

Academic and Professional Integrity Policy

1. Ethical and Professional Standards at Palo Alto University

Palo Alto University is an academic community that endeavors to maintain the highest ethical and professional standards in all that we do, as well as to comply with the Higher Education Act and all relevant regulations.

PAU has a responsibility to help its students to understand, to be measured by, and to uphold the ethical and professional standards of our PAU community and the academic and professional fields that our programs represent. The PAU Faculty is specifically charged with providing students with clear information regarding PAU's academic and professional integrity standards, providing guidance and feedback that enhances students' engagement with these standards, and measuring students' work according to these standards.

Students have a responsibility to learn our community's ethical and professional standards and to maintain those standards in all of their work and professional relationships while at PAU. This includes their work and professional relationships as students, as researchers, as clinicians and counselors in training, and as professional and academic colleagues.

Just as students progress through stages of acquiring and practicing academic and clinical knowledge and skills, they also progress through stages of learning and being measured by ethical and professional standards. Because of this, the Faculty endeavors to take into consideration context, intent, level of progress through a program, and other factors when measuring whether a student has succeeded or failed in adhering to our ethical and professional standards.

PAU is primarily an academic community. Thus, one of our most important ethical and professional standards is known as academic and professional integrity.

2. Academic and Professional Integrity

Integrity is a foundational value for all communities, and for academic communities it is a foundation on which many ethical standards are built, in particular the standard known as academic and professional integrity.

Academic and professional integrity entails honesty in giving credit to others for their ideas, expressions, inventions, and collaborative contributions, in reporting research results, in representing the degree to which a student completed work or received academic credit without collaboration, assistance, or access to unauthorized resources, and in representing acts as one's own acts.

Academic and professional integrity also entails acting ethically and responsibility in interactions with others, and involves respecting the rights and dignity of others including colleagues, clients, students, dissertation research participants, and professors.

Acting with regard for academic and professional integrity ensures the integrity of the scientific process, the integrity of the educational process in fairly and accurately awarding grades and other academic credit, and the integrity of PAU as a degree-granting institution and a center of excellence in research, clinical practice, and service to the community.

Acting with disregard for academic and professional integrity constitutes academic and professional misconduct.

3. Academic and Professional Misconduct

Any student who commits, aids, or attempts to commit academic and professional misconduct shall be subject to remediation or disciplinary action. Academic and professional misconduct may lead to loss of credit, grade reduction, probation, suspension, or dismissal from the university, or even the revocation of a degree. In general, acting with disregard for academic and professional integrity constitutes academic and professional misconduct. Academic and professional misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- **Plagiarism: Plagiarism is the inclusion, in any paper, draft, assignment, presentation, or other work, of someone else's product, words, ideas, or data and representing it as one's own work. Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to, the taking of any portion of a document, article, or book and representing it as one's own work, the lifting of a well-phrased sentence and including such sentence without crediting the author, or including another person's ideas as an example of one's own thought or work. Plagiarism includes using unpublished work as well as published sources, using another's term paper, or handing in a product that includes substantial work by another individual or agency, including internet services.**
- **Self-Plagiarism: Using one's own work from a previous assignment without the permission of the current instructor and/or without properly citing this information.**
- **A note on verifying plagiarism: PAU subscribes to Turnitin.com, an online service that checks for originality in scholarly papers. Any paper submitted by a student in any program at PAU may be checked for originality to confirm that the student has not plagiarized. Faculty have the right to require that student papers (including dissertations) be submitted in both written and computer-readable format and to submit any paper to a check such as that performed by Turnitin.com. Copies of student papers checked by this process are retained by Turnitin.com. Turnitin produces complex reports that should be interpreted using an instructor's professional judgement as part of any**

final determination of whether plagiarism has occurred. **Cheating:** Cheating includes, but is not limited to, using unauthorized materials in an examination; looking at another student's test paper to copy answers; using or supplying questions or answers from an examination to be given or in progress that have not been authorized for distribution; having a person other than the one registered and taking the course stand in at an examination or at any other graded activity; collaborating with others on projects where such collaboration is expressly forbidden; using resources, including electronic resources, forbidden by a faculty member. Cheating also includes facilitating any of these actions.

