

SUGGESTED REVISIONS – March 2024

Academic Conduct Policy

(Adopted by University Council, December 6, 1995, last revised 2024)

If it is to fulfill its missions, an academic community requires that all of its participants maintain the highest standards of honor and integrity. The purpose of the Academic Conduct Policy is to make all aware of these expectations. Additionally, the policy outlines some, but not all, of the situations that violate these standards. Further, the policy sets forth a set of procedures that will be used when these standards are violated. In this spirit, this policy outlines below: (1) Academic Misconduct; (2) Procedures for Dealing with Academic Misconduct, and (3) Consequences. These are not meant to be exhaustive.

I. Academic Misconduct

Any act that violates the spirit of the academic conduct policy is considered academic misconduct. Specific examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

A. Cheating. Examples of cheating include:

1. Copying from another student's test paper, laboratory report, other report, essay, or computer files and listings.
2. Using in any academic exercise or academic setting material, devices, or online resources not explicitly authorized by the person in charge of the exercise or setting.
3. Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during an academic exercise without the permission of the person in charge of the exercise.
4. Knowingly accessing, possessing, photographing, sharing, acquiring, using, buying, selling, stealing, transporting, soliciting in its entirety or in part, or otherwise making a permanent record and/or recording of the contents of a test or other assignment unauthorized for release.
5. Substituting for another student, or permitting another student to substitute for oneself, in a manner that leads to misrepresentation of either or both students' work.
6. Engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.

B. Plagiarism

The appropriation, theft, purchase, or acquisition by any means of another's work or materials, and the unacknowledged submission or incorporation of that work or materials as one's own offered for credit. Appropriation includes quoting or paraphrasing another's work, published or unpublished, without clear acknowledgment.

C. Collusion

The unauthorized collaboration with another in prepared work offered for credit.

D. Abuse of Resource Materials

Mutilating, destroying, concealing, or stealing such materials.

E. Computer Misuse

Unauthorized or illegal use of computer software or hardware through the TCU Computer Center or through any programs, terminals, or freestanding computers owned, leased, or operated by TCU or any of its academic units for the purpose of affecting the academic standing of a student.

F. Fabrication and Falsification

Unauthorized alteration or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise or academic setting. Falsification involves inventing or counterfeiting information or citation for use in any academic exercise or academic setting.

G. Multiple Submission

The submission by the same individual of substantial portions of the same academic work (including oral reports) for credit more than once in the same or another class without authorization.

H. Complicity in Academic Misconduct

Helping another to commit an act of academic misconduct.

I. Bearing False Witness

Knowingly and falsely accusing another student of academic misconduct.

J. Unauthorized use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Using generative AI without documented approval from the course instructor or in the syllabus will be considered equivalent to representing someone else's work as one's own.

II. Procedures for Addressing Academic Misconduct

A. Noted and definitions

1. For the purposes of this policy, an "academic day" is defined to be any day on which classes meet during a regular long Fall or Spring semester or during summer academic sessions.
2. Academic dean refers to the dean of the college or school offering the course in which the academic misconduct is alleged to have taken place, or their designee.
3. "Department chair" refers to the academic administrator responsible for the unit providing the instruction in which the alleged academic misconduct occurred. In some units this may be a program director or other academic administrator. The office of the academic dean of the college or school offering the course can provide the appropriate administrator if necessary.
4. Faculty refers to the instructor of the course in which the suspected academic misconduct occurred.
5. Advisor refers to any person selected by the student who accompanies the student during formal hearings. The advisor may speak with the student but may not actively participate in the hearings.
6. The Academic Appeals Committee is a standing University Committee. The charge and membership of the Committee may be found in the current *Handbook for Faculty and Staff*.
7. If a student does not receive a reply acknowledging receipt of an appeal letter within five (5) academic days, they may contact the next administrator to request the next stage of appeal.
8. Study abroad students are subject to the rules, regulations, and academic policies of the host university/program. Misconduct consequences for study abroad courses do not fall under this policy.

B. Investigation and Initiation

1. Students who know of an act of academic misconduct should report the incident to the faculty member teaching the course. The faculty member will obtain the basic facts of the allegation and ask the student reporting the misconduct to write and sign a statement of facts. The name(s) of the student(s) reporting suspected academic misconduct will remain confidential during the informal faculty/student meeting, but must be revealed to the accused student if the resolution proceeds beyond the faculty member and the accused student.

2. Faculty who suspect academic misconduct or who have academic misconduct reported to them must initiate an investigation and meet with the accused student within five (5) academic days of becoming aware of the incident. A faculty member who is made aware by another person of an act of academic misconduct has the responsibility to investigate the allegation, and, if warranted, pursue the issue as outlined below (C.1).

3. In instances where the suspected academic misconduct is discovered during an academic exercise, the faculty member has the right to suspend immediately the student involved in the alleged activity from further work on the academic exercise.

4. A student accused of academic misconduct will proceed in the course without restriction until resolution of the issue or until the academic dean has taken an action as specified in III.B that removes the student from the course.

5. An "I" grade should be given by the instructor if the alleged misconduct occurs near the end of a semester, for example during finals, and a consequence outlined in section III has not been applied by the instructor or the dean.

