

Undergraduate Academic Integrity Policy

Category: Academic – Students, Teaching, Faculty

Approval: Senate

Responsibility: Office of the Provost & VP Academic

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Part I: Application and Definitions

1.1 Application

This policy applies to students registered in undergraduate courses in the Faculty of Arts and Science at Trent University as well as to applicants to undergraduate programs at the University.

1.2 Terminology

In this policy, “department” means undergraduate departments, programs, and schools. “Chair” means chairs and directors of undergraduate departments, programs, and schools, or appointed designates. “Dean” means the Deans of Humanities, Science, Social Sciences, Education, Nursing, or Durham, and “Registrar” means University Registrar.

1.3 Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is defined by the basic principles of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility (as articulated by the International Center for Academic Integrity, www.academicintegrity.org). These values serve as the foundation for the development and acquisition of knowledge and all members of the University community are expected to uphold them. For students, adherence to these fundamental values is essential for earning academic credit in all courses, whether offered on- or off-campus, online, or as placements, practicums or internships. Trent University’s Academic Integrity website provides helpful information on why integrity is important and how to avoid integrity infractions (www.trentu.ca/academicintegrity).

1.4 Academic Dishonesty

Academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, cheating, and the unauthorized sharing and distribution of course content, is ultimately destructive of the values of the University. Scholarly integrity is required of all members of the University. Engaging in any form of academic dishonesty or misconduct in order to obtain academic credit or advantage of any kind is an offence under this policy.

1.5 Plagiarism

Plagiarism is knowingly presenting words, ideas, images, data, or any other form of work of another person (including essays, theses, lab reports, projects, assignments, presentations and posters) in a way that represents or could be reasonably seen to

represent the work as one's own. 'Knowingly' includes ought reasonably to have known. Plagiarism includes failure to acknowledge sources correctly and submitting materials copied from the internet without proper acknowledgement of the source. Draft work submitted for evaluation is subject to the same standard as final work.

1.6 Cheating

Cheating is dishonest academic conduct or attempted dishonest academic conduct during tests or examinations or in the preparation of any other course work or in the presentation of credentials for admission to the University or one of its programs. Some common examples are:

- submitting one's own original student work for credit in more than one course (includes a course being repeated) without the prior agreement of the instructors involved
- bringing aids, including electronic aids, that have not been authorized by the instructor into an examination or test
- impersonating another individual or colluding in an impersonation for an examination or test
- copying from one or more other individuals or knowingly permitting one or more other individuals to copy from one's own test, examination paper, lab report, or assignment
- collaborating with one or more other individuals when collaborative work has not been expressly authorized by the instructor
- communicating with one or more other students during a test or examination
- purchasing, selling, or sharing of any course identifying responses to assignments, labs, tests and exams, or facilitating the selling and purchasing of such material (material intended for publication or professional availability may be exempt from this policy)
- submitting purchased material as one's own work
- falsifying or tampering with results in laboratory experiments or research assignments
- falsifying transcripts or tampering with documents used to make decisions about admissions to the University or one of its programs
- falsifying documentation submitted to another institution, organization, or regulatory body, e.g., submitting fraudulent letters to register for Letter of Permission courses
- withholding transcripts or other required documents at the time of application to the University
- submitting false or misrepresentative medical certificates or other documentation in support of requests for concessions on academic work or deadlines

1.7 Sharing and Distribution of Course Content

As per the Policy on the Sharing and Distribution of Course Content, sharing and distribution of any course content other than among individual students registered in the course is not permitted without written permission. Sharing and distribution means providing access to course content in any form to non-course participants or generally making such content accessible to others, which may involve uploading/downloading or transferring course content to, or from, another device, system or network, including but not limited to any publicly accessible website, chat group, social media, or other internet platform.

1.8 Student to consult if in doubt

Students who have any doubt as to what might be considered academic dishonesty in a particular course should consult the instructor of the course to obtain appropriate guidelines.

Part II: Penalties for Academic Offences on Course Work, Tests or Exams

2.1 Minor or major offence

The penalty for a student who has been found to have committed an academic offence will be based on whether the offence is minor or major.

2.2 Penalties

First minor offence: The penalty for a first offence that is a minor offence will be partial or total loss of marks on the piece of academic work. The grade reduction shall, at a minimum, lead to a failure on the piece of work. The recommended penalty is a zero grade. There will be no opportunity to resubmit the course work, test or exam.

Second minor or first major offence: The penalty for a second minor offence or a first offence that is a major offence will be a grade of zero on the piece of academic work with no opportunity to resubmit, plus a transcript notation (e.g., AHCL 1001H – Academic Dishonesty). A reduced final grade or a final grade of zero in the course may also be levied.

