Academic Integrity and Student Responsibility

Academic Integrity
(Academic Regulation 18)

Saint Mary’s University is committed to upholding academic integrity and adopts the following statement of values:

An academic community flourishes when its members are committed to these fundamental values:

1. HONESTY: An academic community of integrity advances the quest for truth and knowledge by requiring intellectual and personal honesty in learning, teaching, research and service.

2. TRUST: An academic community of integrity fosters a climate of mutual trust, encourages the free exchange of ideas, and enables all to reach their highest potential.

3. FAIRNESS: An academic community of integrity establishes clear standards, practices, and procedures and expects fairness in the interactions of students, faculty, and administrators.

4. RESPECT: An academic community of integrity recognizes the participatory nature of the learning process and honours and respects a wide range of opinions and ideas.

5. RESPONSIBILITY: An academic community of integrity upholds personal accountability and depends upon action in the face of wrongdoing.

1 The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity, Center for Academic Integrity, Duke University (www.academicintegrity.org)

University students are expected to have a reasonable measure of self-discipline and maturity. While the University’s teaching resources are available for help and guidance, and instructors and staff will make reasonable efforts to assist students with academic or other problems, the final responsibility for success or failure in academic studies rests with the students.

At times there may be considerable pressure to achieve high grades. Some students may be tempted to obtain grades by dishonest means. The integrity of the University and of the degrees it awards are compromised by practices such as cheating and plagiarism. The University does not condone such acts under any circumstances and will take appropriate disciplinary action.

Examples of Academic Offences

These are examples of academic offences that may justify investigation and discipline under this Policy. This list is not exhaustive, but should guide students in understanding expectations and those responsible for enforcing this Policy.

Plagiarism – The presentation of words, ideas or techniques of another as one's own. Plagiarism is not restricted to literary works and applies to all forms of information or ideas that belong to another (e.g., computer programs, mathematical solutions, scientific experiments, graphical images, or data).

Examples of plagiarism include:
- quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing text without proper acknowledgment;
- paraphrasing too closely (e.g., changing only a few words or simply rearranging the text);
- downloading all or part of a paper, journal article, or book from the Internet or a library database and presenting it as one's own work;
- purchasing documentation and presenting it as one's own work;
- sharing papers or parts of papers including the selling of essays, tests, or other assignments.

Cheating – The attempt to secure a grade by unethical means. Knowingly assisting someone to cheat is itself cheating.

Examples of cheating include:
- impersonating someone during a test or exam;
- copying or sharing information during a test or exam;
- using or possessing unauthorized materials (e.g., notes, books, calculators) during a test or exam;
- obtaining or looking at a copy of a test or exam before it is administered;
- improper use of technology (e.g., electronic devices to store and retrieve information during an exam);
- unauthorized use of communication technology (e.g., cell phones, pagers, etc.).
• unauthorized collaboration between students when individual work is required.
• submitting the same work for credit in more than one course without the permission of the instructors involved;
• any behavior intended to gain unearned advantage.
• Former or current students providing unacceptable or forbidden support on exams, tests, assignments, etc.

**Falsification**  – It is an offence to falsify any academic record or to use a falsified record.
Examples of falsification include:
• submitting a false excuse for missing a class, exam, etc. (e.g., forging a medical or death certificate);
• falsifying course work (e.g., altering or making up data, using fake citations in a bibliography);
• changing the answers on a returned assignment and resubmitting it to be reevaluated;
• submitting false information on a university admission form or other documentation;
• misrepresentation of knowledge of a language by providing inaccurate or incomplete information about one’s linguistic educational history;
• non-disclosure of previous post-secondary enrolment;
• presentation of another’s credentials as one’s own.

**Tampering**  – It is an offence to tamper with University library materials or computer system resources in any way which would deprive others of their use.
Examples of tampering include:
• destroying, hiding, or stealing library materials;
• altering or destroying university computer programs or files without authorization;
• accessing and altering official records without authorization.

