

Reviewed and approved February 10, 2022

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS OF POLICY

Preamble and Code

Academic honesty is the cornerstone of the academic integrity of the university. It is the foundation upon which the student builds personal integrity and establishes a standard of personal behavior. The University can best function and accomplish its mission in an atmosphere of the highest ethical standards. The University expects all students, faculty, and staff to contribute to such an atmosphere by observing all accepted principles of academic honesty. This policy is designed to encourage honest behavior and outlines the processes and actions pertaining to any violation of the Academic Honesty Policy and Honesty Code.

Honesty Code

The Honesty Code is the university community's standard of honesty and is endorsed by all members of the University of Houston-Clear Lake academic community. It is an essential element of the University's academic credibility. The Honesty Code states:

I will be honest in all my academic activities and will not tolerate dishonesty.

- A. Rationale.
The University of Houston-Clear Lake expects and encourages all students, faculty, and staff to abide by the Honesty Code. However, it is recognized that any university may include a few students who do not understand, appreciate, or choose to practice the accepted principles. As a consequence, alleged cases of academic dishonesty will inevitably occur. The following procedures are designed to handle these cases in fairness to all concerned: the accused student, the faculty, and the University of Houston-Clear Lake.
- B. General Jurisdiction.
Matters relating to academic honesty are within the general jurisdiction of the Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost.
- C. Questions Regarding Applicability of Policy.
All questions regarding the applicability of University of Houston-Clear Lake policy, code, or special provisions of either shall be determined finally by the Provost.
- D. Compass of Actions Taken Against Students.
Actions taken against students are university-wide in their effect, unless otherwise specified.
- E. Student Responsibility.
Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in all academic work attempted while enrolled at the University including following the Academic Honesty Policy. Each student acknowledges, by the mere act of turning in work for a grade, that they have honored the Honesty Code. Students shall have the responsibility of reporting incidents of alleged academic dishonesty to the instructor involved, or to the appropriate authority if the alleged act is not associated with a specific class, or if necessary, to the Dean of Students.
- F. Teaching Assistant Responsibility.
Teaching assistants, including proctors, will have the responsibility of reporting incidents of alleged academic dishonesty to the instructor involved.
- G. Instructor Responsibility.
Instructors are responsible for knowing the principles and procedures of the Academic Honesty Policy, and for enforcing the policy when academic honesty violations occur. Instructors must also remind students of the Academic Honesty Policy and help them comply with it.
- H. Purpose of Procedures.

The purpose of these procedures is to provide for the orderly administration of the Academic Honesty Policy consistent with the principles of due process. Reasonable deviations from these procedures will not invalidate a decision or proceeding unless the Provost determines, upon written appeal from the accusing and/or accused parties, that the deviation will result in prejudice to one or more of the parties involved, including the student or instructor.

I. Notification.

All required written notices shall be addressed to the student via their UHCL email. It is the responsibility of the student to regularly check (at least once per week) their UHCL email. A notice properly addressed and so sent shall be presumed to have been received by the student.

J. Retaliation.

The University of Houston-Clear Lake prohibits retaliatory action against persons who report incidents of alleged academic dishonesty under this policy, who are suspected of having reported incidents of alleged academic dishonesty under this policy, who are identified to serve or have served as witnesses in any academic honesty proceeding, or who are identified to serve or have served on a hearing panel. Any acts of retaliation will be referred to the appropriate office for review and response.

K. Academic Honesty Panel

The Academic Honesty Panel is a group comprised of faculty, students, and academic administrators that conducts hearings in matters of academic dishonesty. It is the charge of the Academic Honesty Panel to uphold the Academic Honesty Policy of the University of Houston-Clear Lake and to ensure that the policy process herein has been followed. The Academic Honesty Panel includes one faculty member from each college, one student from each college, and an Associate Dean of the college in which the student is not enrolled.

The Student Government Association Executive Council will select a pool of students for each college. Each college Dean will select a student representative and an alternate from the college's pool of students. Members of the Academic Honesty hearing panel for a specific case will not include a member involved in the case of violation of the Honesty Code. Members are selected prior to the beginning of each academic year for a one-year term to begin September 1 through August 31 and they may serve consecutive terms. The Panel shall hold a hearing within ten working days of being notified by the Dean of Students.

II. PREVENTATIVE PRACTICES

A. Student Practices.

University of Houston-Clear Lake students may be required to participate in training on academic honesty and acknowledge their acceptance of the policy. Students will be provided with evidence of completion of training, which must be submitted to instructors as requested. Students are encouraged to read the Academic Honesty Policy and review as needed.

