THE STUDENT GUIDE TO ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Metropolitan State University
TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction to the Student Handbook ............ 3
Academic Integrity Policy .......................... 4
Academic Integrity Procedures ..................... 8
Frequently Asked Questions ....................... 16
Resources ........................................... 18
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDENT GUIDE

Congratulations on your acceptance to Metropolitan State University. You are now a member of an academic community dedicated to providing an exemplary education to its graduate and undergraduate students.

The integrity of the learning process is important in an educational context. Students must present their own original work to their teachers in order to demonstrate and improve their mastery of concepts and skills. Academic dishonesty undermines this relationship between learner and teacher that forms the foundation of higher learning.

Use this handbook to become familiar with the expectations for academic honesty at Metropolitan State University. The Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures are printed here in their entirety. Answers to common questions are printed at the end.

Finally, carefully consider and explore the resources listed at the end of this guide. It is the student’s responsibility to avoid academic integrity violations: these free resources will answer your questions and provide you with support to help you have a successful educational journey.
Section 1. Purpose

This policy is intended to provide all members of the Metropolitan State University community with a shared understanding of our high expectations for honesty in academic work and responsibilities for upholding academic integrity.

Section 2. Authority

This policy is issued pursuant to authority granted under the Rules and Regulations of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU).

Section 3. Effective Date

This policy shall become effective upon signature by the president and shall remain in effect until modified or expressly revoked.

Section 4. Philosophy

Metropolitan State University is an institution dedicated to higher learning. In the pursuit of education in their fields, learners are exposed to theories, artworks, arguments, practices, and data created by countless contributors across time and around the globe. The academic community in the United States requires that we express our indebtedness and respect by explicitly acknowledging the original source of any material we use in our own work.

A student’s work provides the means of assessing learning. It is essential, consequently, to distinguish between a student’s own responses and the ideas being borrowed or built upon. Every dishonest act, every breach of integrity, and every
misrepresentation undermines the process of learning and impedes the advancement of knowledge. Deceit cannot be tolerated in a community devoted to the principles of education.

Each member of the university is accountable for the intellectual honesty of his or her academic work. The integrity of Metropolitan State University is ours to hold in trust for future students.

**Section 5. Responsibilities**

Student Responsibilities:

By enrolling at Metropolitan State University, students agree to accept responsibility for upholding standards of academic integrity in all of their work at the university. Students should:

- read and become familiar with the Academic Integrity Policy;
- complete all academic work with integrity;
- understand actions defined as academic integrity violations and avoid such violations;
- seek clarification from their professors when they are uncertain about what constitutes academic integrity violations; and
- report breaches of academic integrity to an advisor, professor, dean, or the provost.

Faculty Responsibilities:

Metropolitan State University faculty members are committed to preventative and educational measures aimed at increasing student awareness and understanding of academic integrity. Faculty should:
• refer to the Academic Integrity Policy on each course syllabus;
• model principles of academic integrity in their own work;
• explain their expectations for academic integrity to students;
• answer students’ questions about academic integrity and the correct procedures for completing course work;
• provide written guidelines for specific policies they require students to follow in their coursework if such policies differ from this University policy; and
• address student violations of the academic integrity policy by reporting offenses to the office of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs and assigning penalties outlined in the course’s syllabus.

Administrator Responsibilities:

Metropolitan State University administrators are committed to maintaining the academic integrity of the institution. Their role is to support faculty efforts at upholding academic integrity, ensure that all students undergo fair and due process, keep effective records of academic integrity violations, and impose appropriate sanctions as posted. Administrators should:

• assist and support the faculty in addressing student violations of the academic integrity policy;
• communicate with faculty and students the actions taken to address violations of the academic integrity policy;
• maintain accurate records of student academic integrity violations;
• notify faculty members in a timely manner about students’ prior violations and actions taken.

