

# FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY ACADEMIC HONOR POLICY

*(as codified in FSU Regulation 3.005)*

Revised July 2022

## **Introduction**

The statement on Values and Moral Standards says: “The moral norm which guides conduct and informs policy at The Florida State University is responsible freedom. Freedom is an important experience which the University, one of the freest of institutions, provides for all of its citizens – faculty, students, administrators, and staff. Freedom is responsibly exercised when it is directed by ethical standards.” The statement also addresses academic integrity: “The University aspires to excellence in its core activities of teaching, research, creative expression, and public service and is committed to the integrity of the academic process. The [Academic Honor Policy] is a specific manifestation of this commitment. Truthfulness in one’s claims and representations and honesty in one’s activities are essential in life and vocation, and the realization of truthfulness and honesty is an intrinsic part of the educational process.” (Values and moral standards at FSU retrieved from the current General Bulletin located at <http://registrar.fsu.edu/>.)

Guided by these principles, this Academic Honor Policy outlines the University’s expectations for all students’ academic work on each campus and all virtual platforms, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty throughout the process. This policy is educational in nature and strives to provide students due process at every level. Please refer to memos outlining necessary procedural modifications of the process for the Panama City and Republic of Panama campuses. The Academic Honor Policy Committee may take direct jurisdiction of a case under extraordinary circumstances when it is determined by a majority vote of the committee that taking direct jurisdiction is appropriate.

If a student observes a violation of the Academic Honor Policy, they should report the incident to the instructor of the course. Allegations that come to the instructor’s attention after the semester has ended should be communicated to the Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement (FDA) for guidance. The scope of the Academic Honor Policy applies to any student enrolled in any credit-bearing course or program. This includes students completing coursework to satisfy “Incomplete” grades and candidates for the degree completing their dissertations. False, fraudulent, or incomplete information and/or statements by an applicant related to admission or residency are addressed by the University Admissions Committee, not by the Academic Honor Policy.

Students in the College of Law and the College of Medicine are governed by the academic integrity policies and procedures of their respective colleges, which are subject to approval by the Academic Honor Policy Committee.

## **FSU Academic Honor Pledge**

I affirm my commitment to the concept of responsible freedom. I will be honest and truthful and will strive for personal and institutional integrity at the Florida State University. I will abide by the Academic Honor Policy at all times.

## **Academic Honor Violations**

**Note: Instructors are responsible for following and reinforcing the importance of the Academic Honor Policy in their courses and for clarifying in writing their expectations regarding collaboration and multiple submission of academic work.**

Examples have been provided for the purpose of illustration and are not intended to be all-inclusive. All charges include attempting to commit the alleged violation. Failed violation attempts will be construed as similar to completed violations in determining charges and sanctions.

**1. PLAGIARISM. Presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source).**

Typical Examples Include: Using another's work from print, web, or other sources without acknowledging the source; quoting from a source without citation; using facts, figures, graphs, charts, or information without acknowledgement of the source; utilizing ghostwriting or pay-for-paper services; submitting another's work through online thesaurus software.

**2. CHEATING. Improper access to or use of any information or material that is not specifically condoned by the instructor for use in the academic exercise.**

Typical Examples Include: Copying from another student's work or receiving unauthorized assistance during a quiz, test, or examination; using books, notes or other devices (e.g., calculators, cell phones, or computers) when these are not authorized; procuring without authorization a copy of or information about an examination before the scheduled exercise; unauthorized collaboration on exams. This includes unauthorized actions taken on any social media platform.

**3. UNAUTHORIZED GROUP WORK. Unauthorized collaborating.**

Typical Examples Include: Working with another person or persons on any activity that is intended to be individual work, where such collaboration has not been specifically authorized by the instructor. This includes unauthorized actions taken on any social media platform.

**4. FABRICATION, FALSIFICATION, AND MISREPRESENTATION. Unauthorized altering or inventing of any information or citation that affects grades given for academic work or attendance.**

Typical Examples Include: Inventing or counterfeiting data or information; falsely citing the source of information; altering the record of or reporting false information about practicum or clinical experiences; altering grade reports or other academic records; submitting a false excuse for a class absence or tardiness in a scheduled academic exercise; lying to an instructor to increase a grade.

**5. MULTIPLE SUBMISSION. Submitting the same academic work (including oral presentations) for credit more than once without instructor permission. It is each instructor's responsibility to make expectations regarding whether students may incorporate existing work into new assignments clear in writing.**

Typical Examples Include: Submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without instructor permission; making minor revisions in a credited paper or report (including oral presentations) and submitting it again as if it were new work.

