

## Academic Integrity Policy

### I. Academic Integrity Policy

Forest Institute is committed to developing educated professionals who accept the responsibility to demonstrate personal and academic integrity. An environment of honesty and trust among students and between students and faculty is essential for a strong, functioning academic community. Therefore, all share the responsibility for fostering academic integrity and are expected to refrain from and discourage behavior that threatens the freedom and respect each person deserves.

Although academic integrity is only a part of the overarching code of conduct, code of ethics and core values of Forest Institute, this policy will set forth the specific criteria to be used in determining instances of academic dishonesty. Dishonesty is constituted by any of the following acts:

- 1. Cheating:** The term “cheating” refers to using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.
- 2. Fabrication:** The term “fabrication” refers to unauthorized falsification or invention of any information (including research data) or any citation in any academic exercise.
- 3. Plagiarism:** The term “plagiarism” includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work or sections of a work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials, including material taken from or ordered through the Internet.
- 4. Facilitating academic dishonesty:** Assisting or attempting to assist another to violate any provision of the Academic Integrity Policy, whether or not that action is associated with any particular course.

All members of Forest Institute share the responsibility and authority to challenge and make known acts of apparent academic dishonesty. Any student, faculty member, or staff person who has witnessed an apparent act of student academic dishonesty, or has information that reasonably leads to the conclusion that such an act has occurred or has been attempted, is strongly encouraged to immediately report said act. Witnessing an act of academic dishonesty or other violation of the professional ethics code and failing to report such in a timely manner may in and of itself constitute an ethics violation. Anonymous reports of academic dishonesty will not be accepted.

Acts of apparent academic dishonesty that occur within the context of a particular course may be reported directly to the course Instructor and/or the Dean. All other suspected incidents of academic dishonesty should be reported directly to the Dean.

## **II. Academic Dishonesty Offenses and Sanctions**

Any violation of academic honesty is a serious offense and is therefore subject to an appropriate sanction. Violations at Forest Institute are classified into four levels. For each level of violation a corresponding set of sanctions is recommended. Deans reviewing such complaints are not bound by these illustrations, which are intended as general guidelines for the academic community. Since adherence to a code of conduct can be seen as a function of socialization into the group whose norms are reflected in such a code, culpability may be assessed differentially for those with varying degrees of experience as members of the academic community; thus, violations of academic integrity by students in an advanced standing will presumably be penalized more severely than violations by first semester students. Examples are cited below for each level of violation. Consideration will also be given to multiple violations, academic standing or other instances of ethical infractions. These examples, too, are illustrations and are not to be considered all-inclusive.

## **III. Consequences of Violating the Academic Integrity Policy**

Students committing acts of academic dishonesty not only face disciplinary action by the academic program, but also place future educational and employment opportunities in jeopardy. Prospective employers and other educational institutions frequently use recommendation forms that ask for judgment and comment on an individual's moral or ethical behavior. Since such forms are sent with the permission of the student, faculty and administrators who know of academic dishonesty infractions are ethically bound to report such incidents. In all cases in which a grade of "XF" is assigned as a sanction, the "XF" will remain on the student's transcript, even if the course is retaken and a passing grade is achieved.

## **IV. Administration of the Academic Integrity Policy**

Responsibility for administering the Academic Integrity Policy rests with the program Dean. Evidence of academic dishonesty should initially be brought to the attention of the Instructor or to a Dean. Any member of the academic community may present evidence of academic dishonesty to the Instructor or a Dean. If a student reports a breach of the policy, the Instructor of the course is expected to cooperate in the investigation.

In all cases, violations of the Academic Integrity Policy should be reported. The Complainant should complete the form entitled "Report of Alleged Academic Integrity Policy Violation" and submit the form to the Dean. The Dean, or the Dean's designee, will conduct a preliminary investigation. The procedures to be followed in investigating the allegation will be provided in writing to the Complainant, to the Instructor of the course in which the violation is alleged to have occurred if other than the Complainant, and to the student alleged to have violated the Policy ("Student"). The Student may continue to participate in a course or research activities until the case has been adjudicated. Under no circumstances should the Student be offered a choice of either dropping a course or facing disciplinary action.

