

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY CODE**

### Preamble

The central commitment of the American University of Nigeria (AUN) is to develop thoughtful and responsible human beings with the highest moral and ethical standards, within the context of a very diverse yet collaborative academic environment. This commitment is founded on the following core values of the University: Tolerance and understanding among national, ethnic, and religious groups; Freedom of Expression; Non-discrimination in the admission and employment processes with regard to gender, age, religion, nationality, ethnicity, physical ability, political affiliation, or personal relationships. Excellence and integrity are the core principles that guide us.

This Academic Integrity Code is designed to benefit and assist the AUN community in forming the highest standards of ethics and morals among its members. It is designed to foster the University's commitment to excellence and equity, while affirming the shared values that make community life possible. Students with alleged violations of the Academic Integrity Code should contact the Office of the Dean of their respective program to receive further information on disciplinary procedures.

### I. Authority for Academic Integrity

Ultimate authority for all University policies is vested in the Board of Trustees of the American University of Nigeria. Academic disciplinary authority has been delegated by the President to the Academic Vice-President.

Primary responsibility for ensuring academic honesty rests with the faculty. In practice, the resolution of academic integrity cases may involve an array of the University administrators, committees of students, staff, and faculty. Students are expected to assume positions of responsibility in the University judicial system in order to contribute their skills and insights to the resolution of academic integrity cases. The University reserves the right to amend this Academic Integrity Code at any time according to the established procedures.

### II. Responsibilities and Rights

A. Every student has a duty to read, understand and abide by the rules and regulations of the University. Ignorance of a rule or regulation will not be an acceptable defense. Students accused of Academic Integrity Code violations are entitled to the following procedural protections:

1. To be informed of the charges against them;
2. To request an informal resolution of the case;
3. To be allowed reasonable time to prepare a defense;
4. To hear and respond to evidence upon which a charge is based;
5. To call relevant witnesses and question the witnesses who testify in Code violation proceedings;

6. To be assured of confidentiality according to the terms of the University policy on confidentiality;
7. To request that any person conducting an integrity session, or serving as an Integrity Council member be disqualified on the grounds of personal bias;
8. To be provided with an opportunity to review these rights before any integrity session or hearing;
9. To be considered not responsible for the charges until found responsible by a preponderance of evidence; and  
To have reasonable access to the case file prior to and during the integrity session or hearing.

### III. Jurisdiction

The Academic Integrity Code (Integrity Code) is the University's policy for academic integrity offenses and applies to all students, student groups, and student organizations at AUN.

The University retains jurisdiction over alleged infractions that occur during a student's matriculation or attendance at the University, including Fall, Spring, and Summer breaks and periods of leave of absence from the University. Therefore, a hearing may be scheduled after a student has completed a program, withdrawn, or graduated from the University.

Generally, the University's jurisdiction is invoked where the alleged violation relates to any academic endeavor administered, in whole or in part, by AUN, including but not limited to examinations, research papers, projects, internships, study abroad programs and other credit bearing activities or programs. Nothing in this section shall construe the University's jurisdiction to take action when, in the judgment of the University officials, a student's alleged misconduct has a negative effect on the University's pursuit of its mission or on the wellbeing of the greater community.

### IV. Academic Integrity Code Infractions

This Integrity Code is not written with the specificity of a criminal statute, nor is it intended to cover every instance of potentially prohibited conduct. American University of Nigeria expects its students, wherever they are, to adhere to high standards of honor and good citizenship and to conduct themselves in a responsible manner that brings credit to themselves and the University.

Attempting to commit; aiding, abetting or inciting others to engage in any prohibited conduct is punishable under this Integrity Code and may be considered as serious as engaging in the violation itself. Retaliating against anyone who reports an alleged violation of the Integrity Code, a witness or participant in any Integrity Code proceeding or investigation is also prohibited and shall be dealt with accordingly.

