

Academic Policies and Procedures

For the most current policy information, please visit policies.tcnj.edu.

Orientation and Responsibility to Inform and Keep Informed

The main responsibility for keeping informed rests with each student. The current *Graduate Bulletin*, along with information shared on the Web site and through College e-mail, will typically be the primary sources of information about the graduate program. The College will make every effort to inform students of changes in the programs as they occur. Nevertheless, students should take the initiative to consult their graduate program advisers and the Office of Graduate Studies to keep current and for advice before making significant decisions.

Students have the concomitant responsibility to inform their advisers and the administration of any changes affecting their status. Students should refer to the College's Web site for the most up-to-date information on policies and procedures.

Academic Honesty

All students are expected to adhere to standards of academic honesty in their study at the College. Academic dishonesty is any attempt by the student to gain academic advantage through dishonest means; to submit, as his or her own, work that has not been done by him or her; or to give improper aid to another student in the completion of an assignment. Such dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, submitting as one's own a project, paper, test, or speech copied, partially copied, or partially paraphrased from the work of another (whether the source is printed, under copyright, or in manuscript form). Credit must be given for words quoted or paraphrased. These standards apply to any academic work, whether it is graded or ungraded, group or individual, written or oral.

Academic Integrity Policy

The College of New Jersey is a community of scholars and learners who respect and believe in academic integrity. This integrity is violated when someone engages in any of the dishonest behavior described below.

Academic dishonesty is any attempt by the student to gain academic advantage through dishonest means, to submit, as his/her own, work which has not been done by him/her or to give improper aid to another student in the completion of an assignment. Such dishonesty would include, but is not limited to: submitting as his/her own a project, paper, report, test, or speech copied from, partially copied, or paraphrased from the work of another (whether the source is printed, under copyright, or in manuscript form). Credit must be given for words quoted or paraphrased. The rules apply to any academic dishonesty, whether the work is graded or ungraded, group or individual, written or oral.

Academic dishonesty is not tolerated at The College of New Jersey.

Each student must do his or her own work and behave in an ethically responsible manner. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following behaviors:

- Copying from another student's exam
- Completing an academic activity or taking an exam for someone else
- Giving answers to or sharing answers with another student during an exam
- Using notes, books, or other aids of any kind during an exam when prohibited

- Stealing an exam or possessing a stolen copy of an exam
- Sharing answers during an exam by using a system of signals
- Disrupting or delaying the administration of an exam or academic activity.
- Submitting a work for credit that includes words, ideas, data, or creative work of others without acknowledging the source
- Using another author's words without enclosing them in quotation marks, without paraphrasing them, or without citing the source appropriately
- Concealing, destroying, or stealing research or library materials with the purpose of depriving others of their use
- Falsifying bibliographic entries
- Submitting any academic assignment which contains falsified or fabricated data or results
- Submitting the same term paper or academic assignment to another class without the permission of the instructor
- Feigning illness or personal circumstances to avoid a required academic activity
- Sabotaging someone else's work
- Collaborating on homework or take-home exams when instructions have called for independent work
- Attempting intimidation for academic advantage
- Inappropriate or unethical use of technologies to gain academic advantage
- Submitting a falsified document

A. Policy and Procedures for Disciplinary Action

As described below, enforcement of the Academic Integrity will depend upon individual faculty members, upon an Academic Integrity Officer for each school (designated by the Dean), and upon an All-College Academic Integrity Board. The board will include three students and three faculty members (with three student and three faculty alternates), as well as one staff member from the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs, who will vote only in case of a tie and who will be responsible for all documentation relevant to integrity matters. Responsibilities of faculty members, Academic Integrity Officers, and the All-College Academic Integrity Board are specified below. Records of academic integrity violations will be kept in academic files in the Office of the Vice President of Academic Affairs.

If a faculty member believes that a student has violated the Academic Integrity Policy, the faculty member will first discuss the matter with the student. Also, the faculty member may choose to discuss the matter with the department chairperson.