All disciplinary proceedings are confidential. Faculty members and students are cautioned not to discuss cases of academic dishonesty outside of the proceedings prescribed by the Policy. In all instances, the Dean will issue any final determination involving sanctions pursuant to the Levels described as follows:

## 1. Level One Violation

A Level One violation occurs due to inexperience or lack of knowledge of principles of academic integrity on the part of the person committing the violation. These violations are likely to involve a small fraction of the total course work, are not extensive, and/or occur on a minor assignment. The following are illustrative examples of a Level One violation:

- a. Working with another student on a laboratory or other homework assignment unless the Instructor explicitly authorizes such work.
- b. Failure to footnote or give proper acknowledgment in an extremely limited section of an assignment.

Recommended sanctions for a Level One violation are listed below; one or more of these may be chosen in any particular case:

- a. Required attendance in a non-credit workshop or seminar on ethics, APA-style or related subjects.
- b. Completion of an assigned paper or research project on a relevant topic.
- c. Imposition of a make-up assignment at a more difficult level than the original assignment.
- d. Denial of points/credit for the original assignment.

Records of students who commit Level One offenses will be maintained by the program Dean until graduation.

## 2. Level Two Violation

A Level Two violation is characterized by dishonesty of a more serious nature than a Level One violation or which affects a more significant aspect or portion of the course work. The following are illustrative examples of a Level Two violation:

- a. Quoting directly or paraphrasing, to a moderate extent, without acknowledging the source.
- b. Submitting the same work or major portions thereof to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without permission from the Instructor.
- c. Using data or interpretative material for a laboratory report without acknowledging the sources or the collaborators. All contributors to preparation of data and/or to writing the report must be acknowledged.
- d. Receiving assistance from others, such as research, statistical, computer programming, or field data collection help that constitutes an essential element in the undertaking, without acknowledging such assistance in a paper, examination, or project.

The recommended sanction for a Level Two violation is academic probation. The Dean may additionally impose a failing grade for the assignment involved while allowing the grade in the course to be determined in the normal manner.

Notation of academic probation will be placed on the student's transcript and will remain for the period during which the sanction is in force. Records of students who commit Level Two offenses will be maintained in the Dean's Office until graduation.

### 3. Level Three Violations

Level Three violations are those that go beyond Level One or Two and are, in the opinion of the Dean, evidence of a substantial ethical violation requiring more significant sanctions and intervention. Level Three violations include dishonesty that affects a major or essential portion of work done to meet course requirements and/or involves premeditation, or is preceded by one or more violations at Levels One or Two. Illustrative examples include:

- a. Copying on examinations.
- b. Acting to facilitate copying during an exam.
- c. Using prohibited materials, e.g., books, notes, or calculators during an examination.
- d. Collaborating before an exam to develop methods of exchanging information and implementation thereof.
- e. Altering examinations for the purposes of re-grading.
- f. Acquiring or distributing an examination from unauthorized sources prior to the examination.
- g. Plagiarizing major portions of a written assignment or project.
- h. Presenting the work of another as one's own.
- i. Using a purchased term paper or other materials.
- j. Removing posted or reserved material, or preventing other students from having access to it.
- k. Fabricating data or inventing or deliberately altering material (for example, citing sources that do not exist).
- l. Using unethical or improper means of acquiring data.

The normal sanction to be sought for all Level Three violations or repeated violations of Levels One and/or Two, is a minimum of an XF grade for the course, academic probation, as well as consideration for Administrative Withdrawal from the program. Imposition of an XF grade and related sanctions by the Dean will surrogate the need for further review or recommendation by the Academic Standing Committee as described in the Academic Progress section of the Academic Catalog.

Notation of academic probation will be placed on the student's transcript and will remain for the period during which the sanction is in force. However, the XF grade for the course will be permanently noted on the Student's transcript. Records of students who commit Level Three offenses will be maintained in the Dean's Office until graduation.

