

UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Academic Integrity

As a Catholic, Franciscan learning community, committed to the values of respect, compassion, service, and integrity, the University of St. Francis acknowledges academic freedom as a fundamental right. For academic freedom and Franciscan values to be maintained and shared, uncompromising honesty and responsibility are essential elements of community life.

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members promote academic integrity in many ways, including instruction on the components of academic honesty, modeling the Franciscan values of respect and integrity, as well as abiding by university policies on penalties for cheating and plagiarism.

Academic integrity requires that all academic work be wholly the product of an identified individual or individuals. Collaboration is only acceptable when it is explicitly acknowledged.

Ethical conduct is the obligation of every member of the University community, and breaches of academic integrity constitute serious offenses. Since a lack of academic integrity necessarily hinders the student's academic development, it cannot be tolerated under any circumstances.

Violations of Academic Integrity

Some of the various ways in which academic honesty can be violated are listed below. Violations include but are not limited to:

- **Cheating:** Cheating is taking, giving, or accepting any illicit advantage for any course work inside or outside of the classroom. This includes use of materials, books, notes, electronic devices, and communication with others not expressly permitted for the assignment or activity. Students may not employ others, including commercial enterprises, to conduct research or prepare work for them. Students may also not submit the same work more than once without prior instructor approval. Submitting the same assignment twice violates the assumption that every assignment advances a student's learning and growth.
- **Fabrication:** Fabrication is the falsification or invention of any information, data, or citation in an academic exercise.
- **Facilitating Academic Dishonesty:** Students who knowingly or negligently allow their work to be used by other students or who otherwise aid others in academic dishonesty are violating academic integrity. Such students are as guilty of intellectual dishonesty as the student who receives the material even though they may not themselves benefit academically from that dishonesty.
- **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the representation of the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or by appropriate indentation and must be properly cited in the text or in a note. Citation is also required when material from any source in print, electronic, or other medium is paraphrased or summarized in whole or in part in one's own words. Since information that is "common knowledge," such as names of leaders of prominent nations, basic scientific laws, etc. need not be footnoted, plagiarism can, in some

cases, be a subtle issue. Any questions about what constitutes plagiarism should be discussed with the faculty member.

- **Denying others access to information or material:** It is a violation of academic integrity to deny others access to scholarly resources, or to deliberately impede the academic work of another student. Examples of offenses of this type include: giving other students false or misleading information; making library material unavailable to others by stealing or defacing books or journals, or by deliberately misplacing or destroying reserve materials; or by altering computer files that belong to another.

Determination of Violations

If an instructor suspects a violation of the University Academic Integrity Policy, they will meet with the student. This meeting must occur within five work days of the discovery of the suspected violation and will provide the student with an opportunity to clear himself or herself to the satisfaction of the instructor.

- If the student is cleared, the matter will be dropped. Otherwise, the instructor will submit an Academic Integrity form in the portal within two work days of the meeting that documents the violation itself, the discussion between the instructor and the student, and whether or not the student admits to the violation.
- If the student admits to the violation as alleged and accepts the course sanction, the instructor will include the agreed upon sanction in the violation form. The student will receive notification of this in their portal, and they must respond to it within two work days. Once the student has responded to the violation, the dean will review the circumstances and may or may not impose a university sanction. The student will be notified of the dean's decision within five work days of the student's response or the submission of the violation form if no response is provided.
- If the student and the instructor cannot agree on the matter of guilt on the alleged violation or if the student does not accept the course sanction, the instructor will include a statement that the student does not accept the sanction in the violation form. The student will receive notification of this in their portal, and they must respond to it with their own statement within two work days. The dean will meet with both parties within five work days of receiving both submissions. The dean will make the final ruling, impose University sanctions (dependent on the ruling), and notify the instructor and student in writing within five work days after the meeting. If the student is ruled guilty of violating the Academic Integrity Policy, the instructor may impose a course sanction.

