



Academic Honor Code

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Responsible Office: Academic Affairs

Responsible Administrator: Vice President for Academic Affairs

Revised: November 2012

Policy Statement

Students who imitate or copy another person's idea or written work and claim it as original, fail to master the knowledge and skills that they need for successful careers in their chosen fields. Students must also comply with the policy on collaboration established for each course, as set forth in the course syllabus or on the course website. Conduct that evidences any form of disrespect for the intellectual efforts of oneself or others or violates established collaboration policies will subject students to serious penalties.

Reason for the Policy

The academic honor code exists to:

- Establish the College's set of rules and principles governing academic integrity; • Ensure that faculty and students are aware of and understand their responsibilities with respect to academic integrity; and
- Ensure that there is a clear framework with respect to the processes and procedure for investigation and resolution of charges emanating from breaches of the academic honor code.

Who is Responsible for this Policy

- Vice President for Academic Affairs
- Offices of the area vice presidents (Academic Affairs, Enrollment Management and Student Success, General Counsel)
- Dean of students
- Academic deans
- Department chairpersons
- Faculty
- Students

Who is Affected by this Policy

- Students
- Faculty
- Department chairs
- Academic deans

- Enrollment Management and Student Success
- Academic Affairs

Definitions

N/A

Principles

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

FIT prepares students for professional excellence in design, fashion, and business by providing a premier educational experience that fosters creativity, career focus, and a global perspective. Students who imitate or copy another person's idea or written work and claim it as original, fail to master the knowledge and skills that they need for successful careers in their chosen fields. Students must also comply with the policy on collaboration established for each course, as set forth in the course syllabus or on the course website. Conduct that evidences any form of disrespect for the intellectual efforts of oneself or others or violates established collaboration policies will subject students to serious penalties.

DISHONESTY

As recognized by the college, the term "academic dishonesty" is intended to include all forms of imitation, deception, fraud, falsification, plagiarism, cheating, misrepresentation, collusion or any other conduct that might reasonably be considered as wrongfully taking another person's idea or work claiming it as original. Knowingly aiding or abetting a student in engaging in dishonesty is also academic dishonesty. It is expected that all homework assignments, projects, lab reports, papers, theses, and examinations and any other work submitted for academic credit will be the student's own. Students should always take great care to distinguish their own ideas and knowledge from information derived from sources. The term "sources" includes not only primary and secondary material published in print or online, but also information and opinions gained directly from other people.

COLLABORATION

Policies vary among the many majors and courses in the college, and may even vary for particular assignments within a course. Generally, while several students may have the same source material, the analysis, interpretation, and reporting of the data must be each individual's independent work. Unless otherwise stated on the syllabus or website, when collaboration is permitted within a course, students must acknowledge any collaboration and its extent in all submitted work. However, students need not acknowledge discussion with others of general approaches to the assignment or assistance with proofreading. If the syllabus or website does not include a policy on collaboration, collaboration in the completion of assignments is not permitted. Collaboration in the completion of examinations is prohibited absent written instructions to the contrary.

PENALTIES

Students who are found to have committed academic dishonesty or fail to adhere to established collaboration policies will be subject to penalties for breach of academic integrity. If an instructor believes that a student has committed a breach of academic integrity, the instructor will notify the student and the department chair. The instructor will discuss the misconduct with the student and with

the department chair, determine a penalty applicable to the particular course(s) involved—a failing grade on the project or exam, or a failing grade in the course—and notify the student, in writing, of the penalty. The notification letter from the instructor must be sent to the student not later than five business days following the date that the course instructor meets with the student to discuss the misconduct and verbally informs the student that the decision has been made to move forward with a formal charge of academic misconduct. Upon receipt of the notification letter the student may elect either to accept the determination of the course instructor or to challenge the determination.

