

Undergraduate Academic Integrity and Grievances

A Summons to Responsible Freedom

Values and Moral Standards at Florida State University

The moral norm that guides conduct and informs policy at Florida State University is responsible freedom. Freedom is an important experience that the University, one of the freest of institutions, provides for all of its citizens: faculty, students, administrators, and staff. Freedom is responsibly exercised when it is directed by ethical standards.

As the Florida public university most deeply rooted in the liberal arts tradition, Florida State University not only focuses on intellectual development, but as a community engaged in moral discourse, it also recognizes the need for the development of the whole person. The University maintains a comprehensive educational program ranging from classroom instruction to research and creative activities at the frontiers of human knowledge. These modes of searching for the truth are mutually enhancing and provide the context for the liberating experiences students gain from contact with ideas and individuals. Education based in the liberal arts provides an opportunity for students to learn to express themselves; to think critically both quantitatively and qualitatively; to gain an understanding of and respect for self and others; to understand the world by knowing more about its history, the role of science and technology, and social and cultural achievements; and to develop specialized talents for a vocation. This opportunity is provided with the conviction, as reflected in the University seal, that through such an educational experience one can come to a clearer understanding of the complex moral issues inherent in human life and can develop the knowledge and skills for effective and responsible participation in the world.

Florida State University shares a commitment to the dignity and worth of each person and is guided in its many endeavors by that underlying value. Through academic activity, community involvement, social interaction, cultural experience, recreational and physical activity, and religious involvement, students find many avenues in the University community for the development of the whole person.

The University shares this society's commitment to the rule of law and expects members of the community to abide by the laws of the city, state, and nation, as well as University rules and regulations.

The University aspires to excellence in its core activities of teaching, learning, research, creative expression, and public service and is committed to the integrity of the academic process. The Academic Honor Code is a specific manifestation of this commitment. Truthfulness in one's claims and representations and honesty in one's activities are essential in life and vocation, and the realization of truthfulness and honesty is an intrinsic part of the educational process.

The University is a place of both assent and dissent and is committed to academic freedom and civil dialogue. In a free and vigorous academic community an ongoing clash of ideas is to be expected and encouraged. The University has a special obligation to see that all have an opportunity to be heard.

Florida State University is committed to nondiscrimination in matters of race, creed, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, veterans' or marital status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or any other protected group status. This commitment applies in all areas with students, faculty, and other University personnel. It addresses recruiting, hiring, training, promotions, and applicable employment conditions. It is also relevant to those aspects of the University concerned with the choice of contractors, suppliers of goods and services, and with the use of University facilities. The University believes in equal opportunity practices that conform to both the spirit and the letter of all laws against discrimination.

A responsible student recognizes that freedom means the acknowledgement of responsibility to the following: to justice and public order; to fellow students' rights and interests; to the University, its rules, regulations, and accepted traditions; to parents, teachers, and all others whose support makes one's advanced education possible; to city, state, and national laws; to oneself; and to the opportunity for specialized training and continuing education toward the ends of personal fulfillment and social service. Students are urged to use their freedom in the University community to develop habits of responsibility that lead to the achievement of these personal and social values. Responsible student behavior requires observance of the Student Conduct Code, which is based on respect for the dignity and worth of each person and the requirements for successful community life.

Relations among all persons should be characterized by mutual respect and equality. The University denounces all forms of sexism and racism. Sex discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual coercion of any sort are wrong and constitute a violation of fundamental moral requirements and state and federal law. Minimally responsible behavior requires that no one take sexual advantage of another.

The cultural, ethnic, and racial diversity of the University community provides an opportunity for learning about those different from oneself. The University believes that each individual deserves to be treated with dignity and respect and accorded the full opportunities of the University, without regard to prejudicial assumptions or attitudes. Discrimination based on race or ethnicity resulting from acts or policies is illegal and incompatible with the concept of responsible freedom as espoused by Florida State University.

The University enforces all laws relevant to alcohol and controlled substances and further strongly discourages the use of illegal substances at any time. The University disseminates and encourages the dissemination by others of information concerning the responsible use of alcohol.

The University is a compassionate community. In its treatment of students, it recognizes the wisdom both of letting students experience the consequences of their actions and of providing the opportunity to learn and grow in ways that can overcome past difficulties. The University provides ongoing student support through the health center, counseling services, and the academic advising process.

