

Academic Integrity

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Policy

All members of the Ramapo community are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. Since violations of academic integrity erode community confidence and undermine the pursuit of truth and knowledge at the College, academic dishonesty must be avoided.

Procedure

The Office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs has the responsibility for the oversight and enforcement of the academic integrity policy and for making the policy an institutional priority. The Office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs is also responsible for publishing the policy and for educating faculty about the policy.

Faculty members play a crucial role in the academic integrity policy. They are responsible for educating their students about the importance of academic integrity and for communicating to students their expectations with respect to academic integrity in course work.

Students have the responsibility to understand the College academic integrity policy and to comply with the policy in all their academic work.

Criteria

There are four broad forms of academic dishonesty:

1. Cheating

Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents his or her mastery of material on a test or other academic exercise. Examples of cheating include, but are not limited to:

- copying from another student's work;

- allowing another student to copy his/her work;
- using unauthorized materials such as a textbook, notebook or electronic devices during an examination;
- using specifically prepared materials such as notes written on clothing or other unauthorized notes, formula lists, etc., during an examination;
- collaborating with another person during an examination by giving or receiving information without authority;
- taking a test for another person or asking or allowing another to take the student's own test.

2. Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when a person represents someone else's words, ideas, phrases, sentences, or data as one's own work. When a student submits work that includes such material, the source of that information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate, and specific footnote references; additionally, verbatim statements must be acknowledged through quotation marks.

To avoid a charge of plagiarism, a student should be sure to include an acknowledgment of indebtedness:

- whenever he or she quotes another person's words directly;
- whenever he or she uses another person's ideas, opinions, or theories, even if they have been completely paraphrased in one's own words;
- whenever he or she allows another individual to contribute to the work in some significant fashion (for instance, through editing, or sharing of ideas);
- whenever he or she uses facts, statistics, or other illustrative material taken from a source, unless the information is common knowledge.

Examples of standard citation formats can be found on the Library website:
<http://library.ramapo.edu/erefshelf/Citationstyleguides.html>

3. Academic Misconduct

Academic Misconduct includes the alteration of grades, involvement in the acquisition or distribution of unadministered tests, and the unauthorized submission of student work in more than one class. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- changing, altering, falsifying, or being the accessory to the changing, altering, or falsifying of a grade report or form or other academic record, or entering any computer system, College office or building for that purpose;
- stealing, buying, selling, giving way, or otherwise obtaining all or part of any unadministered test or entering any computer system, College office or building, for the purpose of obtaining an unadministered test;
- submitting written work (in whole or in significant part) to fulfill the requirements of more than one course without the explicit permission of both instructors;
- disregarding policies governing the use of human subjects or animals in research;
- sabotaging another student's work through actions designed to prevent the student from successfully completing an assignment;
- knowingly facilitating a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy by another person.

4. Fabrication

Fabrication refers to the deliberate use of invented information or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive. Examples of fabrication include, but are not limited to:

- citation of information not taken from the source indicated;
- listing of sources in a “works cited” that were not used in that project;
- altering, stealing and/or falsifying research data used in research reports, theses, or dissertations;
- submission as one's own of any academic work prepared in whole or in part by others, including the use of another’s identity;
- falsifying information or signatures on registration, withdrawal, or other academic forms and records.

Reporting Violations

To ensure due process, any member of the Ramapo community who is aware of violations of the College's academic integrity policy is urged to report the incident to the Office of the Provost.

Faculty members who choose to resolve the matter themselves are encouraged also to report the incident to the Office of the Provost, since the incident may be a repeat offense, or there may be a subsequent grade appeal.

Hearing Process

Faculty members have the option of resolving the charges with the student themselves; or, they may refer the matter to the Vice Provost.

For all conferences with students, the procedures and procedural protections provided in this Catalog and the Code of Conduct section of the Student Handbook will apply.

The following steps are to be taken:

1. Resolution by faculty members.

Faculty members may choose to resolve the charges themselves; they are encouraged to informally consult with the Vice Provost and/or their Dean. Faculty will arrange a conference with the student, reminding the student to review the Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure before the meeting. Faculty members should keep records for their own reference and are encouraged to report the outcome to the Vice Provost on the Reporting Form. In the case of a factual finding that a violation has occurred, the faculty member may require the student to redo the assignment, assign a failing grade on the assignment, or assign a failing grade for the course.

If the case is not resolved, faculty members will refer the matter to the Vice Provost for further review and determinations; the case will typically be heard by a subcommittee of CASP.

