

ACADEMIC POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND SERVICES

Academic Integrity Policy

Effective July 1, 2014, as Revised

Institutional Policy and Procedural Guidelines

The academic integrity policy statement applies to all Union Institute & University students and employees. The procedural guidelines that follow the policy statement are specific to students; procedures for employees who violate the Academic Integrity Policy are separate and can be found on the university's employee intranet, under human resources policies.

Policy Statement

Union Institute & University is committed to ensuring the highest level of academic integrity. Violations of academic integrity of any kind are strictly prohibited. Violations of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, and dishonesty.

Definitions

Academic Integrity: Characterized by honesty and responsibility in scholarship, based on the following assumptions about academic work at Union Institute & University:

- Students attend UI&U in order to learn, and academic assignments exist for the sake of this goal.
- All academic work must be met through a student's own efforts. Academic work completed any other way is unacceptable, and any grades and credits awarded as a result are fraudulent.

Academic integrity means understanding and respecting these basic truths, without which no university can exist. Academic dishonesty is not just "against the rules" but violates the assumptions that are at the heart of all learning. Violations of academic integrity destroy the mutual trust and respect that should exist among students and faculty, as well as being unfair to students who operate with integrity and honesty.¹

Plagiarism: The practice of claiming or implying authorship of another person's written or creative work, ideas, and/or words through incorporation, in whole or in part, into one's own without adequately acknowledging or crediting the source. Plagiarism usually takes the form of submitting the work or ideas of another (written, artistic, technical, etc.) as one's own. Commonly plagiarized sources include books and articles (published and unpublished), Internet sites, and other students' work. Plagiarism may be unintentional or intentional; this policy and related procedures apply regardless of intentionality.

Cheating: The use of deception or other means in an effort to obtain credit for a learning activity.

¹ Adapted from "A Student's Guide to Academic Integrity," University of Oklahoma, http://integrity.ou.edu/students_guide.html

There are other forms of academic dishonesty, which include but are not limited to: entering into a consensual relationship with an instructor, mentor, advisor, or other employee responsible for evaluating the student's work (which creates an immediate conflict of interest for both the student and the instructor); providing false or inaccurate information about one's academic and/or professional background, such as claiming a degree one has not earned or submitting false letters of recommendation; submitting the same work for credit more than one time; or violating any protocols and/or procedures specified in a course syllabus.

Identification of Student Plagiarism

Assignments submitted by students as part of any undergraduate or graduate course or as a component of any student's academic program are regularly reviewed for plagiarism, which may include use of plagiarism identification software. Each enrolled student agrees that, by registering for learning activities, s/he consents to the submission of her/his work for textual similarity review to identify possible plagiarism.

Personal Relationships and Academic Integrity

A close personal relationship (sexual, familial, or personal) with an instructor, mentor, advisor, or other employee responsible for evaluating a student's work creates an immediate conflict of interest for both the student and the instructor. Students should be aware that having a close personal relationship with an individual who has responsibility/authority to evaluate/approve the student's work may be construed to be a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy – a form of cheating.

While such consensual relationships are not forbidden by the university, a student involved in a consensual relationship with an instructor may not register for coursework with that individual. If there are no other sections of the course available, the student is required to disclose the relationship to the dean, so that the student's work and the instructor's evaluation of that work can be monitored.

If a consensual relationship comes to light after the conclusion of a course, the dean will immediately forward the case to the VPAA for review by the academic integrity committee. All of the student's coursework will be closely reviewed by the committee – a review that may include comparison of the quality of the work in the subject course to the student's work in other courses. If the review leads to a conclusion of favoritism (grade inflation, evidence of inappropriate assistance from the instructor, or other similar violations of academic integrity), the committee will make a recommendation to the VPAA for disciplinary action. Disciplinary action could range from changing the course grade to reflect the actual quality of the student's work, to academic probation, or even dismissal from the program.

Because the university's employee Conduct and Ethics Policy states that sexual relationships between employees and students are "usually deemed inappropriate or unethical," disciplinary action will also be taken against the instructor, in accordance with the university's human resources policies and procedures.

Procedural Guidelines: Student Violations of Academic Integrity

The procedural guidelines detailed herein are to be followed in all cases where a Union Institute & University student is suspected of violating the university's policy on academic integrity.

Concerns about violations of academic integrity are typically raised by faculty, but they may also be raised by another student, a graduate, or a non-instructional employee. If a student,

graduate, or non-instructional employee has concern about a student's violation of academic integrity, the concerns should be reported to the dean responsible for the program in which the student is enrolled. The dean (not the person raising the concern) is then responsible for ensuring that all applicable steps of this procedure are followed.

