

# **Academic Honesty**

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For much useful information designed for both faculty and students, consult the Academic Honesty website at [www.rochester.edu/college/honesty](http://www.rochester.edu/college/honesty).

## **Academic Integrity in the College**

Undergraduate education at Rochester builds on the principle that excellence requires freedom. Honesty and integrity are prerequisites of this freedom. Academic honesty in the advancement of knowledge requires that all students and instructors respect the integrity of one another's work and recognize the importance of acknowledging and safeguarding intellectual property.

As members of an academic community, students and faculty assume certain responsibilities. One of these responsibilities is to engage in honest communication. Academic dishonesty is a serious violation of the trust upon which an academic community depends. The College Academic Honesty Policy is both an articulation of the kinds of behaviors that violate this trust and the means by which that trust is safeguarded and restored. All undergraduate students, staff, and faculty in the College must abide by the Academic Honesty Policy.

## **Orientation Honesty Policy Discussion**

During Orientation, the Dean of Freshmen introduces students to the nature of academic honesty in the College. Freshman advisers give their advisees a written version of our policy and a form acknowledging that they have received information about academic honesty. Advisers collect signed acknowledgement forms and these forms are filed in the students' official files. Transfer students receive their briefing on academic honesty from Academic Support.

These Orientation procedures are designed to reinforce the importance of academic honesty. All students (matriculated and non-matriculated) enrolled in the College or in College courses must adhere to our academic honesty policy, even if they do not attend Orientation or sign the acknowledgement form.

A student remains responsible for the academic honesty of work submitted in University of Rochester courses even after the student has received a final course grade. This rule also applies to students who are no longer matriculated at the University of Rochester, including those who have graduated.

Ignorance of these standards will not be considered a valid excuse or defense.

## **Violations of Academic Honesty**

There are many different forms of academic dishonesty. The following kinds of honesty violations and their definitions are not meant to be exhaustive. Rather, they are intended to serve as examples of unacceptable academic conduct.

**CHEATING:** Using unauthorized notes or other study aids during an examination; using unauthorized technology during an examination; improper storage of prohibited notes, course materials and study aids during an exam such that they are accessible or possible to view; looking at other students' work during an exam or in an assignment where collaboration is not allowed; attempting to communicate with other students in order to get help during an exam or in an assignment where collaboration is not allowed; obtaining an examination prior to its administration; altering graded work and submitting it for regrading; allowing another person to do one's work and submitting it as one's own; submitting work done in one class for credit in another without the instructor's permission; obstructing or interfering with another student's academic work; undertaking any activity intended to obtain an unfair advantage over other students.

**PLAGIARISM:** The representation of another person's work as one's own, or the attempt "to blur the line between one's own ideas or words and those borrowed from another source." (Council of Writing Program Administrators, January 2003, <http://wpacouncil.org/node/9>). More specifically, the use of an idea, phrase, or other materials from a written or spoken source without acknowledgment in a work for which the student claims authorship.

Examples include: the misrepresentation of sources used in a work for which the student claims authorship; the improper use of course materials in a work for which the student claims authorship; the use of papers purchased online and turned in as one's own work; submission of written work such as laboratory reports, computer programs, or papers, which have been copied from the work of other students, with or without their knowledge and consent.

A student can avoid the risk of plagiarism in written work or oral presentations by clearly indicating, either in footnotes or in the paper or presentation itself, the source of any idea or wording that he or she did not produce. Sources must be given regardless of whether the idea, phrase or other material is quoted directly, paraphrased or summarized in the student-writer's own words.

**FABRICATION:** Falsifying or inventing any information, citation, or data; using improper methods of collecting or generating data and presenting them as legitimate; misrepresenting oneself or one's status in the University; perpetrating hoaxes unbecoming to students in good standing or potentially damaging to the University's reputation or that of the members of its academic community of students and scholars.

**FACILITATING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** Aiding another person in an act that violates the standards of academic honesty; allowing other students to look at one's own work during an exam or in an assignment where collaboration is not allowed; providing information, material, or assistance to another person knowing that it may be used in violation of course, departmental, or college academic honesty policies; providing false information in connection with any academic honesty inquiry.

**DENYING OTHERS ACCESS TO INFORMATION OR MATERIAL:** Any act that maliciously hinders the use of or access to library or course materials; the removing of pages from books or journals or reserve materials; the removal of books from libraries without formally checking out the items; the intentional hiding of library materials; the refusal to return reserve readings to the library. All of these acts are dishonest and harmful to the community.

**FALSIFYING RECORDS AND OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS:** Forging signatures or falsifying information on official academic documents such as drop/add forms, incomplete forms, petitions, letters of permission, or any other official University document.

## **Classroom Honesty Policy Discussion**

Because academic honesty is of vital concern to the faculty and because each discipline may raise its own specific set of issues, all faculty members are encouraged to discuss the issue of academic dishonesty in their classrooms and to explain how the College policy applies in each of their courses. It is particularly important that faculty members discuss the academic procedures that may vary from discipline to discipline, such as proper and improper forms of academic collaboration.

