

## Academic Integrity Code and Review Procedures

(adapted from the academic integrity policies and procedures of Villanova University) [9-28-11]

The academic purpose of attending college is to pursue knowledge and truth, a purpose wholeheartedly embraced by St. Augustine in his own intellectual life. The collegial pursuit of knowledge and truth depends on cooperation and trust between student and teacher, among students, and between the student and the college. This pursuit involves learning methods of research and writing whereby such knowledge and truth are both learned and subsequently conveyed through competencies and skills acquired through academic study.

Academic integrity is fundamental to creating and maintaining an atmosphere of cooperation and trust. It is thus a concern for everyone in the college community. The academic integrity code below is designed to help students understand what is not permissible in their academic and intellectual lives at the college. It seeks to protect students from unintentional acts of dishonesty and to preserve the trust inherent in the student-teacher relationship, which is compromised if suspicion arises regarding the integrity of a student's work. The code is also designed to inform students of the rules which will be used to judge academic integrity infractions.

### Academic Integrity Code

In the broadest sense, academic dishonesty results from any attempt to gain an unfair advantage over others. The following definitions and examples are meant to guide you as students in the matter of avoiding academic dishonesty in your studies at the college. The code is also designed to inform you of the rules which will be used to judge academic integrity infractions.

#### **Cheating**

While taking a test, quiz, or examination, you must rely on your own mastery of the subject and not attempt to receive help in any way not explicitly approved by the instructor. For example, students cannot use books, notes, study aids, assistance from electronic devices, or another's work without the instructor's permission.

Trying to take someone else's examination or trying to have someone else take your own examination is prohibited, as is lying about a class absence or about the need for an extension on a paper or exam, claiming that an exam or paper has been submitted but lost by the instructor, or changing exam answers after the exam has been returned. Obtaining, in advance, specific questions on any test, quiz, or examination not authorized by the instructor is likewise prohibited. Similarly, purchasing a term paper or copying another student's work and submitting it in whole or in part as your own are prohibited and constitute plagiarism (see below).

*Team or collaborative projects, however, where students are told by their instructor to work together and the submission represents joint effort, are permissible.*

### **Fabrication**

You must not falsify, invent, alter, or use in a deliberately misleading way any information, data, or citations in any assignment. For example, making up or changing data or results or relying on someone else's results in an experiment or lab assignment is prohibited, as is citing sources that either don't exist or have not been actually used or consulted.

### **Complicity**

You must not help or attempt to help another student commit an act of academic dishonesty as, for example, allowing another student to cheat from your exam or assignment or helping another student on a take-home exam.

*This prohibition does not apply to team projects where students are directed by their instructor to work together.*

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is intellectual theft. At Merrimack, the failure to acknowledge the intellectual contributions of others is considered plagiarism. It is important to avoid even unintentional plagiarism by being familiar with accepted ways to acknowledge sources and by developing good note-taking and research habits. The explanations and examples below are designed to help you avoid plagiarism.

The most common way to acknowledge the reliance or indebtedness to someone else's work is to provide footnotes, end-notes, in-text citations, or other documentation. Commonplace knowledge such as well-known dates, proverbs, or colloquial expressions seldom require documentation, but you should consult your instructor or cite the source if you are in doubt. In general, the harder it would be for someone to find the fact you have mentioned, the more likely you need to acknowledge its source. It is your responsibility to show clearly when and where you are relying on others, in part because your readers may wish to learn from the same sources you have used.

Since the internet has made information so readily available and the indebtedness of students to sources of many kinds raises issues of how best to handle sources, the following instructions are meant to be helpful in avoiding plagiarism. They are not, however, a substitute for instructions from your particular teachers.

- It's plagiarism if you use someone else's words without acknowledgement. If you use someone else's words, not only must you give the source, but you must also put these words in quotation marks or use some other appropriate means of indicating that the words are not your own. This

requirement applies to spoken as well as written words and mathematical formulations, whether or not they have been formally published.

