School of Health Professions

Policy for Adherence to Standards of Academic and Professional Conduct

and

Procedures for Managing Disciplinary Actions Following Violations

Guiding Principles

1. The School of Health Professions is committed to the practice of ethical and professional standards of conduct in didactic coursework, supervised professional practice assignments, and other sponsored learning activities associated with the School's academic programs.

2. The School's faculty and administrators expect students to maintain an acceptable quality of academic performance and to exhibit appropriate professional and ethical conduct at all times. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a manner similar to accepted standards applied to practicing health professionals.

3. School policies, procedures, and regulations reflect this commitment to ethical practices and professional behaviors and are in compliance with those established by the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

4. The policies put forth in this statement apply to both undergraduate and graduate students matriculating in the School's programs. Procedures that differ by degree status are documented.

5. When academic misconduct is alleged, the School will investigate the allegations and will interview the persons with knowledge of the surrounding facts as well as other persons with expertise that would be helpful in conducting an investigation. Due to the sensitive nature of such allegations, the School will conduct its investigation with discretion.

Policy

Allegations of Academic Misconduct will be investigated by the School, and if a student is determined to have committed Academic Misconduct, the student will be subject to disciplinary action. Allegations of Non-academic Misconduct will be referred to the Office of Student Engagement pursuant to the University's Non-Academic Student Conduct Policy. Students may appeal the disciplinary action by following the established procedures set forth herein.
**Guidelines**

1. Guidelines for appropriate student conduct, academic standards, and technical performance requirements are determined by each SHP academic program and are approved by the Dean. These guidelines are documented in each program’s student handbook which is provided to students upon admission to the academic program.

2. Requirements for individual courses, including the criteria for awarding grades, are documented in the course syllabus provided at the beginning of each course. The assignment of grades is the responsibility of the faculty member(s) designated as the instructor(s) of record for a course. In addition to failure to meet performance standards, Academic Misconduct may result in assignment of a failing grade for a course deliverable or for the entire course.

3. Students should refer to "Student Rights and Responsibilities" found in the UAB student handbook, DIRECTION, for a complete description of the University’s behavioral and performance standards.

4. It is the Student’s responsibility to be familiar with the University’s Non-Academic Student Code of Conduct, the DIRECTION Student Handbook, and the University’s Academic Honor Code.

5. Students should refer to the University’s Non-Academic Student Code of Conduct for guidelines and procedures related to behavior outside the teaching-learning environment but within the university community. Charges of Non-academic Misconduct will be referred to the Office of Student Engagement for evaluation and disciplinary action pursuant to the University’s Non-Academic Student Conduct Policy.

**Definitions Related to Student Misconduct**

**Abetting:** Helping another student commit an act of academic dishonesty. Examples include allowing others to copy your quiz answers or assignments or use your work as their own, or to make your personal study materials accessible to others.

**Academic Misconduct:** Academic conduct generally concerns the behaviors and actions of students in the teaching/learning environment, whether on campus or at another location sponsoring a learning activity. When behaviors and actions of students are deemed unethical or inappropriate, the term academic misconduct may be applied. Examples of Academic Misconduct include, but are not necessarily limited to, Abetting, Cheating, Dishonesty, Fabrication, Misrepresentation, Plagiarism, Tardiness or Unexcused Absences, and Unprofessional Behavior. A student’s failure to meet technical standards shall also be handled as Academic Misconduct under this Policy.

**Cheating:** Use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, study aids, the answers of others, or information accessed electronically, such as computer or Internet files.
Dishonesty: Using unapproved resources, including other persons, in performing assignments or during examinations, or the falsification or alteration of official documents such as laboratory or clinical time sheets or assigned activity reports.

Fabrication: Presenting as genuine falsified data, citations, quotations, or other non-reproducible documentation.

Misrepresentation: Falsification, alteration, or misstatement of the contents of documents, academic work, or other materials related to academic matters, including representing work substantially done for one class as work done for another without receiving prior approval from the instructor. Misrepresentation also includes misrepresenting schedules, prerequisites, transcripts, or other academic records.

Non-academic Misconduct: Shall have the meaning as set forth in the University's Non-Academic Student Conduct Policy.

Plagiarism: Claiming as your own the ideas, words, data, computer programs, creative compositions, artwork, etc., done by someone else, or work you did previously that has been published or made available for public access. Examples include improper citation of referenced works, use of commercially available scholarly papers, failure to cite sources, copying others' ideas, or re-using your own work without attribution.

Tardiness or Unexcused Absences: Habitual lateness or absence related to course or academic program activities, or persistent failure in meeting agreed-upon deadlines for academic deliverables. Attendance standards and deliverable deadlines are generally defined by individual programs and specific penalties may be applied.