Responsibility for implementation of this policy is assigned to the Provost/Vice President for Academic Affairs.
Section 6: Scope

This Academic Integrity Policy pertains to every student at Metropolitan State University. This policy’s requirement of integrity also applies to the materials and records submitted by students seeking admission to the university. This policy’s jurisdiction extends to all academically related activities, whether for on-campus coursework or off-campus endeavors such as conferences or internships.

Section 7: Procedures and Related Policies

Academic Procedure #219 implements this policy. Academic Procedure #219 provides University definitions of academic integrity violations, details the sanctions imposed by faculty and University administration for breaches of academic integrity, and refers violators to Procedure #300 Academic Appeals.

In cases where there may be overlap between Academic Integrity Policy #2190 and University Student Conduct Code Policy #1020, this policy authorizes consultation between the Provost and Judicial Officer to determine whether the infraction warrants Conduct Code outcomes, Academic Integrity sanctions, or both.

Section 8: Availability of Policy and Procedure

During orientation, students shall be informed of Academic Integrity Policy #2190 and its availability. Annually, and upon amendment, the university will notify students of the availability and location of the Academic Integrity Policy. A copy of the policy will be posted on the University website and at appropriate campus locations.
Section 9: Review
This policy will be reviewed and modified as appropriate.

Section 10: Signatures
Issued on May 10, 2014.

Sue K. Hammersmith, President

METROPOLITAN STATE UNIVERSITY
STUDENT ACADEMIC INTEGRITY PROCEDURES
Procedure #219

Section 1. Purpose
This procedure is designed to implement Academic Integrity Policy #2190 by defining violations of academic integrity, detailing sanctions for violations of academic integrity, and describing processes associated with such violations.

Section 2. Authority
This procedure is issued pursuant to authority granted under the Rules and Regulations of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities (MnSCU).

Section 3. Effective Date
This procedure shall become effective upon signature by the president and shall remain in effect until modified or expressly revoked.

Section 4. Responsibility
Responsibility for administrative oversight of this Procedure is given to the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs.
Section 5. Definition of Violations

Any behavior or activity that seeks or achieves misrepresentation of the originality of a student’s work, or damage to another student’s work, constitutes a violation of academic integrity. The following violations of academic integrity suggest typical categories of offenses and a few examples, but it is by no means an exhaustive or definitive list. If a student is unsure about an issue pertaining to academic integrity, she or he should solicit guidance from the faculty member before acting or submitting work.

Cheating: deliberately engaging in acts of deception to create an unfair advantage for the cheater, usually by attempting to use inadmissible sources of information or assistance. This includes, but is not limited to, copying another student’s answers (including work from prior semesters) on an assignment; obtaining unauthorized content, materials, or information about a test before it is administered; referring to notes in any form during a quiz or examination when no notes are allowed; using a computer or calculator to solve a problem students were instructed to complete without assistance; or unauthorized collaboration in the preparation of assignments, lab reports, papers, or take-home examinations.

Academic Misconduct: a broad category of offenses which attempt to undermine the impartiality of the grading process. Examples include trying to bribe an instructor for a better grade; threatening violence unless a particular grade is received; lying about a personal crisis in order to receive an extension on an assignment; and falsely reporting completion of work for a practicum, internship, or any other type of academic activity.

Academic Fraud: serious academic offenses characterized by misrepresentations of methods, results, or sources:
• **Fabrication**: inventing sources or data and then referring to them as if they were real sources. Citing an invented article in a research paper, or making up data, are a few examples of fabricating materials.

• **Falsification**: misrepresenting a source or changing data. Claiming that a source supports a particular stance when it actually opposes it, taking a statement out of context, selectively editing a document or image, or willfully distorting the results of a study or experiment, are examples of falsification. Other forms of falsification include data fudging, data massaging, or omission of data.

• ** Forgery**: unauthorized interference with official university documents and records, including illicit changing of grades on transcripts, illegitimate use of university letterhead, forging an advisor or instructor’s signature, or misrepresentation of academic credentials.