Sanctions

For any violation of the Academic Integrity Policy the following sanctions are imposed:

- A course sanction is imposed by the instructor. It can range from a warning to a failing grade for the assignment or course or require extra work before the course can be completed. Violations having been determined, the student surrenders the right to withdraw from the course.
- A university sanction is imposed separately by the dean of the appropriate college depending on the severity of the violation. The possible University sanctions range from a "censure" (an official reprimand, recorded as a note in the student's file) to dismissal from the University. Dismissals are noted on the student's transcript.

Appeal Procedures

Appeal Procedure for Alleged Violations of Academic Integrity, Academic Probation or Academic Dismissal

The procedure for appealing a dean's imposition of academic probation or dismissal or for appealing claims of academic integrity violations and associated course or university level sanctions is as follows:

Step I

The student completes the Student Complaint and Appeal Form located under For Students in the MYUSF Portal. The student must submit the completed form no later than five work days after notification of the violation determination or sanction (if appealing an alleged violation of academic integrity) or after notification of the dean's decision regarding probation or dismissal (if appealing academic probation or dismissal). The form will be forwarded to the dean of the appropriate college.

In addition, a student appealing academic probation or dismissal must upload (to the same form) an appeal letter that addresses the following questions:

1. What prevented you from being academically successful? Explain briefly any extraordinary circumstances (such as personal illness/injury, a serious family issue, or other similarly grave situations) that may have adversely affected academic performance. When possible, please provide documentation.
2. Why did you not withdraw or request an incomplete (for the course) before the end of the semester?
3. Did you have consistent satisfactory performance prior to the extenuating circumstances described? Explain.
4. What concrete steps would you take if permitted to return to improve your academic performance? Be as specific as possible. They may include meeting with an academic advisor and/or attending an instructor's office hours regularly, attending tutoring regularly, and housing or lifestyle changes. Please note that assurances such as "I promise to study harder" and "I know I can do better" are not sufficient to have a dismissal rescinded.
5. Attach a letter from a faculty member (from the college of your major, when possible) who supports your appeal of the academic probation or dismissal. (This faculty member may be contacted by the Dean and/or the Student Appeals Subcommittee to discuss your appeal.)

If the form does not contain items 1 through 4, it will be sent back to the student for completion. The fully-completed form and faculty letter is due within the five day period. If the form is not complete or is late, the appeal will not be considered. If the faculty letter is not received within the five day period, the appeal may not be considered.

Step II

The Dean must schedule a meeting with the student within five working days after receiving the Student Complaint and Appeal Form. The Dean may elect to solicit input from faculty members and/or other academic personal (such as an advisor or associate dean), and/or have faculty members and/or other academic personnel present at this meeting. The Dean will then notify the student within three working days of the meeting, as to whether the probation/dismissal decision is upheld or reversed. If a mutually agreed upon resolution is achieved (as a result of the meeting), no further action will be taken beyond the Dean recording the agreed upon decision on the Student and Appeal Complaint Form. The form will be stored confidentially in the student information system. If no mutually agreed upon resolution is achieved, the student has the

option to request that the appeal process move to Step III. If the student does not respond to the dean's attempts to meet within five work days, the matter will be considered closed.

Step III

The student may choose to request that the appeal process move to Step III by emailing the chair of the Educational Standards Committee at academicappeals@stfrancis.edu within five work days of the dean's decision. The student must provide evidence of at least one of the criteria for appealing an academic integrity violation determination, academic probation, or academic dismissal:

1. significant new information becomes available that was not available in the Dean's meeting in Step II, or
2. a procedural error affected the outcome of the appeal to the Dean so the student did not receive a fair hearing, or
3. an arbitrary or capricious decision was made that was not consistent with the established facts.

In the email to the Chair, the student should clearly indicate which criteria is/are the basis for the continued appeal, along with an explanation of how the situation meets those criteria. The student must include supporting information or any documentation relevant to their appeal.

Any new information must be presented in this step (not in Step III).

