

## Academic Integrity Policy

### Academic Integrity Regulations<sup>1</sup>

#### *ACADEMIC INTEGRITY*

State University assumes that all students come to the University with serious educational intent and expects them to be mature, responsible individuals who will exhibit high standards of honesty and personal conduct in their academic life. All members of the Salem State University academic community have a responsibility to ensure that scholastic honesty and academic integrity are safeguarded and maintained. Cheating and plagiarism are unfair, demoralizing, and demeaning to all of us. Cheating, plagiarism, and collusion in dishonest activities are serious acts that erode the University's educational role and cheapen and diminish the Salem learning experience not only for the perpetrators, but also for the entire community. It is expected that Salem State University students will understand and subscribe to the ideal of academic integrity and that they will be willing to bear individual responsibility for their work. Materials (written or otherwise) submitted to fulfill academic requirements must represent a student's own efforts.

#### *ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY*

The fundamental purpose of this policy is to emphasize that any act of academic dishonesty attempted by any Salem State University student is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Charges of academic dishonesty are reviewed through a process that allows for student learning and impartial review. Performing, aiding or inciting any of the actions listed below, in courses or other situations involving academic credit, constitutes an offense subject to disciplinary action.

#### TYPES OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

##### Cheating

Cheating is the intentional use or attempted use of deceit, trickery, artifice, fraud, and/or violation of rules and/or misrepresentation of one's academic work in any academic exercise, regardless of the delivery method of the course.

The methods of cheating are varied and well-known, and include but are not limited to the following:

- Copying from others during an examination.
- Sharing answers for a take-home examination.
- Using notes or other resources not authorized by the instructor.
- Taking an examination for another student.
- Tampering with an examination after it has been corrected, then returning it for more credit than deserved.
- Submitting substantial portions of the same academic work for credit in more than one course, without consulting the second instructor (and the first instructor if the courses are concurrent at Salem State University).
- Allowing others to do the research and writing of an assigned paper (for example, using the services of an online paper service).
- Falsifying data or results from research or fieldwork.
- Obtaining the answers to, or a copy of, an examination prior to its administration.
- Submitting a purchased or downloaded paper or other works written by another person, including those obtained through an online paper service.

##### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is academic theft. It refers to the use of another's ideas or words without proper attribution or credit. An author's work is his/her property and should be respected by documentation. However, academic integrity requires that unsigned material must also be identified (for example, anonymous articles or web pages). Credit must be given in the following situations:

- For every direct quotation of any length.
- When a work is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in your own words.

- For any information which is not common knowledge. (“Common knowledge” is defined as information that appears substantially the same in several general sources such as textbooks or encyclopedias.)
- For any material borrowed from another source, whether in print or electronic form (for instance, graphs, images, videos, diagrams, tables, and datasets).

Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

- Copying word for word from a source (printed, electronic, or oral) without properly citing or crediting the source.
- Paraphrasing without proper attribution.
- Failing to properly cite or credit sources, whether the material is a direct quotation, paraphrase, or summary.
- Failing to identify direct quotations through the use of quotation marks.
- Failing to acknowledge and properly cite information obtained through printed, electronic, or oral sources.
- Incorporating into one’s own work graphs, tables, drawings, photographs, diagrams, and other non-textual material from other sources without proper attribution.

### Fabrication

Fabrication is the intentional and unauthorized falsification and/or invention of any information or citation in any academic exercise.

Fabrication includes but is not limited to:

- Falsifying data or results from research or fieldwork.
- Selectively omitting or altering data that do not support one’s conclusions.

### Collusion

Collusion refers to the agreement or cooperation between students to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Any student who knowingly or intentionally helps another student to perform any act of cheating or plagiarism is subject to discipline for academic dishonesty. There is no distinction between those who cheat and plagiarize and those who willingly allow it to occur.

Collusion includes but is not limited to:

- Taking an examination for another person.
- Asking or allowing another person to take an examination for you.
- Allowing another person to copy one’s own work or exam.
- Collaborating with another person before a quiz or examination in order to develop methods of exchanging information during the quiz or examination.
- Distributing an examination from an unauthorized source prior to an examination.
- Distributing or selling a paper or other work to other students.

