

**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 assumed 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. According to the ethical standards of all the professions represented by the Department, a breach of academic integrity constitutes a serious offense. Members of the University community are obliged to report all cases to the appropriate faculty, including the Department Chairperson.

A copy of this policy is available to all students and faculty by visiting the Seton Hall University website. A reference to this policy is provided on every course syllabus within the department.

All full-time faculty members have the opportunity to provide input to the Academic Integrity Policy. As mentioned above, information pertaining to academic integrity is provided on all course syllabi for both online and on-campus courses. Faculty are encouraged to 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.

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 *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* is an excellent resource for additional information on academic integrity and guidance to properly cite another author's work and to reference sources that do not come from the student directly.

Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, cheating and plagiarism of academic assignments (e.g., 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 who suspect academic dishonesty are expected to report violations to the Department Chairperson within 5 calendar days of the occurrence.

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 the professional organizations represented in our department include statements on plagiarism. Plagiarism 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* (2015), Section 5.8 reads "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.” The American Counseling Association’s *Code of Ethics* (2014), section G.5.b, reads, “Counselors do not plagiarize; that is, they do not present another person’s work as their own work” and section G.5.c. reads “In publications and presentations, counselors acknowledge and give recognition to previous work on the topic by others or self”. Similarly, according to the American Psychological Association’s, *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (2017), “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” (8.11). In the *Principles for Professional Ethics of the National Association of School Psychologists* (2010), Standard IV.5.8 Plagiarism, reads “When publishing or presenting research or other work, school psychologists do not plagiarize the works or ideas of others. They appropriately cite and reference all sources, print or digital, and assign credit to those whose ideas are reflected. In inservice or conference presentations, school psychologists give credit to others whose ideas have been used or adapted.”

## I. Breach of Academic Integrity

Listed below are typical violations of academic integrity. The examples are provided as illustrations. These violations are merely examples and do not cover the entire spectrum of offenses. The procedures for referring a suspected breach of academic integrity and determining a violation are described in Part III of this document.

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 fields of counseling, marriage and family therapy, school counseling, and/or 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. Very close paraphrases should also be avoided.

Appropriate paraphrases should cite the original author in the text and be referenced at the end of the student's paper. Self-plagiarism, including submitting the same or essentially the same work for more than one assignment or more than one course (including a repeated course) without advance permission of the instructor, constitutes a violation of academic integrity. See additional information about proper referencing, including electronic media, in the current edition of the APA Publication Manual. References for all citations should be included 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 properly cite, reference, or otherwise give proper acknowledgment in an extremely limited section of an assignment (e.g., using very close paraphrases or unattributed direct quotations with citations).

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 Chairperson's office until graduation. One year after the student graduates, all paper/electronic records of 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, including repeated courses, 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 Chairperson's office until graduation.

**High Level** – 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 another student's work on examinations.
- Acting to facilitate copying during an exam.
- Using generally prohibited materials (e.g., books, notes, or calculators) during an examination without direct advance 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 otherwise 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** – 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 (AAMFT, ACA, APA, ASCA, 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.

## **I. 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.

## **II. 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 Chairperson 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. However, 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.

### **III. Amendments to the Integrity Code**

Suggested changes to this policy may be recommended by any member of the faculty. 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.

### **References**

- American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists. (2015). *Code of ethics*.  
[https://www.aamft.org/Legal\\_Ethics/Code\\_of\\_Ethics.aspx](https://www.aamft.org/Legal_Ethics/Code_of_Ethics.aspx)
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