



Kutztown University Policy ACA-087

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. Fabricating or falsifying information, including, but not limited to research findings, data, or statistical analyses; forging signatures; or altering dates.
2. Plagiarizing or representing someone else's words, either spoken or written, ideas, formulas, solutions, or data as one's own work.
3. 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.
4. Altering or adding or expanding upon answers on exercises, examinations, or quizzes after the work has been graded.

Policy ACA-087

5. 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.
6. Presenting material to fulfill course requirements that was researched or prepared by others (such as commercial services) without the knowledge of the professor.
7. 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.
8. Making fraudulent statements or claims to gain academic credit or influence testing or grading.
9. 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.
10. Using the same paper or work more than once without faculty authorization.
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. Using unauthorized materials/resources during examinations.
14. Providing or receiving unauthorized assistance in coursework or examinations.

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 professors 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 professor, in bringing charges of academic dishonesty against other students.
5. Students should review professors' 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 professor's expectations for the course. Professors should set clear guidelines at the beginning of their courses for what

Policy ACA-087

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, professors 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, professors 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 professor. 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 professor 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.

Policy ACA-087

The following procedures must be followed:

Procedures:

The Informal Resolution Process

The informal resolution process applies to situations when the professor 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.” Professors 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 professor and the student

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

2. The initial meeting and completion of the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Graduate Students*

The meeting between the professor and the student will occur within two (2) weeks after the professor calls for it. Before or during the meeting, the professor will fill out the appropriate sections of the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Graduate Students* (including the proposed sanction) and give it to the student during the meeting. The professor should retain a copy of the completed form. While the professor 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 professor 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 professor 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 (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 professor is permitted to enforce the proposed sanction.

3. The student’s completion and signing of the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Graduate Students*

The student must sign, date, and return the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Graduate Students* to the professor 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 professor is permitted to enforce the proposed sanction.

Policy ACA-087

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 professor 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. Signing under Option #2 reserves the student's right to request a formal hearing by hand-delivering, e-mailing, or faxing a letter to the Dean of Graduate Studies within two (2) weeks of the student's date on the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Graduate Students*. Failure to do so means that the student forfeits the right to a formal hearing or appeal, the process is over, and the professor is permitted to enforce the proposed sanction.

4. Reports and record keeping

When the professor receives the signed *Academic Dishonesty Report Form- Graduate Students* from the student, the professor should make three copies: one for the professor, one for the student, and one for the Dean of the College in which the course is being taught. The original form, along with any relevant documentation, should be hand delivered 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 mandated three-day period, then the professor will note the failure to meet that deadline on the copy of the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Graduate Students* that the professor retained from the initial meeting. The professor then re-signs and dates that notation on the form. The professor then makes three (3) copies: one for the professor, one for the student, and one for the Dean of the College in which the course is being taught. The original copy of the form, along with any relevant documentation, should be hand delivered to the Dean of Graduate Studies within one (1) week of the date when the student returns the form to the professor. As stated above, the process is over and the professor is permitted to enforce the proposed sanction.

The original copies of these *Academic Dishonesty Report Forms – Graduate Students* where students admitted to a violation by signing under Option #1, failed to meet with the professor, or failed to meet the three-day deadline to return the signed form to the professor 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 suspended or dismissed from the University, these records shall be kept permanently. Otherwise, these records and all copies will be destroyed two (2) years after the student's separation from 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 professor may initiate the Formal Resolution Process when the professor, 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 professor will initiate the charges by hand-delivering a completed and signed *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Graduate Students* 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 – Graduate Students* under Option #2, may initiate the Formal Resolution Process when the student wishes to dispute the accusation(s) described by the professor on the 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 two (2) weeks of the date given next to the student’s name on the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Graduate Students*. The request must explain the nature of the student’s disagreement with the charges. Copies of the student’s request shall be sent to the professor and the Dean of the College by the Dean of Graduate Studies as soon as the request for a formal hearing is received.
 - c. The Dean of Graduate Studies will initiate the Formal Resolution Process if a student’s most recent violation of the Academic Dishonesty Policy is a repeat offense that was settled by the Informal Resolution Process. In such cases, the Dean of Graduate Studies will bring a charge of Persistent Infractions of University regulations by completing an *Incident Report Form*. [See Section 4: Administration of Sanctions for repeat offenses where the most recent violation involves the Formal Resolution Process.]
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 – Graduate Students*. 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 professor in question and the appropriate Dean. If the student has requested a formal hearing, copies of the request will also be sent to the professor 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

Policy ACA-087

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 professor and any other accusers to a meeting to explain the judicial process and the rights of the principals.

A formal hearing of the Graduate Academic Honesty Committee* will be scheduled within two (2) 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 an 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 Committee will hear any testimony and/or review evidence relevant to the allegations. 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. 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.

Policy ACA-087

If the student declined to proceed under the informal process, the student receive the sanction that the course professor indicated on the completed Academic Dishonesty Report Form, but still has the right to appeal that sanction.

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.* The accused student 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 will deny or uphold the appeal and will have the power to modify the recommended sanction of temporary suspension or permanent dismissal accordingly. Unless the sanction imposed is expulsion, the decision of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall be final.

- b. *Second Appeal in the Event of Expulsion.* If the penalty is expulsion, the ruling of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs may be appealed, in writing, to the University President. Appeals to the President are governed by the same rules that apply to first appeals. An appeal must be made within one (1) week of the issuance of the ruling made by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. Otherwise, the ruling of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall be enforced.

The University President may deny or uphold the appeal and has the power to modify the recommended sanction of temporary suspension or permanent dismissal accordingly. The decision of the President 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 professor 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 – Graduate Students* that the professor 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.

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 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

G. Last Reviewed

August, 2017
August, 2018