



---

# EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

---

## **Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy**

# **Policy Name: Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy**

## **Policy Purpose**

This policy specifies the Academic Integrity expectations and the process for adjudication of Academic Misconduct for undergraduate and graduate students, except as indicated in the policy. Research misconduct is reviewed and adjudicated under [Misconduct in Scholarship and Research](#) policy. Professional ethical issues are reviewed and adjudicated under [Employee Code of Conduct](#) policy.

## **Applicability**

This policy is applicable to all faculty and undergraduate students at ETSU, and graduate students, excepted as noted in the policy, including those enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Biomedical Sciences within the College of Medicine.

This policy does not apply to graduate professional students at the Quillen College of Medicine (COM) or the Gatton College of Pharmacy (COP). Students at the COM and COP are adjudicated through the respective college procedures.

## **Responsible Official, Office, and Interpretation**

The Provost is responsible for the review and revision of this policy. For questions about this policy, please contact the Office of the Provost. The Provost, in conjunction with the Office of University Counsel, has the final authority to interpret this policy.

## **Defined Terms**

***A defined term has a specific meaning within the context of this policy.***

### Academic Activities

Any assigned work or project used to determine academic credit, including (but not limited to) an examination, writing project, take-home test, or other project; or any competition, activity, or project sponsored or sanctioned by the university in which the student participates for the purpose of gaining an Academic Advantage.

### Academic Advantage

Any potential benefit to a student's academic or professional standing or to the student's prestige within the university community, including (but not limited to) academic credit or honors, or an award or other recognition of excellence in a particular academic or professional field or endeavor (including selection for membership in an organization related to the field or profession); or a waiver, extension, release, or excuse from academic requirements, Sanctions, or penalties.

# **Policy Name: Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy**

## Academic Integrity

A set of values and practices that require honesty, fairness, respect, and responsibility in all aspects of academic life.

## Academic Integrity Dismissal

Permanent separation from the university due to repeated or egregious violations of Academic Integrity.

## Academic Integrity Probation

A specified period of time in which the student is required to comply with specified terms and conditions that include not engaging in further academic conduct that would violate any university policy. Further academic violation(s) could result in additional sanctions, including suspension or dismissal.

## Academic Misconduct

Any act of dishonesty that attempts to gain, helps others to gain, attempts to help others to gain, or helps others to gain an unfair Academic Advantage in all aspects of academic work in or out of the classroom. Academic Misconduct includes plagiarism, self-plagiarism, cheating, collusion, impersonating someone or allowing yourself to be impersonated, and/or fabrication, falsification, or misrepresentation, and failure to meet legal, ethical and professional obligations, or an unauthorized use of generative artificial intelligence.

## Business Day

Days on which the university is open for business during regular business hours (e.g., sending an email after business hours on the final day of a deadline does not qualify as during the Business Day). University holidays for employees and closures are not included. Student breaks during a term during which the university is open for business are considered Business Days.

## Instructor of Record (Instructor)

The individual who provides direct instruction to students, is included on the Faculty Roster form, and is supported and overseen by the institution.

## Retroactive Withdrawal

Withdrawing from all courses after the last day of classes of the term, as published on the ETSU Academic Calendar, in which a grade was assigned.

# **Policy Name: Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy**

## Sanction

Penalty assigned for a violation

## Suspension

A disciplinary action that prevents a student from enrolling in classes, earning credits, and receiving financial aid for a specified period of time and, for the purposes of this policy, is a result of Academic Misconduct.

## Teachable Moment

An instance where an Instructor chooses to address a student's potential Academic Misconduct with a verbal warning and discussion rather than applying a formal Sanction. This is often applied when the Instructor determines the student's behavior was unintentional and stems from a misunderstanding, allowing for learning and corrective action without formal consequences.

## Written Notice

Official documentation conveying to the student that a violation of Academic Integrity is suspected and warrants further investigation.

