



## **Kutztown University Policy ACA-027**

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### **Academic Honesty – Undergraduate Students**

#### **A. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to define the procedures and penalties for academic dishonesty for undergraduate students.

Kutztown University is committed to the personal and intellectual growth of its students. The principal context in which this growth occurs is the University's courses, and the educational process depends upon an open and honest atmosphere of positive cooperation between faculty and students. In order to maintain this atmosphere, instructors must evaluate the academic performance of students fairly and students must demonstrate their mastery of subject matter honorably. Any acts of academic dishonesty by students, such as plagiarism on written papers or cheating on exams, threaten to undermine the educational and ethical goals of the University for its students. Such violations are of the utmost seriousness. The goal of the following policy and procedures is to promote a climate of academic honesty at the University.

#### **B. Scope**

This policy applies to all undergraduate students.

#### **C. Key words and phrases:**

GPA – stands for grade point average.

CGPA – stands for cumulative grade point average.

#### **D. Policy & Procedure(s)**

##### *Definitions of Academic Dishonesty*

Academic dishonesty is any action that constitutes a violation of the Academic Honesty Policy and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Providing or receiving unauthorized assistance in coursework, examinations, or lab work.
2. Using unauthorized notes, materials, and devices during examinations or quizzes.
3. Plagiarizing or representing someone else's words, either spoken or written, ideas, formulas, solutions, or data as one's own work.
4. Presenting material to fulfill course requirements that was researched or prepared by others (such as commercial services) without the knowledge of the instructor.

## Policy ACA-027

5. Fabricating or falsifying information, including, but not limited to research findings, data, or statistical analyses; forging signatures; or altering dates.
6. Engaging in academic misconduct such as tampering with grades or participating in the distribution and/or receipt of any part of a test before its administration.
7. Possessing or arranging for someone else to possess course examination or quiz materials at any time without the consent of the instructor.
8. Altering or adding or expanding upon answers on exercises, examinations, or quizzes after the work has been graded.
9. Making fraudulent statements, excuses, or claims to gain academic credit or influence testing or grading.
10. Taking examinations or quizzes under the identity of another person or arranging to have another person take examinations or quizzes in place of the person registered for the course.
11. Intentionally evading Kutztown University academic policies and procedures; for example, improperly processing course withdrawals, grade changes, or other academic procedures.
12. Buying, selling, stealing, or engaging in the unauthorized exchange of, or improperly acquiring and/or using, any assignments, papers, or projects.
13. Misrepresenting a mastery of subject matter in an academic project or attempt to gain an advantage by the use of illegitimate or unauthorized means, such as misrepresentation of one's credentials.
14. Gaining unauthorized access to the computer system and/or electronic devices of Kutztown University or another person. Violations include tampering with or copying programs or data or access codes associated with coursework.
15. Using graded assignments in another course. Exceptions to this guideline must be specifically stated in the course syllabus.

**Responsibilities of the University**

It is the responsibility of University officials to make undergraduate students aware of this policy. The Academic Honesty Policy – Undergraduate Students will be included in freshmen orientation, printed in the Faculty Handbook, available on the Policy Register, and printed in *The Key*, the student handbook. University officials will take advantage of other opportunities to publicize the University's commitment to academic honesty.

**Responsibilities of Students**

1. It is the responsibility of students to be aware of this policy and abide by it at all times. Lack of familiarity with this policy does not excuse students from their responsibilities under this policy.
2. Students accused of academic dishonesty must meet the time deadlines specified in the procedures set forth below or they will forfeit their rights to a formal hearing and to appeal a sanction.
3. Students who observe or have knowledge of acts of academic dishonesty are encouraged to bring the information to the attention of their instructors or to officials of the University. Students should be willing to testify concerning these matters if subsequent formal hearings result.

## Policy ACA-027

4. Students have the right to participate, as complainants or as co-complainants with the instructor, in bringing charges of academic dishonesty against other students.
5. Students should review instructors' course syllabi for sections dealing with academic dishonesty for information on what style sheets or standards manuals to use, etc. Students should always seek clarification of the instructor's expectations for the course. Instructors should set clear guidelines at the beginning of their courses for what constitutes dishonesty; ultimately, however, it is the student's responsibility to ask for clarification.

