

# Academic Dishonesty

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The School of Theology expects and requires the highest standards of integrity in academic work as well as in personal and community relationships. Academic dishonesty undermines the very foundation of the enterprise in which we are engaged and threatens to deceive those who will eventually depend on the knowledge and integrity of the men and women who receive their preparation for ministry here. It therefore constitutes unacceptable behavior and conduct.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Cheating—the breach of (pre-established) ground rules for completion of assignments, including examinations, by use of resources other than those which have been indicated as permissible. It is assumed that examinations which are designed to test recall of a body of information and the assimilation of that information by a student (“closed book examinations”) do not permit the assistance of written material or assistance from other persons.
- Plagiarism—the use of materials without proper acknowledgment of sources and the submission as one’s own ideas, words, and writings of another.
- Fabrication—the submission of material that has, in fact, been produced by others or is the result of substantial assistance received from others but not noted as the product of such assistance, or making up false sources.
- Duplication—the submission, without prior permission, of portions of the same academic work in fulfillment of requirements for more than one course.
- Facilitating academic dishonesty—participation in support of the above-named behaviors.

Standards for open book exams are the same as for papers. On closed book exams one reconstructs the best references possible.

Academic honesty is foundational to the learning enterprise. Sometimes, academic dishonesty is deliberate, as in the case of cheating on a test, but sometimes it is unintentional, such as the paraphrase of source material without attribution or the direct quotation of cited material without quotation marks. Nonetheless, use of another’s work without attribution, *regardless of intent*, constitutes a violation of academic honesty. Lack of intent does not constitute a defense. Decisions about when to cite sources should always err on the side of citation. Particularly lucid guidance about the citation of sources has been developed by Vassar College, available here (<http://deanofthecollege.vassar.edu/documents/sources>). Dartmouth College has also developed useful guidance, available here (<http://writing-speech.dartmouth.edu/learning/materials/sources-and-citations-dartmouth>).

The standard guide for the writing of papers, especially citation formatting, in the School of Theology is Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*, 9th ed., University of Chicago Press, 2018, which reflects the citation of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th ed. *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17th edition, and *The Chicago Manual of Style Online* (<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>) (<http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>) are also acceptable guides.

## Discipline

Persons who are found to have engaged in any form of academic dishonesty will be subject to disciplinary action. If plagiarism, cheating, fabrication or duplication occurs, the student will automatically fail the course in which the incident occurred, and may be dismissed from the School of Theology or be subject to other sanctions. Facilitating the academic dishonesty of others will result in the same or similar consequences.

## Procedures

1. In order to preserve the integrity of the educational enterprise and to support the vast majority of students who maintain personal integrity in such matters, the faculty will report to the associate dean for academic affairs when dishonesty has occurred.<sup>1</sup>
2. Because the health of any community is determined not only by the degree to which standards of integrity are maintained by those who hold positions of authority in that community, but also by the degree that all members of the community participate in the maintenance of its standards, it is the expectation that students and faculty who observe or know of an instance of academic dishonesty will report it to the associate dean for academic affairs, outlining its specific nature. Such responsibility should, of course, be exercised with due care and should avoid action based on hearsay or rumor.
3. When the associate dean for academic affairs has been presented with such a report, he or she shall make a judgment as to whether it gives sufficient cause to believe that a breach of academic honesty has occurred. If he or she so judges, the associate dean for academic affairs will notify the student that such an allegation has been made and apprise the student of its nature. The student will be given opportunity to present the student’s own interpretation of events related to the allegation and any evidence and/or witnesses to support that interpretation.
4. If, on the basis of such a presentation, it is the judgment of the associate dean for academic affairs there is a likelihood that the allegation is unfounded, the matter will be considered closed with no permanent record in the student’s file. (Administrative records may be kept as necessary.)

- a. If the associate dean for academic affairs judges that academic dishonesty has occurred, and the student does not wish to contest the allegation, the student will receive a failing grade for the course. The associate dean for academic affairs will inform the faculty of the incident of academic dishonesty and the resultant failing grade. Any further disciplinary action will be made by the faculty with counsel from the associate dean for academic affairs.
  - b. During the academic year, if the student does wish to contest the allegation, the associate dean for academic affairs will convene a board consisting of two members of the faculty who serve as advisors, normally including the student's own advisor, and two students elected by the student body. This board will review the nature of the allegation and its basis. It will also afford the student opportunity to present his or her understanding of the events related to the allegation. If on the basis of that review, it is the opinion of the board that there is a likelihood that the allegation is unfounded, the matter will be considered closed with no permanent record kept in the student's file. (Administrative records may be kept as necessary.) If on the contrary, the board judges that there is sufficient warrant to believe that an instance of academic dishonesty has occurred, the student will receive a failing grade for the course. The associate dean for academic affairs will inform the faculty of this decision and bring any recommendation for further disciplinary action before the faculty.
  - c. During the summer session, if the student does wish to contest the allegation, the associate dean for academic affairs will convene the Advanced Degrees Program Committee. The committee will review the nature of the allegation and its basis. It will also afford the student opportunity to present his or her understanding of the events related to the allegation. If on the basis of that review, it is the opinion of the committee that there is a likelihood that the allegation is unfounded, the matter will be considered closed with no permanent record kept in the student's file. (Administrative records may be kept as necessary.) If on the contrary, the committee judges that there is sufficient warrant to believe that an instance of academic dishonesty has occurred, the student will receive a failing grade for the course. The associate dean for academic affairs will inform the faculty of this decision and bring any recommendation for further disciplinary action before the faculty.
5. The student may appeal the judgment to the dean of the School of Theology within 10 days of the decision. The dean will report his decision to the faculty and the appellant.
  6. The student may, in the last resort, appeal the dean's judgment to the vice-chancellor and president within 10 days of the dean's decision.
- <sup>1</sup> In the event that the associate dean of academic affairs is the instructor bringing the report, the dean will appoint a senior faculty member to serve in the role designated for the associate dean in procedures outlined in steps 3 through 4.