**Plagiarism**: presenting another person’s words, ideas, images, graphs, statistics, sound clips, charts, or other original material as one’s own. Plagiarism includes copying paragraphs, sentences, or parts of sentences from online or print sources without documenting the author and source; repeating another writer’s idea (even in new words) without citing that author; including an unattributed image or graph in a paper; or submitting a paper wholly or partially written by another person. Plagiarism can occur in any academic assignment submitted to fulfill course requirements, whether a minor assignment such as a lab report or a major assignment such as a paper.

Merely replacing words with synonyms while retaining the original syntax is not sufficient to avoid plagiarism. Quotations, paraphrases, summaries, and statistics must be cited in the body of the paper as well as in a Bibliography, Works Cited, or References page at the end of the paper.
Double Submission: the attempt to submit the same assignment for more than one course. Unless the student has express written permission from the instructor(s), the student is not allowed to satisfy the course requirements for two different courses with the same assignment.

Collusion: any intentional attempt to help another student commit any of the violations of academic integrity listed above. Collusion includes, but is not limited to, letting someone copy during an exam, engaging in unauthorized collaboration on an assignment, obtaining or transmitting content or information about tests by unauthorized means, or rewriting passages in someone else’s paper without clearly documenting those contributions.

Academic programs may define and publish additional examples of violations of academic integrity that are specific to the ethical and professional expectations of a given field of study or practice.

Section 6. Academic Integrity Policy Sanctions

Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy are assessed according to frequency and varying levels of severity.

First-Level Violations:
For a first-time offense, faculty must submit a violation referral and recommend additional educational intervention arranged at the discretion of the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs. The referral should include the student’s name, evidence of the violation, and the sanction(s) the instructor has imposed.

A violation may be considered first-level if the violation affects a small proportion of the course’s overall grade or would not have increased a student’s grade in the course significantly.
Examples of first-level violations include but are not limited to:
• unauthorized collaboration on a homework assignment or lab;
• copying from another student during a quiz or examination;
• using unauthorized materials during an exam;
• providing unauthorized assistance to someone on an examination;
• using the work of collaborators on an assignment or laboratory report without acknowledging their contributions;
• failing to acknowledge sources of material once in a major assignment; or
• submitting the same work, or major portions of the same work, to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without written permission from the instructor(s).

The faculty member will levy sanctions commensurate with the course syllabus. These may include but are not limited to:
• assigning a zero for the assignment;
• requiring a make-up assignment;
• requiring an additional assignment about the ethical implications of breaches of academic integrity; and/or
• assigning additional practice in proper citation methods.

The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs will levy the following sanctions for a first-level violation:
• sending the student a Breach of Academic Integrity Letter informing the student about the violation of the Academic Integrity Policy and the action(s) taken by the instructor; and
• requiring additional educational intervention (e.g., online workshops, conferences with designated faculty).

A copy of Breach of Academic Integrity Letter will be placed in a discreet AIP file on the student maintained by the office of the Provost / Vice President of Academic Affairs but will not be made public or attached to transcripts or other records. It
should notify the student of his or her right to appeal (University Procedure #300 Academic Appeal).

**Second-Level Violations:**
Second-level violations are serious breaches of academic integrity. These violations involve premeditated dishonesty or repeated ethics violations and result in disciplinary procedures.

Examples of second-level violations include, but are not limited to:
- committing a second first-level violation;
- altering an exam or assignment and submitting it for regrading;
- acquiring or distributing an exam answer key from an unauthorized source;
- making unauthorized copies of examination materials;
- committing plagiarism that exceeds the first-level violation threshold (e.g., using unattributed sources more than once within a major paper or submitting an assignment written by someone else); or
- fabricating research data.

The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs will levy the following required University sanctions for second-level violations:
- assigning disciplinary failure for the course;
- sending the student a copy of Breach of Academic Integrity Letter documenting the student’s academic integrity policy violation, history of violations (if applicable), and disciplinary action(s) taken; and
- requiring additional educational intervention (e.g., online workshops, conferences with designated faculty).