- **Fabrication:** Fabrication includes, but is not limited to, submitting a paper, a lab report, computer data, or other academic exercises with falsified, invented, or fictitious information.
- **Academic sabotage or obstruction:** Academic sabotage is intentional interference with the work or progress of other students or researchers, and may include, but is not limited to, intentionally destroying or interfering with the work of others, stealing or defacing library materials or materials owned by others, and altering or copying computer files or documents owned by others without authorization.
- **Misusing computer software:** PAU is the licensee of many computer software packages that are protected by copyright laws. Students must not copy any computer software program or data protected by copyright or by special license. Students must not damage, alter, or remove without permission any software package in the custody of the School or any PAU community member, including student, faculty, or staff. Students must not access another person's data or text files without proper permission.
- **Unauthorized use or misuse of materials:** Unauthorized use or misuse of materials include, but are not limited to, reading, duplicating, copying, removing, or any other unauthorized use or misuse of a document, record, book, ledger, file, printout, tape, cartridge, disc, key, or any property maintained by any individual(s) or department(s) of PAU.
- **Forgery:** Forgery is the unauthorized creation of an imitation of, forging or any other unauthorized alteration of, a document, electronic file, form, record, identification, or any property maintained by any individual(s) or department(s) of PAU.
- **Grade tampering, exam fraud, or other acts of dishonesty:** Academic and professional misconduct includes other acts of dishonesty or impropriety occurring in the course of academic activities, such as grade tampering, or obtaining or distributing any part of any exam materials or any information about an exam, or knowingly providing false information.
- **Violation of Research or Professional Ethics:** Violations of research or professional ethics in the context of earning academic credit include, but are not limited to, violation of the ethical code or professional code of the profession that a student is preparing to enter (for example the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct and the ACA Code of Ethics), using unethical research practices, and violation of professional ethics when acting as a Teaching Assistant or Student Assistant.

4. Seriousness of Violations and Sanctions for Acts of Academic and Professional Misconduct

Acts of academic and professional misconduct are violations of this policy on academic and professional integrity and are subject to sanctions, remediation actions, disciplinary actions, or penalties that may be applied by individual PAU faculty members or by adjudication bodies of the PAU Faculty. Appeal processes are also available.

Violations of this policy may be less serious violations or more serious violations, as outlined below.

4.1. Less serious violations.

Less serious violations of this academic and professional integrity policy often occur because of carelessness or inattention, or because the student has not yet learned the proper method for achieving an academic end such as proper citation, for example. They generally involve little planning, are clearly accidental, and are accomplished without an intention to deceive or harm another. They are limited, occurring without repetition or pattern in limited contexts, and the violation occurs in a small amount in a single assignment or context. They are also committed by undergraduates, or possibly graduate students in the first year. As a student progresses in their studies, violations due to inadequate understanding of academic norms and processes should not occur, and if they do, they should be classified as more serious violations. A second violation of this policy should always be treated as a more serious violation. Less serious violations of this academic and professional integrity policy include, but are not limited to: accidental plagiarism, that is, plagiarism that was clearly not intentional, constituting a small amount of text or a single missed citation, or clearly due to lack of understanding of the norms of citation; collaboration or use of resources that are not authorized and in which the collaboration occurs in the context of a smaller or less important assignment; any violation that causes little actual harm.

In general, the emphasis should be on education, awareness, and remediation for violations committed by students in the first year of a program or in undergraduate versus graduate contexts. As students progress, the assumption should be that they are aware of the principles and particulars of academic and professional integrity, and remediation should give way to more severe sanctions. At the masters and doctoral levels, the gradation to more severe sanctions should be steeper.

Intent, extent, and context are always factors that should be considered.

In the case of the less serious violations, an instructor may apply a sanction themselves by reducing a grade or requiring that an assignment be redone or substituted, but in all cases proper documentation of the violation, the method of determining that a violation exists, and the sanctions applied by an instructor should be forwarded to the adjudication body of the instructor's program and the student should be informed of the violation and the sanctions applied. The student must also be given an opportunity to respond to the allegations in a meeting with the instructor before sanctions are applied.

