

Scholars' Code

Purpose

The University recognizes that the open exchange of ideas plays a vital role in the academic endeavor, as often it is only through discussion with others that one is fully able to process information or to crystallize an elusive concept. Therefore, students generally are encouraged to engage in conversations with their teachers and classmates about their courses, their research, and even their assignments. These kinds of discussions and debates in some ways represent the essence of life in an academic community. Even so, it is important for all scholars to maintain academic integrity in all aspects of their work, clearly noting when they have relied upon or incorporated the work of others.

To ensure academic honesty and provide support for students who may have engaged in minor violations, the university proposes the Scholars' Code as means by which the course instructor can work with students in an educational and restorative manner while also securing the academic integrity of the university.

This policy emphasizes several values in order to provide students a clear path forward if they have committed an offense and to provide faculty with clear steps to follow when a student has committed an offense in their class. The first of those values is the student's academic responsibility, followed by values impacting the process through which an offense is adjudicated: nondiscrimination, equal and consistent treatment, confidentiality, and respect.

To that end, the policy consists of the following aspects:

- Violations
- Levels of offense
- Procedures and standards for course instructor reporting
- Process
- Levels of sanction based on offense
- Appeals process

This policy is intended to provide a consistent view of academic dishonesty and a practice to follow for course instructors in reporting incidents of academic dishonesty and in initiating the formal adjudication process on the university level.

Definitions

Advisor: During any meeting or proceeding under this policy, students may be accompanied by an Advisor of their choice, including but not limited to a faculty member, family member, friend, or third party. The "potted plant" rule applies to Advisors throughout this process. Advisors may not speak on the student's behalf, individually meet or correspond with the course instructor, or otherwise interfere with the process. Where an Advisor's conduct undermines the integrity of this policy or interferes with meetings or proceedings, an Advisor may be prohibited from continuing to serve in their role. Where there are unreasonable delays due to an Advisor, the meetings or proceedings may be held in their absence. The affected party will be permitted to obtain a substitute Advisor.

Appeals Coordinator: Provost (or designee) will function as the Appeals Coordinator and ensure that the Appeals Panel is appropriately trained and equipped with relevant information to adjudicate the received appeal.

Appeals Panel: The Appeals Panel will be comprised of three (3) university officials (university staff or faculty) who have been trained to adjudicate violations of the Scholars' Code.

Hearing Officer: The Dean of the impacted College or designee will function as the Hearing Officer and determine whether to convene a Scholars' Code Administrative Hearing or a Scholars' Code Panel. The Hearing Officer retains the sanctioning authority for both Administrative Hearings and Panel Hearings.

Preponderance of the Evidence: A standard of proof that indicates that the information provided leads an administrative Hearing Officer or hearing board to decide that "more likely than not" a violation did or did not occur. This is the standard of proof for all alleged violations of the Scholars' Code. The preponderance standard is lower than the standard of "beyond a reasonable doubt," which is used in criminal court cases. If the evidence presented meets this preponderance standard, then the accused should be found responsible.

Respondent: A student who has allegedly violated this policy.

Scholars' Code Administrative Hearing: A process in which the facts of an alleged violation of the Scholars' Code are presented to a Hearing Officer to determine if a violation(s) took place and if sanction(s) are appropriate.

Scholars' Code Panel: A group of trained faculty who determine if a student(s) is responsible for a violation(s) of the Scholars' Code. The Dean of the impacted college (or designee) will advise the panel as the Hearing Officer and may sit in on the adjudications of the board to ensure proper procedures are followed.

Witness: Any person having relevant, direct knowledge of the alleged violation. Witnesses shall not present character evidence.

Violations

In a university community, true knowledge can be gained only through honest means. Therefore, all academic dishonesty is expressly prohibited, whether in the traditional classroom or in online or hybrid settings.

Violations include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The use of unauthorized materials or the receipt of unauthorized assistance during an examination or in the completion of any other assignment, exercise, experiment, or project for academic credit. Unauthorized materials may include, but are not limited to, notes, textbooks, previous examinations, exhibits, experiments, papers, or other supplementary items.
- Copying or utilizing information from a paper of another student during an examination.
- Rendering unauthorized assistance to another student by knowingly permitting him or her to copy an examination, project, paper, assignment, exhibit, exercise, or other material to be submitted for academic credit.
- Illegally obtaining or attempting to obtain unauthorized prior knowledge of an examination or test materials.
- Selling or giving to another student, unauthorized copies of tests or examinations, or research assignments.
- The use of a commercially prepared term paper or research project or the submission of a paper, project, or experiment completed by someone other than the student submitting any of the above for academic credit.
- Falsifying class attendance.
- Falsifying reasons why a student did not attend a required class or take a scheduled examination.
- Taking an examination in the place of another student.
- Making unauthorized changes in any reported grade or on an official academic report form.

