

Seton Hall University
College of Education & Human Services
Department of Professional Psychology & Family Therapy
Plagiarism/Academic Integrity Policy

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is an important basic responsibility that is taken by all students in higher education. An integral part of academic integrity is honesty and the freedom to express oneself without using the work of someone else and calling it one's own. Within the American Psychological Association (APA) a breach of academic integrity constitutes a serious offense and members of the University community are obliged to report all cases to the appropriate faculty including the Department Chair and the Dean.

A copy of this policy is available to all students by visiting the Seton Hall University website at <http://education.shu.edu/academicprograms/profpsych/index.html>. A reference to this policy is provided on every course syllabus within the department.

All faculty members are aware of and have provided input to the Academic Integrity Policy. As mentioned above, information pertaining to academic integrity is provided on all course syllabi for both on-line and on-campus courses. Faculty are encouraged express both orally and in written form the importance of academic integrity and to give the students clear guidelines and expectations of what is acceptable behavior regarding the use of someone else's work. Such violations include, but are not limited to, cheating and plagiarism of academic assignments (i.e., research papers, critiques, presentations, and book/journal reviews). Cheating on exams is also a serious violation and is in violation of this policy. Faculty members that suspect academic dishonesty are expected to report violations to the department chair within 5 calendar days of the occurrence.

Students must also take on the responsibility of academic integrity by promoting work that is original in content and properly referenced. The latest edition of the American Psychological Association's Manual of Style is used within the department to properly cite another author's work and to reference sources that do not come from the student directly.

This policy in hand provides the student with a fair procedure for due process if a charge is brought to a student's attention from a faculty member.

I. Professional Standards

All of the professional organizations represented in our department include statements on plagiarism. In the American Psychological Association's, *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (June 2003), p.11, states that: "Psychologists do not represent portions of

another's work or data as their own, even if the other work or data source is cited occasionally." Plagiarism in this document is defined as the use of someone else's work and claiming it as your own. In the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapists, *AAMFT Code of Ethics*, Principle VI, Responsibility to the Profession, item 6.4 states, "Marriage and family therapists who are the authors of books or other materials that are published or distributed do not plagiarize or fail to cite persons to whom credit for original ideas or work is due." In the American Counseling Association, Code of Ethics (2005), item G.5.b states, "Counselors do not plagiarize; that is, they do not present another person's work as their own work." In the National Association of School Psychologists, Principles for Professional Ethics (1997), item C states "Plagiarism of ideas or product is a violation of professional ethics."

I. Breach of Academic Integrity

Listed below are typical violations of academic integrity. The examples used are provided as illustrations. These violations are merely examples and do not cover the entire spectrum of offenses.

1-A - Cheating – Cheating is defined as use of inappropriate and unacknowledged use of materials, information, study aids, or any written or verbal material that has not been authorized by the author or faculty member for use. This includes students using another person's work (or part of their work) and claiming it as their own. Cheating can take the form of use of cell phones or other electronic devices to convey information via text messaging, picture taking, or conversing electronically while taking tests or exams. These acts are prohibited and are considered in violation of this document. Students must also have written permission to use another person's work, or provide proper reference notation citing the original author(s).

1-B – Fabrication – Fabrication is the falsification of information. Fabrication also involves the invention of information without the permission of the author. This may take on the form of creating information without the use of an author's work. For example, if a student uses a quotation from a book or journal, all relevant reference information should be made available to the reader at the end of the work.

1-C - Facilitating Academic Dishonesty – Students who allow their work to be used by other students either knowingly or out of negligence are also in violation of the academic integrity policy. Students should make every attempt to keep their work secure so as not to allow others to use their work in any fashion or form.

1-D - Plagiarism – As a graduate student, soon to be entering the field of psychology, plagiarism is a serious offense. In order to prevent plagiarism every direct quotation must be properly identified and cited in the paper with full reference to the author. The use of footnotes can be used to properly cite another person's work. Paraphrasing should have a reference to the original author in the text and be referenced at the end of the student's paper. With the use of Internet sources, see the proper referencing of electronic media in the APA Manual of Style. A reference page or bibliography section of cited authors should be used in all written manuscripts.

