

RESPONDING TO MISCONDUCT WITH EDUCATION: ACADEMIC INTEGRITY REMEDIATION TO REDUCE RECIDIVISM

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Abstract

Following a major faculty and student survey, focus groups, and working committees, our university rolled out revised academic integrity policies and procedures in fall 2019. Included in these new procedures is an opportunity for undergraduate students with one non-egregious offense to expunge their conduct record in the Office of Academic Integrity through successful completion of a remediation assignment. The decision to offer remediation stemmed from a number of factors, including the recognition that undergraduate students require more direct instruction in practices of academic honesty at the university level, our international students require additional support as they assimilate to the norms and expectations for academic integrity in the United States, and instructors may be more willing to report infractions if students have some opportunity for forgiveness.

The academic integrity remediation assignment began in fall 2019 and has evolved over the past five semesters to meet particular goals. Specifically, students who complete the assignment should: have an enhanced appreciation of the value of both academic and professional integrity; gain greater awareness of the range of policy violations; apply insights about academic integrity to their own practices; become familiar with authorized resources for academic assistance offered by the university; and be less likely to commit another act of academic dishonesty.

The remediation process begins with a meeting between the student and a member of the Office of Academic Integrity. This initial conversation provides an opportunity for the student to reflect on their case, what led to their choices, how their actions affect them and others within the university community, and how integrity will be important in their future professional endeavors. At this meeting, students are enrolled in the three-module assignment built within our learning management system (LMS).

Module 1 consists of a “homegrown” Prezi presentation with information about the six values associated with academic integrity (ICAI, n/d), common causes of cheating, and the culture of higher education. There are also videos of members of our university community discussing the effects of academic dishonesty on them in their various roles (i.e., fellow student, parent, professor, director of the Office of Academic Integrity). After viewing the Prezi presentation, students answer a series of short answer questions specific to their case.

Module 2 provides students with ten scenarios of academic dishonesty. For each scenario, the student must correctly label the academic integrity violation, the most likely cause of the dishonesty, the effects (both academic and non-academic) of the behavior on the student, and the effects on others (e.g., classmates, professors, families, the university).

Module 3 is dedicated to legitimate resources for help, proper citation techniques, and

paraphrasing. Since all students at the university level must be able to properly cite and attribute work, this module provides both instruction and a quiz on these techniques.

Once complete, the Office of Academic Integrity staff member reads and scores the student's work. If revisions are required, the student receives comments about what is needed and why. Students have one chance to make changes to their work. Assuming the written portion of the assignment is successful, students then have a final meeting with the Office of Academic Integrity staff member. This meeting allows students to debrief what they have learned from the assignment and how they can apply those insights to their work moving forward – both in their academics and subsequent profession.

Although the written portion of remediation typically takes 5-6 hours to complete, students are given a 60-day deadline to ensure that there is no issue with short-term conflicts (e.g., final exams, travel, illness). Because the assignment

is intended as an educational intervention to prevent students from committing future acts of academic dishonesty, there is strict adherence to this deadline. Upon successful completion of the remediation process, undergraduate students with one non-egregious offense have their record cleared with the Office of Academic Integrity, meaning that their offense would not be reported out to graduate schools or employers seeking information about student records.

This workshop will include an overview of the remediation creation and execution, what students seem to gain from it, and data on its success. Specifically, of the 954 students who have cleared their record through this process since fall 2019, only 40 (4.2%) have had a repeat offense versus the 122 repeat offenders (17.2%) of the 711 students who opted not to take remediation to clear their record. This is a statistically significant result. Other variables, such as gender, year in school, and international versus domestic status will be examined.

References

ICAI (2021). Fundamental values of academic integrity, International Center for Academic Integrity, Third Edition.

https://academicintegrity.org/images/pdfs/2019_ICAI-Fundamental-Values_R12.pdf