



AP 5522 Grade Penalty Procedures

The Santa Clarita Community College District (District) is committed to upholding academic integrity in all courses and programs and, to that end, academic dishonesty is prohibited. Both faculty and students play a crucial role in fostering an environment where academic honesty is the standard.

This procedure is intended to both protect academic integrity and establish a process whereby students may meaningfully dispute a grade penalty on a particular assessment imposed because of academic dishonesty.

1. The Role of the Academic Review Committee

The Academic Review Committee shall be tasked with addressing (1) student appeals of grade penalties imposed on a particular assessment due to academic dishonesty and (2) student requests a change in a final grade that was assigned due to mistake, bad faith, fraud, or incompetence (see AP 5530 - Student Rights and Grievances for applicable procedures).

The Academic Review Committee shall consist only of faculty and students.

In the fall semester of even numbered years, the Academic Senate President shall appoint faculty members to serve on the Academic Review Committee for two-year terms, including one faculty member that the Academic Senate President shall designate as the chairperson having overall responsibility for the administrative operation of the committee. In addition, the Academic Senate President may appoint (1) a replacement faculty member to complete the unexpired term of a faculty member of the Academic Review Committee who is unable to complete their term and (2) a temporary faculty member to serve for a limited time on the Academic Review Committee - in place of a temporarily-absent, regularly-appointed member - when necessary for the efficient operation of the Academic Review Committee. When deemed appropriate and feasible by the Academic Senate President, at least one of the faculty appointees to the Academic Review Committee shall be a member of the Academic Senate's Academic Integrity Committee. In addition, the Academic Senate President, when making appointments to the Academic Review Committee, shall strive for appointees who reflect the District's diversity including, but not limited to, demographic and disciplinary.

The President of the Associated Student Government (ASG) shall appoint the student members

to the Academic Review Committee under terms and conditions established by the ASG.

The Academic Review Committee shall operate democratically, with each member voting on a matter entitled to a single vote with the majority prevailing. The Academic Review Committee shall adopt operating procedures consistent with District policy and procedure and shall regularly review and update those operating procedures as necessary and appropriate. The operating procedures shall address matters important to the efficient completion of the committee's mission including, for instance, the scheduling and holding of meetings, voting, and the conduct of hearings.

2. Procedures Applicable to Student Appeals of a Grade Penalty Imposed on a Particular Assessment

a. Academic Dishonesty Defined

Academic dishonesty, as outlined in Board Policy 5500, is any practice or behavior, whether intentional or unintentional, that undermines the integrity of material submitted for a grade including, but not limited to, plagiarism or self-plagiarism, cheating, or fraud. Specific examples of academic dishonesty may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Unauthorized or improper use of generative AI (Artificial Intelligence) or other web-based applications.
- ii. Submitting someone else's work as one's own, or without adequate or proper attribution.
- iii. Resubmitting the same work from a different class without the current instructor's knowledge and approval (e.g., using the same term paper in more than one class).
- iv. Copying from someone else's test, or any evaluated assignment.
- v. Using an unauthorized aid during a test (e.g., phone, smart watch, notes or browser).
- vi. Unauthorized collaboration or communication with others during a test or an independent assignment, including downloading, uploading, sharing or duplicating course material.
- vii. Having a test or an assignment completed by someone else.
- viii. Buying, selling or otherwise obtaining or distributing term papers, assignments, or tests.
- ix. Falsifying, misrepresenting or forging an academic record or supporting documents (e.g., submitting a fake doctor's note, misrepresentation of identity).
- x. Improper access/obstruction of materials/systems (e.g., stealing a term paper or test).
- xi. Misrepresentation, falsification, or fabrication of data presented for surveys, experiments, and reports including authors, data or falsely claiming attendance at a class event.
- xii. Falsifying attendance records or grade rosters.
- xiii. Changing answers on a previously scored test, assignment, or experiment without

- express instructor permission.
- xiv. Giving or receiving information during an examination by any means including sign language, hand signals, secret codes, or electronic transmission.
- xv. Failure to observe the expressed procedures or instructions of an academic exercise (e.g., examination instructions regarding alternate seating, electronic devices in the testing area, or conversation during an examination).
- xvi. Intentionally or knowingly helping another to engage in any act of academic dishonesty.

