

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY

Academic Integrity (Academic Regulation 33)

Saint Mary's University is committed to upholding academic integrity and adopts the following statement of values:

An academic community flourishes when its members are committed to these fundamental values:

1. **Respect:** An academic community of integrity is a community where individual growth of all members is advanced through the cultivation of mutual respect in an atmosphere of academic freedom.

We strive to create an environment where everyone recognizes their responsibility to respect the rights of other members of the university community, and nurtures a climate of respect, fairness, and civility toward others while embracing everyone's dignity, freedom, and diversity.

2. **Communication:** In an academic community of integrity, it is acknowledged that a shared point of view is not always possible, and that civil debate and discourse is necessary for intellectual growth even in the face of disagreement.

Through respectful and vigorous discussion and debate, individual freedoms may flourish without threatening the privileges or freedoms of others.

As new and emerging technologies change communication, all members of the academic community commit to continually be mindful of the safety, privacy, and confidentiality of others as well as that of their own.

3. **Responsibility & Accountability:** Personal behavior and actions have consequences. All members of the academic community commit to the responsible enjoyment and exercise of their rights, with respect for the rights of others.

All members of the academic community will be trustworthy and answerable for their conduct, decisions, and obligations, and will comply with all applicable laws, regulations, policies and procedures.

4. **Stewardship:** Members of an academic community of integrity value their community's property, infrastructure, and resources as assets that allow them to accomplish their work. All members of the academic community will use university resources ethically and in a wise and prudent manner to achieve our educational mission and strategic objectives.
5. **Excellence & Leadership:** Members of an academic community of integrity know that through scholarly inquiry, academic freedom improves through working and learning together.
6. **Honesty & Integrity:** Members of an academic community of integrity act and communicate truthfully and candidly as they uphold the university's values, and they make decisions based on the pursuit of truth and the honest search for knowledge.

All members of the academic community conduct themselves with integrity in learning, teaching and research.

Our conduct as community members should protect and promote the University's pursuit of the advancement of research and scholarship.

7. **Safety:** Members of the academic community will not endanger others, intentionally or recklessly. When situations arise where someone is in danger we will strive to act to alert the person, or the proper authorities, to the danger.

Adapted From - The Saint Mary's University 'Declaration of Respect'. For further information and resources see: <https://smu.ca/about/safe-and-respectful-smu.html>

Saint Mary's University is committed to maintaining a scholarly institution where all may come together for the common purpose of learning.

University students are expected to have a reasonable measure of self-discipline and maturity. While the University's teaching resources are available for help and guidance, and instructors and staff will make reasonable efforts to assist students with academic or other problems, the final responsibility for success or failure in academic studies rests with the students.

At times there may be considerable pressure to achieve high grades. Some students may be tempted to obtain grades by dishonest means. The integrity of the University and of the degrees it awards are compromised by practices such as cheating and plagiarism. The University does not condone such acts under any circumstances and will take appropriate disciplinary action. Students are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing offences, and to take responsibility for their actions.

Students are responsible for demonstrating behaviour that is honest and ethical in their academic work. Honest and ethical behaviour includes:

- Abiding by University Regulations and Policies and provincial and federal legislation.
- Following the expectations given by instructors for referencing sources of information and for group work.
- Submitting original work, citing sources fully, and respecting the authorship of others.
- Preventing their work from being used by others, e.g., not lending assignments to others, not uploading assignments or course materials to external "solutions" websites, protecting access to computer files, not asking someone else to do your work for you.
- Asking for clarification of expectations as necessary. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part may be viewed as a violation of the standards of academic integrity should ask their instructors of record.
- Adhering to the principles of academic integrity when conducting and reporting research.
- Adhering to codes of ethics that govern students who are members of regulated professions.

The Code of Student Conduct outlines the behaviors which the University considers to be non-academic misconduct offences, and the range of

remedies and/or sanctions which may be imposed. This Regulation applies to Academic Offences.

Examples of Academic Offences

These are examples of academic offences that may justify investigation and discipline under this Regulation. This list is not exhaustive, but should guide students in understanding expectations and those responsible for enforcing this Regulation.

Plagiarism

The presentation of words, ideas or techniques of another as one's own.

Plagiarism is not restricted to literary works and applies to all forms of information or ideas that belong to another (e.g., computer programs, mathematical solutions, scientific experiments, graphical images, or data).

Examples of plagiarism include:

- quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing text without proper acknowledgment;
- paraphrasing too closely (e.g., changing only a few words or simply rearranging the text);
- downloading all or part of a paper, journal article, or book from the Internet or a library database and presenting it as one's own work;
- purchasing documentation and presenting it as one's own work.

Cheating

The attempt to secure a grade by unethical means. Knowingly assisting someone to cheat is itself cheating.