If prior violations by the student have been found by prior, independent, hearings, the current case will subsequently be referred for further action to the College Judicial Board, which may impose additional sanctions.

If the student prefers the case to be heard by the Office of the Provost, or if the student fails to attend the conference, faculty members will refer the case to the Vice Provost.

2. Resolution by the Office of the Provost.

If the case is referred to the Office of the Provost, the faculty member must provide all pertinent documentation and evidence to the Office of the Provost, with the specific factual allegations set forth on the reporting form. The faculty member should also provide written notice to the student of this course of action.

Once the allegation of a violation is made to the Office of the Provost, the Vice Provost (or the Vice Provost's designee) will determine the factual sufficiency of the charge(s) and the forum for the hearing (i.e., whether the case remains in the Office of the Provost or is to be referred to Judicial Affairs). For cases to be heard by the Office of the Provost, there will be a preliminary meeting between the Vice Provost and the student, at which time the student will be notified of the nature of the allegation(s) and will be provided an opportunity for a closed hearing before a subcommittee of CASP, comprised of two faculty members, a student member, and the Vice Provost (ex-officio). The CASP subcommittee will also hear those cases referred to the Vice Provost after unsuccessful attempts by the faculty member to resolve the issue. For the hearing, the procedures and procedural protections provided in this Catalog and the Student Handbook will apply. Both the complainant and the person charged will have an opportunity to appear before the CASP subcommittee. In the case of a factual finding that a violation has occurred after a plenary hearing, penalties may range from an official warning or receipt of a failing grade on the suspicious assignment, to a failing grade for the course. A student may also be penalized by being placed on disciplinary probation.

If the student fails to attend the hearing, a registration hold will be placed on the student's account.

Multiple or Egregious Occurrences – If the student has been previously found guilty of violations of the Academic Integrity Policy, or if the Vice Provost considers that the violation is egregious (e.g., the stealing of an exam), the current case will be referred instead to Judicial Affairs. All information pertaining to the case will be made available by the Office of the Provost to Judicial Affairs. A Judicial Board hearing is required under the provisions of the College Code of Conduct. The procedures and procedural protections provided for in the Catalog and the Student Handbook will apply. In the case of a guilty finding after a Judicial Board hearing, penalties may range from an official warning or receipt of a failing grade on the suspicious assignment, to a failing grade for the course. A student may also be penalized by being placed on disciplinary probation, suspended for a specified period, or expelled from the College.

Honors Program – If the student is found to have violated the Academic Integrity Policy and is enrolled in the College Honors Program, the Honors Program Director will be notified.

Final Grades – When a student is suspected of academic dishonesty and the case is not resolved prior to the official submission of final grades to the Registrar's Office, a "Z" grade will be assigned by the instructor for the course involved, using a "Z" grade form. Once a Z grade has been issued, the procedures described above will be followed. If the Z grade is not resolved by the completion of a grade adjustment form within one year, the grade will be changed to an F on the student's academic transcript.

Appeal Procedures – Persons found guilty of violations of academic integrity may appeal the decision of the hearing officer/body (i.e., the faculty member, Vice Provost, CASP or the College Judicial Board), if certain circumstances exist. Appeals may be made only if:

- sanctions are grossly disproportionate to the offense, and/or
- specific procedural errors or errors in interpretations of College regulations were substantial, and/or
- new and significant evidence becomes available which could not have been discovered by a properly conducted investigation prior to or during the original hearing.

The following procedures apply to appeals:

- Appeals must be submitted by the student in writing to the Office of the Provost, within seven (7) business days from the date of the letter of finding. Failure to appeal within the allotted time will render the original decision final and conclusive.
- In the instance of a student appealing a faculty-resolved case, the student will address their appeal to CASP; for cases heard by the Vice Provost, CASP or the College Judicial Board, the student will address their appeal to the Provost. The Vice Provost (on behalf of CASP) or the Provost, as appropriate, reserves the right to hear the appeal, and will reject any appeal that does not offer clear evidence that one of the heretofore mentioned circumstances applies.
- In the case where an appeal is filed, the imposition of the sanction may be delayed upon the written request in the appeal letter for such action. The decision on the delay is solely at the discretion of the Provost or Vice Provost (as appropriate).
- Appeals shall be decided only upon the record of the original proceeding and upon the written letter of appeal. Reversal or modification of sanctions, or a finding of no guilt, may only occur if one of the heretofore mentioned circumstances applies.

Retention of Records – Case files will be retained as a disciplinary record for five years after graduation or termination from Ramapo in the Offices of the Provost. Such records may be retained for longer periods of time or permanently, if so specified in the letter of finding.