b. Faculty Responsibilities

To maintain an environment of academic integrity, faculty shall:

- i. Undertake reasonable efforts to conduct classes in a manner that encourages honorable behavior, ensures equal opportunity for student success, and discourages academic dishonesty.
- ii. Clearly communicate in writing the conduct that is acceptable and unacceptable including transparent rules regarding, for example, citation methodology; use of information, papers, tools, software, hardware, machines, computers, the internet, and/or Artificial Intelligence; joint/individual work.
- iii. When academic dishonesty causes imposition of a grade penalty, to engage in meaningful dialogue with the penalized student about the academic misconduct that led to imposition of the penalty with the goal of (1) resolving any misunderstandings as to the conduct at issue and (2) to inform students of their right to due process as outlined in this procedure.
- iv. Report academic integrity violations to District officials in the manner outlined in this procedure.

c. Student Responsibilities

To maintain an environment of academic integrity, students shall:

- i. Familiarize themselves with BP 5500 (Standards of Student Conduct), AP 5520 (Student Discipline Procedures), this procedure, and each of their instructors' expectations for acceptable academic conduct and behavior.
- ii. When directed by faculty in advance of an assessment and as a condition of completing the assessment, affirm their consent to comply with the instructor's expectations of acceptable academic conduct and behavior when completing the assessment.
- iii. Behave in a manner that encourages learning and upholds academic integrity.
- iv. After receiving a grade penalty for academic dishonesty, fully engage in a meaningful dialogue with the instructor about the conduct that led to imposition of the penalty to resolve misunderstandings.
- v. Act with fairness (i.e., not seek undue advantage) towards other students in

classroom interactions, completion of assignments, examinations, or any other academic activity.

- vi. Make every attempt to prevent the unauthorized or improper use of their own work by other students.

d. Grade Penalties for Academic Dishonesty

In response to academic dishonesty that impacts a particular graded assessment, a faculty member may penalize a student by reducing the student's score/grade on that particular assessment ("grade penalty"), subject to the student's right to appeal, when the faculty member reports the academic dishonesty in the manner that this procedure requires.

The grade penalty may reduce the student's score on the entire assessment that has been impacted by academic dishonesty, or, in the faculty member's discretion, a portion thereof, up to and including an F grade, a "no pass," and/or a score of "0" points.

Any grade penalty imposed in accordance with this procedure shall be effective immediately and shall remain effective unless and until removed by either the faculty member who imposed it or the Academic Review Committee according to the process set forth herein.

This procedure authorizes faculty to impose a grade penalty for academic dishonesty only on the particular assessment impacted by the academic dishonesty; not on a final course grade.

e. Faculty Report of Academic Dishonesty

In response to an alleged act of academic dishonesty, faculty shall:

- i. Inform the student of the nature of the alleged academic dishonesty and, if applicable, the faculty member's decision to impose grade penalty in response and make reasonable efforts to initiate a meaningful dialogue with the student about the behavior that led to the grade penalty with the goal of resolving misunderstandings and disagreements about the conduct in question. The best practice recommendation for faculty is to share information and documentation with the student when notifying the student of the alleged academic dishonesty.
- ii. Report at least the essential details of the incident to the Office of Student Services ("Student Services"), according to the disciplinary reporting mechanism that Student Services shall establish and maintain, no later than seven calendar days after the faculty member acquired sufficient information to reasonably determine that the student engaged in academic dishonesty. When reporting essential details of the incident to Student Services, a short and plain statement of the events leading to the grade penalty is adequate. Faculty shall not be required to submit, at the time of the initial report to Student Services, the totality of the evidence, documentary or

otherwise, upon which the faculty member concluded that the student had engaged in academic dishonesty.

f. Student Services' Notice of Grade Penalty

After faculty notify Student Services of a grade penalty, Student Services shall transmit a Notice of Grade Penalty to the student. The Notice of Grade Penalty shall describe the essential details supporting the grade penalty, the student's right to appeal the grade penalty to the Academic Review Committee, the time within which the student must submit any Notice of Appeal, and how the Notice of Appeal must be submitted. Student Services' Notice of Grade Penalty, and any other written notifications required by this procedure from the District or its employees to the student, may be completed via email directed to the student's District-issued email address.

