

Appendix IX

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Italicized text constitutes provisional policies at the time of revisions that will be used until the Faculty approves those or new policies.

Also see the [Colby Student Handbook](#) for academic integrity information provided to students and the [Colby academic integrity website](#) pages for additional information and resources, including the [quick guide to promoting academic integrity](#).

Honesty, integrity and personal responsibility are cornerstones of a Colby education and provide the foundation for scholarly inquiry, intellectual discourse and an open and welcoming campus community. These values are articulated in the [Colby Affirmation](#) and are central to the academic endeavor. Colby students are expected to aspire to the highest standards of integrity; to understand what is expected in each course or program; submit work that reflects their best efforts; follow the guidelines for each assignment; accurately represent sources; give credit to anyone or anything whose work is used or relied upon; and to seek help when struggling with an assignment rather than resorting to unethical means. Course assignments and exams are given to facilitate and evaluate learning required to earn a Colby degree. These are compromised when academic dishonesty occurs. Unethical behavior often occurs when students feel disconnected from the coursework, when they feel under pressure, or that they do not have time to complete the work independently.

Promoting Academic Integrity in Your Courses

Instructors should help students understand the value of the assigned work, develop a growth mindset, and learn what constitutes ethical behavior. Keep in mind that students typically have four courses a semester and each one has its own policies and allowed practices. This makes it difficult for students to keep track of what is acceptable in each individual course and underscores the need for appropriate repeated reminders to minimize confusion. Students may not consider that policies vary between different venues, such as between high school and Colby, or between Colby classes, even those taught by the same instructor. For example, while using and reposting images and text passages without acknowledgement is accepted and even encouraged in the social media they use, the same behavior is almost always considered to be plagiarism in a college course.

Educating students about ethical academic behavior in the context of your course is part of your job. Clear policies should be given in your syllabus, discussed in class with an opportunity to ask for clarifications, and in each assignment document/rubric for at least the following: Is collaboration allowed on this assignment and how is collaboration defined? If so, with whom are collaborations allowed? To what extent can electronic resources, including generative AI, be used on this assignment? If collaborations and electronic resources are allowed, what are the limitations with rationales and citation requirements? Additional considerations to promote clarity and transparency include scaffolding the assignment (to help prevent some students from becoming overwhelmed and/or underestimating the time required to do the assignment) and determining ahead of time what supportive feedback will be available or is available from you that your students can use to complete or learn from the assignment(s).

Remind students as needed that there are ample resource individuals available at Colby who are willing and able to help them with various aspects of their education. These include you and their other course professors (for instance, in office hours or an appointment set up by email), an assigned academic advisor, an assigned advising dean, a course teaching/learning assistant or laboratory instructor, a librarian, a tutor, or even a coach, faculty liaison, learning consultant, counselor in the Health Center or community advisor, when applicable. Also remind students that the grade penalty in a course for late or substandard work done honestly will be much less than the grade penalty incurred by a sanction for academic dishonesty in that course.

Academic Integrity Violations

Students who fail to meet standards of academic integrity at Colby are to be reported for either academic dishonesty or academic negligence. The reporting professor decides whether a particular situation warrants a report of academic dishonesty or academic negligence based on the following guidelines. *However, to promote fairness and consistency, a report may be reclassified (before an academic review board meets) by agreement of the Chair of the Academic Honesty Committee and the Director of the Office of Community Values.* An academic review board also has the authority to reclassify a case of academic dishonesty as negligence as the outcome of case review.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Violating clearly stated rules for taking an exam, completing homework or working on any other academic assignment (such rules may be found in the course syllabus or given in the exam or assignment directions, whether orally or in writing);
- Plagiarism (including material or ideas from sources, including but not limited to generative AI, classmates, or online sources, without a citation and/or quotation marks around any borrowed words);
- Claiming another's work or a modification of another's work as one's own, including the use of generative AI for the production of work submitted as one's own;
- Relying on external materials or tools, such as generative AI, when they are not allowed or approved;
- Having electronic devices during examinations when it is not allowed, regardless of whether a device is used;
- Buying or attempting to buy or obtain papers or projects for submission as one's own in a course;
- Fabricating information or citations, including relying on generative AI to so do;
- Misrepresentations to a faculty member within the context of a course, an academic assignment or an academic record;

- Submitting the same work (such as an essay) in more than one course without the permission of the respective faculty members;
- Knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, such as providing them with materials or excessive editing/advice.

“Generative AI” includes platforms such as ChatGPT, Notebook LM, Gemini, and Grammarly, as well as many other tools available online. While it is the student’s responsibility to ensure that any tool is acceptable to use by consulting with the course instructor before using any external tool or resource that is not clearly indicated as allowed, the instructor should clearly indicate in each assignment or assessment what can and cannot be used and what the limitations of use are along with rationales when instructive. Be cautious in the use of AI writing checkers, as these are not reliable.

