



Procedure for Addressing Academic Dishonesty

Academic Integrity

The College promotes and maintains high ethical standards of academic conduct. In order for a student to get the most out of their education and in order to uphold the integrity of the degrees and certificates that the College awards, each instructor must also support, promote and ensure academic integrity in the classroom. By doing so, they are ensuring the integrity of York County Community College and its students, faculty and staff. In order to promote academic integrity, one must first understand academic dishonesty and the process the instructor may follow if one suspects academic misconduct.

Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct includes cheating and plagiarism.

Cheating is an attempt to use unethical or dishonest means to perform work for a course. These may include but are not limited to, copying the work of others, bringing unapproved sources of information during tests or other work ("cheat sheets", the use of information stored on electronic devices, the use of others' work on out-of-class assignments, etc.), taking an examination on behalf of another person, or having another person taking an exam on one's behalf, and any other covert means to complete work without the approval of the instructor. Cheating encompasses both those giving and receiving aid.

Plagiarism is the undocumented use of information or the work of others presented as one's own. York County Community College recognizes two types of plagiarism: accidental plagiarism and deliberate plagiarism.

Accidental plagiarism occurs when a student attempts to cite their sources, but does so improperly or incompletely. Accidental plagiarism is considered to be poor work and may be graded as such.

Deliberate plagiarism occurs when a student copies the work of others or purposefully uses information from sources with no attempt to document it and presents it as their own. Submitting the same work in more than one course without the prior permission of both instructors is also considered to be deliberate plagiarism. Deliberate plagiarism is considered to be academic dishonesty.

If an instructor suspects academic dishonesty, we recommend the following procedure.

Documenting the misconduct

Accusing someone of academic dishonesty is a serious allegation. The instructor should be able to explain and justify their allegations of academic misconduct. Where possible, document the instance of cheating or plagiarism. In the case of plagiarism, for example, the instructor should attempt to find the original plagiarized source. Printouts of plagiarized web pages, articles, or other students' work should be obtained as supporting evidence. YCCC Library staff can assist instructors in this search.

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Determining the consequences of the misconduct

According to MCCS policy 309, the instructor has the authority to review the instance of academic misconduct and to determine the consequences. Instructor responses to academic misconduct may include, but are not limited to the following: giving a zero grade to the assignment, but allowing the student to make up the work; giving a zero grade to the assignment without possibility of make-up; assigning additional work to the student over and above that assigned to other students; or failing the student for the course. If the instructor deems the offense to be serious enough, he or she may report the incident to the Dean of Students for appropriate action (see below). Ideally, the consequences determined by the instructor should be commensurate with the severity and intentionality of the misconduct. The instructor may consult with the department chair and/or the Dean of Students prior to making such decisions.

Communicating with the student

It's important to communicate clearly with students about academic honesty and misconduct from the beginning of the semester. The instructor's policies and procedures regarding academic dishonesty should be outlined in the course syllabus. The Library and the Student Success Commons have handouts and online tutorials to educate students about plagiarism and citation style. Instruction sessions and workshops are also available.

In the event of academic misconduct, the instructor should use the Academic Dishonesty Report to communicate the misconduct to the student, with its consequences. A follow-up conversation with the student is recommended to make sure they understand the seriousness of the issue and to give them an opportunity to respond. A copy of the Academic Dishonesty Report, with supporting documentation of the misconduct, should also be forwarded to the Dean of Students in order to establish a record of misconduct. If the consequence decided upon is to assign a failing grade for the course, the instructor must notify the Office of Records and Retention of the grade when the Academic Dishonesty Report is given to the student.

Pursuing sanctions beyond those imposed by the instructor

In those instances when the instructor seeks to pursue additional sanctions beyond the grade, the College will use the procedures outlined in the MCCS Student Code of Conduct. The Dean of Students or other person(s) designated by the college president will review the allegations and investigative findings and determine if additional sanctions are warranted. (MCCS Policies – section 309).

The student's right to appeal

In those instances when a student seeks to challenge an instructor's determinations of academic dishonesty, the student should use the College's grade appeal process. More information on that process can be found in the College Catalog or from staff in Student Services.

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