



ACADEMIC INTEGRITY GUIDEBOOK

Promoting and Affirming Academic Integrity

2021-2022

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**This Guidebook contains the policies and
procedures regarding academic integrity at
Mars Hill University.
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Introduction

All Mars Hill University students and faculty pledge to uphold the Honor Code in all academic settings, including work produced outside of class or outside the university campus. Faculty and students are governed by the university's academic standards and regulations, which are designed to ensure excellence and the integrity of all academic work. The standards and regulations of academic integrity are administered by the Academic Integrity Coordinator under the supervision of the Provost.

This guidebook provides university faculty and students information about Mars Hill University's academic integrity regulations that safeguard the value and integrity of our work. The policies in this guidebook provide: (1) a systematic, organized way to address academic misconduct, (2) an accounting method for addressing offenders of academic misconduct, and (3) an appeals process that guarantees academic excellence and fairness for both students and faculty. We believe this collaborative, broad-based understanding provides a positive, educational approach to academic integrity.

This guidebook provides a complete discussion of the issues and additional FAQs. Violation and appeal forms are available from the Academic Integrity Coordinator. Portions of the material in this guidebook can also be found in the academic catalog, the student handbook, and on the internal and external university websites.

The **Academic Integrity Coordinator (AIC)** is appointed by the provost and is responsible for all administrative matters related to Academic Integrity, including chairing and training members of the Academic Integrity Board (AIB); serving as a resource for faculty, staff, and students; gathering and disseminating all forms and information related to AI violations, sanctions, and appeals; and maintaining records of academic integrity violations for tracking purposes. These records are housed in the Office of the Provost.

The **Academic Integrity Board (AIB)** is comprised of a broad representation of faculty and teaching staff who are charged with the task of adjudicating appealed cases of alleged academic dishonesty. Members of the board will be nominated by the Academic Integrity Coordinator (AIC) and approved by the Provost. Members serve a three-year term. The board meets regularly to engage in professional development and training on issues such as plagiarism, unauthorized aid, falsifying information, self-misrepresentation, and policy implementation. The chair of the board is the Academic Integrity Coordinator (AIC).

Academic Integrity @ MHU

Mars Hill University is committed to the fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage¹. Our Honor Code calls us to uphold these core values in the work that we do and the lives we lead. As an academic community, we honor and expect honest work, fair and respectful treatment of all members of the community, and trust, which is the touchstone of our work with one another. When members of our community break this code, it is our duty as an academic institution to repair what has been damaged and to follow clear guidelines that support and promote the fundamental values of academic integrity.

Mars Hill University Honor Code

We, the students of Mars Hill University, pledge ourselves to uphold integrity, honesty, and academic responsibility in and out of the classroom.

Mars Hill University Honor Pledge

On my honor, I have neither given nor received any academic aid or information that would violate the Honor Code of Mars Hill University.

¹ *The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity*. The Center for Academic Integrity, October 2014. 2nd Edition.

Responsibilities of Students and Faculty

Academic Integrity Responsibilities of Students in and out of the Classroom

1. All coursework you submit is a representation of your knowledge and understanding of the material. Your work represents you. Violations of this responsibility include, but are not limited to:
 - use of unauthorized materials in any classroom assignment, including writing assignments, quizzes, tests, or problem sets.
 - unauthorized collaboration in any classroom assignment, including writing assignments, quizzes, tests, or examinations.
 - plagiarism, which includes, but is not limited to, the use by paraphrase or direct quotation of the published or unpublished work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials.
 - the acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to university faculty, staff, or another student.
 - the reuse of any portion of work you submitted for credit in a different class without the expressed permission of the instructor.

2. Collaborating and assisting other students is encouraged unless it keeps another student from learning. Violations of this responsibility include, but are not limited to:
 - Providing unauthorized collaboration or assistance on any classroom assignment, including writing assignments, quizzes, tests, or examinations.
 - Allowing another student to copy your work.
 - Copying another student's work.

