

**TITLE: ACADEMIC HONESTY**

**POLICY NO: 2-7**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: 12/08/00**

**VCCS POLICY NO: [6.5.0](#)**

**REVISED DATE: 01/16/18**

I. Purpose:

To uphold the academic integrity of the academic programs and courses at the institution and foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the college community.

II. Definitions:

Academic dishonesty: the misrepresentation of one's academic work, which includes, but is not limited to:

- a. Cheating: the intentional use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise, for example:
- copying or using notes, examinations, or other instructional material during examinations, tests, or quizzes
  - using another person to write a paper or any part of a paper, without indicating the person's contribution with proper documentation
  - obtaining, using, or possessing unauthorized copies of an examination or any written work to be graded or receiving unauthorized information regarding examinations
  - submitting another's project as one's own
  - having an examination or any written work to be graded, taken or completed by a second party
  - altering or falsifying examination results after they have been evaluated by the faculty member and returned to the student
  - writing, without authorization, the answer to an exam question outside class and submitting that answer as part of an in-class exam
- b. Facilitating academic dishonesty: the intentional or knowing help or attempt to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty, such as:
- completing, in whole or part, an examination or project in the name of someone else
  - permitting another student to copy one's work during an examination, test, or quiz
  - permitting another student to copy one's written work whenever the work is to receive a grade
  - illicitly collaborating with another individual or individuals in the completion of course assignments

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- taking an examination for someone else
  - giving test questions or answers to anyone else
  - writing all or part of a paper/assignment for another student
  - selling or purchasing all or part of examinations, papers, or other assignments
- c. Plagiarism: the intentional or unintentional presentation as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source without properly citing the source of the material, for example:
- duplicating an author's work (in part or whole) without quotation marks and/or accurate citations
  - duplicating an author's words or phrases or ideas with accurate citations, but without quotation marks as necessary
  - using an author's idea(s) in paraphrase without accurate citation(s)
  - submitting, without quotation marks, an essay or written work to be graded in which exact words are merely rearranged even though cited
- d. Other forms of academic dishonesty, such as:
- submitting or resubmitting the same paper for two different classes/courses without the explicit authorization and approval of the faculty members teaching those classes/courses
  - fabrication: intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information, data, or citation in an academic exercise

Formal Hearing Committee: an ad hoc committee composed of five (5) members within the college community: three (3) teaching faculty members—one (1) representing each school that is not involved with the academic honesty case, one (1) administrative or classified staff member from Student Affairs, and one (1) student, who may be a student leader from any recognized student organization or a student trained to hear conduct cases. No committee members will have any previous relationship with the student.

III. Policy:

Reynolds Community College is committed to ensuring that the integrity of all academic programs and community members is not violated. As such, students are expected to conduct themselves in an honorable manner in all academic work. Students suspected of violating this policy shall be addressed in accordance with the provisions of this policy.

A. Student rights

Under this policy, students have the right to:

1. receive notice of alleged violation(s) in writing;

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2. review all relevant materials or information that led to the suspicion of an alleged violation;
3. an impartial hearing where the student is able to present information in his/her defense, unless that right is waived by the student. A hearing may be defined as the informal meeting between the faculty member and the student where notice is provided and the student has the ability to review the information and contest the charges, or a formal hearing with a hearing committee.
4. witnesses to speak on behalf of the student regarding a case. The student is responsible for informing the faculty member and/or the Office of Student Affairs of potential witnesses.
5. have an attorney or advisor accompany the student in a formal hearing. Attorneys/advisors may not participate in the hearing by asking questions or cross-examining witnesses, but instead are silent observers. Attorneys/advisors are not allowed to participate in the informal hearing process.
6. appeal a decision as prescribed in the Appeals section within section IV;
7. continue in the course in question throughout the entire process;
8. waive his or her right to a hearing. By waiving the right to a hearing, the student accepts responsibility for the alleged acts, accepts the sanction that shall be issued, and relinquishes his/her right to an appeal. Waiver of rights may be submitted in writing by the student. A failure to respond to charges shall be considered a waiver of rights.

