

OWENS COMMUNITY COLLEGE
PROCEDURES

Academic Misconduct Procedures

Board Policy No.: 3358:11-2-55

PROCEDURES:

Academic Misconduct at Owens Community College is defined as an action, attempted or performed, which misrepresents one's involvement in an academic task in any way, or permits another student to misrepresent the latter's involvement in an academic task by assisting in the misrepresentation. Primary responsibility for academic truth and honesty rests with the individual student.

In spite of increased use of collaborative learning and other forms of group work (e.g., labs, study groups, group projects, etc.), it is very important that each student remain accountable for his/her own work whether in individual, group, or virtual settings. Lack of intent shall not be a defense against a charge of violating academic misconduct; that is, it shall not be necessary to prove intent for a person to be in violation of the policy.

The College recognizes that the vast majority of students at Owens maintain high ethical academic standards; however, failure to abide by the prohibitions listed herein is considered academic misconduct and will be entered into the student's disciplinary record. A determination regarding the dishonest academic practice should, in most cases, be made by the individual instructor.

Personal Responsibility

Academic integrity is a cumulative process that begins with the first college learning opportunity. It is recognized by the College that the primary responsibility for academic honesty and conduct are with the individual student. However, instructors shall take reasonable steps to discourage academic misconduct and encourage honest scholarship while informing students of course-specific requirements. Students are responsible for knowing the Academic Misconduct policy and procedures and may not use ignorance of either as an excuse for academic misconduct.

Definitions

Academic misconduct is dishonest or unethical behavior that includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is presenting work, words, ideas, theories, etc. derived in whole or in part from a source external to the student as though they are the student's own efforts. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited, to the following:

- a. Failing to use proper citations as acknowledgment of the true source of information included in a paper, written or oral examination, or any other academic exercise. This can include submitting an entire paper downloaded from a website or another source, copying and pasting parts of different papers to form the term paper, failing to put quotes around exact wording used from another source, and failing to appropriately reference ideas from another person.
- b. Presenting any work completed in whole or in part by any individual or group other than the student, as though the work is the student's own, in any academic exercise.
- c. Work copied with only a few words altered from the original without proper credit being given.
- d. Buying, selling, bartering, or in any other fashion obtaining or distributing material to be used fraudulently as part of any academic exercise.

Faculty members are responsible for informing students of appropriate formats for handling quotations, footnotes, endnotes, and bibliographic references. (i.e., APA or MLA)

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2. Carelessness

Students sometimes make minor mistakes in completing academic assignments. Mistyping one of many endnotes in a long paper, for example, may in most cases be considered a careless mistake, rather than an act of deliberate dishonesty.

When students make multiple mistakes in acknowledging sources, however, these mistakes cannot be considered simply careless. Students who copy long passages from a book or a Web source, for example, make a deliberate choice to do so. Such students have taken a short cut; instead of explaining the source of their ideas, they have simply stolen ideas from others. In such cases, carelessness is a form of academic misconduct.

3. Cheating

Soliciting, disseminating or receiving answers, data, or other information by any means other than those expressly permitted by the instructor as part of any academic exercise. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited, to the following:

- a. Copying answers, data or other information (or allowing others to do so) during an examination, quiz, laboratory experiment, or any other academic exercise in which the student is not expressly permitted to work jointly with others.
- b. Assuming another individual's identity or allowing another person to do so on one's own behalf for the purpose of fulfilling any academic requirement or in any way enhancing the student's grade or academic standing.
- c. Using any device, implement, or other form of study aid during an examination, quiz, laboratory experiment, or any other academic exercise without the faculty member's permission.
- d. Gaining access to examinations prior to the exam time or the extraction of information regarding an examination from other students.

4. Multiple Submission

The submission of substantial portions of the same work (including oral reports) for credit more than once without authorization. Examples of multiple submissions include, but are not limited, to the following:

Submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without the faculties' permission; making revisions in a credit paper or report (including oral presentations) and submitting it as if it were new work. Different aspects of the same work may receive separate credit; e.g., a report in history may receive credit for its content in a history course and for the quality of presentation in a speech course.

5. Complicity/Solicitation

Helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic misconduct. Examples of complicity include, but are not limited, to the following:

Allowing another to copy from one's paper during an examination or test; distributing test questions or substantive information about the materials to be tested ; collaborating on academic work knowing that the collaboration is not authorized and will not be reported; taking an examination or test for another student, or signing another's name on an academic exercise, or soliciting answers or assistance in an academic exercise online.

6. Fabrication

Inventing or falsifying information. Examples of fabrication include inventing data for an experiment was not conducted or was not conducted correctly, making reference to sources were not use in a research paper, etc.

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7. Abuse of academic materials

Harming, appropriating or disabling academic resources so that others cannot use them. This includes cutting tables and illustrations out of books to use in a paper, stealing books or articles, deleting or damaging computer files intended for others' use, etc.

8. Deception and/or misrepresentation

Lying about or misrepresenting work, academic records or credentials. Examples of deception and misrepresentation include forging signatures, forging letters of recommendation and falsifying credentials in an application. Of particular concern, given the current popularity of collaborative projects, is taking credit for group work but not contributing or meeting assigned obligations. Each student should be responsible to obtaining clear instructions on individual and collective responsibilities from each faculty member for each course.

9. Electronic dishonesty

Using network access inappropriately, in a way that affects a class or other students' academic work. Examples of electronic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, using someone else's authorized computer account to send and receive messages, breaking into someone else's files, gaining access to restricted files, disabling others' access to network systems or files, knowingly spreading a computer virus or obtaining a computer account under false pretenses, etc.