The university experience is a time for adventure, fun, excitement, the making of new friends, and the discovery of new possibilities. There are numerous individual and organized opportunities for students to develop and to learn in the course of their university years to exercise newly acquired freedom deliberately and responsibly.

Matriculation to Florida State University, then, is a summons to the exercise of responsible freedom in a community of teaching, learning, and discovery.

Integrity in Research and Creative Activity

It is the policy of Florida State University to uphold the highest standards of integrity in research and creative activity, and to protect the right of its employees to engage in research and creative activity. Detailed policies and procedures can be found in the *Faculty Handbook* under "Section 6: Policies and Procedures."

Academic Honor Policy

The Academic Honor Policy is currently under revision. Please visit this website for the version in effect:

<https://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources> (<https://www.fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources>).

Introduction

The statement on 'Values and Moral Standards at FSU' says: "The moral norm which guides conduct and informs policy at Florida State University is responsible freedom. Freedom is an important experience which the University, one of the freest of institutions, provides for all of its citizens – faculty, students, administrators, and staff. Freedom is responsibly exercised when it is directed by ethical standards." (See above 'Values and Moral Standards at FSU' section of this chapter.)

The statement also addresses academic integrity: "The University aspires to excellence in its core activities of teaching, research, creative expression, and public service and is committed to the integrity of the academic process. The [Academic Honor Policy] is a specific manifestation of this commitment. Truthfulness in one's claims and representations and honesty in one's activities are essential in life and vocation, and the realization of truthfulness and honesty is an intrinsic part of the educational process." (See above 'Values and Moral Standards at FSU' section of this chapter.)

Guided by these principles, this Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for all students' academic work on each campus and all virtual platforms, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty throughout the process. Please refer to memos outlining necessary procedural modifications of the process for the Panama City and Republic of Panama campuses. The Academic Honor Policy Committee may take direct jurisdiction of a case under extraordinary circumstances when it is determined by a majority vote of the committee that taking direct jurisdiction is appropriate.

Students in the College of Law and the College of Medicine are governed by the academic integrity policies and procedures of their respective colleges, which are subject to approval by the Academic Honor Policy Committee.

Panama City students who have questions about the academic honor policy can contact the Dean's Office in the Holley Building for assistance.

FSU Academic Honor Pledge

I affirm my commitment to the concept of responsible freedom. I will be honest and truthful and will strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University. I will abide by the Academic Honor Policy at all times.

Academic Honor Violations

Note: Instructors are responsible for following and reinforcing the importance of the Academic Honor Policy in their courses and for clarifying in writing their expectations regarding collaboration and multiple submissions of academic work. Examples have been provided for the purpose of illustration and are not intended to be all-inclusive.

1. **Plagiarism.** Presenting the work of another as one's own (i.e., without proper acknowledgement of the source). Typical examples include: Using another's work from print, web, or other sources without acknowledging the source; quoting from a source without citation; using facts, figures, graphs, charts or information without acknowledgement of the source; or utilizing ghostwriting or pay-for-paper services; submitting another's work through an online thesaurus software.
2. **Cheating.** Improper access to or use of any information or material that is not specifically condoned by the instructor for use in the academic exercise. Typical examples include: Copying from another student's work or receiving unauthorized assistance during a quiz, test, or examination; using books, notes, or other devices (e.g., calculators, cell phones, or computers) when these are not authorized; procuring without authorization a copy of

or information about an examination before the scheduled exercise; or unauthorized collaboration on exams. This includes unauthorized actions taken on any social media platform.

