

ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION – STUDENT AFFAIRS
POLICY NUMBER – SA 3.31
POLICY TITLE – STUDENT CODE OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY
SCOPE OF POLICY – USC UPSTATE
DATE OF REVISION – MAY 8, 2025
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER – VICE CHANCELLOR FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE – VICE CHANCELLOR FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

I. Purpose

USC Upstate is first and foremost an academic community, with its fundamental purpose the transmission of knowledge, the pursuit of truth, the development of students, and the general well-being of society. Academic integrity is a commitment to engaging in ethical academic decision-making rooted in five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Students are expected to practice the highest possible standards of academic integrity, meaning at the most basic level that submitted work is created and produced by them.

By choosing to join the USC Upstate community students assume the obligation to follow the Academic Misconduct Policy, to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with USC Upstate’s function as an educational institution, and to always engage in ethical decision-making.

The values of USC Upstate are embodied in the USC Upstate Spartan Creed, which asks students to engage in the following behavior:

- I will practice personal and academic integrity;
- I will respect the dignity of all persons;
- I will respect the rights and property of others;
- I will discourage bigotry, while striving to learn from differences in people, ideas and opinions;
- I will demonstrate concern for others, their feelings, and their needs for conditions which support their work and development.

When a student is uncertain as to whether conduct would violate this policy, it is the responsibility of the student to seek clarification from the appropriate faculty member or instructor of record.

II. Definitions:

Academic misconduct violation: an act of plagiarism, cheating, falsification, unauthorized use of AI, or complicity therein, as described below.

Academic outcome: consequence determined by the instructor of record following case resolution.

Educational outcome: consequence determined by the Dean of Students Office in conjunction with the instructor of record or through recommendations of the Honor Council.

Honor Council: a group of students and faculty who are selected and then trained to provide both educational outreach on behalf of the Dean of Students office as well as serve on hearing panels to adjudicate allegations of student misconduct.

Honor Council hearing: a meeting between the Honor Council and a student to adjudicate alleged violations of the Student Academic Misconduct policy.

Informal hearing: meeting between a conduct administrator and a student to discuss the alleged violation, explain university process, and potentially adjudicate violations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy.

Instructor of Record: individual designated by the academic unit as responsible for the course. The instructor of record is the primary instructor on the class section record, identified as either 'assigned instructor' or 'instructor.'

Student: any person who is enrolled at USC Upstate and who has not completed a program of study in which they are enrolled. Student status continues whether or not USC Upstate's academic programs are in session. Student status includes those taking courses for credit or non-credit at USC Upstate, either full-time or part-time, while pursuing undergraduate, graduate, or professional studies. Persons who withdraw after allegedly violating the Code are also considered students.

Support person/advisor: an individual who may attend an Informal hearing or Honor Council to provide advice, support, or guidance to the respondent. A Support Person may not delay, disrupt, or otherwise interfere with a meeting or hearing. An attorney may serve as a Support Person, although the attorney's participation is limited to the role of Support Person as described herein.

Witness: a person who was present during the incident and observed what occurred; the instructor of record for the course in which the allegation occurred, or in limited circumstances, a person to whom the respondent interacted with regarding the incident. Character witnesses are not permitted.

III. Policy

Violations of the Student Code of Academic Misconduct include the following:

- A. **Plagiarism:** Use of work or ideas without proper acknowledgment of source. Other prohibited behaviors include:
1. Partial or incomplete citation of work or ideas.
 2. Improperly paraphrasing by acknowledging the source but failing to present the material in one's own words.
 3. Paraphrasing without acknowledgment of the source.

4. Self-plagiarism, or multiple submissions of the same or substantially the same academic work for academic credit without prior authorization.
 5. Copying, partially or entirely, any material without acknowledgement of the source.
- B. **Cheating:** Improper collaboration or unauthorized assistance in connection with any academic work. Other prohibited behaviors include:
1. Requesting unauthorized assistance.
 2. Providing aid or assistance to or receiving aid or assistance from another individual or source without permission (including improper collaboration), in conjunction with academic work.
 3. Copying another individual's or group's academic work.
 4. Allowing others to complete an assignment or portion of an assignment for another student (e.g., having an online tutor complete one's work, buying a paper, having another person complete a test for another student).
 5. Using any material or aid that is not authorized by the person giving the test, project or other assignment (e.g., websites, cell phone, calculator, notes, previous testing materials).
 6. Using, possessing or distributing the contents of any examination (e.g., unauthorized access to test/quiz information, unauthorized duplication of test/quiz materials) without authorization.
 7. Engaging in an act of bribery or coercion. Bribery refers to offering, receiving or giving an item of value in exchange for academic work.
 8. Taking, misplacing, or damaging property if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained.
- C. **Falsification:** Misrepresenting or misleading others with respect to academic work or misrepresenting facts for an academic advantage. Other prohibited behaviors include:
1. Signing in for another student who is not in attendance, requesting this action of others, or signing into an online class and not attending the entire class period.
 2. Violation of classroom rule and/or failing to comply with instructions given by the person administering a test, project, or other assignment, or given in conjunction with the completion of course requirements (e.g. placement exams, licensure exams, or graduation requirements).

