Section: 300

Section Title: Academic

Policy Number: 300-B

Policy Name: Academic Integrity

Policy:

All members of the community are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. At its core, academic integrity requires accuracy regarding the representation of the work of others in one’s own academic work. Since violations of academic integrity erode community confidence and undermine the pursuit of truth and knowledge at the College, academic dishonesty is not acceptable.

Reason for Policy

To delineate the procedure for reviewing and recommending academic policies and procedures.

To Whom Does The Policy Apply

Faculty, Staff and Students of Ramapo College.

Related Documents

Procedure

Academic Integrity Reporting Form
Code of Professional Responsibility

Contacts

Office of the Provost: 201-684-7532

POLICY

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PROCEDURE
I. Responsibilities

OFFICE OF THE PROVOST: The Office of the Provost has responsibility for the oversight and enforcement of the Academic Integrity Policy and for making the policy an institutional priority. The Office of the Provost is also responsible for publishing the policy and for educating both faculty, staff, and students about the policy.

FACULTY AND STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES: Faculty members and College staff play a crucial role in implementing the Academic Integrity Policy. They are responsible for educating students about the importance of academic integrity and for communicating to students expectations with respect to academic integrity in course work including but not limited to permissible limits of student collaboration and, where relevant, acceptable citation format.

In order to demonstrate responsible teaching and academic practices that are grounded in academic integrity, all faculty will:

1. foster an environment where academic integrity is expected and respected by undertaking adequate measures to prevent academic dishonesty, and by imposing penalties and reporting all alleged violations of academic integrity to the Vice Provost whenever such incidents occur; and
2. adhere to and encourage all students to comply with the policy in their academic work, which includes but is not limited to adhering to the honest pursuit of research and scholarship by attribution of credit to all individuals who participated in the conduct or contributed to the completion of a project, paper, publication, experiment, etc.; by citation of the specific source of all information; and by respect for truth in reporting experimental findings or the results of scholarly inquiry.

STUDENTS RESPONSIBILITIES: Students have the responsibility to know and understand the Academic Integrity Policy, and refrain from acts of academic dishonesty and the means by which to ensure academic integrity and avoid academic dishonesty. Students must comply with the policy in their academic work, and to inform the faculty and/or the Vice Provost if they are aware of violations of the Academic Integrity Policy.

II. Types of Academic Dishonesty Criteria
There are four (4) broad forms of academic dishonesty; overlap may occur between them. Faculty will generally communicate expectations of what is/is not allowed for their specific assignments (for instance, they might specify that the use of grammar tools/spellcheck are allowable, but AI is not; or an assignment might require that an AI tool is used). As a general rule, if no specific guidance is provided students and faculty should assume all of the following are to be avoided, along with any other practices that violate the spirit of academic integrity.

**Cheating**

Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents their 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 their work;
- using unauthorized materials such as a textbook, notebook, or electronic devices (including the internet) or editing software/AI during an examination or other academic exercise (assignment);
- 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 authorization from the instructor;
- taking a test for another person or asking or allowing another person (or AI or other online tool) to take the student’s own test.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism occurs when a person represents someone else’s words, ideas, phrases, sentences, or data as their own work, when it is actually the work of someone (or something) else. Examples may include someone else’s words, ideas, phrases, sentences, or data represented as the student’s own work; the use of online tools (including AI) in preparing the work; and a third party (person or tool) preparing the work for the student.
When a student submits work that includes sourced material, the source of that information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate, and specific footnote or endnote references; additionally, verbatim statements must be acknowledged through quotation marks. To avoid a charge of plagiarism, students should be sure to include an acknowledgment of attribution:

- whenever they quote another person’s words directly;
- whenever they use another person’s ideas, opinions, or theories, or data, even if they have been completely paraphrased in one’s own words;
- whenever they allow another individual (or online tool/AI) to contribute to the work in some significant fashion (for instance, through editing or sharing of ideas);
- whenever they use 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 George T. Potter Library Website: Library Website: Citation Manuals and Style Guides

**Fabrication**

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

- citing information not taken from the source indicated;
- citing of sources in a “works cited” that were not used in that project;
- altering, stealing, inventing, and/or falsifying research data and information used in research reports, theses, or dissertations;
- submitting as one’s own any academic work prepared in whole or in part by others; this would include acquiring such work from a third
party with or without payment, or using online tools (including AI) to prepare the work.

- falsifying information or signatures on registration, withdrawal, or other academic forms and records.