Consequences for violations of the policy on academic integrity will vary depending on the severity of the infraction and the extent to which the student was aware of university and external standards. Graduate students are expected to be better informed regarding what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, and other forms of academic dishonesty than are undergraduate students, especially those undergraduate students who have had little or no previous postsecondary education.

The scope of the violation will be considered in determining consequences, including:

- The consequences for student work that is substantially or entirely the work of another will have more serious consequences than will a case where there is either a single or small number of non-accredited citations.
- Academic dishonesty related to an entire course, a dissertation, thesis, culminating study, capstone project, or other substantive work will have more severe consequences than will plagiarism or cheating on a single paper or test that constitutes one learning activity within a course or seminar.
- The consequences for student dissemination/use of exam questions and/or answers will be more severe if payment is involved.

Regardless of the student's degree level and the extent/scope of the action, Union Institute & University takes all alleged violations of academic integrity seriously. Accordingly, all initial warnings and informal resolutions and all formal incidents and resolutions must be reported to the dean. Reports may be submitted to the program director, associate dean, or other staff member, but that individual is required to relay them to the dean responsible for the student's program.

Procedures²

Stage 1: Informal review and resolution (faculty and student or dean and student)

If a violation of the policy on academic integrity is suspected, the faculty member (or the dean, if the concern was raised by someone other than a member of the faculty) will contact the student, explain the university's policy on academic integrity, and discuss the alleged infraction. In this process, the faculty member or dean will orally warn the student and instruct him/her in the appropriate conventions of citation or academic practice. As part of that conversation, the student must be given a copy of this policy and procedural guidelines. The faculty member has the right to consult with another faculty member and/or the dean at any point during this stage. There are three potential outcomes of stage 1. The first two outcomes result in the conclusion of the incident review process; the third moves the incident review to stage 2.

- If the student is able to prove (through explanation or exculpatory evidence) to the satisfaction of the faculty member or dean that no violation occurred, either intentional or unintentional, the matter will be considered to be resolved. Such a case would not count as a first incident, and no record need be made in the student's academic record. The faculty member must report the incident to the dean.
- If the student acknowledges a violation, and the student and faculty member and/or dean come to a mutually satisfactory resolution, then the process ends at this stage. A satisfactory resolution must include: (1) student recognition of the issues regarding

² In all procedural stages, the dean may assign another faculty member or administrator as her/his designee.

her/his actions; (2) evidence that s/he has learned from the experience; (3) student cooperation in the resolution of the concern; and (4) satisfactory assurances that the practice will not happen again. A report of the incident and its resolution must be provided to the dean, and a record of the occurrence will be placed in the student's permanent academic record. A consequence may be determined by the faculty, considering the appropriate action for the seriousness of the incident and the academic level of the student (i.e., undergraduate or graduate level). Possible consequences include: requiring the student to revise the work and resubmit it (least serious); reduction of the grade awarded for the work; or assignment of a failing grade for a course or learning activity (most serious).

- If there is no satisfactory conclusion to the informal resolution stage, such as if the student denies the allegation, is not able to prove to the satisfaction of the faculty member or dean that plagiarism has not occurred, or is noncompliant with the informal process, the case moves to the formal program-level review process (stage 2).

If an initial incident review concludes stage 1 (i.e., no violation occurred or a mutually satisfactory resolution is achieved) but there is later evidence that the behavior continues or has recurred, the faculty member or dean will prepare a formal incident report, providing all relevant evidence related to the occurrence. The report is submitted to the dean, who will move the case to the formal program-level incident review process (stage 2). The dean will also initiate stage 2 for cases where there has been more than one report of concern about an individual student's violations of the policy on academic integrity.

When a case is moved to stage 2, all documentation will be placed and retained in the student's permanent academic record; the student must be given a copy of the report and advised that it is part of her/his permanent record.

Stage 2: Formal program-level review and resolution (student, faculty, and/or dean)

Whenever an incident reaches stage 2, a formal written report of the incident, including a complete description of the allegation, must be prepared by the faculty member or the dean involved in the stage 1 process. The report should include: attempts at informal resolution and any and all interactions and responses among the faculty member, dean, and the student. The dean must provide this report to the student and place a copy of the report in the student's permanent record.

The dean will invite the student to respond to the allegations and to supply any relevant evidence s/he wishes to make part of the discussion. That invitation will include a 30-day deadline for the student to submit her/his response. (The student may request an extension.) The student's response must be in writing, signed by the student, and dated; an email response is not appropriate.