B. Unintentional Violations

If the faculty member is convinced that the lapse was *not intentional*, then he/she need not refer the matter to the Academic Integrity Officer (although that remains an option). The faculty member will decide what consequence(s) seem(s) appropriate and educational.

Consequences may include:

1. Allowing the student to redo all or part of the work, if doing this would give him/her beneficial experience, and
 - a) giving a full grade for the assignment, or
 - b) giving a diminished grade for the work. or
2. Assigning a grade of zero or failing to the work.

After the matter has been resolved, the faculty member may choose to send a report to the School's Academic Integrity Officer, although this is

not required for unintentional violations. If a report is sent, the student will be given an opportunity to read and sign it.

C. Intentional Violations

If the violation seems intentional, then the faculty member must report the case to the Academic Integrity Officer of the school by which the course is offered. The Academic Integrity Officer will talk with the student and with the faculty member, and will gather any other information relevant to the case. The Academic Integrity Officer will also check whether there is a prior record of academic integrity violation(s) by the student. The Academic Integrity Officer will then use the gathered information to decide whether to refer the case to the All-College Academic Integrity Board. An Academic Integrity Board hearing will be mandatory if there is a prior record of intentional integrity violation(s). However, any case may be referred to the All-College Academic Integrity Board. Thus, there are two possible courses of action when an intentional violation has been reported:

1. The Academic Integrity Officer considers the evidence and decides on the appropriate consequence(s). If the Academic Integrity Policy was violated, the Academic Integrity Officer, after consultation with the faculty member, will determine the appropriate sanction(s) from the list of options below. The Academic Integrity Officer will give the student an opportunity to read the report to be filed in his/her academic folder; the report will describe the violation and the penalty. By signing at the end of the report, the student will indicate either: "I accept this decision," or, alternatively, "I wish to appeal to the All-College Academic Integrity Board." If the student accepts the decision, then the matter will not be forwarded to the Academic Integrity Board for a hearing. The student may attach a personal statement to the report. If the Academic Integrity Officer decides that no violation occurred, then no report will be filed. **OR** (Note: An All-College Academic Integrity Board hearing is mandatory if student has a prior record of integrity violation(s).
2. The Academic Integrity Officer refers the case to the All-College Academic Integrity Board for a hearing. The Board (with attendance of 5 members required for a quorum) will meet as soon as possible with the student in question. The faculty member who reported the violation will be required to attend the hearing.

If the Board decides that there has been a violation, Board members, after consultation with the faculty member, will determine the appropriate sanction(s) from the list of options below, with severity determined by the nature of the violation and by whether a prior record exists. The Board will prepare a report, describing the violation and the penalty for the student's academic folder. The student will be given an opportunity to read and sign the report, and may attach a personal statement to the report.

If the Board decides that no violation occurred, then no report will be filed.

D. Disciplinary Options for Academic Integrity Officers and Board.

An Academic Integrity Officer or Academic Integrity Board shall choose among the following disciplinary options:

For an unintentional violation:

1. Allow the student to redo all or part of the work, if doing this would give him/her beneficial experience, and
 - a) give a full grade for the assignment, or
 - b) give a diminished grade for the assignment. or
2. Assign a grade of zero or failing to the work.

For an intentional violation:

1. Allow the student to redo all or part of the work, if doing this would give him/her a beneficial experience, and
 - a) give a full grade for the assignment, or
 - b) give a diminished grade for the assignment. or
2. Assign a grade of zero or failing to the work. or
3. Record a grade of F for the course. Furthermore, the student may not withdraw from registration in the class. or
4. Record a disciplinary F for the course; this F shall permanently contribute to calculation of the grade point average (although not explicitly labeled disciplinary on the transcript). or
5. Suspend the student for the rest of the semester. or
6. Suspend the student for the rest of the semester and for the following semester. The Board will determine whether credits earned at another institution during these semesters may be transferred for TCNJ credit. or
7. Dismiss the student from the college.

