

SUBJECT: ACADEMIC CODE OF CONDUCT
REVISED DATE: May 31, 2023
Policy for: University of South Carolina Beaufort
Issued by: Academic Affairs
Number: 309

POLICY ON ACADEMIC FREEDOM

Academic institutions exist for the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students and the general well-being of society. Free inquiry and free expression are indispensable to the attainment of these goals. As members of the academic community, students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are inseparable tenets of academic freedom. The freedom to learn depends upon appropriate opportunities and conditions in the classroom, on the campus and in the larger community. Students should exercise their freedom with responsibility.

The responsibility to secure and to respect general conditions conducive to the freedom to learn is shared by all members of the academic community. The University has a duty to develop policies and procedures that provide and safeguard this freedom. Such policies and procedures should be developed within the framework of general standards with the broadest possible participation of the members of the academic community.

The essential provisions for student freedom to learn include:

1. Freedom of access to higher education

While the University has the right and responsibility to set admissions policies based on the characteristics and expectations of the students it considers relevant to success in the institutional program, no student will be barred from admission on the basis of race, creed, sex, handicap, religion, ancestry or national origin. Thus, within the limits of its facilities, the University is open to all students who are qualified according to its admissions standards.

2. Freedom in the classroom

The professor in the classroom and in conference should encourage free discussion, inquiry and expression. Student performance should be evaluated solely on an academic basis, not on opinions or conduct in matters unrelated to academic standards.

3. Protection of freedom of expression

Students should be free to take reasoned exception to the data or views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion. They are nonetheless responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.

4. Protection against improper academic evaluation

Students should have protection through orderly procedures against prejudiced or capricious academic evaluation. At the same time, they are responsible for maintaining standards of academic performance established for each course in which they are enrolled.

5. Protection against improper disclosure

Information about student views, beliefs and political associations which professors acquire in the course of their work as instructors, advisors and counselors should be considered confidential. Protection against improper disclosure is a serious professional obligation. Judgments of ability and character may be provided under appropriate circumstances, normally with the knowledge and consent of the student.

6. English Proficiency

The University has established procedures to certify that all classroom activities are conducted by individuals with sufficient proficiency in spoken and written English. Student complaints concerning the English proficiency of an individual with classroom responsibilities should follow grievance procedures.

THE HONOR CODE

The first law of academic life is intellectual honesty. It is the responsibility of every member of the USCB community to uphold and maintain the high academic standards of the University. Students of the University are expected to be honest and forthright in their academic endeavors. To falsify the results of one's research, to steal the words or ideas of another or to cheat on an examination corrupts the essential process by which knowledge is advanced.

Jurisdiction

All students enrolled at USCB, whether full-time or part-time, shall be subject to the Academic Code of Conduct (The Honor Code). The USCB Chancellor, USC President, and USC Board of Trustees are ultimately responsible for governing the university.

The Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs (EVCAA) is responsible for maintaining and enforcing the Academic Code of Conduct. The EVCAA is also responsible for executing any sanctions resulting from violations of the Code and for keeping records.

Honor Code Responsibilities: Student and Faculty

The USCB Honor code establishes the general standards of academic accountability for students at USCB. All members of the academic community of the University share the responsibility to advance, support and enforce academic honesty and integrity.

The following obligations must be assumed by students and faculty of the University in order to meet this responsibility:

- Prepare thoroughly for examinations and assignments;
- Take the initiative to prevent other students from copying exams or assignments;
- Discourage dishonesty among other students;
- Refuse to assist students who cheat;

- Report observed cases of academic dishonesty immediately;
- Maintain the confidentiality of examinations by not disclosing any information, whether directly or indirectly, to another student still to write that same examination;
- Consult with faculty and other sources to clarify the definition of plagiarism;
- Learn to recognize techniques of proper attribution of sources used to prepare written work and identify allowable resource materials or aids to be used during examinations or completion of any graded work;
- Conduct all academic work within the letter and spirit of academic honesty, which prohibits giving or receiving unauthorized aid in the academic process;
- Discuss the issues of cheating, academic misconduct, fabrication and plagiarism at the beginning of each semester and before major exams or assignments;
- Make sure students understand the reference requirements for assigned papers and the extent of collaboration expected or allowed on class or team projects;
- Verify faculty signatures on change of grade forms;
- Exercise caution in the preparation, duplication and security of examinations to ensure that students cannot gain improper advance knowledge of their contents;
- Specify prior to an examination or assignment what materials (books, notes, equipment, etc.) students may have in their possession or to what degree they may collaborate; and
- Prepare new exams each semester or administer alternate forms of the same exams.

