

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

At the heart of Spelman College's mission is academic excellence, along with the development of intellectual, ethical and leadership qualities. These goals can only flourish in an institutional environment where every member of the College affirms honesty, trust, and mutual respect. All members of the academic community of Spelman College are expected to understand and follow the basic standards of honesty and integrity, upholding a commitment to high ethical standards. Students are expected to read and abide by the Spelman College Code of Conduct (see the Spelman College Student Handbook) and are expected to behave as mature and responsible members of the Spelman College academic community. Students are expected to follow ethical standards in their personal conduct and in their behavior towards other members of the community. They are expected to observe basic honesty in their work, words, ideas, and actions. Failure to do so is a violation of the Spelman College Academic Integrity Policy.

Some common violations of these basic standards of academic integrity include, but are not limited to:

1. Cheating: Using or attempting to use unauthorized assistance, material, or study aids in examinations or other academic work, or preventing or attempting to prevent another from using authorized assistance, material, or study aids. (Examples: using a cheat sheet in a quiz or exam; programming a calculator or other electronic device with information for an exam, test, or quiz; soliciting information regarding an exam or test from another student; altering a graded exam and resubmitting it for a better grade, etc.)
2. Plagiarism: Using the ideas, data, or language of another without specific and proper acknowledgment. Likewise, students may not use Internet source material, in whole or part, without careful and specific reference to the source. All use of the Internet must be thoroughly documented. Examples: misrepresenting another's work, (i.e., paper, lab report, article, or computer work) as one's own original creation and submitting it for an assignment; using someone else's ideas without attribution to source; failing to cite a reference or to use quotation marks where appropriate, etc.) The Writing Center, the Office of Undergraduate Studies web page, and departments provide guidelines to aid students in documenting source materials. Internet plagiarism includes but is not limited to submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers or articles, paraphrasing or copying information from the internet without citing the source, and "cutting and pasting" from various sources without proper attribution to source.
3. Fabrication: Submitting contrived or altered information in any academic exercise. Examples: making up data for an experiment; "fudging" data; citing nonexistent or irrelevant articles; presenting fraudulent excuses, lies, letters of recommendations.
4. Multiple submissions: Submitting, without prior permission, any work submitted to fulfill another academic requirement. Example: submitting the same paper for two different classes without the expressed consent of both professors.
5. Misrepresentation or falsification of academic records: Misrepresenting or tampering with or attempting to tamper with any portion of a student's transcripts or academic record, either before or after enrolling at Spelman College. Examples: forging a registration form or a change of grade slip; forging signatures of advisors; falsifying information on an official document such as drop/add form, ID card or other college documents; tampering with computer records, etc.
6. Facilitating academic dishonesty: Knowingly helping or attempting to help another violate any provision of this code. Example: working together on a take-home exam or other individual assignments, discussing an exam with a student who has yet to take it, giving tests or papers to another student, etc.
7. Unfair advantage: Attempting to gain unauthorized advantage over fellow students in an academic exercise. Examples: gaining or providing unauthorized access to examination materials (either past or present); obstructing or interfering with another student's efforts in an academic exercise; lying about a need for an extension for an exam or paper; continuing to write even when time is up during an exam; destroying, hiding, removing, or keeping library materials, etc.

Every student is responsible for reading and abiding by the Academic Integrity Policy. All faculty members should announce the policy at the beginning of each semester and include the policy statement in their course syllabus for each class. Faculty should also establish a climate that encourages honesty and enhances learning while emphasizing Spelman's no tolerance stance on academic dishonesty, i.e. academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Violations of academic integrity may occur on four levels:

**Level One Violations** may occur because of inexperience or lack of knowledge of principles of academic integrity on the part of persons committing the violation. These violations are likely to involve a small fraction of the total coursework, are not extensive, and/or occur on a minor assignment. Examples of Level One Violations include but are not limited to working with another student on a laboratory or other homework assignment when such work is prohibited and failing to footnote or give proper acknowledgement in an extremely limited section of an assignment.

Level One Violations may be handled by the professor of the course in consultation with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. There are no appeals afforded for Level One Violations. A repeat of such violation will constitute a Level Two Violation.