10. Other types of academic misconduct

The list above is a partial one not intended to be fully exhaustive of all potential instances of academic misconduct. Instructors may explain in their syllabi other types of academic dishonesty relevant to the work in particular disciplines or particular courses or may identify cases of academic misconduct not herein contemplated.

Processes for Academic Misconduct Adjudication

1. Administrative Conference (informal process)

Step 1. When the instructor of record (or designee instructor) believes that an act of misconduct has occurred, the instructor immediately notifies the chair of their department. The instructor is responsible for saving the evidence in its original form and need not return any of the original papers or other materials to the student. Copies of the student's work and information about other evidence will be provided to the student upon request.

Step 2. The Department Chair notifies the Dean of Student Life, which triggers the notification and record keeping process.

Step 3. The instructor conducts an inquiry (if applicable) into the alleged misconduct, which may include, but is not limited to, meeting with students, reviewing documentation, interviewing witnesses, etc.

Step 4. The student is notified of the alleged academic misconduct and provided with the option of a meeting to respond to the claim of academic misconduct.

Step 5. Based on the inquiry (if applicable), the instructor determines if a violation of academic misconduct has occurred.

- If it is determined that no violation has occurred, or if the findings are inconclusive, the case is closed.
- If it is determined that a violation of academic misconduct has occurred, the instructor determines a sanction (See section on Sanctions). The student is notified in writing.

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Step 6. Upon learning of the instructor's findings, the student may decide to appeal or not appeal the findings. (See Page 5 on Appeals)

If Student does not Appeal a Finding

- If the student does not appeal the findings, s/he acknowledges the findings and the sanction(s). By doing so, the student forfeits the right to an appeal.

Note: A student's non-response shall be considered the student's decision not to appeal the findings/sanctions.

If a Student Appeals a Finding (See section on Appeals)

2. Hearing (formal process)

In cases of severe academic misconduct or a third violation, the department chair will notify the Dean of Student Life.

Step 1. Once department chair and Dean of Student Life agree that the alleged violation represents a severe act of academic misconduct or the accused student is being charged with academic misconduct for the third time at Owens, the Dean of Student Life schedules a hearing and convenes a Community Standards Board.

Step 2. The Community Standards Board conducts the hearing, under the direction of the Dean of Student Life or designee (according to Section 16D of the Student Code of Conduct System Process).

Note: A student has the right to decline participation in a hearing. By doing so, the student consents to the findings/sanctions as determined by the Dean of Student Life. In most cases, the student will be required to sign a form waiving the right to a hearing.

Step 3. Upon completion of the hearing process, the student may appeal or not appeal the findings/sanction of the Community Standards Board.

If a Student does not Appeal a Finding

- If the student does not appeal the findings, s/he receives a letter from the Dean of Student Life with findings/sanction(s). Sanctions are final.

Note: A student's non-response shall be considered the student's decision not to appeal the findings/sanctions.

If a Student Appeals a Finding (See section Appeals)

Appeals

Students have the right to appeal an academic misconduct decision. An appeal may be sought on the following three grounds and must be specifically described:

1. On a claim of error in the hearing procedure that substantially affected the decision;
2. On a claim of new evidence or information material to the case that was not known at the time of the hearing; and/or
3. On a claim that the sanction(s) is not in proportion to the severity of the misconduct

In cases involving an **administrative conference (informal process)**, an appeal must be made, in writing, to the Office of the academic dean in the school where the misconduct occurred within seven (7) business days of the announcement of findings/sanction. The letter of appeal must specifically describe the grounds with which the appeal is being sought. The academic dean (or designee) has the authority to dismiss an appeal not sought on proper grounds. If the academic dean (or designee) determines that the asserted grounds for appeal are valid, the academic dean (or designee) may uphold, dismiss, or modify the sanctions of the instructor/department chair. The decision of the academic dean (or designee) is final.

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In cases involving a *hearing (formal process)*, an appeal must be made, in writing, to the Office of the Provost within seven (7) business days of the announcement of findings/sanction. The letter of appeal must specifically describe the grounds with which the appeal is being sought. The Provost (or designee) has the authority to dismiss an appeal not sought on proper grounds. If the Provost (or designee) determines that the asserted grounds for appeal are valid, the Provost (or designee) may uphold, dismiss, or modify the sanctions of the Community Standards Board. The decision of the Provost (or designee) is final.

Sanctions

Typically, a student found responsible for academic misconduct violations will be sanctioned as follows:

1. **First Offense (minor violation)** – student will be assigned a grade of “zero” for the particular assignment, exam, project, paper, etc. on which the misconduct occurred. The instructor also may require the student to demonstrate mastery of the objectives of the particular assignment, exam, project, paper, etc.
2. **First Offense (severe or egregious violation)** – Student will be assigned a zero grade for the assignment and is subject to suspension or expulsion.
3. **Second Offense (minor violation)** – Student will receive a failing grade for the course.
4. **Second Offense (severe or egregious violation)** – Student will receive a failing grade for the course and is subject to suspension or expulsion.
5. **Third Offense (regardless of level of severity)** – If found responsible, typically the student will be suspended for the remainder of the current semester and the next full semester. Student must apply for readmission, which is not guaranteed. Upon readmission, any subsequent academic misconduct violation in which the student is found responsible will result in expulsion from the College.

NOTE: The College reserves the right to determine a sanction, or any combination of sanctions, that appropriately address the nature and severity of the act of misconduct.

These procedures were reviewed by the Academic Standards Committee for implementation through the Office of the Provost.

Any changes to the procedures must be submitted to the Board Secretary for President’s Cabinet review.

These procedures conform to the POLICY approved by the Board of Trustees on May 3, 2011, and said policy has been filed with the State of Ohio Electronic Rule Filing with the policy effective date of May 14, 2011.

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