



## ACADEMIC DISHONESTY POLICY

Area:	Student Affairs	Number:	
Applies to:	All students	Issued:	September 20, 2021
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Policy Owner:	Office of Student Conduct	Page(s):	9

### I. Purpose

The purpose of the Academic Dishonesty Policy is to provide guidance on the regulations for Academic Dishonesty as well as provide the policies and procedures concerning violations of the Academic Dishonesty regulations.

### II. Scope

All students must be aware of and comply with this policy. All employees must be aware of this policy in order to report alleged violations of the Academic Dishonesty policy.

### III. Policy Statement

Georgia Southern University is committed to academic excellence and expects academic honesty from all members of the University community. Academic honesty includes adherence to guidelines established by the institution. It prohibits representing the work of others to be one's own (plagiarism); receiving unauthorized aid on an assignment (cheating); and using similar papers or other work product to fulfill the obligations of different classes without the instructor's permission. This policy sets forth the standards of academic integrity which student members of our academic community are expected to follow.

### IV. Definitions

**Day(s)** refers to any day when the University is open for business and classes are in session.

**Formal Resolution** refers to when a Student is charged with a violation of the Code of Student Conduct and the case is resolved by a Single Hearing Officer or the University Student Conduct Board. As part of this resolution, the Student maintains their right to appeal.

**Hearing Officer** refers to any person designated by the Chief Conduct Officer or designee to investigate, adjudicate or otherwise resolve any cases of alleged Student Misconduct.

**Informal Resolution** refers to when Students are charged with a violation of the Code of Student Conduct and the case is resolved by accepting the outcome offered by the Hearing Officer. By accepting the outcome, Students waive their right to a formal hearing and waive their right to an appeal.

**Major Violation** refers to any violation or accumulation of violations, which is likely to result in Disciplinary Suspension, Expulsion, or any removal from University Housing.

**Minor Violation** refers to any violation that is not likely to result in Disciplinary Suspension, Expulsion, or any removal from University Housing.

**Student** means an individual who has been accepted for admission to the University and maintains a continuing relationship with the University by being enrolled in classes or being eligible to enroll in classes. Students also include but are not limited to online students, SOAR participants, and Savannah State University, Ogeechee Technical College, East Georgia College, or transient Students taking courses on any Georgia Southern University campus.

**University Official** refers to and includes any person employed by Georgia Southern University, performing assigned administrative or professional responsibilities.

**University Student Conduct Board** refers to a body trained to hear and make recommendations concerning alleged violations of the Code of Student Conduct. This board may include Students, Faculty, and Staff.

## V. Exclusions

This policy only applies to alleged violations of the Academic Dishonesty Policy.

## VI. Procedures

### A. Academic Dishonesty

#### 1. Reporting

- a. Reports must be submitted to the Office of the Provost or the Faculty Member of the class where the alleged violation occurred within two (2) weeks of return to the student of the grade for the assignment in question. Exceptions to this time limitation will be made only in cases where new information arises which was not known or reasonably could have been known within the two (2) week period described. Reports will be reviewed to determine if there is sufficient basis to support alleged behavior that is in violation of this policy. To report any violation of the Academic Dishonesty Policy, please go to <http://students.georgiasouthern.edu/conduct/>. A report of an alleged violation of the Academic Dishonesty Policy should include:
  - i. The type of alleged misconduct;
  - ii. Name of the Respondent;
  - iii. Date, time, and place of misconduct;
  - iv. Name and contact information for any witnesses;
  - v. Any evidence available.

#### 2. Confidentiality

Where a Complainant requests that his or her identity be withheld or the allegation(s) not be investigated, the Office of the Provost or Faculty Member will inform the requesting party that Georgia Southern University generally cannot guarantee confidentiality. The Office of the Provost or Faculty Member will consider whether or not such request(s) can be honored while still providing a safe and nondiscriminatory environment for the University. Honoring the request may limit Georgia Southern University's ability to respond fully to the incident and may limit Georgia Southern University's ability to discipline the Respondent.

#### 3. Retaliation

Anyone who, in good faith, reports what they believe to be Student misconduct, who participates or cooperates in, or who is otherwise associated with any investigation,

shall not be subjected to retaliation. Anyone who believes they have been the target of retaliation for reporting, participating or cooperating in, or otherwise being associated with an investigation should immediately contact the Office of Student Conduct. Any person found to have engaged in retaliation in violation of the Code of Student Conduct shall be subject to disciplinary action, pursuant to Georgia Southern University's policy.

4. False Complaints

Individuals who intentionally give false statements to a Georgia Southern official, or who submit false complaints or accusations, including during a hearing, shall be subject to disciplinary action pursuant to Georgia Southern University's policy.

