The Graduate Academic Integrity Policy

Southeastern University seeks to foster a spirit of honesty and integrity in students. The University expects graduate students at SEU to embody the same spirit of commitment to high ethical standards and academic integrity in all aspects of their participation within the program.

Therefore, any work submitted by a student must represent original work produced by that student. Any source used by a student must be documented using program appropriate scholarly references and citations.

“Academic dishonesty” refers to plagiarism or cheating (regardless of intention) (see definitions below). Should a professor suspect academic dishonesty of any kind, the professor will follow the guidelines below and will refer the student to the Academic Center for Enrichment (ACE) by submitting an Early Alert (the Early Alert link is available through JICS). The intervention will be noted in the student’s file. University personnel will follow up assuring that all consequences dictated by the professor and university policy have been completed. To effectively counter academic dishonesty, professors must follow these guidelines in all instances of plagiarism and cheating.

The processes stated in the Student Appeal and Complaint Policy (see “Appeals”) are to be utilized should a student seek an appeal of any decision rendered under the Academic Integrity policy.

**Doctoral - Procedure for Dealing with Violations of Academic Integrity**

When students attain the level of doctoral studies, the expectation is that they understand academic integrity and plagiarism. Doctoral students are expected to maintain the highest level of academic integrity in all their academic work.

This policy applies to all doctoral coursework and comprehensive exams, as well as drafts and final versions of the dissertation/capstone and/or sections of the dissertation/capstone submitted to professors and to graduate writing support.

**Academic Dishonesty Report**

In each instance of academic dishonesty, the professor will (a) determine the level of the offense and the appropriate consequences according to the guidelines listed below; (b) communicate with the offending student to discuss the nature of his or her academic dishonesty, the academic integrity policy, and the consequences to be assigned; and (c) submit an academic dishonesty report to the Office of Academic Success and to the department chair, director, or coordinator.

The academic dishonesty report should include:

- Name and ID number of the offending student
- Professor, course, and term
• Description of the academic dishonesty (plagiarism or cheating), indicating the level of offense (Level 2 or 3 as outlined below)

• Documentation of each step of the academic integrity procedure that has been followed

• Copy of the plagiarism report (for example, from Turnitin.com), if available

• A copy of the plagiarized work, if applicable

• Any other supporting documentation

• An indication of the consequences already assigned

**Doctoral - Consequences and Levels of Offense**

The consequences for plagiarism vary according to the extent of the plagiarism and according to whether the instance is a student’s first or subsequent offense. Three levels of offenses and corresponding consequences are outlined below.

The Office of Academic Success and the department chair, director, or coordinator will keep records of plagiarism offenses. The professor should check with the academic success coordinator with ACE to find out whether a given instance of plagiarism is a first or subsequent offense. The professor is responsible for determining the extent of the plagiarism. Plagiarism detection tools (such as Turnitin.com) may be used as an aid in this process.

Students may not withdraw from a course in order to avoid consequences for academic dishonesty.

**Level 1**

Level one is used only for undergraduate students.

**Level 2**

Academic Dishonesty will be considered a Level 2 offense when it is:

- The *first* instance of plagiarism in a submission for a doctoral student; OR
- The first instance of cheating in a submission for a doctoral student.

Consequences for a Level 2 offense are assigned at the programs chair’s, director’s, or coordinator’s discretion with input from the professor, considering factors such as the extent of the academic dishonesty and the nature of the assignment. When students are allowed to correct plagiarism for a graded submission, the course professor will determine the due date for resubmission.

**Consequences for the student for a Level 2 offense must include:**

- Completing a **Graduate** Academic Integrity (GAI) course. The student must successfully complete the course **prior to registering for additional doctoral courses or continuing the dissertation/capstone process.** A copy of the completion record must be submitted to the
professor and the department chair before a student may continue in the doctoral program; AND

- Receiving a grade penalty in the course (for non-dissertation submissions); AND
- Receiving a Z grade annotation (may only be removed by successful completion of the GAI course). (Students may not withdraw from a course in order to avoid consequences for academic dishonesty)

Additionally, the consequences may include any or all of the following:

- Correcting the plagiarism in the assignment for a grade reduction; AND/OR
- Receiving a failing grade for the submission with no option for resubmission; AND/OR
- Failing the course; AND/OR
- Being placed on academic probation.