g. Student's Notice of Appeal

To preserve the student's right to appeal a grade penalty to the Academic Review Committee, the student must submit a Notice of Appeal to Student Services, via a notification system that Student Services shall establish, maintain, and publicize to the campus community, within seven business days of Student Services' transmission of the Notice of Grade Penalty. A student need not have reviewed the transmitted Notice of Grade Penalty to trigger the running of the seven-day period. A student who fails to submit a Notice of Appeal within the seven-day period allowed by this procedure shall forfeit their right to contest the grade penalty.

h. Appeal Preparation Conference

After a student submits a timely Notice of Appeal, Student Services shall schedule a synchronous Appeal Preparation Conference (APC), which may be held face-to-face, via telephone, or via videoconferencing technology, with the student and notify the student of the APC's date, time, location, and/or modality. Student Services shall endeavor to schedule the APC for a time that is reasonable, convenient for all involved parties and within ten calendar days after the student's submission of the Notice of Appeal. A student who fails to attend a noticed APC shall forfeit their appeal and the grade penalty will be uncontestable.

Student Services shall notify the faculty member who imposed the grade penalty of the date, time, location, and modality of the APC. The faculty member shall have the option, but not the obligation, to attend the APC, for the purpose of providing the faculty member's view of the evidence supporting imposition of a grade penalty.

During the APC, the CSSO (Chief Student Services Officer) or designee and the student shall discuss (1) the circumstances and, if available, evidence supporting the grade penalty that has been submitted by the faculty member to Student Services, (2) the general processes by which the student's appeal to the Academic Review Committee will be heard and considered, and (3) whether, in light of the discussion at the APC, the student intends to proceed to a hearing before the Academic Review Committee. The student may request that an advisor accompany

them to the information meeting with the CSSO and/or the Hearing with the Academic Review Committee. The advisor must be trained by the CSSO on Student Conduct and their role in the proceedings.

The CSSO or designee conducting the APC shall have full discretion to meet privately with the student outside of an attending faculty member's presence during the APC to address confidential, sensitive, or otherwise private issues. However, the information shared by the student at the APC shall not be deemed privileged or otherwise confidential, unless otherwise protected from disclosure by Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) or any other applicable statute.

If the student chooses to proceed with the appeal to the Academic Review Committee following the APC, Student Services shall notify the faculty member who imposed the grade penalty and refer the matter to the Academic Review Committee for its consideration according to the Academic Review Committee's procedures.

No person, other than faculty member who imposed the grade penalty, shall be empowered to reverse the grade penalty other than the Academic Review Committee in accordance with the process set forth herein.

i. Hearing by a Panel of the Academic Review Committee

If a student chooses to proceed with the appeal after the APC, the Academic Review Committee shall work expeditiously toward a final resolution.

Each student appeal shall be decided by a panel of three Academic Review Committee members, including two faculty and one student. Prior to each hearing, the Chair of the Academic Review Committee shall appoint the faculty panelists and designate one as Panel Chair. In appointing faculty panelists, the Chair of the Academic Review Committee shall attempt to appoint members who are likely to be available for the expeditious resolution of the appeal, while (1) avoiding the appointment of a person with a known and actual, or reasonably possible, conflict-of-interest and (2) seeking a reasonably proportional distribution of panel appointments throughout an academic year. The CSSO or designee shall appoint the student panelist from the Academic Review Committee members.

All Academic Review Committee members appointed to a panel that will consider an appeal by a student with whom that member has a relationship that could reasonably cause a fair-minded person to doubt their ability to be impartial shall decline the appointment as soon as possible in the process. In addition, an appealing student may object, no later than the beginning of the hearing on the appeal, to the appointment of a panelist based on an actual conflict-of-interest or upon facts which may cause a reasonable person to question the panelist's ability to objectively consider the matter. The Panel Chair must sustain an objection to a faculty panelist when it has been established that the appealing student had been on a class roster (after the census date) of a class that the faculty panelist to whom the student has objected had taught.