**6. ABUSE OF ACADEMIC MATERIALS. Intentionally damaging, destroying, stealing, or making inaccessible library or other academic resource material.**

Typical Examples Include: Stealing or destroying library or reference materials needed for common academic purposes; hiding resource materials so others may not use them; destroying computer programs or files needed in academic work; stealing, altering, or intentionally damaging another student's notes or laboratory experiments. (This refers only to abuse as related to an academic issue.)

**7. COMPLICITY IN ACADEMIC DISHONESTY. Intentionally helping another commit an act of academic dishonesty.**

Typical Examples Include: Knowingly allowing another to copy from one's paper during an examination or test; distributing test questions or substantive information about the material to be tested before a scheduled exercise; deliberately furnishing false information.

### **Student Rights**

Students have the following due process rights, which may have an impact on the appellate process:

1. To be informed of all alleged violation(s) and to be given access to all relevant materials pertaining to the case.
2. To receive an impartial hearing or a meeting with an administrator in a timely manner (as appropriate) where the student will be given a full opportunity to present information pertaining to the case.

Students are also accorded the following prerogatives:

1. When possible and appropriate, to discuss the allegations with the instructor.
2. Privacy, confidentiality, and personal security.
3. To be assisted by a support person who may accompany the student throughout the process but may not speak on the student's behalf; a witness may not serve as a support person.
4. To choose not to answer any question that they do not wish to answer.
5. To dispute the sanctions of a Student & Instructor resolution and to appeal both the decision and sanctions of an Academic Honor Policy hearing or an Administrative Case Resolution.
6. To have an opportunity to provide information in writing to the FDA administrator, prior to a hearing, if they have reason to believe any panel member would not be able to review the case objectively without bias or prejudice.

The student should continue in the course in question during the entire process. Once an alleged violation of the Academic Honor Policy is discovered, or when a student has been found “responsible” for an Academic Honor Policy violation, they are not permitted to withdraw or drop the course or request that the grading basis be changed to a “Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory” grade if the course is letter-graded.

Students who provide false information when requesting to drop a course may be subject to allegations of Student Conduct Code violations. Should no final determination be made in an Academic Honor Policy case before the end of the term, the grade of “Incomplete” will be assigned until a decision is made.

Students who need assistance should seek guidance from a list of volunteers who have been trained in the Academic Honor Policy, which can be found on this website: <https://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy>.

### **Student Responsibilities**

Students should read the Academic Honor Policy and follow each of its requirements, seek clarification from the instructor as needed, and participate actively and appropriately in the resolution of any Academic Honor Policy allegations. All email messages related to cases are sent to official FSU email accounts, which students are required to check and respond to regularly, as stated in the *General Bulletin*. Students are also expected to communicate respectfully with instructors, fellow students, and staff members throughout the process.

### **Defining Egregious Allegations**

The decision regarding whether an allegation is egregious is made by an FDA administrator and the instructor. Allegations of academic dishonesty involving egregious allegations will be referred to a formal hearing. The following list of egregious allegation examples is provided for illustrative purposes, but is not all-inclusive:

- Coercing current classmates or former course enrollees to provide exam questions and/or answers.
- Stealing or disseminating exam questions and/or answers from an instructor.

- Operating an ongoing, organized scheme to help others violate the Academic Honor Policy in some manner.
- Using analog or technological methods to alter grades for oneself or others.
- Violating the Academic Honor Policy while fulfilling one's graduate program milestones.

### **Procedures for Resolving Cases – First Offense (that is not considered an egregious violation)**

**Student & Instructor Resolution.** When an instructor believes that a student has violated the Academic Honor Policy in one of the instructor's classes, the instructor must first contact the FDA Office to discover whether the student has a prior record of academic dishonesty and thus whether to proceeding with a Student & Instructor Resolution is appropriate. The instructor must also inform the department chair or dean (Teaching assistants must seek guidance from their supervising faculty member, and adjunct instructors must seek guidance from their department chair). However, faculty members or others who do not have administrative authority to enforce the Academic Honor Policy should not be informed of the allegation unless they have established a legitimate need to know. If pursuing a Student & Instructor Resolution is determined to be possible, the instructor shall share and discuss the evidence of academic dishonesty with the student, in as private and confidential a setting as possible, and explore the possibility of a resolution. Instructors are responsible for outlining all resolution options available to the student. After this discussion, the instructor may drop the charge if it appears to be unsubstantiated, which does not create a record, or the student may accept responsibility for the violation and accept the academic sanction proposed by the instructor. If a Student & Instructor Resolution is agreed to, the matter goes no further and the process is concluded. The signed [Student & Instructor Resolution Form](#) becomes a confidential student record of academic dishonesty that is subject to the conditions described in the Records section. Any grade imposed as the result of an academic sanction will remain on the student's transcript indefinitely. Students will not be eligible for a course drop, withdrawal, or modification of grading basis, including changing the grading basis to "Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory."

