instructor will:

1. Inform the student of the imposed sanction for the course.
2. Inform the student a report has been filed.
3. Provide student with a copy of this policy and inform the student that an administrator may be following up with them as there may be additional sanctions if there have been other reports of academic integrity concerns.

#### When Guilt Is Not Admitted:

If a faculty member determines a violation of academic integrity has occurred, and the involved student does not admit wrongdoing, the faculty will:

1. Inform the student of the recommended course sanction.
2. Inform the student a report has been filed.
3. Provide the student with a copy of this policy and inform the student that an Administrator will be following up with them for the next steps.

#### B. Processes Once a Report is Filed

When cases alleging academic dishonesty are filed, a copy is forwarded to the College/School Dean with oversight of the course, as well as the Dean of the College or School with oversight of the student's current major. All Academic Deans will have access to reports of violations of academic integrity. If a student admitted guilt, both Deans may review if there have been multiple violations and may inform the student that an Academic Honor Board will also be convened to review the case/student's history. If this is a single/first-time violation, the faculty sanction will be the only sanction and no other actions will be taken.

If a student **does admit guilt, and there is a history of multiple violations**, the Academic Dean with oversight of the student's major or program may convene an Academic Honor Board. **If a student does not admit guilt**, the Academic Dean with oversight of the academic course/activity where the report violation occurred will oversee the concern. In all cases, the Dean must inform the student within ten business days of the intent to convene the Board.

#### C. Academic Honor Board Review Process

The Dean will convene an Academic Honor Board. The board will be comprised of two faculty from the college/school, selected by the academic dean, and two students, selected from a list of students previously identified by the college/school faculty to serve as volunteers on the Academic Honor Board. A list of such students eligible to serve on the Academic Honor Board shall be available from the Dean's office upon request. The Dean will serve as chairperson of the board; however, he/she will only vote to break a tie in cases where the board is split. The college/school dean is responsible for any substitution to the board in order to obtain a quorum of five members. All members of the Academic Honor Board shall be bound by the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

The accused may request that a student or faculty member not serve on the Honor Board if he/she feels that the individual may be biased, prejudiced, or have a conflict of interest. Some substantiation of the claim may be required, and the final decision shall rest with the college/school dean.

A student is presumed innocent until proven guilty by the preponderance of evidence, or until guilt is admitted or a simple majority vote of the board members is reached.

In order to assure a student's right to due process, the procedure of formal inquiry by the Academic Honor Board will include:

1. Securing a written statement describing the nature and circumstances of the alleged offense from the student, faculty, or staff member making the allegation.
2. Securing a written statement describing the incident from the accused student.
3. Interviewing separately the accused student, and the faculty/staff member alleging the dishonesty in order to clarify and to expand upon the written statements.
4. Interviewing any witnesses or other persons claiming knowledge of the incident.
5. Securing, examining, and retaining any physical evidence related to the incident.

Using written statements, interviews, and available physical evidence, the Academic Honor Board will decide the validity of the alleged incident of academic dishonesty. If academic dishonesty has been verified, the Academic Honor Board will determine appropriate sanctions to be imposed. The Academic Honor Board will consider the recommended sanction from the faculty, as well as consider additional educational and/or disciplinary sanctions, including academic suspension or dismissal from the University. The decision of the Board will be communicated in writing to the student by the Dean with oversight of the Board.

#### D. Appeals of Disciplinary Sanctions Assessed by Academic Honor Board

Any student who feels he/she has not been accorded justice by the Academic Honor Board may appeal to the Provost for review of the decision. If the Provost determines that there should be a review, he/she convenes a Committee on Academic Integrity which is comprised of two senior tenured faculty members (or faculty with multi-year renewable-term appointments in schools without tenure) and an elected member of the Student Government Association. The Committee shall be bound by the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act. The Committee shall determine whether the process followed by the Academic Honor Board was fair and impartial and that adequate consideration was given to evidence and information presented.

- Timetable – Appeals of Academic Honor Board decisions must be submitted in writing to the Committee on Academic Integrity within ten working days of the Honor Board's decision.
- Following a review of the appeal, the Committee on Academic Integrity will determine whether to uphold or modify the decision of the Academic Honor Board.

The decision of the Committee on Academic Integrity shall be considered final. A written statement shall be sent to the student in question no later than three business days after the committee's final decision is reached.