



## *Guidelines/Procedures*

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**SUBJECT:** Academic Integrity and Disciplinary Process

**Guideline/Procedure for AR#:** [1.04.006](#)

**Date Effective:** 11/02/2012; amended 10/03/14

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### **Value Statement**

Austin Community College values academic integrity in the educational process. Acts of academic dishonesty/misconduct undermine the learning process, present a disadvantage to students who earn credit honestly, and subvert the academic mission of the institution. The potential consequences of fraudulent credentials raise additional concerns for individuals and communities beyond campus who rely on institutions of higher learning to certify students' academic achievements, and expect to benefit from the claimed knowledge and skills of their graduates.

### **Purpose**

The Academic Integrity and Disciplinary Process is established to foster and protect one of the core missions of the College, which is to assess and certify students' academic achievements. When assignments and exams reflect honest efforts and legitimate accomplishments, the academic progress of those students can be measured accurately and, in turn, any credentials awarded to them can reliably and fully attest to their actual academic achievements.

### **Application of the Rule**

The Academic Integrity and Disciplinary Process is a part of the Student Standards of Conduct and Disciplinary Process ([AR 1.04.006](#)) which applies to the on-campus conduct of all students. The code also applies to the off-campus conduct of students in direct connection with:

1. Academic course requirements or any credit-bearing experiences, such as internships, field trips, study abroad, or student teaching, research at other institutions or professional practice assignments;

The Academic Integrity and Disciplinary Process governs students enrolled at all College campuses, centers, and in distance learning courses. A student alleged to have engaged in acts of academic dishonesty/misconduct is not permitted to withdraw from a course or from the College until allegation(s) are resolved.

President/CEO: Richard M. Rhodes Date: 04/22/15

Students continue to be subject to federal, state, and local laws, and violations of those laws may also constitute violations of the Academic Integrity and Disciplinary Process in the Student Standards of Conduct and Disciplinary Process ([AR 1.04.006](#)). In such instances, the College may proceed with disciplinary measures independent of any legal proceeding that involves the same violation. The College may also impose sanctions independently of legal authorities, even if the legal proceedings are not yet resolved, or are resolved in the student's favor.

### **Student Rights**

1. Students have the right to receive a detailed course syllabus within the first week of class. Each syllabus should include course policies, instructor expectations, instructor office hours and location, instructor contact information, and grading requirements.
2. Students have the right to receive a clear explanation of proper documentation in research assignments/projects, including, but not limited to, a definition of plagiarism.
3. Students have the right to timely academic evaluation that is fair and consistent.
4. Students have the right to engage respectfully and appropriately in the free and open expression of ideas and opinions.
5. Students alleged to have engaged in acts of academic dishonesty/misconduct have the right to due process in the resolution of the allegation.

### **Prohibited Conduct**

Any student found to have engaged, or attempted to engage, in any of the following conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action as set forth in these Guidelines. An *attempted* violation shall be defined as conduct that, if successful, would constitute or result in the prohibited conduct.

#### **1. Academic Misconduct**

Academic misconduct refers to any activity that compromises academic integrity or subverts the educational process, including but not limited to the following:

- A. Violation of rules contained in the course syllabus;
- B. Violation of College rules regarding the use of academic facilities, including labs and testing centers;
- C. Using or providing unauthorized information during exams;
- D. Using or providing unauthorized materials or devices during exams;
- E. Using or providing unauthorized assistance in labs, on field work, in scholarship, or on a course assignment;
- F. Submitting plagiarized work for an academic assignment or requirement;
- G. Falsification, fabrication, or dishonesty in creating or reporting laboratory or research results;
- H. Falsification, fabrication, or dishonesty in creating any assignment;
- I. Serving as, or enlisting the assistance of, a substitute for a student in any assignment, exam or course requirement;
- J. Alteration of grades in an effort to change the earned or assigned grade or credit;
- K. Alteration or unauthorized use of academic records or forms; and
- L. Engaging in activities that unfairly place other students at a disadvantage, such as taking, hiding, or altering resource materials.

## **Disciplinary Actions and Due Process for Academic Misconduct**

### **1. Reporting violations**

All members of the College community are ethically bound to report suspected violations of academic dishonesty. Cases of suspected academic dishonesty should be reported to one or more of the following College officials:

- A. the instructor;
- B. the department chair;
- C. the instructional dean; or
- D. the campus Dean of Student Services

If the complaint is received by an official other than the instructor, the official who receives the complaint should forward the complaint to the instructor as soon as possible.

