

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Since Bethel University is a Christian academic community, its fundamental purpose is the pursuit of knowledge and the development of growing Christian persons. Essential to the success of this educational mission is a commitment to principles of ethical academic integrity. Every member of the university community is responsible for upholding the highest standards of honesty at all times. As members of this community, students are also responsible for adhering to the principles and spirit of academic honesty. There are several ways in which these principles and spirit can be violated:

Academic Honesty Violation Definitions

Activities that have the effect or intention of interfering with education, pursuit of knowledge, or fair evaluation of a student's performance are prohibited. Examples of such activities include, but are not limited to, the following definitions:

1. **Cheating** - Using or attempting to use unauthorized assistance, material, or study aids in examinations or other academic work. *Example:* using a cheat sheet on a quiz or exam.
2. **Plagiarism** - Using the ideas, data, or language of another without specific and proper acknowledgement. *Examples:* misrepresenting another's work (paper, lab report, article, or computer work) as one's own original creation and submitting it for an assignment; using someone else's ideas without attribution; failing to cite a reference or to use quotation marks where appropriate.
3. **Fabrication** - Submitting contrived or altered information in any academic exercise. *Examples:* making up data for an experiment; fudging data, citing nonexistent resources, or padding bibliography.
4. **Multiple submission** - Submitting, without prior permission, any work submitted to fulfill another academic requirement. *Example:* submitting the same paper for two different classes.
5. **Misrepresentation of academic records** - Misrepresenting, tampering with, or attempting to tamper with any portion of a student's academic record, either before or after coming to Bethel University. *Example:* entering an unauthorized change to a grade.
6. **Unfair advantage** - Attempting to gain unauthorized advantage over fellow students in an academic exercise. *Examples:* gaining unauthorized access to examination materials (either past or present); obstructing or interfering with another student's efforts in an academic exercise; misrepresenting the need for an absence or extension; continuing an exam beyond the prescribed time limit; destroying, hiding, removing, or keeping academic resources.
7. **Digital offenses** - Unauthorized destruction, modification or duplication of digital assets. *Examples:* software piracy; hacking; constructing or utilizing viruses; knowingly introducing viruses into a system; copying programs and data belonging to others.
8. **Facilitating academic dishonesty** - Knowingly helping or attempting to help another violate any provision of this code. *Example:* unauthorized working together on a take-home exam or other individual assignment; sharing exam content with someone who has not yet taken the exam.

Addressing Academic Dishonesty

While violating honesty standards is primarily an academic offense addressed by faculty and other academic officers, it is also a behavior inconsistent with Bethel's Covenant for Life Together, which states that "We will not tolerate plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty." As a result, academic dishonesty is dealt with by two separate and parallel processes, involving the Office of Academic Affairs (<https://www.bethel.edu/undergrad/academic-affairs/>) and the Office of Student Life (<https://www.bethel.edu/undergrad/student-life/>).

Academic Penalties for Academic Dishonesty

When academic dishonesty occurs, penalties are given at the discretion of the faculty member, as described in the course syllabus. Such penalties can range from failure on an assignment to denial of credit (U or F) in a course.

Appeals of Academic Penalties

Students charged with a violation have the right to appeal any disciplinary action. The appeals process is as follows:

1. As soon as possible following the disciplinary action in question, the student will seek to resolve the matter first with the instructor or with the party directly responsible for the decision, and then with the department chair or program director. (If the instructor is the department chair/program director, the student should contact the Dean of Academic Programs.)
2. If after talking with the instructor and the department chair/program director, the matter is not resolved, the student may appeal in writing to the Associate Provost of the College of Arts and Sciences. This written appeal must be received within three weeks of the decision or incident in question.

Institutional Intervention in Addressing Habitual Academic Dishonesty

Because Bethel is committed to developing “whole and holy persons,” repeated or habitual violations of academic honesty are causes for concern and, potentially, disciplinary action. Because Bethel’s Covenant for Life Together urges us to “nurture one another” and “to elevate kingdom values over personal agendas,” the Associate Provost of the College of Arts & Sciences will be notified of all academic honesty violations. The faculty member reporting the academic honesty violation provides the student’s name, describes the violation, identifies the date of the violation, and describes the response by the faculty member. The Office of Academic Affairs (<https://www.bethel.edu/undergrad/academic-affairs/>) keeps a record of instances of academic dishonesty so that inappropriate behavior can then be reported to, and addressed by, the Office of Student Life (<https://www.bethel.edu/undergrad/student-life/>). While each offense is handled individually, the policy addresses the cumulative effect of all violations. This procedure involves the following:

First Violation

Written notification will be sent from the Associate Provost of the College of Arts and Sciences to the student indicating receipt of this violation and the procedure that would be followed in the event of future occurrences. No further disciplinary action is taken beyond the penalty as assigned by the faculty member.

Second Violation

When a student has committed a second violation of the Academic Honesty policy, the Associate Provost of the College of Arts and Sciences will refer the student to the Associate Vice President of Student Life, who will meet with the student to clarify the next steps. The Dean will then make written recommendations to the student and the student’s academic advisor (or a faculty mentor chosen by the student) in order to address the student’s pattern of behavior. This letter will also describe the consequences of additional violations. These recommendations may include, but not be limited to:

- Meeting (or meetings) with the advisor
- Meeting with the instructor(s) involved
- Appointments with the Academic Enrichment and Support Center
- Involvement with a counselor

The advisor or mentor will monitor the student’s progress in acting on the recommendations and submit a report to the Dean of Student Life at the end of the academic year.

Third and Subsequent Violations

When a third (and subsequent) violation occurs, the Dean of Student Life will review the case and, in consultation with the Associate Provost for the College of Arts and Sciences, take appropriate action, which can include, but is not limited to, probation, suspension, or dismissal.

Appeals of Disciplinary Action

Students charged with habitual academic dishonesty have the right to appeal any disciplinary action. Appeals should be submitted in writing within three weeks of the decision to the Associate Vice President for Student Life.

The policies and procedures that address habitual academic dishonesty are not intended to be punitive but to be positively developmental in helping the student deal with a pattern of behavior that is harmful to both the individual and the community. Keeping a record of all violations is a way to identify and help students who have made an unfortunate habit of academic dishonesty, for whatever reason. Without this record, individual faculty members and the Office of Student Life (<https://www.bethel.edu/undergrad/student-life/>) will not be able to identify a pattern of offenses and will be unable to take the necessary, restorative action.