**B. Other provisions**

1. A drop or withdrawal from a course by a student where alleged academic misconduct occurs does not prevent a student from being charged under this policy.
2. Faculty members and students are strongly encouraged to meet face-to-face during hearings. However, in instances where face-to-face meetings are impractical (e.g. an online student or faculty member living a considerable distance from the college), then alternative methods may be utilized to facilitate the hearing. These methods may include teleconferences or video streaming.
3. Faculty members are strongly encouraged to provide notice of the allegations as soon as practicable after discovering the possible violation. However, if suspicion of a violation occurs at the end of a semester/term and grades are due, the faculty member has the ability to issue a final grade. In these instances a charge notice must be issued in accordance with the procedures outlined in section IV, Procedures.

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4. In instances where a suspected student has been previously found responsible for violating this policy, the student shall automatically receive a formal hearing. Multiple violations of this policy shall automatically subject the student to suspension or expulsion.
5. In instances where grade changes are warranted, procedures outlined in [Reynolds Policy No. 2-6](#), Grades Plan, shall be followed.
6. In instances where a faculty member is not available to facilitate a meeting (e.g., no longer employed by the college, sick, etc.), the supervising dean (or his/her assistant dean) may elect to serve on behalf of the faculty member. Where these instances are anticipated, faculty members are strongly encouraged to provide their supervising dean with all relevant materials.
7. Allegations of academic dishonesty occurring in administrative support areas such as the testing centers or academic support centers shall be referred to the faculty for whom the test(s) or assignment(s) belongs. The staff member who refers the information on the incident shall take measures to identify the student and document the incident.
8. Allegations of academic dishonesty occurring during the placement process shall be initiated by the coordinator of the testing center where the alleged incident occurred. Any formal hearing shall be handled by the vice president of student affairs (VPSA), or designee, in accordance with the following procedures.

All matters shall be handled in accordance with [Reynolds Policy No. 1-26](#), Student Privacy and Release of Student Information.

IV. Procedures:

A. Informal hearing procedures

If a faculty or staff member has a good faith belief that an act of academic dishonesty has occurred, he/she will:

1. Contact the Office of Student Affairs to determine if the student previously has been found responsible for violating the policy. If a violation has been previously recorded, the faculty member will refer the case to the Office of Student Affairs using [JSRCC Form No. 75-0005](#), Behavior Intervention Referral. If no previous violations have been recorded, then the faculty member will proceed with the process for addressing the student.
2. Send the student a notice of the allegation, which will:
  - a. outline the details of the allegation;

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- b. request a meeting to discuss the charges and evidence obtained;
  - c. outline the proposed sanction(s) in accordance with the Sanctions section of this policy (Note: As prescribed in section III of this policy, in instances where the alleged act occurred at the end of the term, and grades are due, the faculty member may issue a grade in the student information system before meeting with the student.);
  - d. provide a timeline for the student to respond (Note: Students should be provided no less than ten (10) business days, or two (2) weeks for a response); and
  - e. provide students the opportunity to accept the charge(s).
3. Meet with the student. At the meeting the faculty or staff member will:
- a. review the allegation charge notice provided to the student;
  - b. provide the student with the opportunity to review the relevant materials;
  - c. provide the student with the opportunity to respond to the charge(s);
  - d. if the student accepts the charge(s), have the student sign an agreement accepting the charges and sanctions and forward all case materials to the Office of Student Affairs; and
  - e. if the student does not accept the charge(s), refer the case to the vice president of academic affairs (VPAA) for a formal hearing and resolution using [JSRCC Form No. 75-0005](#), Behavior Intervention Referral.

**B. Formal hearing procedures**

In instances where no resolution is achieved at the informal hearing level, or a charged student has previously violated this policy, a formal hearing committee will be composed to review the case. Formal hearings for academic honesty cases that occur within courses will be facilitated by the dean of the academic unit where the course is offered. The vice president of academic affairs (VPAA) may designate an alternate dean or another academic affairs administrator to hear a case when necessary.