**Disputing the Sanction.** The student may accept responsibility for the alleged violation but contest the proposed academic sanction. In this circumstance, the instructor must submit the "[Disputing the Sanction](#)" form along with supporting documentation to the FDA Office. The student's written statement must demonstrate specific reasons why the student believes that the proposed sanction is extraordinarily disproportionate to the offense committed for any modification of the sanction to be considered. An FDA administrator (or designee) will review the submitted written documentation to determine whether the proposed sanction should be imposed. The Vice President (or designee) may affirm or lessen the severity of the instructor's proposed sanction as determined to be appropriate in the circumstances. The decision that results from this review is final.

**Administrative Case Resolution.** For cases in which the student denies responsibility and after receiving a Hearing Referral, the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement (FDA) administrator will assess the case to determine whether it could be suitable for Administrative Case Resolution rather than the hearing process. Such cases will be straightforward cases that do not require extensive additional information, explanation, or evidence beyond what is contained in the charge letter and documentation provided by the instructor. These cases would also not reasonably result in serious sanctions, such as suspension or expulsion, if the student were to be found responsible. If the FDA administrator determines that the case is eligible for Administrative Case Resolution, the administrator will ask the instructor if they have any objection to the case being resolved by the student meeting with an academic administrator from FDA in lieu of a hearing. If the instructor does not object, the student will have the option to meet with an FDA administrator to discuss the case and attempt to resolve it. If it is possible to resolve in this manner, the administrator will determine whether to find the student "responsible" or "not responsible" for the allegation(s) based on a preponderance of evidence standard, as well as what sanctions to impose, if appropriate. In certain cases when a second allegation

against a student meets the criteria above, especially if the student admits responsibility for the alleged violation, an Administrative Case Resolution may be appropriate. A finding of “responsible” creates a formal record that is subject to the conditions described in the Records section. Any grade imposed as the result of an academic sanction will remain on the student’s transcript indefinitely and will not be eligible for a course drop, withdrawal, or modification of grading basis, including changing the grading basis to “Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory.”

**Hearing at Student’s Request.** The student may deny responsibility for the alleged violation, making a hearing the appropriate resolution procedure. In this circumstance, the instructor submits the “Academic Honor Policy Hearing Referral” form along with supporting documentation to FDA in preparation for an Academic Honor Policy Hearing. Refer to the section entitled *Hearing Process*.

### **Procedures for Resolving Cases – Second Offense (or first offense considered egregious)**

#### **General Conditions Requiring a Hearing**

The student may deny responsibility for the alleged violation. In this circumstance, the instructor submits the “Academic Honor Policy Hearing Referral” form along with supporting documentation to FDA in preparation for an Academic Honor Policy Hearing.

If the student is found to have a prior record of academic dishonesty, the student is a graduate student who allegedly violated the Policy in any culminating milestone of their degree program, or the egregious nature of the allegations merits a formal hearing, the instructor must refer the matter for an Academic Honor Policy Hearing by submitting the “[Academic Honor Policy Hearing Referral](#)” form and appropriate documentation to FDA.

#### **Allegations involving Graduate Student Culminating Milestones**

All alleged violations involving a graduate student engaged in any phase of the preliminary or comprehensive examination, thesis, or dissertation are treated as egregious and are resolved through the Academic Honor Policy Hearing process, in which the major professor will serve as the “instructor” under the hearing procedures. The Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement, the student’s academic dean, (as well as the Vice President for Research in cases involving grant-funded research), and the Dean of the Graduate School or designee should be informed as soon as possible of all such allegations. The decision regarding whether to submit a hearing referral will be made by a committee consisting of the department chair and two faculty members appointed by the academic dean, one of whom should be the student’s committee member serving as the University (outside) representative—if one has been identified—excluding the major professor. In rendering its charging decision, this committee should review all available information and consult with the major professor and the academic dean.

#### **Hearing Process**

For cases that were not or could not resolved by one of the other alternatives outlined above, the hearing process will be conducted. The student will be provided notice of the charge(s) in advance of the hearing and, at the hearing, will have the opportunity to provide information, to present documentation, to respond to the evidence presented, and/or to provide witnesses to testify.

