

Robert Morris University

Academic Integrity Policy

Section A

Academic Integrity – A Definition

In an academic community, including students, instructors, and researchers, ethical behavior is interpreted through academic integrity. Academic integrity is a commitment to the fundamental values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. It requires that scholars of every level adhere to guidelines set forth by their instructors and/or peers in their fields of study and submit work that is wholly their own. Demonstrating respect for classmates, instructors, and disciplines by adhering to the rules and conventions of the academy upholds the level of scholarship associated with Robert Morris University. The university's practice of upholding rigorous ethical standards facilitates a student's development of ethical behaviors used beyond the classroom. This academic integrity policy applies to all students who complete coursework at Robert Morris University (i.e., current and former students).

Section B

Violations of Academic Integrity

The following constitute violations of academic integrity and will not be tolerated at Robert Morris University.

- B1.0 Plagiarism:** Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism involves taking someone else's work or ideas and presenting them as if they are one's own. Plagiarism includes:
- B1.1 Failure to properly cite source material that is quoted, paraphrased, or summarized in an academic work, including papers, speeches, slide presentations, web pages, images, or other products.
 - B1.2 Removal of an author or creator's name from a work and placement of one's own name.
 - B1.3 Use of artificial intelligence (AI) or any other machine authored content, to complete any work, except as specifically allowed by the instructor, in which case the information generated by AI must be cited.
- B2.0 Cheating:** Using prohibited materials, devices, or other resources (including people or AI) to gain an academic advantage. Cheating includes:
- B2.1 Replication or imitation of another's work with or without their knowledge
 - B2.2 Permission to another to replicate or imitate one's own work.
 - B2.3 Using technologies, such as calculators, phones, laptops, etc., during exams except as permitted by the instructor.
 - B2.4 Soliciting or distributing information about exams
 - B2.5 Participation in misrepresenting one's identity during a test, an assignment, or a course.
- B3.0 Resubmission:** A student is not permitted to resubmit work produced for a different course unless given permission by the instructor.

- B4.0 Sabotage:** Students are not permitted to disrupt or destroy another student's work, or otherwise inhibit another student's ability to complete their work by means of: tampering with lab or studio equipment or computers; disturbing/modifying/stealing another student's work; tampering with another student's personal equipment or technology; destroying or purposefully hindering access to books or other materials from the library.
- B5.0 Fabrication:** Students are not permitted to falsify documents or data in their academic work.
- B6.0 Violation of "Fair Use":** Fair Use in copyright law is a doctrine that allows one to use brief excerpts of copyrighted materials for teaching or research without permission of or payment to the copyright holder. In particular, students featuring original works of others, including images, videos, etc., in their own works must ensure that they comply with the legal and artistic implications of such use. This includes knowledge of the concepts of licensing, copyright, fair use, and public domain.
- B7.0 Contract Cheating:** Students are not permitted to buy or sell their academic work to other students or to a "paper mill" so that other students may submit that work as their own.
- B8.0 Collaboration:** Students are not permitted to work with others on academic projects except as specifically permitted by the instructor. Acceptable assistance in research projects includes proofreading or critiquing another's work, running spell and grammar checks and/or automating formatting in a word processing program, having another transcribe recorded oral interviews, or having another enter data into a database.
- B9.0 Failure to Conduct Ethical Research:** All students who plan to use human subjects in primary research (surveys, focus groups, clinical trials, etc.) and also plan to publish these findings in a source (journal article, book, website, master's thesis, doctoral field project, dissertation, etc.) must first apply for and receive permission from the RMU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and any other affiliate agencies before beginning their research. Failure to obtain approval from the IRB or altering the research process without first obtaining permission from the IRB may result in nullification of any findings and render the data invalid in addition to being a violation of academic integrity.
- B10.0 Violations of Individual Instructor's Academic Integrity Policies:** The course syllabus serves to communicate the instructor's course requirements and policies, and students are required to adhere to those requirements and policies. Failure to comply with course rules related to issues of academic integrity would, therefore, violate this policy.

Section C

Academic Integrity Violations Ranking

Violations of academic integrity may be ranked as minor or major. The instructor has the discretion to use the available data to determine the ranking.

C1.0 Minor Violations may include, but are not limited to

- C1.1 Failure to cite the source of a quote, paraphrase, or summary in an academic work. Academic work includes, but is not limited to, papers, speeches, slide presentations, webpages, and images.
- C1.2 Resubmission of work done for a previous class unless specifically allowed by the instructor.
- C1.3 Collaboration with another or the use of AI to aid in completion of a project unless specifically allowed by the instructor.
- C1.4 Solicitation and/or exchange of information about exams with anyone unless specifically allowed by the instructor.

The maximum course-level penalty for a Minor Violation shall not exceed failing the actual coursework involved in the violation. Failing the specific coursework as a result of a Minor Violation could result in a failing grade in the class itself.

C2.0 Major Violations may include, but are not limited to

- C2.1 Plagiarism of large portions of material in an assignment.
- C2.2 Signing one's name to or misidentifying a work as if it is your own.
- C2.3 Misrepresentation of identity to an instructor, for example, one student taking an exam or participating in a course for another.
- C2.4 Failure to receive IRB approval before starting primary research using human subjects with the intent to publish.
- C2.5 Use of prohibited resources during an exam, including but not limited to, cell phones, calculators, notes, other people's work, or AI.
- C2.6 Duplication and distribution of exams.
- C2.7 Fabrication of data for academic work.
- C2.8 Solicitation of or communication about information concerning exams with anyone.
- C2.9 Use of AI to create all or nearly all of an entire academic work.
- C2.10 Sabotaging someone else's work.