B. Instructor Practices.

Instructors can help students comply with the Academic Honesty Policy by noting the Honesty Code on the course syllabus and providing course-specific guidance. Instructors will use reasonable security precautions in the preparation, handling, and administering of graded work.

Instructors can help students comply with the academic honesty policy by minimizing temptation to act dishonestly. Measures instructors should consider are:

1. Maintaining adequate security precautions in the preparation and handling of tests;
2. Structuring the type and sequence of examination questions so as to discourage dishonesty;
3. Providing ample room for proper spacing of students during examinations, when possible;
4. Monitoring examinations, especially in large classes and in classes where not all students are known to the instructor or the assistant;
5. Making clear to their students the rules concerning the use of electronic devices;

6. Making clear to their students, in writing, what constitutes academic dishonesty, particularly in those classes where group activities (laboratory exercises, generation of field reports, etc.) are part of the instructional process;
7. Requiring students to submit their own work and defining for their students particular aspects of dishonesty, such as plagiarism and self-plagiarism;
8. Requiring students to show a picture ID and sign major assignments and exams; and
9. Helping raise consciousness of the issue of academic honesty by asking students to sign an honor pledge in the first week of class and to write a short honor pledge in their own hand on their major assignments.

C. University Practices.

The University will help students comply with the Academic Honesty Policy by informing students about academic honesty. Information about the Academic Honesty Policy will be provided to students at the time of admission and highlighted during orientation programs. The University shall establish guidelines to monitor that students and faculty follow the guidelines set forth in II.A and II.B. Additional awareness efforts can be made at the College- and University-level that engage all members of the University community, with a particular focus on informing students and instructors about the Academic Honesty Policy each academic year.

III. CATEGORIES OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

A. Application of the Academic Honesty Policy.

This policy applies to those acts of dishonesty committed by a student while enrolled at the University of Houston-Clear Lake.

B. Academic Dishonesty Prohibited.

“Academic dishonesty” means employing a method or technique or engaging in conduct in an academic endeavor that contravenes the standards of ethical integrity expected at the University of Houston-Clear Lake or by a course instructor to fulfill any and all academic requirements. Any conduct or activity by a student intended to earn or improve a grade or receive any form of credit by fraudulent or dishonest means is considered an Honesty Code violation and deemed academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism can include, but is not limited to, the following acts:

- a. Using the words of another author without indicating that these words belong to another author.
- b. Summarizing the words of another author without indicating that the summary has been derived from another author.
- c. Using the ideas of another author without indicating that these ideas belong to another author.
- d. Engaging another writer, whether a professional, friend, or family member to write a document that the student writer is expected to be solely responsible for writing. Or, stealing, copying, purchasing, or “borrowing” the writing of another author for the purpose of submitting the work as the writer's own.
- e. Copying the organizational strategy of another author by presenting ideas in the text in exactly the same order as in the primary text.

2. **Cheating**

- a. Openly cheating in an examination, such as copying from another’s paper;
- b. Being able to view during an examination, quiz or any in-class assignment an electronic device that allows communication with another person, access to unauthorized material, access to the internet, or the ability to capture an image, unless expressly permitted by the instructor;

- c. Using and/or possessing “crib notes,” as unauthorized use of notes or the like to aid in answering questions during an examination;
- d. Giving or receiving unauthorized aid during or after an examination, such as trading examinations, whispering answers, passing notes, or using electronic devices to transmit or receive information;
- e. Informing any person or persons of the contents of any examination prior to the time the examination is given;
- f. Securing another to take a test in the student’s place. Both the student taking the test for another and the student registered in the course are at fault;
- g. Providing answers for any assigned work when not specifically authorized by the instructor to do so;
- h. Working with another person or persons on any assignment when not specifically permitted to do so;
- i. Taking credit for work contributed by the group that was not done by the student;
- j. Completing work for other students who receive credit;
- k. Purchasing or otherwise obtaining unauthorized course work solutions;

3. *Fabrication, Falsification, and Misrepresentation*

- a. Changing answers or grades on a test that has been returned to a student in an attempt to claim instructor error;
- b. Using another’s laboratory results as one’s own, whether with or without the permission of the owner;
- c. Falsifying results in laboratory experiments;
- d. Misrepresenting academic records or achievements as they pertain to course prerequisites or corequisites for the purpose of enrolling or remaining in a course for which one is not eligible;
- e. Representing oneself as a person who has earned a degree without having earned that particular degree;
- f. Misrepresenting one’s qualifications, forging signatures, or falsifying information on official documents for the purpose of academic gain;