Additional consequences for dissertation or capstone students may include any or all of the following:

- Suspension of up to one subsequent semester. The student will not be allowed to communicate with members of the dissertation or capstone committee or enroll for dissertation or capstone credits until the suspension is completed.
- Re-assignment of dissertation or capstone committee;
- Suspension of the Graduate Writing Support services until reinstated.

**Level 3**

Academic Dishonesty will be considered a Level 3 offense when:

- The offense is the second instance of plagiarism or cheating in the student’s doctoral program; OR
- The offense is an instance of plagiarism or cheating deemed egregious by the professor and department chair, director, or coordinator; OR
- Cheating occurs on the comprehensive exam; OR
- The offense consists of most of the assignment or dissertation/capstone section; OR
- The student becomes defensive or belligerent when any level of academic dishonesty is addressed.

Consequences for the student for a Level 3 offense are determined according to the program chair’s, director’s, or coordinator’s discretion with input from the professor, considering factors such as the extent of the plagiarism, the nature of the assignment, and the number and levels of any prior offenses.
Consequences for Level 3 offenses must include the following:

- Completing a **Graduate** Academic Integrity (GAI) course (if not taken previously). The student must successfully complete the course prior to registering for additional doctoral courses or continuing the dissertation/capstone process. A copy of the completion record must be submitted to the professor and the department chair before a student may continue in the doctoral program; AND

- Receive a zero for the submission (the student will have no option to rewrite course submissions and the student will receive no credit for the assignment); AND

- Receiving a Z grade annotation (required, see below); (Students may not withdraw from a course in order to avoid consequences for academic dishonesty).

Additional consequences for *dissertation or capstone students* may include any or all of the following:

- Suspension of up to one subsequent semester. The student will not be allowed to communicate with members of the dissertation or capstone committee or enroll for dissertation or capstone credits until the suspension is completed

- Re-assignment of dissertation or capstone committee

- Suspension of the Graduate Writing Support services until reinstated

Additionally, consequences for any student may include any or all of the following:

- Failing the course; AND/OR

- Expulsion from the University

**Doctoral - Definitions**

For the purpose of this policy,

- “professor” is defined as any person providing academic support or assessment of a student’s work. These persons include course instructors, mentors, writing support professors, and members of the dissertation/capstone committee (chair, methodologist, content specialist, and third reader);

- “submission” is defined as all doctoral coursework, comprehensive exams, as well as drafts and final versions of the dissertation/capstone projects and/or sections of the dissertation/capstone project submitted to professors and to graduate writing support.

**Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is considered a serious academic offense at Southeastern University. Plagiarism undermines the educational process, and when done intentionally, violates the integrity of the community.
Plagiarism occurs when a writer (regardless of intent) uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original material without acknowledging its source.

Plagiarism includes unattributed use of any source, in any medium, published or unpublished.

The policy also applies to incidents of self-plagiarism, resubmission, or multiple submissions (the use of a single project in two or more academic settings either at Southeastern University or another academic institution). Work submitted in another course may not be resubmitted unless both professors specifically state otherwise.

Some examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- Quoting or paraphrasing material without attributing it to its source
- Copying segments from the work of others without giving proper credit
- Submitting work written by someone else
- Allowing another student to submit their work to use as his or her own when that individual had not done the work

Widely known facts do not require citation and do not count as plagiarism if the facts are communicated in the writer’s own words. Ideas and observations original to the writer also do not require citation.

**Avoiding Plagiarism**

Professors at Southeastern University work diligently to help students understand and avoid plagiarism. However, the responsibility ultimately rests on students to make sure that their work does not contain plagiarism. Students can avoid plagiarism by properly citing and quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing all material they use from sources.

Common forms of citation include parenthetical citations, footnotes/endnotes, and attributive statements such as “According to Smith and Rodriguez…”

*Quotations* include entire sentence(s), key phrase(s), or specific term(s) that match a source word for word. All quotations must be cited using the appropriate quotation format.