A copy of Breach of Academic Integrity Letter will be placed in the student’s file but will not be made public or attached to transcripts or other records. It should notify the student of his or her right to appeal (University Procedure #300 Academic Appeal).
Third-Level Violations:
Third-level violations are serious breaches of academic integrity. These violations involve gross dishonesty or repeated ethics violations and result in severe disciplinary procedures.

Examples of third-level violations include but are not limited to:
- a third first-level offense as tracked by the Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs;
- forgery, theft, or falsification of University documents or credentials;
- fulfillment of course requirements by someone other than the student (which results in third-level violations for both students);
- fabrication of evidence, falsification of data, or any instance of plagiarism in a senior thesis, capstone paper, master’s thesis, doctoral dissertation, or conference presentation; and/or
- willful violation of the ethical code of the profession for which the student is preparing.

The Provost/Vice President of Academic Affairs will levy the following required University sanctions for third-level violations:
- sending the student a copy of the Breach of Academic Integrity Letter documenting the student’s academic integrity policy violation, history of violations (if applicable), and disciplinary action(s) taken. The letter should inform the student of his or her right to appeal (University Procedure #300 Academic Appeal); and
- administering disciplinary suspension or permanent expulsion from the University with a notation of “academic disciplinary separation” on the student’s transcript.

Permanent expulsion will result in an additional legislatively-required due process hearing by the Board of Trustees.
Section 7. Appeals

Every student has the right to a fair hearing. Any student who faces course and/or Academic Integrity Policy sanctions may appeal by initiating a Formal Academic Appeal, University Procedure #300.

An instructor’s report of an academic integrity violation shall not be overturned unless there is clear and convincing proof that the instructor’s assessment was arbitrary and/or capricious and unfair to the student.

The student may also contact the university’s Ombudsperson. As a neutral party, the Ombudsperson is responsible for helping a student understand and navigate the appeals process and ensuring that a student receives due process. The Ombudsperson does not supplant the student’s right to also have an advocate present.

Section 8: Availability of Policy and Procedure

During orientation, students shall be informed of Academic Integrity Procedure #219 and Academic Integrity Policy #2190. Annually, and upon amendment, the University will notify students of the availability and location of the Academic Integrity Policy and Procedure. A copy of the policy and procedure will be posted on the University website and at appropriate campus locations.

Section 9: Review
These procedures will be reviewed and modified as appropriate pursuant to Academic Integrity Policy #2190.

Section 10: Signatures
Issued on May 10, 2014.

Sue K. Hammersmith, President
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

I have a question about academic integrity. Who should I ask? Start with your instructor. Also, the Library and the Center for Academic Excellence have Web sites available 24/7.

My instructor charged me with cheating – but I didn’t! What can I do? Do not hesitate to contact the Ombudsperson to help you initiate and navigate the appeals process.

Should I withdraw from a course if its instructor charges me with an academic integrity violation? The answer to this question differs according to each student’s situation, the severity of the violation, and whether the student intends to appeal, so you need to talk to your advisor or the Ombud.

I cheated on an exam and the professor charged me with a second-level academic integrity violation. If I withdraw from the course, can I prevent the F from showing on my transcript? No, even if you withdraw from the course, the F is the academic consequence for an integrity violation at this level. The F will replace the W.

I’m afraid I might accidentally commit plagiarism! Is that possible? This is a very common worry, but it’s actually very difficult to come up with someone else’s ideas, words, and syntax out of the blue. Check out the Writing Center’s Web site for the dates of their frequent and free plagiarism workshops to learn how to study and use sources with confidence.

I know what I did was wrong. Do I still have to complete the workshop and educational intervention? The educational interventions assigned to violators of the academic integrity policy are designed to help all students learn something about how to get the most from their university educations – not to scold students for having done something wrong. This is your chance to develop crucial skills and a support network: the next integrity violation could get you expelled.
**Will an academic integrity violation become part of my permanent record?** Records of violations are kept on file, but they are not made public for first- or second-level infractions. For third-level violations leading to suspension or expulsion, however, the student’s transcript will publish a note of “academic disciplinary separation.”