Upon receiving the student's request, the Chair will notify the college of the continuing appeal and request relevant information related to the appeal. This may include the reason for probation/dismissal, a summary timeline of appeal notifications and meetings, appeal communications (with dates), appeal meeting notes, the Student Complaint and Appeal Form content, and other related information such as grades; assignment scores; attendance; academic performance; previous probation/dismissal data; faculty, advisor and/or administrative input related to the case; or similar. The chair of the Educational Standards Committee will review the documentation to ensure that the student has provided evidence meeting at least one of the criteria above. If this is the case, the chair will convene a meeting of the Student Appeals Subcommittee. The dean will also provide a statement explaining their position. The chair will share the student's and dean's documentation with the subcommittee. The student should expect email notification from the chair of the Educational Standards Committee of the hearing date, time and place. The hearing may be held in-person or by remote means (such as conference call, web-meeting or similar). The hearing shall take place within five working days after the Chair receives the Step III appeal request notification from the student. By proceeding to Step III, the student understands that all relevant information related to the appeal will be shared with members of the Student Appeals Subcommittee.

The Student Appeals Subcommittee, which will be composed of three faculty members of the Educational Standards Committee and two students nominated by the dean of students and approved by the chief academic officer, will convene within five work days after the chair receives notification. If two students from the same college are not available, then students from other colleges can be utilized. The two student representatives will complete the "Statement of FERPA Understanding" form prior to receiving any material related to the appeal. The Student Appeals Subcommittee will review the detailed statements and supporting documentation from the Dean and the student. The student who is appealing has the opportunity to state their case at the meeting and may be asked questions by the Subcommittee. The Dean (or representative of the college) may attend the meeting if desired, or if requested by the Chair. Once the hearing is completed, the subcommittee will provide the student, the Registrar, the Dean and the

Chief Academic Officer/Provost email notification of the Subcommittee's decision no later than three working days from the hearing. The decision of the Subcommittee is final. The Dean will record the decision of the Subcommittee on the Student Complaint and Appeal Form and the form will be stored confidentially in the student information system.

Appeal Procedure for Re-application after Sanctioned Dismissal

The procedure for appealing for re-application after a sanctioned dismissal is only available to students who were granted this right as a condition of their original sanction. The student must produce written evidence from the University that the right was granted. The procedure is as follows:

Step I- The student completes Appeal for Re-application after Sanctioned Dismissal (ARSD) form which is available in the Registrar Office. The student must submit the completed form to the Registrar's Office no later than two months prior to the semester for which the student is seeking re-application. The Registrar will forward a copy of the form to the Dean of the appropriate college.

Step II- The Dean must schedule a meeting with the student within five work days after receiving the form. If a resolution is achieved at the meeting, no further action will be taken beyond the Dean and the student signing the form explaining the agreed upon decision. Signed copies of the form are retained by the Dean and the student, as well as forwarded to the Registrar. If no resolution is achieved, the form is forwarded to the Chair of the Educational Standards Committee. The student should expect notification of an appeal hearing to be convened within seven work days after the Chair receives notification.

Step III- The Student Appeals Subcommittee, composed of the Chair of the Educational Standards Committee, two additional faculty members preferably from the Educational Standards Committee, and two students from the same college as the appealing student, will convene a hearing. If two students from the same college are not available, then students from other colleges can be utilized. The two representatives will complete the "Statement of FERPA Understanding" form prior to receiving any materials related to the appeal. The hearing may be held in-person or by remote means (such as conference call, web-meeting or similar). Students can seek assistance or advice from persons of their choosing, including an attorney, but the student is not permitted to have a representative or attorney attend the hearing. The subcommittee will interview the student, the Dean, and at the discretion of the committee, and any other persons related to the appeal. The student, the Registrar, the Dean, and the Chief Academic Officer/Provost will receive electronic notification of the subcommittee's decision within three work days of the hearing. This will be followed by hard copy letter to the student, the Registrar, the Dean, and the Chief Academic Officer/Provost within five work days of the hearing. The decision of the subcommittee is final.

A grievance based on alleged racial, gender, or other discrimination should be directed through the appropriate Title IX procedures explained in the Student Handbook.

Grievance Procedure: Grading

A student may appeal capricious grading. As that term is used here, capricious grading is when the final grade assigned in the course is alleged to be based on one or more of the following:

- Something other than academic performance or academic misconduct,

- Standards that are unreasonably different from those applied to other students in the same course and section, or
- Requirements and/or standards that depart unreasonably from those stated on the syllabus.