Responsibilities

N/A

Procedures

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY VIOLATION APPEALS PROCESS

If the student elects to challenge the accusation of the course instructor or is dissatisfied with the penalty determined by the instructor, the student may appeal the decision of the instructor to the dean of the school in which the course is offered. The student will have five business days from the date he or she receives the decision of the instructor to deliver his or her objection, in writing, to the dean of the school. The student's appeal letter should include any statement he or she cares to make regarding the charge(s) of misconduct that have been brought against the student. The dean of the school will assemble an Appeal Committee to be drawn from members of the college community. The Appeal Committee will consider information and materials provided by the student and the instructor and schedule a hearing date to take place not later than ten business days from the date that the student delivers his/her appeal letter to the dean of the school. Additional procedural guidelines governing an appeal are contained in the college publication "Academic Integrity-Due Process and Student Rights," available in the office of the dean of the school in which the course is offered. Upon the completion of the hearing, the Appeal Committee will make a written recommendation to the dean. The dean will review the recommendation and communicate his or her decision to the student in writing not later than three business days following receipt of the recommendation from the Appeal Committee. If the student is dissatisfied with the determination of the dean of the school in which the course is offered, the student will have three business days from the date the student receives the decision of the dean of the school to appeal to the vice president for Academic Affairs. The vice president will review any and all information and materials available and may elect to interview individual(s) that he or she deems appropriate to assist in reaching a decision on whether to uphold or reverse, in whole, or in part, the decision of the dean. The vice president will communicate his/her decision to the student in a timely fashion. The decision of the vice president will be final. In the event that the student is successful in his/her appeal, the vice president for Academic Affairs will determine what administrative actions need be taken in an attempt to offset any actual disadvantage the student may have sustained as a consequence of the unsubstantiated charge.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY—DUE PROCESS AND STUDENT RIGHTS

I. Due Process Section

- **Accusation and Notice**

A course instructor, or any other person(s), who has reasonable cause to believe that any student has engaged in an act of academic misconduct shall have an obligation to report the same to the chair for the department in which the course is offered promptly; but in no event later than (a) two business days following the date on which the alleged misconduct is observed to have been committed, or (b) except as otherwise provided in Paragraph 3 of this Section A, one business day following the date upon which sufficient evidence has been compiled that could lead one to reasonably conclude that an act of academic misconduct may have been committed. In the event that the accuser of the student is any person other than the course instructor, then that person must present evidence of the student's misconduct to the course instructor for the course in which the accused student is enrolled and the misconduct is believed to have transpired. Upon review of the supporting evidence provided by the accuser, the instructor shall decide whether or not to move forward with action against the student. If the instructor is persuaded by the evidence presented by the accuser the course instructor will proceed in place of the accuser and follow the procedure established for accusations brought by an instructor.

In the event that the act of academic misconduct involves the use of technology (e.g., computers, smart phones, internet), the faculty member and/or department chair will notify the executive director of Online Learning and Academic Technology. All course materials and online activity reports will be secured for examination by that department ("OLAT"). All such alleged acts involving technology will be evaluated initially through this process culminating with a final report issued by OLAT offering its opinion as to whether or not there is adequate basis to support the allegation that an act of academic misconduct has been committed. The OLAT report will be provided within ten business days from the date it was originally requested unless there are extenuating circumstances that compel an extension. In advance of issuing a notification letter formally accusing the student, the course instructor must discuss the misconduct with both the student and the department's chair but shall not be required to withdraw the accusation at the request of the chair. In the event that the course instructor and the chair disagree on whether there is adequate basis for accusing the student of academic misconduct the matter will be referred to the dean of the school in which the course is offered. The dean will review the matter and make the final determination as to whether or not there is adequate basis to support the allegation that an act of academic misconduct has been committed. In the event that a decision is made to move forward with a formal accusation against a student, the course instructor will issue a notification letter to the student (courtesy copying the chair of the department and the dean of the school in which the course is offered).

The notification letter from the instructor must be sent to the student not later than five business days following the date that the course instructor meets with the student to discuss the misconduct and verbally informs the student that the decision has been made to move forward with a formal charge of academic misconduct. The notification letter sent by the course instructor to the student must include a clear explanation as to the basis for the instructor's accusation, and identify the penalty assessed by the instructor – which shall be either a failing grade on the project or exam, or a failing grade in the course. It shall also include, in the text of

the letter, a clear statement that apprises the student of his or her right to challenge the instructor's determination, and shall also include a copy of the Academic Integrity–Due Process and Student Rights. The accused student shall be deemed notified of the instructor's charges as of the date that the letter is: (a) hand-delivered by campus staff; or (b) mailed (by regular U.S. Mail) to the home address which the student provided to the College registrar in the student's registration documents; or (c) electronically mailed to the student's FIT email address.

The student will have five business days from the date he/she receives the notification letter from the course instructor to deliver to the dean of the school in which the course is offered a written objection and decision to appeal the instructor's determination. If the student does not take timely action to respond to the notification letter, the student's failure to do so shall be deemed her/his acquiescence to the course instructor's charge and the penalty imposed.

II. The Appeal Process

Upon receipt of the student's written objection and decision to appeal the course instructor's determination, the dean of the school in which the course is offered shall assemble a committee to review the matter, conduct a hearing and issue a recommendation.

