

I. Guidelines for Addressing Academic Misconduct

Academic honesty is a fundamental requirement in higher education. Ethical behavior is expected of all members of the University community. This document provides guidelines for addressing allegations of student academic misconduct at Southern Connecticut State University, as defined in the Student Code of Conduct (available on the University website) and other University and departmental documents relevant to academic misconduct. Faculty members and Students are responsible for knowing this relevant information upon which all claims of academic misconduct and defenses thereto shall be based.

These guidelines are based on the principle that the faculty has oversight over academic honesty, including the authority and responsibility to impose appropriate penalties when academic misconduct occurs. In instances where both academic and non-academic misconduct are alleged, only the academic portion shall be handled according to the disciplinary procedures for academic misconduct described here. The Office of Student Conduct (OSC), whose action may precede or follow any academic disciplinary action, shall address separately charges of non-academic misconduct. In instances when alleged academic misconduct includes component(s) of research misconduct the SCSU Office of Research Integrity (ORI) may be consulted as appropriate.

Throughout this document, “days” means University Calendar weekdays when the University is open.

These guidelines address:

1. Instructor’s Role and Responsibilities
2. Complaint by Person Other than the Course Instructor
3. Role of University Office of Student Conduct
4. Faculty Hearing Panels
5. Hearing Procedures
6. Student Rights and Responsibilities
7. Appeal of the Faculty Hearing Panel Ruling
8. Annual Reporting
9. Revisions to these Academic Misconduct Guidelines
10. Timelines

1. Instructor’s Role and Responsibilities.

Instructors are responsible to address the commission of acts of academic dishonesty.

a. When there are course-specific requirements for academic conduct that may not be self-evident in the Student Code of Conduct, the Instructor shall inform Students of those requirements in the course syllabus. The Instructor shall inform Students of penalties that may be imposed for academic dishonesty according to the guidelines in the Student Code of Conduct and their professional judgment. Instructors are strongly encouraged to refer Students to the Student Code of Conduct and other relevant University documents pertaining to academic misconduct in their course syllabi.

b. Incidents of academic misconduct can range in severity; Instructors determine sanctions according to their professional judgment of the severity of misconduct. At the discretion of the

Instructor, this determination may be made in consultation with the OSC (e.g., regarding patterns of past academic misconduct by an individual student and clarification of the Hearing and Appeals processes). Academic sanctions imposed by the instructor shall be related to performance in the course and be commensurate with the severity of misconduct and may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following:

- a reduced grade for the assignment in question;
- the opportunity to revise the assignment in which the act of dishonesty occurred;
- the opportunity to complete additional course work;
- a grade of F for the assignment in question;
- a grade of F for the course.

c. Instructors may decide to handle minor violations informally, according to their discretion, especially when there is no sanction imposed beyond requiring the revision of an assignment. When an Instructor determines that a more serious act of academic misconduct has occurred, within three (3) days, the Instructor shall inform the Student in writing of the infraction and shall provide an opportunity for the Student to respond to the allegation in person or in writing within five (5) days.

d. When an Instructor determines that a more serious act of academic misconduct as described in Section 1c has occurred, the Instructor shall file an Academic Misconduct Report with the Department Chairperson and College/School Dean within three (3) days of the response from the Student. Within seven (7) days, the Dean shall forward a copy of the report to the OSC and also send a copy to the Student. The Academic Misconduct Report from the Instructor must indicate the academic sanction(s) imposed and whether they recommend that additional disciplinary actions be initiated by the OSC.

e. In the case of a Student appeal, the grade given for that class shall not be considered final until the appeal process is complete. The grade shall be entered as an "I+" by the Instructor until the end of the following semester or until the appeal is finalized.

2. Complaint by Person Other Than the Course Instructor.

Any member of the University community may file a complaint against a Student alleging academic misconduct. Accusations of alleged violations by a person other than the Student's Instructor must be reported in writing within ten (10) calendar days of discovery of the alleged violation either to the Instructor or to the OSC, which shall inform the Instructor in writing within three (3) University calendar days. Upon receipt of notification, the Instructor shall assess the merit of the allegation. An Instructor who decides to pursue a claim of academic misconduct shall follow the procedure outlined in Section 1 of these guidelines, acting within three (3) University calendar days of receipt of the complaint.

3. Office of Student Conduct Role.

The Office of Student Conduct (OSC) shall have specific responsibilities regarding notification, record keeping and hearings related to academic misconduct.