## *PROCEDURES*

Discipline for academic dishonest behavior is exercised on two levels:

- 1) Informal Process, which results in a written “Report of Academic Misconduct”
- 2) Formal process, which results in a “Formal Charge of Academic Dishonesty”

### **1. Informal Process Resulting in “Report of Academic Misconduct”**

Upon discovering an incident of student misconduct and a violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, the professor or other member of the university community must contact the Office of Academic Affairs to determine if this is the student's first documented offense.

If it is the first documented offense, the professor or other member of the university community will notify the student and the department chairperson, in writing within ten (10) working days after discovery of the alleged offense, that a Report of Academic Misconduct will be submitted to the dean of the college for that department.

The dean will also notify the student and additionally, the Office of Academic Affairs, in writing, that a Report of Academic Misconduct has been filed and will be on file in the Office of Academic Affairs. The notification to the student from the dean will include a copy of the Academic Integrity Regulations and reiterate the consequences of violating the Academic Integrity Policy.

A Formal Hearing is not required for the first documented offense; however, the student charged or the individual bringing the charge may elect to have a Formal Hearing (see the last paragraph in this section).

The professor of the course or the member of the university community has the authority to handle an incident of student academic misconduct directly, by any of the following means:

- reprimand,
- assignment of additional work,
- reexamination,
- exclusion from the course, committee, or organization,
- reduction of the grade for the work and/or the course.

If the professor or member of the university community elects to impose any or all of these remedies s/he must submit a written report of the action decided upon that will serve to notify the student, the chairperson of the department housing the course, and the dean of the college housing the coursework or activity in which the alleged violation took place. No additional action will be taken unless there is a subsequent charge of academic misconduct filed. Should a second or subsequent charge of Academic Misconduct be filed at a later date, after the student has been notified of the first offense by the dean of the appropriate college and received a copy of the Academic Integrity Regulations, a Formal Charge of Academic Dishonesty is mandatory. The Formal Process is described below.

The student charged has the option to challenge the Informal Process - Report of Academic Misconduct with a request for a Formal Hearing, within 10 working days of receipt of a report of Academic Misconduct from the dean of the appropriate college. The Formal Hearing will follow the procedures listed below.

## **II. Formal Process Resulting in "Formal Charge of Academic Dishonesty"**

If after discovering an incident of student misconduct and violation of the Academic Integrity Policy, and notifying the Office of Academic Affairs, the professor or other member of the university community learns that this is the second or subsequent offense of Academic Dishonesty, a Formal Charge of Academic Dishonesty is mandatory.

The professor or other member of the university community must follow the same notification procedures as for the "Informal Process" outlined above. The student, chairperson, dean, and provost will be notified in writing within ten (10) working days after the discovery of the alleged offense. Upon receipt of the Formal Charge, the provost shall inform the student charged and provide him or her with a second copy of the Policy on Academic Integrity, the alleged Charge of Academic Dishonesty, the Formal Hearing Procedure, and a preliminary date for the Formal Hearing.

- The student charged has a right to a pre-hearing conference with the provost or designee for the purpose of reviewing the Academic Integrity Regulations and the hearing procedures.
- An ad hoc Hearing Committee shall be formed and convened by the provost or designee. The Hearing Committee shall consist of three (3) faculty members appointed by the Salem Chapter of the MSCA/MTA/NEA, two (2) students appointed by the Student Government Association, and one (1) administrator appointed by the President of the University.
- Students have ten (10) working days of receipt of the "Formal Charge of Academic Dishonesty" from the Office of Academic Affairs to waive their right, in writing, to a hearing and accept disciplinary action from the designated

administrator. Students who choose to accept disciplinary action from the designated administrator waive their right to appeal the administrator's decision.

### **When a Formal Hearing is Required**

A formal hearing is required in the following cases:

- a. In cases in which the violation of academic integrity is egregious.
- b. In cases in which the student is a repeat offender (i.e., it is the student's second or subsequent offense).

A formal hearing can be called by either party, the faculty or student.