HONOR VIOLATIONS

The following acts of academic dishonesty are considered violations of the USCB Honor Code and subject the student to disciplinary action:

Lying

Lying includes the deliberate misrepresentation of any situation or fact, in part or whole, for the purpose of avoiding or postponing the completion of any assignment, duty, test or examination in the course, internship or program.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the representation of someone else's words, ideas or data as one's own work. All work for credit that includes the words, ideas or data of others must acknowledge the source of that information through complete, accurate and specific references and, if verbatim statements are included, quotation marks. By placing his or her name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgments.

Students will avoid charges of plagiarism by acknowledging indebtedness:

- Whenever they quote another person's actual words;
- Whenever they use another person's idea, opinion or theory even if this is completely paraphrased in their own words; and
- Whenever they borrow facts, statistics or other illustrative materials, unless the information is common knowledge.

Persons commit plagiarism when they:

- Submit another person's work in lieu of their own work;
- Submit the work, sentences, ideas, conclusion and/or examples from a source (a book, an article, another student's paper, etc.) without acknowledging the source; or

- Knowingly aid another student in plagiarizing an assignment or allows another student or students to complete all or part of his or her course work and/or examination;
- Commit self-plagiarism, i.e. submitting the same work in more than one course.

Plagiarism, even a first offense, may result in a failing grade for the assignment or the course in addition to any sanctions assigned by the Honor Court or EVCAA. Consult the [USCB Libraries](#) for resources to guide citing work.

Bribery

Bribery involves the offering, giving, receiving or soliciting of anything of value to obtain a grade or consideration a student would not expect to achieve from his or her own academic performance.

Cheating

Any conduct during a program, course, quiz, examination or any other assignment which involves the unauthorized giving, receiving, offering or soliciting of information. Cheating includes, but is not restricted to, the following:

- The submission of another person's work in lieu of one's own work;
- Unauthorized use of laboratory reports, term papers, thesis or other written materials, in whole or in part;
- The buying, selling, theft, obtaining, using or giving of any examination or quiz prior to its administration;
- Unauthorized use of any electronic or mechanical device during any assignment or examination;
- Use of prepared materials, notes, or texts other than those specified and permitted by the instructor during an examination or quiz;
- Unauthorized collaboration on any test, assignment or project.

Academic Misconduct may include:

- Stealing, buying or otherwise illicitly obtaining all or part of an administered test;
- Selling or giving away all or part of an un-administered test, including answers to an un-administered test;
- Bribing any other person to obtain an un-administered test or any information about the test;
- Entering a building, office or computer system for the purpose of changing a grade or work for which a grade is given;
- Changing, altering, or being an accessory to the changing and/or altering of a grade in a grade book, on a test, a "change of grade" form or other official academic records of the University which relate to grades;
- Entering a building, office or electronic system for the purpose of obtaining an un-administered test.

Withdrawal from the University or Course

A student who has violated or who has been charged with the violation of any regulation of the University may not be permitted to withdraw from the University without the permission of the EVCAA. A notation of circumstances under which the accused student was permitted to withdraw shall be entered in the minutes of the Honor Court, if convened. The withdrawal of a student with or without approval shall not deprive the Honor Court of the power to hear charges against the student.

DUE PROCESS FOR ALLEGED ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Allegations and Reporting

Whether decided by a faculty-student conference or an Honor Court hearing, any allegation of academic misconduct requires a preponderance of evidence demonstrating the student's responsibility in committing academic misconduct in order for sanctions to be applied. The burden of proof shall be on the faculty member making the allegation.

Pre-Reporting Intervention

A faculty member who suspects an infraction of the Academic Code must first inform the student of their suspicions and offer the student an opportunity to respond. If the faculty has questions about the pre-reporting intervention, contact academicintergity@uscb.edu for guidance.

