

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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The mission of Trinity Christian College states that, “All members of the academic community – faculty, staff, and students – endeavor to provide an educational environment of Christian integrity and love that enhances and supports the learning experience.” Essential to creating this type of educational environment is a commitment to the principles of academic integrity. Every member of the college community is responsible for upholding the highest standards of integrity at all times. Students, as members of this community, are also responsible for adhering to the principles and spirit of academic honesty. In *Doing Honest Work in College* (University of Chicago Press, 2004), Charles Lipson identifies three principles of academic honesty:

1. When you say you did the work yourself, you actually did it.
2. When you rely on others’ work, you cite it. When you use their works, you quote them openly and accurately, and you cite them, too.
3. When you present research materials, you present them fairly and truthfully. That’s true whether the research involves data, documents, or the writings of scholars.

The College works to promote an environment of academic integrity by providing students with the tools to act with integrity. These tools include materials on how to present work honestly and assistance in the form of academic support services.

When the standards of academic integrity are compromised, the entire academic community suffers. Therefore, student violations of academic integrity are considered a serious breach of behavior and can result in assignment or course failure as well as dismissal from the College.

Categories of Academic Integrity Violations

Cheating

- Copying answers from fellow students and representing them as your own work
- Obtaining questions from an exam, quiz or assignment beforehand
- Using answers gained through unauthorized materials or technologies and representing them as your own work

Misrepresentation or falsification

- Deliberately representing the work of others as your own, such as failing to cite the words or ideas of others and cutting and pasting the work of others without acknowledging the source
- Failing to properly identify the contribution of others to your work, such as using incomplete or incorrect citations
- Fabricating academic resources such as falsified citations or sources
- Submitting work for credit in a class that is being or has already been used to fulfill requirements for another course without first obtaining permission of the instructor
- Presenting false credentials or grades in the form of falsified transcripts or diplomas
- Forging or altering official academic documents
- Turning in the product of a collaborative group effort as your own work, the work of an individual

Unauthorized use of an Artificial Intelligence (AI) tool or other electronic resource

- Using an AI tool to generate answers to assignments and representing them as your own work
- Submitting material supplied by an AI tool without acknowledging the source
- Using an AI tool or another electronic resource for an assignment in a way that a professor has forbidden

Unauthorized group effort

- Working collaboratively without the instructor’s knowledge or permission.

Facilitating the academic dishonesty of others

- Providing answers to other students without the knowledge and permission of the instructor
- Providing information (for example, questions) to other students that would give them an undeserved advantage over other students

Levels of Academic Integrity Violations

Minor Offense: This is a less serious breach of integrity with one or more of the following characteristics:

- Limited in size relative to the scope of the assignment, including the submission of an assignment only a portion of which contains material that falls under one of the categories given above
- Has minimal impact on the student's grade in the course
- Does not involve others
- Does not involve planning or premeditation

Sanctions for a minor offense range from a formal warning to zero credit for the assignment.

Major Offense: This is a more serious breach of integrity with one or more of the following characteristics:

- Substantial in size relative to the scope of the assignment, including the submission of an assignment of which a significant portion falls under one of the categories given above
- Has major impact on the student's grade in the course
- Involves others
- Involves planning or premeditation
- Represents the second time a student is cited for a similar minor breach of integrity

Sanctions for a major offense range from zero credit for the work involved to a final grade of "F" for the course in which the violation occurred.

Flagrant Offense: This is the most serious breach of integrity. It includes some or all of the characteristics of a major offense plus at least one additional feature which indicates the flagrant nature of the offense. These additional features may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A one-time offense of a deliberate and egregious nature
- Represents a pattern of dishonesty evident across two or more courses
- Involves encouraging others to engage in dishonest behavior
- Has the potential to have a major impact on the student's academic progress
- Represents the third time a student is cited for any breach of integrity. A third violation will initiate the Official Academic Integrity Review Committee Process.

The sanction for a flagrant offense is permanent dismissal from the College, if recommended by an official Academic Integrity Review Committee.