Unprofessional Behavior: Failure to behave according to accepted standards applied to practicing health professionals, including failure to demonstrate respect for faculty, staff, students, and patients. Examples of unprofessional behavior include (1) falsification of patient records, (2) improper practice of the profession, (3) willful neglect of a patient, (4) improper use of equipment or participation in activities which may damage equipment, supplies, and/or private and public property, (5) misrepresentation of professional status, (6) falsification of student records, (7) failure to respect confidentiality of patient information, (8) failure to adhere to established dress codes, and (9) engaging in personal (i.e., romantic or sexual) relationships with faculty, staff, preceptors, patients, or other individuals involved in the learning experience.

Disciplinary Actions

Students determined to have committed Academic Misconduct shall be subjected to one or more of the following disciplinary actions.
Warning: An oral or written warning to the student that he or she is violating university regulations. Both oral and written warnings will be documented in the student’s record maintained by the academic program.

Reprimand: An official written warning that continuation or repetition of wrongful conduct may cause more severe disciplinary action. The reprimand will be documented in the student’s record maintained by the academic program.

Probation: A written notice explaining the serious nature of the offense and outlining the terms of the probationary status, including length of probation and performance requirements to remain enrolled in the academic program. A copy of the probation documents will be included in the student’s record maintained by the academic program and copied to the Department Chair and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The length of the probationary period will be recommended by the program faculty and is subject to approval by the Department Chair and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. If the student is a graduate student, the Dean of the Graduate School will be notified of probation conditions.

Suspension: Exclusion from classes and other privileges in the School of Health Professions for a defined period of time. The written statement will include specification of the terms under which the student may return as a matriculating student in the academic program. A copy of the suspension documents will be included in the student’s record maintained by the academic program, and copied to the Department Chair and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the UAB Vice President for Student Life, and the Office of Registration and Academic Records. The length of the suspension will be recommended by the program faculty and is subject to approval by the Department Chair and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. If the student is a graduate student, the Dean of the Graduate School will also be notified.

Expulsion: Permanent termination of student status in the School of Health Professions. A copy of the expulsion documents will be included in the student’s record maintained by the academic program, and copied to the Department Chair and the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the UAB Vice President for Student Life and the Office of Registration and Academic Records. If the student is a graduate student, the Dean of the Graduate School will also be notified.

NOTE: In cases in which personal or public property has been stolen, defaced, disfigured, damaged, or destroyed, the disciplinary action also may require appropriate restitution and response to legal charges.

References:


Procedure for Managing a Charge of Student Misconduct

and Appeals to Decisions

Anyone aware of Academic Misconduct or Non-Academic Misconduct should report the misconduct to appropriate faculty or administrator, such as the course instructor, program director, academic advisor, an authorized school or university committee, or a legal authority. Any report received should be given prompt attention by the appropriate faculty or administrator to allow for an investigation. Academic Misconduct will be handled pursuant to this policy and the procedures set forth herein. Non-Academic Misconduct will be referred to the Office of Student Engagement pursuant to the University’s Non-Academic Student Conduct Policy. Student grade challenges that do not involve Academic Misconduct or Non-Academic Misconduct are not subject to this policy and the procedures set forth herein.

Allegations of Academic Misconduct will be handled as follows:

1. The individual responsible for the first level of review, i.e., the course instructor or program director, will prepare a written report after conclusion of the investigation to include:
   - Summary description of the allegation reported as misconduct;
   - Summary of investigation such as relevant documents reviewed, interviews conducted, or other information or resources used;
   - Statement of findings, including either a charge of misconduct or no charge of misconduct;
   - Statement of disciplinary action to be applied; and
   - Reference to this Policy and the appeal process.

2. The written report will be provided to the student and discussed with the student, either face to face, or by other communication medium within ten (10) work days of the completion of the investigation. If a personal meeting is not reasonably feasible or the student refuses to meet, the report will be sent by e-mail to the student’s e-mail address on record with the University.

3. If there is a meeting with the student, he or she will be asked to sign a statement (Attachment A) that the report was received. If the student declines to sign the statement, it will be so noted on the form and signed by the faculty member. If there is no meeting, the e-mail to the student as provided above will be deemed to have been received by the student.

4. A copy of the report and supporting documents will be included in the student’s file maintained by the program.

5. A copy of the first-level investigation report will be provided to any higher-level reviewer(s), along with the supporting documentation.