3. **Unauthorized Group Work.** Unauthorized collaborating with others. Typical examples include: Working with another person or persons on any activity that is intended to be individual work, where such collaboration has not been specifically authorized by the instructor. This includes unauthorized actions taken on any social media platform.
4. **Fabrication, Falsification, and Misrepresentation.** Unauthorized altering or inventing of any information or citation that is used in assessing academic work. Typical examples include: Inventing or counterfeiting data or information; falsely citing the source of information; altering the record of or reporting false information about practicum or clinical experiences; altering grade reports or other academic records; submitting a false excuse for absence or tardiness in a scheduled academic exercise; or lying to an instructor to increase a grade.
5. **Multiple Submissions.** Submitting the same academic work (including oral presentations) for credit more than once without instructor permission. It is each instructor's responsibility to make expectations regarding incorporation of existing academic work into new assignments clear to the student in writing. Typical examples include: Submitting the same paper for credit in two courses without instructor permission; or making minor revisions in a credited paper or report (including oral presentations) and submitting it again as if it were new work.
6. **Abuse of Academic Materials.** Intentionally damaging, destroying, stealing, or making inaccessible library or other academic resource material. Typical examples include: Stealing or destroying library or reference materials needed for common academic purposes; hiding resource materials so others may not use them; destroying computer programs or files needed in academic work; stealing, altering, or intentionally damaging another student's notes or laboratory experiments. This refers only to abuse as related to an academic issue.
7. **Complicity in Academic Dishonesty.** Intentionally helping another to commit an act of academic dishonesty. Typical examples include: Knowingly allowing another to copy from one's paper during an examination or test; distributing test questions or substantive information about the material to be tested before a scheduled exercise; or deliberately furnishing false information.
8. **Attempting to commit any offense as outlined above.**

Student Rights

Students have the following important due process rights, which may have an impact on the appellate process:

1. to be informed of all alleged violation(s), receive the complaint in writing (except in a Step 1 agreement, described in the Procedures Section, where the signed agreement serves as notice), and be given access to all relevant materials pertaining to the case.
2. to receive an impartial hearing in a timely manner where they will be given a full opportunity to present information pertaining to the case.
3. Students are also accorded the following prerogatives:
4. when possible, to discuss the allegations with the instructor.
5. privacy, confidentiality, and personal security.
6. to be assisted by an advisor who may accompany the student throughout the process but may not speak on the student's behalf. Witnesses cannot also serve as advisors.
7. to choose not to answer any question that might be incriminating.
8. to contest the sanctions of a first-level agreement and to appeal both the decision and sanctions of an Academic Honor Hearing.

The student has the right to continue in the course in question during the entire process. Once a student has received notice that he or she is being charged with an alleged violation of the Academic Honor Policy, or when a student has been found responsible for an Academic Honor Policy violation, the student is not permitted to withdraw or drop the course or request that the grading basis be changed to a "Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory" grade if the course is letter-

graded. Students who provide false information when requesting to drop a course may be subject to allegations of the Student Conduct Code violations. Should no final determination be made before the end of the term, the grade of "Incomplete" will be assigned until a decision is made.

Students in Tallahassee should contact the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards for further information regarding their rights.

Procedures for Resolving Cases

Step 1.

Throughout the Step 1 process, the instructor has the responsibility to address academic honor allegations in a timely manner, and the student has the responsibility to respond to those allegations in a timely manner. For assistance with the Academic Honor Policy, students should consult the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards and instructors should consult the Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement.

If a student observes a violation of the Academic Honor Policy, he or she should report the incident to the instructor of the course. When an instructor believes that a student has violated the Academic Honor Policy in one of the instructor's classes, the instructor must first contact the Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement to discover whether the student has a prior record of academic dishonesty in order to determine whether to proceed with a Step 1 agreement. The instructor must also inform the department chair or dean. (Teaching assistants must seek guidance from their supervising faculty member and adjunct instructors must seek guidance from their department chair.) However, faculty members or others who do not have administrative authority for enforcing the Academic Honor Policy should not be informed of the allegation, unless they have established a legitimate need to know. If pursuing a Step 1 agreement is determined to be possible, the instructor shall discuss the evidence of academic dishonesty with the student and explore the possibility of a Step 1 agreement (refer to <https://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy> (<https://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy>)). Four possible outcomes of this discussion may occur as a result of that discussion:

1. If the charge appears unsubstantiated, the instructor will drop the charge, and no record of academic dishonesty will be created. The instructor should make this decision using the "preponderance of the evidence" standard.
2. The student may accept responsibility for the violation and accept the academic sanction proposed by the instructor. In this case, any agreement involving an academic penalty must be put in writing and signed by both parties on the "*Academic Honor Policy Step 1 Agreement*" form (refer to <https://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy> (<https://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy>)) which must then be sent to the Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement. This agreement becomes a confidential student record of academic dishonesty and will be removed from the student's file five years from the date of the final decision in the case. Any grade imposed as the result of an academic sanction will remain on the student's transcript indefinitely. Students will not be eligible for a course drop, withdrawal, or modification of grading basis.
3. The student may accept the responsibility for the violation but contest the proposed academic sanction. In this circumstance, the student must submit the "*Academic Honor Policy Referral to Contest Sanction*" form (refer to <https://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy> (<https://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy>)) along with supporting documentation to the Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement. The student's written statement must demonstrate specific reasons why the proposed sanction is extraordinarily disproportionate to the offense committed for any change to occur in the sanction. The Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement (or designee) will review the submitted documentation to determine whether the proposed sanction should be imposed. The Vice President (or designee) may affirm or modify the sanction as appropriate. The decision that results from this review is final.

4. The student may deny responsibility. In this circumstance, the instructor submits the "Academic Honor Policy Hearing Referral" form (refer to <https://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy> (<https://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy>)) along with supporting documentation to the Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement for an Academic Honor Policy Hearing. The student is issued a letter detailing the charges within ten class days of the receipt of the referral, and the schedule for the hearing will be set as soon as possible and within ninety days from the date of the letter. These timelines may be modified in unusual circumstances. Unless all parties agree, the hearing will not be held any sooner than seven class days from the student's receipt of the charge letter. The process then proceeds to Step 2.

If the student is found to have a prior record of academic dishonesty or the serious nature of the allegations merits a formal hearing, the instructor must refer the matter to Step 2 for an Academic Honor Policy Hearing by submitting the "Academic Honor Policy Hearing Referral" form (refer to <https://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy> (<https://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy>)) and appropriate documentation to the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement.

Allegations of academic dishonesty involving a graduate student engaged in any phase of the preliminary or comprehensive examination, thesis, or dissertation will be treated as egregious and will be resolved through the Step 2 process, in which the major professor will serve as the "instructor" under the hearing procedures. The Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement and the student's academic dean, (as well as the Vice President for Research in cases involving grant-funded research), and the Dean of the Graduate School or designee should be informed as soon as possible of all such allegations. The decision regarding whether to submit a hearing referral will be made by a committee consisting of the department chair and two faculty members appointed by the academic dean, one of whom should be the student's committee member serving as the University representative (if one has been identified), excluding the major professor. In rendering its charging decision, this committee should review all available information and consult with the major professor and the academic dean.

Step 2.

Academic Honor Policy Hearing.

A panel consisting of five members shall hear the case. The panel shall include: one faculty member appointed by the dean from the unit in which the academic work is conducted; one faculty member appointed by the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement who is not from that unit; and two students. The panel shall be chaired by the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement (or designee), who votes only in case of a tie.

The hearing will be conducted in a non-adversarial manner with a clear focus on finding the facts within the academic context of the academic work. The student is presumed innocent going into the proceeding. After hearing all available and relevant information from the student, instructor, and any witnesses, the panel determines whether or not to find the student "responsible" for the alleged violation using the "preponderance of the evidence" standard. If the student is found "responsible" for the violation, the panel is informed about any prior record of Academic Honor Policy violations and determines a sanctioning. The range of sanctions available at the Step 2 phase is broader than at Step 1.

In cases where a Step 1 Agreement is appropriately proposed (i.e., the student has no prior record) and denies responsibility of the alleged violation, a Step 2 hearing is convened. If the student is found "responsible" in these cases, the panel typically will impose a sanction no more or less severe than that which was proposed by the faculty member. The panel is required to provide a clear written justification for imposing a sanction different from what would have resulted from the student signing a Step 1 Agreement.

The chair of the Academic Honor Policy hearing panel will report the decision to the student, the instructor, the academic unit, the supervising faculty member or a teaching assistant or an adjunct instructor, the student's dean, the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards, and the Registrar, if appropriate. If the student is found "responsible," this outcome will be recorded by the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement and becomes a confidential student record of an Academic Honor Policy violation. Violations of the Academic Honor Policy are part of the student's disciplinary record and are maintained by the University. Records in which suspension or a less severe sanction (including all academic sanctions) is imposed will be removed five years from the date of the final decision in the case. Any grade imposed as the result of an academic sanction will remain on the student's transcript indefinitely and will not be subject to course drop, withdrawal, or grade change, including changing the grading basis to "Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory." Records involving dismissal and expulsion will be retained permanently, except in cases where a dismissed student is readmitted. Those records will be removed five years from the date of the student's readmission.