The Appeal Committee shall consist of five members of the college community comprised of the following:

- The dean of the school in which the course is offered. The dean shall serve as the chair of the Appeal Committee and shall preside over the appeal proceedings but shall not be permitted to vote at the conclusion of the committee's deliberations.
- A teaching faculty member who is a member of the same school as the dean, but outside of the accusing instructor's department.
- • A non-teaching/administration member of the college, selected by the dean of the school in which the course is offered.
- • A student, selected by the dean of students, who is currently enrolled in the college and otherwise in good standing.
- • Also included, shall be a non-voting record keeper from the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs for keeping clear and complete records of the proceedings.⁵

Once the dean has assembled the Appeal Committee, the dean shall schedule a hearing to consider all issues of fact, review evidence and hear testimony. The hearing should commence within ten business days of the dean's receipt of the student's written objection and decision to appeal the course instructor's determination. At the hearing conducted by the Appeal Committee, those present shall be:

- The accused student, who has the right to be accompanied by an advisor and/or relevant witnesses;
- The course instructor, who has the right to bring relevant witnesses; and
- Any other person called by the chair.

At the hearing, the accused student may be accompanied by one individual of her or his choice. However, no one accompanying the student may address the Appeal Committee, respond to questions on the student's behalf, offer argument on the student's behalf, or otherwise participate in the proceedings other than to speak with the student.

If the student is to be accompanied by someone he or she must notify the committee not less than three business days prior to the scheduled hearing date. At the hearing, only the witness that is presently testifying is permitted to be in the hearing room. Witnesses who are waiting to be called and those witnesses that have already given testimony are not permitted to be present in the hearing room.

Should the student seeking the appeal, or the course instructor, fail to appear before the Appeal Committee on any date scheduled for the hearing, the committee shall have full authority to proceed in her/ his absence.

The chair of the Appeal Committee shall preside over the hearing to ensure that: (a) the proceedings are conducted in conformance with these guidelines; (b) all student rights are observed while the appeal is being heard by the Appeal Committee; and (c) that no person threatens, intimidates, or coerces any of the participants. The Appeal Committee is to hear all available parties to the dispute and examine all the evidence presented. The chair of the committee may solicit outside advice to assist the committee in obtaining additional information that is considered germane to reaching its finding(s).

Upon the conclusion of the hearing, the Appeal Committee shall excuse all parties, witnesses and participants that may have been involved in the hearing and convene a private session to deliberate and vote. Each of the faculty, non-faculty administrator and student member of the Committee shall have one vote to cast. The chair and the record keeper shall be present during the deliberations but shall not be permitted to cast a vote.

The Committee need not reach a unanimous decision on the sufficiency (or insufficiency) of evidence to uphold the accusation of the course instructor. The Appeal Committee's recommendation shall not govern the final decision of the dean.

The dean may choose to accept the recommendation in whole or in part. The dean will communicate his or her decision to the student in writing not later than three business days following the date the dean receives the written recommendation of the committee.

If the student is dissatisfied with the determination of the dean of the school in which the course is offered, the student shall have three business days from the date the student receives the decision of the dean to appeal the matter to the vice president for Academic Affairs whose review and decision shall be final. The appeal shall be in writing and it may include a supplemental written statement from the student setting forth any information the student believes the vice president should take into consideration upon appeal of the decision of the dean.

When an appeal is received by the Office of Academic Affairs, the vice president shall have broad latitude in reviewing the matter. Though conducted in an informal manner, the vice president can schedule one or more conferences with the student, instructor (and /or other accuser), and members of the Committee. The student may be accompanied by anyone of his or her choice. However, the same limitations and prior notice requirements specified for their attendance at the Appeal Committee hearing will apply to conferences with the vice president.

If an academic misconduct appeal is commenced at a point during any semester that could possibly require a number of days to conclude that would extend past the date the course is scheduled to end, at the appropriate time, the instructor will notify the Registrar's Office that the grade is unable to be assigned until the matter is fully resolved.

If an academic misconduct matter is underway during a student's final semester and the awarding of the student's degree is solely dependent upon the resolution of the charge, the student shall be permitted to participate in the commencement ceremony. However, no degree shall be deemed conferred unless and until (a) the student receives a favorable determination on the appeal; and (b) the student has satisfied all other requirements to receive a passing grade for the course in which the charge arose.

In the event the student receives a final ruling that he or she has not committed a breach of the college's standards of academic integrity, the vice president for Academic Affairs will determine what administrative actions need be taken so as to reasonably offset any actual disadvantage the student may have sustained as a consequence of the unsubstantiated charge.

All second offense accusations are referred immediately to the vice president for Academic Affairs for resolution. A penalty of expulsion is mandated for a finding of academic misconduct on all second offenses.

Violations

N/A

Related Policies

List related FIT policies that provide relevant information for this policy. (Please ensure all links are properly hyperlinked, and underlined)

- [Student Code of Conduct](#)
- [Attendance/Scholastic Standing Policy](#)

Related Documents

- [Grade Appeal](#)

Contacts

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