6. A student may request a review and reconsideration by the Program Director if the course instructor conducted the first-level investigation, or by the Department Chair if the Program Director conducted the first-level investigation. This request must be made in writing within five (5) work days of receiving the written report. The student must
provide with specificity the grounds of his or her appeal as well as any supporting documentation. If practical, the decision of the Program Director or the Department Chair, as the case may be, will be made and returned to the student in writing within five (5) work days after the request for review is made, and will be final with regard to the substance of the matter. Further appeals will be limited to allegations by a student that the investigation and procedures followed were inconsistent with this policy and materially impacted the findings or disciplinary actions taken.

7. Appeals of the appellate determination of the Department Chair or Program Director in Section 6 above are limited to allegations by a student that the investigation and procedures followed were inconsistent with this policy and materially impacted the findings or disciplinary actions taken. These appeals must be made to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs. The written appeal of alleged inconsistent procedures that materially impacted the findings or disciplinary actions taken must be submitted within five (5) work days from the receipt of the written determination provided in Section 6 above. The student must provide in writing, with specificity, the grounds of his or her appeal as well as any supporting documentation. If practical, the Associate Dean will notify the student of his or her decision in writing within five (5) work days of receiving the request. Except in the case of expulsion, the Associate Dean’s decision will be final and not appealable.

8. In the case of expulsion, to appeal the Associate Dean’s decision, a student must submit a written request with the Dean within five (5) work days of receiving the Associate Dean’s response. The appeal of an expulsion is limited to allegations by a student that the investigation and procedures followed were inconsistent with this policy and materially impacted the findings or disciplinary actions taken. The student must provide with specificity the grounds of his or her appeal as well as any supporting documentation.

9. The Dean may conduct the appeal independently, or form an Advisory Committee and set a date for a hearing on the expulsion. The student will receive the Dean’s written decision on conducting the appeal, and will be notified of any proposed hearing date at least five (5) work days before the scheduled hearing.

10. The Advisory Committee shall consist of five individuals: one person selected by the student, one person selected by the person who conducted the first-level review, and three persons selected by the Dean. The Dean will designate the committee Chair. Committee members must be either currently-enrolled SHP students or SHP faculty members.

11. If the Dean chooses to form an Advisory Committee, the Advisory Committee will conduct a hearing at which the student and the person who conducted the first-level review may submit documentary evidence. All evidence must be submitted to the Advisory Committee at least five (5) days before the hearing. The Student and the person who conducted the first-level review may submit the names of individuals who they believe have firsthand knowledge of the Academic Misconduct at issue. The Advisory Committee will determine which individuals will be invited to answer questions at the hearing. All questions will be asked by members of the Advisory Committee. The Student may have counsel at the hearing but the counsel will be limited to advising the
Student and cannot actively participate in the hearing. The hearing will be audio recorded and transcribed, and a copy of the transcript will be maintained in the Office of the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs.

12. Within three (3) work days after the hearing is concluded, the Committee will send a written advisory recommendation to the Dean. If practical, the Dean’s written decision to uphold or modify the recommendation for expulsion will be provided to the student in person or by e-mail within five (5) work days after the hearing is concluded.

13. The Dean’s decision is final and not appealable. The decision will be communicated to the Program Director, Department Chair, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, the UAB Vice President for Student Life, and the Office of Registration and Academic Records. If the student is a graduate student, the Dean of the Graduate School will also be notified.
Attachment A: Attestation of Receipt of Information Following Misconduct Charge

Date: ______________________

Student Name / Number: ____________________________________________

I [Student Name] acknowledge that I received a written document describing a charge of misconduct that occurred on ___[Date]____. I understand the findings from the investigation and any penalty to be applied. I understand my opportunity for appeal of this decision.

_________________________________________   _______________________________________
[Student Name - Printed]                                           [Date]

_________________________________________
[Student Name - Signature]

_________________________________________   _______________________________________
[Faculty Name - Printed]                                           [Date]

_________________________________________
[Faculty Name - Signature]
Flowchart of Misconduct Management Process

Charge of Misconduct Made

Academic

Investigation by Instructor, Program Director or Department Chair

Meeting with Student or E-mail to Student to Discuss Findings and Penalty

If failing course grade, student can appeal one level higher (Program Director or Department Chair) within 5 work days

If student contends mismanagement of process, appeal may continue to Associate Dean within 5 work days

If student dismissed from program, may appeal to Dean within 5 work days

At Dean's discretion, Advisory Committee conducts hearing

Non-Academic

Referred to Office of Student Engagement

Response within 5 work days; grade appeal ends here

Response within 5 work days; if student not dismissed from program, appeal ends here

No Advisory Committee; response within 5 work days; appeal ends here

Advisory Committee report to Dean within 3 work days of hearing; Dean's decision within 5 workdays of hearing; appeal ends here.