Relationships between students and instructors are based on trust. Dishonesty used to gain advantage in your course not only harms your relationship but ultimately restricts the opportunities of your peers.

Academic Integrity Responsibilities of Faculty and Teaching Staff

1. Promote integrity as a core institutional value that aligns with the university's mission to promote character development.
2. Uphold the MHU Honor Code and affirm our policies and procedures of academic integrity.
3. Teach students how to properly use all source materials effectively and honestly.
4. Clarify all expectations for students by:
 - designing educational experiences that teach academic honesty;
 - clarifying expectations for student collaboration and individual assignments;
 - and providing continual guidance throughout the course.
5. Develop fair assessments that promote significant learning opportunities.
6. Reduce opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty by having clear standards, adequate classroom management, and strong testing security.
7. Respond to academic dishonesty when it occurs.
8. Minimize opportunities and incentives for academic dishonesty by¹:
 - using multiple assessment techniques (low-stakes) in place of high stakes exams when appropriate;
 - talking openly about the importance of academic integrity;
 - raising awareness about what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate academic behavior;
 - and using technology to prevent and detect academic dishonesty.
9. In online education, it is especially important to insure the student receiving academic credit is in the one doing the work.

¹ See *Cheating Lessons: Learning from Academic Dishonesty* by James M. Lang (Harvard University Press, 2013).

Violations of Academic Integrity

As an academic community, it is our goal to educate students about academic integrity. We recognize that some violations may occur as a result of a lack of understanding on the student's part, while other violations are committed with clear intent to misrepresent one's work. This policy delineates three levels of academic integrity violations and corresponding ranges of sanctions. The instructor reporting the violation determines the level and sanction for each case based on the following guidelines. All violations, regardless of their levels, are cumulative throughout a student's years at MHU, not just within a single course or semester.

Minor Violations

Minor violations are unintentional and reflect a lack of understanding of academic integrity guidelines by the student. These violations include, but are not limited to:

- unintentionally misusing a source.
- unintentionally sharing an assignment (e.g., sharing a finished lab report with a lab partner).
- being in a compromised situation during a test or quiz (e.g., having a calculator on the desk during a "calculator inactive" quiz, even though it is evident that the student is not using the calculator).

The instructor may decide that remediation is appropriate in place of a grade penalty. Possible remediation options may include an academic integrity assignment, rewriting and resubmitting the assignment, or completion of an academic integrity online tutorial. Other possible sanctions for minor violations may include a reduced grade on the assignment or loss of a benefit such as extra credit. If an instructor assigns any remediation or sanction, they will complete the AI Form and submit it to the Academic Integrity Coordinator (AIC).

A third minor violation by a student will be treated as a standard violation.

Standard Violations

Standard violations reflect intentional acts of dishonesty and misrepresentation. These violations include, but are not limited to:

- accessing unauthorized information on a quiz/test/exam.
- allowing another student to use some or all of a student's work.
- turning in a paper with a "significant" amount of text that is not the student's work.
- completing an assignment for a classmate.
- unauthorized collaboration on an assignment.
- providing false or misleading information in order to gain advantage (e.g., to get an extension on assignment, to take an exam at a later date, to be excused from a class or assignment).
- or encouraging another student to violate any of the above (e.g., asking a peer to write a paper for you—even if your request was denied).

Appropriate sanctions at this level may range from having to recomplete the assignment to a failing grade in the course.

A third standard violation by a student will be treated as a major violation. The Academic Integrity Coordinator (AIC) will send a letter to the student after their second standard violation, warning that a third standard violation will be treated as a major violation.

Major Violations

Major violations reflect intentional acts of dishonesty and misrepresentation with greater impact on the campus community. These violations include, but are not limited to:

- selling research papers or tests.¹
- misrepresenting a student's identity in an academic setting (e.g., taking a test for another student).
- altering university documents.
- committing three standard violations.