**Responsibilities of Faculty Members and Administrators**

1. It is the responsibility of faculty members who become aware of acts of academic dishonesty to investigate, gather evidence, bring charges, participate in the resolution of cases that they initiate, and administer appropriate sanctions according to the policy and procedures set forth below.
2. As a preventive measure against such acts, instructors are strongly encouraged to inform students at the beginning of each course that they intend to uphold this policy.
3. In addition, whenever there is a potential for ambiguity as to how the policy applies to specific course activities and assignments, instructors should explain clearly to students what procedures, activities, and resources are allowed.
4. Administrators who become aware of breaches of the Academic Honesty Policy – Undergraduate Students may bring charges or participate, as co-complainants, in bringing charges of academic dishonesty.
5. Administrators and faculty members must ensure that students accused of academic dishonesty who intend to request a formal hearing in order to contest the allegations may continue to attend class in a course in progress pending resolution of the case.
6. If the course in question ends before the case is resolved, the faculty member will submit a grade of "NG" (no grade), that will be replaced with the appropriate grade upon resolution of the case.
7. When in the opinion of the instructor the act of academic dishonesty cannot be resolved within the framework of the course, the instructor should pursue the procedures outlined below.

**Sanctions**

One or more of the following sanctions may be imposed upon a student who commits a single act or multiple acts of academic dishonesty. The determination of the sanctions to be imposed depends on the severity of the offense or offenses. In the event that a student agrees to accept the charges made by the course instructor using the informal process or loses an appeal through the formal resolution process, the course instructor will administer either the first or second sanction below. In the event that the current offense represents a second or multiple offense or the current single offense is of such severity, the Undergraduate Academic Honesty Committee may recommend (after a formal hearing) suspension or dismissal from the University. Such a dismissal or suspension may mean the loss of all academic credits earned during the semester in which the most recent offense occurred in accordance with University policy. No course grade where a penalty for academic honesty has been assessed can be appealed under the University's Grade Appeal Policy.

## Policy ACA-027

1. The student may be given a grade-reduction penalty within the course in which the act occurred and/or be required to fulfill additional academic requirements within the course at the discretion of the instructor. The grade reduction may encompass one portion of a course (such as a particular assignment or exam) or apply to the entire course (such as dropping the student one letter grade).
2. The student may be given a failing grade of “F” for the course. Instructors have the right to assign such a grade for any instance of academic dishonesty, and the student may not withdraw from the course in order to avoid this penalty.
3. The student may be temporarily suspended from enrollment at the University.
4. The student may be permanently dismissed from enrollment at the University.

### PROCEDURES

No sanction for academic dishonesty may be imposed upon a student without following the procedures established in this policy.

Students accused of academic dishonesty in the context of a course in progress who intend to request a formal hearing in order to contest the allegations may continue to attend the class in question until the case is resolved. If the course in question ends before the case is resolved, the instructor shall submit a grade of “NG” (no grade), that will be replaced with the appropriate grade upon resolution of the case.

The term “class days” as used in this policy refers to days when classes are officially scheduled at the University during the Fall and Spring semesters and during the Summer and Winter sessions. Thus, final exam days, holidays, recesses, and breaks are excluded. The term “week” refers to any period of time spanning five class days. Formal hearings are only held during the Fall and Spring semesters. If a case is not resolved by the end of the course in which the alleged violation occurred, then the matter is continued to the following Fall or Spring semester.

If a violation is discovered after the instructor of the course is no longer employed by the University or if the time deadlines for a case extend beyond the period of employment of the instructor, then the chair of the department in question or the chair’s designee may substitute for the instructor in the procedures associated with this policy.

### The Informal Resolution Process

The informal resolution process applies to situations when the instructor believes that an alleged act of academic dishonesty can be resolved within the course by enforcing either the first or second sanction, that is, where the maximum penalty sought by the instructor is no greater than failure in the course with a grade of “F.” Instructors are urged to confer with or at least inform the chair of the department in question about any charges of academic dishonesty.

#### **1. Arranging the initial meeting between the instructor and the student.**

Within two (2) weeks of when the instructor first becomes aware of an instance of academic dishonesty in the course, the instructor shall inform the student that the student must meet with the instructor to discuss the incident.

**2. The initial meeting and filling out the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Undergraduate Students*.**

The meeting between the instructor and the student shall occur within one (1) week after the instructor calls for it and shall be confirmed by email. Before or during the meeting, the instructor shall fill out the appropriate sections of the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Undergraduate Students* (including the proposed sanction) and give it to the student during the meeting. The instructor should retain a copy of the completed form. While the instructor and the student may wish to discuss the case and its resolution at this meeting, no lengthy discussion is required. Even if the case eventually results in a formal hearing, the instructor shall not impose a sanction any stronger than the proposed sanction on this form.

If the student does not appear for the scheduled meeting, the instructor dates and files the completed form with the Registrar, noting that the student failed to show up for the meeting. If the meeting is not rescheduled by the student within three (3) days of the original specified meeting day, then the student forfeits the student's right to a formal hearing or appeal, the process is over, and the instructor is permitted to enforce the proposed sanction.\*

\*In the event that a face-to-face meeting is not possible (e.g., unavailability of instructor, online course), correspondence by email would serve in place of completion of the form. An email, using a KU email account, copying the student, Registrar, dean of the college, and department chair is sent by the instructor and will count as a signature.

