



## **Kutztown University Policy ACA-087**

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### **Academic Honesty - Graduate Students**

#### **A. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to define the procedures and penalties for academic dishonesty in graduate programs.

#### **B. Scope**

This policy applies to all graduate students.

#### **C. Key words and phrases:**

None.

#### **D. Policy & Procedure(s)**

Graduate students at Kutztown University are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. Any acts of academic dishonesty by students, such as plagiarism on written papers/projects, falsifying the results of research, or cheating on examinations, threaten to undermine the educational and ethical goals of the University for its students. Such violations are of the utmost seriousness. The goal of the following policy and procedures is to promote a climate of academic honesty for all individuals at the University.

#### *Definitions of Academic Dishonesty:*

Academic dishonesty is any action that constitutes a violation of the Academic Honesty Policy and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Providing or receiving unauthorized assistance in coursework, examinations, or lab work.
2. Using unauthorized notes, materials, and devices during examinations or quizzes.
3. Plagiarizing or representing someone else's words, either spoken or written, ideas, formulas, solutions, or data as one's own work.
4. Presenting material to fulfill course requirements that was researched or prepared by others (such as commercial services) without the knowledge of the instructor.
5. Fabricating or falsifying information, including, but not limited to research findings, data, or statistical analyses; forging signatures; or altering dates.
6. Engaging in academic misconduct such as tampering with grades or participating in the distribution and/or receipt of any part of a test before its administration.

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7. Possessing or arranging for someone else to possess course examination or quiz materials at any time without the consent of the instructor.
8. Altering or adding or expanding upon answers on exercises, examinations, or quizzes after the work has been graded.
9. Making fraudulent statements, excuses, or claims to gain academic credit or influence testing or grading.
10. Taking examinations or quizzes under the identity of another person or arranging to have another person take examinations or quizzes in place of the person registered for the course.
11. Intentionally evading Kutztown University academic policies and procedures; for example, improperly processing course withdrawals, grade changes, or other academic procedures.
12. Buying, selling, stealing, or engaging in the unauthorized exchange of, or improperly acquiring and/or using, any assignments, papers, or projects.
13. Misrepresenting a mastery of subject matter in an academic project or attempt to gain an advantage by the use of illegitimate or unauthorized means, such as misrepresentation of one's credentials.
14. Gaining unauthorized access to the computer system and/or electronic devices of Kutztown University or another person. Violations include tampering with or copying programs or data or access codes associated with coursework.
15. Using graded assignments in another course. Exceptions to this guideline must be specifically stated in the course syllabus.

*Responsibilities of the University:*

It is the responsibility of University officials to make graduate students aware of this policy. The "Academic Honesty Policy – Graduate Students" will be included in graduate orientation, printed in the Faculty Handbook, and available on the Policy Register. University officials will take advantage of other opportunities to publicize this policy.

*Responsibilities of Students:*

1. It is the responsibility of students to be familiar with this policy and abide by it at all times. Lack of familiarity with this policy does not excuse students from their responsibilities under this policy.
2. Students accused of academic dishonesty must meet the time deadlines specified in the procedures set forth below or they will forfeit their rights to a formal hearing and to appeal a sanction.
3. Students who observe or have knowledge of acts of academic dishonesty are encouraged to bring the information to the attention of their instructors or to officials of the University. Students should be willing to testify concerning these matters if subsequent formal hearings result.
4. Students have the right to participate, as accusers or as co-accusers with the instructor, in bringing charges of academic dishonesty against other students.
5. Students should review instructors' course syllabi for sections dealing with academic dishonesty for information on what style sheets or standards manuals to use, etc. Students should always seek clarification of the instructor's expectations for the course. Instructors should set clear guidelines at the beginning of their courses for what

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constitutes dishonesty; ultimately, however, it is the student's responsibility to ask for clarification.

*Responsibilities of Faculty Members and Administrators:*

1. It is the responsibility of faculty members who become aware of acts of academic dishonesty to investigate, gather evidence, bring charges, participate in the resolution of cases they initiate, and administer appropriate sanctions, according to the policy and procedures set forth below.
2. As a preventive measure against such acts, instructors are strongly encouraged to inform students at the beginning of each course that they intend to uphold this policy.
3. In addition, whenever there is a potential for ambiguity as to how the policy applies to specific course activities and assignments, instructors should explain clearly to students what procedures, activities, and resources are allowed.
4. Administrators who become aware of breaches of the Academic Honesty Policy may bring charges or participate, as co-accusers, in bringing charges of academic dishonesty.
5. Administrators and faculty members must ensure that students accused of academic dishonesty who intend to request a formal hearing in order to contest the allegations may continue to attend class in a course in progress pending resolution of the case.
6. If the course in question ends before the case is resolved, the faculty member will submit a grade of "NG" (no grade), that will be replaced with the appropriate grade upon resolution of the case.