Level Two through Four Violations must be referred to the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. See sanction for Academic Integrity Violations for more information.

**Level Two Violations** are characterized by dishonesty of a more serious character or affect a more significant aspect or portion of the coursework. Level Two Violations include, but are not limited to, the following examples:

1. Plagiarizing a moderate portion (1/3 or more) of a written assignment.
2. Submitting the same work or major portions thereof to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without permission from the instructor.
3. Using data or interpretative material for a laboratory report without acknowledging the sources or the collaborators. All contributors who prepare data and/or who write the report must be named.
4. Receiving assistance from others, such as research, statistical, computer programming, or field data collection help without acknowledging such assistance in a paper, examination or project.

**Level Three Violations** include dishonesty that affects a major or essential portion of work done to meet course requirements or involve premeditation. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Plagiarizing major portions (1/2 or more) of a written assignment.
2. Copying on any examination.
3. Acting to facilitate copying during an exam.
4. Using prohibited materials, (e.g., books, notes, or calculators, cell phones, PDA's, etc. during an examination.)
5. Collaborating before an exam to develop methods of exchanging information and the implementation thereof.
6. Altering examinations for the purposes of re-grading.
7. Acquiring or distributing an examination from unauthorized sources prior to the examination.
8. Presenting the work of another as one's own.
9. Using purchased term paper or other materials.
10. Removing posted or reserved material, or denying other students access to it.
11. Fabricating data by inventing or deliberately altering material (this includes citing "sources" that are not, in fact, sources).
12. Fabricating evidence, falsification of data, quoting directly or paraphrasing without acknowledging the source, and or presenting the ideas of another as one's own senior thesis or final paper
13. Using unethical or improper means of acquiring data.

**Level Four Violations** represent the most serious breaches of intellectual honesty. Examples include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. All academic infractions committed after return from suspension for a previous academic integrity violation.

2. Infractions such as forging a transcript, stealing an examination from a professor, buying an examination; forging a letter of recommendation;
3. Having a substitute take an examination or taking an examination for someone else
4. Sabotaging another student's work through actions designed to prevent the student from successfully completing an assignment
5. Willful violation of the Spelman College Code of Conduct

### **Sanctions for Academic Integrity Violations**

Academic misconduct is considered to be a violation of the behavior expected of a Spelman College student in an academic setting as well as a student conduct violation. A student found responsible for academic misconduct is therefore subject to appropriate academic penalty, as well as sanctions under the Spelman College Student Code of Conduct.

### **Level One Violations**

The professor of the course has the authority to handle an incident of student misconduct on this level. Prior to exercising sanctions, the professor is encouraged to consult with the Dean of Undergraduate Studies.

An accusation of a Level One Violation requires a fact-finding discussion between the professor and student. The meeting should be prompt, private, and informal. While there is no prescribed procedure, the student should be allowed to respond. Depending on the situation and level of comfort, the professor may wish to have the chair present to corroborate any exchange of information. If the professor concludes that the student is not in violation of the policy, this meeting should end the matter. If the professor concludes that there is indeed a violation and can resolve the matter, after consulting with the Dean, the professor will normally assign a penalty grade of zero on the assignment and the accompanying reduction in the course grade. However, a professor may assign, but is not limited to, one of the following penalties:

- rewriting the paper
- retaking an exam or test
- redoing an assignment
- issuing a verbal or written reprimand,
- required attendance in Writing Center workshops on citation and referencing
- required attendance in a workshop(s) on ethics or a related subject by Student Affairs.

If the violation occurs near the end of the course or cannot be resolved prior to final grade submission, the professor should assign an Incomplete (I) until the sanction(s) are fulfilled. Once concluded, a grade change must be submitted. The professor must submit a "Report of Academic Misconduct" form to the Office of Undergraduate Studies.

When a professor has cause to question a student's work based on inferential circumstances but responsibility cannot be established, the professor may send a "letter of reprimand" to the student. This letter will constitute a formal acknowledgment by the College that a possible violation has occurred. Letters of reprimand do not become part of the student's individual permanent record, but will be placed in their file in the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies and may be taken into account in judging the seriousness of any future violations. A copy of the letter of reprimand **MUST** be sent to the Office of Undergraduate Studies.

