

*Policy effective for alleged misconduct occurring after August 15, 2018*

## **OVERVIEW**

As a community of students and scholars, the University strives to maintain the highest standards of academic integrity. All members of the community are expected to exhibit honesty and integrity in their academic work. This responsibility can be met only through earnest and continuing effort on the part of all students and faculty. Faculty, students, and staff are responsible for acquainting themselves with, adhering to, and promoting policies governing academic conduct.

Any dishonesty related to academic work or records constitutes academic misconduct. This includes --- but is not limited to --- activities such as giving or receiving unauthorized aid in tests and examinations; improperly obtaining a copy of an examination; plagiarism; unauthorized submission of the same work in separate courses; misrepresentation of information; and the alteration of transcripts or university records.

All matters related to academic misconduct are the responsibility of the academic units involved and the Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs. Faculty are expected to report suspected cases of academic misconduct. These matters will be resolved through procedures defined herein for both undergraduate and graduate students (except those in the College of Medicine).

## **DEFINITIONS**

- The term “student” is used in this policy to refer to one or more students as appropriate to the case.
- The terms “writing” and “written” refer to communications delivered either on paper or electronically.
- The term “Academic Misconduct Penalty Record” (or “AMPR”) refers to the official case record, whether generated using paper documentation or an electronic reporting system.

## **COMMITTEES**

### **1. University Academic Integrity Review Board (UAIRB)**

The University Academic Integrity Review Board is comprised of faculty and students from each college, and serves as the pool from which Academic Integrity Review Panels are drawn. The UAIRB shall be appointed each Fall Semester by the Office of the Provost (or at other times as required in order to replace members or supplement the UAIRB).

### **2. Academic Integrity Review Panel (AIRP)**

In cases of academic misconduct that warrant a panel review, an Academic Integrity Review Panel will be constituted. These panels will be comprised of five (5) faculty members and two (2) student members. In cases involving graduate students, faculty panelists should be graduate faculty and student panelists should be graduate students. In cases involving undergraduate students, the student panelists should be undergraduates.

**a. Home-college cases**

When misconduct is alleged to have occurred within the student's home college, a majority of faculty panelists and both student panelists should be from that college.

**b. Cross-college cases**

When misconduct is alleged to have occurred in a college other than the student's home college, a majority of faculty panelists should be from the college in which the infraction occurred. A minority of faculty panelists and both student panelists should be from the student's home college.

**3. Panel Authority**

Panels may prescribe penalties, sustain penalties, reduce penalties (including reduction to no penalty), or dismiss charges, as appropriate to the case. In subsequent-offense cases, as well as those involving alleged academic misconduct beyond the scope of a specific class and/or instructor, the panel may prescribe dismissal from a program, college, or the University. In first-offense cases limited to a specific class and/or instructor, however, a panel should not typically increase the severity of the previously prescribed penalty.

**PROCEDURES**

**1. Initial Reporting**

When evidence suggests that academic misconduct has occurred, the instructor of record will assign a penalty, and the involved student will be informed. The incident and the assigned penalty will be reported into the official case record by the initial reporter. In most cases, the initial reporter will be the instructor of record, although department chairs, deans, or other involved parties may also do so.

**a.** The initial reporter should gather and submit into the official case record all material related to the case, including the course syllabus, the work in question, and any other documentation.

**b.** The initial reporter should clearly detail the alleged offense and any prescribed penalties.

**c.** Upon receiving the initial report, the College in which the offense is alleged to have occurred is responsible for processing the incident. Notification will then be sent to the student, instructing the student to access the charges. Notification will also be sent to involved instructors, department chairs, deans, and the Office of the Provost.

**d.** A hold will be placed on the student's account, preventing withdrawal from the course(s) in question. If the charges are dismissed at any point, the hold will be lifted.

**e.** Once the charges have been accessed, a student who wishes to dispute an academic misconduct charge has seventy-two (72) hours to submit a written response. Failure to respond within seventy-two (72) hours will be considered agreement with the charge, acceptance of the penalty, and forfeiture of the right of appeal.

- f. If the student has not accessed the charges within seventy-two (72) hours of the initial notification being sent, a second notification will be sent. The student has an additional seventy-two (72) hours to access the charges. Thereafter, failure to access the charges will be considered agreement with the charge, acceptance of the penalty, and forfeiture of the right of appeal.