Student Academic Problems

Florida State University has established both informal and formal processes that provide fair and equitable routes for resolving student complaints and grievances. (See "Academic Honor Policy," "Grievance Procedure," and "Grade Appeals" headings of this *Bulletin* section for more specific information.)

The University encourages students to raise any academic issue they encounter as soon as possible, directly with the person who is closest to the matter. Each of these complain resolution processes gives students the opportunity to present information and to appeal an initial decision to a higher authority.

Please note the important distinction between the student grievances mentioned above and student requests for exceptions to University academic policies. Exceptions, such as student requests for late course drops or substitution of major requirements, are handled by each student's primary academic dean's office. Deans, or their designees, have final authority over decisions regarding academic policy exceptions.

The academic dean considers information provided by students in making these decisions. When petitioning for an exception, the student must provide cause-specific documentation of their circumstances showing that their ability to complete their academic obligations or requirements was disrupted. Based upon the presented evidence, the Dean will determine if exceptional circumstances beyond the student's control prevented the student from complying with the academic policy. If such circumstances are found to exist, the Dean will grant the request and provide specific directions to the student regarding how to proceed.

Because the final authority rests with the dean, there is no appeal for having been denied an exception to academic policy (such as missing the course-drop deadline or asking for a course to be substituted for the required one in the major).

Students can help to prevent situations that lead to grievances and requests for exceptions by staying aware of course requirements and deadlines, marking course-drop dates on their calendars, and letting their instructor or adviser know as soon as possible if they are falling behind and need assistance.

Sanctions

Step 1 Sanctions.

This Step 1 procedure is implemented with first-offense allegations that do not involve egregious violations. The decision regarding whether an allegation is egregious is made by the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement (or designee) and the instructor. The instructor should consider the seriousness of the violation, the student's circumstances, potential opportunities for learning and consistency with past sanction in determining a proposed sanction. The following sanctions are available in the Step 1 procedure.

1. **Additional academic work, including re-doing the assignment**
2. **A reduced grade (including "0" or "F") for the assignment**
3. **A reduced grade (including "F") for the course**
4. **Educational Activities**—Examples include, but are not limited to, referrals to improve future educational outcomes, tutoring regarding proper citation practices, development of an academic plan with the assistance of the Academic Center for Excellence, participation in ethics workshops, interviews with appropriate faculty or administrators, or writing educational or reflective essays. Fees may be charged to cover the ethics workshops. Please contact the Academic Affairs Administrator in the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement before implementing educational sanctions.

Step 2 Sanctions.

An Academic Honor Policy Hearing is held for all second offenses, for all first offenses that involve egregious violations of the Academic Honor Policy, for all allegations of academic dishonesty involving a graduate student engaged in any phase of the comprehensive (or other culminating) exam, thesis, or dissertation, for all offenses that involve simultaneous violations of the Student Conduct Code, and in all cases where the student denies responsibility for the alleged violation. The decision regarding whether an allegation is egregious is made by the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement (or designee) and the instructor.

In cases where a Step 1 Agreement is appropriately proposed and the student does not accept responsibility, a Step 2 hearing is convened. If the student is found "responsible" at a Step 2 hearing, the panel typically will impose a sanction no more or less severe than that which was proposed by the faculty member. The panel is required to provide a clear written justification for imposing a sanction more severe than the sanction proposed in Step 1 Agreement. Students will not be penalized solely for exercising their right to request a Step 2 hearing. The following sanctions are available in the Step 2 Hearing Process and may be imposed singly or in combination:

1. **Additional academic work, including re-doing the assignment**
2. **A reduced grade (including "0" or "F") for the assignment**
3. **A reduced grade (including "F") for the course**
4. **Educational Activities**—Examples include, but are not limited to, referrals to improve future educational outcomes, tutoring regarding proper citation practices, development of an academic plan with the assistance of the Academic Center for Excellence, participating in ethics workshops, interviews with appropriate faculty or administrators, writing educational or reflective essays. Fees may be charged to cover the cost of educational activities.
5. **Restitution, letter of apology, or other restorative act**
6. **Disciplinary Probation**—a period of time during which any further violation of the Academic Honor Policy puts the student's status with the University in jeopardy. If the student is found responsible for another violation during the period of Disciplinary Probation, serious consideration will be given to imposing a sanction of Suspension, Dismissal, or Expulsion. Restrictions that may be placed on the student's activities during this time period include but are not limited to: participating in student activities; representing the University on athletic teams or in other leadership positions; and participating in practice for athletic or other competitions.
7. **Suspension**—Separation from the University for a specified period, not to exceed two years.
8. **Dismissal**—Separation from the University for an indefinite period of time. Dismissal is considered a final sanction, but readmission is possible in some cases under documented exceptional circumstances. No consideration will be given to readmitting a dismissed student within the first three years after a dismissal is imposed. Dismissal is noted on the student's transcript.
9. **Expulsion**—Separation from the University without the possibility of readmission. Expulsion is noted on the student's transcript.
10. **Withholding of diplomas, transcripts, or other records for a specified period of time.**
11. **Suspension of degree, in cases where an offense is discovered after the degree is posted.**

12. Revocation of degree, in cases where an offense is discovered after the degree is posted.

Appeals

Decisions of the Academic Honor Policy Hearing Panel may be appealed to the Academic Honor Policy Appeal Committee, a standing four-member committee composed of two faculty appointed by the President and two students appointed by the Vice President for Student Affairs. The chair will be appointed annually by the President, and other members will serve two-year renewable terms. In case of a tie vote regarding a case, the committee will submit a written report to the Provost or designee, who will then make the final determination.

On appeal, the burden of proof shifts to the student to prove that an error has occurred. The only recognized grounds for appeal are:

1. Due process errors involving violations of a student's rights that substantially affected the outcome of the initial hearing.
2. Demonstrated prejudice against the charged student by any panel member. Such prejudice must be evidenced by a conflict of interest, bias, pressure, or influence that precluded a fair and impartial hearing.
3. New information that was not available at the time of the original hearing.
4. A sanction that is extraordinarily disproportionate to the offense committed.
5. The preponderance of the evidence presented at the hearing does not support a finding of "responsible."
Appeals based on this consideration will be limited to a review of the record of the initial hearing, and the student will not be invited to appear before the Appeal Committee.

The procedures followed during the appeals process are:

1. The student should file a written letter of appeal to the Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement within ten class days after being notified of the Academic Honor Policy Hearing Panel decision. This letter should outline the grounds for the appeal (see 1–5 above) and should provide supporting facts and relevant documentation.
2. The Academic Honor Policy Appeal Committee will review this letter of appeal and will hear the student and any witnesses called by the student, except in appeals based on consideration #5 above. The committee may also gather any additional information it deems necessary to make a determination in the case. The instructor is not typically involved in the appellate process.
3. The Appeals Committee may affirm, modify, or reverse the initial panel decision, or it may order a new hearing to be held. This decision becomes final agency action when it is approved by the Provost or designee. In cases where the student is found "responsible," the decision by the Appeals Committee becomes a confidential student record of academic dishonesty.
4. Appellate decisions are communicated in writing to the student, the instructor, the instructor's academic unit, the supervising faculty member or a teaching assistant or an adjunct instructor, the Office of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement, the student's academic dean, the Office of the Student Conduct and Community Standards and the Registrar, if necessary, within thirty class days of the appellate hearing.

Academic Honor Policy Committee

An Academic Honor Policy Committee shall be appointed by the University President. The Committee will include: three faculty members, selected from a list of six names provided by the Faculty Senate Steering Committee and three students, selected from a list of six names provided by the Student Senate. The Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement or designee and the Office of Student Conduct and Community Standards or designee shall serve *ex officio*. Faculty members will serve three-year staggered terms, and students will serve one-year terms. The committee

will meet at least once a semester during the academic year. It will monitor the operation and effectiveness of the Academic Honor Policy, work with the Faculty Senate and the Student Senate to educate all members of the community regarding academic integrity, and make recommendations for changes to the policy.

Amendment Procedures

Amendments to the Academic Honor Policy may be initiated by the Academic Honor Policy Committee, the Faculty Senate, the Student Senate, and/or the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Amendments to the policy must be approved by the Faculty Senate, the Student Senate, and the Board of Trustees, as appropriate.

