

SAMFORD UNIVERSITY - ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY for 2013-2014

Proposed process to manage academic dishonesty issues

The purpose of this proposal is to offer a process for adjudicating academic integrity violations by undergraduate students. This document is not intended to supplant existing graduate or professional school academic integrity processes. This process may be used by graduate or professional programs that do not have an academic integrity process in place.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

A degree from Samford University is evidence of achievement in scholarship and citizenship. Activities and attitudes should be consistent with high academic standards and Christian commitment and should be in keeping with the philosophy and mission of the University. At Samford, academic integrity is expected of every community member in all endeavors and includes a commitment to honesty, fairness, trustworthiness, and respect.

The University Statement on Academic Dishonesty is as follows: students, upon enrollment, enter into a voluntary association with Samford University. They must be willing to observe high standards of intellectual integrity, respect knowledge, and practice academic honesty. Those who cheat on an examination or class assignment are not only academically dishonest, but also are deficient in the scholarly maturity necessary for college study. Those who engage in academic dishonesty are subject to severe punishment. The more dependent, the more inevitable becomes ultimate failure, often accompanied by public disgrace. Any act to obtain an unfair academic advantage is considered dishonest.

I. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY VIOLATIONS

Academic integrity violations are acts of academic misconduct. The term academic integrity violation includes, but is not limited to, the following acts:

- (1) Offering for course credit as one's own work, in whole or in part, the work of another.
- (2) Plagiarism, that is, incorporating into one's work offered for course credit passages taken either word for word or in substance from a work of another, unless the student credits the original author and identifies the original author's work with quotation marks, footnotes, or another appropriate written explanation.
- (3) Offering for course credit one's own work, but work that one has previously offered for course credit in another course, unless one secures permission to do so prior to submission from the instructor in whose course the work is being offered.
- (4) Obtaining an unauthorized copy of a test or assignment in advance of its scheduled administration.
- (5) Taking an examination for another student or knowingly permitting another person to take an examination for oneself.
- (6) Giving, receiving, or obtaining information pertaining to an examination during an examination period, unless such action is authorized by the instructor giving the examination.
- (7) Divulging the contents of an essay or objective examination to a student who has not taken the exam.
- (8) Taking, keeping, misplacing, or tampering with the property of Samford University, a faculty member, or another student, if one knows or should reasonably know that one would, by such conduct, obtain an unfair academic advantage. This section is intended to include, but not be limited to, material in a university library.

- (9) Failing to follow the instructions of a professor in completing an assignment or examination, if one knows or should reasonably know that one would, by such conduct, obtain an unfair academic advantage.
- (10) Witnessing conduct which one knows or should reasonably know is dishonorable and failing to report it.
- (11) Altering or falsifying academic or student record documents such as transcripts, change of grade forms, University excuses, and add/drop forms.
- (12) Giving or receiving unauthorized assistance on an examination, assignment, project, or other academic assignment.
- (13) Making a false report of academic dishonesty.
- (14) Fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation of data, results, analyses, or other studies, presenting the results of research or studies not actually performed, or manipulating or altering data to achieve a desired result, including the failure to report or suppression of conflicting or unwanted data.

II. PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY VIOLATIONS

In all instances of suspected academic integrity violations or academic misconduct, the faculty will decide whether an assignment or course grade adjustment, up to a grade of failure due to a violation of academic integrity (FX) for the course, is appropriate.

The University Registrar serves as the Academic Integrity Officer (AIO).