- It's plagiarism if you use someone else's ideas, facts, data, or arguments without acknowledgement, even if the words you use are your own. If you use someone else's examples, reasoning, or experimental results, you must acknowledge that use. Paraphrasing, summarizing, or rearranging someone else's words, ideas, or results does not alter your indebtedness to the source, which must be acknowledged.
- It's plagiarism if you acknowledge someone in a way that will lead a reader or listener to think your indebtedness is less than it actually was. If you use a whole paragraph worth of ideas from a source and include as your final sentence a quotation from that source, for example, you must indicate that your indebtedness includes more than just the quotation. If you simply put a page number after the quotation, you will lead your reader to think that only the quotation comes from the source. Instead, make clear that you have used more than the quotation.

Since online information is so readily available and cut-and-paste procedures are so easy to use, you must understand and use accepted techniques for citing internet sources and must be particularly on guard not to claim authorship of any idea or words of another. Since many internet sources do not include an author's name, it is easy to assume that the work is part of the public domain and may be used without acknowledgement. This is not the case. All work taken from another must be acknowledged. The same rules apply to citing internet sources as apply to citing print sources, but the form of the citations may differ. Information on how and when to properly cite sources is available from your instructor. You can also seek help from staff in McQuade Library or visit the library's webpage: "How to Cite Sources," <http://libguides.merrimack.edu/content.php?pid=117804>. Help is also available at the Writing Center located in McQuade Library.

The words or ideas of a roommate or tutor or of an encyclopedia, or notes from another class all require acknowledgement. Introductions and notes from books also require acknowledgement. Speak with your instructor about the best way to handle such acknowledgements for your particular class.

- It's still plagiarism if you use unacknowledged material accidentally or even unintentionally. Avoiding plagiarism begins with good note-taking, research, and essay-drafting habits. Take careful notes on sources, keeping track of these sources throughout the various stages of the writing process. Notes should identify the information you have obtained and where you acquired it so that later you can acknowledge your indebtedness accurately. A paper can be plagiarized even if you have simply forgotten that you used a certain source, or even if you have included material accidentally without remembering that it was taken from another source. One of the most common problems is that students write a draft of a paper without proper documentation, intending to go back later to "put in the references." In some cases students accidentally hand in such papers

instead of the documented version, or they forget to include some citations in their final draft. The fact that the wrong draft was submitted is not a defense against an accusation of plagiarism. In general students are held accountable for the work that they actually hand in, rather than the work they intended to hand in.

### **Appropriation**

You must acknowledge the original source when using or incorporating an existing work into the production of a new work for a variety of purposes such as creating parody, offering commentary, or extending meaning and/or expression through a new context for the original work. Appropriation is particularly relevant to the fine arts. It is an expressive option that requires attention to legal and historical practice and responsibility since copyright and other laws may be involved. You should acknowledge the original source(s) according to your instructor's guidelines.

### **Multiple Submissions**

You must not submit academic work for a class which has been done for another class unless your instructor gives prior approval. In any assignment, an instructor is justified in expecting that a certain kind of learning will be taking place. Handing in something done previously may preclude this learning.

### **Unsanctioned Collaboration**

When doing out-of-class projects or assignments, you must work individually unless collaboration has been expressly encouraged or permitted by your instructor. In many disciplines, collaboration is considered not simply a vital tool for learning, but more importantly, one of the primary means for generating knowledge. Thus it is expected, encouraged, and in some cases mandatory that students collaborate with each other, with faculty, and with tutors as they complete their assignments. You should follow your instructor's guidelines with respect to whether and what kind of collaboration is permissible with regard to an assignment or project. You should follow your instructor's guidelines with respect to seeking the help of tutors for a graded assignment and to the manner of the acknowledgement of such help. If you are in doubt as to whether collaboration is acceptable, you should assume that you are expected to do your work independently unless cooperation is specifically authorized by the instructor. When in doubt, ask your instructor.