1-E - Denying access to information – Denying any student access to information is another violation of the academic integrity policy. This violation occurs when a student gives misinformation about the sources of a reference or destroys written or electronic information that would hamper another student’s progress within a class.

Any violation of academic honesty is a serious offense and is therefore subject to an appropriate penalty. Violations at Seton Hall University are classified by severity according to the nature of the offense. For each level of offense a corresponding set of sanctions is recommended. Sanctioning bodies are not bound by these illustrations, which are intended as general guidelines. Examples are cited below for each level of offense. These examples, too, are illustrations and are not to be considered all-inclusive.

Low Level - These offenses happen because of inexperience or lack of knowledge of academic standards by the persons committing the offense. These infringements are likely to involve a small fraction of the total course work, are not extensive, and/or occur on a minor assignment. The following are some examples:

- Working with another student on an assignment unless the instructor explicitly authorizes such work.
- Failure to footnote or give proper acknowledgment in an extremely limited section of an assignment.

Recommended sanctions for low level offenses are listed below; one or more of these may be chosen in each case:

- Required attendance in a non-credit workshop or seminar on ethics or related subjects.
- An assigned paper or research project on a relevant topic.
- A make-up assignment at a more difficult level than the original assignment.
- A recommendation to the instructor that no credit be given for the original assignment.

Records of students who commit low level offenses will be maintained in the respective Chair’s Offices until graduation. One year after the student graduates, all paper/electronic low level offenses will be destroyed.

Medium Level – These violations are those characterized by dishonesty of a more serious nature or which affect a more significant aspect or portion of the course work.

The following are some examples:

- Quoting directly or paraphrasing, to a moderate extent, without acknowledging the source.

- Submitting the same work or major portions thereof to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without permission from the instructor.
- Using data or interpretative material for a laboratory report without acknowledging the sources or the collaborators. All contributors to preparation of data and/or to writing the report must be acknowledged.
- Receiving assistance from others, such as research, statistical, computer programming, or field data collection help that constitutes an essential element in the undertaking, without acknowledging such assistance in a paper, examination, or project.

The recommended sanction for medium level offenses is one year of academic probation. The student will receive an F on the work and be graded normally for the rest of the course.

Notation of academic probation will be placed on the student's transcript and will remain for the period in which the sanction is in force. Records of students who commit Medium level offenses will be maintained in the respective Chair's Office until graduation.

High Level Offense – High level offenses include dishonesty that affects a major or essential portion of work done to meet course requirements and/or involves premeditation, or is preceded by one or more violations at low and medium levels. Examples include:

- Copying on examinations.
- Acting to facilitate copying during an exam.
- Using prohibited materials, e.g., books, notes, or calculators during an examination without permission from the instructor.
- Collaborating before an exam to develop methods of exchanging information and implementation thereof.
- Altering examinations for the purposes of regrading.
- Acquiring or distributing an examination from unauthorized sources prior to the examination.
- Plagiarizing major portions of a written assignment.
- Presenting the work of another as one's own.
- Using a purchased term paper or other materials.
- Removing posted or reserved material, or preventing other students from having access to it.
- Fabricating data or inventing or deliberately altering material (for example, citing sources that do not exist).
- Using unethical or improper means of acquiring data.

The normal sanction to be sought for all high level offenses or repeated violations of low or medium offenses is a minimum of a one semester suspension from the University and a failing grade for the course. The Academic Standard Committee may also consider expulsion from the program.

Severe Level Offenses – These offenses represent the most serious breaches of intellectual honesty.

Examples of serious level offenses include:

- All academic integrity infractions committed after return from suspension for a previous academic integrity violation.
- Infractions of academic integrity resembling to criminal activity (such as forging a grade form, stealing an examination from a professor or from a university office; buying an examination; or falsifying a transcript).
- Having a substitute take an examination or taking an examination for someone else.
- Fabrication of evidence, falsification of data, quoting directly or paraphrasing without acknowledging the source, and/or presenting the ideas of another as one's own within a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, in scholarly articles submitted to refereed journals, or in other work represented as one's own as a graduate student.
- Sabotaging another student's work through actions designed to prevent the student from successfully completing an assignment.
- Willful violation of a canon of the ethical code of the profession (APA, AAMFT, ACA, NASP, etc.) for which a graduate student is preparing.