The following misconduct shall violate the Academic Integrity Code:

- A. *Plagiarism* – submitting the academic work of another as one’s own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to fabricating citations, downloading from the internet, cutting and pasting information, using another’s idea/words without proper attribution; and fabricating any professional source or work as one’s own.
- B. *Copying* – copying an unsuspecting person’s work or collaborative/complicit copying; unauthorized passing of answers or notes during an exam; prohibited discussion of exam questions or answers.
- C. *Cheating* – using cheat sheets of any kind, pre-programming a device or loading prohibited material, or using text books or reference materials during a closed book examination.
- D. *Unauthorized Submission of Previous Work* – submitting a paper, lab work or any other assignment that was previously submitted without authorization from the faculty member.
- E. *Altering* – changing one’s own or another’s academic work/results in order to deceive or gain undue credit.
- F. *Unauthorized Exam Possession/Purchase/Distribution/Sale/removal* – any possession, purchase, delivery, removal, distribution or sale of any academic material(s) without the faculty member’s permission or approval from designated office or person.
- G. *Passing off* – Sitting in place of another to take a test or engage in any academic project or exercise or causing another person to do so on one’s behalf.
- H. *Facilitating Academic Dishonesty* – causing, aiding or abetting academic dishonesty by another.
- I. *Other Academic Misconduct* - this covers any other form of academic misconduct not contemplated in (A) – (H) above.

#### V. Procedures For Academic Dishonesty Cases Before The Faculty:

- A. Whenever academic dishonesty is suspected, the faculty member will conduct preliminary investigations and will, if circumstances permit, give the student an opportunity to explain the conduct forming the basis of the allegation.
- B. If a preponderance of the evidence shows that the student violated this Integrity Code; the faculty member shall formally charge the student using the Academic Infraction Form. The Form will state the particulars of the charge, the evidence forming

the basis of the charge and the sanction imposed. The faculty member will review the duly filled Academic Infraction Form with the student who has the option to:

- I. Accept the charge and the sanction;
- II. Accept the charge but not the sanction imposed;
- or III. Deny the charge.

- C. The faculty member may allow up to 5 business days (excluding University approved holidays and weekends) for the student to sign and return the Academic Infraction Form. If there are no extenuating circumstances, a student who does not sign and return the Academic Infraction Form by the specified deadline will be deemed to have accepted each charge and sanction imposed.
- D. If the student accepts the charges and the sanction the case is closed and the sanction takes effect immediately. The faculty member will notify all relevant parties including the Dean, the Registrar and the Academic Advising Department, by sending them a copy of the Academic Infraction Form.
- E. Where there is a dispute as to the charges or sanction imposed, the faculty member will refer the case to the Chair of the Academic Integrity Council which shall hear the case in accordance with the procedures under Section VI below.
- F. Faculty members may only impose academic sanctions for violations of the Academic Integrity Code. Cases that warrant disciplinary sanctions must be referred to the Academic Integrity Council under Section VI of the Integrity Code for final determination.

## VI. The Academic Integrity Council

Any member of the AUN community may refer an alleged violation of the Integrity Code to the Academic Integrity Council (Integrity Council). The Integrity Council will consist of faculty and students: eight (8) faculty members chosen by the Faculty Senate or by the Provost/VP Academic; and one (1) student to be chosen by the Student Government Association. Once selected, members of the Academic Integrity Council will choose their Chair by a simple majority vote. The Academic Vice-President or his/her designee is responsible for training and providing administrative support to the Integrity Council. Among other duties, members of the Integrity Council will sit on integrity panel and adjudicate cases of first instance or alleged violations referred for a hearing in accordance with Section V of this Integrity Code. The Chair is the primary contact person for the Academic Integrity Council and will be responsible for general management of Integrity Council affairs including selecting members of integrity panels.

- A. An integrity panel shall comprise of five (5) persons: four (4) faculty members and one (1) student. If possible, each School/College at AUN shall have at least one (1) faculty representative in the integrity panel. An Integrity Administrator shall be elected by a

simple majority vote by members of the integrity panel. Whenever the Chair of the Academic Integrity Council sits on an integrity panel, he/she will serve as the Integrity Administrator. The Integrity Administrator is responsible for conducting the hearing and ensuring proper procedure is followed in the adjudication of cases before the integrity panel.