6. If more than one student is accused of the same act of misconduct (e.g., giving and receiving aid), each individual student is guaranteed the right to have their case heard separately. With each student's permission, the cases can be combined. The faculty/student conference (C.1) is exempted from this requirement.

C. Resolution

1. Meeting Between Faculty Member and Student. This is the first step to be taken in resolving an incident of suspected academic misconduct.

a. Within five (5) academic days of suspecting misconduct, the faculty member will hold a meeting with the student. At this meeting, the faculty member will inform the student of all allegations against them and present any information supporting the allegations.

b. The student will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegations. The student has the right not to respond.

c. The faculty member will decide whether or not academic misconduct has occurred, and, if warranted, apply any combination of consequences in III.A below, or refer the matter to the dean for more severe consequences (probation, suspension, or expulsion). Findings of academic misconduct are based on the preponderance of the evidence.

d. The faculty member will notify the student in writing of their decision and should send copies to the academic dean, the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled, the department chair, and the Dean of Students. Any such copies of the findings will be kept on file in the college and department offices and in the student conduct files maintained by the Dean of Students.

2. Meeting with Department Chair. This meeting takes place when the student wishes to appeal either the findings of the faculty member or the severity of the consequence(s).

a. Within five (5) academic days of being notified by the faculty member of the disposition of the incident of academic misconduct, the student may request a meeting with the department chair.

b. The department chair will become acquainted with the facts and meet with the parties involved in the case. The student has the right to meet with the department chair without the faculty member being present.

c. The department chair may either support or reverse the findings of the faculty member, and may lessen the consequence(s) imposed by the faculty member even while supporting its findings. The chair may not increase the severity of the consequence(s).

d. The department chair will notify the student and faculty member of their decision in writing and may send copies to the faculty member, the academic dean, and the Dean of Students. Any such copies of the findings will be kept on file in the college and department offices and in the student conduct files maintained by the Dean of Students.

3. Meeting with Academic Dean. This meeting takes place if the student wishes to appeal either the findings of the department chair or the severity of the consequence(s), if the faculty member recommends consequences by the dean as listed in III.A.4-5, or if the student has been found guilty of academic misconduct previously, in which case the academic dean may levy additional consequences.

a. Within five (5) academic days of being notified by the chair of the disposition of the incident of academic misconduct, the student may request a meeting with the academic dean.

b. The academic dean will hear the facts of the case and make a decision about the alleged act of academic misconduct or the appropriateness of the consequences administered by the faculty member. The academic dean can issue any combination of consequences listed in III.

c. The academic dean will notify the student of their decision in writing with copies to the department chair and the faculty member. Copies of the findings will be kept on file in the college office and should be sent to the Dean of Students.

4. Academic Appeals Committee. Should the student wish to appeal the decision of the academic dean, they have the right to request a hearing before the Academic Appeals Committee.

a. The student must request this hearing by submitting an appeal letter to the chair of the university Academic Appeals Committee no later than five (5) academic days from the date of receiving written notification of the dean's finding.

b. Upon receipt of the appeal letter, the chair of the Academic Appeals Committee may request materials from the student, the faculty member, the department chair, and/or the dean.

c. The appealing student has the right to appear before the Academic Appeals Committee. The student may bring one person with them as an advisor. The advisor may not speak for the student or to the committee. The advisor may only speak with the student. If the advisor will be an attorney, the student must inform the committee chair at the time the chair collects the availability of the parties for scheduling the hearing in order for the University to also have an attorney present for the hearing. Each party shall bear the expense of their legal counsel. Legal counsel is to provide counsel only and may not participate directly in the meeting. The meeting is an administrative hearing, not a court proceeding, and is not subject to the procedures or practices of a court of law.

III. Consequences

A. By the faculty member:

1. Treat the examination or assignment in question as a missed assignment.
2. Assign a reduced grade, including possibly a grade of "F" or a zero, for the examination or assignment in question.

3. Impose an alternative, possibly more or less severe, grade consequence within the course.
4. Recommend to the academic dean that the student be dropped immediately from the course with a grade of “F.”
5. Recommend to the academic dean that the student be dismissed from an academic program, placed on probation, suspended, or expelled from the University.

B. By the academic dean or Academic Appeals Committee:

(Previous academic misconduct will be taken into account when either the academic dean or the Academic Appeals Committee considers consequences for academic misconduct.)

1. Apply consequences in III.A.
2. Drop student from the course with a grade of “F.” This grade cannot be changed by student-initiated withdrawal and the grade will be included in the computation of the GPA even if the course is repeated.
3. Place the student on suspension from the University for a specified period of time.
4. Expel the student from the University.
5. Recommend to the Provost that they request the Board of Trustees revoke an awarded degree.
6. In a case where the academic dean as defined above is not the dean of the college in which the student is enrolled, they shall recommend to the Provost/Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs that the student be placed on probation, suspended, expelled or have their degree revoked.

Note: Program dismissals resulting from violations of professional standards of the discipline should be implemented via the Policy on Unprofessional Behavior, Disruptive Behavior, and Lack of Academic Progress.