The normal sanction for all severe level offenses and a repeat infraction at high level offenses is permanent expulsion from the University. Notation of expulsion will be placed on a student's transcript and remain permanently.

II. Consequences of Violating the Academic Integrity Policy

Students committing acts of academic dishonesty not only face university censure but run a serious risk of harming their future educational and employment opportunities. In addition to the notation for a specific sanction placed on the student's transcript and which remains for the term of the sanction, prospective employers and other educational institutions frequently use recommendation forms that ask for judgment and comment on an individual's moral or ethical behavior. Since such forms are sent with the permission of the student, University faculty and administrators who know of academic dishonesty infractions are ethically bound to report such incidents. In all cases in which a grade of "F" is assigned for disciplinary reasons, the "F" will remain on the student's transcript, even if the course is retaken and a passing grade is achieved.

III. Administration of the Academic Integrity Policy

If the instructor suspects evidence of a violation of a low level offense, the instructor will meet with the student and the instructor will determine the appropriate sanction. The instructor will report the incident to the Chairperson, who will keep a record until one year following the

student's graduation. If the instructor suspects evidence of a violation of a medium level offense or higher, the student will be notified and the case and all supporting documents will be sent to the Department Chair and Academic Standards Committee. The instructor will write a report documenting the nature of the violation and provide supporting documentation. The committee will meet within 10 days to review the allegations. The Committee reserves the right to call in the student and instructor for follow up information. The decision of the Committee will be final and the student reserves the right to appeal, the process of which is described in the Student Handbook. Responsibility for administering the Policy on Academic Integrity rests with the Chairperson and the Academic Standards Committee of the Department. The above sanctions are general recommendations. The Academic Standards committee will consider each case in context looking at all factors. The committee reserves the right to suspend or expel a student at any level of offense if the committee deems that consequence appropriate.

Evidence of academic dishonesty should initially be brought to the attention of the instructor. Any member of the academic community may present evidence of academic dishonesty to the instructor. If a student reports a breach of the policy, the instructor of the course is expected to cooperate in the investigation. If a student reports a violation by another student, the student making the allegation is expected to cooperate fully and submit any evidence or written report to the committee. The identity of the student making the allegation will remain anonymous throughout the process except to the faculty on the Academic Standards Committee.

Students may continue to participate in a course or research activities until the case has been adjudicated. Under no circumstances should a student be offered a choice of either dropping a course or facing disciplinary action. A grade of I (Incomplete) should be assigned, pending resolution of this matter, and no penalties should be imposed until this complaint is resolved.

All disciplinary proceedings are confidential. Faculty members and students are cautioned not to discuss cases of academic dishonesty outside of the proceedings prescribed by the policy.

IV. Amendments to the Integrity Code

Suggested changes to this policy may be recommended by the Faculty Senate, the College of Education and Human Services - Dean's Office, and the Provost. Changes shall be approved by Department vote upon review.

(Portions of this policy adapted from Rutgers University Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students, 2004.

<http://www.camden.rutgers.edu/RUCAM/info/Academic-Integrity-Policy.html>)

References

American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists. (2001). Code of Ethics. Alexandria, VA: Author. Retrieved June 5, 2006 from <http://www.aamft.org/resources/LRMPlan/Ethics/ethicscode2001.asp>

American Counseling Association. (2005). Code of Ethics. Alexandria, VA: Author. Retrieved June 5, 2006 from <http://www.counseling.org/Resources/CodeOfEthics/TP/Home/CT2.aspx>

American Psychological Association. (2002). Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct. American Psychologist, 57(12), 1060-1073. Retrieved June 5, 2006 from <http://www.apa.org/ethics/code2002.html>

American Psychological Association. (2001). Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

National Association of School Psychologists. (2000). Professional Conduct Manual/Principals for Professional Ethics. Bethesda, MD: Author. Retrieved June 5, 2006 from <http://www.nasponline.org/pdf/ProfessionalCond.pdf>