**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; and any other forms of academic dishonesty that do not clearly fall into the categories of cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication. Examples of academic misconduct include, but are not limited to:

- falsifying information or signatures on registration, withdrawal, or other academic forms and records.
- changing, altering, falsifying, or being the accessory to the changing, altering, or falsifying of a grade report or form, transcript, or other academic record, or entering any computer system or College office or building for that purpose;
- stealing, buying, selling, giving away, or otherwise obtaining all or part of any unadministered test or paper or entering any computer system or 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.
Note from Emma Rainforth, Provost’s Council: the remainder of the document and reporting form will be cleaned up in a subsequent iteration (there are some minor edits only in this version). We intend to bring those edits forward in Fall 2023. The purpose right now (Spring 2023) is to ensure AI is explicitly covered by the policy/procedure and that reference to other policies/practices is up to date in time for the 2023-24 Catalog (July 2023). Please feel free to provide comments on the remainder of the document now, but our focus is to get the definitions sections (above) tidied up in time for the Fall semester – please focus your attention there for now!

Reporting Violations

In order to ensure due process, any member of the community who is aware of a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy is expected to report the incident.

In case of a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy by a student, a faculty member may choose to resolve the incident themselves or send the case to the Vice Provost for review (see below). In a faculty member is encouraged to report an alleged violation of academic integrity within 30 days of the discovery of the alleged violation but must do so no later than the last day to submit grades for the term in which the alleged violation occurred. A faculty member may report an incident after that date, but only if they have new evidence.

Hearing Process

A faculty member has the option of resolving a case of an alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy with the student or referring the case to the Vice Provost. When an unresolved case reaches the Vice Provost, they will determine the factual sufficiency of the case and identify the appropriate hearing body, either the Vice Provost or the Academic Integrity Board, which is charged with hearing cases that may result in Suspension or Expulsion, cases of students found responsible for prior offenses, and other cases that the Vice Provost would like the board to review. The Vice Provost will also send to the board for review a case resolved by the faculty member that constitutes a second or subsequent violation.
Resolution by the faculty member.

A faculty member may choose to resolve the case themselves. The faculty member will notify the student of the allegation in writing and arrange a review conference with the student, reminding the student to review the Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure before the meeting. At the conference, the faculty member will present the evidence to the student and give the student two options: to resolve the case with the faculty member or to send the case to the Vice Provost for further review. If the student elects to resolve the case with the faculty member, the faculty member will issue a finding (i.e., responsible or not responsible for violating the Academic Integrity Policy) and, if responsible, a sanction. Sanctions may include requiring students to redo the assignment or to retake the exam with or without penalty, assigning a failing grade on the assignment or the exam, or assigning a failing grade for the course. The faculty member may also recommend that a student seek the support, for example, of the Center for Reading and Writing. The faculty member reports the incident as well as the finding and the sanction on the reporting form and submits it with all supporting documents to the Vice Provost (preferably by email: academicintegrity@ramapo.edu). The Vice Provost will acknowledge receipt of the report via Ramapo e-mail. If, once the case is reported, the Vice Provost determines that the student has been found responsible for a prior offense, the Vice Provost may refer the case to the Academic Integrity Board for review. The finding and the sanction of the Academic Integrity Board override the finding and the sanction of the faculty member.

If the student or the faculty member prefers the case to be reviewed by the Vice Provost, if the student fails to attend the scheduled conference with the faculty member, if the student contests the faculty member’s finding and/or sanction, or if the case is not otherwise resolved, the faculty member must refer the matter to the Vice Provost for further review and resolution. If the case is referred to the Vice Provost, the faculty member must provide all pertinent documentation and evidence to the Vice Provost with the specific factual allegations set forth on the reporting form.

Resolution by the Vice Provost.

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 case. The Vice Provost (or designee) will also determine the Hearing Officer/body (i.e., the Vice Provost/designee or the Academic Integrity Board), depending on the nature and the severity of the case and/or whether it is a second or subsequent
case. If the Vice Provost (or designee) determines that the case has factual sufficiency, they will charge
the student with violating the Academic Integrity Policy via e-mail. The charge will include the hearing
date and the hearing body.

The Vice Provost (or designee) will hear cases that, while serious, are not egregious enough to result in Suspension or Expulsion from the College. The Vice Provost (or designee) will arrange a hearing with the student. At the hearing, the Vice Provost (or designee) will review the policy and procedure, present the evidence to the student, and determine the finding (responsible or not responsible for violating the Academic Integrity Policy) and, if found "responsible", the sanction. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, issuing an official warning, requiring the student to redo the assignment or to retake the exam with or without penalty, requiring the student to seek the services of the Center for Reading and Writing, assigning a failing grade on the assignment or the exam, assigning a failing grade for the course, suspending the student from activity privileges, and/or placing the student on disciplinary probation. Failure to comply with sanctions by the prescribed time may result in a registration hold or other disciplinary action. For specific definitions of these sanctions, the student should consult section N of the Student Handbook. The Vice Provost (or designee) will communicate the finding and the sanction (if applicable) to the student and the referring faculty member via Ramapo e-mail.