E. Appeals of Academic Integrity Decisions.

Appeals may be directed as follows:

Any decision by a faculty member may be appealed to the Academic Integrity Officer, who will hear the case.

Any decision by the Academic Integrity Officer may be appealed to the All-College Academic Integrity Board, which will hear the case.

Any decision by the All-College Academic Integrity Board may be appealed to the All-College Disciplinary Board. Appeals of All-College Academic Integrity Board decisions are heard by the All-College Disciplinary Board at its discretion. All decisions of the All-College Disciplinary Board are final.

F. Integrity Statement

When a student is accepted and prior to enrollment at The College of New Jersey, he/she will receive a brochure explaining the College's commitment to academic integrity and the current policy and procedures for dealing with academic integrity violations. Prior to enrollment in courses, he/she will sign a copy of the following integrity statement and return it to the Office of Records and Registration: I have received The College of New Jersey brochure on academic integrity, and I understand and agree to abide by the complete policy on academic integrity and procedures for discipline of academic integrity violation as stated in their entirety in the student handbook.

All faculty will also receive the brochure on academic integrity and a copy of the integrity statement.

Absence and Attendance

A. Class Attendance Policy

- i. Students are expected to check the College calendar, and plan their course schedules and vacations so as to enroll only in those classes that they can expect to attend on a regular basis. Students are expected to participate in each of their courses through regular attendance at lecture and laboratory sessions, complete assignments as scheduled, and to avoid outside conflicts. It is further expected that every student will be present, on time, and prepared to participate when scheduled class sessions begin.
- ii. At the first class meeting of a semester, instructors are expected to distribute in writing the attendance policies which apply to their courses. While attendance itself is not used as a criterion for academic evaluations, grading is frequently based on participation in class discussion, laboratory work, performance, studio practice, field experience, or other activities which may take place during class sessions. If these areas for evaluation make class

attendance essential, the student may be penalized for failure to perform satisfactorily in the required activities.

- iii. In all circumstances, it remains the student's responsibility to initiate discussion about absence and arrangements for making up any missed work with each instructor.

B. Class Absence Policy

Absences from class are handled between students and instructors. The instructor may require documentation to substantiate the reason for the absence.

i. For Extended Absence

- a. Extended absence is defined as the number of consecutive class sessions missed that will severely impede the student's successful completion of the course. This number depends on a number of factors such as the course content and schedule, number of the hours in a session, whether the course is taken in a regular semester, winter term, Maymester, blended learning, etc. *The student should consult with the instructor to clarify this for the specific course.*
- b. Extended absence from classes is to be reported by the student, or his/her responsible designee (including College officials), to the **Dean of Students**. As a courtesy to the student, the Dean of Students office will then notify 1) the student's instructors, 2) the student's academic advisor(s), and 3) the Dean's office of the student's school. Such notification will **not** be provided in cases where the absence is reported to the Dean of Students **after** the student has returned to class. If the student desires, the reason for the absence may be included in the notification. By forwarding such information, the Dean of Students is **not serving to authenticate any reason** for absence, nor is it serving to excuse any absence.
- c. A student who has had an extended absence must be in contact with faculty as soon as possible, but no later than returning to campus. The Dean of Students office may, when asked by faculty, verify a student's absence. In cases of lengthy absence, make-up opportunities may not be feasible. The student must consult with the course instructor and his/her academic advisor to discuss other options such as withdrawal from the course, an incomplete grade, or a leave of absence within the parameters of existing College policies on these topics.
- d. Faculty may consult with the Office of the Dean of Students and/or with a Dean's office for guidance in how to make reasonable accommodations for a student, if such accommodations are possible. If student absence is caused by: illness, injury, bereavement, or similarly compelling personal reasons, it is recommended that the instructor provide fair and reasonable make-up opportunities when possible. However, it is recognized that in some courses and situations it may not be possible for a student to resume taking a course.

