

PSU Academic Integrity Policy

Academic integrity is the foundation of the pursuit of knowledge. All members of the academic community are expected to be dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge in an honest, responsible, respectful, and ethical manner. Every violation of academic integrity is an affront to the academic community. Violations of academic integrity make fair evaluation impossible and cast doubt upon the seriousness with which students accept the responsibility of acquiring an education.

Members of the academic community are expected to report all instances of those violations which come to their attention. Both faculty and administration consider it their duty, as guardians of academic standards and intellectual honesty, to enforce the following policy by identifying, investigating, and bringing to a resolution all cases of violation of academic integrity. Students are urged to consider that it is the toleration of violations of academic integrity, and not the reporting of it that is dishonorable.

1. Definitions

A. What is a Violation of Academic Integrity? A violation of academic integrity includes any act which portrays a member of the academic community as having acquired knowledge through legitimate study or research which, in fact, has been stolen. Violation of academic integrity includes also any act which gains one member of the academic community an unfair advantage over another. This includes any act hindering the academic accomplishment of another. Examples of violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Providing or using unauthorized books, notes, or other sources of information during an examination.
2. Submitting another person's work as one's own, that is, plagiarism. This includes, for example: copying during examinations; purchasing papers or taking them from Internet resources; copying papers, reports, laboratory results, or computer work; quoting or paraphrasing library or Internet sources without proper citations.
3. Doing work for which another person will receive credit. This includes, for example, allowing one's examination answers, reports, laboratory results, or computer work to be submitted by another person as his or her own work.
4. Falsifying, through forgery or other alteration, academic documents such as transcripts, registration materials, withdrawal forms, or grade reports.
5. Reading, removing, or copying, without authorization, or stealing any academic document, exam, or academic record maintained by any member of the faculty or administration.
6. Using unauthorized assistance in the laboratory, at the computer terminal, or on field placement.
7. Stealing, copying, or destroying another person's computer program or file, deliberately preventing or depriving another's access to the University computer system or resources, or impeding the system's performance.
8. Stealing, or removing without authorization, books or periodicals from the library, or mutilating library materials.

9. Falsifying or fabricating data or results of research or field work.
10. Lying in connection with an academic integrity investigation.

B. Who are Those Involved in Academic Integrity Cases?

1. Complainant: The Complainant is the individual who makes the discovery of an alleged violation and initiates proceedings as described in the list of required actions by the Complainant.
2. Examiner: The Examiner is a designated academic colleague (e.g., department chair, program coordinator, or Cluster coordinator) who reviews allegations with the Complainant to determine if the evidence is sufficient for taking prescribed actions.
3. Student(s): The student(s) is the individual(s) alleged to have violated the Academic Integrity policy.
4. Academic Student Advocate: The Academic Student Advocate is an independent campus resource who can advise both the Complainant and student on specific policy matters. The office of the Academic Student Advocate receives and maintains all electronic records from the beginning to the end of an inquiry.
5. Academic Integrity Appeals Panel: The Academic Integrity Appeals Panel is a body comprised of faculty and students. The panel hears appeals regarding findings of responsibility and sanctioning.

2. What Steps Are Taken When a Violation of Academic Integrity Is Suspected?

In cases where a violation of academic integrity in coursework is suspected, or in other cases of suspected violations, the individual making the discovery, the Complainant, must initiate proceedings as prescribed in the list of required actions.

A. Required Actions by the Complainant

1. Any alleged violation of academic integrity should be examined by at least two people. In the case of a violation of academic integrity associated with a class, these people shall include the instructor (Complainant) and an Examiner. In other cases, the people shall include whoever is making the complaint and whoever is in charge of the area of complaint. In the case of stealing, removing, or mutilating library materials in conjunction with a course, the library shall notify the course instructor of the violation. The course instructor shall pursue the complaint. Library personnel may be asked to appear as witnesses.
2. Any supporting evidence shall be gathered and verified as thoroughly as possible. The examination shall be thorough enough to establish with reasonable confidence whether a violation of academic integrity occurred, who the parties involved are, and that allegations can be justly made and are supportable. The examination shall proceed as quickly as possible and should be completed within seven days.
3. If the Complainant and Examiner determine through the review of evidence that the alleged behavior is not a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, no further actions are taken.
4. If the Complainant and Examiner determine through the review of evidence that the alleged behavior violates the Academic Integrity Policy, the student, or students, shall meet with the Complainant and be made aware of any accusations and be given a copy of this policy. This shall be