A. Faculty Actions Based on a Suspected Academic Integrity Violation

- 1) The faculty member suspects that a student violated academic integrity as defined in Section I.
- 2) If the faculty member is resolved in the belief that academic dishonesty occurred, the faculty member must address the issue with the student within 15 University working days after discovering the alleged violation. Based on the situation, the faculty member should consider having a witness at the meeting with the student. Once a faculty member has charged a student with academic dishonesty, the student may not withdraw from or change status in the course until the matter is resolved.
- 3) The faculty member is encouraged to consult with his or her department chair and or dean and may disclose information necessary for the chair and/or dean to provide guidance as a school official with a legitimate educational interest. The faculty member may also consult with colleagues about the suspected academic integrity violation. All such communications shall comply with FERPA. Faculty members may also consult with the AIO regarding a suspected violation.
- 4) If, after further review, the faculty member is satisfied that no academic dishonesty occurred, no report is filed. At that point, the allegations are dismissed, and the matter is closed.
- 5) If, after further review, the faculty member continues to believe that academic dishonesty occurred, the faculty member will submit an assignment and/or course grade adjustment. The sanction imposed by the faculty member may be no more severe than an FX grade in the course.
 - a. The student is notified of the assignment and/or course grade adjustment and the option to appeal per the grade appeal process.
 - b. The AIO is notified for tracking purposes and possible follow up. If the faculty member believes that sanctions in addition to a changed assignment and/or course grade are

warranted, the matter must be forwarded to the AIO for Academic Council review within 15 University working days of discovering the violation.

- 6) The faculty member and/or the department chair should retain all documents related to the academic integrity violation for at least five years following the date of the violation.

Faculty members are required to report all instances of academic dishonesty to the AIO. The AIO is responsible for creating a repository for all academic integrity violations and maintaining documents related to academic integrity violation.

B. Matters Directed to the Academic Council

The Academic Council will adjudicate the following matters in instances of academic dishonesty involving undergraduate students:

- 1) Instances when it is the student's second or greater academic integrity offense.
- 2) Instances where a faculty member requests Academic Council review for consideration of sanctions in addition to a grade and/or assignment adjustment due to the seriousness of an academic integrity offense.

The AIO will determine whether a matter is the student's first academic dishonesty infraction. In all instances where it is the student's second or greater offense of academic dishonesty, the infraction is automatically referred to the Academic Council to determine if additional sanctions are warranted. A matter may also be directed to the Academic Council for review if the faculty member believes that the academic integrity violation warrants additional sanctions.

C. The Academic Council deliberation process will proceed as follows:

- 1) The AIO will compile forms and documents related to all student integrity violations and submit them to the Academic Council.
- 2) The Academic Council Chair will assemble a Hearing Panel and convene a hearing.
- 3) The Chair may, when necessary, request assistance from legal counsel and other University departments, as appropriate.
- 4) The Hearing Panel may confer with the AIO for consistencies in sanctioning.
- 5) The Hearing Panel will deliberate and impose sanctions by majority vote. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to probation, suspension, or expulsion.
- 6) The Hearing Panel will notify the AIO of the decision.
 - a. In the case of a Hearing Panel decision of no additional sanctions, the AIO will notify the student and the faculty.
 - b. In the case of a Hearing Panel decision imposing additional sanctions, the AIO will notify the student, the faculty, and the dean(s) of the appropriate school(s).
- 7) Expeditious deliberation by the Hearing Panel is an important priority. The Hearing Panel must convene and make their deliberations within 20 University working days after receipt of the matter by the AIO. In any of these cases, if there are not 20 University working days remaining in the semester, the matter must be handled at the start of the next semester.

III. THE ACADEMIC COUNCIL

A. Composition

The Academic Council is composed of a faculty member from each of the University's schools which provides undergraduate studies (*Howard College of Arts & Sciences, Ida V. Moffett School of Nursing, Brock School of Business, Orlean Bullard Beason School of Education & Professional Studies and School of the Arts*) and the University Library. The Council also includes five undergraduate students, one from each school. The faculty-to-student ratio for each hearing is three faculty members and two students.

Faculty members must be full-time faculty with at least three years of instructional or library experience at Samford University. Each student member must have a cumulative grade point average of 3.0 or higher at the time of the appointment and during service. The student members shall be appointed annually by the deans of the participating schools. Faculty members shall be appointed for three-year terms by their respective deans. A chair shall be selected each year by the faculty members of the Academic Council, although a chair may carry over from year to year.

B. Duties

The Academic Council:

- (1) Determines through the process of a hearing whether an accused student has consistently or severely violated matters of academic integrity.
- (2) Imposes sanctions for students who have consistently or severely violated matters of academic integrity.
- (3) Completes the Hearing Panel Decision Template and notifies the AIO of the outcome of matters referred to the Council.