### **Formal Hearing Procedures**

1. The Provost and Academic Vice President or designee shall convene the committee and designate a Chairperson. No member of the committee shall convene the meeting.
2. All members of the Hearing Committee must be present for any proceedings.
3. The members of the Hearing Committee will be required to convene in closed session immediately prior to the hearing to review the report of alleged misconduct, the specific charges to be considered, and all supporting papers and/or evidence.
4. The Hearing will not be videotaped or audio taped. The Hearing will be recorded by a stenographer
5. The student charged and his or her advisor, if any, will be called before the Hearing Committee, and the designated chairperson will restate the content of the alleged academic dishonesty. The person(s) who originally filed the formal charge of academic dishonesty may be present. Witnesses for either side are excluded from the hearing room at this time.
6. Opening statements. The student charged and the person(s) bringing the charges are asked to outline briefly the facts they intend to present during the hearing.
7. Presentation of witnesses and evidence by person(s) bringing charges. The person(s) bringing the charges present the evidence and, if applicable, call witnesses to support the charges. The student charged and the Hearing Committee may question the person(s) bringing the charges and the witnesses as each finishes his or her testimony.
8. Presentation of witnesses and evidence by the student charged. The student charged presents his or her evidence and calls witnesses, when applicable, to respond to the charges against him or her. The person(s) bringing the charges and the Hearing Committee may question the student charged and the witnesses as each finishes his or her testimony. Witnesses may be asked to remain or leave the hearing room as required by the Hearing Committee.
9. Closing statements. The student charged and the person(s) bringing the charges are asked to summarize their testimony and highlight any specific information they wish the Hearing Committee to consider in its deliberation.
10. Deliberation by Hearing Committee. All persons other than the Hearing Committee will leave the hearing room, and the deliberations will begin. If the Hearing Committee needs more information, it may reconvene the hearing within ten days in order to seek necessary clarification.
11. In those instances, where more than one student is charged with academic dishonesty relating to the same instance of misconduct, the Hearing Committee may wish to consider the cases at the same time. This action will be taken only with the agreement of the students charged.
12. Voting to uphold the charge of academic dishonesty will be by secret ballot and will require a two-thirds vote of the Hearing Committee.
13. All Hearing Committee members and all individuals present will be bound by confidentiality restrictions.

The student shall receive written notice within five (5) working days following the hearing informing him/her of any recommendations made as a result of the hearing body's deliberations, including recommended sanctions, if applicable. Student appeals must be made in writing and submitted within ten (10) working days after the notification of the imposition of sanctions.

## SANCTIONS

Individuals found guilty of violating Salem State University's Academic Integrity Regulations may receive the following sanctions:

**Warning:** Written notice to the student that continued or repeated violations of specified policies or regulations may be cause for further disciplinary action.

**Suspension:** Students will lose their status for a definite period of time, not to exceed one year.

**Dismissal:** Termination of student status for an indefinite time.

**Expulsion:** Permanent termination of the student status without possibility of readmission to the university.

**Other sanctions:** Students may receive other sanctions deemed appropriate by the Hearing Committee.

Violations of any of the conditions imposed under this section can be cause for further disciplinary action, usually in the form of loss of privileges and exclusion from activities, suspension, or dismissal.

Sanctions are assigned with the intent of maintaining consistency and fairness, and the degree of sanction is primarily correlated with the extent and severity of the violation.