## Penalties for Academic Dishonesty

### Individual Course Penalty

The academic course penalty will be determined by your instructor. A student who violates the academic integrity code in a course may receive an F for the course, or, at the discretion of the instructor, a less severe penalty. If you withdraw from any course in which you have been accused of an academic integrity violation for which the penalty is F for the course, the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs will record the grade of WF on your transcript.

### College Penalty

If the course penalty results in failure for the course, you will be referred to the instructor's academic dean. The severity of the violation may, in the judgment of the dean and upon the recommendation of the instructor, require an additional college penalty beyond failure for the course. A college penalty may result in such actions as suspension or expulsion from the college. Your academic dean will be notified of the action.

If not expelled from the college, you must complete an educational program devised by the office of the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs and supervised by your academic dean, to help you come to a fuller understanding of the academic integrity code. If you fail to complete the educational program to the satisfaction of your dean, and within the timelines specified by your dean, a hold will be placed on your transcript until the program has been completed.

### Right of Appeal

If you acknowledge the integrity infraction but believe that *the course grade penalty* is inappropriate, you may appeal the grade through the normal college procedure for resolving grade disputes. Your instructor can inform you of the process as can your academic advisor or your academic dean.

If you acknowledge the integrity infraction but believe *the college penalty*, if one has been imposed by the instructor's dean, is inappropriate, you may appeal the dean's penalty to the Provost / Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA). All college penalty decisions are reviewed by the Provost / VPAA.

If you believe that you have not committed an integrity infraction, your instructor or your instructor's dean will refer your case to the Academic Integrity Board (AIB). You may also appeal directly to the AIB.

If you withdraw from the college before your appeal is completed, the Provost / VPAA will enter the grade of WF on your transcript for the course and any reapplication for admission to the college may be denied.

## Academic Integrity Review Procedures

These procedures cover all cases where students are alleged to have committed infractions of the academic integrity code. Materials on academic integrity violations will be considered an internal and confidential record. These materials will be retained in the files of the Provost / VPAA until the student graduates or withdraws from the college. At that point, the files will be removed and destroyed.

Note: All references to “dean” in the following procedures are to the instructor’s academic dean unless otherwise indicated.

### Reporting the Violation

The Academic Integrity Code helps students understand what is permissible and what is not regarding academic course conduct. *Any additional requirements an instructor seeks to impose must be specifically published and accessible to students on either an instructor’s course syllabus and/or course website.*

1. If an instructor believes that a student has violated the academic integrity code, the instructor will, under normal circumstances, notify the student, allowing the student an opportunity to respond. Depending on the circumstances, the instructor may choose to notify the student orally or in writing. At his or her sole discretion, the instructor may take a variety of actions, including taking no action, requiring the student to redo the work or complete an alternative piece of work, giving the student a failing grade for the assignment in question, or giving the student a failing grade for the course, which requires written notification to the student.
2. When an instructor assigns as penalty a failing grade for the course, the instructor must also report the matter in writing to the instructor’s department chair. If the department chair has questions, the chair may refer the matter back to the instructor for further discussion or clarification. Unless the instructor wishes to withdraw the action, the department chair will report the matter to the dean. The dean will notify the Provost /VPAA’s office of the instructor’s action.

If the dean decides to impose a college penalty, then such a penalty can include suspension or expulsion from the college. The dean may request further consultation with the instructor, the department chair, or the student before imposing such a penalty

3. Students who believe an academic integrity violation by others has occurred should report the suspected violation to the instructor. If the instructor does not act on the report, students may also report the matter to the instructor’s department chair, the instructor’s academic dean, or to their own academic dean who will report the complaint to the instructor’s academic dean. The instructor’s department chair or academic dean will investigate and determine how to proceed.

## **Appeals**

### **1. Appealing the Course Grade Penalty**

If a student believes the course grade penalty imposed by the instructor is inappropriate, the student can appeal the course grade through the normal college procedure for resolving grade disputes.