When an instructor suspects or witnesses a violation of academic integrity, or receives a report of an alleged violation, the instructor shall notify the department chair, and meet privately and individually with the accused student(s) to discuss the allegations and review the supporting evidence. The student may not withdraw from the course or the College during the disciplinary review process.

### **2. Resolution/penalties**

In consultation with the department chair, the instructor may resolve the matter in one or more of the following ways:

- A. Dismissing the allegation;
- B. Issuing a written warning that further violations may result in additional penalties;
- C. Requiring the student to revise or replace the work in which the violation occurred;
- D. A reduction in the grade on the work in question;
- E. A failing grade on the work in question;
- F. A failing grade or other denial of credit in the course; and
- G. Recommending disciplinary sanctions to the Dean of Student Services.

Within 5 (five) business days of the meeting with the student, the instructor shall provide written notification of the resolution to the student, the department chair, the instructional dean, for informational purposes, and to the Dean of Student Services, for possible disciplinary action.

Due process will not be delayed because a faculty member is off-contract. In the event that the accusing faculty member is unable to participate in the investigation and/or appeal, the department chair or dean will represent the interests of the faculty member.

Multiple offenses of academic dishonesty will result in progressively more severe disciplinary sanctions up to and including expulsion from the College.

### **3. Appeals**

A student found to be in violation of academic integrity has the right to appeal the instructor's decision(s). Appeals must be made in writing to the instructional Department Chair, within 10 (ten) business days following notification of the Instructor's decision(s). The appeal must state the specific grounds for appeal and should include all supporting documentation. Students have the right to appeal only once for each academic integrity violation. Students are encouraged to

meet with a College counseling faculty member to explore options prior to submitting an appeal.

Within 7 (seven) business days of receipt of a student's written appeal, the Department Chair, in consultation with the instructional dean, shall request that the Vice President of Instruction convene an Academic Integrity Appeals Panel hearing.

#### **4. Academic Integrity Appeals Panel hearing**

##### **Composition of the Academic Integrity Review Panel**

The Panel will be composed of seven members, appointed by the Vice President of Instruction, as follows:

- A. an instructional dean, who will serve as Panel chair;
- B. a Student Services dean;
- C. four faculty members, including at least one from outside the instructional area; and
- D. one Student Government Association member

Members of the Academic Integrity Appeals Panel cannot be involved in, nor have direct knowledge of, the case or the accused.

##### **Hearing Procedures**

The Academic Integrity Appeals Panel hearing is closed to the public. The instructor and the accused student will each present evidence to support their respective positions.

A student will be found by the hearing panel in violation if the evidence supports the charge(s). If, after exhaustive deliberations, the review panel cannot reach a majority decision, the student will be found not in violation. A written notice of the decision will be provided to the accused student and the faculty member within 5 business days of the Academic Integrity Review Panel Hearing. The Panel's decision is final.

#### **5. Attendance and Postponement of Disciplinary Review Panel Hearing**

The student who has been charged with a violation may request a postponement of the hearing for reasonable cause. Because the most accurate and fair review of the facts can best be accomplished when both parties (student and instructor) are present, the accused student is expected to attend and to participate. If the student chooses not to attend the hearing, the charges will be reviewed as scheduled on the basis of the information available, and a decision will be made. Although no inference may be drawn against a student for failing to attend, or for remaining silent, the hearing will proceed and the conclusion will be based on the evidence presented. No decision shall be based solely on the failure of the student to attend or participate.

#### **6. Sanctions**

For a student found to have engaged in Academic Misconduct, the Academic Integrity Review Panel may uphold the sanction(s) imposed by the instructor and may recommend that the appropriate Dean of Student Services impose one or more of the following sanctions:

- A. Suspension;
- B. Expulsion from the College; or
- C. Denial or revocation of degree or other credential.

**7. Record of proceedings**

A single record consisting of written notes, electronic recordings, or other method selected by Panel chair, will be made of all hearings. Such record will remain the property of the College, but will be made available to the accused for review during any appeal period.

- 8.** It is the responsibility of the Academic Integrity Review Panel chairperson to send written notification to the student, the faculty member and the College Registrar of any grade change resulting from the Panel's decision.

**Confidentiality and Records Retention**

Records of violations of the Student Standards of Academic Integrity may be shared with College officials who have a legitimate interest in the case. These records will be retained in accordance with the Texas Records Retention Law and other applicable laws. Except in cases of legally sanctioned requests, student records may be disclosed outside the College only with the student's signed consent.