

Jacksonville State University Scholars' Code

Purpose

Academic integrity is essential for building a community of trust in the university setting and for fostering excellence in teaching, research, and learning. It is necessary for students to complete scholarly and academic assignments with integrity and honesty and to avoid any instances of academic misconduct. The University recognizes that the open exchange of ideas plays a vital role in the academic endeavor, and students are generally encouraged to engage in conversations with their teachers and classmates about their courses, their research, and their assignments. Even so, it is important for scholars to maintain academic integrity in all aspects of their work, clearly noting when they have relied upon or incorporated the work of others, and they must avoid all instances of lying, cheating, or misrepresenting their work.

To ensure academic honesty, the university's Scholars' Code serves as a 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.

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

- Violations
- General Process and Procedures for Honoring and Maintaining the Scholar's Code
- Recommended Levels of Sanction
- Appendix A: Scholar's Code Administrative Hearing and Scholar's Code Panel Processes
- Appendix B: Appeals Process
- Appendix C: Definitions

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.

Common instances of violations include, *but are not limited to*, the following:

- Using online sources and programs—such as artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, and other generative AI—to produce content without proper acknowledgment or authorization.
- Using or providing unauthorized materials or 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.
- Falsifying class attendance records or providing false reasons for an absence in a required class meeting or 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.
- Plagiarizing, 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.
- Falsifying research or data.

General Process and Procedures for Honoring and Maintaining the Scholars' Code

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 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 the [Academic](#)

[Integrity Reporting Form](#). The student should then be informed of the infraction, provided with all relevant evidence (HonorLock, Turnitin, witness statement, etc), and informed of any penalty imposed.

In situations where it is unclear if the Scholars' Code was violated or if there was an attempt to defraud, the course instructor should initiate a meeting with the student within five business days of noticing the potential violation. If no action was taken because there was no violation or intent to defraud, then no report by the course instructor is required (e.g., a student misunderstanding instructions or expectations).

Repeat/Egregious Offenses Processes

Egregious offenses and repeat or multiple offenses will receive increased scrutiny and may trigger a review through the Scholars' Code Administrative Hearing or Scholars' Code Panel processes (Appendix A), which will determine possible further sanctions.

Appeals: Students have the right to appeal imposed sanctions. Students should contact the Dean of the affected college and request a Scholars' Code Administrative Hearing (see Appendix A).

Recommended Levels of Sanction

In general, course instructors should follow the best practices suggested by their specific department and employ their own best judgment when assigning sanctions for violations of the scholar's code.

Suggested/possible sanctions are listed below:

- **Minor Offense:** The 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 overall 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. The student 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. Additionally, a Scholars' Code Administrative Hearing or a Scholars' Code Panel may 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 Administrative Hearing or the Scholars' Code Panel may refer the student to the Office of Community Standards and Title IX for further disciplinary action.
- **Repeat Offenses/ Major Offense:** The course instructor may impose sanction of an "F" in the course. Additionally, the matter may be subject to further review via the Scholars' Code Administrative Hearing or 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 Administrative Hearing or the Scholars' Code Panel may refer the student to the Office of Community Standards and Title IX for further disciplinary action.

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.

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.

APPENDIX A: SCHOLARS' CODE ADMINISTRATIVE HEARING AND SCHOLARS' CODE PANEL PROCESSES

In cases of repeat offenses or egregious academic misconduct, the Dean of the impacted College or their designee (hereafter called the Hearing Officer) may convene a Scholars' Code Hearing or a Scholars' Code Panel, depending on the severity of the alleged academic misconduct and the Hearing Officer's ability to adjudicate the proceedings.

Scholars' Code Administrative Hearing

The student will receive written notice that a Scholars' Code Administrative 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 receiving this notice. The Hearing Officer will contact the student to schedule a hearing (in person or via Teams) to provide them with the opportunity to provide a written or verbal statement and answer clarifying questions. A Scholar's Code 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, the 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 Scholars' Code Hearing. If the student chooses not to participate in this process, the Hearing Officer will review the available information before issuing a decision based on the preponderance of the evidence.

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 the evidence.

Scholars' Code Panel

For cases that require adjudication beyond the Scholar's Code Administrative Hearing (such as in particularly egregious cases of misconduct or in cases where the Hearing Officer feels unable to reach a verdict), a Scholar's Code Panel may be convened. 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 panel's 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.

The Dean of the college or designee shall serve as the Hearing Officer for the Scholar's Code Panel. The Hearing Officer should attend and advise the Scholars' Code Panel at all hearings. The Hearing Officer or Panel 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 Panel 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 the evidence, 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.

APPENDIX B: APPEALS PROCESS

The student will have the right to appeal sanctions resulting from an Administrative Hearing or a Panel hearing. Students wishing to appeal a sanction issued by a course instructor should contact the Dean of the affected college and request a Scholar's Code Administrative Hearing (detailed in Appendix A).

Students wishing to appeal the verdict of the Scholar's Code Administrative Hearing or Panel hearing must follow this process: Within five (5) business days of notification of sanctions from the Hearing Officer (or in the case of reason #1 below, 30 days), a student must submit in writing their grounds for appeal, outlining the specific issues and rationale for the appeal. The Provost or designee will function as the Appeals Coordinator for matters implicating this policy. If an appropriate appeal has been submitted, the Appeals Coordinator will appoint an Appeals Panel composed of three faculty/staff members. Requests for an appeal will only be considered for one or more of the following reasons:

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 Panel 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 Appeals 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.

APPENDIX C: 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, they 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: The 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 composed 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 Scholars’ Code Panel 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 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 panel to ensure proper procedures are followed.

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

Definitions of Levels of Offenses

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: A 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: A student indicates that the 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: A student paraphrases or copies a sentence (or two) without citing the source or provides an improper citation.
- Moderate Cheating examples: A student cheats, or facilitates the cheating of another student, 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: A 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 examples: A student poses as, or facilitates another person posing as, someone else during an exam. A student requests or receives payment for unauthorized academic content: A student directs another student on how to evade detection.
- Major Cheating example: A student cheats or facilitates the cheating of another student 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: A student places their name on a written assignment they did not write.