## **2. Departmental Conference**

On receipt of a student's written response, the chair of the department in which the infraction is alleged to have occurred will arrange for a conference, the purpose of which is to seek a mutually satisfactory resolution. The chair should schedule and hold the conference as soon as practicable, ensuring there is no delay that might unfairly penalize the student.

- a. The conference, which should include a review of the allegations of the case and the student's response, is to be conducted by the department chair and must include both the student and the involved instructor. (Should the involved instructor be unavailable, the dean shall delegate an appropriate proxy.)
- b. At the conclusion of the conference, the chair shall submit a report for inclusion in the student's AMPR. This report should detail the results of the conference, including the penalty to be enforced (if any).
- c. Notification of the outcome of the conference will be delivered electronically to the student, as well as involved instructors, department chairs, deans, and the Office of the Provost.
- d. A student who is unsatisfied with the outcome of the departmental conference has seventy-two (72) hours from delivery of the notification to submit a written response and thereby request an Academic Integrity Review. Failure to respond within seventy-two (72) hours will be considered agreement with the charge, acceptance of the penalty, and forfeiture of the right of appeal.

## **3. Academic Integrity Review**

Academic Integrity Review is the University's review and appeal process for cases of alleged academic misconduct, and is coordinated and overseen by the Office of the Provost.

### **a. Administrative Review**

In a first-offense case, if a student appeals the result of the departmental conference, the Office of the Provost will conduct an administrative review of the Academic Misconduct Penalty Record (AMPR). After considering the relevant materials, the Office of the Provost may either uphold the departmental recommendation or refer the case to an Academic Integrity Review Panel (AIRP). When an administrative review upholds the departmental recommendation, the ruling is subject to no further appeal.

### **b. Panel Review**

Academic Integrity Review Panels (AIRPs) will review first-offense cases that have been

referred by the Office of the Provost. In addition, the Office of the Provost will ensure that AIRPs review all subsequent-offense cases in which the charges have not been dismissed, as well as those involving alleged academic misconduct beyond the scope of a specific class and/or instructor; in such cases, the Office of the Provost must solicit a penalty recommendation from the dean of the student's home college.

- i. AIRPs are constituted on an ad-hoc basis and drawn from the UAIRB. An AIRP can be empaneled to hear a single case or a docket of separate cases, as circumstances dictate. The Office of the Provost will endeavor to schedule reviews in a timely fashion, ensuring there is no delay that might unfairly penalize the student.
- ii. Once an AIRP has been empaneled and given its charge by the Office of the Provost, a faculty panelist shall be elected chair. The chair shall maintain complete, confidential records of all proceedings, including minutes of all meetings; these will become part of the AMPR. However, neither minutes nor recordings will be made of meetings when deliberations occur.
- iii. The AIRP will meet to conduct its review, interviewing both parties and any witnesses it chooses. Other than the members of the AIRP, only the involved student, faculty member (and/or administrators), and presenting witnesses should be in attendance. Both parties shall have opportunities to present all relevant information and witnesses. Legal counsel or other representatives are not permitted.
- iv. Following the review meeting, the AIRP will reconvene to deliberate and confirm its decision by majority vote. The vote will be conducted by secret ballot, and the chair of the panel will not vote except in case of a tie. The decision will then be submitted to the Office of the Provost.
- v. The Office of the Provost will review the AIRP's decision to ensure that proper procedure has been followed throughout the process, certify the decision, and notify the student. When certified by the Office of the Provost, the decision of the AIRP is considered final and is not subject to further appeal.

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Academic misconduct is incompatible with the standards of the academic community. Such acts are viewed as moral and intellectual offenses and are subject to investigation and disciplinary action through appropriate University procedures. Penalties may range from the loss of credit for a particular assignment to dismissal from the University. Degree revocation may be warranted in cases involving academic misconduct by former students while they were at USA. Note that dismissal from any University of South Alabama college or school for reasons of academic misconduct will also result in permanent dismissal from the University.
- In all issues regarding academic misconduct, deans and department chairs may appoint appropriate designees to act in their stead.

- In cases of documented disability, a student's SDS-registered aide may accompany the student to departmental conferences and panel reviews. The aide's role is limited to providing disability support and assistance to the student; the aide is not allowed to participate in the conference or review.