*Actions Which May be Taken for Violation of the Academic Honesty Policy:*

One or more of the sanctions enumerated below may be imposed on a student who commits a single act or multiple acts of academic dishonesty. The determination of the sanctions to be imposed depends on the severity of the offense(s) and consideration of the student's prior record of academic honesty.

**Sanctions:**

1. The student may receive a grade-reduction penalty within the course in which the act occurred and/or be required to fulfill additional academic requirements within the course at the discretion of the instructor. The grade reduction may affect one portion of a course (such as a particular assignment or examination) or apply to the entire course (such as dropping the student one letter grade).
2. The student may receive a failing grade of "F" for the course. A instructor may assign a failing grade for any instance of academic dishonesty, and the student may not withdraw from the course in order to avoid this penalty.
3. The student may be temporarily suspended from enrollment at the University.
4. The student may be permanently dismissed from enrollment at the University.

**Effect of Sanctions:**

A suspension or dismissal may mean the loss of all academic credits earned during the semester in which the offense occurred in accordance with University policy.

When a sanction for academic dishonesty has been imposed, the affected grade may not be appealed under the University's Grade Appeal Policy.

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## Procedures:

No sanction for academic dishonesty may be imposed upon a student without following the procedures established in this policy.

Students accused of academic dishonesty in the context of a course in progress who intend to request a formal hearing in order to contest the allegations may continue to attend the class in question until the case is resolved. If the course in question ends before the case is resolved, the instructor shall submit a grade of “NG” (no grade), that will be replaced with the appropriate grade upon resolution of the case.

The term “class days” as used in this policy refers to days when classes are officially scheduled at the University during the Fall and Spring semesters. Thus, final exam days, holidays, recesses, and breaks are excluded. Formal hearings are only held during the Fall and Spring semesters. If a case is not resolved by the end of the course in which the alleged violation occurred, then the matter is continued to the following Fall or Spring semester.

If a violation is discovered after the instructor of the course is no longer employed by the University or if the time deadlines for a case extend beyond the period of employment of the instructor, then the chair of the department in question or the chair’s designee may substitute for the instructor in the procedures associated with this policy.

### *The Informal Resolution Process*

The informal resolution process applies to situations when the instructor believes that an alleged act of academic dishonesty can be resolved within the course with the imposition of either the first or second sanction listed above under “Sanctions.” Instructors are urged to confer with the Chairperson of the Department and Dean of the College about any charges of academic dishonesty.

1. Arranging the initial meeting between the instructor and the student

Within two (2) weeks of when the instructor first becomes aware of an alleged instance of academic dishonesty in the course, the instructor will inform the student that the student must meet with the instructor to discuss the incident.

2. If the alleged act of academic dishonesty occurs during a winter or summer session, the faculty member and student may seek to resolve the matter informally during that winter or summer session. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, the formal resolution process, as outlined below, will be continued the following Fall or Spring semester.

3. The initial meeting and completion of the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form*

The meeting between the instructor and the student will occur within one (1) week after the instructor calls for it. Before or during the meeting, the instructor will fill out the appropriate sections of the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form* (including the proposed sanction) and give it to the student during the meeting. The instructor should retain a

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copy of the completed form. While the instructor and the student may wish to discuss the case and its resolution at this meeting, no lengthy discussion is required. Even if the case eventually results in a formal hearing, the instructor should not impose a sanction any stronger than the proposed sanction on this form.

If the student does not appear for the scheduled meeting, the instructor dates and files the completed form with the Dean of Graduate Studies, noting that the student failed to show up for the meeting. If the meeting is not rescheduled by the student within three class (3) days of the original specified meeting day, then the student forfeits the right to a formal hearing or appeal. The process is then over, and the instructor is permitted to enforce the proposed sanction.\*

\*In the event that a face-to-face meeting is not possible (e.g., unavailability of instructor, online course), correspondence by e-mail would serve in place of completion of the form. An e-mail using a KU e-mail account, copying the student, Dean of Graduate Studies, dean of the college, and department chair is sent by the instructor and will count as a signature.

4. The student's completion and signing of the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form*

The student must sign, date, and return the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form* to the instructor within three (3) days of the initial meeting. This form can be returned in person, by e-mail, or by fax. Failure to do so means that the student forfeits the right to a formal hearing or appeal, the process is over, and the instructor is permitted to enforce the proposed sanction.

There are two (2) options for the student when signing the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form-Graduate Students*. By signing under Option #1, the student admits the violation and waives the right to a formal hearing or appeal on the matter. In that event, the process is over, and the instructor is permitted to enforce the proposed sanction.

