Academic Integrity Policy

Policy Area: Governance

Approval: Chairperson, Board of Directors

Signature: Date:

1. INTRODUCTION

Academic integrity is essential to the success of the educational enterprise and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses against the academic community. Every member of that community bears a responsibility for ensuring that the highest standards of academic integrity are upheld. Only through a genuine partnership among students, faculty, staff, and administrators will Sheridan be able to maintain the necessary commitment to academic integrity.

The Sheridan administration is responsible for making academic integrity an institutional priority and for providing students and faculty with effective educational programs and support services to help them fully understand and address issues of academic integrity. The administration is also responsible for working with other members of the academic community to establish equitable and effective procedures to deal with violations of academic integrity.

The faculty shares the responsibility for educating students about the importance and principles of academic integrity. Individual faculty members – for purposes of the *Academic Integrity Policy*, the term faculty member includes full-time, part-time and sessional lecturers, TAs, staff members, and administrators who are serving as the instructor of record in a course; i.e., the instructor responsible for assigning final course grades – are also responsible for informing students of the particular expectations regarding academic integrity within individual courses, including permissible limits of student collaboration and, where relevant, acceptable citation format. Finally, all members of the faculty should report all violations of academic integrity they encounter.

Students are responsible for understanding the principles of academic integrity fully and abiding by them in all their work at Sheridan. Students are also encouraged to report alleged violations of academic integrity to the faculty member teaching the course in which the violation is alleged to have occurred.

2. RESPONSIBILITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Initial approval of policy and later amendments:	Board of Directors
Amendment of procedures consistent with the policy:	Academic Principal
Distribution of policy:	Academic Principal, Faculty
Implementation of policy:	Academic Principal, Faculty, Board of Directors
Monitoring and compliance of policy:	Academic Council, Academic Principal, Executive Principal, Faculty
Evaluation and recommendations for amendments:	Academic Council, Academic Principal, Executive Principal, Faculty

3. VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Various ways in which academic integrity can be violated are described below. The comments and examples within each section provide explanations and illustrative material, but do not exhaust the scope of possible violations.

3.1. Cheating

Cheating is the use of impermissible and/or unacknowledged materials, information, or study aids in any academic activity. Using books, notes, calculators, conversations with others, etc. when their use is restricted or forbidden, constitutes cheating. Similarly, students may not request others (including commercial term paper companies) to conduct research or prepare any work for them. Students may not submit identical work, or portions thereof, for credit or honours more than once without prior approval of the instructor to whom the work is being submitted for the second or subsequent time.

3.2. Fabrication

Fabrication is the falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic work. "Invented" information may not be used in any laboratory report or other academic work without authorization from the instructor. It is improper, for example, to analyse one sample in an experiment and "invent" data based on that single experiment for several more required analyses. Students must also acknowledge the actual source from which cited information was obtained. A student should not, for example, reproduce a quotation from a book review and claim that the quotation was obtained from the book itself.

3.3. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic work. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks, or by appropriate indentation, and must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline. Acknowledgment is also required when material from any source is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words. To acknowledge a paraphrase properly, one might state: to paraphrase Plato's comment... and conclude with a footnote or appropriate citation to identify the exact reference. A footnote acknowledging only a directly quoted statement does not suffice to notify the reader of any preceding or succeeding paraphrased material. Information that is common knowledge, such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc, need not be cited; however, the sources of all facts or information obtained in reading or research that are not common knowledge among students in the course must be acknowledged. In addition to materials specifically cited in the text, other materials that contribute to one's general understanding of the subject may be acknowledged in the bibliography.

Sometimes, plagiarism can be a subtle issue. Students should be encouraged to discuss any questions about what constitutes plagiarism with the faculty member teaching the course.

3.4. Denying others access to information or material

It is a violation of academic integrity to deny others access to scholarly resources or to deliberately impede the progress of another student or scholar. Examples of violations of this type include giving other students false or misleading information; making library material unavailable to others by stealing or defacing books or journals; deliberately misplacing or destroying reserve materials; and altering someone else's computer files.