Examples of cheating include:

- impersonating someone during a test or exam;
- copying or sharing information during a test or exam;
- using or possessing unauthorized materials (e.g., notes, books, calculators) during a test or exam;
- obtaining or looking at a copy of a test or exam before it is administered;
- improper use of technology (e.g., electronic devices to store and retrieve information during an exam);
- unauthorized use of communication technology (e.g.: cell phones, pagers, etc.);
- unauthorized use of material, including test banks;
- unauthorized collaboration between students when individual work is required.
- submitting the same work for credit in more than one course without the permission of the instructors involved;
- former or current students providing unauthorized support on exams, tests, assignments, etc;
- sharing work or parts of work, tests, assignments, answers, or any material that is submitted to an instructor for evaluation, including buying, selling, downloading/uploading content to/from external "tutoring" or "solutions" websites;
- any behaviour intended to gain unearned advantage.

Falsification

It is an offence to falsify any academic record or to use a falsified record.

Examples of falsification include:

- submitting a false excuse for missing a class, exam, etc. (e.g., forging a medical or death certificate);

- falsifying course work (e.g., altering or making up data, using fake citations in a bibliography);
- changing the answers on a returned assignment and resubmitting it to be reevaluated;
- submitting false information on a university admission form or other documentation;
- misrepresentation of knowledge of a language by providing inaccurate or incomplete information about one's linguistic educational history;
- non-disclosure of previous post-secondary enrolment;
- presentation of another's credentials as one's own.

Tampering

It is an offence to tamper with University library materials or computer system resources in any way which would deprive others of their use.

Tampering may also include disrupting, damaging, or destroying the academic work of another member of the university.

Examples of tampering include:

- destroying, hiding, or stealing library materials;
- altering or destroying university computer programs or files without authorization;
- accessing and altering official records without authorization;
- deliberately interfering with the academic work of others which could include deleting another's computer files, altering or destroying research data, or sabotaging a laboratory experiment.

Assisting someone in the commission of dishonest behavior as it relates to academic integrity is an offence subject to sanctions.

General Procedures

When a member of the University community (faculty, staff, or student) believes that an academic offence has been committed, they file an Incident Report (<https://www.smu.ca/academics/calendar/dishonesty-incident-report-form.html>) within 15 working days from the time the incident has been identified. The Report must identify and provide evidence of the alleged offence. The Incident Report will be forwarded to the Academic Integrity Administrator (the "Administrator") in the University Secretariat. The Administrator will record the submission and submit it to the appropriate AIO of the Faculty in which the incident occurred (or alternative given workload/availability).

In cases where faculty members do not abide by the decisions made by the AIO, Senior Academic Integrity Officer (SAIO), Senate Executive, or Academic Integrity Appeals Board, the Dean of the Faculty in which the course is offered may intervene to adjust the grade consistent with the decision made.

If a student is subject to a penalty for an academic integrity issue that is applied outside of the processes detailed in this Regulation, the student may file an academic appeal.

Reports must be on the form available from the Registrar's office at <https://smu.ca/academics/calendar/dishonesty-incident-report-form.html>.

The Form must be accompanied by:

- Instructor's memo describing the incident of dishonesty;
- Course Outline;
- Instructor's assignment or test (blank);

- Student submission(s) that include evidence of dishonesty (assignment, test, for example);
- Any other supporting materials or information pertinent to the matter;
- A student cannot withdraw from a course in which an Academic Integrity investigation is ongoing.

Academic Integrity Officers (AIO)

Each Dean will appoint two – three academic staff members to serve as the Academic Integrity Officers (AIO) and carry out the responsibilities of this Regulation within each Faculty.

The AIO is responsible for processing the reported incident as follows.

The AIO will notify the student within ten (10) business days of receiving a Report that there is an incident requiring investigation, and invite the student to meet, either in person or online. The notice will be in writing and will include:

- Notice of the alleged academic misconduct;
- Information on how to schedule a prompt meeting with the AIO to provide the student's response to the allegation, and the consequences of failing to do so;
- Notice of the right to be accompanied by a friend, peer, or student advocate, including SMUSA contact information;
- A link to a copy of this Regulation;
- Notice that the student cannot normally withdraw from the course in which there is an Academic Integrity charge against them.

Where an academic integrity case involves two or more students, it is the responsibility of the AIO to schedule a meeting with all students involved. Each student should be provided with an opportunity to meet individually with the AIO. In the case of group work, the AIO is required to assess the individual responsibility of each student based on the evidence, including the course outline and Instructor's instructions to students regarding responsibility for and assessment of group work.

Persons accompanying a student to a meeting with the AIO are for support purposes only and have no active role during the meeting. The AIO may ask the Administrator or another University employee to take notes during the meeting with the student. No instructor who is teaching a course in which the student is enrolled at the time of the meeting may be present.

The AIO may request additional information from the Instructor or the student before deciding whether the student committed an offence under this Regulation.