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense. Violations on a piece of work worth 10% or less of the course grade are typically considered a minor violation; violations on a piece of work worth 11% or more of the course grade and semester exams or final projects, regardless of the grade value, are considered a major violation.

Sanctions for Academic Dishonesty are assigned by an academic review board and may include, but are not limited to:

- Minor violations – receiving no credit for the assignment; receiving no credit for part of an assignment; a course grade reduction of $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{2}{3}$ or a full letter-grade; educational programming addressing academic integrity
- Major violations – failure of the course; educational programming addressing academic integrity
- Multiple violations – suspension or expulsion from the College (For a student responsible for two separate minor violations, the academic review board has the discretion to treat the second violation as a major violation, especially if it is similar or identical to the first violation. However, the review board also has the discretion not to impose a suspension, despite treating the matter as a major violation.)

By law, a finding of academic dishonesty is retained as a disciplinary record until six years after the student graduates or leaves the College. This finding does not appear on a transcript or as part of an academic record. Many applications to educational institutions, such as to graduate or professional schools, request that discipline or academic dishonesty findings be disclosed and addressed. If addressed appropriately (responsibility for the action taken, combined with an authentic statement of the lessons learned), such findings do not usually preclude acceptance into those institutions unless a finding is quite egregious or there are multiple findings.

Academic negligence consists of a minor, usually unintentional lapse of ethical academic behavior that the student should have known. This may result from misunderstanding expectations; inadequate pre-college preparation; or different citation practices due to cultural differences. Regardless of intent, academic negligence is a serious matter that identifies a need for further education, for instance on academic honesty and dishonesty or the U.S. standards for use of sources in academic writing. A finding of academic negligence, unlike a finding of academic dishonesty, is not

a disciplinary finding of the College and is typically handled solely by the course instructor. A student should not receive more than one report of academic negligence while at Colby. Multiple reports of academic negligence are generally treated as academic dishonesty, especially when similar in nature.

Processes for Academic Integrity Violations

If you suspect a student has made an academic integrity violation, unless there is a good reason not to, reach out to the student and ask them to meet with you. View this meeting as a fact-finding and/or an educational session. For instance, ask the student to explain passages that don't make sense in the context of the assignment and/or ask how the student completed the work in order to understand what happened. Sometimes the student did something or has a viewpoint that you hadn't considered and there was no academic integrity violation. Calmly explain what seems to be concerning to you, which usually makes the student become less defensive and more likely to be forthcoming than if you were to aggressively confront the student with your suspicions. Also ask yourself if you would make the same conclusion for any student, or if you have been unconsciously applying a different standard or making assumptions about a particular student that are influencing your perspective (for example, assuming that an international student couldn't have written a paper so well).

If you conclude that a student has made an academic integrity violation, you are required to submit a report in Student Workday. The report form is found by going to the Faculty/Staff Academics Dashboard, selecting the Teaching tab, and then under External Links and Resources selecting the Academic Integrity Form.

In the following text, the *“Academic Integrity Coordinator” (AIC)* refers to a member of staff in the *Office of Community Values, Conflict Resolution, and Restorative Practice (“OCV”)* and *“Chair”* refers to the *Chair of the faculty Academic Honesty Committee*. The Academic Honesty Committee members are elected by the Faculty or are appointed by the Provost's Office.

The **academic negligence** report goes to the Chair and the OCV along with the student, the student's class dean, and the student's academic advisor(s). The reporting faculty member selects the appropriate sanction(s). This includes an educational conversation with the instructor about the transgression and may also include the successful completion of an instructive module on plagiarism or other educational components deemed appropriate by the instructor. Proof of the completion of educational modules is sent to the OCV. The instructor communicates that any other requirements have been met to the OCV. Students are required to complete any requirements before the deadline for grade submission or they will receive an administrative incomplete in the course. An unresolved administrative incomplete will be automatically converted to a grade of F by the Registrar's office after the deadline for submitting incomplete grades. There is no notation of a negligence report on a student's transcript and this information is not shared with anyone outside of Colby. Also, there are no other ramifications unless the student doesn't complete the assigned sanctions in a timely manner or has another negligence (or dishonesty) report.

An academic negligence report is intended as a corrective warning to the student from the course instructor to emphasize that academic integrity is a serious matter. The sanctions should be

supportive educational components designed to help the student understand the error and learn how to proceed with integrity. Thus, a negligence report should not be associated with a severe grade penalty (e.g., the penalty should not by itself significantly impact the student's final course grade), as this violates the intended nature of the report. Ideally, if a student is negligent in an assignment, this would be addressed by having the student redo the assignment (perhaps with a modest late penalty), submit an additional piece of work, and/or complete some other relevant activity to provide an opportunity to learn from the assignment and the error in a supportive fashion.

