Policy & Procedures for Handling Plagiarism

A Guide for Instructors

Provided by Technology Across the Curriculum (TAC)

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Policy

Students are held accountable to specific policies when they become students at Oregon State University. OSU is part of the Oregon University System, which adheres to Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs). Within the OARs, section 576-015-0200 is the Student Conduct Code. The Student Conduct Code puts forth student expectations, and defines plagiarism within Academic or Scholarly Dishonesty:

http://studentlife.oregonstate.edu/sites/studentlife.oregonstate.edu/files/student_conduct_code_1.pdf

(2) Academic or Scholarly Dishonesty:

(v) PLAGIARISM - representing the words or ideas of another person or presenting someone else’s words, ideas, artistry or data as one’s own, or using one’s own previously submitted work. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to copying another person’s work (including unpublished material) without appropriate referencing, presenting someone else’s opinions and theories as one’s own, or working jointly on a project and then submitting it as one’s own.

This definition clearly defines what actions constitute academic dishonesty. Do note that intention regarding plagiarism is difficult to objectively define, so instead, rules regulate the actions and outcome in a situation.

This policy outlines what students are held accountable to regarding plagiarism as a community member of OSU. The OARs are an in depth document, and can be challenging to fully understand or remember. If students have questions regarding the content, they should talk with their instructor or contact the Student Conduct and Community Standards office.

Process & Procedures

OAR 576-015-0200 describes the process for academic dishonesty offenses:

(c) Academic Dishonesty cases are handled initially by the academic units, following the process outlined in the University’s Academic Dishonesty Report Form, and will also be referred to SCCS for action under these rules.

When considering how to judge a case of plagiarism, know that student conduct uses the ‘preponderance of the evidence' standard. This means deciding whether it’s more likely than not that a policy was broken. This is different from the legal system’s ‘beyond a reasonable doubt’ standard.

The form to report academic dishonesty can be found at the Student Conduct and Community Standards website: http://studentlife.oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/academic-misconduct-reporting-forms.
An abbreviated version of the process is:

1. When an instructor observes or suspects academic dishonesty, they will gather physical evidence about the incident that demonstrates why or how dishonesty occurred.
   
a. Examples of this may be copies of tests, papers and sources printed from the internet that had not been cited, or pictures of methods of cheating.

2. The Instructor compiles this information into an Academic Dishonesty Report Form (ADRF), which includes a summary of the incident and the evidence.

3. The instructor initiates a meeting with the student to discuss the situation and hear the student’s point of view.

4. If the instructor determines that academic dishonesty occurred, the instructor completes the ADRF, and the department chair and Dean sign the ADRF form with any further opinions or comments, who then submits it to the Student Conduct and Community Standards (SCCS) Office. They will soon contact the student to begin the judicial process.

**SCCS Process if student is found responsible:** Student conduct works on a model of restorative justice. Their process is not punitive, but seeks to empower and educate to prevent repeat offenses.

5. Student takes an online course on Academic Integrity at OSU (which covers plagiarism), completes quizzes, and writes several papers – one reflective, one with research.

6. Student meets with a conduct officer to discuss the case.

**Records:** If a student is found responsible for a case of plagiarism, this stays on their confidential conduct record for five years at OSU, after which it is erased. The incident does not go on their academic transcript.

**Penalties**

Grade penalties imposed as a result of academic dishonesty are entirely up to the instructor, department and college or school. A student may appeal the charge of academic dishonesty and the penalty imposed in accordance with the procedure outlined below, or with a procedure developed by the department, college or school in which the course is offered.

**Appeals**

Per OAR 576-022-0005:

(3) Unless otherwise specified, all initial appeals must be filed in writing within 15 calendar days of the decision or action being appealed, and all appeals to subsequent steps in the process must be filed within seven calendar days of the date of the decision at the previous level.
As outlined in the appeal form, the appeal process may be specified at the college, and if not, the form goes through the following channels in the following order: Instructor, Department Chair or Director, Deans Office (of the college in which the course is offered), and finally the Vice Provost for Academic Success and Engagement, 500 Kerr Administration Building.

On this form, students may describe what occurred in the reporting procedures or add new information that may affect the outcome. In either case, the evidence should be submitted attached to the form.

The appeal form can be found here:  
[http://studentlife.oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/academic-misconduct-reporting-forms](http://studentlife.oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/academic-misconduct-reporting-forms)

The process can be found here: OAR Division 22, Student Appeals and Grievances  

Responsibilities and Resources

Instructor Responsibilities:

1. Provide information on OSU’s academic dishonesty policies to each class.
2. For charges of academic dishonesty, provide evidence of dishonesty on the ADRF.
3. Initiate the conduct process by contacting and informing the student of the evidence of academic dishonesty. Meet with the student, listen to their perspective, and consider whether it is more likely than not that plagiarism occurred.
4. Work with your colleagues to create a consistent, college wide response to plagiarism.
   a. Because instructors won’t know whether a student has plagiarized before, it is helpful to report each case. If an incident is not reported, the student does not receive an opportunity to learn from their mistakes.
   b. Students notice when instructors don’t report plagiarism, or ignore an issue. Consistently enforcing the policy sends a clear message.
5. If you are using SafeAssign, we recommend using the following syllabus statement:

   **SafeAssign:**
   Your instructor may ask you to submit one or more of your writing assignments to Blackboard’s SafeAssign plagiarism prevention service. Your assignment content will be checked against Internet sources, academic journal articles, and the papers of other OSU students, for common or borrowed content. SafeAssign generates a report that highlights any potentially unoriginal text in your paper. The report may be submitted directly to your instructor or your instructor may elect to have you submit initial drafts through SafeAssign and you will receive the report allowing you the opportunity to make adjustments and ensure that all source material has been properly cited.

Student Responsibilities:
1. “Not knowing” is not an excuse for plagiarism.
2. If you can’t find or don’t understand OSU academic honesty polices, ask your instructor for help and/or clarification.
3. If you don’t know or don’t understand when and how to correctly cite sources, ask your instructor.
4. Appeals for charges of plagiarism (academic dishonesty) are initiated by students and should filed within 15 days of the charge
   a. It is up to you to produce new evidence or information that may dispute the charge.
   b. If is also up to you to seek resources and support during this process (see student resources below)

**Student Resources**

Students have several possible resources when responding to charges of academic dishonesty. A discussion with the instructor is encouraged as the first step. More resources may be:

**ASOSU Office of Advocacy** (a resource noted on the appeal form). Snell 133. 541-737-9300.  
[http://oregonstate.edu/dept/asosu-advocacy/](http://oregonstate.edu/dept/asosu-advocacy/)

**Student Conduct and Community Standards**. Kerr B058. 541-737-3656  
[http://oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/home/](http://oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/home/)

**OAR on Student Appeals and Grievances**:  

**Instructor Resources**

The above student resources may be helpful.

**Appendix A: Academic Dishonesty** of the faculty handbook provides information around academic dishonesty and what faculty should know. Tips to prevent cheating can be found at:  
[http://oregonstate.edu/admin/aa/faculty-handbook-appendix-academic-dishonesty](http://oregonstate.edu/admin/aa/faculty-handbook-appendix-academic-dishonesty)

**OARs Plagiarism Definition**:  