

HONOR CODE

“As a Mississippi State University student I will conduct myself with honor and integrity at all times. I will not lie, cheat, or steal, nor will I accept the actions of those who do.”

INTRODUCTION

Mississippi State University is dedicated to the discovery, development, communication and application of knowledge in a wide range of academic and professional fields and assumes as its historic trust the maintenance of freedom of inquiry and an intellectual environment nurturing the human mind and spirit. The MSU Honor Code is critical to these ideals, to the goal of assuming a place of preeminence in higher education, and to the development of the whole student.

COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

Academic dishonesty is a corrosive force in the academic life of a university. It jeopardizes the quality of education and depreciates the genuine achievements of others. It is, without reservation, a responsibility of all members of the Mississippi State University community to actively deter it. Apathy or acquiescence in the presence of academic dishonesty is not a neutral act -- failure to confront and deter it will reinforce, perpetuate, and enlarge the scope of such misconduct.

As such, a primary responsibility assumed by Mississippi State students is to discourage violations of the MSU Honor Code by others. Various methods of discouragement exist including drawing attention to a suspected violation and moral suasion. Initiating formal procedures is an expected remedy when other methods are inappropriate or have failed. Self-reporting is encouraged and may be considered a mitigating circumstance in the sanctioning phase of a particular case.

Additionally, faculty and staff share in the responsibility and authority to challenge and make known acts that violate the MSU Honor Code. Faculty are expected to take proactive steps to promote academic integrity including, but not limited to, adding language to their syllabi that describes prohibited behavior and the consequences of such activity; and, having an open discussion about academic integrity with students in their courses early in the semester. Additionally, faculty members are expected to adhere to the policy pertaining to the reporting and adjudication of violations of the MSU Honor Code. Initiating formal procedures is a necessary and obligatory component of this shared responsibility.

Collaboration and sharing information are characteristics of academic communities. These become violations when they involve dishonesty or are used in ways that give a student an unfair advantage. Faculty members should make clear to students their expectations about collaboration and information sharing. Students should seek clarification when in doubt.

DEFINITIONS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

Misconduct in research or scholarship includes fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, reviewing, or reporting research or other academic work. It does not include honest error or honest differences in interpretations or judgments of data.

Mississippi State University students are responsible for authenticating any assignment submitted to an instructor or graduate committee, excluding examinations. If asked, a student must be able to produce proof that the assignment submitted is indeed the work of that student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work, should the instructor or graduate committee request it, is sufficient grounds to initiate an academic dishonesty case.

Commission of any of the following acts shall constitute academic dishonesty. This listing is not, however, exclusive of any other acts that it may reasonably be said to constitute scholastic dishonesty. Clarification is provided for each definition with a listing of some prohibited behaviors.

1. Cheating: Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, notes, study aids or other devices or materials in any academic exercise.

Clarification:

- a. Students completing any examination are prohibited from looking at another student's examination and from using external aids (for example, books, notes, calculators, conversation with others, electronic devices) unless specifically allowed in advance by the instructor.
- b. Students may not have others conduct research or prepare work for them without advance authorization from the instructor.
- c. Students may not acquire answers for any assigned work or examination from any unauthorized source. This includes, but is not limited to, the services of commercial term paper companies; purchasing answer sets to homework from tutoring companies; and students who have previously taken the examination.
- d. Collaboration with other students in the completion of assigned work is also prohibited unless specifically authorized by course instructor. Students should assume that all assignments are to be completed individually unless the instructor indicates otherwise.

2. Fabrication: Making up data or results and recording or reporting them.

Clarification:

- a. The intentional invention and unauthorized alteration of any information or citation in any academic exercise.
- b. "Invented" information shall not be used in any laboratory experiment, report of results or academic exercise. It would be improper, for example, to analyze one sample in an experiment and then "invent" data based on that single experiment for several more required analyses.
- c. Students shall acknowledge the actual source from which cited information was obtained. For example, a student shall not take a quotation from a book review and then indicate that the quotation was obtained from the book itself.

d. Changing information on tests, quizzes, examinations, reports, or any other material that has been graded and resubmitting it as original for the purpose of improving the grade on that material.

3. Falsification: Manipulating research materials, equipment, or processes, or changing or omitting data or results such that the research or academic work is not accurately represented in the research or work record.

4. Multiple Submission: The submission of substantial portions of the same work (including oral reports) for credit more than once without authorization from the instructor of the class for which the student submits the work.

Clarification:

- a. Submitting the same paper for credit in more than one course in the same semester without the instructor's permission.
- b. Making revisions in a paper or report (including oral presentations) which has been submitted and graded in a previous semester and submitting it for credit in another class without the instructor's permission.
- c. Representing group work done in one class as one's own work for the purpose of using it in another class.

5. Plagiarism: The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit.

Clarification:

- a. Intentionally, knowingly, or carelessly presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper credit).
- b. Failing to credit sources used in a work product in an attempt to pass off the work as one's own.
- c. Attempting to receive credit for work performed by another, including papers obtained in whole or in part from individuals or other sources.
- d. The internet, data bases and other electronic resources must be cited if they are utilized in any way as resource material in an academic exercise.