- B. The Academic Vice-President or designee may establish an *ad hoc* integrity panel (selected from the existing Academic Integrity Council or *bona fide* members of the AUN community) whenever a five-person integrity panel cannot be constituted, or is otherwise unable to hear a case. An *ad hoc* Conduct Council hearing panel will be composed of a minimum of three persons: two (2) faculty members, and one (1) student member (or *bona fide* members of the AUN community.)
- C. The Integrity Council, or its *ad hoc* equivalent, shall have the power to render a decision by a simple majority, and the Integrity Administrator, following reasonable deliberations, shall, on behalf of the panel, pronounce appropriate sanctions (sentence) as prescribed, or set forth in the —Offences and Sanctions Guidelines
- D. Members of the Integrity Council who are charged with any violation of this Integrity Code, other University policies, or a criminal offense may be temporarily suspended from their positions by the Academic Vice-President while charges against them are pending. Members found responsible for any such violation or offense may be disqualified from any further participation in the University disciplinary system. The Academic Vice-President may establish additional grounds and procedures for removal.

## VII. Procedures for Integrity Panel Hearings

Any person accused of an academic offense that will likely result in sanctions such as assignment of F\* grade, suspension or dismissal is subject to an integrity panel hearing before an Integrity Administrator. In all other cases brought by a member of the AUN community directly to the Academic Integrity Council; the Chair of the Council may, in his/her discretion, decide to constitute an integrity panel to determine the case, or he/she may decide to refer the case to the relevant faculty member for adjudication. In making this decision, the Chair shall give deference to the fact that faculty members acting in their capacity as teachers are well positioned to educate on matters of academic integrity based on the unique relationship between the faculty member and the student. Cases referred to the faculty member shall follow the procedures set forth in Section V of this Integrity Code. In cases before an integrity panel, the following procedures will apply:

1. The student shall have the right to at least five (5) business days (excluding holidays and weekends) notice of the hearing.

2. The student shall have the right to appear before the integrity panel to contest the charges and/or to provide additional relevant information.
3. The student will have the right to an advisor; to examine relevant portions of the case file; to take notes; and to confront witnesses or respond to evidence presented.
4. The student may waive his or her right to attend the hearing. In this case the integrity panel will rely on the written record, including submissions by the student, to reach a conclusion.
5. The faculty member shall have the right to appear before the integrity panel to discuss the charge. F. The panel shall determine the case based on a preponderance of the evidence.

If the panel determines that academic misconduct has occurred; the student's previous violation(s) of the Academic Integrity Code may be used in deciding the appropriate sanction only. A student's prior record will under no circumstances be used to determine guilt in a case of alleged academic dishonesty.

The integrity panel may:

- Affirm the charges and academic sanction proposed by the faculty member; ○ Impose a new/different sanction; or
- Dismiss the case if there is insufficient evidence to support the charge.

A written copy of the integrity panel's decision shall be given to the student and faculty member.

The results of any integrity panel hearing shall be reported by the Integrity Administrator to the Chair of the Academic Integrity Council who will, in turn, notify the Academic Vice-President, Dean, Registrar, Department of Academic Advising and other relevant parties.

## VIII. Appeals

Decisions of the Academic Integrity Council are appealable by either party (faculty member or student) to the Academic Vice-President. All appeals shall be in keeping with the following provisions:

A. The appeal must be in writing and delivered to the Chair of the Academic Integrity Council within five (5) business days after the decision of the integrity panel is delivered to the address on record for the student in the Office of the Registrar.

B. Appeals will be reviewed by an appellate board of the Academic Integrity Council to determine their viability. The appellate board will consist of at least three (3) but no more than five (5) members selected by the Chair from the Academic Integrity

Council. The appellate panel will be constituted of members who did not serve on the original integrity panel. The appellate board will meet as soon as possible after the appeal is received.