- a. Within *five (5) calendar days* of observing the suspected infraction, the faculty member must notify the student. This notification must include a description of the alleged infraction (including a reference to the specific policy in question), a summary of any evidence, a statement of penalties to be imposed or recommended if the student is found to be responsible for the infraction, and a request for a one-on-one conference to discuss the matter.
- b. The student must respond to this notification *within 72 hours*. If the student does not respond within 72 hours, then faculty member may proceed to file an official [Academic Misconduct Report](#) and notify the student of the faculty member's intent to proceed with any faculty imposed sanctions the faculty member finds appropriate. Even if a student chooses not to respond within the 72 hour window, the student may still request an Honor Court hearing *within 10 days* of the original letter of notification to appeal these sanctions.
- c. The student or faculty member may request the presence of a representative from Honor Court to mediate the one-on-one conference.

A conference can have one of four possible outcomes:

<i>Possible Outcome #1</i>	The faculty member decides that there was no academic misconduct and the matter is dismissed.
<i>Possible Outcome #2</i>	The student and faculty member agree that a misunderstanding has occurred that does not rise to the level of academic misconduct. The faculty member may offer the student an opportunity to redo the assignment or may offer an alternate assignment with or without an upper limit to the possible grade for that assignment.
<i>Possible Outcome #3</i>	The student admits to an act of academic misconduct, the faculty member applies appropriate faculty-imposed sanctions (see Penalties and Sanctions, below) and fills out an Academic Misconduct Report .
<i>Possible Outcome #4</i>	The faculty member and student are unable to come to an agreement. The faculty member applies appropriate faculty-imposed sanctions and fills out an Academic Misconduct Report . The student may request an Honor Court hearing to review the faculty member's decision and make recommendations to the EVCAA.

Student Notification

After the Academic Affairs Office receives and accepts an Academic Misconduct Report, the EVCAA or designee on behalf of the EVCAA shall issue a letter of notification to the student. This letter will inform the student that the report has been filed and added to their record. It will also inform the student of the number of offenses on their record and what that record could mean in terms sanctions and penalties related to any subsequent offenses.

HONOR COURT HEARINGS

An Honor Court Hearing may be convened for one of the following reasons:

- Depending on the severity of the misconduct alleged in the report, the faculty member may request for the EVCAA to convene an Honor Court hearing or the EVCAA may convene an Honor Court at their discretion upon a first reported offense.
- Upon receiving a second or subsequent [Academic Misconduct Report](#) an Honor Court hearing may be convened, at the EVCAA's discretion.
- A student may request an Honor Court hearing to review any sanctions applied directly by faculty due to allegations of academic misconduct.
- By approval of the EVCAA to hear cases related to academic grievances defined in Student Development Policy [539](#).

The Honor Court will be appointed by the EVCAA and will consist of three faculty members plus one alternate and two student members plus one alternate. The Honor Court will adjudicate the case and will recommend sanctions when necessary.

When Honor Court is convened, the student will be sent a written notice to appear at a scheduled hearing.

The notice will include:

- The general nature of the charge;
- The time and place of the hearing; and
- The right to be accompanied by an advisor throughout the hearing process.

The advisor, with the written permission of the charged student(s) or student organization(s), may:

- Advise the accused regarding preparation for the hearing;
- Accompany the accused to all conduct proceedings;
- Have access to evidence to be introduced at the hearing.

NOTE: Advisors are not permitted to participate directly in the hearing process, or to speak for the charged student(s) or student organization(s).

The student charged with infractions and the faculty member alleging the infraction shall have the following rights at an Honor Court hearing.

The Right to:

- Be present, either in person or through video conferencing software for all testimony;
- Call witnesses;
- Question witnesses;
- Testify on his or her own behalf;
- Enter into the record statements bearing on the matter under consideration.

Honor Court Procedure

The Honor Court Chair will introduce the case, calling first on the individual making the charge, then on the student charged with the violation. The court members may question all parties who may decline to answer any or all questions. After both sides have presented their cases and all testimony has been given, the court will deliberate the case. All other participants will be requested to leave. The court will reach a decision by a majority vote. Should a tie vote occur, it will be considered as favoring the student charged. If the decision is unfavorable to the student, the court will recommend sanctions according to the regulations below.

Once the court has reached a decision and recommended sanctions (if necessary), the student will be informed both in person (immediately after the decision) and in writing. The results of the hearing will be forwarded to the EVCAA.