### **2. Appealing the College Penalty**

If a student believes the college penalty imposed by the dean is inappropriate, the student may appeal the college penalty to the Provost / Academic Vice President.

### **3. Appealing the Allegation**

If a student denies that an academic integrity violation has occurred, the dean will refer the matter to the Academic Integrity Board (AIB). A student may also appeal directly to the AIB.

Upon receiving notice from the dean that an alleged academic integrity violation has occurred and the student(s) involved have denied the allegation, the Provost / VPAA will direct the Chair of the AIB to assemble a hearing panel consisting of faculty and student members of the AIB (see “Composition and Procedures of the Academic Integrity Board” in Appendix A). If several students are involved in one case, the dean may request that the panel consider the situation of all involved students, even if one or more do not deny having committed an academic integrity offense. The panel will make a determination regarding whether academic dishonesty has occurred and convey its findings to the dean, who will advise the student and the instructor of their rights of appeal.

*The sole purpose of the hearing panel is to determine whether an academic integrity violation has occurred.*

If the hearing panel determines that a violation has occurred, the original action of the instructor will stand, subject to decision on any appeal of the board’s findings (see #4 below, “Appealing the Findings of the Academic Integrity Board”). The Chair of the AIB will notify in writing at the same time the instructor’s academic dean and all parties of the hearing panel’s findings. If the student believes, nonetheless, that the instructor’s action is inappropriate, the student may appeal the grade through the normal college procedure for resolving grade disputes. The grade appeal process will only consider the grade and not reconsider or review the decision that an academic integrity violation has occurred.

If the hearing panel determines that a violation has occurred, the dean may impose on the student a college penalty. If, in the dean’s judgment, there are no extenuating or mitigating circumstances and the penalty for the academic integrity violation assigned is expulsion from the college, the dismissal and the reason for the dismissal may be noted on the student’s transcript.

If the hearing panel determines that a violation has NOT occurred, the Chair of the AIB notifies in writing the instructor's dean and all parties, at the same time, of the hearing panel's findings. The instructor's department chair will then request that the instructor re-grade the student's work based on the premise that no violation has occurred. If the instructor refuses, the instructor's department chair will follow the normal college procedure for resolving grade disputes to resolve the matter.

#### **4. Appealing the Findings of the Academic Integrity Board**

Findings of the hearing panel of the Academic Integrity Board (AIB) can be appealed in writing to the dean by either the student(s) or the instructor within five (5) business days. There are only two grounds for an appeal: (1) there was a material procedural error in the panel's review of the case; (2) new evidence not reasonably available to the panel at the time of its deliberations has come to light.

After reviewing the records of the hearing panel, written materials submitted with the request for an appeal of the panel's findings, and the results of any further consultations with the parties, the dean may either affirm the finding of the hearing panel or remand the case to the hearing panel on the basis of either or both grounds for appeal.

If the case is remanded to the hearing panel, the panel will review and correct any substantiated violation of procedure and examine any new evidence; it will once again forward its findings to the dean. At this point, the dean will review the findings to be sure the grounds for the appeal of the hearing panel's original findings have been addressed. If so, the findings of the board will stand.

#### **Required Educational Program**

Once the determination has been made that an academic integrity violation has occurred, either by admission of the student(s) or findings of the hearing panel of the Academic Integrity Board (AIB) and the penalty is not expulsion from the college, the student's academic dean, in consultation with the AIB Chair, will require the student to complete a program of education and reflection on the meaning and importance of academic integrity. This program will be designed by the office of the Provost / VPAA and may include written exercises, community service, and/or participation in an integrity educational program supervised by the college.

If the educational program is not completed in a timely and satisfactory manner as determined by the student's academic dean, the student's dean will impose a hold on the student's academic records, thus preventing the student from registering for further courses, transferring coursework to another institution, or graduating until the conditions of the educational program have been met.