### **Level Two – Four Violations**

The professor must file a "Report of Academic Misconduct" form, including all appropriate evidence. The Dean will inform the student of the allegation(s) in writing. The student will be requested to arrange an appointment with the Dean to discuss procedures and to set a time, date, and place for the hearing. The letter of notification will include a description of the specific acts, date and time of the occurrence, and the sanctions authorized for the offense. The Dean will conduct a pre-hearing with the student to clarify procedures and charges. The student will be asked to acknowledge in writing that the procedures have been explained and that she understands the process.

The hearing will be conducted by the Academic Integrity Committee and will be chaired by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies or her designee. The Academic Integrity Committee is comprised of one faculty representative from each division, and two faculty or staff members appointed by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. Care will be taken to resolve any conflict of interest in individual cases.

The Committee will first hear the professor's evidence of the charge of academic misconduct. The student will have an opportunity to present matters and evidence refuting the charge. The student may be accompanied to the hearing by an advisor of her choice and will give the Dean reasonable advance notice of who the advisor will be. The student will be expected to speak for herself. The advisor may counsel his or her advisee but has no official voice in the hearing.

The Academic Integrity Committee will have the opportunity to question both parties and will render a decision within one week of the hearing. The parties will be notified in writing of the Committee's decision.

The sanctions below are available to the Academic Integrity Committee and are the most commonly used. However, there is a range of sanctions available to the Committee. Sanctions are assigned with the intent of maintaining consistency and fairness, and the degree of sanction is primarily correlated with the extent and severity of the violation.

1. A student who is found responsible for her first violation of the academic integrity policy will receive a grade of "F" in the course in which the offense occurred. In addition, the student will be subject to Spelman College code of conduct sanctions, conditions and/or restrictions.
2. A student who is found responsible for a second violation will receive a grade of "F" in the course and will be suspended from the College for the following semester. In addition, the student will be subject to Spelman College code of conduct sanctions, conditions and/or restrictions.
3. A student who is found responsible for a third violation will receive a grade of "F" in the course and will be expelled from the College at the end of the semester.

If the alleged act of academic misconduct occurs during finals week or within a time frame in which the opportunity for a fair hearing would be difficult, the professor may submit an Incomplete (I) until the hearing process can be initiated.

The student will be informed that the decision can be appealed to the Academic Integrity Appeals Committee, comprised of one faculty representative from each division, and two faculty or staff members appointed by the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. The Appeals Committee will not include the same individuals who heard the case previously. Care will be taken to resolve any conflict of interest in individual cases.

Spelman College allows only one appeal for a sanction of Level Two - Four Violations. Appeals must be written and will only be accepted from the student(s) involved in the case. Appeals from others will not be considered. Appeals must be filed with 10 working days of the initial notification. If an appeal is not filed with the Office of Undergraduate Studies within the allotted time, the decision of the Academic Integrity Committee will stand.

All appeals must be based on substantial new evidence and or sufficient grounds for good cause. Substantial new evidence is defined as evidence that was not available at the original hearing and which has a direct bearing on the case. It is the student's responsibility to demonstrate that the penalty should be modified. Sufficient grounds for good cause is defined as an infringement on the rights of the student because of any irregularities in the way the Academic Integrity Committee originally conducted the hearing. The Academic Integrity Appeals Committee will uphold the sanctions of the Committee or reduce the sanctions of the Committee. In no case will a more severe sanction be imposed.

A student cross-registering or on exchange from another institution who has violated the Spelman academic code of conduct will receive an "F" in the course in which the violation occurred. The Spelman

College Dean of Undergraduate Studies will notify the Academic Dean of the student's home institution. Appeal procedures will rest with that institution.

All materials relating to an allegation of academic misconduct will be kept in confidence in the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. It is fairly common for potential employers, other institutions of higher learning, and governmental agencies to solicit information about a student's conduct. If the student has signed a release form accompanying such a request, the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies will review the disciplinary records file to determine if the student has been found responsible for academic misconduct or behavioral misconduct on file in the Office of Student Affairs. In those cases where the student has such a record, the information will be provided to the requesting party.

Adapted with permission from the "Policy on Academic Integrity for Undergraduate and Graduate Students," Rutgers University, New Brunswick Campus.