Grievance Procedure

Students who allege that academic regulations and procedures have been improperly applied in specific instances may have their grievances addressed through the general academic appeals process. In this process, the student brings a complaint first to the instructor, then to the department chair, and finally to the academic dean appropriate to the course involved, stopping at the level at which the complaint is resolved. If no resolution is reached, the student brings the complaint to the attention of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement for either resolution or referral to the Student Academic Relations Committee of the Faculty Senate. A graduate student whose complaint is unresolved must see the Dean of the Graduate School prior to meeting with the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement. The Student Academic Relations Committee has the authority to direct, through the Vice President for Academic Affairs, that corrective action be taken when justified.

Grievance Procedure: Panama City Campus

Students who allege that academic regulations and procedures have been improperly applied in specific instances may have their grievances addressed through the general academic appeals process. In this process, the student brings a complaint first to the instructor, then to the Panama City Associate Dean (or department chair if applicable to the course), and then to the Panama City Dean (or College Dean if applicable to the course), stopping at the level at which the complaint is resolved. If no resolution is reached, the student brings the complaint to the attention of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement for either resolution or referral to the Student Academic Relations Committee of the Faculty Senate. A graduate student whose complaint is unresolved must see the Dean of the Graduate School prior to meeting with the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement. The Student Academic Relations Committee has the authority to direct, through the Vice President for Academic Affairs, that corrective action be taken when justified.

Grievance Procedure: Panama, Republic of Panama Campus

Students who allege that academic regulations and procedures have been improperly applied in specific instances may have their grievances addressed through the general academic appeals process. In this process, the student brings a complaint first to the instructor, then to the FSU Panama Vice Rector for Academic Affairs. If the complaint is not resolved at this stage, then the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs forwards the complaint to the Academic Standards Committee, which then must make a recommendation to the FSU Panama Rector. If no resolution is reached at the Republic of Panama campus, then the student will go to the department chair, and finally to the academic dean appropriate to the course involved, stopping at the level at which the complaint is resolved. If no resolution is reached, the student brings the complaint to the attention of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement for either resolution or referral to the Student Academic Relations Committee of the Faculty Senate. A graduate student

whose complaint is unresolved must see the Dean of the Graduate School prior to meeting with the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement. The Student Academic Relations Committee has the authority to direct, through the Vice President for Academic Affairs, that corrective action be taken when justified.

Student Academic Relations Committee (SARC) of the Faculty Senate

The Faculty Senate Committee on Student Academic Relations hears appeals from students concerning decisions about their academic work which they have evidence to show to have been arrived at improperly or unprofessionally in departments, schools, or colleges. The committee comprises five faculty members (appointed annually by the Faculty Senate steering committee with the advice and consent of the Senate for staggered two-year terms) and two students, one undergraduate and one graduate (appointed annually by the University President). The committee elects its chair annually from among the faculty representatives and reports its findings and recommendations to the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Students wishing to make appeals to the committee on student academic relations should consult the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement. Appeals to this committee are made after all other available remedies have been exhausted.

University Student Ombudsperson

The Office of the University Ombudsperson provides students of the University community an avenue for confidential exploration of decisions regarding academic issues. Once all other appropriate mechanisms have been exhausted, students may present their case to the University Ombudsperson. The ombudsperson is a neutral facilitator and will assist students with any academic problem or grievance that may arise during their interaction with the University. While he/she may be an instrument for change, the ombudsperson does not resolve issues by any direct use of authority or power, but rather requests a reexamination of the problem.

Grade Appeals System

The purpose of the grade appeals system is to afford an opportunity for an undergraduate or graduate student to appeal a final course grade under certain circumstances. Faculty judgment of students' academic performance is inherent in the grading process and hence should not be overturned except when the student can show that the grade awarded represents a gross violation of the instructor's own specified evaluation (grading) statement and therefore was awarded in an arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory manner. The evaluation (grading) statement utilized during the grade appeals process is the one contained in the instructor's syllabus at the beginning of the semester. This system does not apply to preliminary or comprehensive exams or to thesis or dissertation defenses; these issues are reviewed by the Faculty Senate Student Academic Relations Committee via the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement.

Step 1.