## **Appendix A**

### **Composition and Procedures of the Academic Integrity Board**

The Academic Integrity Board (AIB) is the appeals mechanism for allegations of academic integrity code violations. It consists of faculty members and students. From its ranks come the members of a hearing panel for any case of alleged academic dishonesty. The sole purpose of the hearing panel is to determine whether an academic integrity violation has occurred. The hearing process is an internal community-based procedure governed by the policies of Merrimack College and is limited to members of the Merrimack College community as defined below.

#### **Membership**

The Provost / Vice President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) will constitute the membership of the AIB according to the requirements below. Except for the Chair of the AIB, who is a member of the Provost/VPAA's staff, AIB members will normally serve three-year terms to provide experience and continuity to the hearing panels.

1. A Chair of the AIB from the Provost / VPAA's office who will have faculty status, as defined in the Faculty Senate Constitution and Bylaws. The job of the Chair will be to oversee the academic integrity policy at the college, including insuring that incoming students are aware of the code, that the code is widely disseminated and regularly communicated, working with faculty and academic support staff in devising ways that promote and support academic integrity, devising an educational program to aid understanding of academic integrity by students who have violated the code, and overseeing all procedures of the AIB, including the training of board members on issues such as conflicts of interest, the importance of confidentiality, and how to assess evidence.
2. At least five (5) fulltime faculty with at least one faculty person from each of the college's disciplinary divisions (business, humanities, science and engineering, social science) chosen by the Faculty Senate. The faculty will normally serve for three-year terms.
3. At least four (4) undergraduate students chosen by the Student Government Association drawn from each of the college's disciplinary divisions (business, humanities, science and engineering, social science) who have at least sophomore status. Students will serve for the duration of their tenure at the college or up to three years.

If a vacancy in the board occurs, the Provost / VPAA will ask the Faculty Senate and/or the Student Government Association to fill the respective vacancy.

## **The Hearing Panel**

A hearing panel will be formed from the membership of the AIB to hear cases involving an alleged breach of the academic integrity code. A new panel for each case will be formed by the Chair of the AIB on the basis of availability and impartiality. A panel will consist of six (6) members from the following AIB membership categories:

*the Chair of the AIB, who will be a non-voting member, who will provide continuity among the various hearing panels, convene and preside over the proceedings, and assure compliance with the requirements of reviewing the complaint at all levels including the hearing process; one faculty member, preferably from the school of the course involved in the alleged violation; two (2) other faculty members, preferably one from the student's school if different from that of the course instructor; two (2) students.*

## **The Hearing Panel Review Process**

1. When a case is referred to the AIB, the Provost / VPAA's office will ask the Chair of the AIB to convene a hearing panel to determine if a violation has occurred. Normally the panel will be convened within thirty (30) days of receipt of notification. If the violation occurred prior to the final exam in the course, the hearing panel will, if possible, be convened prior to the scheduled time of the final exam. If the violation is reported during the examination period or between semesters, the hearing panel will, if possible, be convened within thirty (30) days after the beginning of the next fall or spring semester.
2. The Chair of the AIB will inform in writing the student(s), the instructor, the instructor's department chair, the instructor's dean and the student's dean (and, if appropriate, any additional or other complainant) of the time, place, and membership of the hearing panel. The AIB Chair will do so within a reasonable time to permit adequate preparation for the hearing. The hearing will not be delayed if a student cannot be reached for lack of a correct address in the college's student record system. If the student fails to appear for the hearing, the hearing panel will make its judgment on the basis of the evidence presented at the hearing, and the student will forfeit any right to a further hearing or appeal.
3. Members of the hearing panel will disqualify themselves from hearing a case if they feel there is a conflict of interest or a perceived conflict of interest. A disqualified member will be replaced by another member of the same membership category, if possible (see "The Hearing Panel" above for the definition of categories). If another member of the same membership category is not available, the Chair of the AIB will select another member of the AIB to fill the vacancy. In no case, however, will the number of students on the hearing panel exceed two. If the AIB Chair cannot perform the responsibilities of chairing the hearing panel either because there is a real or perceived conflict of interest or other special circumstance that prevents it, then the Provost / VPAA will provide

a person to serve as hearing panel chair, preferably a past or present member of the AIB.