- Unauthorized collaboration between two or more students on an examination, paper, or project.
- Plagiarism, which is the deliberate act of copying, writing, or presenting as one's own the information, ideas, or phrasing of another person without proper acknowledgement of their true source.
- Making use of computing facilities and electronic devices in an academically dishonest manner including personal devices such as phones, tablets, dual monitors, watches, and glasses.
- Using online sources and programs, such as artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, and other generative AI, to produce content without proper acknowledgment or authorization.

Levels of Offense

The following levels of offense provide specific examples of academic dishonesty in three categories: collaboration, cheating, and plagiarism.

MINOR OFFENSES: In general, minor offenses involve errors in judgment that, in the course instructor's professional opinion, violate academic integrity, such as:

- Minor Collaboration example: student copies part of the work of another student exactly on an assignment on which collaboration is allowed but copying is not.
- Minor Cheating example: A student is caught glancing at another exam, but there is no evidence of premeditation or collaboration between those students.
- Minor Plagiarism example: student indicates that source of information is not original but does not follow proper citation procedures.

MODERATE OFFENSES: In general, moderate offenses are unpremeditated dishonest acts that directly affect only one student, such as:

- Moderate Collaboration example: student paraphrases or copies a sentence (or two) without citing the source or provides an improper citation.
- Moderate Cheating example: student cheats, or facilitates the cheating of another, on an examination (in cases where there is no evidence of premeditation). A student tries to gain an advantage in an exam by removing reserved materials from a lab or library to have additional study time at home.
- Moderate Plagiarism example: student paraphrases or copies a portion of a document without citing the source or provides an improper citation.

MAJOR OFFENSES: In general, major offenses are premeditated dishonest acts or dishonest acts that directly affect the offenders and/or other students' grades, such as:

- Major Collaboration example: student poses as, or facilitates another posing as, someone else during an exam; student requests or receives payment for unauthorized academic content; student directs another student on how to evade detection.
- Major Cheating example: student cheats or facilitates the cheating of another on an examination in a way that is premeditated (e.g., using a cheat sheet, a prearranged system of sharing answers, a prearranged system of accessing unauthorized academic content, or some similar method that was planned in advance).
- Major Plagiarism example: student places his/her name on a written assignment he/she did not write.

Procedures and standards for course instructor reporting

Student responsibility: If a student suspects that a violation of the Scholars' Code has occurred, they will notify the professor.

Course instructor responsibility: The course instructor must report any offense—minor, moderate, or major—when it is clear there was an intent to defraud and when the course instructor has taken action because of the offense, such as assigning a zero to the assignment or lowering the course grade. The course instructor will report via [Academic Integrity Reporting Form](#). If no action was taken because there was no intent to defraud, then no report by the course instructor is required. (i.e. a student misunderstanding instructions or expectations).

Process

When the course instructor suspects that the Scholars' Code has been violated, including credible reports from students, the course instructor will review the relevant evidence to determine if the allegation is credible. This evidence may include, but is not limited to, video and transcripts from HonorLock, Turnitin, tests, written assignments, and witness statements. If the allegation is credible, the course instructor will notify their Department Head and report the incident via [Academic Integrity Reporting Form](#). The Department Head and/or course instructor, in consultation with the Dean, may directly refer the matter to Office of Community Standards and Title IX for major offenses or where the potential sanction could be suspension or expulsion.

If the course instructor does not refer the matter to the Office of Community Standards and Title IX, then within five (5) business days of actual notice of a potential violation, the course instructor or designee will send the student a request to meet (in-person, virtual) to discuss the alleged violation. The student will be provided a notice of allegations, which will specify the violation at issue and include a copy of or link to this policy.

During the scheduled meeting, the course instructor or designee will provide the student with access to the relevant evidence and specify the proposed action. Students will have the right to view the evidence being offered against them, present relevant evidence, be accompanied by an Advisor, and discuss the allegations and proposed action with the course instructor or designee. The course instructor will employ diligence in assuring due process.