4. *Stealing and Abuse of Academic Materials*

- a. Stealing, as theft of tests or grade books, from faculty offices or elsewhere, or knowingly using stolen tests or materials in satisfaction of exams, papers, or other assignments; this includes the removal of items posted for use by the students;
- b. Mutilating, destroying, concealing, stealing, or altering any materials provided to assist students in the completion of academic work, including library books, journals, computer files, microfilm and microfiche files, materials placed on reserve by the instructor, or any such materials as the instructor may provide or assign;
- c. Copying of any data files or copyrighted computer program(s) for one’s own personal use or the use of others;
- d. Sharing usernames and passwords with another to allow unauthorized access to restricted information or uploading course materials (e.g. exams, assignment solutions, graded work) to the internet;

5. *Complicity in Academic Dishonesty*

- a. Failing to report to the instructor an incident which the student believes to be a violation of the academic honesty policy;

6. *Academic Misconduct*

- a. Any other conduct which a reasonable person in the same or similar circumstances would recognize as dishonest or improper in an academic setting.

IV. ACADEMIC HONESTY ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES

The instructor has primary responsibility and authority in the classroom. Since each instructor has specific responsibilities to inform students of the contents of the Honesty Code, encourage compliance with the Honesty Code, and enforce the Honesty Code in the classroom, it is incumbent upon the instructor to administer the Academic Honesty Policy in a fair and judicious manner in all instances of alleged academic dishonesty.

A. Course Level Resolution

When an instructor has evidence that a violation of the Honesty Code may have occurred, whether through their personal witness or through a report made by another person, the instructor should immediately investigate the alleged violation to determine the facts. If a student or other member of the University community suspects that another student has committed an act of academic dishonesty, that person shall notify the instructor in the course in question.

The instructor shall notify the student, via UHCL email, of the allegation and proposed sanction. The instructor will include the Department Chair on the notification email. Once informed of the alleged violation, the student has ten working days to respond and, if desired, meet with the instructor to discuss the alleged violation. The meeting represents an opportunity for the student to present a defense on their own behalf.

After the ten-day period, and after consideration of any new evidence, the instructor will notify the student and Department Chair of their decision regarding the alleged violation with the proposed sanction. If it has been determined that a violation has occurred, the following will occur:

1. The instructor will document the violation and sanction on the Honesty Code Violation Form, and email the completed form to the student, Department Chair, and Dean of Students. This form must be completed for all instances of violation of the Academic Honesty Code, regardless of the severity of the alleged violation or the sanction imposed.
2. The Honesty Code Violation Form will include notification to the student that the decision may be appealed to the Academic Honesty Panel, and that, to appeal the decision, the student must contact the Dean of Students by email, with a copy to the instructor and Department Chair, within ten working days of receiving the completed Honesty Code Violation form.
 - a. If the decision is appealed, the Academic Honesty Panel Resolution procedures will be followed as outlined below.
 - b. If the decision is not appealed, the Dean of Students will advise students with no academic honesty violations on record that the case is closed, unless the instructor requests sanctions beyond those available in a course.
Students with academic honesty violations on record or facing additional disciplinary action(s) will be required to appear in front of the Academic Honesty hearing panel.
 - c. The Dean of Students will advise the student that, in addition to academic sanctions by the instructor, the student may also be subject to disciplinary action. Such action may be imposed by the Academic Honesty Panel if evidence exists of repeated violations of the Honesty Code.

In the event a case of academic dishonesty is not resolved prior to the deadline for reporting final grades to the registrar, the student shall receive a grade of Incomplete ("I") until the appropriate grade can be determined.

B. Academic Honesty Panel Resolution

An Academic Honesty Panel hearing will be held in the following instances:

- 1. The instructor determines that a student has committed an act of academic dishonesty and such act warrants sanction more severe than those available for a course (e.g. Suspension).** In this case, the instructor must attach a copy of the complaint to request sanctions beyond the course level sanction to the Honesty Code Violation Form. The instructor shall recommend what they believe to be the appropriate sanction to the Academic Honesty Panel. The Dean of Students will initiate a formal hearing process as soon as possible but no later than thirty working days from receipt of the complaint from the instructor, notifying the student of the alleged violation and setting a date and time for the hearing before the Academic Honesty Panel.
- 2. The student has a pre-existing record of academic dishonesty.** The Dean of Students will notify the student, instructor(s), and the Department Chair(s) of the series of alleged violations and set a date and time for a hearing before the Academic Honesty Panel.
- 3. The Dean of Students is timely notified within 10 working days that the student wishes to appeal a course level sanction.** The Dean of Students will initiate a formal hearing process as soon as possible but no later than thirty working days from receipt of the appeal, notifying the student, instructor, and Department Chair of the date and time for the hearing before the Academic Honesty Panel.

