

UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS
BOARD POLICY

Policy Number: 709

Subject: Academic Integrity

Date Adopted: 02/10 Revised: 02/13, 05/14, 12/20

A. Academic Integrity

The mission of the University of Central Arkansas commits all members of the university community to acquiring, sharing, evaluating, and communicating knowledge. Such a commitment includes an expectation of academic integrity, an organizational and individual commitment to honesty and responsibility in teaching and learning. By their affiliation with the University of Central Arkansas, all members of the university community are committed to shared responsibility for maintaining the highest standards of academic integrity. Although this policy focuses on academic integrity in course-related work, its basis and context is the commitment made by the entire university community.

B. Academic Misconduct

Violation of the expectation of academic integrity is academic misconduct. Examples of misconduct commonly identified by universities include but are not limited to those listed here (definitions are quoted from the *Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary*, 1999 ed.):

- *Cheating*: to cheat is, in an academic context, “to take an examination or test in a dishonest way, as by improper access to answers.” Cheating may also occur in the context of other academic assignments.
- *Plagiarism*: “the unauthorized use or close imitation of the language and thoughts of another author and the representation of them as one's own original work.” This concept may apply to any kind of intellectual property.
- *Fabrication*: to fabricate is, in this context, “to fake; forge (a document, signature, etc.).” Fabrication is commonly associated with the falsified research findings.

Other forms of academic misconduct may include unauthorized collaboration or submitting the same paper or portions of the same paper to two different courses without the consent of both instructors. The university will provide extensive publicly accessible examples of and information about forms of academic misconduct (see section C, below).

The university's academic integrity policy applies to all students enrolled in courses at the University of Central Arkansas. All forms of academic misconduct at the University of Central Arkansas will be regarded as serious.

C. Requirement to Inform Students

UCA will discuss the academic integrity policy during new student orientation for freshmen, transfer, and graduate students each fall semester. Beginning in fall 2010, first-year freshman students will be required to participate in an official orientation program.

The Divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Services will collaborate in publishing information about academic integrity and misconduct, with explanations and examples intended to help students make informed decisions about how they conduct themselves in their academic work, including the use and presentation of information.

Beginning in the fall semester 2010, every course syllabus, including those for courses offered by distance education, must include the following language: "The University of Central Arkansas affirms its commitment to academic integrity and expects all members of the university community to accept shared responsibility for maintaining academic integrity. Students in this course are subject to the provisions of the University's Academic Integrity Policy, approved by the Board of Trustees as Board Policy No. 709 on February 10, 2010, and published in the *Student Handbook*. Penalties for academic misconduct in this course may include a failing grade on an assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Continued enrollment in this course affirms a student's acceptance of this university policy." An instructor may include in the course syllabus additional information about academic integrity if he/she wishes to do so.

D. Notification of Charge of Academic Misconduct

In the event an instructor determines that a student has engaged in academic misconduct, the instructor will notify the student of the allegation and the basis on which it is made and inform him/her of the action or sanction the instructor deems appropriate, consistent with the terms of section E of this policy.

The university registrar will provide a form to be used by instructors in reporting allegations of academic misconduct.

E. Penalties for Academic Misconduct

1. Each instructor will decide on a case-by-case basis what penalty will be given to the student for his/her academic misconduct; such penalty may include a failing grade on the assignment, a failing grade in the course, or any other course-related sanction the instructor determines to be appropriate. Depending on the nature of the misconduct and the context in which it occurs, other penalties may be appropriate; additional penalties, if any, will be recommended by the instructor in consultation with the department chair.

The instructor will submit the signed Academic Integrity Violation form to the department chair as notification of the allegation and penalty/penalties. The chair confirms the allegation by signing the form and submitting it to the university registrar for recording (the “official allegation”).

2. Using the student’s preferred email address listed in Banner, the department chair will inform the student of his/her right to appeal. Within 10 working days of the department chair’s notification, the student has a right to appeal the decision through the procedures set forth below.

Institutional Penalties

Institutional responses to allegations of misconduct fall into two categories: (1) automatic penalties based on an official allegation and (2) additional penalties that will result if the student is not exonerated. The institutional responses seek both to educate and reprimand students while promoting academic integrity. These responses vary based on student classification, previous infractions, and their outcome.

All official allegations against a student, whether undergraduate or graduate, made by the instructor and confirmed by the department chair, will be maintained in a permanent electronic record by the registrar. Similarly, every official allegation made by the instructor and confirmed by the department chair, may result in course-related sanctions determined by the instructor. Other penalties may apply on a first infraction, based on the nature and context of the misconduct. Penalties will escalate on further infractions.

The following escalating consequences apply to *undergraduate students*:

- Second infraction
 - Automatic additional penalties: completion of compulsory Academic Integrity course or workshop as determined by the university to be completed within 45 calendar days of notification of the requirement to complete the course or workshop by the registrar or a registration hold will be placed on the student’s file. The cost of this course/workshop will be paid by the student and charged to their student account.
 - Additional penalty, if not exonerated: meeting with administrator (dean or designee).
- Third infraction
 - Additional penalty, if not exonerated: referral to Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee for possible university sanction (e.g., probation, suspension, expulsion)

- Subsequent infractions
 - Automatic additional penalty: referral to Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee for university sanction (e.g., probation, suspension, expulsion)

The following escalating consequences apply to *graduate students*:

- First infraction
 - Automatic additional penalties: (1) completion of compulsory Academic Integrity course or workshop as determined by the university to be completed within 45 calendar days of notification of the requirement to complete the course or workshop by the registrar or a registration hold will be placed on the student's file; the cost of this course/workshop will be paid by the student and charged to his or her student account; (2) meeting with graduate dean.
- Second infraction
 - Automatic additional penalty: referral to Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee for university sanction (e.g., probation, suspension, expulsion).