Within five (5) business days of the scheduled meeting, the student may submit a plea by admitting or refuting the offense, contest the proposed action, and/or offer written evidence supporting their denial of the offense or their request for an adjustment of the proposed action. The course instructor will consider the nature of the offense, the Levels of Offense and Levels of Sanctions Based on Offense as noted elsewhere in this policy, the totality of the circumstances, and evidence presented by the student. Upon review of the available information and the submitted plea, the course instructor or designee, in consultation with the Dean, may issue a decision of responsibility based on preponderance of the evidence and determine an appropriate action, refer the matter to a Scholars' Code Hearing, or refer the matter Office of Community Standards and Title IX where the course instructor deems suspension or expulsion may be a justified action.

Documentation: Regardless of level of offense, the course instructor should document the alleged incident, the student's response, and resolution of the incident. All documentation should be submitted through the [Academic Integrity Reporting Form](#), which will be shared with the Dean of the School.

Referral to Scholars' Code Hearing

Moderate offenses, major offenses, and repeat or multiple offenses will receive increased scrutiny and may trigger a review through the Scholars' Code Hearing process, which will determine possible further sanctions

as outlined below. The Dean of the impacted College or designee will function as the Hearing Officer and determine whether to convene a Scholars' Code Administrative Hearing or a Scholars' Code Panel.

The student will receive written notice that a Scholars' Code Hearing has convened to review the matter. The student may provide a written statement or additional evidence to the Hearing Officer within five (5) business days of this notice. The Hearing Officer will contact the student to schedule a hearing (in person or via Teams) to provide them the opportunity provide a written or verbal statement and answer clarifying questions. If the student chooses to participate in this hearing, they may be accompanied by an Advisor who may not speak on their behalf. If the student chooses not to participate in this process, the Hearing Officer and/or the Scholars' Code Panel will review the available information before issuing a decision based on the preponderance of information.

The Hearing Officer and/or the Scholars' Code Panel will seek the input of the course instructor member before making final recommendations and referrals for disciplinary action to the Office of Community Standards and Title IX. The Hearing Officer will generally provide a written decision letter to the student within fifteen (15) business days of the scheduled hearing.

Scholars' Code Administrative Hearing

An Administrative Hearing is generally conducted in the presence of the Hearing Officer. Students will have an opportunity to hear the evidence being offered against them and present witnesses and relevant evidence. In addition, students may be accompanied by an advisor of their choice. During the hearing, Hearing Officer will have an opportunity to question the student and any participating witnesses. The Hearing Officer may add or amend the violation based on information uncovered during the Administrative Hearing.

The Hearing Officer may also elect to refer the matter to a Scholars' Code Panel based on uncovered information. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Hearing Officer may make a determination based on the totality of the circumstances, available evidence, and the preponderance of information.

Scholars' Code Panel

A Scholars' Code Panel will be composed of two faculty members and one student. Students will have an opportunity to hear the evidence being offered against them and present witnesses and relevant evidence. In addition, students may be accompanied by an advisor of their choice.

During the hearing, the members of the Scholars' Code Panel will have an opportunity to question the student and any participating witnesses. The Hearing Officer may also ask questions as appropriate. The Hearing Officer may add or amend the violation based on information uncovered during the hearing.

Hearing Officer. The Dean of the college or designee shall serve as the Hearing Officer. The Hearing Officer should attend and advise the Scholars' Code Panel at all hearings. The Hearing Officer or board shall have discretion to interpret, vary, and adjust procedural requirements in order to promote a fair and just decision. The primary responsibility for maintaining order lies with the Hearing Officer. However, all members of the hearing board have a duty to assure an orderly and fair proceeding.

Findings. A simple majority vote by the Scholars' Code Panel will determine the findings. Based on the totality of the circumstances, available evidence, and the preponderance of information, the Scholars' Code Panel will make a finding of responsibility and recommend sanctions to the Hearing Officer.

The Hearing Officer maintains sanctioning power to ensure fairness and consistency and will account for mitigating and aggravating factors. The Hearing Officer will generally provide a written decision letter to the student within 15 business days. Under certain circumstances, the Hearing Officer may need additional time to review the presented evidence before making a determination.