### 4. Level Four Violations

A Level Four violation represents the most serious breach of the Academic Integrity Policy. Such cases are referred directly to the Dean for consideration for Administrative Withdrawal from the program. Illustrative examples of Level Four violations include:

- a. Infractions of the Academic Integrity Policy committed after return from suspension for a previous academic integrity violation.
- b. Infractions of the Academic Integrity Policy resembling criminal activity (such as forging a grade form, stealing an examination from a professor or from an on-campus office; buying an examination; or falsifying a transcript).

- c. Having a substitute take an examination or taking an examination for someone else.
- d. Fabrication of evidence, falsification of data, quoting directly or paraphrasing without acknowledging the source, and/or presenting the ideas of another as one's own in a capstone project, within a master's thesis or doctoral dissertation, in scholarly articles submitted to refereed journals, or in other work represented as one's own as a graduate student.
- e. Sabotaging another student's work through actions designed to prevent the student from successfully completing an assignment.
- f. Willful violation of a canon of the ethical code of the profession for which a graduate student is preparing.

Should the Dean determine Administrative Withdrawal to be the most appropriate sanction, the sanctioned conduct will be permanently noted on the Student's transcript.

Note: This policy is based on the Rutgers University—Camden/New Brunswick *Policy for Academic Integrity* and, to a large extent, replicates it. It has been modified to reflect the structure of The School of Professional Psychology at Forest Institute with permission.

## Procedures for Adjudicating Alleged Violations of Academic Integrity

1. Instructor or other member of the Forest community (“Complainant”) suspects that a student (“Student”) may have violated the Academic Integrity Policy.
2. Complainant reviews available evidence to determine whether or not a violation has occurred.
3. If the Complainant determines a violation has occurred, the Complainant compiles supporting evidence and turns it in along with the form entitled “**Report of Alleged Academic Integrity Policy Violation**” to the appropriate program Dean.
4. The Dean will:
  - a. review the information provided by the Complainant,
  - b. interview the Complainant, Instructor if the violation occurred within the context of a course, and other witnesses as necessary,
  - c. meet with the Student, and
  - d. issue a written determination indicating whether or not a violation occurred. If a violation is determined to have occurred, the Dean will also determine the Level of the violation and impose the sanction.

If the Student is determined NOT to have violated the Academic Integrity Policy, the Dean will 1) inform the Complainant, the Instructor of the course in which the violation is alleged to have occurred (if different than the Complainant), and the Student in writing of the determination; and 2) maintain a final copy of the **Report of Alleged Academic Integrity Policy Violation** until the Student has graduated.

**NOTE:** Documentation submitted and/or considered in support of an alleged violation will be maintained in the Student’s discipline file as maintained by the Dean. Copies of such documentation shall not be kept in any individual student file. This means that the Dean, Complainant and Instructor involved may retain a copy of relevant information during the course of investigation and due process, but shall not file it in the Student’s file. This is done so that a removal timetable can be followed accurately if noted as part of the sanction.

5. If the Student accepts responsibility for the action and decision of the Dean:
  - a. A sanction commensurate with the Level determined by the Dean to reflect the action of the Student will be automatically imposed;
  - b. The Student will sign a notice accepting responsibility for the Student’s actions and agreeing to the sanction levied; and
  - c. The disciplinary action will be recorded in the Student’s file by the Dean to be maintained by the Dean separate and apart from the Student’s other academic records.
6. If the Student does not accept responsibility for the findings of the Dean, the Student has five days to appeal the decision of the Dean pursuant to the Due Process Policy as outlined in the Academic Catalog.

7. If the violation is determined to be a Level Three or Four offense with a resulting sanction of Administrative Withdrawal:
  - a. The Student will be notified in writing of the determination and of the right to pursue a Due Process appeal of the determination.
  - b. The Student's transcript will document the Administrative Withdrawal pending completion of a Due Process appeal.