Assisting someone in the commission of dishonest behavior as it relates to academic integrity is an offence subject to sanctions.

**General Procedures**

**Academic Integrity Officers and Academic Discipline Officer**

Each Dean will appoint an academic staff member to serve as the Academic Integrity Officer (AIO) and carry out the responsibilities of this Policy within each Faculty.

When a member of the University community (faculty, staff, or student) believes that an academic offence has been committed, they shall make a written report to the AIO of the Faculty in which the incident occurred (normally this would be the Faculty in which the course was taught) with a copy to the Chair of the Department in which the incident occurred. The report must identify and provide evidence of the alleged offence.

Reports must be on the form available from the Registrar’s office (INSERT LINK). The AIO is responsible for processing the complaint as follows:

Upon receiving an Academic Integrity Incident report, the AIO will:

• notify the Registrar who will advise the AIO as to whether this is the first incident of academic dishonesty for the student or students involved;
• collect additional evidence as necessary;
• communicate with the student, preferably in person. Students should be encouraged to bring representation in the form of a friend, peer or student advocate. The student should be advised that failure to meet with the AIO will result in the case being referred to the Academic Discipline Officer (ADO). The student will also be advised that they cannot withdraw from the course in which there is an Academic Integrity charge against them.

The AIO will consider the evidence and determine whether there has been a violation of this Policy. If the AIO determines that there has been a violation of this Policy that warrants a Standard Sanction (see “Sanctions” below), the AIO will notify the student in writing of the AIO’s decision and sanction imposed. A copy of the decision will be provided to the Registrar, the Department Chair and the instructor. The student will be informed of the student’s right to appeal (see “Appeals” below).

If the AIO determines that there has been a violation of this Policy that warrants a Severe or Very Severe Sanction, the AIO must refer the matter to the ADO, with a summary of the AIO’s findings and a recommended Severe Sanction. There should be no decision or notice of right to appeal until the sanction is determined by the ADO.
Academic Discipline Officer (ADO)

The Academic Discipline Officer will be an academic staff member or senior administrator appointed by the Vice-President, Academic and Research. Upon receipt of a referral from an AIO, the ADO may accept or reject the recommended Severe Sanctions and/or impose additional sanctions. The ADO has the authority to recommend a Very Severe Sanction, but the decision to impose a Very Severe Sanction is made by the Senate Executive.

If the ADO imposes Severe Sanctions, the ADO will notify the student in writing of the ADO’s decision and sanction imposed. A copy of the decision will be provided to the Registrar, the Department Chair, the instructor and the AIO. The student will be informed of the student’s right to appeal (see “Appeals” below).

If the ADO recommends a Very Severe Sanction to the Senate Executive, the matter will be referred to the Senate Executive, with a summary of the ADO’s findings and recommended Very Severe Sanction. There should be no decision or notice of right to appeal until the sanction is determined by the Senate Executive.

Senate Executive

The Senate Executive may accept or reject the recommended Very Severe Sanction(s). The student must be informed of the decision in writing and advised of his/her right to appeal. A copy of the decision will be provided to the Registrar, the Department Chair, the instructor, the ADO and the AIO.

APPEALS

Senate Academic Discipline Appeal Committee

Composition

The Senate Academic Discipline Appeal Committee is comprised of six representatives of the faculty and two representatives of the student body. The faculty representatives are elected by Senate for a three-year term. There shall be two faculty representatives from each of the faculties of Arts, Business and Science, with no two faculty representatives from the same Department. In cases involving a graduate student a faculty representative appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies and a graduate student representative will also attend. The student representatives shall be appointed by the Students’ Association. The Chair of Senate will chair the Committee.