The AIO will consider the evidence and determine whether there has been a violation of this Regulation. If the AIO determines that there has been a violation of this Policy that warrants a Standard Sanction (see "Sanctions" below), the AIO will include the recommended sanction in their decision letter. The AIO's decision letter will be sent to the Administrator. Before the decision is sent to the student, the Administrator will determine if the incident is a second offence and refer it, if so, to the SAIO for sanctioning.

The Administrator will send the decision to the student, normally within ten (10) working days of the decision, and will provide a copy to the Registrar, the Department Chair, and the Instructor. The message will

include information about the appeal process and timeline (see "Appeals" below) and SMUSA's contact information for their assistance.

If the AIO determines that there has been a violation of this Regulation that warrants a Severe or Very Severe Sanction, the AIO must refer the matter to the SAIO, with a summary of the AIO's findings and a recommended Severe Sanction. There should be no decision or notice of right to appeal until the sanction is determined by the SAIO.

Senior Academic Integrity Officer (SAIO)

The Senior Academic Integrity Officer will be an academic staff member or senior administrator appointed by the Vice-President, Academic and Research. Upon receipt of a referral from the Administrator (in the case of a second offence) or an AIO, the SAIO may accept or reject the recommended Severe Sanctions and/or impose additional sanctions. The SAIO has the authority to recommend a Very Severe Sanction, but the decision to impose a Very Severe Sanction is made by the Senate Executive.

If the SAIO imposes Severe Sanctions, the Administrator will notify the student in writing of the SAIO's decision and sanction imposed. A copy of the decision will be provided to the Registrar, the Department Chair, the instructor and the AIO. The message will include information about the appeal process and timeline (see "Appeals" below) and SMUSA's contact information for their assistance.

If the SAIO recommends a Very Severe Sanction to the Senate Executive, the matter will be referred to the Senate Executive, with a summary of the SAIO's findings and recommended Very Severe Sanction. There should be no decision or notice of right to appeal until the sanction is determined by the Senate Executive

Senate Executive

The Senate Executive may accept or reject the recommended Very Severe Sanction(s). The student must be informed of the decision in writing and advised of their right and the timeline to appeal (see "Appeals" below), along with SMUSA's contact information for their assistance.

The decision will be provided to the Administrator, who will send it to the student, the Registrar, the Department Chair, the Instructor, the SAIO, and the AIO.

Appeals

Senate Academic Integrity Appeal Board

Composition

The Senate Academic Integrity Appeal Board is comprised of six representatives of the faculty and two representatives of the student body. The Academic Integrity Administrator provides administrative services to the Board.

The faculty representatives are elected by Senate for a three-year term.

There shall be two faculty representatives from each of the Faculties of Arts, Business, and Science, with no two faculty representatives from the same Department. In cases involving a graduate student a faculty representative appointed by the Dean of Graduate Studies and a graduate student representative will also attend. The student representatives shall be appointed by the Students' Association.

Function

The Senate Academic Integrity Appeal Board shall:

1. Appoint from its members, panels to review and hear appeals of decisions made pursuant to this Regulation based only on one or more of the following grounds:

- a. a failure to follow Procedural Fairness;
 - b. a failure to follow University rules, regulations or policies.
 - c. compelling new evidence not considered by the AIO, SAIO or Senate Executive which may have, in the opinion of the Board members, altered an earlier decision(s);
2. Have the responsibility to ensure the execution of its decisions.

Procedural Fairness

The procedures for handling offences reflect the gravity with which the University views such offences. At the same time, these procedures represent the University's commitment to fairness.

Fairness is fundamental when dealing with students. Students have the right to be informed of policies, procedures, or guidelines that may affect their academic progress or their conduct and have the right to question whether decisions are consistent with those policies, procedures, or guidelines.

Each student is entitled to:

- the presumption of innocence;
- have matters addressed fairly and expeditiously;
- be made aware of the case against them, including the pertinent evidence, information, and particulars that the AIO is aware of and whether the AIO intends to collect additional evidence;
- know, respond to, and seek clarification of the evidence gathered and presented by witnesses;
- be accompanied by a support person to any meeting with administrators and to any hearing;
- have matters heard by those who are not sitting in judgment of their own actions or decisions; and
- receive decisions based on the balance of probabilities, with consideration given to consistency and University precedent.

Procedures

Initiation of the Appeal

1. The student or instructor may initiate an appeal under this Regulation by submitting an Academic Integrity Appeal Form (<https://www.smu.ca/academics/calendar/academic-integrity-appeal-form.html>). Appeals will not be accepted without the student's A# and completion in full of the Appeal Form. Appeals must be submitted not later than ten (10) working days from the date the decision being appealed has been sent in writing to the parties. Late appeals will not be accepted.
2. Upon receipt of an Appeal Form, the Administrator shall assemble a **three-person review panel** from the members of the Board, preferably two faculty members and one student. The review panel will determine if the appeal involves a permissible ground for appeal as set out herein (see **Function** and **Procedural Fairness** sections above).
3. The appellant is provided with the option of a five-minute interview with the review panel to present their grounds for appeal. Students may bring a friend, peer, or student advocate to this interview. These individuals are for support purposes only and have no active role during the meeting.