General information pertaining to plagiarism:

- a. Faculty members are responsible for identifying any specific style/format requirement for the course. Examples include, but are not limited to, American Psychological Association (APA) style and Modern Languages Association (MLA) style.
- b. Direct Quotation: Every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and must be properly acknowledged in the text by citation or in a footnote or endnote.
- c. Paraphrase: Prompt acknowledgment is required when material from another 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 Locke's comment,..." and then conclude with a footnote or endnote identifying the exact reference.
- d. Borrowed facts: Information gained in reading or research, which is not common knowledge, must be acknowledged.

e. Common knowledge: Common knowledge includes generally known facts such as the names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc. Materials, which add only to a general understanding of the subject, may be acknowledged in the bibliography and need not be footnoted or endnoted.

f. Footnotes, endnotes, and in-text citations: One footnote, endnote, or in-text citation is usually enough to acknowledge indebtedness when a number of connected sentences are drawn from one source. When direct quotations are used, however, quotation marks must be inserted and acknowledgment made. Similarly, when a passage is paraphrased, acknowledgment is required.

6. Complicity: Intentionally or knowingly helping, or attempting to help, another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Clarification:

- a. Knowingly allowing another to copy from one's paper during an examination or test.
- b. Distributing test questions or substantive information about the materials to be tested without the instructor's permission.
- c. Collaborating on academic work knowing that the collaboration will not be reported.
- d. Taking an examination or test for another student.
- e. Signing another's name on an academic exercise.
- f. Conspiring or agreeing with one or more persons to commit, or attempting to commit, any act of scholastic dishonesty.

7. Violation of Departmental or College Rules: Students may not violate any announced departmental or college rule relating to academic matters including, but not limited to, abuse or misuse of computer access or information in any academic exercise.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY SANCTIONS

Instances of academic misconduct represent behavior that is of an especially serious nature. Sanctions assigned for academic misconduct should convey the message that this type of behavior serves as a destructive force within the academic community. However a range of sanctions can be employed in order to strike an appropriate balance between sending a message of accountability and enhancing a student's moral and cognitive development.

The Honor Code Council is empowered with assigning sanctions that are outlined within Mississippi State University's Policies. These sanctions include separation from the institution, probationary status, and documentation that a violation has occurred. In addition, the Honor Code Council is also empowered to assign appropriate academic and/or educational sanctions based upon the specifics of the incident. Examples of appropriate academic sanctions include receiving a failing grade or other grade penalty for the course for academic misconduct. Educational sanctions include requiring a student to complete the Academic Integrity Intervention Program.

Faculty members may assign sanctions up to an XF in the course, probation and referral to the Academic Integrity Intervention Program. In cases involving graduate students, the Graduate Committee may assign sanctions up to separation from the institution. There may be additional

consequences for a student within their academic major based upon an involvement in academic misconduct. Students are encouraged to discuss their involvement in an academic misconduct situation with their academic advisor. While this list is not designed to be exhaustive, it demonstrates the wide range of sanctions that can be considered in cases of academic misconduct.

Sanctioning Guidelines:

When it is determined by the Honor Code Council or a faculty member that a student has violated the MSU Honor Code, the normal sanction assigned for a first offense will be an “XF” for the course, probation, and a requirement to complete the Academic Integrity Intervention Program. The Honor Code Council or faculty member will only impose a lesser grade sanction (a lowered course grade rather than an F) in exceptional circumstances, such as a case where the assignment involved is a minor part of the final course grade. The dishonesty notation (“X”), probation and the intervention program will be required with all grade sanctions. If a faculty member wishes to impose a more severe penalty than an XF, then the case must be referred to the Honor Code Council. The Honor Code Council has the authority to remove a student from the University, even for first offenses. Decisions by the Honor Code Council Hearing Panels are binding on all parties.

The grade of “XF” is intended to identify a student that has failed to uphold the values of academic integrity at Mississippi State University. The grade of “XF” shall be documented on the student’s transcript with the notation “failure due to academic dishonesty”. The grade of “XF” shall be treated the as an F for the purposes of calculating Grade Point Average and determination of academic class standing. Further, a student who receives a grade of an “XF” will be on disciplinary probation with the university for reasons of academic misconduct until such time as the Honor Code Council decides to remove the X.

In addition, a student who is determined to be responsible for a violation of the MSU Honor Code shall be required to successfully complete an Academic Integrity Intervention Program (see Appendix III) administered through the Honor Code Council Office. This requirement must be completed prior to a student being eligible to petition to have the grade of “XF” changed to an F on their transcript. This requirement must also be completed before the student is eligible to repeat the course in which the “XF” was assigned.

Removal of XF Grade:

The student must file a written petition to the Honor Code Council to have the grade of “XF” removed and permanently replaced with the grade of an F. The decision to replace the grade of “XF” will be considered by the Honor Code Council only on the student’s successful completion of the Academic Integrity Intervention Program. A student will remain on disciplinary probation until the notation of “XF” is removed from their transcript and replaced with an F. Additionally, the resulting F grade will not be eligible for any “grade forgiveness policy” and cannot be replaced for the calculation of a student’s Grade Point Average.

Authority to Revoke a Degree:

Mississippi State University has the authority to revoke the degree of a former student if a finding of academic dishonesty is determined after the student graduated. The basis for revocation of the degree would be if the sanction that is assigned for the dishonesty would have caused the student to be ineligible to receive the degree at the time.

The Honor Code Council will be responsible for investigating the allegation, conducting a hearing if appropriate, and determining the sanction in accordance with the MSU Honor Code. The Honor Code Council's decision may be appealed under the provisions of the Honor Code. If a sanction is assigned to the former student, then the case is referred to the College that awarded the degree to determine if the sanction would have made the student ineligible for the degree. If the answer is no, then the record of the dishonesty is placed in the student's record and on the transcript as appropriate. If the answer is yes, then the College Dean will recommend revocation of the degree to the Provost, who will make the final decision and notify the student, the College and the Honor Code Council. The decision by the Provost cannot be appealed.