C. Jurisdiction

The Academic Council has exclusive jurisdiction over all academic integrity matters brought before them.

IV. ACADEMIC COUNCIL HEARINGS

A. Members for a Hearing

A hearing is convened with a Hearing Panel comprised of three faculty and two student members of the Academic Council. The hearing will not be affected by a member of the Hearing Panel disqualifying himself or herself after a hearing has begun.

B. Recusal

A member of the Hearing Panel shall recuse himself or herself if he or she believes that, in reaching a decision as to whether or not an accused student has consistently or severely violated academic integrity, he or she cannot act on the weight of the evidence without bias or prejudice. The Hearing Panel may, by majority vote, recuse one of its members from sitting on a hearing if that would best serve the interests of the Academic Council and the University.

V. SANCTIONS

A. Sanctions Imposed by the Faculty Member

If the faculty member finds a student guilty of academic dishonesty the possible sanctions include, but are not limited to, failure/grade penalty on the assignment or test, rewriting the assignment or test, and failure/grade penalty in the course. If a faculty member believes that it is appropriate for a student to be placed on probation, suspended, or expelled for the academic integrity violation, the faculty member must refer the matter to the Academic Council. Faculty must refer matters to the AIO for Academic Council review within 15 University working days of discovering the violation.

B. Sanctions Imposed by the Academic Council

If the Hearing Panel determines that the accused student has severely or consistently violated academic integrity, it may impose sanctions against the student. Whenever sanctions are imposed, the format in section VIII will be used. Possible sanctions include, but are not limited to probation, suspension, and expulsion as defined below.

(1) Probation

A process or period that may include restrictions or required activities such as community service, educational classes, and/or prohibition from participating in co-curricular activities.

(2) Suspension

Termination of student status at the University for a specified period of time.

(3) Expulsion

Termination of student status at the University permanently or for an indefinite period of time.

VI. APPEAL OF SANCTIONS

Any grade may be appealed through the grade appeals process as outlined in the University catalogue. If the student wishes to dispute the sanction(s) imposed by the Academic Council, he or she may appeal the sanction decision in writing to the AIO within five University working days of the date he or she receives notice of the Hearing Panel decision. In such a situation, the AIO, in discussion with the Provost and Executive Vice President, may review the record of the hearing, and the student's academic and disciplinary records, and based upon this review, decide to:

1. Allow the sanction(s) to stand.
2. Modify the sanction(s) or impose a different sanction(s).
3. Suspend the sanction(s).

For issues regarding the same academic integrity incident, the AIO and Provost will consider a grade appeal and an appeal of the Academic Council's decision on additional sanctions at the same time. The decision of the AIO and Provost as to the appropriateness of the sanction(s) is final.

VII. ACADEMIC COUNCIL CONFIDENTIALITY

The proceedings of the Academic Council and Hearing Panel are confidential and are subject to the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and its implementing regulations.

VIII. HEARING PANEL DECISION TEMPLATE (This completed form must be provided to the student)

Does the Academic Council Hearing Panel decide to impose additional sanction(s)?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, what additional sanction(s) does the panel impose?

<input type="checkbox"/>	_____

State the reasons for imposing additional sanction(s) beyond the grade adjustment or other academic adjustment made by the faculty member:

Approved:

Signature of Hearing Panel Chair

Print Name (date)

Signature of Hearing Panel Member

Print Name (date)

Signature of Hearing Panel Member

Print Name (date)

Signature of Hearing Panel Member

Print Name (date)

Signature of Hearing Panel Member

Print Name (date)

Signature of Hearing Panel Member

Print Name (date)

The student may appeal this decision in writing to the AIO within five University working days of this notice.

POTENTIAL SANCTION(S) IMPOSED BY THE HEARING PANEL

1. Reflection letter
2. Skill remediation
3. Academic integrity seminar
4. Warning
5. Probation
6. Suspension
7. Expulsion
8. Withdrawal of credit for previously-accepted course or requirement
9. Revocation of degree or certificate
10. Referral to appropriate legal authorities
11. Referral to the appropriate authorities (E.g., NIH, OIG, grant sponsors, etc.)