

Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy for Graduate Students in the School of Communication

Bellarmino University is an academic community. It exists for the sake of the advancement of knowledge; the pursuit of truth; the intellectual, ethical, and social development of students; and the general wellbeing of society. All members of our community have an obligation to themselves, to their peers, and to the institution to uphold the integrity of Bellarmine University.

In the area of academic honesty, this means that one's work should be one's own and that the faculty member's evaluation should be based on the student's own efforts and understanding. When the standards of academic honesty are breached, mutual trust is undermined, the ideals of personal responsibility and autonomy are violated, teaching and learning are severely compromised, and the academic integrity of the university is undermined.

Students and faculty members must be fully aware of what constitutes academic dishonesty; claims of ignorance cannot be used to justify or rationalize dishonest acts. Academic dishonesty can take a number of forms, including but not limited to cheating, plagiarism, fabrication, aiding and abetting, multiple submissions of the same work or submitting substantive portions of works previously submitted for credit in other courses; obtaining unfair advantage, and unauthorized access to academic or administrative systems.

Cheating includes receiving or giving help on papers, experiments, reports, compositions, projects, or examinations without the faculty member's permission. It also includes submitting as one's own work part or all of the completed assignment of another individual. Of special note and concern is the use of purchased research papers. It is a violation of the regulations of Bellarmine University for a student to submit a term paper or any academic work that has been purchased. Cheating also includes using unauthorized materials and aids, such as books, one's own notes or those of another, and calculators or other electronic devices during an examination.

Plagiarism is the fraudulent misrepresentation of any part of another person's work as one's own. Submitting any writing, including take-home exams or other assignments, that does not properly acknowledge that one is quoting or paraphrasing another person's words or that fails to give proper credit for another person's ideas, opinion, or theory, is plagiarism. Any unacknowledged use of sources to which one is indebted, including but not limited to music, video, audio, theatre projects, compositions, web site, and computer software, constitutes plagiarism.

Fabrication is the falsification or invention of information or data in reports, lab results, field or clinical work, bibliographies, or any other academic undertaking.

Multiple submissions refers to submitting identical papers or course work for credit in more than one course without prior permission of the faculty member.

Obtaining unfair advantage includes the theft, alteration, destruction, or obstruction of another student's work. This may take the form of theft, defacement, or destruction of resources, e.g., library periodicals and books, so as to deprive other students of information. It also includes gaining or providing access to examination materials prior to the time authorized by a faculty

member; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on an academic assignment; retaining, possessing, or circulating previously used examination materials if specifically told not to use them; obstructing or interfering with another student's academic work; or engaging in any activity designed to obtain an unfair advantage over another student in the same course.

Unauthorized access is viewing or altering computer records in any way, modifying computer programs or systems, releasing or distributing information gathered via unauthorized access, misrepresenting through digital media oneself or someone else, or in any way interfering with the use or availability of computer systems/information.

Aiding and abetting is assisting someone in an act of academic dishonesty as defined above. This may be done by providing material, information, or other assistance that violates academic integrity, or providing false information in connection with any inquiry regarding academic integrity.

Note: Professional programs may have additional standards or requirements regarding academic and professional integrity; students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with these. Any breach of these standards or requirements constitutes a violation of the University's Academic Honesty and Integrity Policy.

I. Procedures to Follow in Cases of a Violation of Academic Honesty or Integrity When the Incident Occurs in a Class

1. If, as a result of clear and compelling evidence, a faculty member suspects a violation of academic honesty or integrity, the faculty member must consult (in person or via email) his/her Program Director about the suspected violation within five (5) University working days (hereafter in this document defined as days when Bellarmine University administrative offices are officially open) after discovery of the suspected violation, explaining the nature and basis of the allegation. Any questions about the violation itself or process, including appropriate penalties, should be discussed at this time.
2. Within five (5) University working days of the meeting with the Program Director the faculty member will request a meeting with the student. In the event that the student is unable to meet, for instance after final exams, email may be utilized within this same specified timeframe. The faculty member is required to explain to the student the nature and basis of the alleged violation of academic honesty or violation of integrity, as well as the penalty to be applied. The student must be provided with the opportunity to respond verbally and/or in writing. If the incident involves a course in which the student is NOT enrolled, the faculty member whose course is involved requests the conference with the student, and if the allegation was reported by a person other than the faculty member, this person may be invited to attend the conference.
3. If the faculty member remains convinced after discussion with the student that the alleged infraction did occur, the faculty member is required to communicate this in writing, via email, to the student within seven (7) University business days after the discussion with the student (whether via conference or email) took place.

This discussion with the student must include:

- a. a description of the offense being reported to the Office of Academic Affairs;
 - b. the penalty the faculty member has decided to impose; and
 - c. notification of any additional department/college/school/programmatic penalty.
4. After the faculty member has notified the student that a report of academic dishonesty is being reported to the Office of Academic Affairs, the faculty member is required to complete the *Action Report for Violations of Academic Honesty and Integrity Form*, which is available through mybellarmine.edu on the Faculty page. The report should be sent electronically to:
- a. the Program Director;
 - b. the Dean of the college or school in which the infraction occurred;
 - c. the Dean of the student's college or school; and
 - d. the Provost.

II. Procedures to Follow in Cases of Violations of Academic Honesty or Integrity When They Occur Outside of a Class

If a suspected violation of academic honesty or integrity occurs outside of a class, individuals will report this to the Provost, who will address the infraction according to procedures set forth in Section I of this document.

III. Penalties for Violations of Academic Honesty and/or Integrity

1. The faculty member's choice of penalty ranges from a minimum penalty of failing the assignment or test to failing the course itself. If the latter penalty is imposed, the faculty member must inform the Office of the Registrar immediately so that the student may not withdraw from the course with a "W" grade instead of the intended grade of F. Additional penalties may be levied in cases where:
 - a. Departments/colleges/schools/programs have established policies addressing violations of academic honesty and integrity. In such instances, the Program Director will enforce the program's policies.
 - b. The Provost or his/her designee determines that the violation of academic honesty or integrity warrants further sanctions than those imposed by the faculty member and/or Program Director.
2. In all instances, if a previous violation of academic honesty or integrity has been reported to the Office of Academic Affairs, the Provost will take action as outlined below:

Record of one prior offense - immediate and permanent dismissal from the university. This sanction is in addition to the penalty imposed by the faculty member. The academic transcript will note academic dismissal for the semester in which the second offense takes place.

3. The VPAA is to communicate in writing the penalty imposed to the student within ten (10) University business days. A copy of this communication is sent to the dean of the student's college or school, the Chairperson of the student's major, and the student's advisor.

IV. Communication with Students

In the master's programs in the School of Communication, the Program Director will communicate to the student in writing and within ten (10) University business days the penalty(ies) imposed as a result of violations of academic honesty and/or integrity. A copy of this communication is sent to the Dean of the student's school or college and the student's academic advisor.

V. Academic Grievance Policy

Students who believe they have been treated unfairly with respect violations of academic honesty and/or integrity may initiate and pursue the grievance procedure described in the *Course Catalog*.