- a. The OSC shall retain records of all reported cases of academic misconduct, including Academic Misconduct Reports submitted by Instructors and written complaints received from others.

- b. The OSC shall report the number and nature of incidents and the disposition of prior hearings to an Instructor seeking input on how to regard an incident.
- c. The OSC shall report the number and nature of incidents and the disposition of prior hearings to hearing officers during the sanctioning phase of an academic misconduct hearing.
- d. The OSC shall notify Instructors of academic misconduct complaints it receives from sources other than the course Instructor, as described in Section 2 of these guidelines.
- e. Within ten (10) days of receipt of an Academic Misconduct Report, the OSC shall review recommendations by the Instructor for further action and determine one of the following: a) the case requires no further action; or b) the case is eligible for an administrative resolution in consultation with the student, the reporting faculty and, if the faculty member is unavailable, the Chairperson of the Department in which the class was taught; c) the case merits a hearing with the University-wide Academic Standing Committee (UASC). The Student shall be notified of the determination within this 10-day period.
- f. When no further disciplinary action is requested by the faculty member, but the student has a previous academic misconduct record that may warrant further action, the OSC shall consult with the UASC and determine whether to convene a hearing.

4. Faculty Hearing Panels.

- a. A Faculty Hearing Panel made up of members of the University-wide Academic Standing Committee (UASC) shall have the responsibility of reviewing student appeals and/or referrals from the OSC.
- b. A Faculty Hearing Panel shall be convened when one or more of the following conditions are satisfied:
 - a Student seeks to appeal the Instructor's finding of misconduct;
 - a Student seeks to appeal sanctions imposed by an Instructor for academic misconduct;
 - a Student seeks to appeal sanctions based on an Instructor's failure to follow the procedures set forth in this policy;
 - a Student's record of prior academic misconduct reaches two reported instances of academic misconduct while at Southern Connecticut State University;
 - the Director of the OSC determines that there has been an egregious violation as reported by the Instructor.
- c. The OSC shall notify the UASC of the need to constitute a hearing panel. Within five (5) days of notification by the OSC, the UASC shall form a hearing panel comprising a minimum of three (3) members to be convened to address a specific academic misconduct complaint. A Faculty Hearing Panel may not include a member from the Student's home Department nor from the Department that houses the course in which the alleged misconduct occurred. A representative from the OSC shall be the convener and a non-voting member of the Panel
- d. UASC members shall be available to hear appeals during the first and last week of each academic semester per the academic calendar to address end-of-semester appeals as they arise.
- e. In the case of a Student appeal, the Faculty Hearing Panel shall determine the merits of the Student appeal or OSC referral. The Faculty Hearing Panel shall not increase any academic sanctions that were originally imposed by the Instructor alleging the misconduct.

5. Hearing Procedures.

When a Faculty Hearing Panel is convened, the Panel shall operate according to the following procedures and timeline:

- a. **Scheduling of Hearing.** Hearings normally are held during the fall and spring semesters of the academic year. When the criteria set forth in section 4b have been satisfied, Faculty Hearing Panels shall be conducted within ten (10) days of receipt by the OSC of an academic misconduct report or a Student's request for a hearing during the fall and spring semesters.
- b. **Summer Hearing Panels.** If a penalty imposed for academic misconduct in a course in the spring semester would prevent a Student from continuing in a program or major, the Student is eligible to have a hearing held during the summer on a schedule determined by the UASC.
 - i. Instructors are strongly encouraged to participate in Summer Faculty Hearing Panels either in person or remotely.
 - ii. Insofar as a Summer Faculty Hearing Panel would not take place during the Academic/Contract year, the Instructor and the members of the UASC shall be compensated for their participation according to the following formula unless they are employed under a full-year contract. The members of the UASC shall receive 4 hours of non-teaching credit load for each hearing panel; the Instructor shall receive 2 hours of non-teaching credit load for each hearing panel.¹
- c. **Notice of Hearing.** A Student shall be notified in writing by the OSC when a hearing has been scheduled. The notice shall advise the Student of: i) the purpose of the hearing, ii) relevant report(s) of academic misconduct, iii) the date, time, and place of the hearing, iv) hearing procedures, including who may attend, and v) the Student's rights. The Student shall be afforded a reasonable period of time to prepare for the hearing, which shall be not less than three (3) days.
- d. **Right to Appear.** The Student and the Instructor shall have the right to be present at all stages of the hearing process except during the private deliberations of the Faculty Hearing Panel, which shall be closed to the Student, the Instructor, supporting persons, and any other person alleging misconduct. The Faculty Hearing Panel may, at its discretion, admit any person into the hearing room. The Faculty Hearing Panel, **by a majority vote**, shall have the authority to remove any person whose presence is deemed unnecessary or obstructive to the proceedings.
- e. **Opportunity to Present Positions.** Both the Instructor and the Student shall have the opportunity to present their positions to the Hearing Panel, including the opportunity to present the testimony of witnesses and documents in support of their positions, according to the hearing procedures outlined in the Notice of Hearing communicated by the OSC.
- f. **Support Person.** The Student shall have the right to be accompanied by an advisor or support person, who is a silent non-participant in the hearing, and who may not provide written testimony. Delays shall not be allowed on the basis of an advisor or support person's scheduling conflicts.
- g. **Record of Hearing.** The University shall make an audio recording of the hearing. The recording shall be the property of the University. No other recordings shall be made by any person during the hearing. Upon request, the Student shall be allowed to review the recording in a designated University office in order to prepare for an appeal of the decision rendered by the Hearing Panel. Applicable state and federal law shall govern further disclosure of the recording.