- Resolution by the Academic Integrity Board

The Academic Integrity Board will hear all cases of students found responsible for prior offenses, as well as all other cases that, because of their egregiousness, may result in Suspension or Expulsion from the College. Egregious cases may include, but are not limited to, ones in which graduate students allegedly plagiarized any part of their theses or capstone projects. In addition, the Vice Provost (or designee) reserves the right to send to the board for review any case at any time for any reason.

The board is comprised of up to six members: the Vice Provost (or designee) as the Board advisor, plus two matriculated students and three faculty and/or professional staff, and the Vice Provost (or designee) serves as the Board Advisor. A quorum consists of the Board Advisor plus three members of the board, one of whom must be a faculty member. The Vice Provost appoints board members upon positive recommendation from deans (in the case of faculty), divisional vice presidents (in the case of professional staff), and any faculty member, administrator, or professional staff member (in the case of students). The Vice Provost (or designee) also trains each new board member for service on the board and apprises the entire board of any approved procedural changes.
The Vice Provost (or designee) will provide the student with the option to meet with them individually prior to the hearing to present the evidence and to review the policy and procedure. At the hearing, the Vice Provost (or designee) will serve as Board Advisor and, in that capacity, will present evidence, comment on procedure and admissibility of evidence, manage the hearing, and protect the rights of all parties. In addition, the Board Advisor has the right to remove from the hearing any individual who disrupts the hearing or otherwise fails to follow the procedures outlined in this policy. The Board Advisor will be present during the deliberations of the board but will not vote. The board (including the Board Advisor) will hear testimony from, and pose questions to, the student, the complainant, and any witnesses. The student will in turn have an opportunity to question anyone who provides information at the hearing and to respond to any evidence presented against them. After the hearing, the board will determine the finding (responsible or not responsible for violating the Academic Integrity Policy) and, if responsible, the sanction. Sanctions may include Suspension or Expulsion as well as the imposition of lesser sanctions as appropriate. Graduate students found responsible for violations plagiarizing any part of their theses or capstone projects may be sanctioned with permanent dismissal from their programs in addition to or instead of other sanctions as appropriate. Failure to comply with sanctions by the prescribed time may result in a registration hold or other disciplinary action.

**Procedural Protection**

For any hearing conducted by the Vice Provost (or designee) or the Academic Integrity Board, the student shall have the following procedural protections:

- The student will receive, in addition to the reporting form, written notice of the charges that is dated at least three (3) business days prior to any scheduled hearing with the Vice Provost (or designee) and seven (7) business days prior to any scheduled hearing with the Academic Integrity Board. A student may relinquish their right to the notification period by signing and executing a waiver with the Office of the Provost. All correspondence will be sent to the student’s Ramapo College e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the student to access their e-mail on a daily basis.
- The student will have reasonable access to the case file prior to and during the hearing, provided that all reviews of files must take place in the Office of the Provost. All case materials shall be retained in the Office of the Provost.
- The burden of proof shall be upon the complainant, who must establish that the person charged is responsible for the conduct violation “more likely than not” based on the
credible evidence. This “preponderance of the evidence” standard is a lower one than the “beyond a reasonable doubt” standard employed in criminal prosecutions within the court system.

- The student has the right to remain silent and not to present evidence against them.

- The student has the opportunity both to question those who provide information at the proceeding and to respond to any information being presented against them. Formal rules of evidence shall not be applicable pursuant to the Code of Conduct. The Vice Provost (or designee) Hearing Officer or Board Advisor, as applicable, shall give effect to the rules of confidentiality and privilege but shall otherwise admit all information for consideration that reasonable persons would accept as having material value. Unduly repetitious or irrelevant information may be excluded.

- Any member of the College community may, upon showing relevance and necessity, request witnesses to appear at a hearing conducted by the Vice Provost (or designee) or the Academic Integrity Board. Character witnesses are not permissible in academic integrity campus disciplinary proceedings. It is the responsibility of the complainant and the charged student to notify the Vice Provost, by fax, electronic mail, or in writing of the persons they wish called as witnesses at least three (3) business days before the proceeding. The Vice Provost will notify students who are identified as witnesses that their appearance is expected. It is generally expected that witnesses will appear in person to give testimony. Under rare circumstances, witnesses may appear remotely (e.g. via video-conferencing); or a signed, dated, and notarized statement of a witness who is unable to appear or who has been excused may be introduced at a proceeding. The decision as to whether such a document or any other alternative means of testimony may be used lies solely with the Vice Provost. Under extraordinary circumstances, the Vice Provost may require students to serve as witnesses. Students who refuse to appear as witnesses for either the complainant or the charged student may be charged with “failure to comply with the directions of College officials, including campus Public Safety officers, or officers of the law, acting in performance of their duties (Code H.17).” Witnesses will be excluded from the proceeding during the testimony of other witnesses. All parties to the case and witnesses shall be excluded during any deliberations determining responsibility or sanctions.