## PROCEDURAL SAFEGUARDS

1. Students have access to the Formal Charge of Academic Dishonesty, name of accusers and witnesses, and any written evidence or other pertinent papers, which may be used against them. This information will be available in the Office of Academic Affairs.
2. Students have the right to have their cases heard with all reasonable promptness. Under normal circumstances, hearings will be conducted within twenty-one (21) working days after the university receives written notification of the student's desire to have a formal hearing.
3. Students will receive written notification of the date, time and place of any hearing at least ten (10) working days before the hearing, in order to permit a reasonable amount of time to prepare for the hearing.
4. At the time they receive written notice of a hearing, students also will receive a written statement of charges against them, the source of such charges, and the conduct regulations upon which the charges are based.
5. Students have the right to an advisor of their choice. Such an advisor may be present at any hearing and may counsel the student charged. The advisor may not address the board on the student's behalf.
6. All hearings will be closed to the public and press, and all proceedings will be considered confidential.
7. Students have the right to a Hearing Committee of impartial members, any member(s) of which may be challenged in writing and replaced at the discretion of the Provost and Academic Vice President or designee.
8. Students have the right to make a written request for postponement of a hearing. Under normal circumstances such a request must be submitted to the Provost and Vice President no later than twenty-four hours prior to the date and time of the hearing.
9. The burden of proof will rest with those bringing charges against any student, and students will be presumed innocent until proven guilty.
10. The hearing will proceed, whether or not the accused student or students choose to participate.
11. Written notification of the Hearing Committee's decision will be mailed within five (5) working days after the conclusion of the hearing.
12. Except where students have waived the right to a formal hearing, students have the right to appeal the decision of the Hearing Committee within ten (10) working days of the date of receipt of the written decision. Such appeals shall be made in writing and submitted to the Provost and Academic Vice President or designee for adjudication.
13. All students have the right to continue in their student status until the conclusion of judicial proceedings. However, no degree will be awarded until the matter is resolved.

## MAINTENANCE OF DISCIPLINARY RECORDS

Disciplinary records will be maintained in Academic Affairs for five (5) years and then destroyed unless it is determined there is good reason to retain the records beyond that date.

They will not be released to individuals outside the University except:

- a. by the written authorizations of both the student involved and the person(s) bringing the charge; or
- b. under the conditions specified in the Family Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 and its amendments, or
- c. if otherwise required by law.

In order to ensure that minor and non-recurring infractions do not negatively impact the student's academic career beyond Salem State University, all disciplinary records will be reviewed by the Provost and Academic Vice President or designee in order to determine whether the student's records should be expunged. A student may petition for such review two (2) years from the date the initial sanction was imposed, or upon graduation from the university, whichever comes first. It is fairly common for potential employers, governmental agencies, or other institutions of higher education to solicit information about a student's conduct while attending Salem State University. If the student has signed a release form accompanying such a solicitation, the designee of the Provost and Academic Vice President will review the disciplinary records file to determine if the student has been found guilty of misconduct. In those cases where the student has such a record the information will be provided to the requesting party.

<sup>1</sup>The wording for the Academic Dishonesty Policy came from multiple sources, most especially from the policy on Academic Integrity at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and Rutgers University's Policy on Academic Integrity

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## **Research Integrity Policy**

### 1.0 Introduction

While rare in occurrence, research fraud and occurrences of noncompliance with institutional review board, animal care, and data policies and procedures raise concern in the public as well as among the federal, state and private funding agencies, which support much of the research now being conducted in academia. In 1981, the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services identified as a major management initiative the development of policies and procedures for dealing with misconduct in science. In 1985, the National Institute of Health (NIH) released a proposed set of detailed procedures dealing with misconduct in research funded by the Public Health Service, aspects of which have been incorporated into regulation. HHS then developed the Office of Research Integrity and eventually adopted the government wide Federal Research Misconduct Policy in 2000. These agencies, along with the Association of American Universities (AAU) and the Association of American Medical Colleges require universities to adopt specific policies for handling allegations of fraud or unethical behavior by researchers. Salem State University expects the highest standards of ethical behavior from all members of the academic community involved in the conduct of research.

This "Research Integrity Policy" describes procedures for dealing with suspected digressions from intellectual honesty and ethical treatment of human subjects, animals, and data in research by faculty, staff, and students at Salem State University. Procedures are defined which will foster the maintenance of high standards in research in the university and protect the rights and reputations of all parties involved in instances of alleged misconduct. The policy also covers charges involving students employed on research grants or contracts including those who fall under the National Science Foundation's policy on Responsible Conduct in Research.

Allegations of academic dishonesty involving students engaged in research as part of their academic program will be dealt with in accordance with Salem State University's "Policy on Academic Integrity" and the student disciplinary procedures included in the student handbook.