C. Academic Honesty Panel Hearing

The Dean of Students or his designee, shall be required to convene these hearings to serve as the facilitator of the hearing(s). This individual shall not have a vote at the hearing or be present during the deliberations of the panel.

The hearing shall be held in two phases. The first phase is the determination of violation, followed, if necessary, by the sanction phase.

The student may bring an advisor to the hearing for support and advice during the hearing. The advisor may attend the hearing but shall not directly participate in the hearing or enter into discussion with the parties present. Procedures for the Academic Honesty Panel hearing process are detailed in Appendix A.

If either party intends to have legal counsel attend the hearing, the Dean of Students must be notified at least three working days before the hearing. The hearing cannot be held with such counsel in attendance unless a representative from University of Houston System legal counsel is also present.

The student and instructor will have the opportunity to present their case during the hearing. This may include the introduction of documents and/or physical evidence as well statements of individuals who have knowledge of the circumstances.

If either party intends to have witnesses attend the hearing for such statements, the Dean of Students must be notified at least three working days before the hearing along with a written statement from the witness. The Dean of Students will provide the written statement(s) to both parties prior to the hearing.

If physical evidence or witness testimony is presented in the hearing, and if either party needs reasonable time to review the evidence and/or consider the witness testimony, either party may request a

postponement of the hearing. Decisions on postponement of the hearing will be made at the discretion of the Dean of Students or designee.

The cases presented to the panel must be made by the accusing individual and the accused student. The instructor or other individuals who reported the alleged misconduct shall present the relevant information, including statements by witnesses. The accused student shall then present his/her statement and relevant information, including statements by witnesses. Neither party shall ask questions of or solicit answers directly from the other party or its witnesses. Where it appears that there are matters of disputed fact, the Dean of Students shall request the panel to ask appropriate questions of either or both parties and/or their respective witnesses so as to clarify the points in dispute. The panel shall have the right to question any and all witnesses and to examine documentation presented.

At the conclusion of the first phase of the hearing, the panel shall meet in a closed session to render a decision. The Academic Honesty hearing panel deliberates and renders a vote.

A student is found in violation of the academic honesty policy by a vote of 6 or more members of the panel present at the hearing. In order for the hearing to proceed, at least 8 out of the 9 members of the panel must be present for the hearing. Upon reaching a decision in either phase, the phase shall reconvene with all parties present and inform all parties of its decision.

After resolution of an alleged violation, the Dean of Students will email the final decision to the student, instructor, Department Chair, and Academic Dean (or the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs if the student is non-degree seeking) within five working days of receipt of the panel's judgment.

The decision of the Academic Honesty Panel should be considered final, unless there are specific grounds for appeal (see IV.E).

The hearing shall have an audio recording. The parties involved may obtain a copy of the recording from the Dean of Students at the expense of the requesting party.

D. Sanction Phase

During the sanction phase of the hearing, the student will have an opportunity to present relevant information regarding misconduct, including witness statements, documents and other information in accordance with hearing procedures.

The faculty and student will have an opportunity to present a sanction statement. The panel shall have the right to ask questions of both parties.

If the panel decides that a violation has occurred, then the instructor's recommended sanction will be considered before a final decision is rendered by the panel. If repeated violations of the Academic Honesty Policy are documented, then the panel may impose additional penalties beyond the instructor's recommended sanction. These may include, but are not limited to:

- 1. Grade:** A grade penalty of "F" or "zero" for the course or for the academic assignment, respectively;
- 2. Probation:** The student shall not represent the University in any extracurricular activity or run for office in any University sponsored group or organization. Additional restrictions or conditions may be imposed;
- 3. Suspension:** Separation of the student from the University for a definite period of time, after which the student is eligible to return. Conditions for re-admission may be specified. When suspended, a student may not attend class or participate as a student in any University activity;
- 4. Expulsion:** Permanent separation of the student from the University.

