



Policy AC059: Academic Integrity

Recommended for Approval by:

A blue ink signature of Dr. Scott E. Miller, written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Scott E. Miller, VP for Academic Affairs and Provost,
Pennsylvania Western University

Approved by:

A blue ink signature of Dr. Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson, written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Dale-Elizabeth Pehrsson, President,
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Effective Date: 07/01/2022

A. Intent

To ensure that all students understand the importance of moral responsibility, honesty, and personal integrity in the learning process, and the consequences of deviation from that behavior.

B. Definition(s)

Academic Impersonation: Having another party complete a course, assignment, or exam for the student.

Cheating: The use of unauthorized materials, information, ideas, study aids, etc., in any academic exercise. May include, but is not limited to:

- copying answers from another student's exam;
- using notes, books, or other resources for an exam when not expressly permitted to do so;
- using electronic devices when not expressly permitted to do so;
- fraudulently obtaining or sharing an exam;
- submitting a term paper or other assignment written by someone else;
- plagiarizing the work of others;
- submitting the same term paper or other assignment to more than one instructor without obtaining prior permission to do so;

Conference: Communication between two or more people. May be in person, by telephone, in writing (including, but not limited to, email or mailed letter), or through videoconferencing or

other meeting technologies.

Digital Violations: The following acts are violations of academic integrity when done to benefit a student's own (or others') academic record:

- Digital Privacy and Privacy Violations: May include, but are not limited to, the willful violation of copyright laws through unauthorized sharing of information; use of material found online without proper acknowledgement of the source; interference with others' use of shared sites, etc.
- Hacking/Cracking: Seeking out weaknesses or breaking security in a computer network or system for personal gain or sabotage.

Dishonesty in Publication: Intentionally submitting/publishing inaccurate information.

Fabrication: The falsification or invention of any information or citation in academic work. Examples include, but are not limited to, citation of information not taken from the source indicated, listing in a bibliography sources not actually consulted, and inventing data or other information for research or other academic projects.

Improper Research Practices: Falsifying data, research procedures or protocols, violating subject confidentiality, or in any other way conducting research in an improper manner.

Academic Misconduct: Falsifying, tampering with, or creating records such as transcripts, diplomas, verifications of enrollment; failure to report previous academic work when applying. Academic misconduct also includes:

- Stealing, buying, or otherwise obtaining all or part of an unadministered test.
- Selling or giving away all or part of an unadministered test, including answers to an unadministered test.
- Bribing, or attempting to bribe, any other person to obtain an unadministered test or any information about the test.
- Buying, or otherwise acquiring, another's coursework and submitting it as one's own work, whether altered or not.
- Entering a building, office, or computer for the purpose of changing a grade in a grade book, on a test, or on other work for which a grade is given.
- Changing, altering, or being an accessory to changing and/or altering a grade in a grade book, on a test, or on another official academic University record that relates to grades.
- Entering a building, office, or computer for the purpose of obtaining an unadministered test.
- Continuing to work on an examination or project after the specified allotted time has elapsed.
- Giving or taking unauthorized aid, including language translation, in an exam, paper, or other assignment.
- Allowing another student to submit or copy from your previously submitted class work.

Plagiarism: The representation of the work of another as your own, without proper credit and/or citation. When an individual submits work that includes the words, ideas, or data of others, the source of that information must be acknowledged through complete, accurate and

specific references, and if verbatim statements are included, through quotation marks or other accepted citation practices.

C. Policy

Pennsylvania Western University fully embraces academic integrity, and therefore does not tolerate cheating, false communication, digital violations, fabrication of academic work, improper research practices, academic misconduct, impersonation, plagiarism, or dishonesty in publication. Violations of academic integrity will not be ignored and will become part of the student's academic record at the University.

Nothing in this policy shall be deemed to supersede a more restrictive policy related to academic sanctions imposed by an academic department or the academic dean in order to comply with accreditation or licensure standards.

D. Procedure(s)

1. A faculty member who believes that a student has violated academic integrity has an obligation to hold a conference with the student to discuss the charge before assigning a sanction or sanctions. This conference, and all conferences mentioned hereafter, may take place in person, or in the case of a distance education student, it may be by email, video conference, phone, or other appropriate method. The conference with the student should include the following:
 - a. discussion of the alleged act;
 - b. hearing any defense the student may have;
 - c. discussion of any proposed academic sanctions;
 - d. informing the student of their right to appeal the faculty-imposed academic sanctions to the academic dean.

If the faculty member believes that actions by the student have violated this policy, the faculty member may impose academic sanctions on the student, which may include the following:

- a. a written reprimand;
- b. requiring the student to redo/resubmit the assignment, test, or project;
- c. lowering the grade for the assignment, test, or project, including to the level of failure;
- d. failing the student for the course;
- e. referral of the student to the dean for possible dismissal from the major or other appropriate action.

The above list of academic sanctions is for illustrative purposes only, and should not be construed as restrictive or as an exhaustive list of the various academic sanctions that may be imposed by the faculty member.

If the faculty member believes that the offense is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, the faculty member shall also refer the incident to Student Affairs. However, a student may not be expelled or suspended without a hearing in compliance with the Student Code of Conduct and the requirements under Chapter 505 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code concerning Student Personnel.

Note: If reasonable attempts to engage the student in conference fail to elicit a response, the faculty member may impose a sanction(s) on the student at their discretion.

2. In cases where a sanction is imposed, the faculty member will document the nature of the policy violation, date of conference with the student, and imposed sanction(s). This documentation will be shared with the student, the department chair over the course, academic dean, and registrar.
3. If the student wishes to appeal the sanction(s), they may do so to the academic dean over the course. Such an appeal must be filed in writing to the academic dean within ten (10) days of receiving the documentation of decision and sanction from the faculty member.
4. The academic dean, or their designee, will hold a conference with the student to review their appeal. The academic dean, or designee, will make a decision on the appeal within ten (10) days of the conference with the student, and communicate that decision in writing to the student, faculty member, department chair, and registrar. The academic dean, or designee, may uphold the sanction(s) imposed by the faculty member, or mitigate or remove the sanction(s). A decision by the Dean, or designee, will be final and may not be appealed further. If the academic dean, or designee, believes that the offense is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, the academic dean, or designee, shall also refer the incident to Student Affairs. If the academic dean, or designee, finds for the student, the academic dean will contact the registrar to remove the previously submitted violation documentation from the student's record.
5. If the student has violated this policy or the faculty member has referred this violation to the academic dean per step 1 in this Procedure, the academic dean (or designee) may, at their discretion, review the student's education record, including the history of violations of this policy. The academic dean, or designee, may schedule a conference with the student to discuss the student's violation(s) and possibly impose additional academic sanctions, which may include, but not be limited to, removal from the major. If the academic dean, or designee, believes that the offense is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct, the academic dean, or designee, shall also refer the student's case to Student Affairs. However, a student may not be expelled or suspended without a hearing in compliance with the Student Code of Conduct and the requirements under Chapter 505 of Title 22 of the Pennsylvania Code concerning Student Personnel.

E. Related policies

Confidentiality of Student Records Policy (AC053)

Course Withdrawal Policy (AC046)

Grade Appeal Policy (AC022)

Repeating a Course Policy (AC032)

Student Code of Conduct

F. Contact Information

For additional information, please contact the Office of the Provost.

G. Policy Review Schedule

All policies will be reviewed every two years or on an as needed basis if a change in BOG, PASSHE or Pennsylvania law would create the need for an immediate change.