3.5. Facilitating Violations of Academic Integrity

It is a violation of academic integrity for a student to aid others in violating academic integrity. A student who knowingly or negligently facilitates a violation of academic integrity is as culpable as the student who receives the impermissible aid, even if the former student does not benefit from the violation.

4. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY VIOLATIONS AND SANCTIONS

4.1. Levels of Violations and Recommended Sanctions

Any violation of academic integrity is a serious offense and is therefore subject to an appropriate penalty or sanction. Academic integrity violations at Sheridan are classified into four levels according to the nature of the violation. For each level of violation a corresponding set of sanctions is recommended.

The recommended sanctions at each level intended as general guidelines for the academic community. Due to mitigating circumstances, a recommended sanction is not always imposed, even when a student is found responsible for a given violation. Culpability may be assessed and sanctions imposed differentially for those with more or with less experience as members of the academic community. Therefore, violations of academic integrity by graduate and professional students will normally be penalized more severely than violations by first-year undergraduate students.

Examples are cited below for each level of violation. These examples are meant to be illustrations and should not be considered all inclusive.

Level One Violations

Level One violations may occur because of inexperience or lack of knowledge of the principles of academic integrity and are often characterized by the absence of dishonest intent on the part of the student committing the violation. These violations generally take place early in a student's course, are quite limited in extent, occur on a minor assignment, and represent a small fraction of the total course work. Examples include:

 a. Working with another student on a minor laboratory exercise or homework assignment when such collaboration is prohibited.
 b. Failure to footnote or give proper acknowledgment in a very limited section of an assignment.

Sanctions for Level One violations ordinarily include one or more of the following, although this list is not all inclusive:

 a. Required participation in a non-credit workshop or seminar on ethics or academic integrity.
 b. An assigned paper or research project related to ethics or academic integrity.
 c. A make-up assignment that is more difficult than the original assignment.
 d. No credit for the original assignment
 e. Disciplinary warning.

Level Two Violations

Level Two violations are breaches of academic integrity that are more serious or that affect a more significant aspect or portion of the course work compared with Level One violations. Examples include:

 a. Quoting directly or paraphrasing, to a moderate extent, without acknowledging the source.
 b. Submitting the same work, or major portions thereof, to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without permission from the instructor to whom the work is submitted for the second or subsequent time.
 c. Using data or interpretative material for a laboratory report without acknowledging the sources or the collaborators. All contributors to the acquisition of data and/or to the writing of the report must be acknowledged.
 d. Failure to acknowledge assistance from others, such as help with research, statistical analysis, computer programming, or field data collection, in a paper, examination, or project report.

Sanctions for Level Two violations ordinarily include one or more of the following, although this list is not all inclusive:

    a. A failing grade on the assignment.
    b. A failing grade for the course.
    c. Disciplinary warning or probation.

Level Three Violations

Level Three violations are breaches of academic integrity that are more serious in nature or that affect a more significant aspect or portion of the course work compared with Level Two violations. Examples include:

    a. Repeat Level Two violations.
    b. Presenting the work of another as one's own.
    c. Copying work on hourly exams or final exams.
    d. Plagiarizing major portions of a written assignment.
    e. Acting to facilitate copying during an exam.
    f. Using prohibited materials, such as books, notes, or calculators during an examination.
    g. Conspiring before an exam to develop methods of illicitly exchanging information during the exam.
    h. Altering examinations for the purposes of re-marking.
    i. Acquiring or distributing copies of an examination from an unauthorized source prior to the examination period.
    j. Submitting purchased materials such as a term paper.
    k. Removing or damaging posted or reserve material, or preventing other students from having access to the material.
    l. Fabricating data by inventing or deliberately altering material. Fabrication includes citing "sources" that are not, in fact, sources.
    m. Using unethical or improper means of acquiring data.