Appropriate sanctions at this level include suspension or expulsion from the university. If the Academic Integrity Coordinator determines that suspension or expulsion is appropriate, they will send this recommendation to the Provost. If the Provost agrees with the recommendation, they will notify the student in writing of their suspension. If the student wants to appeal their suspension, they should follow the suspension appeal process explained in the Academic Catalog.

¹ This is meant to address instances when there is a bank of papers or tests that are being distributed for profit.

Reporting a Violation of Academic Integrity

The following guidelines address the process for reporting all levels of violations and sanctions.

Step One: Instructor informs student of violation

The instructor determines sufficient evidence exists to warrant a violation of academic integrity. The instructor communicates verbally or in writing to the student the violation and schedules a meeting. If multiple students are involved in the violation, the instructor may choose to meet with students individually or together. The instructor tells the student(s) that the meeting must be completed within seven business days of that notice. Then the instructor completes the Academic Integrity Form for each student involved in the alleged incident.

At this point, a student *may not* drop or withdraw from the course until the matter is resolved. If the student drops the course, the Registrar will be notified and the student will be placed back into the course. If the incident happens at the end of the term, a grade of Incomplete (I) will be issued until the matter is resolved within two weeks of the subsequent semester (Fall or Spring).

Step Two: Instructor and student meet and complete forms (if appropriate)

At the meeting the instructor outlines the violation, provides evidence, and informs the student of the sanction. The instructor also outlines the appeal process and informs the student that confidentiality will be maintained throughout the process and information will only be shared as required by the AI policy. If the student chooses to discuss the matter with other faculty, staff, or administrators, then relevant information may be disclosed to these individuals.

Five possible outcomes may occur from the student's and instructor's meeting:

1. It is agreed that no violation occurred and no further action is required. The instructor destroys the AI Form.
2. It is agreed that the student committed academic dishonesty, the student admits responsibility, and the student accepts the sanctions. The AI Form is completed, sanctions are noted, and the form is signed by the instructor and student. The student is given a copy of the signed form.
3. The student denies that the violation occurred OR disagrees with the sanction.
 - a. The AI Form is completed and signed by the instructor and student, indicating his/her objection. The instructor will inform the student that he/she may appeal; the student indicates on the form that he/she intends to appeal the violation. Once informed of the student's desire to appeal, the Academic Integrity Coordinator will email the student and explain the appeal process (see pp. 11-12).
4. The student fails or refuses to meet with the instructor within the seven-day period. In this case, the sanction will be applied and the AI Form is signed by the instructor.

Step Three: Instructor submits forms and evidence to AIC (if appropriate)

It is the instructor's responsibility to submit appropriate paperwork to the Academic Integrity Coordinator along with the evidence of the violation. The Academic Integrity Coordinator will securely maintain all files.

Appealing Academic Integrity Violations

If a student thinks they were falsely accused of academic dishonesty or that the sanction was inappropriate, they have the right to appeal the violation. These are the steps of the appeal process.

Step One: Student expresses desire to appeal

If a student desires to appeal the violation, they must do one of the following: 1) mark the appropriate box on the violation form provided by the instructor (note: the instructor will then give this form to the AIC) or 2) directly contact the Academic Integrity Coordinator (AIC) (see title page of this document for AIC contact information). The student will forfeit the right to appeal if they fail to do one of the above within five business days of receiving the official violation paperwork from the instructor.

Once receiving the student's desire to appeal, the AIC will email the appeal form to the student, explain the appeal process, and inform the student of the deadline to appeal. Once receiving the appeal form from the AIC, the student has five business days to submit the completed appeal form to the AIC.

Step Two: Student submits appeal

A student must submit the AI Appeal Form to the AIC within five business days of receiving the academic integrity appeal form from the AIC. (If a student does not submit an appeal within this timeframe the student forfeits his/her right to an appeal to the AI Board.) The student may choose to seek out a MHU faculty or staff member who can assist or counsel the student through the appeals process. This person may help the student complete the application, help the student prepare for the hearing, and/or attend the appeals hearing.