3. Interfering with an instructor's ability to evaluate accurately a student's competency or performance on any academic work.
 4. Forgery, alteration, or misuse of any document submitted in connection with academic work.
- D. **Complicity:** Assisting or attempting to assist (through intentional or unintentional action) another in any violation of the Honor Code. Other prohibited behaviors include:
1. Sharing academic work with another student (either in person or electronically) without the permission of the instructor.
 2. Communicating (either in person or electronically) with other student(s) or other individual(s) during an examination without the permission of the instructor.
- E. **Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Use of an AI generator such as ChatGPT, iA Writer, MidJourney, DALL-E, or any other AI tool to complete any portion of submitted academic work is explicitly prohibited unless AI usage is:
1. Specifically called for as part of the assignment instructions to accomplish assignment objectives, or
 2. Approved on an individual basis by prior explicit and clear written permission of the instructor, and then only in the ways allowed by that instructor. It is the student's responsibility to secure instructor permission before beginning work.

In cases where AI use is permitted, any use of AI resources or content obtained from an AI source should be properly attributed and cited in the assignment submission following the appropriate scholarly style guidelines where applicable. Submission of any generative AI content in academic work that falls outside the parameters listed above could be considered an unauthorized collaboration and may be treated as an infraction of this policy. Expectations for courses will be established by the instructor of record as required under [ACAF 7.14](#).

Academic and Educational Outcomes:

- A. Academic Outcomes (discretion of instructor of record/Program/Department/College)
1. Resubmitting an assignment
 2. Submitting an alternative assignment
 3. Reduction of points/letter grade for the assignment
 4. Reduction of points/letter grade for class
 5. Failing grade for assignment
 6. Failing grade for class
 7. Transcript Notation

8. Withdrawal of credit for previously accepted course or requirement
 9. Revocation of a degree or certificate
 10. Suspension or Removal from program or college (approved by Dean/Academic Unit Equivalent)
- B. Educational Outcomes (discretion of instructor of record, Honor Council, Dean of Students Office)
1. Reflection Letter of Understanding
 2. Skill Remediation
 3. Plagiarism Prevention Module
 4. Academic Integrity Seminar
 5. Conduct Warning or Probation
 6. Loss of Privileges*
 7. Suspension
 8. Expulsion
 9. Referral to the appropriate legal authorities
 10. Other recommendations that the Honor Council may feel are appropriate

**In instances where it is determined that the academic misconduct is of both an intentional and egregious nature, and the resulting academic sanction is a failing grade in the course, the student may lose the privilege of evaluating the instructor of record.*

IV. Procedures

A. Initial Investigation

1. A case of academic misconduct shall be initiated by the instructor of record.
2. The instructor of record shall notify the student of potential concerns and request a meeting to discuss the potential allegation.
3. During the informal hearing:
 - i. The instructor of record should confer with the student to investigate the potential violation and explain any concerns with submitted academic work
 - ii. Concerns regarding any potential academic violations will be explained
 - iii. Possible outcomes of the meeting are as follows:
 - a. The instructor of record determines no violation has occurred.

- b. The instructor of record finds enough information to move forward with an academic misconduct violation and discusses potential outcomes with the student.
 - c. The student can:
 - 1) accept responsibility for the violations and accept the academic sanctions,
 - 2) accept responsibility and appeal the academic sanctions via the [academic grievance process](#), or
 - 3) request a hearing with the Honor Council to dispute the allegations.
- 4. In cases where the instructor of record has found an academic misconduct violation, such cases must be sent to the [Dean of Students Office](#).
 - i. In instances where the student has had multiple violations of the Academic Misconduct Policy, the instructor of record will be notified for consideration of the recommended academic sanction by the Dean of Students Office.
 - ii. If the instructor of record modifies the proposed academic sanction, the Dean of Students will notify the student of their rights to: (a) accept the violation and academic sanction, (b) submit an academic grievance form, or (c) dispute the allegations and request an Honor Council.
- 5. If the student is unavailable or unresponsive, the faculty member shall refer the case to the [Dean of Students Office](#).
- 6. If a case proceeds to an Honor Council, the recommended academic sanctions are held in abeyance until the conclusion of the Honor Council process. If violations occur at the end of the semester, the instructor of record shall give a grade of Incomplete until the Honor Council process has concluded.