Subsequent offence, Suspension: The penalty for any offence i) after two minor offences; or ii) after a first offence that is a major offence; or iii) that is a major offence where a minor offence is already on record will be a period of suspension from the University (academic status ‘Suspension – Academic Dishonesty’) ranging from one term to two years in addition to a zero grade in the course and an Academic Dishonesty notation for the course. If a student, who is otherwise eligible to graduate, has been suspended for academic dishonesty, the student may not graduate until the period of the suspension has been served.

Subsequent offence, Expulsion: The penalty for any subsequent offence will be expulsion from the University.

2.3 Extraordinary circumstances

The penalties above will be levied unless there are extraordinary circumstances which justify a different penalty.

2.4 Factors to determine whether offence minor or major

In deciding whether an offence is minor or major, consideration will be given to the following factors:

- the extent of the dishonesty
- whether the act in question was deliberate or whether the student ought reasonably to have known
- the importance of the work in question as a component of the course or program
- the academic experience of the student
- any other relevant circumstances

These factors shall also be taken into consideration in determining penalty where the usual penalty provides for a range.

2.5 Ineligibility for Honour Rolls

A student who has committed a major offence or multiple offences is ineligible for the Dean's Honour Roll that academic year and the President's Honour Roll at graduation.

Part III: Procedures for Evaluation of Course Work and Conduct During Tests and Exams

Note: All written communication to current students pursuant to this policy will be to the student's Trent email account

3.1 Instructor investigates

The instructor will make reasonable inquiries to investigate the circumstances of the matter. If the instructor has reason to believe that a student has committed an academic offence, the instructor will so inform the student within a reasonable time and invite the student to meet to discuss the matter.

3.2 Instructor finds no academic dishonesty

If after meeting with the student and reviewing the evidence the instructor is satisfied that no academic dishonesty occurred, no further action will be taken by the instructor unless new evidence comes to their attention.

3.3 Instructor finds academic dishonesty, reports to Chair

If, after meeting with the student (or if the student fails to respond to the request for a meeting or does not attend a prearranged meeting) the instructor decides that academic dishonesty has occurred, the instructor will prepare a report to the Chair. The report will summarize the relevant facts and evidence, including the student's version of events if given. The report will additionally state whether the instructor considers the offence to be minor or major and the reasons therefore, as well as any extraordinary circumstances that are evident in the case. If the offence is considered to be minor, the instructor will recommend a grade reduction (see 2.2). Copies of all supporting documentation will be attached to the report. The instructor will provide a copy of the report to the student and to the Dean.

3.4 Opportunity for comment by student

Should the student wish to add to or clarify the information in the report, within seven days of the date of the report, the student may request a meeting with the Chair or send written comments to the Chair.

3.5 Chair finds no academic dishonesty

The Chair will carefully review the report and comments, if any. If the Chair is not satisfied that academic dishonesty occurred, the Chair will inform the student in writing of their decision, with a copy to the Dean, and no further action will be taken unless new evidence is brought to the Chair's attention.

3.6 Chair finds academic dishonesty, consults Office of the Dean

If the Chair is satisfied that academic dishonesty occurred, the Chair will first determine if the offence is minor or major and the penalty that should be imposed. The Chair will then inquire of the Office of the Dean whether there is a record of any previous academic offence by the student.

3.7 First offence, Chair decides

If there is no record on file of any previous academic offence by the student the Chair will levy a penalty accordingly. If, based on extraordinary circumstances, the Chair decides to levy a penalty other than the usual penalty, the Dean will be notified of the reasons for the penalty. The Chair will send to the student an Academic Dishonesty Form to inform the student in writing of the decision and confirm that a record of the offence will be filed in the department office and the Office of the Dean.

3.8 Limits of Chair's authority

The Chair does not have authority to levy a penalty exceeding a grade in the course of zero with the transcript notation "Academic Dishonesty."

3.9 Timing of Chair's decision

The Chair's decision will normally be conveyed to the student within two weeks of receiving student comments or, if no comments are provided, within two weeks of receipt of the instructor report.

3.10 Appeal of Chair's decision to the Dean

The student may appeal a decision by the Chair by writing to the Dean setting out the grounds for appeal within two weeks of receiving the Academic Dishonesty Form. The Dean will normally respond to the appeal within two weeks of receiving the appeal.