Step Three: AIC selects hearing board and sets date of hearing

Upon receiving the appeal form, the AIC will select a five-person committee from the Academic Integrity Board (AIB) to conduct the appeal. One member will be designated to chair the hearing. The AIC may choose to chair the hearing, be a regular member, or not serve for the hearing. The hearing board will have a minimum of one member from the same division as the instructor involved in the appeal. The Chair will provide the date, time, and location to the student, instructor, and hearing board members. The hearing date should be held within 20 calendar days of the appeal filing. If extenuating circumstances prevent the 20-day scheduling (holidays, vacation, campus closings, etc.) then all parties will be notified of the reason and the first possible date of the hearing. Note: In the event that an AIB member identifies a conflict of interest for an appeal (e.g., being the student's academic advisor, having submitted a previous violation for this student), this member will recuse themselves from the appeal.

Step Four: Hearing board evaluates written evidence

Prior to the hearing day, members of the AI Hearing Board will review all documentation, including the AI Form, AI Appeal Form, and all evidence presented prior to the hearing. The purpose of the hearing is to assess if the principles and procedures of this handbook were followed in the case. The board will assess the following questions: 1) did the student violate the academic integrity policy? 2) If so, does the infraction align with the level of violation assessed by the faculty member (e.g., minor/standard/major), and 3) is the sanction within the range of allowable sanctions?

Step Five: Hearing board meets separately with student and instructor

At the hearing, the board will conduct separate interviews for both the instructor and the student. In the event that the violation involves multiple students, the AI Hearing Board has the discretion to interview students together or separately. All parties are allowed to bring supporting evidence and rationales for/against the violation and sanctions to the hearing, and all parties will be made privy to all evidence. The student is allowed to have a MHU faculty or staff member on hand to help support them. If the faculty or staff member wants to address the board, the student will be asked to temporarily leave the hearing. Lawyers, parents, and other individuals acting in a legal or official capacity are not permitted. If a student or instructor fails to appear for an appeal hearing, the AI Hearing Board will still review the appeal and make a decision based on the evidence available at the time.

Step Six: Chair of hearing board submits ruling to AIC

The hearing board chair will complete the Academic Integrity Hearing Board report and submit it to the AIC, who will inform in writing the instructor and the student of the outcome. The board will rule to: 1) uphold the violation and sanction, 2) modify the level of violation and/or sanction, or 3) nullify the violation and sanction.

Once the hearing report is finished, hearing board members should destroy their records related to the case (with the exception of the AIC).

Records of Academic Integrity Violations

Records of academic integrity cases will be maintained by the Academic Integrity Coordinator (AIC) under the supervision of the Office of the Provost. These records will be maintained until the first of the following conditions occurs: the student graduates or a period of five years elapses after the infraction. At that point, all paper and electronic records should be destroyed—including those held by any faculty member or the AIC.

Records of academic integrity violations are kept primarily for the purpose of identifying and addressing instances of multiple violations. These records will be shared outside the Office of the Provost if they are relevant to other appeals or complaints raised by the student.

In the event that an academic integrity violation involves a campus organization (e.g., fraternity, sorority, athletic team, and any other student organization), the AIC will notify the appropriate director, coach, or advisor of the organization of the incident, along with the MHU administrator responsible for managing the organization (e.g., Director of Athletics, Vice President of Student Life, etc.). Information, including access to the documentation of the incident, will be shared with these individuals as necessary.

Academic Integrity – FAQs for Students

1. Q: What if my instructor doesn't believe me? I really didn't cheat!

A: You have a right to appeal the instructor's decision or sanction related to an alleged violation. You must complete and submit the appeal form within five business days of the instructor's decision. You will receive a date for a hearing related to your appeal. You may submit your evidence to the Academic Integrity Coordinator and plead your case at the appeal hearing. You have a right to seek the help of a MHU faculty or staff member through the appeal process, and this person may attend the hearing with you.

2. Q: I saw a classmate cheat on a test. Do I have to report it? If so, where?

A: Yes, you should report any violations of academic integrity to your instructor or the Academic Integrity Coordinator.