ii. For Absence Due to Religious Observance

- a. Students are expected to notify their instructors of anticipated absence for religious observance well in advance of the date on which any absence will occur. As with other substantiated reasons for absence, and in consideration of the needs of our diverse campus community, it is recommended that the instructor provide a fair and reasonable opportunity for work to be made up by the student, whenever possible. The Office of Academic Affairs will notify the faculty of the dates of religious holidays on which large numbers of students are likely to be absent and are, therefore, unsuitable for the scheduling of examinations.

iii. For Absence Due to Official College Events

- a. Students who are absent due to participation in a field trip, conference, or other official College event should communicate with their instructors about the absence well in advance. Instructors

may require documentation to verify the reason for an absence.

The Office of Academic Affairs will verify, upon request, the dates of and participation in such college functions.

iv. For Absence Due to Participation in NCAA-Sanctioned Intercollegiate Sports

- a. TCNJ encourages student athletic participation as well as academic achievement. Therefore, competition that is scheduled by local TCNJ officials should be scheduled at a time that is likely to cause minimal academic disruption. Contests that are scheduled by outside bodies such as NJAC or the NCAA are sometimes scheduled at inconvenient times and may be more disruptive. All athletic contests should be treated like an absence for an official college event. The student should communicate with the faculty member well in advance of the event and make arrangements to make up missed work. In the event that a scheduled contest conflicts with an exam (including a scheduled midterm or final), the student should be allowed a reasonable opportunity to make up the exam.
- b. It is a violation of NCAA rules to miss class for an athletic practice. Therefore, such absences are not excused (unless the practice takes place during travel to take part in an athletic contest). Coaches are expected to schedule practices at times that are not likely to conflict with classes. Coaches are also expected to excuse without penalty any student who misses practice because of a scheduled class meeting. If there are consistent conflicts between class and practice times and the coach, in consultation with the athletic director, cannot change practice times or excuse the student from practice, the student must either withdraw from the class or leave the team. Any conflict between the coach and the student over course and practice times should be resolved by appeal to the athletic director. The Vice President for Student Affairs serves as the final appeal for such conflicts.
- c. In the event that any NCAA policy regarding absences changes, this policy will change accordingly to remain compliant with NCAA regulations.

Graduate Student Complaint/Appeal Committee Procedures

1. Both parties shall submit their full complaint response (as applicable) in writing along with supporting documents at least 5 business days before the hearing.
2. Materials submitted by parties for review shall have been provided to all committee members, as well as both of the parties, prior to the date of the hearing. No additional supporting documents will be accepted 48 hours before the hearing so that all parties will have sufficient time to review all pertinent documents.
3. A staff member shall be invited to the hearing for the purpose of taking minutes.
4. Prior to the start of the hearing, the faculty members of the committee shall choose a faculty member on the committee to serve as chairperson.
5. The complainant and the respondent will be asked to enter the room.
6. The chairperson shall begin the hearing by introducing and describing the role of each person present.
7. The complainant will have the opportunity to elaborate on his/her written statement.
8. The respondent will have the opportunity to elaborate on his/her written statement.
9. The complainant will have the opportunity to respond.

10. Committee members will have the opportunity to ask questions of the complainant.
11. Committee members will have the opportunity to ask questions of the respondent.
12. The complainant and the respondent will be asked to leave the room.
13. Committee members will then review the case and render a decision in closed session or may decide to reconvene within two business days, pending the receipt and consideration of additional information if such information has been requested. Committee members will have the opportunity to request additional information from others on campus as they deem appropriate.
14. Within four business days, hearing minutes shall be distributed to committee members and parties for signature of all who were present.
15. The committee chairperson will draft a decision letter.
16. Within seven business days of the conclusion of the hearing, the chairperson will send the decision letter to all concerned parties.