Edgewood College
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR
INCIDENTS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students are expected to uphold Edgewood College’s Academic Honesty policy as delineated in the Student Handbook and College Catalog. Alleged violations of academic honesty may be investigated by a staff member or instructor individually, through an academic department’s appeal procedure, or through a hearing of the college’s Academic Honesty Committee.

The instructor, staff member or committee does not need to prove “beyond a reasonable doubt” that dishonesty has occurred. The instructor, staff member or committee may use the standard of “preponderance of evidence,” meaning that “more likely than not” dishonesty has occurred. An instructor, staff member or hearing committee should be guided by common sense and good judgment. Key ideas are to hold students responsible for their actions and to uphold the principles of academic honesty set by the college.

If indicated by the incident, an instructor, staff member or committee should consider a sanction that will

- Deter further cheating or the appearance of cheating;
- Educate the student about appropriate academic policies and behaviors, including consequences of cheating;
- Assist the student to get whatever help or support is needed for satisfactory academic performance.

The sanction should be appropriate for the situation, including consideration of mitigating and aggravating factors listed below.

Factors that might mitigate or aggravate consideration of the offense include, but are not limited to:

1. Experience level of the student with higher education: For example, freshmen, who may not yet be familiar with college-level practices, may require more guidance than seniors, who have had more academic experience.

2. Lack of dishonest intent/Acting from lack of knowledge: Some students act dishonestly inadvertently because they do not know what constitutes honesty. E.g., in some courses, collaboration among students might be considered dishonest; some students may not be familiar with correct citation practices.

3. Premeditation: More serious consideration should be given to the student who plans in advance to act dishonestly. E.g., a student who brings a crib sheet into an exam might be treated more harshly than a student who is confronted with the opportunity to see another student’s test during an exam.

4. Involvement of Other Students: Consider whether the student enlisted assistance of others to collude in dishonesty and whether the others were unwitting or active parties.
Students who assist another student in an act of dishonesty, but do not gain anything personally, might be treated more mildly than students who benefit themselves.

5. **Conscious disregard for other students:** Consider whether the outcome of the dishonest action adversely affects other students, who may or may not be aware of the situation. E.g., a student who copies an assignment from another student, implicates the latter student in the incident.

6. **Extent to which the student accepts responsibility for actions, expresses remorse for dishonesty and understanding of honest behaviors:** A student who lies, covers up or presents false evidence, especially if it jeopardizes other students, might receive a more severe sanction, as the dishonesty is compounded by deceit.

7. **Consequences of student’s behavior:** Consider what actual harm was caused by the act of dishonesty, or what potential harm would have been caused if the dishonesty had not been caught.

8. **Whether this is the student’s first act of Academic Dishonesty:** A student who has been found to have previously violated the Academic Honesty Policy may be given a stricter sanction.

It is to be kept in mind that extenuating personal circumstances--stress, work schedule, family circumstances, and illness--do not justify acts of academic dishonesty. There are other ways than dishonesty for a student to cope with difficult circumstances.

**SUSPICION/INVESTIGATION OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

In cases of academic integrity at Edgewood College, all instances of dishonesty or suspicions of dishonesty need to be investigated by the instructor or staff. When an instructor or academic staff member discovers or suspects an incident of academic dishonesty, it is the responsibility of the instructor or staff member to meet with the student(s) involved as soon as possible to present what evidence points to academic dishonesty and to allow the student to explain and, if needed, to provide evidence. The instructor or staff member should ensure that the student understands the college’s academic honesty policy and the specific policies of the course. Students do not have to admit to dishonesty in order for the instructor to determine dishonesty has occurred and for a sanction to be imposed.

As indicated by the conversation and any further investigation, the instructor or staff member may conclude that academic dishonesty has occurred and impose a sanction. The student has the right to appeal the sanction through the department appeal process. If the instructor or staff member believes that the act of dishonesty might warrant sanctions, he/she may opt to refer the matter directly to the Academic Dean’s Office with a recommendation for a sanction beyond what he/she has the authority to apply.
The instructor/staff member should keep his/her own written record of what occurred, keep all original documents, and make copies of any evidence. The instructor/staff member may want to consult his/her department chair or supervisor. **In all cases, the instructor should notify the student in writing of the sanction to be imposed and this letter or email should be copied to the Associate Academic Dean.**

**Sanctions for Instructors or Departments/Schools**

A sanction should help the student learn from this situation, serve to deter others, and serve to uphold the college’s standards. The sanction imposed should be appropriate for the situation, including consideration of mitigating and aggravating factors listed above. Sanctions that an instructor or staff member might impose include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Student’s grade is lowered on the assignment or test
2. Student redoes the assignment, with a grade penalty
3. Student is failed on the assignment
4. Student is given an additional assignment to complete for the course or an assignment that would serve to remediate the student’s lack of understanding about academic integrity.
5. Student receives a letter of reprimand from the instructor or staff member
6. Student’s grade in the course is lowered
7. Student fails the course
8. Student is placed on probation or dismissed from the academic program.

**ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT/SCHOOL APPEAL**

If a situation regarding an allegation of academic dishonesty is not resolved between the instructor and student directly or if the student contests the sanction, the instructor should refer the student to the Department Chair, or in the cases of the Schools of Nursing, Business, and Education, the Dean to explain the ways in which the student may appeal the decision. Students may pursue their complaint through the appeal procedure in the department/school in which the incident occurred or seek other means of resolution through that department Chair, or Dean.