3. Q: I know of a student on campus who has access to a test bank for his calculus course. What should I do?

A: The University Honor Code, the Call to Honor, and the Academic Integrity Policy call us to have the courage to act when we have knowledge of a violation. You should report any violation to your instructor, any faculty member, the division dean, or the Academic Integrity Coordinator. Your identity will remain anonymous and your statement will be held confidentially within the confines of an academic integrity investigation.

4. Q: I needed to share data with my lab partner, so I emailed him a copy of my completed lab report. I didn't realize he was going to copy more than just my data, and now my instructor has notified me of an academic integrity violation. What will happen?

A: You are responsible for your work and your actions. Unauthorized collaboration, even in a lab setting, is considered a violation of academic integrity. It is your responsibility to protect your work so that others cannot copy it (electronically or otherwise). Do not share completed assignments with other students unless your instructor has granted permission for work to be shared (e.g., group work, etc.).

5. Q: My roommate stole my paper out of my desk and turned it in as her own. My instructor remembered reading it when I took the course last year, and now we have both been accused of an academic integrity violation. Why am I in trouble?

A: You are responsible for your work. Do not stay logged into a computer when it is unattended, do not leave academic materials where they can be accessed by others, and take appropriate measures to protect access to your own work.

6. Q: I've made a few mistakes in two freshmen classes but have since learned from my mistakes. Will future instructors know about these incidents?

A: No, the instructor will only know about his or her course, but not the outcome from other instructors in

other courses. Academic Integrity Coordinator will know about prior violations and, if necessary, will notify you in writing, warning you about the next steps. For example, if you allowed your roommate to use your English paper (standard violation #1) and you completed an assignment for your best friend (standard violation #2) the Academic Integrity Coordinator will notify you in writing, warning you that the next standard violation will be treated as a major violation. This is to ensure that you understand the severity of the situation.

7. Q: I just got an email from my history professor informing me that she needs to meet with me about my term paper, alleging that I plagiarized most of the paper. Can I go ahead and drop the course?

A: No, you cannot drop the course. Once the process has begun, you are required to follow through with the process until it is resolved. If the incident happens at the end of the term, a grade of Incomplete (I) will be issued until the matter is resolved.

8. Q: What support do students have in this process?

A: If you wish to appeal the instructor's decision, you have the right to contact a MHU faculty or staff member who can assist you with the appeal process. This person may help the student complete the application, prepare the hearing presentation, and/or attend the appeal hearing.

9. Q: My instructor has brought an allegation of cheating against me and she also serves on the Academic Integrity Board. How will this be handled?

A: In this case, the instructor would not be able to serve on the hearing board for your case.

10. Q: I am on the golf team and I just got an email from my instructor informing me of allegations of cheating on my midterm. I am leaving for a tournament tomorrow and won't be back for at least a week. How will this be handled?

A: When extraordinary circumstances like this arise, the instructor, in consultation with your coach and the Academic Integrity Coordinator, will work out a modified timeline.

11. Q: I am taking an online class this summer, does this policy and its procedures apply to distance education courses?

A: Yes, of course. Regardless of whether the course is face-to-face, semi-online or completely online you are held to the same set of standards.

12. Q: A student in my online class has copied my discussion thread posting for this week and submitted it as his own work. What should I do?

A: You are responsible for reporting any allegations or suspicions of academic dishonesty. Contact the professor immediately with your concerns. Your professor will ensure that your reporting of the incident remain anonymous.

Academic Integrity – FAQs for Instructors

1. Q: I found a student committed a minor violation of academic integrity. I decided to use this as a teachable moment and help the student learn the correct way to do this assignment. Do I have to submit any documentation?

A: If you assigned any sort of remediation or sanction to the student – a separate assignment, a second test attempt, etc. – then yes, you should submit documentation. If you did not assign any remediation or sanction, then you do not have to submit documentation. Remember, the goal of submitting documentation is to identify students who are committing multiple (or regular) violations of academic integrity. If documentation is not submitted, students may be committing repeated violations without actually making changes to their academic habits.