*Paraphrases* and *summaries* include material (usually information or ideas) taken from a source and put into a writer’s own words. All paraphrased and summarized materials must completely rephrase the original source and be properly cited.

The bottom line in avoiding plagiarism is that students must clearly indicate the material in their writing that is original to them and the material taken from sources.

**Cheating**

Cheating is attempting to present (regardless of intent), as one’s own, work that one has not performed, or using improper means to pass an examination. Examples include, but are not limited to the following:
• Sharing of unauthorized information regarding specific content of assignment/examinations or using books, notes or other material without the professor’s permission.

• Interacting with another person or source in any manner during an assessment.

• Submitting work the student has not personally completed.

• Submitting the same paper or assignment, or material portions thereof, for more than one course (except by both professors’ approval and in accordance with established criteria).

• Falsifying research data.

• Preventing student or faculty access to course material, such as mutilating or stealing materials provided by the university for the examination, and/or disabling and interfering with required equipment (e.g. computer equipment or databases).

• Using electronic devices to store or share information or materials that are not authorized by the professor.

Other violations

Other violations may include:

• Failing to follow any explicit regulation or expectation announced by the professor, and/or circulated to each student, including failure to use surveillance equipment or software as required by the professor. Students are responsible to confer with the professor if procedures are unclear.

• Falsifying a signature on an official university document.

• Altering any official university document.

• Intentionally helping or attempting to help another student to violate any provision of this policy.

Doctoral - Z Grade Annotation

When a professor, program chair, director, coordinator, or college dean conclude that cheating has occurred (plagiarism or some other form of cheating), the student’s course grade will be preceded by the letter Z (ZB, ZC, ZD, ZF, with +/- designations as appropriate). The transcript key will indicate that the Z grade annotation is assigned in cases of cheating. If the student has withdrawn from the class in which the cheating occurred, he or she should be added back to the roster and assigned a Z grade annotation. When submitting final grades, an intervention coordinator will inform the Registrar’s Office, which will affix a “Z” in front of the grade. The intervention coordinator will also inform the faculty, program chair, director, coordinator or college dean involved in this process.

After the first cheating offense in the student’s SEU career, the student must complete a required integrity course prior to enrolling in another course. Upon receiving documentation of successful
completion of the assigned integrity course and fulfilling any other requirements imposed by the professor, the academic success coordinator will instruct the Registrar to remove the Z from the student’s transcript. After the second or subsequent cheating offenses, the Z grade annotation cannot be removed. This penalty may be applied at the professor, chair, director, coordinator, or dean level.

Master’s - Consequences and Levels of Offense

Level 1
Level 1 is only used for undergraduate students.

Level 2
Academic Dishonesty will be considered a Level 2 offense when it is:

- The first instance of plagiarism of up to 50% for a master’s student; OR
- The first instance of cheating on a test or assignment.

Consequences for the student for a Level 2 offense must include:

- Completing a Graduate Academic Integrity (GAI) course that includes strategies for avoiding plagiarism and cheating (required if not already taken); AND
- Receiving a grade penalty in the course; AND
- Receiving a Z grade annotation (may only be removed by successful completion of the GAI course).

Additionally, the consequences may include any or all the following:

- Correcting the plagiarism in the assignment for a grade; AND/OR
- Failing the course; AND/OR
- Losing eligibility to take certain types of courses for the remainder of their careers at Southeastern.

Level 3
Academic Dishonesty will be considered a Level 3 offense when it is:

- The second (or higher) instance of plagiarism in a master’s level student’s career at Southeastern; OR
- Is the second instance of cheating on a test or assignment

Consequences for Level 3 offenses must include the following:

- Receiving a grade penalty in the course; AND
- Completing an GAI course that includes strategies for avoiding plagiarism and cheating (required if not taken previously); AND
• Receiving a Z grade annotation (required, see below)

• Note: students with a level 3 offense may not withdraw from a course or will be added back to the roster

Additionally, consequences may include any or all the following:

• Failing the course; AND/OR

• Losing eligibility to take certain types of courses for the remainder of their careers at Southeastern; AND/OR

• Expulsion from the University at the discretion of the Provost

Master’s - Definitions

Plagiarism

Plagiarism occurs when a writer uses someone else’s language, ideas, or other original material without acknowledging its source.