# **Policy Name: Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy**

## **Policy**

East Tennessee State University (ETSU) is a community committed to excellence in teaching, scholarship, service, and the holistic development of its students. Central to this mission is a shared commitment to Academic Integrity, a foundational principle that sustains the trust, respect, fairness, and responsibility essential in all Academic Activities.

Integrity ensures that both students and faculty benefit fairly from their academic pursuits. It upholds the value of a university education and reinforces the credibility of the institution's teaching, learning, and research endeavors. Violations of Academic Integrity compromise ETSU's reputation and undermine its core mission and goals.

ETSU recognizes that Academic Misconduct erodes the value of a higher education degree and diminishes the integrity of scholarly research. The consequences of such misconduct extend beyond campus, affecting relationships with future employers, graduate programs, research institutions, and the broader community.

The Instructor of Record (hereafter referred to as the "Instructor") has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of Academic Integrity. Students guilty of Academic Misconduct, either directly or indirectly, through participation or assistance, are immediately responsible to the course Instructor. Any form of Academic Misconduct (plagiarism, cheating, etc.) is subject to a Sanction for a violation may vary with the severity of the offense and whether a student has multiple findings of Academic Misconduct. Multiple instances of Academic Misconduct can lead to significant Sanctions, including but not limited to, Academic Integrity Probation, Suspension, or Academic Integrity Dismissal. If multiple instances of Academic Misconduct are suspected, those instances may be adjudicated in one hearing.

The specific consequences depend on the severity and number of the offenses. The Instructor may reduce a grade up to and including an assignment of an "F" or a zero ("0") for the exercise/examination or an "F" in the course, propose Academic Integrity Probation, Suspension, or Academic Integrity Dismissal.

Students may appeal a grade assignment associated with a finding of Academic Misconduct, as distinct from a student disciplinary or grade appeals process, through the university's Academic Misconduct Procedures. The student will not be subjected to any form of pressure to coerce admission of guilt or information about the student's conduct or that of others. In the event of an academic misconduct situation that is not specifically addressed by this policy arises or it is difficult to apply a certain step of this policy, the Dean may consult with the Provost or the Provost's designee for guidance. Any action taken based on this guidance will be documented. The Provost may, in the Provost's discretion, consult with the appropriate campus leadership as needed.

# Policy Name: Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy

All parties participating in an Academic Misconduct hearing must abide by confidentiality, except as required to comply with the law, and not share the details of the hearing with others.

## 1. Responsibilities and Expectations.

All faculty, students, and staff of the ETSU academic community share a collective responsibility to uphold and promote standards of honesty, fairness, and accountability in all Academic Activities.

### 1.1. Instructor of Record Responsibilities.

The Instructor of Record is responsible for maintaining the academic standards of their course and ensuring fair assessment of student performance. To uphold Academic Integrity, Instructors are expected to:

- 1.1.1. Become familiar with and follow the procedures outlined in this policy;
- 1.1.2. Clearly communicate expectations regarding academic conduct in the course syllabus;
- 1.1.3. Report instances of suspected Academic Misconduct to initiate an adjudication, except when the violation is treated as a “Teachable Moment”;
- 1.1.4. Gather or supply evidence in instances of suspected Academic Misconduct;
- 1.1.5. Participate in the adjudication process as required;
- 1.1.6. Implement strategies to deter misconduct, such as exam proctoring and digital submission platforms; and
- 1.1.7. Request a dean/designee place a note and hold on a student’s account and assign a grade of Incomplete (“I”) if a resolution is pending when final grades are due; and
- 1.1.8. Assign a grade once an allegation is resolved and notify the Office of the Registrar.