B. Honor Council Process

- 1. Students may have an advisor present during a hearing. An advisor is a person chosen by the alleged student and cannot be involved in the incident. The advisor may not participate directly in the hearing process or speak for the student. The advisor may:
 - i. Advise the student regarding preparation for the hearing;
 - ii. Accompany the student to all proceedings; and
 - iii. Have access, via the student, to evidence to be introduced at the hearing.
- 2. Prior to the Hearing
 - i. The student will receive a notice letter 10 business days prior to the Honor Council, which includes the specific allegations, date and time of the Honor Council, and potential Honor Council members.
 - ii. The student may request that a member of the Honor Council be removed based on a conflict of interest.

- iii. The student and instructor of record may submit to the Dean of Students Office any documentary information that would be relevant to the allegations in questions at least 5 business days in advance of the hearing (e.g. past academic work, assignments in questions, syllabus). If it is not submitted by the deadline, the Hearing Chair can make a determination on whether or not the information can be presented on the day of the hearing.
- iv. All parties to the hearing (student, instructor of record, and Honor Council) will have access to the documentary information being considered at least three business days prior to the Honor Council hearing.

3. At the Honor Council

- i. The instructor of record has the ability to provide a verbal statement regarding the complaint, analysis as to why they believe a violation has occurred, and explain any documentary information they provided to the Honor Council in support of their position
- ii. The student has the opportunity to explain the situation from their perspective and present information including relevant documentation and/or witness(es) who were present during the incident. If the student elects not to appear at the hearing, a final decision will be made regarding the findings and sanctions in their absence.
- iii. The student does not have to answer questions or make a statement. However, the Honor Council may draw inferences from this refusal.
- iv. The student can question witnesses, including the instructor of record. The Honor Council may rule on the relevance of these questions prior to questions being asked or answered.
- v. The Honor Council has the responsibility to:
 - a. Keep discussions relevant.
 - b. Prevent intimidation of witnesses.
 - c. Manage time effectively.

4. Deliberation

- i. After all evidence is presented, the Honor Council deliberates privately to determine responsibility.
- ii. The Honor Council determines, by a preponderance of the information, whether a violation of the Academic Misconduct policy occurred.

5. Sanction Assignment

- i. If the student is found responsible, the Honor Council must endorse the academic sanction recommended by the instructor of record.
- ii. The Honor Council may also recommend educational sanctions for the students.

C. Academic Outcomes

- 1. In cases involving a failing grade in the course due to academic misconduct, a student shall not be allowed to withdraw from the course.

2. Transcript Notation is reserved for the most serious breaches of Academic Misconduct. The more serious violations include: (1) premeditation, (2) conspiracy and/or intent to deceive, and (3) repeated violations of misconduct.
3. If a student receives a failing grade in the course or a transcript notation for academic misconduct, the student shall lose the right to evaluate the instructor of record.

D. Appeals

1. A student may appeal the outcome of an Honor Council within five (5) business days after receiving the outcome of the Honor Council. An appeal may be based on the following reasons:
 - i. Substantial deviations of procedures that may have altered the outcome of the hearing; and,
 - ii. New information that was not available at the time of the hearing.
2. Appeals will be heard by the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs.
3. Any appeals of the severity of the academic sanctions must be submitted via the [academic grievance process](#).

E. Timing

1. The University may impose discipline for violations that occur before the degree is awarded but which are not discovered until after the degree is awarded.
2. If a student withdraws from the University while an academic misconduct violation is pending, the student matter must be resolved prior to reenrollment.

F. Records Retention

1. Records are confidential and retained for seven years.
2. Suspension or expulsion records are kept indefinitely.
3. Students may petition to remove a transcript notation from their record. To be eligible, students must also have completed all the other outcomes from their case on time.
 - i. Undergraduates may petition to have a transcript notation removed one-year post graduation (from USC Upstate or a different institution).
 - ii. Graduate students may petition to have a transcript notation removed two-years post-graduation (from USC Upstate or a different institution).
 - iii. Petitions would be heard by the Honor Council.