Academic Honesty Policy

**Custodian of Policy:** Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic and Student Affairs

**Relevant Minnesota State System Policy:** Board Policy 3.6.1

**Effective Date:** February 2020

**Last Review:** Fall 2024

**Next Review:** Fall 2031

Policy

The University expects all students to represent themselves in an honest fashion. In academic work, students are expected to present their original ideas and to give credit for the ideas of others.

Faculty members have academic freedom, which includes the authority to design and develop materials presented in a course along with deciding how to teach the course. Also, faculty members have the authority to evaluate submissions from students to determine what grade is to be given to each student in the course or on a particular activity.

When an instructor has convincing evidence of cheating or plagiarism, the instructor has a variety of options, which may include the following academic outcomes (this list is not exhaustive):

* A failing grade may be assigned for the course in which the student cheated.
* The course grade may be reduced.
* The assignment may be given a zero.
* The individual item on the assignment may be given a zero.
* The student may be required to re-submit the assignment.
* The student may be required to submit an alternative assignment that meets the same learning outcomes.

The instructor shall report the incident of academic dishonesty and the academic outcome to the college dean in instances where a failing grade in a course is given solely due to academic dishonesty. The instructor may also choose to report the incident of academic dishonesty and the academic outcome to the college dean for other cases, at the instructor’s discretion. If the instructor, dean, or any other person feels the seriousness of the offense warrants additional action, the incident may also be reported to the Assistant Dean of Students, [**Troy Schmidt**](mailto:troy.schmidt@mnstate.edu), in the Dean of Students Office, who will determine any relevant student conduct outcome.

* For students who are referred, past case history will be reviewed to determine if any additional disciplinary, non-academic outcomes should be assessed. The Assistant Dean of Students, [**Troy Schmidt**](mailto:troy.schmidt@mnstate.edu), may assess non-academic outcomes in addition to the academic outcomes in situations including, but not limited to, the following: if there are repeated academic dishonesty violations, if a student takes a test for another student, if a student obtains an unauthorized copy of a test, if a student misrepresents facts to receive a postponement or extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment.
* The Assistant Dean of Students, [**Troy Schmidt**](mailto:troy.schmidt@mnstate.edu), does not provide an academic outcome for students found responsible for violating University Prohibited Conduct Policies nor requests or initiates any academic outcome in such cases; rather, a student conduct outcome is assigned and recorded within the student’s disciplinary record. See the Student Conduct Code located in the Student Handbook.

Definitions

**Cheating:**

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

* The use of any unauthorized assistance in taking quizzes, tests, or examinations in the classroom or online learning environment;
* The use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving homework problems, or carrying out other assignments;
* The acquisition, without permission, of tests, solution keys, or other academic material belonging to a member of the MSUM faculty or staff; or
* Engaging in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to:

* The use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment, or
* The unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials or misrepresentation of student work in an online environment (i.e. submitting work prepared by someone else).

Procedures

It is important that students be provided an opportunity to respond to allegations of academic dishonesty within a reasonable time after the allegations have been made. Modifications can be made to the following, but minimal due process must be satisfied.

Minimal due process requires faculty 1) to tell the student the alleged specific behavior in question and 2) to provide an opportunity for the student to respond to the allegation prior to the faculty member determining an academic outcome. Note: In cases where a student is asked to re-submit an assignment, such as when they have improperly cited a reference, these two criteria are generally met when the instructor asks for an assignment to be corrected and resubmitted. In serious cases, due process will likely be more formal, and in such cases, it is recommended that detailed notes be kept regarding these matters.

When a case is reported to the Dean of Students Office, the Assistant Dean of Students, [**Troy Schmidt**](mailto:troy.schmidt@mnstate.edu), will follow procedures set out in the Student Conduct Code. After the review of the case and a fair, unbiased hearing, the Assistant Dean of Students, [**Troy Schmidt**](mailto:troy.schmidt@mnstate.edu), may take disciplinary action if the student is found to be responsible.

A student who has a course grade reduced by an instructor because of cheating or plagiarism, and who disputes the instructor's finding, may appeal the grade, but only by using the Grade Appeal Policy, which states that the student must prove the grade was arbitrary, prejudicial, or in error.

Rationale

The University is committed to the core value of integrity and mutual respect in our conduct and interactions. The value of a college degree, moreover, depends on the integrity of the work completed by the student.