

# Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures

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## **Integrity of Scholarship**

The Union College community adheres to high academic and ethical standards. Inspired by the values of both the Christian and the scholar, its faculty, staff and students commit to exhibit integrity and truth in all academic endeavors. Thus, scholarly endeavors carry the broad expectation that they have been accomplished with honesty, whether by professors in research and developing coursework or by students preparing assignments and taking examinations.

Among other examples, dishonest conduct by students includes cheating on examinations and the submission of assignments that violate expected standards of integrity. As a result, unauthorized multiple submissions, excessive revision by someone else, unauthorized collaboration, forged signatures, plagiarism (copying of others' published works), misrepresented sources, misused copyrighted material, and fabricated or unauthorized use of data all constitute violations of academic integrity. In addition to exhibiting honesty in creating their own work, students should refrain from suspicious behavior themselves and deny others the opportunity to use their works in an unethical manner. Similarly, Union expects professors to exhibit trustworthiness in their work, both in and out of the classroom, and to commit to working in redemptive ways with students regarding academic honesty.

Academic integrity violations range from incidental to significant to egregious. Descriptions of each level of violation, the processes and corresponding consequences are explained in greater detail in the Integrity Policy on the Academic Administration section of the Union College website.

The consequences of violating integrity can range from remediation to receipt of a failing grade for an assignment to dismissal from the course and even expulsion from the college.

A student who feels unjustly charged with misconduct after following the appropriate process should appeal to the Vice President of Academic Administration, and if still not satisfied then to the President. Reports of academic integrity violations and their consequences are maintained by the Office of Academic Administration, and serious violations may be noted in a student's permanent academic record as explained in the Integrity Policy in the Academic Services section of the website.

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## **The Purpose of this Policy**

The Academic Integrity Policy fosters academic integrity at Union College by

- Classifying and describing incidents of academic dishonesty by severity and defining typical consequences assigned for each category;
- Outlining the process by which offenses are reported;
- Describing the student's right to appeal decisions;
- Clarifying the respective roles and responsibilities of the Office of Academic Administration (OAA), the Academic Integrity Committee (AIC), and faculty in reporting incidents and administering the process.

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## **Classifications of Integrity Offenses**

### **Level 1: Incidental Violations**

These violations are characterized as inadvertent and isolated; they may typically be the result of inexperience or lack of knowledge on the student's part and only affect minor assignments, works in progress or drafts, or a small portion of the total coursework. Level 1 violations may include but are not limited to:

- working on an assignment with another student without a professor's permission,
- failing to properly cite a source in a limited portion of a paper,
- summarizing or paraphrasing poorly,
- and/or misrepresenting a source.

In all violations, consequences are determined by the AIC chair in consultation with the reporting faculty member after an alert is filed. In Level 1 violations, these consequences may include a penalty that affects the student's final grade, but will generally be less than a full letter grade reduction. Consequences may be reduced due to mitigating factors such as self-reporting, but usually include one or more of the following:

- additional instruction,
- tutoring,
- repeating an assignment,
- revision or correction of one's coursework,
- earning no credit on the work in question.

A student's failure to fulfill the assigned consequences is considered a Level 2 violation. Multiple Level 1 incidents, either in the same course or in several, call for more concerted intervention and taken together may also be considered a higher level of violation.

### **Level 2: Significant Violations**

These violations may include but are not limited to:

- repeated Level 1 violations,
- disregarding explicit instructions against collaborating on an assignment,
- giving or receiving significant or expert assistance on coursework without acknowledgement or attribution,
- using unauthorized materials on an exam,
- altering quiz or test answers and submitting for rescoring,
- submitting the same work to multiple professors without their knowledge or permission,
- collaborating to exchange information about a test,
- signing an attendance sheet for an absent peer,
- consistently citing sources improperly, or not citing sources at all in a paper.

In these violations, consequences are determined by the AIC chair in consultation with the reporting faculty member, after an alert is filed, and reviewed by the full AIC (the student will be kept anonymous from the other AIC members by the chair). At the discretion of the AIC, significant violation reports may be added to the student's permanent academic record. The AIC chair will inform the student of the consequences. Consequences may range from those appropriate to Level 1 violations to include the following:

- reduction of the final grade in a course,

- failure of a course, and/or
- academic probation.

The student's failure to meet with the professor or to fulfill the consequences is considered a Level 3 violation, which the AIC will investigate separately.