### 2.0 Guidelines for Identifying Academic Fraud and Misconduct

Fraud in research is defined as deliberate misrepresentation with intent to gain some advantage. Misconduct is defined as the violation of institutional research policies, relevant state and federal regulations governing such research, or generally accepted ethical standards for research. While there is no list of examples of academic fraud and misconduct which would be universally accepted, Salem State University recognizes four types of fraud and misconduct in academic research which will serve as broad guidelines in identifying research fraud. These guidelines are derived from policies forwarded by the AAU and the Department of Health and Human Services, and the National Institute of Health.

**2.1 Falsification of Data** undermines the basic principle on which the scientific process depends. Since scientific advances depend on accurate collection, analysis and reporting of information, dishonest reporting misleads others and

results in the waste of resources, both human and monetary. If practiced in clinical research, falsification could even be directly dangerous to humans. Falsification of data ranges from sheer fabrication to selective reporting, including the omission of conflicting data.

Plagiarism is especially hurtful to individual researchers since it is an attempt by one individual to receive credit for the work of someone else. Plagiarism refers to the use of another's ideas or words without proper attribution or credit. An author's work is his/her property and should be acknowledged appropriately. However, academic integrity requires that unsigned material must also be identified (for example, anonymous articles or web pages).

**2.2 Abuse of Confidentiality** is a significant act of fraud given the privilege of acquiring information through research. According to the university's Data Classification and Access Policy effective May 2009, confidential data should be protected to the highest possible degree as is prudent or as is required by law. Guidelines include, but are not limited to the following:

- Systems which store or process Confidential data in an electronic format, must be protected with strong passwords and stored on servers that have protection and encryption measures applied in order to protect against loss, theft, unauthorized access and unauthorized disclosure.
- Must not be disclosed to parties without explicit management authorization.
- Must be stored only in a locked drawer or room or an area where access is controlled by a guard, cipher lock, and/or card reader, or that otherwise has sufficient physical access control measures to afford adequate protection and prevent unauthorized access.
- When sent via fax must be sent only to a previously established and used address or one that has been verified as using a secured location.
- Must not be posted on any public website.
- Must be securely destroyed when no longer needed per Commonwealth Records Retention Policy.
- Exposure to an unauthorized 3rd party must be reported to the Information Security Office.

Confidential data are to be stored only on university file shares or within university databases. Confidential data in paper form are to be secured at the end of the work day. Confidential data in paper form are to be shredded at the end of use in SSU approved locked shred bins.

In the rare case when confidential data are used, the data must be encrypted at rest and in transit when used outside of IT systems. Standards of confidentiality of data must be upheld to ensure academic integrity.

**2.3 Instances of violations of regulations** applicable to research also present a problem. Serious violations of rules adopted by appropriate mechanisms to protect research participants, animals, and data, while not fraudulent in the traditional sense, undermine the integrity of the research process. Violations of regulations include but are not limited to the following:

- The conduct of human subjects research without approval of the IRB (even if technically IRB exempt)
- The conduct of research involving animals without approval of the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC)
- Altering IRB or IACUC approved research protocols or consent forms without IRB or IACUC approval
- Failure to maintain ongoing review on research that extends beyond the initial 12 month IRB or IACUC approval
- Failure to report adverse events
- Violation of the confidentiality or anonymity of research subject(s)
- Failure to obtain approval from external institutional review boards when required in addition to Salem State University's IRB
- Violation of the provisions of the Salem State University Data Classification and Access Policy

### 3.0 Procedures For Handling Allegations of Misconduct In Research

**3.1** All initial reports and/or charges of ethical misconduct or research fraud at Salem State University should first be directed in writing to the Dean of the school in which the alleged fraud occurred for a preliminary review. The Dean shall inform the department chair and the research supervisors(s) of the allegations. The Dean shall also inform the involved faculty member(s) of the nature of the allegations, the nature of the review and the rights of the parties involved, including contractual. Instances involving university staff should first be directed to the area Vice President to whom the staff member's department reports. The area Vice President shall also inform the involved staff member(s) of the nature of the allegations, the nature of the review and the rights of the parties involved.