The sanction for Level Three violations ordinarily is an F for the course and suspension for one or more semesters, depending on the seriousness of the violation.

Level Four Violations

Level Four violations represent the most serious breaches of academic integrity. Examples include:

    a. Committing a violation of academic integrity after returning from suspension for a previous violation of academic integrity.
    b. Committing a violation of academic integrity that breaks the law or resembles criminal activity (such as forging a grade form, stealing an examination from a professor or from a Sheridan office, buying a stolen examination, falsifying a transcript to gain access to Sheridan or its resources, or altering the record of work done at Sheridan).
    c. Having a substitute take an examination or taking an examination for someone else.
    d. Fabricating evidence, falsifying data, quoting directly or paraphrasing without acknowledging the source, and/or presenting the ideas of another as one's own in a senior thesis, a master's thesis, a doctoral dissertation, a scholarly article submitted for publication, or any other work represented as his or her own by a graduate or professional student.
    e. Sabotaging another student's work through actions designed to prevent the student from successfully completing an assignment.
    f. Knowingly violating a canon of the ethical code of the profession for which a graduate or professional student is preparing.

The sanction for Level Four violations ordinarily is permanent expulsion from Sheridan with a permanent notation of disciplinary expulsion on the student's Sheridan transcript.

Repeat Offenses

As stated above, a repeat violation at Level Two will ordinarily be treated as a Level Three violation. Likewise, any violation of academic integrity committed after returning from suspension for a Level Three violation will be treated as a Level Four violation. A repeat violation at Level One will ordinarily be treated as a Level Two violation, although it may, under certain circumstances, be treated as a Level Three violation.

4.2.   Other Consequences of Violating the Academic Integrity Policy

A student who commits a violation of academic integrity not only faces censure and sanctions but also runs a serious risk of harming his or her future educational and employment opportunities. The notation of a specific sanction placed on the student's transcript remains for the term of the sanction. In all closed cases in which a grade of "F" is assigned for disciplinary reasons, the "F" shall remain on the student's transcript, even if the student retakes the course and achieves a passing grade. Moreover, prospective employers and other educational institutions frequently use recommendation forms that ask for judgment and comment on an individual's moral or ethical behaviour. Since such forms are sent with the permission of the student, who thereby waives any right he or she may have to keep disciplinary sanctions confidential, Sheridan faculty and administrators with knowledge of academic integrity violations are ethically bound to report such violations.

5.   ADMINISTRATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

The Academic Principal has the ultimate responsibility for implementing and overseeing the Academic Integrity Policy on campus. The Academic Principal is responsible for deciding the sanction for students found responsible for Level Three and Level Four violations of academic integrity on the campus. The Academic Principal shall either exercise this responsibility personally or delegate it to one or more academic administrators.

All academic staff and faculty members shall help to educate students and faculty concerning academic integrity, and shall advise faculty concerning academic integrity policies and procedures. The work of the staff shall be overseen by the Academic Principal (or appointed designee) to make sure that the *Academic Integrity Policy* is implemented consistently and fairly across the Sheridan campus. In addition, the Academic Principal helps to educate students and faculty about academic integrity and provides training for staff.

6.   ADJUDICATING ALLEGED VIOLATIONS OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Any member of Sheridan community may report an alleged violation of the *Academic Integrity Policy* to the faculty member teaching the course, to the Dean of the department offering the course, or to the Academic Principal. Whatever the source of the allegation or the manner in which it is reported, the matter should be handled as specified in this *Academic Integrity Policy*.

Cases of alleged violations of academic integrity by undergraduate and postgraduate students must be referred for adjudication to the Academic Principal. The faculty member may recommend a sanction should the student be found responsible for the violation; this recommendation shall be given serious consideration.