¹ See CSU-AAUP Collective Bargaining Agreement, article 10.12.1: Duties with No Load Credit. "Bargaining unit duties involving no load credit that are within the University but other than normal assignments may be offered to full-time members up to a total of 135 hours per semester (prorated for intersession or summer session as appropriate). Compensation for each 45 hours of work shall be one load credit at the compensation rates listed in Article 11."

- h. **Written Notice of Decision.** Within two (2) days after the hearing, the OSC shall inform the Student and the Instructor of the Hearing Panel's determination in writing. The decision of the Hearing Panel shall be released to the Student and Instructor in question, Department Chair, Dean, and Provost. **No other parties** shall be notified without the prior written consent of the Student. However, certain information may be released if and to the extent authorized by state or federal law.
- i. If the Hearing Panel determines that the Instructor did not provide sufficient evidence to support the alleged misconduct or academic sanctions, the Hearing Panel shall direct the Instructor to assign a grade based on the quality of the work as originally submitted. If the Instructor declines to do so, the matter shall be referred to the Instructor's Department Chairperson or designee, who shall select two (2) anonymous reviewers with sufficient expertise in the area to reevaluate the assignment. In this case, the final grade shall be the average of the grade given by the two anonymous evaluations.

6. Student Rights and Responsibilities.

- a. A Student has the right to appeal an Instructor's finding of academic misconduct or sanctions issued within five (5) days of being notified of sanctions by the Instructor or the Department. A student also has the right to appeal sanctions based on procedural violations.
- b. An appeal hearing is requested by completing and submitting an "Academic Misconduct Appeal Form" to the OSC. The appeal shall include evidence supporting the Student's position and shall follow the guidelines laid out in Section 4e.
- c. A Student accused of misconduct has the right to be heard by an impartial Hearing Body. Any concern surrounding the impartiality of the Hearing Body or any member thereof will be referred to the Vice President for Student Affairs or their designee, who will review the matter and make a determination.
- d. A Student found to have violated the Academic Misconduct Policy by a Hearing Panel may appeal the decision, as described in Section 7.
- e. When the timeline established by this document would result in a delay of the Student's progress towards degree completion, all parties shall expedite the hearing process with all due procedural promptness.

7. Appeal of the Faculty Hearing Panel Ruling.

- a. The Student may appeal the decision of the Hearing Panel to the Provost. An appeal shall be in writing and shall be delivered to the Provost within three (3) days after receipt of the Hearing Panel's written decision. The Provost or designee shall review the record of the hearing, including any and all documents presented to the Hearing Panel, along with the Student's written appeal.
- b. An appeal may be brought on four grounds: (a) a claim that an error in the hearing procedure substantially affected the decision; (b) a claim that new evidence or information material to the case was not known at the time of the hearing; (c) a claim that the academic sanctions imposed were not appropriate for violation of the Code for which the Student was found responsible; (d) a claim that the academic sanction imposed is a palpable injustice. The Provost shall have the right to deny an appeal not brought on proper grounds.

- c. The decision of the Provost shall be rendered within ten (10) days of receipt of an appeal of the Hearing Panel's decision. The decision of the Provost shall be final and there shall be no further right of appeal.

8. Annual Reporting.

At the end of each year, the OSC shall notify the Faculty Senate and the Provost of the total number of academic misconduct cases reported for the year, the number of appeals filed, and the number and type of disciplinary sanctions imposed by the Faculty Hearing Panel. No individual case decisions or outcomes shall be identified in this report. When necessary, the report shall aggregate data over several years in order to maintain confidentiality.