B. Minor Violation – Informal Resolution

1. An Informal Resolution for Academic Dishonesty can occur one of two ways:

a. Between the Faculty Member and the Respondent

- i. In order for the case to be resolved informally with the Faculty member, both the Faculty Member and the Respondent must agree to the sanctions of the Informal Resolution.
- ii. The Respondent has five (5) Days to decide whether or not to accept the Informal Resolution. The term "Day(s)" for purposes of this section refers to any day when the University is open for business and classes are in session.
- iii. A Respondent is eligible for an Informal Resolution only if they have no previous findings of responsibility for the violations listed in this chapter.
- iv. The Faculty Member will provide the Respondent with written notice of a scheduled meeting at least Three (3) Days prior to the meeting. The purpose of the meeting will be to review and discuss the Charges before a final decision is reached.
- v. A third-party observer may be present at the request of the Faculty Member or respondent.
- vi. Documentary evidence and written statements may be relied upon by the Faculty Member, as long as the Respondent is allowed to review and respond to them at the meeting. Respondents may also be allowed to bring relevant witnesses.
- vii. If the Respondent accepts the sanction, the Faculty Member and Respondent may then resolve the problem in a manner acceptable to both. If the Respondent does not accept the sanction(s) determined by the Faculty Member, the case must then be referred to the Office of Student Conduct within ten (10) Days.
- viii. Should the Faculty Member conclude there was no violation of the Academic Dishonesty Policy, the case will be closed. The Faculty Member will send all relevant documentation to the Office of Student Conduct.
- ix. Upon conclusion of the process, the Faculty Member and Respondent should both sign and date the Informal Resolution Form, detailing the specific offense(s) and the sanction(s) assigned. Each party will retain a copy. The original form, along with all relevant documentation, will be submitted to the Office of the Provost and will become part of the Respondent's permanent file. The Respondent will receive a letter from the Office of the Provost, outlining the agreed upon outcome of the case.
- x. Any Respondent has the option to accept an Informal Resolution. By accepting the Informal Resolution, the Respondent waives their right to a formal hearing

and an appeal.

b. Between the Office of Student Conduct and the Respondent

- i. Any Respondent with prior findings of responsibility for Academic Dishonesty violations or who is currently on Disciplinary Probation due to a prior Academic Dishonesty violation must be referred to the Office of Student Conduct for adjudication.

C. Minor Violations – Formal Resolution

1. When a student has no prior findings of responsibility for Academic Dishonesty, but desires a formal resolution, the matter will be considered a Minor Violation. In a Formal Resolution, the Respondent appears before the University Student Conduct Board for adjudication of their case.
2. The Respondent will be notified in writing of the date, time, and location of the hearing, along with any evidence that will be presented against them no later than twenty-four (24) hours prior to the hearing.
3. This notice will also include any alleged violations of the Academic Dishonesty Policy, and the names of the University Student Conduct Board members who will adjudicate the case. The Respondent will then have three (3) Days from the receipt of this notice to challenge any individual scheduled to be a part of the University Student Conduct Board hearing the case. The composition of the University Student Conduct Board may be challenged only based on a conflict of interest or perceived bias. Challenges should be submitted in writing to the Office of Student Conduct who will render a decision.
4. During the University Student Conduct Board hearing, the Faculty Member and witness(es) (if applicable) will have the opportunity to be present to answer any questions the University Student Conduct Board may have, as well as any questions the Respondent may have. The Faculty Member and witness(s) (if applicable) will also have the opportunity to question the Respondent.
5. The Respondent is entitled to an Advisor who may advise them and assist in drafting questions.
6. The Chief Conduct Officer or designee reserves the right to allow a party to testify in a separate room or from a remote location. If this occurs, the Chief Conduct Officer or designee will ensure proper sequestration in a manner that ensures testimony has not been tainted and the sequestration will not disadvantage any party. If a party is unable to ask questions, the Chief Conduct Officer will work to provide reasonable accommodations to allow the party to ask questions of any person providing testimony.
7. The University Student Conduct Board will determine findings and recommend any authorized sanction or combination of sanctions it deems warranted by the circumstances of the case. Prior conduct history will not be considered until the sanctioning phase of the hearing.

8. A written copy of the University Student Conduct Board's recommendations will be submitted to the Associate Dean/Director of Student Conduct & Community Standards or designee as a recommendation for administrative action. The Associate Dean/Director of Student Conduct & Community Standards or designee will submit a final written decision to the Respondent, Faculty Member, and the Office of the Provost.
9. If the Respondent refuses to cooperate with the Office of Student Conduct or fails to attend the hearing, the hearing will be held in their absence. If the Respondent is found in violation, sanctions will be recommended.

