

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

This policy applies to all Slippery Rock University students. Some graduate programs have expectations above and beyond this policy. In those cases, the program guidelines supersede what follows below. Graduate students in Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, and Physician Assistant are encouraged to review their program handbook for more information.

PURPOSE OF SRU'S ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

The value of education is determined by the quality and character of its students and graduates. Therefore, students, student organizations, management, and faculty are expected to uphold academic integrity.

DEFINITION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity refers to the adherence to agreed upon moral and ethical principles when engaging in academic or scholarly pursuits. Mastery of subject matter should be demonstrated in an honorable and straightforward manner.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COURSE GRADES AND THE SRU DEGREE

A course grade certifies both your knowledge of that particular material and a standard of academic integrity. The SRU degree certifies to society both the educational achievement and the fulfillment of our standards, which include ethical and moral behavior.

DISCIPLINE

Inherent in the learning process is a commitment to discipline. Discipline is a specific form of training that looks to the future where one learns lessons and makes better choices. The instructor will guide the learning process by identifying unacceptable behavior and work with students to define the problem and guide them to make better choices. This process preserves the value and reputation of the degrees conferred by SRU. There are two types of discipline: pre-emptive and corrective discipline.

1. Pre-emptive Discipline

Pre-emptive discipline is a means of training which mandates that the student undertake certain appropriate actions in the course of the learning process. It is expected that students engage in the following pre-emptive behaviors:

- a. Because we seek constant new learning in each course, all academic work, including, but not limited to, papers, computer programs, assignments, and tests, must consist of the student's own original work and not that from other coursework (unless the faculty member approves an exception) or from other students or other authorities not cited in full accord with an appropriate citation style (APA, MLA, CBE, etc.) consistent with the academic discipline or the instructor's directions.
- b. Students are expected to be honest in all academic work, refraining from all forms of academic dishonesty.
- c. Students are expected to function as such, including, but not limited to, attending class regularly and completing all assignments and examinations on their own unless the faculty member notes otherwise.

- d. Students are expected to learn, practice and apply standard techniques for accurately citing resource material. It is the student's, not the instructor's, responsibility to ensure that all material is cited.
- e. Students are expected to know the difference between direct quotations and paraphrases (a common rule of thumb is any three words or more in the same order as the original is quoting, not a paraphrase). No one choice between direct quotations and paraphrases is inherently "better," but if one does choose to paraphrase then the essence of the text should be conveyed FULLY in the student's own words and sentence structure, but citation of the IDEA is required whether a student quotes or paraphrases.
- f. Students are expected to understand basic principles of respect and compliance with intellectual property law. Particularly important are those aspects of the Copyright Law of the United States that apply to academic work as well as to the use of University computer resources.

2. Corrective Discipline

Corrective discipline could be implemented when students engage in dishonest behavior. Corrective discipline activities may include:

- a. Conferring with the instructor to identify inappropriate behaviors
- b. Developing a remediation plan and behavioral goals
- c. Developing a means of assessing the student's accomplishment of the established goals
- d. Identifying student sanctions to be put in place if the student does not meet these behavior goals.
- e. Filing out a conduct referral for the Office of Student Conduct

Graduate programs hold higher expectations for students and academic integrity violations may result in removal from the program. Depending on the graduate student's degree program, additional procedures may be applied and sanctions administered given the expectation of academic integrity at all times.

DISHONEST BEHAVIOR

Dishonest Behavior that would merit corrective discipline is defined as any action that gives the student an unfair advantage. Academic dishonesty may take many forms. **Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:**

1. Buying, selling, or trading papers, projects, or other assignments.
2. Using or attempting to use any unauthorized book, notes, or assistance (for example, copying another student's test or homework).
3. Plagiarizing and/or submitting the work of another as your own.
4. Completing class work for another person.
5. Fabricating information or citations.
6. Facilitating dishonest acts of others pertaining to academic work.
7. Possessing unauthorized examinations.
8. Submitting, without instructor permission, work previously used.
9. Tampering with the academic work of another person.
10. Recording an instructor's teaching content and/or distributing a professor's teaching content without permission.
11. Ghost-taking an exam in place of a student or having any person take an exam in your place.
12. Any attempt to falsify an assigned grade on an examination, report, or program or in a grade book, document, or other record.

13. Any attempted, or actual computer program theft, illegal use of software; illegal downloading or streaming of copyrighted media, or inappropriate use of the Internet; such as, but not limited to, illegal or unauthorized transmission; or improper access to any computer system or account.
14. Any attempted, or actual, collusion willfully giving or receiving unauthorized or unacknowledged assistance on any assignment or examination (all parties are considered responsible).
15. Forging a faculty member's or administrator's signature on any document.
16. Copying and pasting digital media including, but not limited to, email correspondence, text, images, or other media from online sources without proper citation, the copyright owner's permission to use the digital media; or, evidence of having performed a favorable fair use analysis.
17. Copying and pasting significant portions of digital media with or without citation.

IMPLICATIONS OF DISHONEST BEHAVIOR

1. Implications to the Student

- a. The student is deprived of the totality of the learning process and lacks the knowledge and skills needed to succeed.
- b. Ideas are a kind of property (i.e., intellectual property) and to use the ideas of others without proper and full citation is a kind of theft, not unlike unauthorized use of any other property.
- c. The student subsequently misrepresents his/her qualifications to employers; graduate schools etc. and is not as qualified to perform the work as represented.
- d. The student invalidates the assessment tool used to evaluate the class and deprives the faculty from truly evaluating the effectiveness of the assessment instrument and/or the teaching-learning process.
- e. The student is temporarily rewarded by a good grade but induces others, directly or indirectly, to engage in dishonest behavior.
- f. The student will have conditioned himself/herself to take shortcuts when pressured. This behavior will then be repeated when he/she is in the professional world.
- g. The student receives an unfair advantage, relative to other students who conduct themselves in an ethical manner.
- h. The student could be liable for civil or criminal penalties as a result of violating federal intellectual property laws.