Procedures for Responding to Alleged Violations of Academic Integrity

The College has established a set of procedures for responding to alleged violations of academic integrity. The primary authority and obligation rests with the course instructor to determine how specific violations of academic integrity relate to these procedures.

1. The course instructor notifies the student of a suspected breach of academic integrity. Depending on the nature and evidence of the offense, the instructor may choose to first discuss the issue with the student. No additional action is needed if, as a result of this discussion, the faculty member considers the initial suspicion unjustified. If, based on discussion or evidence, the course instructor believes s/he has grounds to suspect a violation of academic integrity, s/he will notify the student in writing of the violation. This notification will include the:
 - a. Specific nature of the offense
 - b. Evidence of the offense
 - c. Course instructor's assessment of the level of the offense (minor, major, or flagrant)
 - d. Intended sanction

The course instructor will report the violation to the Academic Affairs Office using the reporting form on Trollweb. Reports of violations of this policy are retained permanently.

2. Prior to implementation of a sanction more severe than zero credit for the work involved, the instructor must consult with the VPAA (or VPAA's designated academic dean) to confirm that the sanction matches the violation.
3. The student has the right to appeal the instructor's decision by requesting that the VPAA establish an official review committee. This appeal must be in writing to the VPAA and must be received by the VPAA's office within one week of the instructor's initial written notification to the student. The course instructor may also ask the VPAA to appoint an official review committee to review the instructor's assessment of the offense and sanctions.

4. The course instructor's report will be placed in the student's academic integrity violation file, maintained in the Academic Affairs Office, to be used for internal college purposes only.
5. If the student's file includes previous violations of academic integrity that would change the level of violation to flagrant, the VPAA will appoint an official review committee to recommend the appropriate course of action. The student will be notified that the review process has been initiated.

Official Academic Integrity Review Committee Process

At the request of the student, course instructor, upon notification of a flagrant offense, or upon review of the student's academic integrity violation file, the VPAA will appoint an official academic integrity review committee. The committee will include two full-time faculty members, named by the VPAA, and two full-time students, named by the Vice President for Student Life. One of the faculty members will serve as committee chair.

The committee will hold a hearing to review the case within one week of the notification from the VPAA. The student and instructor will be notified in writing of the hearing and invited to present their case to the committee. The student and instructor must notify the committee in advance of any witnesses or evidence they wish to present. The meetings and decisions of the official academic integrity review committees are administrative in nature and address internal college affairs only. No one outside of the College may be present. The meeting is not open to general members of the College community and is not subject to formal rules of civil procedure or evidence. The hearing will proceed using the following format.

1. The chair will summarize the alleged violation and proposed sanctions.
2. The instructor will present evidence of the alleged violation. The committee and the student may question the instructor or other witnesses concerning the evidence. Witnesses will testify individually and will not be present during the testimony of others.
3. The student will present evidence concerning the alleged violation. The committee and the instructor may question the student or other witnesses concerning the evidence. Witnesses will testify individually and will not be present during the testimony of others.
4. The instructor will be excused, and the student will be given the opportunity to present a final statement to the committee.
5. The student will be excused, and the committee will deliberate the merits of the case. The committee will decide, by majority vote, if the information presented supports the alleged violation. The committee will also decide, by majority vote, the appropriate sanction. In the case of a deadlock, both sides of the committee must present their positions and rationale to the VPAA for decision.
6. Within 24 hours of completing the hearing, the committee chair will notify the student and VPAA of the committee's decision.
 - a. In cases where the committee assesses a sanction at the level of a minor offense or a major offense, the decision of the committee regarding sanction will be final.
 - b. In cases where the committee assesses a flagrant offense resulting in permanent dismissal, the student may appeal the decision to the VPAA, but only on the basis of a violation of the Academic Integrity Review Committee Process. This appeal must be made in writing within one week of the written decision of the committee.
7. In cases where the committee assesses a flagrant offense resulting in permanent dismissal, the student may appeal the decision itself to the President. The appeal must be received in writing by the President's Office within one week of the committee's written notification to the student. The President will respond to this final appeal within one week of receipt of the written appeal. The President's decision is final, and there is no further appeal.