### 1.2. Student Responsibilities.

Students are accountable for maintaining the integrity of their academic work. Students are expected to:

- 1.2.1. Familiarize themselves with this policy;

**Policy Effective Date:** January 22, 2019 • **Policy Revised Effective Date:** May 22, 2025  
**Procedures Effective Date:** January 22, 2019 • **Procedures Revised Effective Date:** May 22, 2025

# Policy Name: Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy

- 1.2.2. Not engage in any form of Academic Misconduct;
- 1.2.3. Encourage peers to uphold the standards outlined in the Student Code of Conduct;
- 1.2.4. Notify the Instructor, department chair, dean/designee (throughout this policy, if a student is a graduate student, all references to dean/designee should be understood to refer to the Dean of the Graduate school) of any credible suspicion;
- 1.2.5. Cooperate with the adjudication process as necessary;
- 1.2.6. Attend misconduct hearings when required;
- 1.2.7. Continue to participate in the course, and complete all academic work pending any allegation of Academic Misconduct; and
- 1.2.8. Refrain from withdrawing from a course pending an allegation of Academic Misconduct. If the student submits a withdrawal, the “W” is temporary until resolution is reached. A confirmed violation nullifies a Retroactive Withdrawal.

## 2. Reporting.

Allegations of Academic Misconduct should be submitted promptly in writing to the Instructor, department chair, and Dean/designee. If the allegation of Academic Misconduct is reported directly to the Instructor, the Instructor will report the allegation to the department chair and dean/designee. While a delay in reporting may occur based on when the issue is actually discovered, failing to report within thirty (30) Business Days of the date on which the individual first becomes aware of the potential Academic Misconduct may affect the ability to adjudicate the issue.

## 3. Adjudication.

An allegation of Academic Misconduct is adjudicated pursuant to the procedures of this policy. The determination of Academic Misconduct is based on a preponderance of the evidence (i.e., it is more likely than not that the student committed the misconduct), and an appropriate academic consequence is imposed (e.g., a zero for a plagiarized assignment). This determination is based solely on relevant documentation, exhibits, and oral or written testimony. If the Instructor is unavailable, the department chair will appoint a designee to participate in the adjudication of the matter. Minor deviations from procedure may occur and do not invalidate outcomes.

# Policy Name: Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy

## 4. Reporting and Adjudication Authority

- 4.1. Cases of alleged Academic Misconduct involving undergraduate students are reported and adjudicated by the dean/designee of the academic college in which the misconduct occurred, with communication to include the dean/designee where the student's major is housed. If the student has not declared a major, the dean/designee of the academic college in which the misconduct occurred handles all reporting and adjudication.
- 4.2. Cases of alleged academic misconduct involving graduate students (including those enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Biomedical Sciences within the College of Medicine) are reported and adjudicated by the Dean of the Graduate School, with communication to include the dean/designee where the student's major is housed, the chair where the student's program is housed, and the program coordinator of the student's major.

## 5. Appeal.

After the final decision of a hearing board has been issued, the student may file one (1) appeal. Appeals are not new hearings; they are a review of the existing case. It is not the function of the appeals process to permit a rehearing of the factual issues presented to the hearing board, but rather to ensure that the procedures have been implemented fairly and consistently.

Grounds for appeal are limited to:

- 5.1. an appeal of the outcome due to a material procedural error that directly affected the outcome or the resolution of the matter; or
- 5.2. an appeal of the Sanction due to the Sanction being inconsistent with the requirements of this policy related to Sanctions.

Any Sanction imposed remains in effect during the appeal, unless delayed by the Provost/designee under extenuating circumstances. The Provost/designee hears all appeals. The decision of the Provost/designee is final.

## 6. Academic Misconduct Records.

Academic Misconduct records are official university records. These records serve to document allegations, decisions, and Sanctions related to Academic Integrity violations.

### 6.1. Records Maintenance.

All records are maintained in accordance with ETSU's [Records Retention Policy](#). Academic Misconduct records include, but are not limited to: complaints, correspondence, evidence, summaries of proceedings, final decisions, and audio recordings, if applicable. These records are considered internal to the university and are not disclosed in standard disciplinary history reports.

# **Policy Name: Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy**

## **6.2. Access and Confidentiality.**

Students may request access to their Academic Misconduct records by contacting the Office of the Provost. Access to these records is governed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), university policies, and the laws of the State of Tennessee.