2. Implications to the University

- a. Interns, graduates, etc. will not be qualified to function in their respective professions. Consequently, the SRU degree will be devalued, and SRU will be less attractive as a school for employers recruiting interns or prospective employees.
- b. The perception of the public will be that SRU engages in grade inflation.
- c. Alumni/government funding may decrease.
- d. SRU will lose qualified students for seats occupied by unqualified students who engaged in dishonest behavior.
- e. SRU's ability to recruit top performing students will be negatively impacted as its reputation becomes tarnished.
- f. The University, its faculty and staff could be at risk of penalties as a result of the student's violation of federal intellectual property laws.

3. Implications to Prospective Employers, including those who provide Internships

- a. The student will have engaged in resume/transcript fraud; thus, employers will not be hiring a well-educated employee but instead will be gaining one who cannot perform at the level they represent.
- b. Employers who have bad experiences with SRU graduates will not recruit from the University or provide internship opportunities.
- c. Employers will have wasted resources on graduates who are not qualified to do the job.
- d. Students who have legitimately attained a moderate to high GPA may be overlooked.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Course Instructor

- a. The instructor has the right to demand academic integrity and authentic authorship in the face-to-face or online classroom.
- b. The instructor has the responsibility to ensure that SRU's academic integrity standards are followed.
- c. The instructor is responsible for communicating to students SRU's Academic Integrity Policy and the minimum penalties for dishonesty in the course syllabus.
- d. The instructor is expected to take steps to minimize the opportunity for students to engage in academic dishonesty.
- e. The instructor clearly communicates course expectations.
- f. The instructor who alleges academic dishonesty is responsible for filing out a conduct referral for the Office of Student Conduct.
- g. The instructor will gather evidence and participate in the resolution of cases that he/she initiates by following set procedures.
- h. The instructor serves as a role model and mentor by instilling, through example, high ethical conduct in his/her own academic endeavors and in the classroom and online learning environment.
 - i. The instructor emphasizes to students the importance of honesty and a respect for integrity within the profession.
 - j. The instructor, in accordance with the provisions of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, as amended, will treat as strictly confidential any information relating to an alleged violation of the University's Academic Integrity Policy or the outcome of a conduct hearing.

2. University

- a. SRU has a right to discipline students who deviate from academic standards. The University is responsible for upholding the minimum standards of academic integrity and achievement on which degrees are based and for certifying that students have attained sufficient academic credit and exhibited acceptable standards of conduct to entitle them to a degree.
- b. SRU has a right and is responsible for maintaining and encouraging high standards of academic integrity by establishing policies and procedures for academic integrity and authentic authorship.
- c. The University is responsible for monitoring all violations of this policy in order to ensure the integrity and reputation of a degree from SRU.
- d. The University is responsible for communicating this policy to students in any form deemed appropriate.

3. Student

- a. A student accused of academic dishonesty has the right to due process, which means they will be informed of their alleged behavior and they will have an opportunity to have their case heard in a fair and impartial manner.
 - b. The student must read and understand SRU's policy on Academic Integrity since ignorance of this policy is not an acceptable defense by a student if a charge of academic dishonesty is made by the instructor against the student.
 - c. The student must comply with these standards of integrity as part of the academic community.
 - d. A student who fails to meet the procedural deadlines contained in the policy will forfeit his/her rights to a formal hearing for appealing a sanction.
 - e. The student should actively encourage other students to comply with these standards.
 - f. The student is encouraged to report any violations of this policy by other students to SRU faculty, administration or management. Students are encouraged to testify at subsequent formal hearings about such matters.
 - g. A student has the right to be notified in writing within five (5) business days of the report of the alleged violation.
 - h. A student has the right to meet with the faculty member to present his/her own version of the facts.
 - i. A student has the right to accept the faculty member's allegations as true and accept the faculty member's imposed sanction as well as SRU's sanctions.
 - j. A student always maintains the right to formally appeal the decision of the faculty member to an Academic Review Board composed of the Deans of each college (or designated Assistant to the Dean). The decision of this Review Board is final. The appeal must be submitted no later than 15 working days after the beginning of the semester following the issuance of faculty member's sanction. The summer and winter terms do not constitute a semester.
- b. Understanding the consequences of both positive and negative behaviors to all stakeholders: oneself, the institution, the faculty and management, the assessment process, and fellow students.
 - c. Engaging in actions to change behavior that is negative.
 - d. Changing one's thinking at a deep level leading to positive changes in one's actions.
 - e. Becoming a positive role model for others by one's actions.

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HOW CAN ACADEMIC INTEGRITY BE ENCOURAGED?

1. Faculty

- a. Spell out expectations for authentic authorship in the course syllabus and attach SRU's Academic Integrity Policy.
- b. Review SRU's academic integrity policy when reviewing the syllabus.
- c. Secure all assessment instruments for which a grade will be assigned.
- d. Create an environment that encourages the prevention of academic dishonesty.
- e. State within the syllabi that if students do not understand whether something is or is not a breach of academic dishonesty, they must consult with the instructor prior to undertaking the activity.

2. The Student's Role in Academic Integrity

- a. Taking responsibility for his/her own actions both positive and negative.