Appointment of an Appeal Hearing Panel

1. If the review panel determines there are grounds for an appeal, then the Administrator shall assemble an **Appeal Hearing Panel** from the

members of the Board. An Appeal Hearing Panel is comprised of an Appeal Hearing Panel Chair (ideally from a different Faculty than the appellant), two (2) Faculty members, and one (1) student.

2. The Administrator will forward the Notice of Appeal Hearing to:
 - a. Dean of the Faculty (or designate) from which the original complaint emanated;
 - b. The Chair of the Department from which the original complaint emanated;
 - c. The instructor who initiated the incident report;
 - d. The decision maker, i.e. the AIO, SAIO, or Senate Executive, as the case may be.
 - e. The student; and
 - f. Enrolment Services.

Appeal Hearing Panel Procedure

1. The Appeal Hearing Panel shall be convened to hear the appeal as soon as practical, but except in extenuating circumstances or by agreement of the parties not later than fifteen (15) working days after it is constituted.
2. The Appeal Hearing Panel shall determine its procedures subject to the following:
 - a. all parties involved, including the appellant, respondent [AIO, SAIO or Senate Executive], Instructor, and Department Chair, shall be given adequate notice and full opportunity to participate;
 - b. the basis of the appeal shall be presented by the person who made the appeal (the Appellant);
 - c. evidence supporting or rebutting the appeal may be given by witnesses;
 - d. the hearing shall be in camera. The student is entitled to one observer.

Outcome of the Appeal

The Appeal Hearing Panel may, by a majority vote:

1. deny the appeal;
2. allow the appeal and quash the decision entirely;
3. allow the appeal but require a re-evaluation of the decision by another person [AIO, SAIO, or Senate Executive] or panel; or
4. allow the appeal on the merits and modify the imposed sanctions.

Copy of the Decision

Within five (5) working days from the date the Appeal Hearing Panel has rendered its decision, the Administrator shall send a copy of the decision to the student who initiated the appeal and to the persons mentioned in Section 2 of **Appointment of an Appeal Hearing Panel**, above.

Compliance within Thirty (30) Calendar Days

Where the Appeal Hearing Panel has determined that a person or Faculty is to address or act upon a particular matter, the person or Faculty shall within thirty (30) calendar days of when the decision has been communicated, advise the Hearing Panel Chair and the Administrator of its compliance, or timetable for compliance, with the decision.

No Further Appeal

The findings and ruling of the Academic Integrity Appeal Board Appeal Hearing Panel shall be binding without further appeal.

Sanctions

The AIO, SAIO, Senate Executive, and Academic Appeal Hearing Panel may impose the following sanctions of an academic nature and, without restricting the generality of the foregoing, may include any one or more of:

Standard Sanctions: Can be imposed by AIO or SAIO

- a failing grade or mark or assessment in the course component triggering the discipline;
- reduction in grade in the course component triggering the discipline;
- completion of Academic Integrity training;
- redo the assignment that triggered the discipline;
- completion of a remediation process.

Severe Sanctions: Can only be imposed by SAIO

- reduction in final grade in the class or course;
- failure of the class or course;
- suspension or dismissal for an academic term or year (to a maximum dismissal of three (3) academic years);
- loss of current or continuing scholarship, or both, or loss of eligibility to receive or maintain scholarships, prizes or bursaries;
- removal from the Dean's list;
- academic notation on transcript.

Very Severe Sanctions: Can only be imposed by Senate Executive

- expulsion from the University;
- revocation of degree, certificate or diploma.

A student cannot withdraw from a course in which they receive the sanction of failure for an Academic Integrity violation.

Notices

All notices required by this Regulation or other communications to students and others as provided in this Regulation will be sent to their @smu.ca email listed in Banner at the time the decision is made. Notices and communications sent via this email are deemed to have been received.

University Secretariat and Academic Integrity Administrator

The University Secretariat provides administrative support and advice to those charged with decision-making responsibilities under this Regulation. To ensure the University fulfils its commitment to Procedural Fairness, the University Secretariat provides forms of notices and communications to students, appellants, and respondents in proceedings under this Regulation and, through the Academic Integrity Administrator, provides full administrative services, including preparing correspondence, recordkeeping, scheduling, and other operational support required by AIOs, the SAIO, the Board, and Senate, related to academic integrity processes. The University Secretariat is available to those charged with responsibilities under this Regulation for consultation and advice on any matter related to fulfilment of such responsibilities.