One important reason that documentation should always be submitted to the adjudication body is that repeated violations can be detected across courses.

Sanctions for less serious violations may include:

- Grade reduction for the assignment or the course. Note that grade reduction may result in a failing grade for the course in some cases (e.g., if the course grade before the sanction for the less serious violation was already low).
- A failing grade on an assignment
- Disciplinary warning
- Substitution of a different assignment
- Requiring a re-do of the assignment
- Participation in an academic and professional integrity remediation course or training session

4.2. More serious violations.

More serious violations of this academic and professional integrity policy are characterized by greater intent, greater extent, or more consequential context.

More planning or greater effort applied by a student or student in committing a violation are signs of a more serious violation, for example, as are a greater amount of material involved, or more individual acts of violation, or a greater number of students involved in a collaborative violation.

More serious violations may involve greater harm or consequence than less serious violations, malicious intent, or obvious dishonesty.

Examples of more serious violations of this academic and professional integrity policy include, but are not limited to: a second less serious violation, a great amount of plagiarism in a single assignment, the submission of another student's

work as one's own, exam fraud, research fraud, sabotage, intentional or extensive violation of research or clinical ethics, fabrication, intentional and extensive cheating or cheating on a major assignment, grade tampering, professional ethics violations when acting as a Teaching Assistant or Student Assistant, use or misuse of unauthorized materials or resources on a major assignment, using or serving as a stand-in for an exam, fabrication of evaluations from external training sites, any activity which constitutes a criminal offense, and any violation committed in the context of work on a dissertation, a publication, or research or clinical work involving human participants or clients.

More serious violations must always be referred to the adjudication body of the program in which the accused student is enrolled.

Sanctions for more serious violations include, but are not limited to: academic probation, dismissal or suspension from a program or position, withdrawal of fellowships, scholarships, or other awards, expulsion from the university, and referral to police or other authorities.

Note the following regarding course grade assignment in cases of more serious violations:

- 1) Consistent with the AAUP principles of academic freedom and tenure, the faculty instructor is responsible for determining the course grade.**
- 2) The faculty instructor can consult with the program director or adjudication body for guidance about determining course-specific sanctions but the ultimate responsibility for assigning the course grade is the instructor's.**
- 3) The adjudication body may still review the incident to determine whether additional sanctions beyond the scope of the course, are warranted. Course grade changes by anyone besides the course faculty instructor may only be made according to the policies and procedures outlined in the program and institution's grade appeal processes.**

4.3. Guidelines for individual faculty members and adjudication bodies

4.3.1. The examples, guidelines, and sanctions offered in the previous sections and in this section are meant to serve as guides for faculty as they encounter possible violations of this academic and professional integrity policy and should not be taken as absolute rules.

4.3.2. Application of sanctions should always occur with great regard to context and should include considerations of the experience level of the student,

the degree and extent of premeditation and intent that occurred in the violation, and the program in which the student is enrolled.

- 4.3.3. Individual faculty members working with doctoral students are urged to treat any violation alleged to have been committed by a doctoral student (except perhaps by a first year doctoral student) more seriously than they would treat a violation alleged to have been committed by an undergraduate student or a student in a masters program.
- 4.3.4. Adjudication bodies in each program are able and entitled to develop further and more detailed guidelines for faculty members serving on those adjudication bodies to use in adjudicating violations of this academic and professional integrity policy. Examples of further and more detailed guidelines might be: matching specific violations to specific sanctions, providing more specific examples or definitions of plagiarism tied to the particular program's plagiarism tutorials and student population, and providing more specific examples of more complex cases and how they should be approached in adjudication.

4.4. Evidentiary standard

In considering and adjudicating violations of this academic and professional integrity policy, individual faculty members, adjudication bodies, and individuals participating in appeals processes should use an evidentiary standard of "clear and convincing" evidence. This standard means that those adjudicating a case or hearing an appeal must have a firm belief and conviction that the evidence demonstrates that there is a high probability that the violation was actually committed.

