

Academic Integrity & Appeal Process

Academic Integrity

MiraCosta College highly values academic integrity. At the core, this means producing an honest representation of one's own work. MiraCosta College also promotes the approach that education is best accomplished as a cooperative, collaborative enterprise in which students are encouraged to work with and learn from each other. The line between academic integrity and collaborative education is not always easy to define and may vary from one discipline to the next and from one instructor to the next. Many aspects of cheating and plagiarism are universally recognized, while others are subject to debate.

Board Policy 5505: Academic Integrity provides general guidelines that outline common definitions of academic dishonesty and affirms the right of instructors to employ more detailed academic integrity policies according to their preferences and practices when teaching their respective courses. Faculty are encouraged to outline their policies on their course syllabus. Students are encouraged to review each course syllabus to understand the academic integrity policies of the faculty and course.

Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Cheating: Copying work or using unauthorized aids, including technology such as cell phones or watches, during an examination, quiz, or assignment.
2. Plagiarizing: Copying work or ideas, including but not limited to the use of electronic aids, and misrepresenting them as one's own.
3. Falsification: Making up fictitious information and presenting it as factual or altering records for the purpose of misrepresentation.
4. Facilitation: Helping another student to cheat, plagiarize, or falsify information. Some examples include writing a paper for another student, sharing work where it may be searched and submitted by others, referring a student to those sources, or knowingly allowing a student to copy your own work.

There are two areas that address concerns about behavior that may be deemed a violation of academic integrity. These areas are:

1. Faculty-initiated remedies: Faculty-initiated remedies for violations of academic integrity may include a verbal warning, a lowered assignment grade, and/or submission of an academic integrity report to the Office of Student Affairs. Instructors may consult with the dean of Student Affairs or their designee to review appropriate remedies per state statutes and codes. Students have the right to appeal faculty-initiated remedies as outlined in Administrative Procedure 5505: Academic Integrity–Appeal Process.
2. Referrals to the Office of Student Affairs: Faculty are encouraged to submit reports of alleged violations of Administrative Procedure 5500: Standards of Student Conduct to the Office of Student Affairs. The Office of

Student Affairs provides an educational experience for students when there are alleged violations of the Standards of Student Conduct to decrease the likelihood of recurrence. In particular, if the student has allegedly violated the Standards of Student Conduct before, the Office of Student Affairs may address alleged violations as outlined in Administrative Procedure 5520: Student Conduct Procedures.

See Administrative Procedure 5500: Standards of Student Conduct and Administrative Procedure 5520: Student Conduct Procedures for additional information.

Academic Integrity Appeal Process

MiraCosta College highly values academic integrity. As outlined in Board Policy 5505: Academic Integrity, students have the right to appeal a faculty-initiated academic dishonesty decision and/or remedy. This means that any student who is determined by a faculty member to have engaged in behavior that is deemed a violation of their academic integrity policy such as cheating, plagiarizing, falsification of information, or helping other students to cheat, etc., has the right to appeal a faculty member's decision and/or remedy (e.g., lowering of a grade as the result of behavior deemed a violation of the faculty member's academic integrity policy). Please note that this procedure is specific to faculty-initiated decisions and/or remedies in response to claims of academic dishonesty.

All appeal requests that involve decisions and/or resolutions determined by the Office of Student Affairs must follow the processes and conditions as outlined in Administrative Procedure 5520: Student Conduct Procedures. The process to appeal a faculty decision (and/or remedy) is as follows:

1. Within ten (10) days, the student may appeal the faculty member's action by submitting a written appeal request to the department chairperson via email. The written request should include a description of the alleged behavior in question, the faculty member's decision and/or remedy, detail what the student is specifically appealing (decision and/or remedy), and any information the student deems relevant. The department chairperson must respond to the student in writing via email within ten (10) days of when the appeal was submitted with their decision. The chairperson's decision may be to uphold the faculty member's decision and/or remedy, to overturn the faculty member's decision and/or to modify the faculty member's decision and/or remedy.
2. If the student wishes to appeal the department chairperson's decision, the student may make a final written appeal via email to the vice president of Instructional Services within ten (10) days of receiving the chairperson's decision. The vice president's decision is final and will be delivered to the student within ten (10) days via email.
3. A successful appeal of a faculty member's determination that a student has been academically dishonest does not automatically change the final grade in the course. To appeal the final grade in a course, the student must follow the procedures outlined in Administrative Procedure 4231 on grade changes.

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(Source: MCCCD Board Policy and Administrative Procedure 5505. All MiraCosta College board policies and administrative procedures are located on the Board of Trustees webpage.)