

# SUNY COLLEGE AT OLD WESTBURY

## POLICY ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

*Administered by the Office of Academic Affairs*

As is the policy of all SUNY institutions, students are expected to maintain the highest standards of honesty in their college work. Any act which attempts to misrepresent to an instructor or College official the academic work of the student or another student, or an act that is intended to alter any record of a student's academic performance by unauthorized means, constitutes academic dishonesty. Cheating, forgery and plagiarism are considered serious offenses and are subject to disciplinary action.

### Cheating

Cheating is defined as giving or obtaining information by improper means in meeting any academic requirements. Examples of cheating, although not inclusive, include: unauthorized giving or receiving of information for an examination, paper, laboratory procedure, or computer assignment (file or printout); taking an examination for another student or allowing another student to take an examination for you; altering or attempting to alter a grade either on graded work or in an instructor's records or on any College form or record.

### Forgery

Forgery is defined as the alteration of college forms, documents, records, or the signing of such forms or documents by someone other than the proper authority.

### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined as the use of material from another author whether intentional or unintentional, without referencing or identifying the source of the material. If students have any questions as to what constitutes plagiarism, it is their responsibility to get clarification by consulting with the appropriate instructor.

### Assessment of Penalties

It is the student's responsibility to read and understand the College's policy on academic dishonesty. Faculty members, in consultation with their department chair are responsible for making the initial determination of the academic penalty to be imposed in cases of cheating, plagiarism or forgery. Academic penalties may range from failure of a specific assignment or examination, or failure of the course, to suspension or dismissal. In cases where the faculty member and the chair of the department recommend suspension or dismissal from the college, the final decision will be determined by an Academic Grievance Committee (AGC) drawn from the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee. The AGC decision is final.

### Academic Grievance Procedures

#### Introduction

The procedures below pertain to alleged violations or misapplication of college and/or course academic policies and do not apply to other areas with separate forms of redress, such as issues of sexual harassment, discrimination or discipline, which are addressed elsewhere. They are also directed at a student grievance alleging that he or she has been treated unfairly, in violation of established academic policy or practice. The procedures below reflect the college's commitment to a fair and prompt resolution of student academic grievances. Students should be aware that a review of grade procedure may result in a grade being raised, lowered, or not changed.

This procedure begins with an informal process, but includes a formal process that centers on hearings and recommended resolution of the grievance in a way that maximizes the opportunity for a full and impartial solution. Request to waive or otherwise alter college academic policies shall continue to be the province of the Academic Policy Committee.

#### 1. Jurisdiction

A grievance shall include, but not be restricted to, a complaint by a student:

- a. that college academic regulations and/or policies have been violated or misapplied to him or her;
- b. that he or she has been treated unfairly, based upon established college academic policies.

#### 2. Time Limit

**At informal level** – no later than the end of the third week into the following semester. (A student receiving a grade as a result of satisfying the course requirements of a previously received "Incomplete" grade in the

semester immediately following the semester in which the "Incomplete" was received has three weeks from notification of the grade change.)

**At formal level** – no later than the end of the fifth week into the following semester. (A student receiving a grade as a result of satisfying the course requirements of a previously received "Incomplete" grade in the semester immediately following the semester in which the "Incomplete" was received has five weeks from notification of the grade change.)

### 3. Grievance Resolution Process

The process includes the possibility of hearings at two levels: the department and the College/School. Individual departments or Schools may have more detailed procedures; inquiries should be directed to the appropriate chair or dean.

**a.** At the department level, a student with a complaint should first attempt to resolve the complaint *informally* with the faculty or staff member involved. A student must initiate the process no later than the end of the third week into the following semester. The assistance of the chair of the department may be sought to resolve the dispute. The student who is not able to achieve resolution with the instructor may initiate a *formal* grievance or grade appeal process no later than the end of the fifth week into the following semester by preparing a written statement which includes:

1. a statement of the case in detail;
2. all information about the conference with the instructor;
3. a statement of the reasons the student believes he or she is aggrieved or, in the case of a grade, why it should be reconsidered;
4. all relevant supporting materials (including, but not limited to, syllabus(i), test(s), quiz(zes), paper(s), and any graded evaluation(s)), which should be identified and listed in an index.

The student shall submit complete copies of the written statement and attachments to the chair of the department and the faculty member identified in the grievance. The chair shall carefully review the statement, confer with the student and instructor, and attempt to reach a resolution of the dispute. The chair may ask members of the department to serve as a committee to review the materials and assist him or her in reaching a decision. The chair's decision must be made in writing to the student and the instructor within ten academic days of the date of the request from the student. In conformance with state regulations, the department shall maintain adequate documentation about each formal complaint and its disposition for a period of at least six years after final disposition of the complaint. If the department chair is the party against whom the grievance is brought, the student should initiate a review at the level which follows.

**b.** If the department chair's decision does not resolve the matter to the student's satisfaction, he or she may request a hearing at the College/School level by writing to the Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate/School Dean and forwarding the documentation to that office. This request must be made within twenty academic days of the filing, by the student, of the formal grievance to the department chair. The Executive Committee/School Dean or designee shall convene a three-person Academic Grievance Committee (AGC) drawn from the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee, within ten academic days, if a standing committee for such purposes does not already exist. The AGC shall include one faculty member from the department (or a related one) in which the instructor resides. If the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee does not contain such a member, the Executive Committee/School Dean shall name such a person to the AGC. It shall meet and review the materials presented and solicit a response from the instructor for each count in the student's case. The AGC's decision must be made in writing to the student, the instructor, and the Executive Committee/School Dean within ten academic days of the date of the establishment of the AGC. In the case of a grade appeal, the AGC will familiarize itself with the standards and objectives of the course and evaluative material presented. Its concerns shall be limited to consideration of the fair application of standards and objectives, and whether the standards and objectives were made known to the student in a reasonable manner. The difficulty of the standards shall not be an issue.

The burden of proof shall be on the student, who may be asked to appear before the AGC. In the case of a grade appeal, if the majority of the AGC feels no case can be made, the original grade will remain. If it finds that the standards and objectives were not reasonably known to the student or were unfairly applied, it may recommend a higher or lower grade and give its reasons for so recommending. If the AGC determines that a different grade is appropriate, the Executive Committee/School Dean shall have ten academic days from receipt of the AGC's decision to change the grade. A change of grade shall not be interpreted as an admission of unfairness in grading.

In the case of a grievance, if the majority of the AGC adjudges the grievance to be without foundation, the student's appeal shall be denied. If, in the judgment of the AGC, there is a basis for the grievance, the written decision must include specific recommendations for redress.

The decision of the AGC is final.

In conformance with state regulations, the Executive Committee's/School Dean's office shall maintain adequate documentation about each formal complaint and its disposition for a period of at least six years after final disposition of the complaint.

#### **4. Committees**

Committee (AGC) members shall be drawn from the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee, augmented, if need be, by a member from the department of the instructor involved (or a related one). In naming the AGC to hear a grievance, the Executive Committee/School Dean shall take care to insure that no member has an interest in the case being heard.

#### **5. Confidentiality**

Once the AGC has been convened to hear a complaint, principals and committee members shall have the obligation to maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings and of all materials presented to review proceedings.