To appeal a given grade, the following procedure will be followed if the problem cannot be resolved in an informal discussion between the instructor and student:

Step I – The student completes the Student Complaint and Appeal Form located under For Students in the MyUSF Portal within 10 workdays of the contested occurrence or receipt of grade report. The completed electronic form will automatically be sent to the appropriate Dean of the college in which the course is being offered. A copy of the complaint is then forwarded to the instructor by the Dean. The instructor must contact the student within 10 work days to discuss the grievance. The results of the discussion will be logged into the Student Complaint and Appeal Form and returned to the Dean. The instructor also sends an email to the student with the results of the meeting. If a mutually agreed upon resolution is achieved between the instructor and the student, no further action will be taken beyond the Dean recording the agreed upon decision on the Student Complaint and Appeal Form. The form will be stored confidentially in the student information system.

Step II – If the grievance is not resolved in Step I, the student can request that the appropriate program administrator review the grievance. The administrator will request the student and faculty member to submit material within 10 work days after the Step I decision has been received. The student may request a face-to-face or virtual meeting with the appropriate administrator and/or faculty member. Students can seek assistance or advice from persons of their choosing, including an attorney, but the student is not permitted to have a representative or attorney attend the meeting. The administrator's decision will be provided in writing to the student and faculty member within five work days after the meeting. If the complaint is resolved, no further action will be taken beyond the Dean recording the administrator's decision on the Student Complaint and Appeal Form. The form will be stored confidentially in the student information system.

Step III – If the grievance is not resolved in Step II, the student can request that the appropriate college Dean review the grievance. The Dean may request that the student and faculty member submit additional material within 10 work days after the Step II decision has been received. The Dean will review the materials, confer with the faculty member and student as needed and arrive at a decision. The Dean's decision is final and will be provided in writing to the student and faculty member within five work days after the meeting. The Dean will record the decision on the Student Complaint and Appeal Form and the form will be stored confidentially in the student information system.

Note: If the student fails to adhere to the stated timelines the grievance will be dropped. The timelines may be extended by mutual agreement of parties involved.

Grievance Procedure: Other Academic Matters

When a student has a complaint about an academic matter other than a grade grievance, the following procedure will be followed if the problem cannot be resolved in an informal discussion between the student and the faculty member or administrator.

Step I – The student completes the Student Complaint and Appeal Form located under For Students in the MyUSF Portal within 10 work days of the contested occurrence. The completed electronic form will automatically be sent to the appropriate Dean of the college in which the course is being offered. A copy of the complaint is then forwarded to the faculty member or administrator by the Dean. The faculty member or administrator must contact the student within 10 work days to discuss the grievance. The results of the discussion will be logged into the Student Complaint and Appeal Form and returned to the Dean. The faculty member or administrator also sends an email to the student with the results of the meeting. If a mutually agreed upon resolution is achieved between the faculty member or administrator and the student, no further action will be taken beyond the Dean recording the agreed upon decision on the Student Complaint and Appeal Form. The form will be stored confidentially in the student information system.

Step II – If the grievance is not resolved in Step I, the student can request that the appropriate college Dean review the grievance. The Dean will request the student and faculty member or administrator to submit materials within 10 work days after the Step I decision has been received. The student may request a face-to-face or virtual meeting with the faculty member and/or administrator. Students can seek assistance or advice from persons of their choosing, including an attorney, but the student is not permitted to have a representative or attorney attend the meeting. The Dean's decision is final and will be provided in writing to the student and faculty member or administrator within five work days after the meeting. The Dean will record the decision on the Student Complaint and Appeal Form and the form will be stored confidentially in the student information system.

Note: If the student fails to adhere to the stated timelines the grievance will be dropped. The timelines may be extended by mutual agreement of parties involved. Anonymous academic grievances are resolved at the discretion of the Dean. In case of the grievance against a Dean, the Chief Academic Officer/Provost will serve in the Dean's role.

Student Handbooks

Student handbooks also contain policies that may not be in the University Catalog. They may be accessed in the USF portal (https://myusf.stfrancis.edu/portal/secure/content/STUDENT_HANDBOOK/).