



**Responsible University Administrator:** Office of the Provost  
**Responsible Office:** Provost  
**Origination Date:** 11/12/2014  
**Current Revision Date:** N/A  
**Next Review Date:** 11/12/2018  
**End of Policy Date:** N/A  
**Policy Number:** ACAF-PRO-012  
**Status:** Effective

# Academic Integrity Policy

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## Policy Statement

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Academic misconduct involves deception to improve a grade, earn course credit, or complete a degree. It includes cheating, plagiarism, inappropriate acquisition or provision of information, conspiracy to cheat or plagiarize, lying about academic work, stealing academic materials, and unapproved multiple submissions of assignments.

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## Reason for Policy/Purpose

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Academic misconduct is inconsistent with the scholarly mission of The University of Southern Mississippi and is not tolerated. Students who commit acts of academic misconduct as defined in the Academic Integrity Policy will incur academic sanctions as enumerated by the Policy.

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## Who Needs to Know This Policy

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The entire University of Southern Mississippi community.

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## Website Address for this Policy

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<http://www.usm.edu/institutional-policies/policy-acaf-pro-012>

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## Definitions

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**Cheating** - Unauthorized and inappropriate collaboration as defined by the instructor or proctor; giving or receiving (or attempting to give or receive) aid from any source without the consent of the instructor or proctor or in a manner inconsistent with course or program goals.

**Plagiarism** - The use of another person's words or ideas without appropriate quotation or attribution; claiming or submitting for academic credit the work of another person.

**Acquiring Information Inappropriately** - The act of obtaining course assignments or examination questions or answers in ways or from sources not approved by the instructor or proctor (includes, but is not limited to, unauthorized use of the Internet).

**Lying or Falsification of Data** - Any statement of untruth in all matters related to the academic experience, including false claims of authorship; falsification of information, data, or results derived from or related to research or to laboratory experiments; the misrepresentation of information, data, or results by any means with intent to mislead administrators, faculty, or others acting as officials of the University.

**Stealing or Defacing** - The act of intentionally taking, transferring, defacing or destroying, without right or permission, any property related to the academic mission of the University.

**Multiple Submission** - The submission, more than once, without authorization by all instructors involved, of substantial portions of the same work, including oral reports or work submitted for retaken courses.

**Conspiracy** - The act of agreeing or planning with any person to commit a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy.

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## **Policy/Procedures**

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### **1.0 The Agreement**

1.1 In acknowledgement of the integrity policy, students--upon first formal enrollment in the University--must affirm the Integrity Agreement. Thereafter, it shall be understood that enrollment in a course constitutes affirmation of the following agreement:

As a member of the Southern Miss community, I will act with honor and integrity at all times. I will not engage in any act of academic misconduct, and I understand that such acts violate the Academic Integrity Policy and Student Honor Code and undermine the community of trust so important to the integrity of the University.

## 2.0 Imposed Sanctions

- 2.1 Instructors make the initial determination that the Academic Integrity Policy has been violated. When it is determined that a student has violated the policy, the instructor or proctor may impose the following sanctions based on the circumstances of the case:
- 2.1.1 Resubmission of work, lowered course grade, or any other course- or exam-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Faculty are encouraged to recognize that students are involved in a process of learning and not all violations of the Academic Integrity Policy are equal. The instructor may issue a reprimand or require the student to resubmit the assignment, complete an additional or different assignment, or take a new examination. The instructor may also assign a lowered course grade by assigning an “F” or “0” on the assignment or exam, thereby reducing the final grade.
  - 2.1.2 The XF grade. The instructor may assign an XF for the course. That grade will be recorded on the academic transcript with the notation “failure due to academic misconduct.” The XF will be treated as an F for the purpose of calculating grade point average and class standing but cannot be replaced by retaking the course. The student may petition for removal of the “X” notation upon completion of an Academic Integrity Remediation Program specified by the Academic Integrity Officer (see Sections 3.0 and 8.0). In such cases, the XF will be replaced with an F and the student may then retake the course to replace the grade. Only one XF can be removed from the transcript during a six-year period.
- 2.2 Instructors must make every effort to meet with a student who commits academic misconduct to explain the following:
- the nature of the alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy (e.g., plagiarism; looking at another student’s work on an exam);
  - the basis for believing the student has violated the policy (e.g., a Turnitin originality report, a description of a report made by someone who observed the academic misconduct);
  - the penalty to be imposed; and
  - the process for appeal, regardless of whether the penalty is a lower grade or an XF grade.