**Is a violation of academic integrity to get help from the Writing Center or from the Math Center?** No, it’s not violating academic integrity to seek help at the Center for Academic Excellence. Tutors there are trained to help students build their skills. Rarely, however, an instructor may assign a take-home exam, for example, and instruct you to complete it by yourself. If you’re ever in doubt about a particular assignment, be sure to ask your instructor.

**What should I do if I see another student cheating?** Inform your instructor: it’s his or her responsibility to handle from there. If for some reason, you don’t wish to report to your instructor, contact the department chair or your advisor.

**I’m a graduate student and all I did was plagiarize one sentence of my 50-page thesis! Can I really get expelled for that?** Yes, the policy is clear: any violation of integrity in a capstone paper, master’s or doctorate thesis, or professional/scholarly conference is a third-level violation. The consequences include expulsion.

**I know it was a bad decision to cheat on the exam, but I just can’t find study time to stay caught up. Help!** Work, parenting, school, and life-events can overload students with stress and anxiety—which can lead to poor decisions. Confer with your advisor about a reasonable course load for someone in your situation. Explore options at Counseling Services: did you know they offer consultations about stress, time-management, and academic concerns—in addition to other personal issues or concerns you may be facing? And it’s free!
RESOURCES

Center for Academic Excellence (CAE)  651-793-1460
http://www.metrostate.edu/msweb/resources/academic_ss/cae/index.html

The CAE provides free tutoring in a number of subjects at the Writing Center, the Math Center (including statistics), and the Science Center. Guides for using sources correctly are available on the Writing Center Web site, and tutoring sessions can take place in person (on many campus locations), on the phone, or via email.

Student Counseling Services (SCS)  651-793-1568
http://www.metrostate.edu/msweb/pathway/counseling_services/index.html

SCS offers individual and group counseling as well as workshops to help students find better ways to cope with and resolve the problems of everyday life. Services are free of charge and provide opportunities to increase self-knowledge and develop greater self-awareness, self-understanding, independence, and self-direction in many areas including stress, time management, and academic concerns in addition to other psychological services.

Vice President for Student Success  651-793-1933

The office of the Vice President for Student Academic Success oversees functions directly related to issues of retention and ultimate graduation of students from Metro State University including the Center for Academic Success, the Library, the Center for Online Learning, the Center for Faculty Development, Internships, and Global Studies. The VP also coordinates academic integrity programs within academic affairs.
Ombudsperson  651-793-1933

The Ombudsperson works as a student’s representative, helping the student understands the processes involved in university policies and procedures and ensuring that the student receives due process. If you’re charged with a violation of academic integrity, don’t hesitate to contact the Ombudsperson.

Library  651-793-1616

http://libguides.metrostate.edu/academicintegrity
http://www.metrostate.edu/msweb/resources/library/

The library assists with all aspects of the research process including searching, formatting and the proper use of various citation styles, computer assistance, checking out materials, access to reserve readings and interlibrary loan services and reference. Faculty librarians provide research assistance via email, phone, and chat. The librarians teach a two credit course on information access – INFS 115. The library provides a variety of resources via our website including handouts to assist with citations and access to more than 170 online databases as well as an array of other print and electronic resources.
STUDENT SERVICES

Disability Services 651-793-1549
http://www.metrostate.edu/msweb/pathway/academic_success/disability/index.html

International Student Services
http://kingch.wix.com/metroiss

African American Student Services

American Indian Student Services

Pan-Asian Student Services

Chicano/Latino Student Services

Gender and Sexuality Student Support Services

TRiO
http://www.metrostate.edu/msweb/pathway/academic_success/trio/index.html

Veteran Services
http://www.metrostate.edu/msweb/pathway/academic_success/veterans/index.html

Women’s Services
http://www.metrostate.edu/msweb/pathway/academic_success/womens/index.html