D. Major Violations – Formal Resolution

1. Whenever a student has prior findings of Academic Dishonesty and is facing a possible sanction of suspension or expulsion, they will be issued a Notice of Investigation. The Office of Student Conduct or designee will contact the Respondent at their Georgia Southern University email address to notify them of:
  - i. Preliminary Allegations;
  - ii. Possible sanctions;
  - iii. Request for recusal for bias procedure;
  - iv. The investigator who will be involved;
  - v. The link to provide a written response;
  - vi. The opportunity to schedule a preliminary meeting;
2. The Respondent will have five (5) Days from the receipt of this notice to respond. In this response, the Respondent will have the right to admit or deny the allegations, to set forth a defense with facts, witnesses, and documents (written or electronic) to support that defense, and to challenge the assignment of the investigator assigned to the case. The assignment of the investigator may be challenged only on the basis of a conflict of interest or perceived bias. Challenges should be submitted in writing to the Office of Student Conduct who will render a decision concerning the challenge for recusal. A non-response from the Respondent will be considered a general denial of the allegations and no challenge of the investigator.
3. Based on this response, the investigator will interview the Respondent and any incident witnesses to collect and review documents or other physical or electronic information, and perform other steps as appropriate. The investigator will retain written notes and/or obtain written or recorded statements from each interview. The investigator will also keep a record of any proffered witnesses not interviewed, along with a brief, written explanation.
4. The investigator will summarize all information obtained as part of the investigation process in a preliminary investigative report. This preliminary investigative report will indicate resulting charges (or no charges), facts and evidence in support of those charges, witness statements, and possible sanctions. The report will be submitted to the Respondent via the Student email account.
5. The Respondent will have the opportunity to respond in writing or schedule a meeting within five (5) Days of receipt of this investigative report. The written response should indicate the Respondent's plea to all preliminary Charges and, where applicable, their defense and facts, witnesses, and documents (written or

electronic) to support that defense. A non-response from the Respondent will be considered a denial of the Charge(s).

6. The investigator may conduct further investigation determined necessary and warranted by the Respondent's response to the investigative report.
7. The final investigative report will be provided to the University Student Conduct Board and to the Respondent if the case is resolved formally.
8. In a Major Violation Formal Resolution, the Respondent appears before the University Student Conduct Board for adjudication of their case.
9. Upon Receipt of the Formal Resolution notice, the Respondent will have Five (5) Days from the Receipt of this notice to respond. In this response, the Respondent will have the right to challenge any individual scheduled to be a part of the University Student Conduct Board hearing the case. The composition of the University Student Conduct Board may be challenged only based on a conflict of interest or perceived bias. Challenges should be submitted in writing to the Office of Student Conduct who will render a decision. A non-response from the Respondent will be considered a general denial of the allegations and no challenge of the individuals assigned to the University Student Conduct Board.
10. During the University Student Conduct Board hearing, the Institutional Representative and witness (if applicable) will have the opportunity to be present to answer any questions the University Student Conduct Board may have, as well as any questions the Respondent may have. The Institutional Representative and witness (if applicable) will also have the opportunity to question the Respondent. All questions from the Institutional Representative, witness, and Respondent must be directed in writing to the chair of the University Student Conduct Board. The chair of the University Student Conduct Board will ask the questions as written and will limit questions only if they are unrelated to determining veracity of the Charge leveled against the Respondent. The reason for any question not asked will be read into the record. If the Respondent is unable to ask questions, the Chief Conduct Officer will work to provide reasonable accommodations to allow the Respondent to ask questions of any Witnesses or Institutional Representatives present.
11. The Respondent is entitled to an Advisor who may advise them and assist in drafting questions. The University Student Conduct Board will ask the questions as written and will limit questions only if they are unrelated to determining veracity of the Charge leveled against the Respondent. The reason for any question not asked will be read into the record.
12. The Chief Conduct Officer or designee reserves the right to allow a party to testify in a separate room or from a remote location. If this occurs, the Chief Conduct Officer or designee will ensure proper sequestration in a manner that ensures testimony has not been tainted and the sequestration will not disadvantage any party.
13. The University Student Conduct Board will determine findings and recommend any authorized sanction or combination of sanctions it deems to be warranted by the circumstances of the case. Prior conduct history will not be considered until the sanctioning phase of the hearing.

14. A written copy of the University Student Conduct Board's recommendations will be submitted to the Associate Dean/Director of Student Conduct & Community Standards or designee as a recommendation for administrative action. The Associate Dean/Director of Student Conduct & Community Standards or designee will submit a final written decision to the Respondent, Faculty Member, and the Office of the Provost.
15. If the Respondent refuses to cooperate with the Office of Student Conduct or fails to attend the hearing, the hearing will be held in their absence. If the Respondent is found in violation, sanctions will be recommended.