**3.2** The school Dean or area Vice President, after consultation with the department chair or appropriate research supervisor(s), shall promptly (within five business days) conduct a preliminary review to determine if there is sufficient prima facie evidence to merit a formal investigation of the charges and shall inform the Provost/Academic Vice President that a preliminary review is underway. Confidentiality should be strictly maintained throughout the process of the review in order to protect the rights and reputations of all parties involved.

**3.3** Since time is of the essence, the school Dean should conduct the preliminary review promptly (within five business days) and report the outcome to the Provost/Academic Vice President as quickly as possible.

**3.4** If, after consideration of the review and recommendation of the school Dean or Vice President, the Provost/Academic Vice President then determines that there is not sufficient prima facie evidence to support the charges, no further action needs to be taken, the President and the party(ies) involved shall be so informed and no record shall be kept.

**3.5** If, after consideration of the review and the recommendation of the school Dean, the Provost/Academic Vice President determines that sufficient prima facie evidence exists to support the charges, the Provost/Academic Vice President shall appoint an ad hoc committee charged with the responsibility of conducting a formal investigation. The membership of the committee shall consist of no fewer than four knowledgeable individuals including one representative from the department or unit of the involved faculty member(s) or non-faculty employee(s) and three other faculty members from related departments or areas. In instances where externally funded research is involved, the Provost/Academic Vice President may also appoint, in consultation with the Vice President of Administration and General Counsel and/or Vice President of Finance, staff to serve as an ex officio member of the committee to represent the interests and legal obligation of the University. In addition the Provost/Academic Vice President may also appoint an additional member(s) from outside the institution in order to broaden the expertise of the committee.

**3.6** At the time the committee is requested to conduct a formal investigation, the Provost/Academic Vice President and the school Dean may determine that the research activities of the involved researcher(s) may be restricted or monitored during the course of the investigation. If so, then the Provost/Academic Vice President shall also notify the department chair, and in the case of funded research, the Vice President of Finance and Facilities.

**3.7** The Provost/Academic Vice President shall convene the committee, appoint one of the faculty on the committee to serve as chair, present the charges and allegations and discuss University policies and procedures pertinent to the investigation. The committee shall investigate all charges and facts and may interview any and all parties appropriate to reaching a decision regarding the merit of the charges. The chair of the committee shall meet with the appropriate Human Resources officer as to existing procedures and safeguards to protect the rights and reputation of all parties involved before carrying out the investigation. The committee should begin its investigation promptly and should provide a written report of its findings and recommendations to the Provost/Academic Vice President no later than 60 days after the initiation of the formal investigation. The Provost/Academic Vice President may accept the report or return it to the committee for further information or clarification. The committee shall also forward the final copy of this report to the accused party(ies).

**3.8** If, on the basis of the findings and recommendations of the committee, and Provost/Academic Vice President determines that no unethical or fraudulent acts have been committed, all parties shall be notified accordingly. The Provost/Academic Vice President and the school Dean shall undertake all necessary efforts to restore fully the reputation and credibility of the researcher(s) under investigation. All interim restrictions on research activity will be removed.

**3.9** If, on the basis of the report and recommendation of the committee, the Provost/Academic Vice President determines that there is evidence of unethical or fraudulent acts, the Provost/Academic Vice President shall report this conclusion as well as recommendations regarding the imposition of sanctions and/or disciplinary action to the President. The President shall make the final determination regarding the appropriateness of the recommendation. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, written reprimand, termination of current research activity, public disassociation of the university from any future unauthorized research activity, restriction from future research activities, and debarment from intramural funded research programs. The President may also determine if the matter warrants disciplinary action pursuant to pertinent articles in the current MSCA contract.

**3.10** The President shall determine if information about the charges, the investigation, or their disposition should be released to the public, the press, or specific parties, i.e., editors of journals in which papers or reports of research in question may have appeared. In cases involving externally funded research, the sponsoring agency will be notified of the findings of the investigation and the final disposition of any sanction and/or disciplinary action, or restitution to be made. Corrective actions may also include required research ethics training, mentoring by qualified research faculty, or other actions as stipulated by federal sponsoring agencies.



[See also Research Integrity](#)

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