3.11 Prior record or stronger penalty deemed appropriate by Chair, Dean decides

If there is already a record of an academic offence(s) on file for a student, the Chair will forward the material to the Dean who will decide the matter. The Chair may also forward a case to the Dean for decision on an alleged first major offence where the Chair deems that a penalty stronger than they can render is appropriate. In the latter case the Chair will set out the reasons for their conclusion that a stronger penalty is appropriate.

3.12 Note on Tests and Exams

Where an allegation of academic dishonesty arises during a test or examination, the responsible invigilator will collect the available evidence and, if the invigilator is not the course instructor, will notify the course instructor who will proceed as detailed above.

Part IV: Procedures for Applications to The University or One of Its Programs

4.1 Notice to Registrar

Where the alleged academic dishonesty involves falsifying, misrepresenting, or withholding records for entry into the University or one of its programs, the Registrar will be informed. This may also include a Trent student falsifying documentation to another institution, organization, or regulatory body.

4.2 Student notified

The Registrar will notify the student in writing of the allegation and will invite the student to meet within a reasonable time. If the student does not respond to the request for a meeting or does not attend a prearranged meeting, the Registrar will proceed to make a decision on the basis of the evidence before them.

4.3 Registrar decides

If, after reviewing the evidence, the Registrar is satisfied that no academic dishonesty occurred, the Registrar will inform the student in writing of their decision and no further action will be taken by the Registrar unless new evidence is brought to the Registrar's attention.

If the Registrar is satisfied that academic dishonesty has occurred, the Registrar will decide the appropriate penalty and inform the student in writing of their decision. A written record of the incident, along with the documented evidence, will be kept on file at the Office of the Registrar and the Office of the Dean if appropriate.

4.4 Appeal of Registrar's decision to Dean

The student may appeal the decision of the Registrar by writing to the Dean setting out the grounds for appeal within two weeks of notification of the Registrar's decision. The Dean will normally respond to the appeal within two weeks of receiving the appeal.

Part V: Other

5.1 Withdrawal from courses or the University

Upon receipt of the instructor's report, the Office of the Dean will request that the Office of the Registrar put a registration hold on the course thereby preventing the student from withdrawing. If the student had withdrawn subsequent to a request to meet with the instructor and prior to receiving the instructor's report, the student will be re-enrolled in the course. The registration hold will remain in place unless it is determined that no infraction of the policy has taken place. In that case, the Office of the Dean will request that the registration hold and all records associated with it be removed.

A student will not be permitted to formally withdraw from the University while under investigation for academic dishonesty.

5.2 Final Appeal

The student may appeal a decision of the Dean to the Special Appeals Committee of the University within four weeks of notification of the decision. The decision of the Special Appeals Committee is final within the University.

5.3 Clarification of appeals procedure

Students seeking clarification of the appeals process may consult with their Academic Advisor. For guidance on the appeals procedures at the University see the “Petitions and Appeals” section of the calendar and the Special Appeals website.

5.4 Privacy protection

In accordance with privacy legislation, personal information gathered under this policy will only be shared among university personnel on a need to know basis.

5.5 Other allegations of academic dishonesty

Any other allegations of academic dishonesty may be made in writing to the Dean. The Dean will determine the appropriate procedure to be followed.

5.6 No permanent record of dropped allegations

If it is determined that allegations are not supported by sufficient evidence, no permanent record of the incident will be kept on file at the offices of the department, Registrar, or Dean.

5.7 Course completion or withdrawal is not a stay of proceedings

A student’s completion of a course or withdrawal from a course, program, or the University does not stay or prevent proceedings for academic dishonesty under this policy. Further, penalties for academic dishonesty determined under this policy will appear as appropriate on the student’s record, including the student’s transcript, despite any such course completion or withdrawal.

5.8 Rescinding of degree

If an academic integrity violation is discovered after the degree has been awarded, the University retains the right to rescind the degree.

5.9 Removal of transcript notations

‘Academic Dishonesty’ transcript notations will be automatically removed five years after the notation has been placed on a transcript. If a student wishes to have the transcript notation removed sooner, an application can be made in writing to the Vice President Academic at academicintegrity@trentu.ca. The letter should explain the reason for the request, what the student has learned from the experience, and what they have done to ensure violations of academic integrity will not occur again. Such applications may not be initiated before two years have passed. Zero grades and notations of expulsion for Academic Dishonesty will not be removed from the transcript.

5.10 Report on Academic Offences

A summary of academic offences (setting out the nature of each offence and the penalty) will be prepared by the Dean annually, published on an Academic Integrity website, and circulated to Senate each year for information.

5.11 Participation of others in the appeal process

As long as advance notice is given, students who wish to do so may bring one support person to a meeting with the course instructor, Chair or Dean. That person will not be permitted to participate in the discussion.