- 2.3 Students should not be disallowed from continuing to attend or participate in any class on the basis of academic misconduct alone before they have an opportunity for appeal. Students who appeal a decision of the instructor may continue to register for and attend classes until the appeal process is completed.

### **3.0 Automatic Sanctions for Undergraduate Students**

- 3.1 Academic suspension: Undergraduate students with three XF grades will be placed on academic suspension.
  - 3.1.1 A student placed on academic suspension may not enroll at The University of Southern Mississippi until one semester (fall, spring or summer) has passed.
  - 3.1.2 The student may not transfer credits earned at any other university or college without prior written approval of the chair or director of the student's current department or school and the dean of his or her college. Any credits earned contrary to this policy will not count toward graduation requirements at Southern Miss.
  - 3.1.3 Readmission after the required suspension period requires reinstatement to the University through "the change of academic status" process initiated with the chair or director of the student's current department or school and the dean of the college in which the student was enrolled as a major.
  - 3.1.4 To gain readmission, the student must complete an Academic Integrity Remediation Program specified by the Academic Integrity Officer. With permission from the Academic Integrity Officer, the student may complete the Remediation Program during the semester following a suspension. Failure to complete the Program will result in re-suspension the next semester.
- 3.2 Expulsion: Undergraduate students with four or more XF grades will be expelled from the University.

### **4.0 Sanctions for Academic Misconduct in Graduate Programs**

- 4.1 Students enrolled in a graduate program can be dismissed from the program and the University upon receipt of the first XF grade or after any instance in which academic misconduct has taken place.

- 4.2 Graduate students wishing to appeal a sanction for academic misconduct, including dismissal on the basis of academic misconduct, should file an appeal with the Academic Integrity Appeals Board.

## **5.0 Revocation of Degree**

- 5.1 In egregious instances of academic misconduct, the University reserves the right to revoke a degree if it determines after the student has graduated that academic misconduct occurred in the completion of degree requirements. A former student whose degree is revoked has the same right of appeal as any student who has been assigned an XF grade.

## **6.0 Withholding Honors**

- 6.1 Students with an XF grade at the time of graduation will be disqualified from graduating with academic honors, including Latin Honors.

## **7.0 Offenses Not Associated with a Course**

- 7.1 In case of academic misconduct not directly associated with a course, such as program examinations or defenses of academic projects, the proctor, committee chair, or relevant academic administrator will be responsible for determining whether the Academic Integrity Policy has been violated and the sanction that is to be imposed. The same university representative will serve in the role of the instructor in cases of appeal.

## **8.0 The Academic Integrity Office**

- 8.1 The Academic Integrity Office is entrusted with ensuring that the Academic Integrity Policy is publicized and fairly administered. Its jurisdiction is limited to the Academic Integrity Policy and does not extend to issues properly addressed by the Grade Appeals Committee or Student Government Association's Judicial Board. It consists of the Academic Integrity Officer, the Academic Integrity Appeals Board, and any designated staff.

Because it guarantees that the policy is fairly administered, it may not assume an advocacy role for either students or faculty; however, it may advise participants on how to best secure their rights.

- 8.1.1 The Academic Integrity Officer is appointed by the Provost and may hold an additional academic or administrative role.

- 8.1.2 In addition to promoting Academic Integrity and disseminating the policy, the Academic Integrity Officer initiates an Academic Integrity Appeal upon submission of an Academic Integrity Appeal form, guarantees that all parties to an appeal have been notified and have access to relevant documents, and monitors the appeal process to ensure that the appropriate procedures have been followed. The Academic Integrity Officer may vacate a decision, but on procedural grounds only.
  - 8.1.3 The Academic Integrity Officer also designates appropriate classes or modules to serve as the Academic Integrity Remediation Program, advises on the content of those classes or modules, and certifies that a student has completed the program. The Academic Integrity Officer may change an XF grade to an F if the student completes the required remediation program.
  - 8.1.4 The Academic Integrity Officer submits annual reports to the Provost on the state of academic integrity at the University.
  - 8.1.5 The Academic Integrity Officer, in consultation with the Academic Integrity Appeals Board, can propose to the Provost revisions or amendments to the Academic Integrity Policy and will seek approval of the changes through the appropriate university committees.
- 8.2 The Academic Integrity Appeals Board is a University Standing Committee composed of two students (one undergraduate and one graduate student) and three faculty members appointed by the Provost after seeking nominations from the Attorney General of the Student Government Association, the President of the Graduate Student Senate, and the President of the Faculty Senate.
- 8.2.1 Student board members serve one-year terms, and faculty board members serve staggered terms of two academic years. The Provost will also identify up to three alternate faculty members to serve as needed when regular faculty board members cannot attend a hearing.
  - 8.2.2 The panel's presiding officer, one of the three faculty members, is also chosen by the Provost.
  - 8.2.3 The Academic Integrity Officer may not be appointed to the Appeals Board.
  - 8.2.4 The primary mission of the Appeals Board is to create a community of trust and responsibility that ensures the highest standards of ethical academic conduct at the University.