**3. The student's completion and signing of the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Undergraduate Students*.**

The student must sign, date, and return the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Undergraduate Students* to the instructor within three (3) class days of the initial meeting. Failure to do so means that the student forfeits the student's right to a formal hearing or appeal, the process is over, and the instructor is permitted to enforce the proposed sanction.

There are two (2) options for the student when signing. By signing under Option #1, the student admits the violation and waives the student's right to a formal hearing or appeal on the matter. In that event, the process is over, and the instructor is permitted to enforce the proposed sanction.

By signing under Option #2, the student indicates that the student has been informed of the accusations and intended sanction, but has not admitted to committing a violation or disagrees with the proposed sanction. Signing under Option #2 reserves the student's right to request a formal hearing by hand-delivering a letter to the Registrar within one (1) week of the student's date on the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Undergraduate Students*. Failure to do so means that the student forfeits the student's right to a formal hearing or appeal, the process is over, and the instructor is permitted to enforce the proposed sanction.

#### 4. Reports and record keeping.

When the instructor receives the signed *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Undergraduate Students* from the student, the instructor shall make three copies: one for the instructor, one for the student, and one for the dean of the college in which the course is being taught. The original form, along with any relevant documentation, shall be hand-delivered to the Registrar within one (1) week of receiving the form from the student.

If the student does not return the form within the three (3) day limit, then the instructor will note the failure to meet that deadline on the copy of the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Undergraduate Students* that the instructor retained from the initial meeting. The instructor then re-signs and dates that notation on the form. The instructor then makes three (3) copies: one for the instructor, one for the student, and one for the dean of the college in which the course is being taught. The original copy of the form, along with any relevant documentation, shall be hand-delivered to the Registrar within one (1) week of the date when the student returns the form to the instructor. As stated above, the process is over and the instructor is permitted to enforce the proposed sanction.

The original copies of these *Academic Dishonesty Report Forms – Undergraduate Students* where students admitted to a violation by signing under Option #1, failed to meet with the instructor, or failed to meet the three-day deadline to return the signed form to the instructor shall be kept by the Registrar. These records are to be kept by the Registrar as evidence to be used in the event of future academic dishonesty violations by the same student. These records also may be used to tabulate anonymous statistical information.

If the student in question is eventually dismissed from the University, these records shall be expunged after a six-year period (sanction #4). If a student is suspended from the University, these records are expunged after a six-year period (sanction #3). Otherwise, student records and all copies (sanctions #1 and #2) are destroyed two (2) years after the student graduates or leaves the University.

5. The student has ten (10) calendar days from the date the student was notified of the alleged academic dishonesty to request a formal hearing if the student misses the deadline to appear for a scheduled meeting, does not reschedule the meeting within three (3) days, or fails to return the *Academic Dishonesty Form – Undergraduate Students* within three (3) days.

### The Formal Resolution Process

#### 1. Initiation of the Formal Resolution Process.

The Formal Resolution Process may be initiated by instructors, complaining students, or the Registrar.

- a. An instructor may initiate the Formal Resolution Process when the instructor, preferably in consultation with their department chair, seeks a sanction greater than failure in the course with a grade of “F” or the student involved was not enrolled in

## Policy ACA-027

the course in question. In such cases, the instructor shall initiate the charges by submitting an *Academic Dishonesty Form – Undergraduate Students* along with supporting evidence to the Registrar within two (2) weeks of becoming aware of the violation.

- b. A responding student, who signed the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Undergraduate Students* under Option #2, may initiate the Formal Resolution Process when the student wishes to dispute the accusation(s) or sanction(s) described by the instructor on the form. In order to do this, the student must submit a written request for a formal hearing to the Registrar within one (1) week of the date given next to the student's name on the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Undergraduate Students*. The request must explain the nature of the student's disagreement with the charges or sanctions. Copies of the student's request shall be sent to the instructor and the dean of the college by the Registrar as soon as the request for a formal hearing is received.

## 2. Preliminary briefing of the principals by the Registrar.

The principal participants, or principals for short, in a case are defined to be students accused of academic dishonesty and those who have accused them either by signing an *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Undergraduate Students*. If the student has requested a formal hearing, a letter with copies of the request will also be sent to the instructor and the dean. The letter will invite the student to meet with the Registrar for a preliminary briefing on the case. The responding student has one (1) week to schedule a time for such a briefing that will explain the process at the University and the student's rights. During this same period of time, the Registrar shall also invite the instructor and any other complainants to a meeting to explain the process and the instructor's rights and those of any other complainants.