By signing under Option #2, the student indicates that the student has been informed of the accusations and intended sanction, but has not admitted to committing a violation or disagrees with the proposed sanction. Signing under Option #2 reserves the student's right to request a formal hearing by submitting a letter, which explains the nature of the student's disagreement with the charges or sanctions, in-person to the Dean of Graduate Studies or via e-mail, from the student's Kutztown University e-mail address to the Dean of Graduate Studies within one (1) week of the student's date on the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form*. Failure to do so means that the student forfeits the right to a formal hearing or appeal, the process is over, and the instructor is permitted to enforce the proposed sanction.

5. Reports and record keeping

When the instructor receives the signed *Academic Dishonesty Report Form- Graduate Students* from the student, the instructor should make three copies: one for the instructor,

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one for the student, and one for the Dean of the College in which the course is being taught. The form, along with any relevant documentation, should be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies within one (1) week of receipt of the form from the student.

If the student does not return the form within the three (3) class day limit, then the instructor will note the failure to meet that deadline on the copy of the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form* that the instructor retained from the initial meeting. The instructor then re-signs and dates that notation on the form. The instructor then makes three (3) copies: one for the instructor, one for the student, and one for the Dean of the College in which the course is being taught. The form, along with any relevant documentation, shall be submitted to the Dean of Graduate Studies within one (1) week of the date when the student returns the form to the instructor. As stated above, the process is over and the instructor is permitted to enforce the proposed sanction.

The *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Graduate Students*, where students admitted to a violation by signing under Option #1, failed to meet with the instructor, or failed to meet the three (3) class-day deadline to return the signed form to the instructor will be kept by the Dean of Graduate Studies. These records are to be kept by the Dean of Graduate Studies as evidence to be used in the event of future academic dishonesty violations by the same student. These records may also be used to tabulate anonymous statistical information provided that requirements of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) are followed.

If the student in question is eventually dismissed from the University, these records shall be expunged after a six-year period. If a student is suspended from the University, these records are expunged after a six-year period. Otherwise, student records and all copies are destroyed two (2) years after the student graduates or leaves the University.

### *The Formal Resolution Process*

#### 1. Initiation of the Formal Resolution Process

The Formal Resolution Process may be initiated by administrators, faculty members, accused students, or the Dean of Graduate Studies

- a. A instructor may initiate the Formal Resolution Process when the instructor, preferably in consultation with the Department Chairperson, seeks a sanction greater than a grade of “F” or when the student involved was not enrolled in the course in question. In such cases, the instructor will initiate the charges by hand-delivering a completed and signed *Academic Dishonesty Report Form* along with supporting evidence to the Dean of Graduate Studies within two (2) weeks of becoming aware of the violation.
- b. An accused student, who signed the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form* under Option #2, may initiate the Formal Resolution Process when the student wishes to dispute the accusation(s) or proposed sanctions described by the instructor on the

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form. In order to do this, the student must hand deliver, e-mail, or fax a written request for a formal hearing to the Dean of Graduate Studies within one (1) week of the date given next to the student's name on the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form*. The request must explain the nature of the student's disagreement with the charges or proposed sanctions. Copies of the student's request shall be sent to the instructor and the Dean of the College by the Dean of Graduate Studies as soon as the request for a formal hearing is received.

2. Preliminary briefing of the principals by the Dean of Graduate Studies

The principal participants ("principals") in a case are defined to be students accused of academic dishonesty and those who have accused them by signing an *Academic Dishonesty Report Form*. When the Formal Resolution Process is required, the Dean of Graduate Studies will send the accused student a formal letter by certified mail informing the student of the accusations. Copies of the letter will also be sent to the instructor in question and the appropriate Dean. If the student has requested a formal hearing, copies of the request will also be sent to the instructor and the Dean. The letter will invite the student to meet with the Dean of Graduate Studies for a preliminary briefing on the case. An accused student has one (1) week to schedule a time for such a briefing that will explain the judicial process at the University and the student's rights. During this same period of time, the Dean of Graduate Studies shall also invite the instructor and any other accusers to a meeting to explain the judicial process and the rights of the principals. In the event a face-to-face meeting is not possible, correspondence by e-mail would serve in place of the in-person, preliminary briefing meeting.

A formal hearing of the Graduate Academic Honesty Committee\*\* will be scheduled within three (3) weeks of the date of the certified letter to the student. The Dean of Graduate Studies will make every effort to schedule the formal hearing at a time when all principals are available. Those who attend will be able to speak at designated times during the hearing.

\*The Graduate Academic Honesty Committee will be chaired by an Academic Associate Dean. The chair position will rotate every three years among the four colleges, beginning with (1.) College of Business, (2.) College of Education, (3.) College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and (4.) College of Visual and Performing Arts. The chair will serve as ex-officio, non-voting member of the committee and will be responsible for scheduling and organizing meetings and informing the student of the date and time of the hearing. Three (3) faculty members, appointed by and from the Graduate Council, will serve three-year, staggered terms.