Academic Misconduct records are considered confidential and will not be released without the student's written consent, unless required in the ordinary course of the business of the university or by state or federal law. The university may share these records with university officials who have a legitimate educational interest.

Records may also be disclosed in response to a lawful subpoena.

# Policy Name: Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy

## Procedures

### 1. Reporting Academic Misconduct.

A complaint of Academic Misconduct, along with any supporting evidence or a description of the evidence if that evidence is inaccessible, may be brought by the Instructor, department chair, or dean/designee or to the Instructor, department chair, or dean/designee by other members of the faculty, staff, student body, or community at large. Such complaints should not be considered confidential.

Allegations not directly tied to a specific academic course (e.g., capstone exam, student research) are referred to the appropriate dean/designee for the area where the alleged misconduct occurred.

### 2. Review of Allegation by Dean.

The instructor notifies the dean/designee. The dean/designee contacts the Registrar to determine if the student has committed other Academic Misconduct offenses at the university. If there are previous records of Academic Misconduct offenses or if the charge is serious enough, the dean/designee will determine if additional sanctions may be warranted through a hearing board and if it may reach the level of Academic Integrity Probation, Suspension, or Academic Integrity Dismissal.

#### 2.1. Previous Instances of Academic Misconduct.

The dean/designee may refer the case to a formal board hearing if the nature of the allegation is severe, in the discretion of the dean/designee, or if the student has multiple instances of Academic Misconduct. If the dean/designee decides to move to a formal board hearing, the dean/designee:

- 2.1.1. contacts the Registrar to place a hold and note on the student's account issues an Incomplete ("I") if it is close to the end of the semester,
- 2.1.2. e-mails the student, the department chair, and the Instructor to inform them they intend to refer the case for a formal board hearing, providing the reason for this decision. The department chair should inform the program coordinator of the student's major.

# Policy Name: Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy

## 2.2. No Previous Record of Academic Misconduct.

If there are no records of previous Academic Misconduct offenses, the dean/designee informs the Instructor and the Instructor decides whether to either use the situation as a Teachable Moment, or to apply a Sanction and issue a Written Notice.

### 2.2.1. Teachable Moment.

Within five (5) Business Days of being notified by the dean/designee that no previous charges of Academic Misconduct charges, the Instructor emails the student and the dean/designee stating they intend to use the situation as a Teachable Moment. Within five (5) Business Days, the Instructor schedules a meeting with the student to discuss steps the student should have taken in the past and should take in the future to avoid an allegation of Academic Misconduct. Within five (5) Business Days after meeting with the student, the Instructor emails the dean/designee and the student, and the matter is considered closed.

### 2.2.2. Sanction, Account Hold, and Issue of Written Notice.

If the instructor decides to apply a sanction, then within five (5) Business Days of being notified by the dean/designee that the student has previous charges of Academic Misconduct, the Instructor emails the dean/designee stating they intend to propose a Sanction, providing the information needed to issues a written notice.

#### 2.2.2.1. Issuing Written Notice.

Within five (5) Business Days of informing the dean/designee they intend to propose a Sanction, the Instructor sends a Written Notice to the student's ETSU email account, copying the dean/designee and chair. The chair should forward the Written Notice to the program. The Written Notice includes:

- 2.2.2.1.1. Student's name;
- 2.2.2.1.2. student's E Number;
- 2.2.2.1.3. course rubric, number, section, and title;
- 2.2.2.1.4. Sanction proposed;
- 2.2.2.1.5. a copy or description of any evidence;
- 2.2.2.1.6. the appropriate dean/designee the student contacts to file an appeal;

## Policy Name: Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy

2.2.2.1.7. five-day deadline to respond and consequences for failing to respond; and

2.2.2.1.8. the available options to the student, including: (1) the student accepting the Instructor's proposed sanction, or (2) the student requesting a formal board hearing.