### **Level 3: Egregious Violations**

These violations may include but are not limited to:

- repeated violations (including at least one Level 2);
- taking a quiz or test for a peer;
- stealing an exam;
- willfully using major portions of a source without documentation;
- submitting work that is not one's own;
- purchasing or selling assignments, exams, or exam aids;
- electronically recording, photographing, or taking images of other's work, papers or examinations without permission;
- fabricating or intentionally misrepresenting data;
- deliberately undermining another student's success;
- lying when addressed regarding academic integrity violations;
- falsifying, damaging, or destroying academic, medical, or other legal documents.

Consequences for Level 3 violations may be reduced due to mitigating factors such as self-reporting, but will ultimately be determined by the AIC after meeting together with the reporting faculty member (the student will be kept anonymous from the other AIC members by the chair). The AIC chair will inform the student of the consequences. Level 3 offenses are automatically added to the student's permanent academic record and are not removed upon graduation or failure to return to Union College. Consequences may range from those appropriate to Level 2 violations to include suspension or dismissal from the college.

### **The Reporting Process**

Upon discovering that a violation may have occurred, the professor should investigate with the student and then report the offense by filing an alert.

#### **Meet with Student**

The faculty member should meet with the student, discuss the alleged violation, and seriously consider plausible student defenses. If the professor remains convinced a violation has occurred he/she should immediately report the incident by filing an alert. In cases where Level 3 violations are suspected and a meeting with a student may endanger fact-finding, contact the AIC chair before the student.

#### **File an Integrity Alert**

- In Portal, the Integrity Alert link is found under the "Academics" drop-down menu.
- Filing an Alert automatically sends a summary email to the reporting faculty member, their program director, and the student.
- This email informs the student of their right to appeal the decision to the AIC chair, and if a Level 1 violation also automatically includes notification that the violation will not become part of the student's permanent academic record. It also includes an invitation to provide a response directly to the AIC chair. If the student chooses to

respond to the AIC chair, they must do so within one week of the date of the emailed Integrity Alert summary.

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### **The Appeal Process**

The standard of proof for any instance of academic dishonesty will be clear and convincing evidence – a measure of proof that produces a firm belief in the allegations presented. It is more than the standard of “preponderance of the evidence” and less than the standard of “beyond a reasonable doubt.”

Students have several opportunities to challenge allegations of Integrity violations. They can defend themselves in the initial meeting with the reporting faculty member and they can present their case to the AIC chair after the Alert has been filed.

After consequences have been assigned, students have ten days to appeal to the AIC chair. Subsequent appeals (e.g. to the decision of the AIC chair) should be directed to the Vice President of Academic Administration within ten days of response of the AIC chair to the first appeal.

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### **Defined Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Responsibilities of the Office of Academic Administration (OAA)**

- Keep accessible the Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures on the College’s website and in the Academic Bulletin.
- Maintain a confidential record of all offenses and their consequences.
- Review course syllabi to ensure that the Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures is referenced.
- Include discussion of integrity issues in both new faculty orientation and faculty development.
- Archive documentation of all levels of violations according to the policy described above. Permanent electronic files maintained by the OAA are only reviewed in cases of a later alleged integrity violation. Records will be purged of Level 1 offenses when an individual graduates or two years after the last semester on campus. Level 2 files will be retained for five years after graduation or two years after the last semester on campus. Level 3 files and those Level 2 files so designated by the AIC become part of the student’s permanent academic record.

#### **Responsibilities of the Academic Integrity Committee (AIC)**

The AIC is composed of three members. The AIC chair and two additional faculty members are appointed for rotating, three-year terms. New members are nominated by the outgoing AIC chair and ratified by the Faculty Senate.

The AIC is empowered by the OAA to:

- Determine the consequences that a student may receive as the result of a “significant” or “egregious” violation of this policy;
- Review Alerts and collect original and additional information in regard to each incident as well as prior academic integrity violations by the student and the consequences previously assigned to similar violations;
- Maintain and adjust the Integrity Alert system;

- Gather data useful in policy amendments and to educate faculty on ways to minimize Academic Integrity issues (e.g. through course design and assessment timing);
- Provide an annual report to the faculty and College regarding academic integrity offenses and recommending changes to the policy.

### **Responsibilities of all Faculty Members**

- Course outlines or syllabi should discuss application of the integrity of scholarship statement and policy within the course and refer students to the Academic Integrity Policy in the Academic Services section of the College's website for further information.
- Professors should reiterate - at the outset of major assignments, at the start of quizzes and tests, and at other appropriate times - the behaviors expected of students throughout the semester and in each situation. Depending on the nature of an exam, a professor might note, for example, that students are not allowed to leave the room during the test or have electronic devices or notes nearby.
- Assignments should be thoughtfully designed to discourage or prevent dishonest work, and exams should be actively monitored.
- Professors are expected to document an alleged integrity violation; this evidence accompanies the formal report.
- Alleged violations should be kept strictly confidential.