Faculty members are encouraged to indicate on each course syllabus how the College policy applies in the course. This may take several forms, e.g., an appended set of guidelines formulated by the instructor, an appended set of guidelines formulated by the department, the address of a Website that contains this information.

## **Reporting Cases of Suspected Academic Dishonesty**

All cases of suspected dishonesty must be reported to the Board, either through a short-form resolution (see below) or by forwarding a case to the Board for a hearing. The only exception is when suspected dishonesty turns out to be an instance of clear and simple misunderstanding (in which case the matter can simply be dropped). Faculty may not come to an understanding with a student on their own in a case

of suspected dishonesty, but must use the short form resolution or submit a case .

In rare instances, cases of suspected academic dishonesty are not related to a specific course. Students and members of the College administrative, teaching, and support staff should forward such cases directly to the Chair of the College Board on Academic Honesty.

Since most cases of suspected academic dishonesty are related to a specific course, any member of the College community can report a probable case by notifying the faculty member or other instructor who is teaching the course. Examination proctors should forward cases, with a written report and pertinent documents, to the instructor. Any instructor who discovers, or who is informed of, a probable case of academic dishonesty should contact the Chair of the College Board on Academic Honesty to learn how similar cases have been handled in the past. The instructor should then discuss the matter with the student in a confidential setting.

Except in instances where the matter is dropped due to a clear and simple misunderstanding, the instructor must choose either to attempt to resolve the case directly with the student or to pass it, unresolved, to the College Board on Academic Honesty. In the former case, the instructor fills out an Academic Dishonesty Incident Report (short form, available on the Academic Honesty website), presents the student with the evidence, suggests an appropriate penalty, and provides the student with a copy of this Academic Honesty Policy.

Consultation with the Board at the time of the infraction regarding the penalty to resolve an Academic Dishonesty Incident Report is crucial to ensure that the case is handled in a way consistent with Board procedures and precedents. Typical penalties range from a change in grade for a course assignment to failure of the course itself. Faculty may also require students to rewrite work as part of their suggested penalty. Students may not withdraw from a course as part of a suggested penalty.

Once notified of the charges, the student will not be allowed to withdraw from the course. If the student withdraws from the course, he or she will be reinstated. The student has 48 hours to decide whether or not to admit guilt and to accept the suggested penalty. If the student so admits and accepts, then the student will complete and sign the Academic Dishonesty Incident Report prepared by the instructor. Once the Report is complete, the instructor forwards it to the Chair of the College Board on Academic Honesty, who reviews it to ensure that the suggested penalty is consistent with Board precedent and practice. If the Board Chair accepts the Report, it becomes part of the student's Board file and a letter is issued to the professor and the student confirming this outcome. If the Board Chair believes the penalty should be modified, the Chair will contact the instructor to discuss the matter. The student will then be asked to decide whether or not to accept the new penalty. If the student so accepts, then the instructor and student complete a new Academic Dishonesty Incident Report and it is returned to the Chair of the Board for final disposition. Copies of any readily available evidence should be attached to the Report, but a detailed analysis is not required, unless and until the Board discovers that the student has exhibited habitually dishonest behavior. If and when the Board receives a second report of academic dishonesty concerning a given student, it will convene a hearing to determine whether further action is required. It is the Board's normal policy to suspend students for a second finding of dishonesty.

If the instructor chooses not to pursue the matter directly with the student, or if the student declines to admit guilt or accept the penalty suggested by the instructor, then a written report of the incident, including all pertinent documents, must be forwarded to the Chair of the College Board on Academic Honesty. The written report should include all relevant information, including: course number and title, date of infraction, a description of the dishonest act, any evidence supporting the charge of dishonesty, an assessment of the student's performance in class (attendance and grades), relative worth of work or test in question, a suggested punishment, any mitigating circumstances, as well as any honesty guidelines noted on the course syllabus.

The College Board on Academic Honesty has the responsibility for reviewing all cases of suspected academic dishonesty by College students or in College courses. In cases in which the instructor and the student do not resolve the case, or the Board does not approve their resolution, the Board hears the

case. It determines if academic misconduct has occurred, determines the penalty, and forwards a report to the Dean of the College. (If the student is matriculated outside the College, the report is sent to the Dean of that student's School.) If the Board determines that the alleged misconduct in any way involves sponsored research (including federal training grants), threatens the integrity of the scientific method, or compromises the creation of new knowledge (including original art, scholarship and research), the matter will be referred to and will follow the procedures outlined in the Policy on Misconduct in Scholarship and Research in the Faculty Handbook.