9. Revisions to this Academic Misconduct Policy.

The Senate, in agreement with the President of the University, shall establish revisions of this Academic Misconduct Policy.

10. Timelines.

Report of Academic Misconduct by Instructor:

	Time Frame	Action To Be Taken
Step 1	Within 3 days from incident	Instructor notifies Student in writing (Section 1c)
Step 2	Within 5 days from receipt of notification	Student response in person or writing (Section 1c)
Step 3	Within 3 days from response from Student	Instructor files an Academic Misconduct Report with the Department Chairperson and College/School Dean (Section 1d)
Step 4	Within 7 days from receipt of report	Dean forwards Academic Misconduct Report to Office of Student Conduct & sends copy to the affected Student (Section 1d)
Step 5	Within 10 days of receipt of Academic Misconduct Report	Office of Student Conduct makes determination (hearing or administrative resolution) and notifies Student (Section 3e)
Go to Hearing Timeline		

Complaint by Person Other Than the Course Instructor:

	Time Frame	Action to be Taken
Step 1	Within 10 days of discovery	Written Report of Academic Misconduct to either the Instructor OR to Office of Student Conduct (Section 2)
Option A: If to the Instructor, then		Instructor follows <i>Report of Academic Misconduct Timeline Step 1</i>
Option B: If to Office of Student Conduct, follow Step 2 below:		
Step 2	Within 3 days of reporting	Office of Student Conduct notifies Instructor of complaint (Section 2)
Step 3	Within 3 days of Instructor's notification	Instructor follows <i>Report of Academic Misconduct Timeline Step 1</i>

If a Hearing is Determined by the Office of Student Conduct or is Requested by the Student:

	Time Frame	Action To Be Taken
Step 1	Within 10 days of receipt of the report of Academic Misconduct or Appeal by the Student	A hearing must be scheduled, typically during the Fall or Spring semester of the academic year (Section 5a)
Step 2	Within five (5) days of notification by the Office of Student Conduct	UASC forms a hearing panel comprising a minimum of three (3) members to be convened to address a specific academic misconduct complaint (Section 4c)
Step 3	At least 3 days prior to the scheduled hearing	Student notification to include: date, time, place of hearing, specific allegation, possible sanctions, hearing procedures, attendees, Student's rights (Section 5c)
Step 4	Within 2 days after the hearing	Office of Student Conduct informs Student and Instructor of Hearing Panel's action in writing (Section 5h)
Step 5	Within 3 days of the receipt of the written decision from the Hearing Panel	Student may submit a written appeal of the decision to the Provost (Section 7a)
Step 6	Within 10 days of receipt of the written appeal	Provost shall render a decision (Section 7c)

Academic Misconduct Report

Instructions

- When any instance of academic dishonesty occurs, this form must be completed and submitted to the Dean of the College/School and the Chairperson of the Department in which the course resides along with evidence necessary to substantiate the claim.
- A copy of the form must be sent to the affected Student.
- Instructors may request no further action, or may request that disciplinary charges be brought by the Office of Student Conduct.

Instructor's Name _____ Department _____

Office _____ Phone _____ Email _____

Course _____ Section _____ Term _____

Student Name _____ Student ID# _____

Describe Alleged Misconduct:

Sanction(s) taken By Instructor:

_____ Reduced Grade for Assignment

_____ Opportunity to Revise Assignment

_____ Opportunity to Complete Additional Course

_____ Grade of F for Assignment

_____ Grade of F for the Course Work

_____ Other: Please specify: _____

To be completed for all allegations of Academic Misconduct:

_____ I Request No Further Action

_____ I Recommend Separate Disciplinary Actions be Initiated by the Office of Student Conduct.

Instructor's Signature

Date

Copies Sent To: Department Chairperson _____ Dean _____

Copy Sent to: Office of Student Conduct _____

Academic Misconduct Student Request for Hearing Form

Student Name _____ Student ID# _____

Course _____ Term _____

Instructor's Name _____

Department _____

Explain the basis of your appeal. Please be specific.

Please attach any additional materials that support your case.

Student's Signature

Date

Copy Sent to: Office of Student Conduct _____

Note: Academic Misconduct can include cheating, plagiarism, and other issues. Examples of what constitutes academic misconduct are presented in the Student Code of Conduct and other University graduate and undergraduate documents, including the Instructor's syllabus.