3. The Formal Hearing by the Graduate Academic Honesty Committee

The Graduate Academic Honesty Committee shall adjudicate cases of academic dishonesty that have not been resolved by the Informal Resolution Process. The formal hearing will be conducted according to due process procedures and guidelines. The Committee will hear any testimony and/or review evidence relevant to the allegations.

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After doing so, the Committee will make a finding as to whether the student violated this policy by committing an act of academic dishonesty. All principal parties are entitled to appear at the hearing with an advisor, who may be an attorney. A principal is permitted to consult with his/her advisor during the hearing, but the advisor may not participate in the hearing.

The Graduate Academic Honesty Committee is tasked with making a finding of whether a violation occurred. The Committee will make a finding based on the testimony and evidence presented. The standard of evidence used in such proceedings is preponderance, therefore, a decision of responsibility will be based upon presented evidence sufficient to make a reasonable person believe that it was more likely than not a student is in violation of University policy. In the event of conflicting testimony, then the Committee will make the decision based upon its assessment of the credibility of the participants.

Within one (1) week of the formal hearing, the Graduate Academic Honesty Committee will render its decision in a written report, including recommended sanctions in the event of a finding of a violation that will be sent by certified mail to the accused student, the accuser(s), the Dean of the College, and the Dean of Graduate Studies. If the formal process results in a determination that a violation occurred, one or more of the four sanctions listed in the section, "Sanctions," may be assigned depending on the severity of the violation.

If the student declined to proceed under the informal process, the student receives the sanction that the course instructor indicated on the completed Academic Dishonesty Report Form.

In the event the current offense represents a second offense, multiple offenses or an offense of sufficient severity, it may be recommended after a formal hearing that the student be suspended or dismissed from the University.

#### 4. Appeals

- a. *The First Appeal.* Any principal participant may appeal the findings of the Graduate Academic Honesty Committee to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The appeal must be in writing and must describe in detail the grounds for the appeal and the desired decision. The grounds for appeal may include such claims as denial of due process, new evidence, an erroneous finding, and an inappropriate recommended sanction of suspension or dismissal.

This appeal must be made within one (1) week of the issuance of the ruling made by the Graduate Academic Honesty Committee. Otherwise, the ruling of the Committee will be enforced. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall deny or uphold the appeal and shall have the power to modify the recommended sanction of temporary suspension or permanent dismissal accordingly.

*The Second and Final Appeal.* The ruling of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs may be appealed in writing under the same rules as given above to the University President, or the President's designee (who shall not be the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs). This appeal must be made within one (1) week of the ruling made by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. If not, the ruling of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall be enforced. The University President, or the President's designee (who shall not be the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs), may deny or uphold the appeal and has the power to modify the recommended sanction of temporary suspension or permanent dismissal accordingly. The ruling of the President, or the President's designee, shall be final.

5. When no Violation is Found

Assuming that no violation is found, the student who was accused has the right to complete the course in question without penalty due to this unproved accusation. The student's grade in the course should be based upon the student's academic performance during the course and be consistent with grading procedures used for other students in the same course as if no accusation of academic dishonesty had ever been made. The student, like other students in the class, would have the right to appeal his or her grade under the University's Grade Appeal Policy.

6. When a Violation is Found

If the student is found to have committed a violation of the Academic Honesty Policy, then the instructor of the course is permitted to assess the first or second sanctions listed in this policy, provided the sanction does not exceed the proposed sanction on the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form* that the instructor completed to begin the Informal Resolution Process.

When a violation has been found, (either by the Graduate Academic Honesty Committee or during the appeal process), the Dean of Graduate Studies will check the student's records for earlier violations of this policy. If such violations exist, then the Graduate Academic Honesty Committee or the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs or the University President who found the current violation may examine the records of the previous violation(s) and take them into account when considering the sanctions of temporary suspension and permanent dismissal from the University. Prior to a finding of responsibility, previous founded incidents of academic dishonesty should not be considered. Such prior findings should only be considered during the sanctioning phase.

7. Filing of Reports and Record Keeping

As with the records of academic dishonesty in cases that are resolved by the Informal Resolution Process, the records of students found responsible through the Formal

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Resolution Process should be kept by the Dean of Graduate Studies for future reference as described in Part 4 of the Informal Resolution Process above.

**E. Effective Date**

Fall 2017

**F. Approved By**

Endorsed by University Senate – March 2, 2017  
Approved by University President – March 17, 2017  
Endorsed by University Senate – December 5, 2019  
Approved by University President – December 13, 2019  
Endorsed by University Senate –  
Approved by University President –

**G. Last Reviewed**

August, 2017  
August, 2018  
August, 2019  
August, 2020  
April, 2022