

# Academic Policies and Procedures

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## 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

## Academic Integrity Policy

### 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 (Note: An All-College Academic Integrity Board hearing is mandatory if student has a prior record of integrity violation(s)) **OR**
2. The Academic Integrity Officer refers the case to the All-College Academic Integrity Board for a hearing. The board (with attendance of five 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.

### Attendance

Every student is expected to participate in each of his/her courses through regular attendance at lecture and laboratory sessions. It is further expected that every student will be present, on time, and prepared to participate when scheduled class sessions begin.

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.

Students who must miss classes due to participation in a field trip, athletic event, or other official college function should arrange with their instructors for such class absences well in advance. The Office of Academic Affairs will verify, upon request, the dates of and participation in such college functions. In every instance, however, the student has the responsibility to initiate arrangements for make-up work.

## Student Absences

Students are expected to attend class and complete assignments as scheduled, to avoid outside conflicts (if possible), and to enroll only in those classes that they can expect to attend on a regular basis. Absences from class are handled between students and instructors. The instructor may require documentation to substantiate the reason for the absence. The instructor should provide make-up opportunities for student absences caused by illness, injury, death in the family, observance of religious holidays, and similarly compelling personal reasons, including physical disabilities. For lengthy absences, make-up opportunities might not be feasible and are at the discretion of the instructor.

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. Students have the responsibility of notifying the instructors in advance of expected absences.

In cases of absence for a week or more, students are to notify their instructors immediately. If they are unable to do so, the Office of Records and Registration should be contacted. The Office of Records and Registration will notify the instructor of the student's absence. All notification should be done in a timely fashion. In every instance, the student has the responsibility to initiate arrangements for make-up work.

## Graduate Student Complaint/Appeals Policy

Note: This policy is for complaints/appeals not involving discrimination or sexual harassment. Also see Major Policies Section—Sexual Harassment Policy for procedures in case of sexual harassment.

- I. Each department that has a graduate program may establish its own complaint procedure and committee, preferably with graduate student members. Appeals to the School of Nursing, Health, and Exercise Science shall go directly to its school committee.
- II. The Council of Graduate Deans shall establish a committee that includes representatives from graduate programs for appeal of complaints during fall and spring semesters. The procedure for selecting faculty and students to serve on an appeals panel will follow these guidelines:
  - A. Faculty members who sit on the Graduate Programs Council, including at least one from each school offering graduate programs, shall serve on the panel. Three of these members are to be drawn randomly for each appeal. For each appeal, one faculty member from the department involved shall sit on the committee. If one member of the panel is already from the department, no additional department member need be involved. A faculty member involved in the appeal (or who participated in a department or school committee hearing this appeal in step I) shall not sit on the committee hearing that appeal. Alternatively, if faculty who are on the GPC are not available, faculty who teach graduate courses in the appropriate school may serve on the panel.
  - B. The Council of Graduate Deans shall choose three graduate students for the panel. These students are drawn randomly for each appeal. If possible, one student from the department involved shall also sit on the committee hearing that appeal. If one member of the panel is already from the department, no additional student from that department need be involved. A student involved in the appeal shall not sit on the committee hearing that appeal.
  - C. The procedure for appeals shall be posted on relevant Web pages accessible to students, faculty, and staff members.
- III. The order of steps to be taken by a student having a complaint against a faculty member shall be as follows. If either party is not satisfied with the decision at any step, appeal may be made to the next step. Every effort will be made to hold hearings within the stipulated time period after the request for hearing. Hearings from step A through D should be held within 10 business days after the request for hearing and for Step E within 15 business days after the request for hearing.
  - A. Discussion with the faculty member.
  - B. Discussion with the chairperson of the department and/or graduate coordinator.
  - C. Appeal to the department complaint committee, as specified by the department or program standards.
  - D. Appeal to the dean of the school in which the course is being offered.
  - E. Appeal to the graduate complaint committee.
    1. The committee reviews all procedural guidelines in order to assess whether the processes or procedures were followed. Accordingly, the Committee must have access to all relevant documents considered at every previous step of the appeals process, as described in point IV below.
    2. The Committee has the authority to rule on the appeal in accordance with the authority it is granted under this policy. However, the Committee must consult with other offices on campus regarding the scope of possible remedies, as appropriate. (Other offices might include, but not be limited to, the Provost, the Vice President for Budget and Finance, College General Counsel, etc.)
    3. In cases where appropriate, the committee shall refer the appeal back to the previous step.
  - F. Appeal to the Provost/Executive Vice President.
  - G. Appeal to the President of the College.
- IV. The complaint and the proposed solution from step B onward shall be provided in writing to all parties involved, to the chairperson, and to the next group or person appealed to. Minutes shall be kept at each step and signed by all present.
 

In steps B through G, both parties to the complaint shall have the right to be present, to present testimony, and to respond to testimony by the other party.
- V. The statute of limitations on filing student appeals shall be one semester following the end of the semester in which the incident occurred.

## 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.