Section D

Judicial Process for Violations of the Academic Integrity Policy

- D1.0 The judicial process involves an Academic Integrity Council (AIC) consisting of at least one teaching faculty member from each school and the library. Student members are selected via an election process conducted by the Student Government Association (SGA). Interested students should submit an application to the SGA and include two faculty references with the application. A maximum of ten students can be elected. AIC members must attend a formal training program. The council chair is a full-time faculty member elected by council members. Members serve on the council for two-year terms with the opportunity for renewal. Members of the AIC are involved in the judicial process on various levels.
- D2.0 When an alleged violation of the Academic Integrity Policy has been identified by a faculty member, the following procedure should be implemented:

- D2.1 Prior to filing a report, the faculty member will inform the student of the alleged violation using the standard notification letter (Appendix A), which is sent electronically via the intranet.
- D2.2 All alleged violations of academic integrity should be labeled as minor or major based on the discretion of the faculty member. In either case, the incident and supporting documentation must be reported via the Academic Integrity violation form, which is filed electronically via the intranet within three business days of notifying the student. The report is routed electronically to the Office of the Registrar and copied to both the Vice Provost and the chair of the AIC. Instructors may grade work as they choose; any grade penalties for the coursework in question are determined by the instructor (unless the student is later exonerated - see D2.5.4). The AIC will not weigh in on grades or in-class repercussions for academic integrity violations.
- D2.3 Within five university business days, the student must either request a meeting with the AIC chair to attempt an informal resolution, or waive the informal resolution meeting and request a judicial hearing from the AIC chair (see D2.4). If a student chooses to contest the classification of a violation (major vs. minor), they may only do so at a judicial hearing. At an informal resolution meeting, the accused student will be advised of their rights and responsibilities under the RMU Academic Integrity Policy and given an opportunity to address and/or explain the charges. Failure to schedule or attend an informal resolution meeting, or failure to formally waive the informal resolution meeting, will result in the case being heard without the student being present, and the right to appeal any decision is forfeited. If an informal resolution is reached, the AIC chair will assign sanctions (if warranted), and the case will be considered resolved. Written notice will be sent to the student, reporting faculty member, Vice Provost, department head of the reporting faculty member, and the Office of the Registrar (electronically) within five university business days after the completion of the resolution meeting.
- D2.4 If an informal resolution is not reached or if the student requests a judicial hearing, the AIC chair will convene a formal hearing with a sub-committee, referred to as a “hearing board,” of the Academic Integrity Council within ten university business days. The hearing board will be comprised of three faculty and two student members (when available) of the AIC.
- D2.4.1 It is the responsibility of the reporting faculty member to investigate, prepare, and present a case before the hearing board. The faculty member may present their case on documentation alone.
- D2.4.2 The hearing board is not authorized to mandate the appearance of any witness at an academic integrity judicial proceeding. Similarly, neither parties nor their representatives are authorized to mandate or attempt to force the appearance of any person at an academic integrity judicial proceeding.
- D2.4.3 The student or faculty member may request that up to two non-participating advisors are present during a hearing, but must notify the AIC three days in advance of their anticipated presence. Attorneys are not permitted to participate in this process.

- D2.5 The hearing board may hear any case of an alleged violation of the RMU Academic Integrity Policy filed against individual current or former students. The hearing board will determine whether the student is responsible for the violation and then recommend sanctions to the Vice Provost.
- D2.5.1 Sanctions may range from minor, educational sanctions up to, but not limited to expulsion from RMU for particularly repeated and/or egregious violations. The Vice Provost will confirm the applicability of such sanctions.
- D2.5.2 In situations where a student has been found to have violated the Academic Integrity Policy after their degree or certificate has been conferred, and where the applicable course-level penalty results in failure of a course required for degree or certificate completion, that student shall be referred to the Provost for additional action.
- D2.5.3 Both the student or reporting faculty member has the right to file an appeal of a decision made by the hearing board and confirmed by the Vice Provost **only if new evidence is discovered and provided**. Within five university business days after the decision, one may file an appeal with the Provost, who, in turn, may consult with the AIC chair and members before making a decision on the appeal.
- D2.5.4 The student or reporting faculty member may appeal the decision itself, the classification of the violation (i.e., major vs. minor), or, in the case of the student, the applicable sanction.
- D2.5.5 The Provost's decision on the appeal is final.
- D2.5.6 (Exoneration of student) If a student is found to have not violated the Academic Integrity Policy, neither the hearing board or the accusing faculty member may impose sanctions. The faculty member will grade the student's work on its merits, without imposing any grade penalty or in-class repercussions due to a perceived violation of the Academic Integrity Policy.

Section E

Withdrawal from the University or the Course

- E.1.0 A student may withdraw from the University rather than participate in the academic integrity judicial process.
- E.1.1 A student who withdraws from the University will be classified in the Academic Integrity files as having withdrawn for academic integrity reasons.
- E.1.2 The student's transcript will be noted as a voluntary withdrawal.
- E.1.3 Students who withdraw under these circumstances are not permitted to participate in any class or program offered by RMU until pending academic integrity matters are resolved.
- E.2.0 A student may not avoid any consequences of violating the Academic Integrity policy by attempting to withdraw from a course after the violation occurred.

Section F

Parental/Guardian Notification

In its sole discretion, RMU may notify parents or guardians of academic integrity judicial issues involving their dependent students so long as the notification does not violate the rights of the student afforded by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).