8.2.5 All decisions of the Board are made by a majority vote of the quorum. The quorum is defined as at least three members of Board (no fewer than one of whom must be a student); during summer terms, the Provost may temporarily fill Board vacancies.

8.3 Together, the responsibilities of the Academic Integrity Appeals Board and Academic Integrity Officer are to:

- afford each student and faculty member full respect and every reasonable consideration;
- ensure that the facts of a case are given careful attention;
- allow open discussion and case discovery through an orderly but not unduly formal procedure;
- hold students to high standards of behavior; and
- contribute to the educational mission of the University and protect its academic reputation by ensuring integrity in all academic matters brought to its attention.

## **9.0 The Appeal Process**

9.1 Students have an absolute right to due process and a fair, speedy appeal.

9.1.1 A student who wishes to appeal a penalty for academic misconduct, including an XF grade, must complete the Academic Integrity Violation Appeal Form and complete the steps described below.

9.1.2 An appeal can occur immediately following notification of a sanction for academic misconduct, but the student must initiate the appeal procedure within 30 school days (excluding Saturday, Sunday, and official student holidays) of the beginning of the semester subsequent to the one in which the grade was awarded, or 120 calendar days after the issuance of spring semester grades, should the student not be enrolled during the summer term.

9.1.3 The appeal procedure is initiated when the student submits the Appeal form to the Academic Integrity Office. Students may begin the appeal process as soon as the instructor notifies the student regarding a sanction for academic misconduct. The student can appeal the sanction while the course is still in progress and does not need to wait until the final course grade is posted. (To appeal a grade unrelated to academic misconduct, the student must employ the standard grade appeal process).

- 9.1.4 The student must meet with the instructor and the chair of the department in which the course was taught to review the facts of the case. If the instructor is not a member of the University faculty at the time of the appeal, the student should meet with the chair.
- 9.1.5 The student has a right to request written documentation of the Academic Integrity Policy violation. The Academic Integrity Violation Appeal Form should be signed by the instructor and chair to confirm meeting with the student unless the faculty member decides to rescind the XF grade.
- 9.1.6 The student should then submit the Appeal form to the Academic Integrity Office. Within five working days, the Academic Integrity Office should contact all parties informing them that a formal appeal has been initiated. All parties must submit any written materials they intend to present to the Academic Integrity Appeals Board within 30 days of being notified of an appeal.
- 9.1.7 An appeal hearing will be scheduled within 90 days of an appeal form being submitted to the Academic Integrity Office. All appeals are heard by the Academic Integrity Appeals Board, a University Standing Committee appointed by the Provost.
- 9.1.8 All parties to an appeal have a right to review the written material concerning the appeal that is submitted to the Academic Integrity Office. All parties have the right to speak on their own behalf. All parties have the right to seek advice (in accordance with FERPA regulations) and schedule witnesses who may speak in their defense as long as they have direct information pertaining to the Academic Integrity Policy violation. Character witnesses are not permitted and will be dismissed by the Board.
- 9.1.9 Upon hearing the case, the Board, by majority vote of a quorum, must determine if the academic integrity penalty was appropriately assigned based on the preponderance of evidence presented by all parties to the case. If the Board determines that the grade was inappropriately assigned, the Board is authorized to change the grade to an Incomplete and to require the faculty member to reassess the student's academic work and submit a grade change.
- 9.1.10 The Academic Integrity Officer must inform all parties of the determination of the Academic Integrity Appeals Board within five working days of the hearing. The determination of the Academic Integrity Appeals Board is final and may not be further appealed except on procedural grounds.