Plagiarism includes unattributed use of any source, in any medium, published or unpublished. Work already submitted for a grade in another course may not be resubmitted unless the professor specifically states otherwise.

Some examples of plagiarism include but are not limited to:

• Quoting or paraphrasing material without attributing it to its source

• Copying segments from the work of others without giving proper credit

• Submitting as original work written entirely by someone else

Cheating

Cheating is attempting to present, as one’s own, work that one has not performed, or using improper means to pass an examination. Examples include, but are not limited to:

• The sharing of unauthorized information regarding specific content of assignment/examinations or using books, notes or other material without the instructor’s permission.

• The discussion of any aspect of the assignment/examination before all students have completed it.

• Speaking or otherwise communicating with one another in English or any other language or manner during an examination.

• Submitting work the student has not done him- or herself. This includes papers, projects, homework assignments, computer programs, etc.
• Submitting of the same paper or assignment, or material portions thereof, for more than one course (except by both instructors’ approval and in accordance with criteria established by each of them).

• Falsifying of research data.

• Preventing student or faculty access to course material. This includes mutilating or stealing materials provided by the university for the examination, and/or disabling and interfering with required equipment (i.e. computer equipment or databases).

• Using electronic devices such as cell phones or calculators to store information or materials that are not authorized by the instructor.

Other violations may include:

• Failing to follow any other explicit regulation or expectation announced by the instructor, and/or circulated to each student. This includes failure to use surveillance equipment or software as required by the professor. It is the responsibility of the student to confer with an instructor when procedures are unclear.

• Falsifying a signature on any official university document.

• Altering the contents and/or intent of any official university document.

• Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of this policy.

Invalid Attempt

The program coordinator and department chair or college dean reserve the right to differentiate between cases of cheating and invalid exam attempts. If an invalid attempt incident is determined, the student is not required to take the academic integrity course, nor given a “Z” grade. Re-attempting the submission or assignment is permitted at the professor’s discretion.

Master’s - Z Grade Annotation

When a professor, program coordinator, and department chair or college dean conclude that cheating has occurred (plagiarism or some other form of cheating), the student’s course grade will be preceded by the letter Z (ZB, ZC, ZD, ZF, with +/- designations as appropriate). The transcript key will indicate that the Z grade annotation is assigned in cases of cheating. If the student has withdrawn from the class in which the cheating occurred, he or she should be added back to the roster and assigned a Z grade annotation. When submitting final grades, an intervention coordinator will inform the Registrar’s Office, which will affix a “Z” in front of the grade. The intervention coordinator will also inform the faculty, program coordinator, and department chair or college dean involved in this process.

After the first cheating offense in the student’s SEU career, the student may complete a required GAI course, normally prior to the start of the next 8-week term. At the discretion of the professor of the course in which cheating occurred, the student may be required to retake the academic
course the next time it is offered to replace the grade. Upon receiving documentation of successful completion of the GAI course and, if required, the retaken academic course, the professor assigning the Z (or academic dean, if the professor is no longer at SEU) will instruct the Registrar to remove the Z from the student’s transcript. After second or subsequent cheating offenses, the Z grade annotation cannot be removed. This penalty may be applied at the professor, coordinator, chair, or dean level. The processes stated in the Student Appeal and Complaint Policy are to be utilized should a student seek an appeal of any decision rendered under the Academic Integrity policy.

Violation of Federal Copyright Laws

“102. Subject matter of copyright: In general

(a) Copyright protection subsists, in accordance with this title, in original works of authorship fixed in any tangible medium of expression, now known or later developed, from which they can be perceived, reproduced, or otherwise communicated, either directly or with the aid of a machine or device.” (https://www.copyright.gov/title17/92chap1.html).

“506. Criminal offenses

(a) Criminal Infringement. —

(1) In general.—Any person who willfully infringes a copyright shall be punished as provided under section 2319 of title 18…”

(https://www.copyright.gov/title17/92chap5.html).

For detailed information, please see the website of the U.S. Copyright Office at www.copyright.gov.