2. Q: What if there are multiple students involved in a violation and some of them are not my students?

A: Address the violation with your own student(s) in the usual manner. Contact the Academic Integrity Coordinator for further guidance when students not enrolled in your class are involved.

3. Q: What if I fear that a meeting with a student to discuss an Academic Integrity violation is going to become contentious?

A: Consider the following

- alert a colleague that the meeting may be contentious.
- conduct the meeting via Zoom.
- keep the door of your meeting place open.
- listen carefully by really paying attention to what is said, relaying the message that you are coming from a place of caring.
- ask questions in a calm manner to help regain control of the conversation.
- above all, avoid defensiveness.

Again, terminate the meeting if you need to. Tell the student you will contact them later to reschedule the meeting¹.

4. Q: What if a student receives notification to meet with an instructor to discuss an academic integrity violation, but the student refuses to schedule a meeting or doesn't show up for the meeting?

A: If a student refuses to meet or does not attend a meeting within seven days of notification of the violation, the instructor should fill out appropriate documentation, determine an appropriate sanction, and send a copy of the documentation to both the student and the Academic Integrity Coordinator. The instructor should include information to the student about the process and timeline to appeal the decision and/or sanction. The student still has five business days to appeal. The timeframe for the appeal will be clearly noted on the AI Form. Written notifications can be made through email, campus mail, or (preferably) both.

5. Q: What if there is an issue not mentioned as minor, standard, or major. How should I decide?

A: Use your best judgment to classify the violation. If you are unsure, consult the Academic Integrity Coordinator.

6. Q: Can I know about other violations for a student to help me decide the appropriate sanction?

A: No. Sanctions for your class should be based on your class policies, as explained in your syllabus. The Academic Integrity Coordinator reviews all reported violations and will assess additional sanctions if necessary. (See Violations of Academic Integrity.)

7. Q: I just uncovered a possible issue of plagiarism and I'm going to a conference tomorrow and won't be back to campus for five days. How should I handle this?

A: Remember, the clock doesn't start until you notify the student of the allegation. When you return to campus, notify the student to the issue and proceed accordingly.

8. Q: I am concerned that students in my online courses will get someone else to do the coursework. How can I prevent this? I want to make sure that the person getting the course credit is the person doing the academic work.

A: There are a number of steps and procedures you can take to minimize this. One, you can use password protected assessments and make the password available just prior to the assessment being made available. Also, change the password for each assessment frequently and more difficult throughout the course. Two, you should consider constructing tailor-made assessment that are difficult to replicate or acquire. Consider using more low-stakes assessments, assessments that allow multiple attempts, or tailor made high-stakes tests that build on the students' individual performance. Three, you might consider developing projects that require cooperation and coordination among students making it difficult for a student to find consistent help throughout a cooperative project of some difficulty and complexity. Lastly, build into your course lots of student- instructor interaction and feedback making it difficult for a student to find consistent help. This allows the instructor to get a better sense of the students' abilities and writing styles. Personalizing the learning experience in a distance education course minimizes the need to commit academic dishonesty

¹ See the following resource guides for faculty.

Responding to Disruptive or Threatening Student Behavior: A Guide for Faculty. (n.d.). Virginia Tech University. Retrieved from http://www.hr.vt.edu/employeescorner/_files/file_hr_Dis_Stdnt_Manl.pdf

Disruptive and Threatening Student Behavior: Guidelines for Faculty and Staff (2015). University of Southern California. Retrieved from <https://studentaffairs.usc.edu/files/2015/09/Disruptive-and-Threatening-Behavior-Guide.pdf>

² See the above resource guides for more information on ways to meet with students who are distressed and/or disruptive.

Acknowledgments

Sources

The following resources and university webpages were consulted throughout the development of this guidebook. We hope that these and other institutions, organizations, and resources continue to inform our policy and procedures.

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Committees and Individuals:

This guidebook was a cooperative project that was completed with the assistance of the following committees and individuals.

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