- 9.1.11 The Academic Integrity Officer shall monitor the process and proceedings of the Academic Integrity Appeals Board. Either on his or her own initiative or after receiving a complaint from a party involved in an appeals hearing, the Academic Integrity Officer may vacate a decision if proper procedures were not followed and refer it back to the Academic Integrity Appeals Board for a rehearing. Decisions may be vacated only on procedural and not substantive grounds.
- 9.2 The appeal process described in this policy applies for grades earned for academic misconduct.
- 9.3 The Academic Integrity Appeals Board determines whether the charge of academic misconduct and the resulting penalty stand or whether the matter is returned to the faculty member to assign a grade based on the work completed.
- 9.4 Students wishing to appeal a grade that is unrelated to academic misconduct should use the grade appeal procedures described in the Grade Appeal Policy.

## **10.0 Hearing Procedures**

- 10.1 Although Board decisions must be based on a full and fair hearing of the preponderance of evidence, Board hearings are not courts of law and do not necessarily follow standard courtroom procedures.
  - 10.1.1 Students seeking to appeal an academic integrity violation penalty are encouraged to discuss an allegation with parents, guardians, legal counsel or any appropriate member of the University community.
  - 10.1.2 A student's legal counsel or other advisors may also be present at the hearing, and students may consult with them. However, there is no right of the accused to formal legal representation, and attorneys or other advisors may not directly or verbally participate in any enforcement proceedings.
- 10.2 In the event of an incapacitating illness, or some other documentable inability to represent him or herself, the student seeking an appeal or the faculty member whose grade is being appealed may choose, with the permission of the Academic Integrity Officer, another member of the University community as his/her surrogate during the proceedings.
  - 10.2.1 A surrogate must be either an employee of the University or a student currently enrolled in the University.

- 10.3 Parties to the appeal may elect not to attend the hearings, but an absence must not impede the progress of a hearing and submitted evidence can still be reviewed.
- 10.4 The panel should attempt to be reasonable in the accommodation of the student or faculty member's schedule and should not proceed in the event of his or her temporary, documented illness, unless a proxy has been appointed.

### **11.0 Duties of the General Faculty**

- 11.1 It is the responsibility of each member of the University faculty to disseminate the Academic Integrity Policy in course syllabi.

### **12.0 Responsibilities of the Entire University Community**

- 12.1 The ultimate success of the Academic Integrity Policy depends on the development of a culture of academic integrity defined by basic values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Because the requisite culture and values require considerable time, resources, and effort, the University community must commit to promoting academic integrity as a defining characteristic of this institution.

### **13.0 Student Awareness**

- 13.1 To ensure student awareness of the centrality of academic integrity to scholarship and the learning process, the University will set forth its Academic Integrity Policy in all appropriate official publications and in student and faculty orientation sessions.

### **14.0 Approval**

- 14.1 The University of Southern Mississippi Academic Integrity Policy has been submitted to the following bodies for consideration:

Student Government Association  
Faculty Senate  
Graduate Council  
Academic Council  
Council of Chairs  
Academic deans

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## **Review**

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The Provost is responsible for the review of this policy every four years (or whenever circumstances require immediate review).

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## **Forms/Instructions/Appendices**

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Appendix I: Implementation Plan

Appendix II: Academic Integrity Violation Appeal Instructions

Appendix III: Academic Integrity Violation Appeal Form

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## **Related Information/References**

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Portions of The University of Southern Mississippi Academic Integrity Policy were adapted from the following sources:

- Mississippi State University Student Honor Code:  
<http://www.honorcode.msstate.edu/pdf/honor-code.pdf>.
- University of California-Irvine, Manual of the Irvine Division of the Academic Senate, Part III -- Appendices of the Irvine Division; Appendix VIII UCI Academic Senate Policy on Academic Dishonesty:  
[http://www.senate.uci.edu/senateweb/default2.asp?active\\_page\\_id=754](http://www.senate.uci.edu/senateweb/default2.asp?active_page_id=754).
- The University of Mississippi Student Academic Conduct and Discipline:  
<https://secure4.olemiss.edu/umpolicyopen/ShowDetails.jsp?istatPara=1&policyObjidPara=10817696>.