Specifically, the student is issued a letter detailing the charges within 20 class days of the receipt of the referral, and the schedule for the hearing will be set as soon as possible and within 120 days from the date of the letter. These timelines may be modified in unusual circumstances. Unless all parties agree, the hearing will not be held any sooner than 10 class days from the student’s receipt of the charge letter.

A panel consisting of four members shall hear the case. The panel shall include: One faculty member appointed by the dean from the unit in which the academic work is conducted; one faculty member, who is not from the academic unit, appointed by the Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement; and two students. An FDA Administrator manages the logistics of the hearing process.

The hearing will be conducted in a non-adversarial manner with a clear focus on finding the facts within the academic context of the academic work. The student is presumed innocent going into the proceeding. After hearing all available and relevant information from the student, instructor, and any witnesses, the panel deliberates and determines whether or not to find the student “responsible” for the alleged violation using the “preponderance of the evidence” standard. If the student is found “responsible” for the violation, the panel is informed about any prior record of Academic Honor Policy violations and determines sanctioning. The range of sanctions available in the hearing process is broader than in a Student & Instructor Resolution or in an Administrative Case Resolution. In the case of a tie vote amongst the panelists, the student will be found “not responsible” for the allegations.

In cases where a Student & Instructor Resolution is appropriately proposed (i.e., the student has no prior record) and the student denies responsibility of the alleged violation, an Academic Honor Policy Hearing is convened. If the student is found “responsible” in these cases, the panel should uphold the faculty member’s proposed sanction unless there is clear justification for imposing a sanction different than what was proposed during the Student & Instructor Resolution process. The rationale for modifying those sanctions should be written in the decision letter.

If the student is found responsible after a hearing, the hearing panel will issue a decision letter, which will address each charge, outline the basis for the finding of “responsible” or “not responsible,” and explain the sanctions determined to be appropriate. The facilitator of the Academic Honor Policy hearing panel will report the decision to the student, the instructor, the instructor’s academic unit, the supervising faculty member of a teaching assistant or an adjunct instructor, the student’s dean, the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards and the Registrar, if appropriate. If the student is found “responsible” at an Academic Honor Policy Hearing, the outcome will be recorded by FDA and becomes a confidential student record of an Academic Honor Policy violation that is subject to the conditions described in the Records section. Any grade imposed as the result of an academic sanction will remain on the student’s transcript indefinitely and will not be subject to course drop, withdrawal, or grade change, including changing the grading basis to “Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory.”

## **Sanctions**

### **Student & Instructor Resolution and Administrative Case Resolution Sanctions**

The following sanctions are available in the Student & Instructor Resolution and Administrative Case Resolution procedures and may be imposed singly or in combination. The instructor should consider the seriousness of the violation, the student’s circumstances, potential opportunities for learning, and consistency with past sanctions in determining a proposed sanction.

1. Additional academic work, including re-doing the assignment
2. A reduced grade (including “0” or “F”) for the assignment
3. A reduced grade (including “F”) for the course
4. Educational activities. Examples include, but are not limited to, referrals to improve future educational outcomes, tutoring regarding proper citation practices, development of an academic plan with the assistance of the Academic Center for Excellence, participation in ethics workshops, interviews with appropriate faculty or administrators, or writing educational or reflective essays. Fees may be charged to cover the ethics workshops. Please contact an FDA Administrator before implementing educational sanctions.



## **Academic Honor Policy Hearing Sanctions**

The following sanctions are available in the Academic Honor Policy Hearing process and may be imposed singly or in combination:

1. Additional academic work, including re-doing the assignment
2. A reduced grade (including “0” or “F”) for the assignment
3. A reduced grade (including “F”) for the course
4. Educational activities. Examples include, but are not limited to, referrals to improve future educational outcomes, tutoring regarding proper citation practices, development of an academic plan with the assistance of the Academic Center for Excellence, participation in ethics workshops, interviews with appropriate faculty or administrators, writing educational or reflective essays. Fees may be charged to cover the cost of educational activities.
5. Restitution, letter of accountability, or other restorative acts.
6. Disciplinary Probation – a period of time during which any further violation of the Academic Honor Policy puts the student’s status with the University in jeopardy. If the student is found “responsible” for another violation during the period of Disciplinary Probation, serious consideration will be given to imposing a sanction of Suspension, Dismissal, or Expulsion. Restrictions that may be placed on the student’s activities during this time period include but are not limited to: participating in student activities; representing the University on athletic teams or in other leadership positions; and participating in practice for athletic or other competitions.
7. Suspension – Separation from the University for a specified period, not to exceed two years.
8. Expulsion – Separation from the University without the possibility of readmission. Expulsion is noted on the student transcript.
9. Withholding of diplomas, transcripts, or other records for a specified period of time.
10. Suspension of degree, in cases where an offense is discovered after the degree is posted.
11. Revocation of degree, in cases where an offense is discovered after the degree is posted.