### 2.2.2.2. Account Hold.

Within two (2) days of receiving the email from the Instructor, deciding to apply a Sanction and issue a Written Notice, the dean/designee contacts the Registrar's Office and requests a hold and note be applied to the student's record pending a final resolution of the matter. This ensures the student cannot drop the course in question until the matter is resolved.

### 2.2.2.3. Student Response to Written Notice.

The student notifies the dean/designee in writing within five (5) Business Days of receiving the Written Notice which option they selected: (1) Accept the Sanction; or (2) Request formal board hearing.

If the student fails to notify the dean/designee of a selection within the designated time-frame, the student forfeits the right to select an option, and the dean/designee moves forward with the dean/designee recommendation.

### 2.2.2.4. Student Acceptance of Sanction.

In the event the student elects to waive a hearing and accept the Sanction and the dean/designee concurs, then the student waives the right to a hearing in writing. The dean/designee informs the Instructor and department chair. The dean/designee consults with the Instructor on the time needed to complete the Sanction and the Sanction is implemented. Every attempt will be made to conclude the procedures within fifteen (15) Business Days of the date the student accepts the Sanction. Once the Sanction is completed, documentation of completion is sent to the dean/designee. The issue is considered closed when the Sanction is completed and the dean/designee informs the Instructor, chair, and Registrar to remove the hold and note. If applicable, the Instructor issues a grade and removes the incomplete ("I").

# **Policy Name: Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy**

If the student fails to complete the Sanction by the agreed upon deadline, the Instructor informs the dean/designee and the chair and the matter moves to a formal board hearing.

## **3. Formal Board Hearing.**

If the student requests a formal board hearing or the dean/designee elects to forward the case to a hearing board, the dean/designee begins the hearing process. Every attempt will be made to conclude the procedures within twenty (20) Business Days of the date the student and/or the dean/designee selects the hearing board option. The hearing may proceed in the absence of a properly notified student or Instructor (having been sent written notice at least five (5) Business Days in advance).

### **3.1. Hearing Board Members.**

The dean/designee designates a hearing board of six (6) members that include three (3) faculty members and three (3) students who are not involved in the offense or from the department in which the offense took place. Board members may be selected from a standing committee appointed by the dean/designee of each school or college on an annual basis or from the college population at large. The dean/designee either appoints a chair or has the board elect a chair from among the hearing board members. The dean/designee schedules a hearing board. The student or Instructor may challenge the ability of a board member to render an impartial judgment and may request a member's removal prior to the hearing beginning. If members of a board believe that their relationship with either the case or the individuals involved would affect their ability to render an impartial judgment, they may disqualify themselves.

### **3.2. Communication About Hearing.**

The dean/designee notifies the student and Instructor in writing, at least five (5) Business Days in advance of the date, time, and place of the hearing, as well as the specific allegations, the structure and procedure for the hearing, the range of possible Sanctions, and the student's right to be accompanied by an advisor. The hearing shall be private, unless otherwise requested by both the student and Instructor, in writing.

### **3.3. Evidence or Documentation in Hearing.**

Both the Instructor and the student provide the dean/designee with copies of any evidence or documentation they will present, a list of names of witnesses they will have at the hearing, and the name of their advisor (if applicable) at least three (3)

# **Policy Name: Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy**

Business Days prior to the hearing. If the evidence or documentation is inaccessible, the student and the Instructor may describe the evidence or documentation. The dean/designee collects and distributes any evidence, documentation, or descriptions of evidence or documentation to be used in the formal hearing. Determinations as to the admissibility of evidence or any procedural questions in the hearing rest solely in the discretion of the hearing board.

## **3.4. Assistance During Hearing.**

Both the student and Instructor may be assisted by any advisor they choose, at their own expense. If the advisor is an attorney, the student must disclose the attorney's name at least one (1) Business Days prior to the hearing. Both parties are responsible for presenting their own case and advisors are not permitted to speak or to participate directly in any hearing. The University Counsel's Office will be advised when an advisor is an attorney.