The dean will review the formal report and any response from the student in consultation with the faculty member. The dean will make a determination regarding an appropriate consequence based on the seriousness of the incident and the academic level of the student (i.e., undergraduate or graduate level). Possible consequences include: requiring the student to revise the work and resubmit it (least serious); reduction of the grade awarded for the work; or assignment of a failing grade for a course or learning activity (most serious). There must be some consequence at the conclusion of the stage 2 process; one consequence might be moving the incident to stage 3. There are two possible outcomes of stage 2: resolution or non-resolution.

- Stage 2 resolution results in the student's acceptance of the report, the resolution, and the consequences.
- Non-resolution occurs if the faculty member and dean are not satisfied that the student recognizes the issues regarding violation of the policy on academic integrity, if the student refuses to cooperate in their resolution, and/or fails to provide appropriate assurances that the practice will not happen again. If resolution cannot be reached, the faculty member or dean prepares a formal incident report to be retained in the student's permanent academic record. The case automatically moves to the formal institutional-level review and resolution process (stage 3).

If a resolution is reached at stage 2 but there is later evidence that the behavior continues or has reoccurred, the faculty member or dean will prepare a formal incident report, providing all relevant evidence related to the first occurrence and the immediate situation. This report is submitted to the dean and is placed and retained in the student's permanent academic record. The case moves automatically to stage 3.

Stage 3: Formal institutional-level review and resolution (student, vice president for academic affairs (VPAA), and academic integrity committee)

Once a formal incident report of student violation of the Academic Integrity Policy has been filed with or written by the dean, the incident moves to a formal institutional-level review and resolution. When the formal incident report is received, the dean will immediately notify the VPAA, forwarding the report and all related documentation to the VPAA. All formal institutional level reviews are conducted by an ad hoc UI&U Academic Integrity Committee (AIC) constituted specifically by the VPAA for each case. Each AIC will have five members: one academic administrator (dean or associate dean), three faculty, and one student. No AIC member may have any prior or current relationship with the student alleged to have violated the Academic Integrity Policy. The AIC is recommendatory to the VPAA, whose decision is final.

Upon receipt of the formal incident report, the VPAA will inform the student, in writing, that the case is to be considered by the AIC.

- To ensure due process, the VPAA will send a letter to the student, inviting the student to respond to the allegations and to supply any relevant evidence s/he wishes to make part of the discussion. The letter will include a 30-day deadline for submission of the response. (The student may request an extension.) The student's response must be in writing, signed by the student and dated; an email response is not appropriate.
- The VPAA will forward the formal incident report and the student's written response to the AIC for consideration. (If the student does not respond, the AIC will receive only the formal incident report.) The VPAA will advise the AIC of the expected deadline for completion of the process. In most cases this will be 60 days; in some cases, however, the VPAA will require an expedited review.
- None of the parties involved in the incident are entitled to participate in the AIC's deliberation. If questions arise during committee deliberations, the committee may request the VPAA to contact any involved party for additional information or clarification; the committee shall not make such contact directly.
- The AIC will evaluate the contents of the formal incident report and the student's response (if applicable), submitting a written response and recommendation for resolution to the VPAA. The recommended resolution will be either for exoneration of the student or for a consequence appropriate to the situation. The recommended consequence can range from denial of academic credit (i.e., assignment of a failing grade) for the learning activity (assignment or course), to academic probation, to

suspension (i.e., dismissal for a short, fixed period of time), to complete dismissal from the university, to rescission of the degree. (Rescission of a degree will occur only in cases where academic dishonesty is discovered after a degree has been awarded; degrees may be rescinded only under the authority of the UI&U Board of Trustees.)

- The VPAA will consider the AIC's recommendation and make a final determination. If the VPAA should decide on a penalty other than that recommended by the AIC, s/he will inform the committee of that decision and the rationale for it.
- The VPAA will inform the student in writing of the formal resolution. The resolution decided by the VPAA may not be appealed.

Institutional Student Complaint Log

Under the provisions of the federal Higher Opportunity Employment Act, colleges and universities are required to maintain a log of student complaints and grievances. If a violation of academic integrity reaches the level requiring review by the academic integrity committee, the VPAA will enter a summary of the case into the log, including the following information:

- Initial date received as a formal complaint (i.e., the date submitted to the VPAA)
- Student name
- Brief description of the incident
- Description of the resolution
- Date of the final resolution