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## **History**

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**New Policy Origination Date – November 12, 2014**

**Amendments: N/A**

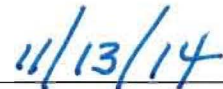
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## Authorization

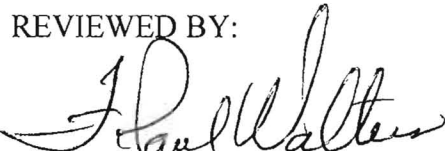
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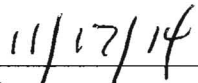
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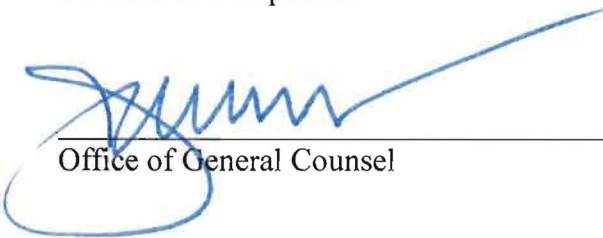
  
Responsible University Administrator

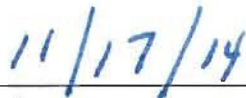
  
Date

REVIEWED BY:

  
Director of Compliance

  
Date

  
Office of General Counsel

  
Date

APPROVED:

  
President

  
Date

## **APPENDIX I: IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

### The Academic Integrity Officer and Appeals Board

The Provost will appoint an Academic Integrity Officer and the five-member Appeals Board. The Board will be a University Standing Committee.

### The Academic Integrity Policy Affirmation in SOAR

The Academic Integrity Officer will work with the University Registrar to develop a mechanism in SOAR to notify all students about the Academic Integrity Policy and to permit students to indicate that they have read and understood the policy when students attempt to enroll for the first time.

### Dissemination of the Academic Integrity Policy and Student Education

The Academic Integrity Officer will work with university personnel and the Student Government Association to ensure that the policy is included in all relevant university publications, to notify new and returning faculty about the policy, to provide support to faculty about how to reinforce academic integrity, and to educate students about the policy and about the importance of the values it represents.

### Academic Integrity Remediation Program

The Academic Integrity Officer will work with Universities Libraries to develop and administer the Academic Integrity Remediation Program. The program will be designed to notify the Academic Integrity Officer when a student successfully completes the training modules.

## APPENDIX II: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY VIOLATION APPEAL INSTRUCTIONS

### Introduction

A student who wishes to appeal a penalty for academic misconduct, including an XF grade, must complete the steps described below. An appeal can occur immediately following notification of a sanction for academic misconduct, but the student must initiate the appeal procedure within 30 school days (excluding Saturday, Sunday, and official student holidays) of the beginning of the semester subsequent to the one in which the grade was awarded, or 120 calendar days after the issuance of spring semester grades, should the student not be enrolled during the summer term. The appeal procedure is initiated when the student submits the Academic Integrity Violation Appeal Form to the Academic Integrity Office. (To appeal a grade unrelated to academic misconduct, the student must employ the standard grade appeal process.)

### Procedure

- Fill in the information that is requested at the top of the Appeal Form, attached.
- On a separate page to be attached to the Appeal Form, summarize your reasons for believing that the sanction was imposed in error.
- Meet with the instructor and the chair of the department in which the course was taught to review the facts of the case. Provide them with a copy of your summary. If the instructor is not a member of the University faculty at the time of the appeal, the student should meet with the chair. The student has a right to request written documentation of the Academic Integrity Policy violation. The Academic Integrity Violation Appeal Form should be signed by the instructor and chair to confirm meeting with the student unless the faculty member decides to rescind the XF grade.
- Submit the Appeal Form to the Academic Integrity Office. Within five working days, the Academic Integrity Office should contact all parties informing them that a formal appeal has been initiated. All parties must submit any written materials they intend to present to the Academic Integrity Appeals Board within 30 days of being notified of an appeal.

An appeal hearing will be scheduled within 90 days of an Appeal form being submitted to the Academic Integrity Office.

**APPENDIX III: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY VIOLATION APPEAL FORM**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ LOCAL TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_ ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CLASS: [ ] Freshman [ ] Sophomore [ ] Junior [ ] Senior [ ] Graduate Student

MAJOR \_\_\_\_\_ ADVISOR \_\_\_\_\_

COURSE \_\_\_\_\_  
(Course Prefix, Section, Title)

SEMESTER FOR WHICH THE SANCTION WAS IMPOSED \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTOR \_\_\_\_\_

SANCTION \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions: The student and instructor should sign the Appeal Form below once they have met to discuss the academic integrity violation penalty. The signatures below only indicate that a meeting has taken place to discuss the penalty. The student and instructor should each attach a summary of the incident leading to the penalty.

The chair should sign the Appeal Form below once he or she has met with the student and instructor. The chair's signature only indicates that the meetings have taken place to discuss the penalty. The chair may attach comments concurring with the imposition of a penalty for violating the Academic Integrity Policy or supporting the student's appeal.

STUDENT SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

INSTRUCTOR SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_

CHAIR SIGNATURE \_\_\_\_\_