- A student charged with alleged violations, complainants, and witnesses may be accompanied by an advisor, who may be an attorney, to the hearing. An advisor may
provide counsel to the student but may not speak on their behalf nor appear in lieu of the student. A student who wishes to have an attorney as an advisor must inform the Vice Provost, in writing by fax, electronic mail, or by telephone at least three (3) business days before the scheduled hearing. When informed that an attorney will be present at the proceeding, the College may consult with General Counsel and/or the New Jersey State Attorney General’s Office for advice on whether legal counsel for the College should also be present.

- In accordance with current guidelines established in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), the New Jersey Open Public Records Act (OPRA) and implemented by Ramapo College, the record of most academic integrity disciplinary proceeding’s findings is not open to the public.

- In cases in which a student charged does not appear after proper notice and has no justifiable reason for non-appearance, the finding will be an “uncontested admission of violation,” and an appropriate sanction will be imposed.

- A student will be subjected to the College’s judicial process if the alleged violation occurred while s/he was a registered student. In cases where a student charged withdraws from the course in question, or the College prior to the Academic Integrity disciplinary proceeding, the Academic IntegrityAdjudicial process will not be deferred.

- Hearings will not be postponed unless under unusual circumstances set forth in the “Justifiable Excuse” policy for non-appearance. The policy is available in the Office of the Provost. The process is designed to be educational in nature and support the student speaking for themselves; therefore, only the responding student may make a request to postpone a hearing. Requests by third parties, including counsel, will not be considered.

- Where Suspension or Expulsion is a possible sanction, proceedings will be audio- or video-tape- or video-recorded. Other proceedings may be recorded at the discretion of the College. These recordings are solely for the purpose of providing assistance to the Vice Provost (or designee) / Academic Integrity Board Advisor / Hearing convenerOfficer (as applicable), the members of the Academic Integrity Board (if applicable), and the appeals officer in their deliberations. These recordings remain the property of the College and constitute an official record of the proceeding.

- Final decisions and a listing of any sanctions imposed will be noted by the Hearing convenerOfficer or the Board Advisor / Vice Provost (or designee) / Academic
Integrity Board Advisor (as applicable), who will be responsible for ensuring such information is conveyed in writing to the charged student and to all others as deemed necessary or appropriate. The finding will be e-mailed to the charged student no later than ten (10) business days following the date of the hearing. Notification of others with a need or right to know under the law will only take place after all possible appeal processes have upheld the finding.

College Honors Program

If the student is found to have violated the Academic Integrity Policy and is enrolled in the College Honors Program, the Director of the College Honors Program will be notified by the Vice Provost in order to review the student’s status in the program.

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, the Vice Provost will assign a Z grade for the course involved, using a Z grade form. Once a Z grade has been issued, the procedures described above will be followed. Once the case is resolved, the final grade will be submitted to the Registrar’s Office on a Grade Change form by the Vice Provost in the case of an "F" grade by the Vice Provost or Academic Integrity Board; otherwise the faculty member will determine and submit the final grade via the Vice Provost.

Repeat Course/Fail (R-gradeF) Option

If a student’s grade is impacted by the sanction resulting from a “responsible” finding, receives an F in a course in which an Academic Integrity violation occurred and a sanction was imposed, the course is not eligible for Repeat-course (R) grading. (See also policy 300-E.)

Appeal Procedures

A student who is found responsible of violating the Academic Integrity Policy may appeal the decision of the Academic Integrity Board only if certain circumstances exist. The student may not appeal the decision of the faculty member or the Vice Provost. 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:

• An appeal must be submitted by the student in writing to the Provost within five (5) 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.
• The Provost 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 in which an appeal is filed in writing, the imposition of the sanction will be delayed.
• Appeals shall be decided only upon the record of the original proceeding and upon the written letter of appeal. Reversal or modification of sanction, or a finding of not responsible, may only occur if one of the heretofore mentioned circumstances applies.

Retention of Records

Case files will be retained in the Office of the Provost until five (5) years after graduation or termination.