#### E. Academic Dishonesty Sanctions

1. The following list of sanctions is intended to show the range of sanctions that may be imposed on a Student, either individually or in combination. This list is not to be regarded as all-inclusive but rather as a sample of sanctions that may be imposed. Other University policies and regulations may impose specific penalties for specific violations, and nothing in this section is intended to limit the imposition of those specific sanctions.
2. Students who fail to complete their sanctions by their determined deadline will receive a Judicial hold on their Student account.
3. Institutional Sanctions:
  - a. Reduction of a Grade/Academic Sanction: A reduction of a grade would apply to either the course assignment at issue or for the overall course grade (i.e., complete loss of credit for the course).
  - b. Disciplinary Warning – An official written reprimand stating that unacceptable behavior has occurred and any further inappropriate behavior or other violations of the Code of Student Conduct may result in more serious actions by the University.
  - c. Disciplinary Probation – Disciplinary Probation is a specific period of time for which the Student is not in good disciplinary standing during which further violations of the Code of Student Conduct may result in suspension or expulsion. Violations of Disciplinary Probation generally will result in more serious disciplinary action against the Student, such as suspension or expulsion from the University.
  - d. Disciplinary Suspension – A Student placed on Disciplinary Suspension indicates that a Student, by their actions, has forfeited the privilege of attending Georgia Southern University for a specified period of time. Students who reside on campus will have a minimum of 48-hour notice to remove all their belongings out of the Residence Hall after notification that the sanction of Disciplinary Suspension is in effect. All Residence Hall fees and deposits may be forfeited. Students must apply for readmission following Disciplinary Suspension according to the "Guidelines for Readmission Following Disciplinary Suspension" document from the Office of Student Conduct. Conditions for readmission may be specified. Readmission documents may start to be submitted within the last three (3) weeks of the Disciplinary Suspension period. Once all documents have been received, they will be reviewed and a recommendation will be made. The Student may also be added to the University System of Georgia's Student Disciplinary Actions Reporting System.
  - e. Expulsion – Expulsion is the most serious sanction that can be imposed on a

Georgia Southern University Student. Expulsion is a permanent separation from the University. An expelled Student may not enter any part of the campus without specific authorization from the Office of Student Conduct. Students who reside on campus will have a minimum of 48-hour notice to remove all of their belongings out of the Residence Hall after notification the sanction of expulsion is in effect.

- f. Educational Sanction(s) – An educational sanction may consist of the assignment of specific projects to be performed by a Student, such as writing a research paper on a specific topic, performing community service hours, attending an educational program, and/or writing reaction papers on a specified topic.

#### F. Appeals

1. All levels of appeal will only be considered for the following reasons:
  - a. To consider new information, sufficient to alter the decision, or other relevant facts not brought out in the original hearing, because such information was not known or knowable to the person appealing during the time of the hearing;
  - b. To allege a procedural error within the hearing process that may have substantially impacted the fairness of the hearing, including but not limited to whether any hearing questions were improperly excluded or whether the decision was tainted by a conflict of interest or bias by the Title IX Coordinator, Conduct Officer, Investigator(s), decision maker(s); or
  - c. To allege that the finding was inconsistent with the weight of the information.
2. A Student found responsible for violating this Policy will have five (5) Days from the Receipt of the official outcome letter to appeal. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Office of Student Conduct by 5pm on the final day for appeal. The appeal packet will be limited to a review of the record of the University Student Conduct Board, supporting documents, and the Student's written appeal. The Student must explicitly state why they believe an appeal is warranted based on the criteria outlined in paragraph 1.
3. All appeal requests and responses in this process are transmitted by electronic mail (which accommodates distance learning Students).
4. Any Student wishing to appeal should submit their appeal in writing to the Office of Student Conduct. The Office of Student Conduct will compile all pertinent information and deliver the appeal packet to the Office of the Provost. The Office of the Provost or designee may:
  - a. Affirm the findings and sanctions.
  - b. Affirm the finding but issue a new sanction of lesser severity.
  - c. Remand the case back to the decision-maker to correct a procedural or factual defect.
  - d. Reverse or dismiss the case if there was a procedural or factual defect that cannot be remedied by remand.
5. The Provost or designee will issue a decision within a reasonable period of time. The Provost or designee's decision will serve as the only level of appeal at the institutional level and shall be the final institutional decision.
6. Following the decision of the Provost or designee, a student may apply to the Board of Regents for further review of the decision pursuant to [Board of Regents Policy 6.26](#).

7. Appeals received after the designated deadlines above will not be considered unless the institution or Board of Regents has granted an extension prior to the deadline. If an appeal is not received by the deadline the last decision on the matter will become final.