Whatever the level of the violation, it is essential for the integrity of the student judicial system that all instances of alleged violations of academic integrity be adjudicated in accordance with the *Academic Integrity Policy*. The final disposition of all academic integrity cases should be reported to the Academic Principal, who will keep judicial records of all violations of academic integrity.
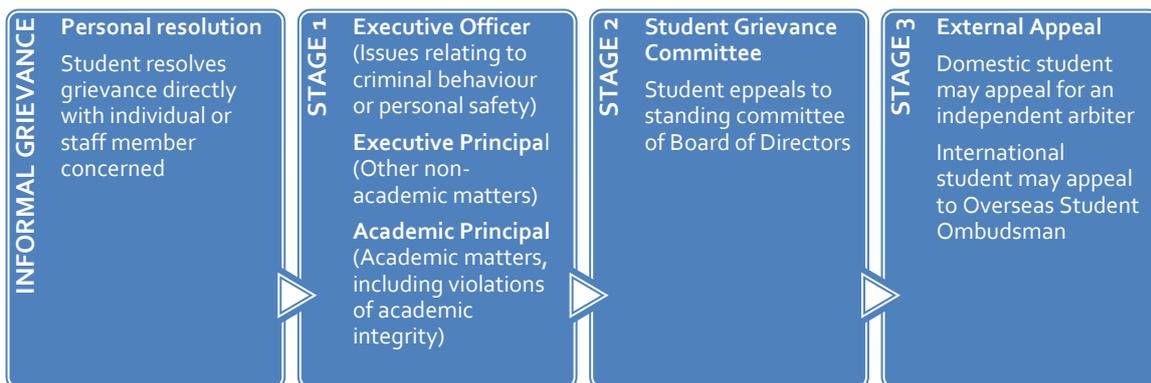
Expulsion files are considered active permanently and shall be retained indefinitely. All other files are considered active until the student graduates and shall be retained for ten years after adjudication of the violation.

The procedures for handling allegations of Level Three and Level Four academic integrity violations are the same as the procedures for handling allegations of other types of student conduct falling within the Level Three and Level Four category with the following exception:

- The administrator responsible for making the decision with regard to the sanction to be imposed when the respondent has been found responsible for a Level Three and Level Four academic integrity violation shall be the Academic Principal (or their designated appointee). The decision of the Academic Principal (or their designated appointee) may be appealed to the Sheridan Board of Directors. The Student Grievance Committee handles cases from students who wish to appeal decisions and/or sanctions imposed by Sheridan for violations of academic integrity.

7. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FLOW CHART

The Process Governing Adjudication of Alleged Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy

INFORMAL GRIEVANCE

Personal resolution
Student resolves grievance directly with individual or staff member concerned

STAGE 1

Executive Officer
(Issues relating to criminal behaviour or personal safety)

Executive Principal
(Other non-academic matters)

Academic Principal
(Academic matters, including violations of academic integrity)

STAGE 2

Student Grievance Committee
Student eppeals to standing committee of Board of Directors

STAGE 3

External Appeal
Domestic student may appeal for an independent arbiter

International student may appeal to Overseas Student Ombudsman

8. APPENDIX: DOCUMENT HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL RECORD

Document Title:	Academic Integrity Policy
Source Documents:	Adapted from Rutger University's Interim Policy on Academic Integrity
Associated Internal Documents:	Governance Manual Student Grievance Policy
Associated External Documents	
Authorised Officer:	Executive Principal
Approved by:	Mr Darren Smith
Date of Approval:	TBA
Next Review Before:	Dec 2023

Version Number	Version Date	Authorised Officer	Amendment Details
0.01	30 May 2011	N/A	Draft prepared for Sheridan and Vose College
0.02	02 Feb 2013	N/A	Revised for Sheridan Board of Directors
1.00	02 Mar 2013	Chairperson, Board of Directors	Submitted to TEQSA for Sheridan HEP registration: Attachment 6.3b Academic Integrity Policy
1.01	16 Dec 2014	Chairperson, Board of Directors	Change to version control box.
1.02	13 June 2017	Executive Principal	Review to ensure HESF 2015 compliance
2.00	3 Aug 2020	Executive Principal	Review and update – logo/name + revisions to administrative procedures.