done in a nonthreatening manner. The student shall be provided with the evidence and given the chance to respond to the allegation. The Complainant must inform the student that she/he may consult with the academic student advocate before any further actions are taken. The academic student advocate is an independent resource who can assist the student with policy questions and who will review findings and outcomes to assure fairness and consistency in application of the Academic Integrity Policy.

5. The Complainant must file an online Academic Integrity reporting form with the office of the academic student advocate. The form describes the allegation, confirms that an Examiner has reviewed the evidence, reports all evidence pertaining to the allegation, and recommends sanctions (see Sanctions Options below).

6. After presenting the allegation to the student the Complainant shall, within seven days, arrange a resolution meeting with the student. The purpose of the resolution meeting is to discuss sanctions for the academic integrity violation. If the student accepts responsibility for violating the policy and accepts the Complainant's proposed sanctions, the matter is resolved, pending final independent review by the Academic Student Advocate. If the student does not agree with the Complainant's allegation or does not agree with the proposed sanctions, the student may request an independent appeal hearing before an Academic Integrity Appeals Panel. If the student fails to communicate with the Complainant and/or attend the resolution meeting, the case will be decided per the judgment of the Complainant's and Examiner's review of evidence.

B. Required Actions by the Student

1. Honor any requests by the Complainant for evidence concerning any alleged violations of academic integrity. This is the first and best opportunity for the student to present ameliorating evidence and/or arguments of innocence.
2. Continue to attend the course until notified otherwise.
3. Read and review the Academic Integrity Policy. The student is encouraged to contact the Academic Student Advocate with any questions regarding the policy. The Academic Student Advocate will advise the student of their rights and responsibilities and provide guidance for further actions. If requested, the Academic Student Advocate will accompany the student to any subsequent meeting(s).
4. Respond to requests from the Complainant to schedule and attend an Academic Integrity resolution meeting.

C.

Academic Integrity Resolution Meeting Outcomes

There are three possible outcomes from the resolution meeting between the Complainant and the student:

1. A determination of an unintentional violation is made. This may be the outcome wherein it is determined that the alleged violation resulted from poor academic practice resulting from a lack of sufficient knowledge/training. In such cases the student and Complainant shall work together to give the student the opportunity to learn the correct academic practice. As with all grades,

instructors will evaluate the assignment in question and may account for the violation in their evaluation.

2. A judgment of an intentional violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is sustained. Based on the evidence, the Complainant will recommend a sanction (see Sanction Options below). If the student accepts responsibility for this outcome and the recommended sanction, the matter is officially resolved pending independent review by the Academic Student Advocate.

3. A judgment of an intentional violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is sustained, but the student disagrees with the finding and/or recommended sanction. In such cases, a student may ask for an appeal hearing before an independent Academic Integrity Panel.

D. Role of the Academic Student Advocate

All cases are reviewed for consistency in sanctioning by the Academic Student Advocate. If the ASA determines that the outcome of a case is consistent with past outcomes for violations of a similar nature, no further action is taken and the matter is officially resolved. If the ASA determines that an outcome deviates significantly from past outcomes for violations of a similar nature, the ASA will work with the Complainant to resolve the discrepancy. If the ASA and Complainant are unable to resolve the discrepancy, the case will automatically be referred to the Academic Integrity Appeals Panel.

3. Academic Integrity Appeals Panel

A. Composition of the Academic Integrity Appeals Panel. The Office of the Academic Student Advocate will convene the Academic Integrity Appeals Panel. The Academic Integrity Appeals Panel will consist of:

- A designated chair who shall be a faculty member recruited from the membership of the Academic Affairs Committee.
- Two PSU faculty members recruited from a faculty pool.
- Two student members.