E. Provost Appeal and Resolution

Within five work days of the panel's decision, either party (i.e. student or instructor) may file an appeal for review with the provost or that officer designated by the provost. The appeal shall be in writing and shall specifically address the issues to be reviewed based on one or more of the following grounds:

1. Significant procedural error inconsistent with the processes as outlined in this policy
2. Discovery of any new information unknown or not reasonably foreseeable at the time of the hearing that was material to and could have reasonably impacted the disciplinary decision.
3. The sanction(s) determined by the panel was significantly disproportionate to the violation.

If an appeal is submitted, the other party and Dean of Students will be notified by the Provost and will receive the appeal documentation prior to an appeal decision. The other party may submit a response within five working days. The Provost shall consider the appeal and deliver a decision within 15 working days of receipt of such appeal, except where adherence to such time period would be impracticable, in which case such time period shall be extended as warranted by the particular circumstances. If the other party submits a response to the appeal within 5 working days, the provost will have 20 working days to deliver his decision from initial receipt of the appeal. Any additional delays will be communicated via UHCL email to the parties, Department Chair and Dean of Students.

F. Actions Which the Provost May Take:

The Provost may decide to:

- (1) Approve the findings and/or sanctions of the panel.
- (2) Reverse the findings and/or sanctions of the panel.
- (3) Return the case back to the Dean of Students to provide a new proceeding, or allow the party to have the case handled beginning at any specific stage of the Academic Honesty Hearing Process.
- (4) In rare cases, return the case to the Dean of Students to provide a new proceeding with a different panel.

The Provost's or designee's written decision, and when applicable justification, will be sent to the parties, Department Chair and Dean of Students within the articulated time period.

Once the Provost has issued a decision, the matter shall be considered final and binding upon all involved.

G. Group Violations of the Academic Honesty Policy.

In instances where two or more students are alleged to be involved in the same infraction of the Academic Honesty Policy, at the discretion of the Dean of Students and in consultation with the relevant instructor, the case against the whole group will be heard by a single Academic Honesty Panel. The facts common to all cases will be presented, with all students allegedly involved, in attendance. Each student shall be allowed to present their case and/or statements to the panel separately. If requested by the presenting student, such statements shall be presented independently without the other accused student(s) in the room.

V. RECORDS

A. Records of Academic Honesty Proceedings.

The Dean of Students shall retain a copy of all Honesty Code Violation Forms. If the sanction imposed is a final grade penalty, suspension, or expulsion, the registrar's office is notified, and a record of the notification is maintained in the registrar's office according to the prescribed operating procedures of that office.

Records of proceedings under this policy are considered a student's educational record in accordance with Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

B. Notations on a Student's transcript.

If the student is found in violation of the Honesty Code and the penalty is anything except suspension or expulsion, the form does not become a part of the student's permanent record or transcript. Instead, it is retained by the Dean of Students. If the student is found in violation of the Honesty Code and the penalty is suspension or expulsion, the record becomes part of the student's permanent academic file and the notation of "Disciplinary Suspension" or "Disciplinary Expulsion" is placed on the transcript. In the case of suspension, the notation will be removed at the conclusion of the specified suspension period at the written request of the student. In the case of expulsion, the entry is noted permanently.

VI. DEFINITIONS

A. Working Days.

Working days, for purposes of this policy, are defined as days the University of Houston-Clear Lake is open (excluding Saturdays and Sundays) as posted in the university academic calendar.

B. Academic Record.

Academic record includes documents, forms, copies, reports, statements, recordings, etc. that are acquired while a student attends the University of Houston-Clear Lake. The information is available to outside sources according to the procedures established by the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act.

C. Sanction.

Sanction means the penalty assessed for a violation of the Academic Honesty Policy.

D. Instructor.

Instructor refers to a faculty member, lecturer, teaching assistant, adjunct instructor, or teaching fellow in charge of the course section in which an alleged violation of this Academic Honesty Policy has occurred. Such individuals will typically be the instructor of the course section in question. In instances where this is not the case, instances of alleged cheating should be reported to the instructor.

E. Student

Student refers to any individual who has ever registered and paid (made a complete payment or has made at least one installment payment) for a course, or courses, at the University of Houston-Clear Lake. This definition would normally include undergraduate students, graduate students, doctoral students, post-baccalaureates, professional school students, and individuals auditing courses.

VII. REVIEW AND RESPONSIBILITY

The academic honesty policy shall be reviewed every five years by the Faculty Senate Teaching and Research Committee. Any amendments to the Academic Honesty Policy must be approved through the shared governance process.