A formal hearing of the Undergraduate Academic Honesty Committee\* will be scheduled within three (3) weeks of the date of the certified letter to the student. The Registrar shall make every effort to schedule the formal hearing at a time when all principals interested in attending can be there. Those who attend will be able to speak at appropriate times during the hearing.

\*The Undergraduate Academic Honesty Committee is a six-member Senate committee, five voting members and one non-voting member. Four undergraduate faculty, one from each college, and an at-large undergraduate faculty representative will be voting members of the committee. A representative from the Registrar's Office will be a non-voting member of the committee.

## 3. The Formal Hearing by the Undergraduate Academic Honesty Committee.

The Undergraduate Academic Honesty Committee shall adjudicate cases of academic dishonesty that have not been resolved by the Informal Resolution Process. The formal hearing will be conducted according to due process procedures and guidelines. The Undergraduate Academic Honesty Committee shall hear any testimony and/or review evidence relevant to the allegations. After doing so, the Undergraduate Academic Honesty Committee shall make a finding as to whether or not the student violated this policy by committing an act of academic dishonesty. All principal parties are entitled to appear at the

## Policy ACA-027

hearing with an advisor, who may be an attorney.

The Undergraduate Academic Honesty Committee shall make a finding based on the testimony and evidence presented. The standard of evidence used in such proceedings is preponderance, therefore, a decision of responsibility will be based upon presented evidence sufficient to make a reasonable person believe that it was more likely than not a student is in violation of University policy.

Within one (1) week of the formal hearing, the Undergraduate Academic Honesty Committee shall render its decision in a written report, including recommended sanctions in the event of a responsible finding that shall be sent to the respondent, the complainant(s), the dean of the college, Registrar, and the chair of the department.

#### **4. Appeals.**

##### **a. The First Appeal.**

Any principal participant in a case may appeal the findings of the Undergraduate Academic Honesty Committee to the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The appeal must be in writing and must describe in detail the grounds for the appeal and what alternate decision is desired instead. These grounds for appeal may include such claims as denial of due process, new evidence, an erroneous finding, and an inappropriate recommended sanction of suspension or dismissal.

This appeal must be made within one (1) week of the ruling made by the Undergraduate Academic Honesty Committee. If not, the ruling of the Undergraduate Academic Honesty Committee shall be enforced. The Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall deny or uphold the appeal and shall have the power to modify the recommended sanction of temporary suspension or permanent dismissal accordingly.

##### **b. The Second and Final Appeal.**

The ruling of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs may be appealed in writing under the same rules as given above to the University President, or the President's designee (who shall not be the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs). This appeal must be made within one (1) week of the ruling made by the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. If not, the ruling of the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs shall be enforced. The University President, or the President's designee (who shall not be the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs), may deny or uphold the appeal and has the power to modify the recommended sanction of temporary suspension or permanent dismissal accordingly. The ruling of the President, or the President's designee, shall be final.

#### **5. When the student is found not responsible.**

Assuming the student is found not responsible, the student has the right to complete the course in question without penalty due to this unproved accusation. The student's grade in



## Policy ACA-027

the course should be based upon the student's academic performance during the course and be consistent with grading procedures used for other students in the same course as if no complaint of academic dishonesty had ever been made. A student who is found not responsible of violating the Academic Honesty Policy, but who nevertheless feels penalized for it, can appeal the grade separately under the University's Grade Appeal Policy (if the student received an "F" in the course).

**6. When the student is found responsible.**

If the student is found to be responsible for a violation of the Academic Honesty Policy, then the instructor of the course is permitted to assess the first or second sanctions listed in this policy, provided the sanction does not exceed the proposed sanction on the *Academic Dishonesty Report Form – Undergraduate Students* that the instructor may have filled out to begin the Informal Resolution Process.

When a student is found to be responsible (either by the Undergraduate Academic Honesty Committee or during the appeal process), the Registrar shall check the student's records for earlier violations of the policy (and this policy only). If such violations exist, then the Undergraduate Academic Honesty Committee or the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs or the University President, depending on who made the finding for responsibility, may examine the records of the previous violation(s) and take them into account when considering the sanctions of temporary suspension and permanent dismissal from the University.

**7. Filing of reports and record keeping.**

As with the records of academic dishonesty in cases that are resolved by the Informal Resolution Process, the records of students found responsible through the Formal Resolution Process should be kept by the Registrar for future reference as described in Part 4 of the Informal Resolution Process above.

**E. Effective Date**

Fall 2019

**F. Approved By**

Faculty Senate - November 1, 1984  
 President Stratton - November 21, 1984  
 APSCUF Rep Council - October 9, 1997  
 University Senate - December 4, 1997  
 Endorsed by University Senate – November 6, 2018  
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Policy ACA-027

**G. Last Reviewed**

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