B. What Happens At an Academic Integrity Appeals Panel Hearing?

1. At the student's request, a hearing before an independent Academic Integrity Panel will be scheduled within seven days of the resolution meeting described above. The appeal may be directed at the Complainant's allegation, the recommended sanction, or both. The Complainant, student, panel members, and witnesses shall be notified of the hearing date. The Complainant and student are required to attend the hearing.

2. The student should continue to attend the course until a decision is rendered at the appeal hearing.

3. The student may consult with the Academic Student Advocate regarding the appeal and may request the presence of the Academic Student Advocate at the appeal hearing.

4. The panel will hear the statements of the Complainant, student, and witnesses. Based on those statements and the evidence behind the allegation, the panel will decide on the merit of the appeal.

5. If the appeal is denied, the student must comply with all requirements of the original finding and sanction as determined by the Complainant.

6. If the appeal is granted, the panel may rescind a finding of responsibility for a violation or may impose a different sanction.

4. Sanctions

A. Determining an Appropriate Sanction The appropriateness of a sanction should, using the Complainant's best professional judgment, reflect the severity and extent of the violation. Complainants are expected to exercise fairness and consistency in determining sanctions. The Complainant may consult with the Academic Student Advocate to seek guidance about sanctions, but nonetheless should consider the following questions in making a decision:

1. Does the violation entail a minor portion or a significant portion of an assessment?

2. Does the violation reflect carelessness/lack of knowledge or does it reflect a calculated and deliberate attempt to gain an unfair advantage?

3. Does the violation involve any external constituencies?

4. Does the violation entail any behaviors that would warrant investigation by other campus offices (e.g., Student Conduct Office, University Police—if a violation of academic integrity involves damage to University property or otherwise violates the law, legal or disciplinary action may also be taken)? All findings of responsibility will result in a record of violation. Additional sanctions beyond that are classified as Level 1 or Level 2. In most cases when students are found to be responsible for violating the Academic Integrity Policy, whether by admission or by evidence examined by the Complainant, and where the incident occurs in connection with a specific course, the Complainant shall impose one of the following Level 1 sanctions:

- Resubmission of an assessment with no grade penalty
- Resubmission of an assessment with a grade reduction penalty
- Lowered grade or grade of failure for an assessment
- Record of violation only (In cases where a violation of academic integrity occurs apart from a particular course or where it has a minor or tenuous impact on a course, the penalty may be simply having a record of conviction. A record of conviction is a serious consequence of a first offense. If the Complainant judges an intentional violation to be egregious (e.g., extensive plagiarism; falsification of research data; forgery of a supervisor's signature), a recommendation for imposing a Level 2 sanction may be offered. A recommendation for imposing a Level 2 sanction will automatically require that the Complainant and student appear before the Academic Integrity Appeals Panel, which will determine the sanction.

Level 2 sanctions are:

- Failure for the course
- Suspension from PSU for a semester or for one academic year

- Expulsion from PSU

B. Second Offense

Upon receiving an Academic Integrity Incident Report Form, the Academic Student Advocate will review prior records to determine if the violation is a first, second, or third offense. If it is determined that a violation is a second offense, the matter is automatically brought for consideration to the provost and vice president for academic affairs, or designee, who will determine a sanction. The second conviction for violating academic integrity will normally result either in suspension from PSU for one semester or for one academic year, or expulsion. Also, if the second offense occurs within a particular course, an F will be posted on the transcript as the final grade for that course.

C. Third Offense

A third violation of the Academic Integrity Policy will result in an automatic and immediate expulsion from Plymouth State University. A student will be withdrawn from all courses.

5. Records

If the student has a formal resolution meeting with a Complainant and is found not responsible for an academic integrity violation, no official records shall be kept. Whenever students have been found in violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, a record of the conviction shall be retained permanently by the Office of the Academic Student Advocate. The Academic Student Advocate, all faculty and principal administrators with legitimate need to know, and the student in question shall have the privilege of access to the record. The Academic Student Advocate shall retain all evidence related to the case until three years after the student has left the University. A record of the conviction shall be reportable to the appropriate academic affairs administrator if the student is convicted of a subsequent violation of the Academic Integrity Policy and to any outside agencies legally requesting this information until the student graduates or five years after the finding.