The Chair of the Honor Court must make a recording of all judicial hearings. The charged party or parties and their advisor shall have the right, upon request, to listen to the recording in the presence of a staff member of the Office of the EVCAA. The charged student may request a duplicate copy of the recording at his/her own expense within a period of six months from the date of the hearing.

After the hearing, the EVCAA shall be responsible for forwarding the written decision of the University Honor Court to the charged party or parties. The letter from the Honor Court shall consist of a statement of charges; findings of the hearing authority and the rationale for the findings; sanction(s) and the rationale for the sanction(s); and a statement regarding the right to appeal and the appeal procedures.

All statements, information, or comments given during hearings will be held in strictest confidence by members of the USCB faculty, staff and witnesses before, during and after deliberation. Only duly authorized persons or faculty and staff with an educational need to know will be informed of the proceedings and outcome.

SANCTIONS AND PENALTIES

In the interest of consistency, sanctions and penalties must be imposed as follows:

Faculty Imposed Sanctions

Following the required faculty-student conference, if faculty still believes the student has committed an infraction of the academic code, the faculty member may assign a failing grade for the assignment or the course and submit an [Academic Misconduct Report](#). If the faculty member assigns a failing grade due to

academic misconduct, they must submit a report. A student may still request an Honor Court hearing after the assignment of a failing grade and submission of an [Academic Misconduct Report](#).

All Other Sanctions and Penalties

May only be imposed by the EVCAA at the recommendation of Honor Court as described below.

Levels of Violation

First Violation

Circumstances and the severity of the violation will determine the sanction. Any or all of the following may be imposed for a first offense:

- Withdrawal from the course with a failing grade (WF)– an extraordinary step and only by specific direction of the Honor Court.
- “X” on the transcript before a grade denoting an Honor Code Violation.
- Research Project or Academic Integrity Learning Module. This sanction can be assigned for the educational benefit of the student and should be related to academic integrity or ethics on the whole or in the discipline in which the offense occurred. The report is submitted to the Chair of the Honor Court.
- Probation. A period of review and observation during which a student is under an official warning that subsequent violations of the Honor Code are likely to result in a more severe sanction including suspension or expulsion from the University. Students on probation may be barred from participating in any or all extra- or co-curricular activities.
- Suspension from the University for a period of no less than one semester.
- Expulsion from the University.
- A combination of the above sanctions.

Second Violation

Either of the following sanctions may be imposed, effective immediately:

- Suspension (for up to one academic year); or
- Permanent suspension.

In either case, the student will receive a failing grade in the course in which the violations occurred and a “W” or “WF” in all other courses. The suspension period will begin immediately following the conclusion of the case. Although a student will not be allowed to enroll in summer school during the suspension period, summer sessions will not count as suspension periods.

Third Violation

A third violation necessitates permanent suspension from USCB.

APPEALS

The initial phase of the student appeal must take the form of a written appeal within *five (5) class days* of the Honor Court decision. If there is no appeal within this time limit, the EVCAA shall implement the decision.

The request for appeal shall be by memorandum addressed to the faculty Chair of the Honor Court through the EVCAA. The memo must state the reason(s) for believing the decision of the original hearing authority to be improper as noted below.

The charged party or parties may submit an appeal of the Honor Court decision under one of these circumstances:

- There has been an alleged deviation from procedural rules that prejudiced the findings of the committee.
- New evidence has become available that was not known or available at the time of the hearing.

Within *twenty (20) class days* of the receipt of the student's appeal, the EVCAA will re-examine all materials pertaining to the case and arrive at a decision. The EVCAA may dismiss the appeal for failure to meet criteria for appeal, approve or reverse the decision of the court, or may change the sanction.

FINAL DISPOSITION

The EVCAA will be responsible for implementing any imposed sanctions. The EVCAA will also inform the Registrar if the sanctions require any restrictions on the student's future enrollment or actions to be officially noted on the student's transcript. The Office of Academic Affairs will keep records of all foregoing procedures in a confidential file.

HISTORY OF REVISION

DATE OF REVISION	REASON FOR REVISION
April 22, 2022	Faculty Senate approved policy updates that added definitions and modernized content and institutional practices.
May 1, 2023	Policy formatting updated and add clarifying language related to final disposition.