**In all cases, the Chair or Dean should notify the student in writing of the outcome of the appeal, and this letter or email should be copied to the Associate Academic Dean.**
ACADEMIC HONESTY HEARING COMMITTEE

1. The Academic Honesty Hearing Committee of the Academic Dean’s Office will be convened if:
   a. An incident of alleged academic dishonesty is not resolved through the college’s departmental appeals process or through consultation with the Chair,
   b. A member of the college academic staff confronts an alleged incident of dishonesty not related to classroom practices (e.g., deceptive alteration of a college document or forgery on a college form) and cannot resolve the situation directly with the student,
   c. An instructor or staff member confronts a matter so serious that it warrants a hearing by the Committee; i.e., it appears that the situation cannot be reconciled in a meeting between the student and faculty or staff, or through the departmental appeals process, or it appears likely that the situation may result in suspension, dismissal or expulsion.

2. Chairperson and presiding officer: the Associate Academic Dean is convener and voting member of the committee. Convening the Hearing Committee includes: a) setting the date, time and place of the hearing, b) notifying the department or office, faculty or staff, and student involved, c) requesting from the department or office a copy of its letter to the student and/or, from the faculty or staff involved, any supporting evidence for a hearing if it hasn’t already been sent to the Academic Dean’s Office.

3. The Committee must review all materials submitted prior to the date of the hearing.

4. The student may choose to have one staff or faculty representative from the college accompany him/her to the hearing. The role of the representative is limited to consultation with the student, except as indicated below. **No other persons will be permitted to accompany the student, unless approved in advance by the Associate Academic Dean.** A hearing may be conducted in the absence of a student who fails to appear at the designated time.

5. The hearing will proceed as follows:
   a. The Chair opens the hearing with a statement about the confidentiality of the proceedings, an explanation of the process of the hearing and a summary of the nature of the appeal or case.
   b. The student states specifics of the appeal or situation and presents his/her facts/evidence relating to the allegation of academic dishonesty.
   c. The instructor or staff member(s) presents his/her facts/evidence.
   d. At this point, the committee may ask questions of the student or instructor, and the student’s staff or faculty representative may make a brief statement.
   e. At end of questions, the student makes a closing statement, then the instructor or staff member(s) makes a closing statement. The outcome of the hearing will be based only on information provided as evidence during the hearing.
6. At the end of the hearing, the Chair will ask the student, student’s representative and instructor or staff member to leave the room during Committee deliberations. The Committee will deliberate as follows:

   a) Did the student commit the offense? The committee will weigh each piece of evidence presented. Evidence may include statements gathered, copies of assignments or exams, emails, and other documentation by the instructor, etc. The committee will consider the following: i) Is it relevant to proving the facts of case? ii) Is it credible, i.e., believable? iii) How strongly do facts/evidence prove or disprove what is asserted by the instructor (or staff) and student, i.e., to what degree does the evidence support or not support the alleged act of dishonesty? The Committee’s standard of proof is **preponderance of evidence**, that is, it is more likely than not that the student committed an act of dishonesty.

   b) If the student is found to have acted dishonestly, what is the appropriate sanction? See below.

7. At the end of the hearing and committee deliberation, all evidence will be collected by the Chair and kept in a confidential file.

8. The Committee will determine and make recommendations to the Committee Chair.

9. The decision of the Committee, and any sanctions to be imposed, will be conveyed to instructor (or staff member) and student in writing by the Committee Chair no later than 5 business days after the hearing.

*Sanctions for the Dishonesty Committee*

As stated above, as part of the disciplinary process, sanctioning a student encompasses four goals--deterrence, education, assistance, and punishment. For each case there will be aggravating and mitigating factors. The committee should consider: What sanction is appropriate for the act of dishonesty committed? What sanction would help the student learn from this experience and cause him/her to think about his/her behavior in the future? What sanction serves to uphold the college’s academic honesty policy? Sanctions might include, but are not limited to:

1. **Failing grade:** A grade of F in the course.
2. **Censure:** A written reprimand from the Committee for the violation of academic honesty, including a warning to the student that any further violation will warrant more serious consequences (that would be stated). A copy will be sent to the Academic Dean.
3. **Loss of Privileges:** A student would lose privileges such as campus privileges or exclusion from campus activities, for a stated length of time or permanently. E.g., a student might lose priority registration for a case of forged signature.
4. Restitution: A student would be expected to pay restitution for damages caused, which may either be monetary or in the form of service to the college.

5. Probation: A student would be put on academic disciplinary probation for a stated length of time and might be barred from certain campus activities for that period, or specific conditions might be placed on the student with a warning that if the conditions are violated, further disciplinary action will be taken.

6. Suspension*: A student may be suspended from class(es) or from college premises for a stated length of time less than a full term.

7. Dismissal*: A student may be administratively withdrawn from the college for the period of a term or more, to be determined by the Committee, with no tuition refund. Conditions for readmission would also need to be determined at the time the sanction is imposed.

8. Expulsion*: A student may be expelled from the college permanently by administrative withdrawal, with no tuition refund, and will receive grades of F in all the courses he/she is currently enrolled in.

*Sanctions of suspension, dismissal and expulsion need to be considered carefully. Due to their severity, in cases where these sanctions are a possibility, the standard of proof should be clear and convincing evidence, rather than preponderance of evidence. These sanctions must be brought to the Academic Dean for consideration.