The **academic dishonesty** report goes to the Chair and the OCV. The OCV will notify the Dean of Studies Office. The process is then as follows.

- The AIC will engage with the reporting instructor to ensure all the appropriate materials are submitted. All reports, plus supporting materials and evidence must be submitted electronically to the AIC.
- The student will be notified of the alleged violation, typically via email.
- The student must meet with the AIC, who will explain the process, and provide guidance on that student's written submission(s), which are also submitted electronically.
- The student's submissions may include a written response to the alleged violation. *The AIC may follow up with the student to suggest edits and/or additions to their response.* The student may also submit a written mitigating circumstances statement. Mitigating circumstances are any factors specific to a student which may give good cause to reduce the severity of sanctions. These can include personal circumstances at the time of the violation (e.g., recent trauma) or general circumstances that may cause a sanction to have a greater impact than it would for most other students (e.g., loss of financial aid, loss of visa). Mitigating circumstances statements are held confidentially by the AIC and only shared with academic review board members if the board determines that the student is responsible for the violation so the board can consider those circumstances when determining the sanction(s) for the transgression.
- All submitted evidence and materials will be shared with the student and the reporting instructor before the review board meets to consider the case. A reasonable opportunity will be provided to the reporting instructor and student to respond to submitted materials.
- The AIC and Chair (or their designees) may seek clarifications from the instructor, the student, or relevant witnesses, make inquiries to other College departments or offices for information or evidence, and take other steps deemed appropriate to ensure the academic review board has the information necessary to make fully informed decisions.
- An academic review board is formed to adjudicate the case. This board consists of:
 - The AIC, who chairs the Board *but does not vote*.
 - Two faculty members, selected by the AIC from the membership of the Academic Honesty Committee.
 - Two students, from the *Conduct Board* student pool

The identities of those serving on the board shall be provided by the AIC to the reporting instructor and the student, who may notify the AIC of any conflicts of interest or bias concerns. The AIC, in consultation with the Chair, shall resolve any claims of conflicts or bias.

A member of the Office of the General Counsel may attend board meetings to assist in the administration of the hearing process.

If the student accepts responsibility for the violation, the academic review board will assign sanctions in keeping with established norms for similar cases.

If the student denies responsibility for the alleged violation, members of the review board will review and discuss all the relevant materials and reach a decision on responsibility and, if applicable, sanctions. The standard of proof for determining whether a violation has occurred is a "preponderance of the evidence"; that is, is it more likely than not that the violation occurred?

If the academic review board finds a student not responsible for the alleged violation, no sanction will be applied and a letter stating this finding is sent to the student and the reporting instructor. For a finding of academic dishonesty, the outcome letter is sent to the student, the reporting instructor, the student's class dean and academic advisor(s), and the head coach (for a student athlete). *Parents/guardians will receive the outcome letter if the student is suspended or expelled, or if the outcome may significantly impact the student's path to graduation by, for example, resulting in the need for an additional semester.*

Because of the complexity of some matters, there are no fixed timeframes or deadlines for a case to be adjudicated. However, the AIC and the board will work deliberately and carefully, but as efficiently as possible, since it is in everyone's interests for cases to be wrapped up in a timely manner.

If a case requires adjudication in the period between the end of the spring semester examinations and the start of the subsequent fall semester, *the student members of the board may be appointed by the AIC and/or Chair from among students living on campus for the summer.* If the case cannot be heard, it will be postponed until the following semester.

The student or reporting faculty member may seek a **reconsideration of a decision** by submitting a written request to the AIC within 10 calendar days of the student's receipt of the outcome letter. A reconsideration may only be sought for one of the following reasons:

- a significant procedural error resulting in a denial of rights under this policy or impacting the fairness of the board's investigation/proceeding (the written request must discuss how the outcome of the matter was materially affected by such an error);
- the existence of new evidence, not available and not known during the proceedings, which would have significant bearing on the decision (the written request must discuss how such new evidence would have affected the outcome);

- aggravating or mitigating circumstances, the existence of which the student or faculty member seeking reconsideration must prove, that would affect the severity of a sanction and that were not previously presented to or considered by the academic review board.

A reconsideration may not be sought purely because of dissatisfaction with the decision or sanctions. The request for reconsideration should contain all information, evidence, and explanations to support the request. The AIC will review the request, and may consult with the board and other officials or experts to determine the merit of the request. The AIC will determine, typically within fifteen calendar days of receipt of the request, whether to grant or deny the request. If the request is granted, the AIC will determine the appropriate next steps. During the reconsideration process, sanctions will remain in effect unless the AIC decides otherwise.