An accused student or a complainant may object to any single panel member assigned to the case. The objection must be written and received by the AIB Chair at least two (2) business days before the hearing. Upon ruling that a challenge is valid, the AIB Chair, after notifying the student and complainant, will replace the challenged member with another from the same category if possible. If another member of the same category is not available, the AIB Chair will select another member of the AIB to fill the vacancy.

4. The student(s), the instructor, and the instructor's chair may attend the hearing. Each may, with the approval of the AIB Chair, address the panel. Any member of the panel may question the student(s) or the instructor. The student may present relevant evidence, including witnesses, in support of his or her position. The hearing will be conducted at the college and is closed to the public (including parents, legal guardians, and legal counsel). The AIB Chair will preside but not vote. Formal rules of evidence will not apply. The AIB Chair may admit or exclude witnesses during the testimony of other witnesses and may exclude any person who, in the Chair's judgment, disrupts the proceeding. The student or instructor may each be accompanied by a student or faculty member whose role is limited to advising the student or instructor. This adviser may not make statements, examine witnesses, or otherwise intervene. Advisers cannot be attorneys in any case.

5. The hearing panel will deliberate among themselves with no other persons present and make its determination by confidential majority vote based on the evidence. The sole purpose of the panel is to consider whether an academic integrity violation has occurred. The panel does not make recommendations on issues such as mitigating circumstances or the severity of the punishment. All materials and discussions with respect to any case are considered confidential educational records and are protected by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), and any release of case materials is guided by the college's FERPA guidelines. All communications follow the official Merrimack College communication policy as outlined in the Student Handbook.

The minutes of the hearing or hearings are the responsibility of the AIB Chair and will be part of the official confidential file to be kept by the Chair of the AIB in the Provost / VPAA's office. The minutes should include the names of the student(s), the faculty member, the panel members, and any witnesses, advisers, or other individuals who attended the hearing, and should tell the result of the panel's decision. The minutes should not include the actual vote count. The Chair may, at his or her sole discretion, also summarize information that was brought up in the hearing but that does not appear in the record.

6. The Chair of the Academic Integrity Board will notify in writing the instructor's dean and all parties, at the same time, of the hearing panel's findings.

## Appendix B

**Academic Dishonesty Sanction Guidelines** (adapted from the University of Southern California, [http://www.usc.edu/studentaffairs/SJACS/forms/sjacs\\_appa.pdf](http://www.usc.edu/studentaffairs/SJACS/forms/sjacs_appa.pdf)).

Copying answers from other students on exam (quiz, test, other course work).	F for the course.
One person allowing another to cheat from his or her exam (quiz, test, other course work).	F for the course.
Possessing or using material during exam (crib sheets, notes, books, etc.) which is not expressly permitted by the instructor.	F for the course.
Taking exam from room and later claiming that the instructor lost it.	F for the course and further disciplinary action.
Failing to submit an assignment and later claiming that the instructor lost it.	F for the course and further disciplinary action.
Changing answers after an exam (quiz, test, other course work) has been returned.	F for the course and further disciplinary action.
Fraudulent possession of exam prior to administration.	F for the course and further disciplinary action.
Obtaining a copy of an exam or answer key prior to administration.	F for the course and further disciplinary action.
Having someone else take an exam.	F for the course and further disciplinary action for both students.
Plagiarism.	F for the course.
Submission of purchased term papers or papers written by others.	F for the course and further disciplinary action.
Submission of the same term papers to more than one instructor, where no previous approval has been given.	F for the course and further disciplinary action.
Unauthorized collaboration on an assignment.	F for the course for both students.