Third infraction

- Automatic additional penalty: expulsion from the Graduate School.

F. Academic Misconduct File

All documentation relevant to a student's academic misconduct will be maintained in both electronic and paper files. The electronic files will be created and housed in the Office of the Registrar, based on documentation submitted by a department and, if applicable, developed in an appeal process. Hard paper copies will reside on file in the office of the college dean or administrator in whose college/division the alleged misconduct occurred. Academic misconduct files shall only be used by non-student university employees as necessary in the case of an appeal. If the student makes a formal appeal, it will be decided in accordance with the procedures set forth below.

G. Appeals Process

A student may appeal the charge of academic misconduct and any sanctions or actions taken by the instructor through the procedures set forth below, beginning at the department level and proceeding to the university level if necessary.

1. Appeals at the Department/College Level

- a. The instructor will advise the student of an accusation of academic misconduct and the penalties to be applied. Within 10 working days of receiving this information and the chair's notification of his/her right to appeal (see E.2), a student may meet informally with the instructor to attempt to resolve the matter.
- b. If the student is not satisfied with the action of the instructor, then within 10 working days of the meeting with the instructor, the student may submit a formal written appeal to the department chair. Within 10 working days of receipt of the written appeal, the chair will meet with the student to attempt to resolve the matter.
- c. If the student is not satisfied with the action of the department chair, then within 10 working days of the meeting with the department chair, the student may submit a formal written appeal to the dean of the appropriate college, with copies to the instructor and the department chair.
- d. Within 10 working days of receipt of the written appeal, the instructor and department chair must submit the following materials to the dean of the college: a description of the academic misconduct and any penalties assigned, and all pertinent documentation concerning the academic misconduct. The dean of the college may ask for additional documentation from the student's academic misconduct file if such documentation exists.
- e. Within 10 working days of receipt of the appeal, the dean of the college will submit a written decision to the student with copies to the instructor and to the department chair. The dean of the college will forward the written decision and documentation to the university registrar for the permanent electronic record and retain all pertinent documentation regarding the academic misconduct in the student's academic misconduct file.

2. Appeals at the University Level

- a. If not satisfied with the action of the dean of the college, the student may submit, within 10 working days after receiving notice of the decision, a written appeal to the dean of students for referral to the Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee. Any appeal of course grade as a result of sanctions will follow the procedures outlined in this policy rather than the grade appeal process.
- b. Within 10 working days of receipt of the student's appeal, the dean of students will refer the appeal to the Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee for a hearing and inform the instructor, department chair, college dean, dean of students, and, as appropriate, the graduate dean. The composition of the committee and the procedures to be followed are set forth in Section H below.

c. The committee will submit the report of the hearing and the recommendations of the committee to the provost and vice president for student services. The provost and the vice president for student services may choose appropriate designees to act on their behalf. The provost and vice president for student services (or designees) will render the final decision after considering the recommendations and report of the Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee. The provost and vice president for student services (or designees) will send a report of the final decision to the student, instructor, department chair, college dean, dean of students, and, when appropriate, the graduate dean. The report, along with the written recommendation of the committee and any additional documentation developed in the appeals process, is forwarded to the university Registrar for completion of the Banner record and permanent electronic archiving.

H. Procedures for the Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee

The following procedures apply to the Academic Integrity and Discipline Committee when it is reviewing cases of academic misconduct.

1. The dean of students will give the committee a copy of the appeal and all pertinent documentation regarding the charge of academic misconduct. Copies of the appeal will also be sent to the instructor, department chair, college dean, dean of students, and, when appropriate, the graduate dean.
2. Academic integrity hearings require a quorum, which will be met when 50% plus one of the committee members are present with at least one appointee from the staff, the faculty, and the Student Government Association present. Decisions must be reached by a majority of the members present. The chair may cast a deciding vote in the event of a tie. The number of yes, no, and abstention votes will be recorded without designating individual votes.
3. The student, instructor, department chair, and the relevant deans will be entitled to five working days' notice of the date, time, and place of hearing.
4. After the committee considers the matters referred to it by the dean of students, the student and instructor may present relevant witnesses and documentary evidence. The committee will accept all oral testimony and documentation that it feels to be relevant and material to the issue. The chair has the power to rule on the admissibility of the evidence and on the relevance of questions. The responsibility for questioning witnesses, securing evidence, and determining the degree of proof will be vested in the committee.
5. Strict judicial rules of evidence will not be applied. The student, the instructor, the department chair, and the appropriate deans may be accompanied by an advisor, who may be an attorney. The university general counsel may be present to advise the committee. An attorney will not be provided at university expense. Advisors will only

function in an advisory capacity; they will not address the committee, question witnesses, or otherwise actively participate in the hearing.

6. The student and the instructor (and advisors), the department chair, the college dean, the dean of students, and the graduate dean, when appropriate, may be present at any time testimony is presented and be provided copies of all evidence considered by the committee. If any person is unable to attend, that person may submit written information on his/her behalf.
7. The office of the college dean or administrator in whose unit the alleged misconduct occurred will retain and secure copies of all evidence considered by the committee.
8. A copy of the minutes and the committee's recommendation will be provided to the student, the instructor, the department chair, the college dean, dean of students, the graduate dean (when appropriate), the vice president for student services, and the provost within 10 working days of the final meeting of the committee.
9. Within 10 working days of receipt of the committee's recommendation, the provost and the vice president for student services, or their designees, will render a final decision. The provost and the vice president for student services, or their designees, will give the student, the instructor, the department chair, the college dean, and, when appropriate, the graduate dean written notice of the final decision. The report, along with the written recommendation of the committee and any additional documentation developed in the appeals process, is forwarded to the university registrar for completion of the Banner record and permanent electronic archiving.