5. Adjudication Procedures

5.1. Less serious violations

As soon as a faculty member learns of a possible violation of this policy, they should follow this procedure:

1. Determine the nature of the possible violation and decide whether to refer it to the adjudication body of the program in which the student is enrolled. In most cases, it is recommended that the instructor communicate with the student about the possible violation to ensure that the circumstances are clearly understood by the instructor.
2. Document the violation using the Academic and professional integrity Violation Initial Report form and send the form to the chair of the adjudication body for the program in which the student is enrolled within 10 days of learning of the possible violation. Note that even in cases where the faculty member wishes to handle the incident with

course-level sanctions, the incident should be documented with the Academic and professional integrity Violation Initial Report form.

3. On the form, an indication will be made as to whether the faculty member will adjudicate the violation themselves or refer it to the adjudication body.
4. Notify the student or students accused within 24 hours of sending the form to the adjudication body. In notifying the student(s), the faculty member should ask the student to schedule a meeting or communicate via phone, email, or online conferencing to discuss the accusation within 5 weekdays of the notification being sent unless the faculty member referred the matter to the adjudication body, in which case they will notify the student that the matter will be handled by the adjudication body. The student has the right to request a meeting (to take place by video/phone/in person depending on availability of both parties) within 5 business days of initial communication about the issue.
5. If contact cannot be made with the student or a discussion cannot be scheduled within 5 days of contacting the student, the faculty member should refer the matter to the adjudication body.
6. In the discussions with the student, present the accusation and the evidence for the accusation, as well as the range of sanctions that may be imposed, and allow the student to respond. If the student does not choose to respond at this meeting, the faculty member may allow more time for the student to respond and schedule another meeting for further response and discussion, or they may inform the student that they will refer the matter to the adjudication body and then make the referral.
7. If the student does not offer sufficient mitigating explanation or evidence, the faculty member may apply a sanction within 5 days of initial communication about the issue, or immediately following a meeting if a meeting has occurred.
8. Apply the sanction and document the sanction by sending an Academic and professional integrity Violation Final Report form to the adjudicating body and to the student via email.
9. If at any time the reported matter is referred to the appropriate adjudication body (rather than the faculty member adjudicating the matter themselves via course-level sanctions), then the adjudication body will follow the procedures listed in the next section of this policy pertaining to more serious violations.
10. If at any time the faculty member determines that no violation occurred,

they will immediately send an Academic and professional integrity Violation Final Report form to the appropriate adjudication body.

11. A student may not drop a course once they have been notified of an accusation of violation until notified that the matter is closed.

5.2. More serious violations

All violations of a more serious nature must be referred to the adjudication body of the program in which the student is enrolled.

As soon as a faculty member learns of a possible more serious violation of this policy, they should follow this procedure:

1. Determine the nature of the possible violation. In most cases, it is recommended that the instructor talk with the student about the possible violation to ensure that the circumstances are clearly understood by the instructor.
2. Document the violation using the Academic and professional integrity Violation Initial Report form and send the form to the chair of the adjudication body for the program in which the student is enrolled within 10 days of learning of the possible violation.
3. On the form, an indication will be made that the violation is being referred to the adjudication body.
4. Notify the student or students accused within 24 hours of sending the form to the adjudication body. The faculty will also notify the student that the matter will be handled by the adjudication body.

Upon receiving a referral of a violation from a faculty member, the adjudication body shall:

1. Follow the procedures established for that adjudication body.
2. If an Academic and professional integrity Violation Report is received from a faculty member and it is determined that the violation is a possible second offense (of any kind - less serious or more serious), then the adjudication body must immediately inform the faculty member who filed the report that they must relinquish adjudication to the adjudication body.

6. Appeals Process

Appeals concerning adjudications related to this policy follow the appeals processes of the program in which the student is matriculated, followed by the appeals processes of the institution beyond that of the program (i.e. via the institutional appeals committee).

7. Amendments to This Policy

This policy is promulgated by the Palo Alto University Faculty Senate and may be amended or changed only by the Palo Alto University Faculty Senate or its successor body.

8. Acknowledgments

This policy was written after consulting many policies of other universities, in particular the academic and professional integrity policy of Rutgers University. The PAU faculty extends its gratitude and professional acknowledgement to the Faculty of Rutgers University for its creating an exemplary policy that served as a model in many respects in the construction of this policy.