Function

The Senate Academic Discipline Appeal Committee shall:

1. Hear appeals of decisions made pursuant to this Policy based only on one or more of the following grounds:

   (a) a failure to follow the “rules of natural justice”,
   (b) a failure to follow University rules, regulations or policies,
   (c) Compelling new evidence not considered by the AIO, ADO or Senate Executive which may have, in the opinion of the Chair of the Committee, altered an earlier decision(s);

2. Have the responsibility to ensure the execution of its decisions.
Procedures

Initiation of the Appeal

1. The student or instructor may initiate an appeal under this policy by delivering a Notice of Appeal to the Registrar.

2. The Registrar will forward the Notice of Appeal to:
   a. Dean of the Faculty from which the original complaint emanated;
   b. The Chair of the Department from which the original complaint emanated;
   c. The instructor who initiated the complaint;
   d. the Dean of the Faculty in which the student is enrolled at the date of Notice of Appeal; and
   e. The AIO, ADO or Senate Executive as appropriate.

   The Notice of Appeal shall be delivered not later than ten (10) working days from the date the decision being appealed has been sent in writing to the student. Thereafter no appeal may be brought.

Appointment of an Appeal Hearing Panel

Upon receipt of a Notice of Appeal, the Registrar shall send a copy of it to the Chair of the Senate Academic Discipline Appeal Committee. If the Chair, after consultation with at least two Committee members, preferably one faculty member and one student, concludes that the appeal involves a permissible ground for appeal as set out herein, an Appeal Hearing Panel shall be appointed by the Chair from the members of the Committee to hear the appeal. An Appeal Hearing Panel is comprised of the Chair, two (2) Faculty members and one (1) student.

Appeal Hearing Panel Procedure

1. The Appeal Hearing Panel shall be convened to hear the appeal as soon as practical, but not later than fifteen (15) working days after it is constituted or such later date as is acceptable to the student (appellant) and respondent (AIO, ADO or representative for Senate Executive)

2. The Appeal Hearing Panel shall determine its procedures subject to the following:
   a. all parties involved, including the instructor and Department Chair, shall be given adequate notice and full opportunity to participate;
   b. the basis of the appeal shall be presented by the person who made the appeal (the Appellant);
   c. evidence supporting or rebutting the appeal may be given by witnesses;
   d. the hearing shall be in camera. The student is entitled to one observer.

Disposition of the Appeal

The Appeal Hearing Panel may, by a majority vote:
   a. deny the appeal;
   b. allow the appeal and quash the decision entirely;
   c. allow the appeal but require a re-evaluation on the merits by another person or panel; or
   d. deny the appeal on the merits but modify the imposed sanctions.

Copy of the Decision

Within five (5) working days from the date the Appeal Hearing Panel has rendered its decision, the Registrar shall mail a copy of the decision to the student who initiated the appeal and to the persons mentioned in Section 2 of Initiation of the Appeal, above;

Compliance within Thirty (30) Calendar Days

Where the Appeal Hearing Panel has determined that a person or Faculty is to address or act upon a particular matter, the person or Faculty shall within thirty (30) calendar days of when the decision has been communicated, advise the Registrar of its compliance, or timetable for compliance, with the decision.
No Further Appeal

The findings and ruling of the Academic Discipline Appeal Committee Appeal Hearing Panel shall be binding without further appeal.

Sanctions

The AIO, ADO, Senate Executive, and Academic Appeal Hearing Panel may impose the following sanctions of an academic nature and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, may include any one or more of:

Standard Sanctions: May be imposed by AIO or ADO

- a failing grade or mark or assessment in the piece of work triggering the discipline;
- repeat of the assignment that triggered the discipline;
- failure of the class or course;
- completion of a remediation process

Severe Sanctions: Can only be imposed by ADO.

- dismissal for an academic term or year (to a maximum dismissal of three (3) academic years);
- loss of a current or continuing scholarship, or both, or loss of eligibility to receive or maintain scholarships, prizes or bursaries;
- removal from the Dean’s list;
- reduction in grade;

Very Severe Sanctions: Can only be imposed by Senate Executive:

- expulsion from the University;
- revocation of degree, certificate or diploma.

Notices

All notices required by this Policy or other communications to students and others as provided in this Policy will be sent to their “preferred” email listed in Banner at the time the decision is made. Notices and communications sent via this email are deemed to have been received.