The following procedure will be followed by the facilitator and hearing committee:

1. The hearing will be conducted in the following order:
  - a. opening statement by facilitator
  - b. opening statement of accused (if desired)
  - c. presentation of evidence by the facilitator
  - d. presentation of evidence by the accused
  - e. calling of witnesses by facilitator
  - f. cross examination of witnesses by accused
  - g. questions by committee (if necessary)
  - h. calling of witnesses by accused
  - i. questions by committee (if necessary)
  - j. closing statement by accused

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- k. closing statement by facilitator
  - l. private deliberation by committee
2. Members (excluding the facilitator) of the hearing committee will vote on the decision; a simple majority vote will be used to determine responsibility. If the student is found responsible for academic dishonesty, the committee will provide a recommendation of the sanction to the VPAA or designee. The recommended sanction by the committee may take into consideration the previously recommended sanction of the faculty member. The VPAA or designee has the authority to accept or modify the sanction. However, the decision of the committee regarding the student's responsibility for the offense will be regarded as final.
  3. The student will be notified of the decision via certified mail within ten (10) class days of the decision.

**C. Sanctions**

The following are examples of sanctions that may be issued to a student found responsible for violating this policy. Sanctions may be issued independent of one another or in combination (of no more than two of the provisions below). Before issuing sanctions, faculty members should consult with the Office of Student Affairs.

1. formal warning: an oral or written statement to the student that he or she has committed an act of academic dishonesty that is prohibited at the institution and may result in more severe disciplinary action if the student is found responsible for engaging in any subsequent act of academic dishonesty.
2. additional work: an assignment or test to provide evidence of the student's academic performance and/or evidence that the student knows and understands the course materials.
3. a lower or failing grade or score on the assignment or examination
4. removal of the student from the class and the assignment of the grade "F" or "U" in the course
5. suspension or expulsion from the college, in cases where a student has previously violated this policy
6. suspension or revocation of degree, in cases where an offense is discovered after the degree is posted

Nothing in this policy will preclude the imposition of other reasonable sanctions or a combination of sanctions within the authority and discretion of the committee or vice president of academic affairs (for cases involving academic courses) or the vice president of student affairs (for cases involving placement testing).

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**D. Appeals**

Students are afforded the opportunity to appeal a decision. An appeal is not a re-hearing. It represents a procedural safeguard for the student and should not be used for anything other than that right and privilege. In the appeal process, the burden of proof is shifted from the college to the student charged with the offense.

If a student would like to appeal the decision of the committee, the student must submit a letter of appeal to the academic dean of the school for which the course is located. If the dean of the appropriate area participated in the faculty member/student meeting, then the appeal should be forwarded to the vice president of academic affairs (VPAA).

The student must show that it is more likely than not that one or more of the grounds for appeal have merit. The letter must be submitted within ten (10) days from the date of the decision. The student may appeal one or more of the following:

1. evidence of a violation of the hearing process or procedures. If there is evidence of a violation, the student would receive another opportunity to go before a hearing committee.
2. excessively severe sanction in relation to the violation due to mitigating factors or previous sanctions for similar violations
3. new, or newly discovered, evidence that may substantially affect the outcome of the hearing

If there is adequate reason to believe that one or more of the grounds of appeal have merit, an appeal meeting will be scheduled by the dean or VPAA.

1. Once the student files an appeal, a copy of the hearing file and records of the student will be forwarded to the dean or VPAA from the Office of Student Affairs.
2. Within ten (10) business days of receipt of the student's appeal, the dean or VPAA will notify the student of the date, time, and place of a meeting for the appeal.
3. During the appeal meeting, the dean or VPAA will review all information presented during the informal or formal hearing and give the student an opportunity to present information to support his/her appeal.
4. Within ten (10) business days of the appeal meeting, the student will be notified by the dean or VPAA of the decision.

**E. Records**

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Records will be maintained in the Office of Student Affairs in accordance with [Reynolds Policy No. 4-38](#), Record Retention and Disposition.

If a student is expelled, the student's record will be maintained permanently by the vice president of student affairs or Office of Student Affairs.

V. Other Information:

[Reynolds Policy No. 1-26](#), Student Privacy and Release of Student Information

[Reynolds Policy No. 2-6](#), Grades Plan

[Reynolds Policy No. 4-38](#), Record Retention and Disposition

[JSRCC Form No. 75-0005](#), Behavior Intervention Referral