C. The appellate panel will determine viability based on whether there is:

1. new information that significantly alters the finding of fact;
2. evidence of prejudicial deprivation of rights or improper procedure;
3. Or a clear indication that the sanction(s) imposed is excessive.

Only when deemed viable will the appeal be forwarded to the Academic Vice-President or his/her designee for review. Decisions of the appellate panel about the viability of the appeal are determined by majority vote and are final.

D. The appellate panel may deny the request for appeal and affirm the original findings or grant the request for appeal and forward its recommendations to the Academic Vice-President or his/her designee.

E. Appeals are not meant to provide a second hearing of the case. All appeals will be decided based solely on the case record which includes but is not limited to any reports filed by the faculty member, Integrity Administrator or appellate panel; the respondent's written statement; and any written response or memoranda prepared in the process of an academic integrity investigation or proceeding. All written materials considered by the appellate panel and the Academic Vice-President or his/her designee would be subject to inspection by the parties to the appeal. Nothing in this section shall prevent the Academic Vice-President or designee from discussing the written materials in person with the parties. Appeal decisions rendered by the Academic Vice-President or his/her designee are final.

F. The following standards will apply when appeals are deemed viable:

- i. Sanctions may be reduced only if found to be substantially disproportionate to the offense. ii. Cases may be remanded for rehearing only if:
  1. The rights deprived, specified procedural errors or errors in interpretation of the University regulations were so substantial as to deny the student a fair hearing; or
  2. New and significant evidence becomes available that could not have been discovered by a properly diligent person before or during the original hearing.
  3. The imposition of sanctions will be deferred while an appeal is pending, unless the Academic Vice-President or his/her designee determines that the circumstances require immediate enforcement of the sanction(s).

The University reserves the right to confiscate any student item(s) that is/are associated with a reported matter for investigation/hearing/any cogent concern.

## IX. Sanctions

Significant mitigating or aggravating factors will be considered when sanctions are imposed, including the present demeanor and past disciplinary record of the offender; and the nature and severity of the offense. Sanctions, which may be imposed in accordance with this Integrity Code include, but are not limited to:

- A. *“Apology Letter”* – a written admission of guilt requesting forgiveness from the complainant or offended party. A copy of the letter will be kept in the case file.
- B. *“Warning”*—notice, oral or written, that continuation or repetition of prohibited conduct may be cause for additional disciplinary action.
- C. *“Censure”*—a written reprimand for violation of specified regulations, including a warning that continuation or repetition of prohibited conduct may be cause for additional disciplinary action.
- D. *“Grade Modification”* – includes reduced grade in the specific assignment to reduced grade in the course, entering an F (failing) grade for the specific assignment or entire course without a transcript notation of academic dishonesty.
- E. *“F\* Grade”* – assignment of an F\* grade with a transcript notation that the failure is due to academic dishonesty. This sanction should be reserved for severe violations and can only be imposed by the Academic Integrity Council and/or the Academic Vice-President.
- F. *“Academic Probation”*—status assigned for a designated period of time, during which the student is required to abide by specified academic conditions and failure to do so may result in more severe sanctions being imposed.
- G. *“Document Review and/or Reflection Paper”*— the student may be required to review academic literature and write a research or reflection paper in order to compel exploration of a particular topic.
- H. *“Suspension”*—exclusion from University premises and other privileges or activities for a specified period as set forth in the suspension notice. This action will be permanently recorded on the student’s academic transcript.

I. “*Expulsion*”—permanent termination of student status and exclusion from University premises, privileges, and activities. This action will be permanently recorded on the student’s academic transcript.

J. “*Revocation of Degree*”—rescinding a student’s degree awarded by the University.

K. “*Other Sanctions*”—other sanctions may be imposed instead of or in addition to those specified in sections (A) through (J) of this section.

There shall be a comprehensive sanctioning guideline for code matters at all times. The responsibility for this shall rest on the judicial affairs office.

#### X. Record Keeping

The Office of the Judicial Affairs is responsible for central record keeping in academic integrity cases. The Registrar will only disclose such records in accordance with University regulations and policies on confidentiality and notification of third parties.