## **Records**

An Academic Honor Policy record results from a finding of “responsible” within all resolution routes described in this Policy. Records are kept in a confidential database and will be removed five years from the final decision in the case, except in instances described below. Students who have a single violation on their record and are within one year from graduating (determined and verified by official program-mapping documentation) may petition the FDA Office to request that their Academic Honor Policy record be removed from the confidential database. Requests may be sent to [FDA-Faculty@fsu.edu](mailto:FDA-Faculty@fsu.edu), outlining what they have learned from their experience with the Academic Honor Policy. Requests to remove records of single violations early are not automatically approved. On the initial referral form submitted to the FDA Office (i.e., the Student–Instructor Agreement, Disputing the Sanction form, or Hearing Referral), the instructor may indicate whether they are supportive of the student being eligible for early record expungement—if the student does not incur a subsequent AHP offense. This written input from the instructor of record will be the primary consideration taken into account when the FDA Office determines whether a student’s record will be expunged early. Records pertaining to egregious cases (see Pages 3-4) will not be removed at the student’s request and will stay remain on file for five years. Records involving expulsion will be retained permanently. Records are maintained in a manner consistent with University record retention policy and in compliance with Florida Public Records Law.

## **Appeals**

Decisions of the Academic Honor Policy Hearing Panel may be appealed to the Academic Honor Policy Faculty Appellate Officer. The Appellate Officer will be appointed annually by the President and may be removed at the discretion of the President.

On appeal, the burden of proof shifts to the student to prove that an error has occurred. The only recognized grounds for appeal are:

1. Due process errors involving violations of a student's rights that substantially affected the outcome of the initial hearing.
2. Demonstrated prejudice against the charged student by any panel member. Such prejudice must be evidenced by a conflict of interest, bias, pressure, or influence that precluded a fair and impartial hearing.
3. A sanction that is extraordinarily disproportionate to the offense committed.
4. The preponderance of the evidence presented at the hearing does not support a finding of "responsible."

All appeals will be limited to a review of the record of the initial hearing and appeal documentation submitted by the student. The student will not be invited to appear before the Appellate Officer.

The procedures followed during the appeals process are:

1. The student must send a written letter of appeal to the Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement, in care of an FDA Administrator, within 10 class days after being notified of the Academic Honor Policy Hearing Panel decision. This letter should outline the grounds for the appeal (see 1-4 above) and should provide all supporting facts and relevant documentation that the student wishes to be considered by the Appellate Officer.
2. The AHP Faculty Appellate Officer will review all material related to the case, including the student's letter of appeal and supporting documentation, and will recommend a final decision to the Provost. The Appellate Officer may also gather any additional information deemed necessary to make a determination in the case. The instructor is not typically involved in the appellate process.
3. The Faculty Appellate Officer may affirm, reduce, or reverse the initial panel decision, or they may order a new hearing to be held. This decision becomes final agency action issued via the Agency Clerk if and when it is approved by the Provost (or designee). In cases where the Appellate Officer upholds a finding of "responsible," the decision becomes a confidential student record of academic dishonesty as described in the Records section.
4. Appellate decisions are communicated in writing to the student, the instructor, the instructor's academic unit, the supervising faculty member of a teaching assistant or an adjunct instructor, the Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement, the student's academic dean, the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards, and the Registrar, if necessary, within 30 class days of the appellate decision.

### **Academic Honor Policy Committee**

An Academic Honor Policy Committee shall be appointed by the University President. The Committee will include three faculty members selected from a list of six names provided by the Faculty Senate Steering Committee, and three students selected from a list of six names provided by the Student Senate. The Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement (or designee) and the Director of the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards (or designee) shall serve *ex officio*. Faculty members will serve three-year staggered terms, and students will serve one-year terms. The committee will meet at least once a semester during the academic year. It will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the Academic Honor Policy, work with the Faculty Senate and the Student Senate to educate all members of the community regarding academic integrity and make recommendations for changes to the policy.



**Amendment Procedures**

Amendments to the Academic Honor Policy may be initiated by the Academic Honor Policy Committee, the Faculty Senate, the Student Senate, the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement, or the Provost. Amendments to the policy must be approved by the Faculty Senate, the Student Senate, and the Board of Trustees, as appropriate.