After receiving an unresolved case, the Chair will notify the student in writing. The notification will explain that a report of suspected dishonesty has been made and will ask the student for a written reply concerning the charges. The letter from the Board also reiterates that the student cannot withdraw from the course and that the Dean will reinstate the student in the course if necessary. If the case occurs at the end of the semester, the student will receive an "N" as a grade until the case is concluded. Furthermore, a temporary hold will be placed on the student's transcript until the case is resolved and the penalty, if any, is in place. The Chair will also indicate that at an appropriate time the student will be given a hearing. Students suspected of academic dishonesty are entitled to swift disposition of their cases. Cases should be heard as soon as possible, routinely within four to five weeks. Cases reported after students have left campus for the summer will be heard in the first weeks of the fall semester. When the hearing is scheduled, the student is notified. Students may review their case file by contacting the Board secretary. In order to protect the confidentiality of Board documents, students may not photocopy the contents of their Board file.

## **Hearing Procedures**

The student who is suspected of academic dishonesty is expected to attend the hearing; if the student does not attend, the Hearing Board can reach a judgment on the case in the student's absence. The person who made the initial allegation will not be present at the hearing unless the Hearing Board determines that his or her presence is needed. While the student has the right, and has been given the opportunity, to prepare a written response to the allegation, the hearing will not be delayed if the student has not responded after a reasonable interval. The student has the right to advice in preparing a written response to the allegation. The student may bring one or two community members (University of Rochester faculty, administrator, student or staff member) to the hearing for moral support. That person or persons may speak to the accused during the hearing, but may not speak to the Board unless asked a direct question by a member of the Board. No one accompanying the student may be an attorney or an individual involved in the case. Every student who is suspected of academic dishonesty will be given an individual hearing; two or more students will never be heard together. If a student has declined to accept a penalty suggested by the instructor, the hearing will be conducted without reference to this fact.

Although the Board reviews the entire academic honesty file of any student charged, files and proceedings remain confidential and are kept separate from the student's regular academic file. During the process of reviewing a case of suspected academic dishonesty, only the Chair of the College Academic Honesty Board, the Convener of the Hearing Board (see below), and any other faculty or staff whom the Board determines have a legitimate need to know, have access to the student's academic file. The Board's records are available only to its members, the Dean of the College, the President, and any other University officers designated by them. Sanctions assigned, such as a failing grade, may become part of the Registrar's official records, although no indication will be made that such a penalty is the result of academic dishonesty. If the penalty is suspension, the student is withdrawn from the University and needs to apply for re-admission. During the period of suspension, students may request transcripts but they will be accompanied by a letter from the Registrar noting that the student has been suspended for academic disciplinary reasons.

The rules governing hearings shall be informal. Civil or criminal court procedures are not applicable, nor are formal rules of evidence. The Board's decision is based on whether it is more likely than not (i.e., based on a preponderance of evidence) that academic misconduct occurred.

## **Disposition of the Cases**

If, after thorough review of all aspects of the case, the Hearing Board finds the student guilty of academic dishonesty, the Convener provides a written report of the findings to the Chair of the Board, including a recommended penalty. The Chair then reviews the report to ensure that the case was handled in a way consistent with Board procedures and precedents. The Chair then presents the report to the Dean of the College for transmitting to the student and the person who reported the case. (If the student is matriculated outside the College, the report is presented to the Dean of that student's School for transmitting to the student and the person who reported the case.) Students may appeal the Board's decision to their Dean. If the Board decides that there has been no academic misconduct, the Convener notifies the Chair of the Board, who then notifies the student and the person who reported the case.

If, after reviewing the written report of a Hearing Board, the Chair of the Board feels there is sufficient cause to question or modify the Board's decision, the Chair will contact the Convener and the Hearing Board will confer to address the Chair's concerns. The Hearing Board will then render a final judgment.

In instances where a Hearing Board is evenly split in determining guilt or innocence, the Chair of the Board will cast the deciding vote.

Board files on all individual cases remain in the possession of the secretary to the Board for a period of five years, after which they are destroyed.

## **Composition of the Board**

The College Academic Honesty Board consists of eleven faculty members appointed by the Dean of the College and a pool of undergraduate students selected by the All Campus Judicial Council (ACJC). The students need not be ACJC members. One faculty member will serve as Chair of the Board. The Chair oversees the administration of the Board and reviews all short forms and cases submitted to the Board. Each case is normally heard by four Board members--three members of the College faculty (or a designated representative) and one undergraduate student from the College. Instances in which a full Hearing Board cannot be formed will not be considered grounds for dismissing or rescheduling the hearing as long as there are three Board members (or designated representatives) present. One of the three faculty members serves as Convener of the Hearing Board and investigates the case prior to the hearing. Investigative responsibilities include determining that all necessary background materials for the case are in order, contacting the faculty member or instructor presenting the charges as needed, and preparing the written report of the Hearing Board after the case is completed. The other two faculty members serve as Reader and Listener for the case, respectively. The student member also serves as Listener. The Reader is provided all supporting documents prior to the Hearing, but does not have the investigative responsibilities of the Convener. The Listeners do not have access to any case material before or after the Hearing but are given needed access to relevant Board files during the hearing process. In cases involving multiple students the Chair of the Board may elect to expand the Hearing Board and to have related cases heard by the same Hearing Board.