## **3.5. Record of Hearing.**

The record is the property of the university. The board chair ensures that there is a single record, such as minutes or a recording of the hearing. The dean/designee provides a written summary of the hearing to the student, Instructor, chair, and the Provost/designee within fifteen (15) Business Days following the hearing. The written summary will include the board's recommendations.

## **3.6. Hearing Process.**

At the hearing, the dean/designee coordinates the presentation of evidence relevant to the alleged misconduct. Both the student and the Instructor may be present throughout the hearing, until the hearing board goes into executive session. Both the student and Instructor have the opportunity to testify and present evidence and witnesses relevant to the charges and penalties involved and to cross-examine any witnesses. In no case will the hearing board consider written statements against the student unless they have been advised of their contents. The student may decline to testify, with knowledge that silence may be considered as evidence. The board may dispose of the case in whatever manner it deems just based upon available information. After all evidence has been presented, members of the hearing board meet in executive session to deliberate on the charges.

# **Policy Name: Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy**

## **3.7. Voting During Hearing.**

The board will rule on the request by a majority vote. The hearing board proceeds with a quorum of two-thirds (2/3) of the hearing board members. The hearing board's decision and recommendation are based on a simple majority vote. In the event of a tie, both opinions are shared with the dean/designee. The board will use a preponderance of the evidence standard to decide if more likely than not the violation occurred.

## **3.8. Hearing Findings.**

If the finding is for the student, the hearing board recommends that the sanction applied by the Instructor be removed. If the finding is against the student, the hearing board recommends such sanction as deemed appropriate. After considering all the evidence, this penalty may differ from the initially imposed Sanction. If the hearing board recommends Academic Integrity Probation, Suspension, or Academic Integrity Dismissal and the dean/designee concurs, the approval of the Provost must be obtained. The dean/designee then advises the student of the decision and of the student's right to appeal, and on what grounds an appeal may be based.

## **4. Appeals.**

The student or Instructor may file an appeal in writing with the Provost/designee within five (5) Business Days of the written outcome.

The written appeal will contain the substantive grounds upon which the appellant is basing the appeal. General dissatisfaction with the outcome of the decision is not a basis for consideration of an appeal. Appeals that do not allege sufficient grounds will be denied consideration and dismissed. Appeals that do allege sufficient grounds will be accepted for consideration.

The Provost/designee may permit written or oral statements from the concerned parties at the time the appeal is considered. The Provost/designee may either: (1) affirm the original decision; (2) reverse the original decision; (3) send the issue back to the original hearing board for consideration of additional information; (4) modify the original Sanction; or (5) refer the case to a completely new hearing board for a new hearing. The Provost/designee will notify the student, Instructor, chair, and dean/designee of the outcome of the appeal in writing within ten (10) Business Days.

# **Policy Name: Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy**

## **5. Removal of Account Hold.**

After the Academic Misconduct Procedures are completed, the dean/designee shall request that the Registrar's Office remove the hold from the student's record within five (5) Business Days of receiving notice of the final resolution. If the student is dismissed from the institution, the account hold will remain indefinitely on the student's account.

# **Policy Name:** Academic Integrity and Misconduct Policy

## **Applicable Forms and Websites**

N/A

## **Authority and Revisions**

**Authority:** TCA § 49-8-203, et seq.

## **Previous Policy:** N/A

The ETSU Board of Trustees is charged with policy making pursuant to TCA § 49-8-203, et seq. On March 24, 2017, the Board delegated its authority to ETSU's President to establish certain policies and procedures for educational program and other operations of the university, including this policy. The delegation of authority and required process for revision to this policy can be found on the [Policy Development and Rule Making Policy webpage](#).

To suggest a revision to this policy, please contact the responsible official indicated in this policy. Before a substantive change to the policy section may take effect, the requested changes must be: (1) approved by the responsible office; (2) reviewed by the Office of University Counsel for legal sufficiency; (3) posted for public comment; (4) approved by either Academic Council or University Council; and (5) approved by ETSU's President.