Referral to Office of Community Standards and Title IX

The Department Head and/or course instructor, in consultation with the Dean, may directly refer the matter to the Office of Community Standards and Title IX for major offenses or where the potential sanction could be suspension or expulsion. Additionally, the Hearing Officer and/or the Scholars' Code Panel may refer students to the Office of Community Standards and Title IX for additional sanctions, including but not limited to, community service, disciplinary probation, research projects, self-reflection questions, counseling, suspension, expulsion and/or removal from Academic College or Major.¹

The Office of Community Standards and Title IX will seek input from the Scholars' Code Panel and/or the Dean of the College as appropriate. Please refer to the Code of Student Conduct for additional information on the student conduct process.

Levels of Sanctions Based on Offense

Students who have repeat violations or have committed a moderate or major offense will also be subject to the following sanctions.

- **Minor Offense:** Student may receive a reduced grade on the assignment, an opportunity to revise the assignment, failure of the assignment, additional coursework, and/or a reduced course grade. The course instructor in whose course the offense occurred will determine the sanction for a minor offense. The student may be required to attend an Academic Integrity Workshop. Students may be referred for disciplinary action through the Office of Community Standards and Title IX for additional sanctions, including community service and counseling.
- **Repeat Offenses/ Moderate Offense:** The course instructor may impose sanctions ranging from failure on the assignment, a reduced course grade, and/or an "F" in the course, for instance. Additionally, the Scholars' Code Panel will conduct a review to determine if additional sanctions above those imposed by the course instructor are merited. The student will be required to attend an Academic Integrity Workshop. The Scholars' Code Panel will seek the input of the course instructor member before making final recommendations and referrals for disciplinary action to the Office of Community Standards and Title IX.
- **Repeat Offenses/ Major Offense:** The course instructor may impose sanction of an "F" in the course. Additionally, the matter will be subject to further review by the Scholars' Code Panel to determine if additional sanctions above those imposed by the course instructor are merited. The student will be required to attend an Academic Integrity Workshop. The Scholars' Code Panel will seek the input of the course instructor member before making final recommendations and referrals for disciplinary action to the Office of Community Standards and Title IX.

Students may be referred for disciplinary action through the Office of Community Standards and Title IX for additional sanctions, including but not limited to, community service, disciplinary probation, research projects, self-reflection questions, counseling, suspension, expulsion and/or removal from Academic College or Major.² The Office of Community Standards and Title IX will seek input from the Scholars' Code Panel and/or the Dean of the College as appropriate.

Appeals Process

The student will have the right to appeal sanctions. Within five (5) business days of notification of sanctions from the Hearing Officer, a student must submit in writing their grounds for appeal. The provost or designee will function as the Appeals Coordinator for matters implicating this policy. If an appropriate appeal has been submitted, the Appeal Coordinator will appoint an Appeals Panel composed of three faculty/staff members.

Any persons desiring an appeal will submit within five (5) business days (or in the case of reason #1 below, 30 days) from the date of the decision, a written statement outlining the specific issues and rationale for the appeal. Requests for an appeal will only be considered for one or more of the following:

1. **Information not previously available.** Information not available at the hearing which, had it been available, would in all reasonable likelihood have produced a different finding(s).
2. **Procedural error.** Procedural error within the hearing process that may have substantially impacted the fairness of the hearing, including but not limited to, failure to adhere to outlined guidelines or perceived Hearing Officer bias (or bias by a board member) based on factors other than the Hearing Officer's decision and rationale for such decision.
3. **Inconsistent Finding or Sanction.** The finding and/or sanction is inconsistent with the weight of the information. The sanction is either too lenient or too severe and does not fit the violation and totality of the circumstances. Discontentment with a particular finding is not a valid reason for appeal.

The Appeal Panel will review all documentation of the offense and sanctions from the course instructor and the Scholars' Code Hearing and will return their decision to the student within fifteen (15) business days of receipt of the request for appeal.

The Appeals Panel decisions shall be made by a simple majority vote. No member may abstain from voting. For additional information regarding the Appeals Process please refer to the Code of Student Conduct. The decision of the Appeal Panel is final. There is not a second level of appeal to the Provost or the President of the University.

Revisions to the Scholars' Code. This Code shall take effect August 1, 2023. The provost, in consultation with university administration and faculty, will bear the responsibility for identifying and considering any proposed revisions to the Scholars' Code. Jacksonville State University reserves the right to make changes to the Scholars' Code as deemed appropriate.