Within 15 class days (defined throughout the Grade Appeals System as Mondays through Fridays during regular fall, spring, and summer semesters, as noted in the FSU Academic Calendar maintained by the University Registrar. Class days are not dependent on whether an individual student has class on a particular day) following the date that final grades are made available to students, the student must contact the instructor in question to discuss the grade and attempt to resolve any differences. The student should document any attempts to contact the instructor in order to establish that the appeal was begun within this 15-class-day period. In the event that the instructor is not available, the

student should provide that documentation to the instructor's program or department chair. It is expected that the student will first attempt to resolve the grade dispute with the instructor; however, either the student or the instructor may consult with the appropriate department chair, school director, or designee during this process.

Step 2.

If no resolution is reached within this 15-class-day period, after the student's documented attempt, the student has an additional 10 class days to submit a written statement to the department chair, school director, or designee. This statement must include an account of attempts to resolve the issue, as well as the evidence that forms the basis for the appeal.

Within 20 class days thereafter, the department chair, school director, or designee will set a date for a meeting of a grade appeals screening committee composed of three students enrolled in the academic unit offering the course to review the appeal. These students should be either undergraduate or graduate students, depending on the enrollment status of the student challenging the grade. The meeting should occur within that 20-class-day period, if practicable. Appropriate students who have no conflict of interest will be chosen to serve on this screening committee by a student organization associated with the program or department, if such an organization exists. If none exists or if members of such an organization are not available, the department chair, school director, or designee will select appropriate students who have no conflict of interest. Both the student and the instructor may attend the meeting, as may the department chair, school director, or designee.

The role of the screening committee is solely to determine whether the student has presented sufficient evidence to warrant further review. Within five class days after this meeting, the screening committee will render its decision in writing (indicating that they recommend/do not recommend further review) to the department chair, school director, or designee, the student, and the instructor. A negative decision will end the appeal. A positive decision will trigger the next step in the process.

Step 3.

Within 15 class days of a positive decision from the grade appeals screening committee, the department chair, school director, or designee will appoint and arrange for a meeting of a grade appeals board. The meeting should occur within that 15-class-day period, if practicable. The board is composed of three faculty members and two students other than those who served on the screening committee. These students should be either undergraduate or graduate students, depending on the enrollment status of the student challenging the grade.

The purpose of this board is to determine whether or not to uphold the final grade assigned by the instructor. The board will consider only the evidence provided by the student and the instructor in making the determination. The student, the instructor, and the department chair, school director, or designee may attend the meeting.

The grade will be upheld unless the evidence shows that the grade was awarded in an arbitrary, capricious, or discriminatory manner, as a result of a gross violation of the instructor's own evaluation (grading) statement. If the original grade is not upheld, the board will recommend that an alternative grade be assigned by the department chair, school director, or designee.

If the student has evidence that this grade appeals process has deviated substantially from these established procedures, resulting in a biased decision, the student may consult with the Office of Faculty Development and Advancement regarding referral to the Faculty Senate Student Academic Relations Committee.

Note: For additional information regarding general grading practices and approvals, please refer to the 'Grading Practices' section in the "Academic Regulations" chapter of this *General Bulletin*.

Religious Holy Days

Per Section 1006.53, Florida Statutes, the Florida State University policy on observance of religious work-restricted holy days provides that students shall, upon notifying their instructor within the first two weeks of the semester, be excused from class to observe a religious work-restricted holy day of their faith. While students will be held responsible for the material covered in their absence, each student shall be permitted a reasonable amount of time to make up the work missed. Instructors and University administrators shall in no way arbitrarily penalize students who are absent from academic or social activities because of religious work-restricted holy day observance. Instructors will find the calendar developed by the University of Missouri (<https://diversity.missouri.edu/guide-to-religions/dates-practices-accomodations/> (<https://diversity.missouri.edu/guide-to-religions/dates-practices-accomodations/>)) a useful resource as they respond to student requests for absence. Students who allege that this policy has been improperly applied in specific instances may have their grievances addressed through the general academic appeals process. In this process, the student brings a complaint first to the instructor, then to the department chair, and finally to the academic dean appropriate to the course involved, stopping at the level at which the complaint is resolved. If no resolution is reached, the student brings the complaint to the attention of the Vice President for Faculty Development and Advancement for either resolution or referral to the Student Academic Relations Committee of the Faculty Senate. This committee has the authority to recommend to the Vice President for Academic Affairs that corrective action be taken when justified. Consult the 'Grievance Procedure' section of this chapter for a complete description.