When the Panel Chair sustains an objection to a panelist, the panel hearing shall be postponed and a replacement panelist shall be appointed, either by the Academic Review Committee Chair, in the case of a faculty panelist, or the CSSO or designee, in the case of a student panelist, as quickly as possible.

The Academic Review Committee and Student Services shall work together to schedule hearings on grade appeals, with Student Services bearing the administrative responsibility of notifying the student and the faculty member who imposed the grade penalty of the date, time, and location of the hearing on the appeal. A student who has filed an appeal but fails to attend the hearing shall forfeit the appeal and any further challenge to the grade penalty.

A Student Services representative shall attend Academic Review Committee hearings in person as an official representative of the District. The faculty member may either attend the hearing personally or rely on the evidence submitted to Student Services in support of the grade penalty. If the faculty member fails to attend the hearing, a Student Services representative shall present to the Academic Review Committee panelists a prepared statement that will be read aloud at the hearing as well as providing any accompanying documents supporting the statement. Both the student and, if in attendance, the faculty member, will have the right to present relevant evidence at the hearing relating to the alleged academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, oral testimony of themselves or other percipient witness, documentary evidence, video/audio materials, and any other forms of evidence. Each party will have the right to comment upon the evidence.

If a student has admitted to the CSSO or designee, either at the APC or at any other time, that the allegation of academic dishonesty is true or substantially true, the CSSO or designee shall share that admission with the Academic Review Committee panelists at the hearing on the appeal.

The District shall not bear the burden of ensuring the attendance of witnesses at the hearing. Instead, each party shall be responsible for procuring the attendance of such witnesses, if any.

The Academic Review Committee shall not be required to follow the rules of evidence applicable in a court of law but shall endeavor to employ fair evidentiary standards and to apply those standards similarly to evidence submitted by any party. When evaluating the evidence, the Academic Review Committee may consider the faculty member's subject matter expertise, experience as an educator, and role as a District employee tasked with preserving academic honesty and integrity.

The District, through the faculty, shall bear the burden of proving by a preponderance of the evidence – sometimes described as the “more likely than not” standard - that academic dishonesty occurred.

Hearings on appeals of grade penalties shall be closed to the public. However, the student bringing the appeal may be accompanied at the hearing by one other person of the student's

choosing ("Student Advisor"), although the Student Attendant may neither directly participate in nor disrupt the proceedings. The student may request that an advisor accompany them to the information meeting with the CSSO and/or the Hearing with the Academic Review Committee. The advisor must be trained by the CSSO on Student Conduct and their role in the proceedings. The Panel Chair shall have discretion to terminate the hearing if the Student Advisor attempts to disrupt the hearing process. Students must notify Student Services of their intent to invite a Student Advisor to the hearing no later than two calendar days before the hearing to provide the training for the hearing process.

Materials related to the hearing, including electronic recordings of the proceedings, may not be released to the student requesting the appeal or to any other individual or group. But in accordance with FERPA, the student may submit a written request to Student Services to inspect and review the materials on campus. The request must be made no less than one week in advance.

j. Academic Review Committee's Resolution of an Appeal

Student appeals may only be resolved by a panel of the Academic Review Committee if all three appointed panelists have participated in the decision-making process.

Within 5 business days after the hearing concludes, the Academic Review Committee shall deliver to the student and the faculty member who imposed the grade penalty, via District-provided email, a written decision either affirming the allegation of academic dishonesty and dismissing the student's appeal or directing the faculty member to reverse the grade penalty. The written decision need not be lengthy but shall provide a reasonably detailed explanation of the evidence upon which the decision is based. In addition, the Academic Review Committee decision shall be forwarded to Student Services for potential further disciplinary sanctions as allowed by AP 5520. Nothing in this procedure shall be construed as limiting disciplinary action against a student for academic dishonesty to a grade penalty imposed by the faculty member.

If the Academic Review Committee directs the removal of the grade penalty, it shall be the faculty member's responsibility to undertake any steps necessary to implement the removal of the penalty such as, for example, changing the grade or score in a learning management system and/or a gradebook.

If the Academic Review Committee directs the removal of a grade penalty after the faculty member has reported a final letter grade for the course to the District, and if removal of the grade penalty would change the student's previously-reported final letter grade, the faculty member shall initiate a final grade change according to the District's procedures.

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