

<b>POLICY NAME</b>	<b>ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY</b>				
<b>POLICY NO.</b>	<b>PAA-10-24</b>	<b>VERSION NO.</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>EFFECTIVE DATE</b>	December 19, 2024

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### ***INTRODUCTION/PURPOSE***

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Academic integrity is one of the foundations of Ana G. Méndez University (AGMU). Practices such as cheating, plagiarism, and fabrication undermine the learning experience and are inconsistent with the ethical standards of the University.

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### ***SCOPE***

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This policy sets forth the standards members of our academic community are expected to follow.

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### ***DEFINITIONS***

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**Academic Integrity** refers to the expectation of honesty in the development and submission of student coursework based on the individual knowledge and skillset of each student.

**Academic Misconduct** is any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the University or subvert the educational process. Common examples of Academic Misconduct include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A. **Plagiarism** is the dishonest representation by a student of information, ideas, or the presentation of another student or author's creation as if they were their own. Not using citations, not giving credit to an author, or using excessive paraphrasing are forms of Plagiarism. Any unacknowledged use of another's words, ideas, or electronic processes also constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism applies to information in writing, presentations, drawings, seminars or lectures, graphs, etc.

Plagiarism also includes "Self-Plagiarism," which is the reuse of substantially identical or nearly identical portions of one's own work in multiple courses without prior permission from the faculty member.

- B. **Cheating** is the act of misrepresentation of mastery or skill in an academic exercise. Cheating may include using or copying information from another student to write a report or complete an assignment, using materials without the authorization of the professor during an exam,

communicating with another student before or during an examination, using AI (for example, Chat GPT) when use of AI is prohibited, or using “study assistance websites.

- C. **Fabrication or falsification** is the creation of false information or results in an academic exercise to deceive and commit fraud. For example, the student invents false information and presents it as facts.
- D. **Facilitation** is knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of Academic Misconduct. For example, posting previous assignments or exams anywhere for others’ use, working with a partner/group when prohibited, or sharing answers or papers.

Note that the AGMU Code of Conduct covers and prohibits additional forms of non-academic misconduct.

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### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

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All forms of Academic Misconduct are expressly prohibited and not tolerated in any form.

At the beginning of each course and on the syllabus, faculty are responsible for explaining the University’s expectations for Academic Integrity, the penalties for Academic Misconduct, and referring students to this policy. Students are responsible for knowing this policy and the penalties for committing Academic Misconduct. Failure of an individual faculty member to remind the student as to what constitutes Academic Integrity or Academic Misconduct does not relieve the student of this responsibility.

Any member of the University community who receives information, knows of, or suspects that a student has engaged in Academic Misconduct, the individual is encouraged to submit a report, including a brief narrative of the situation, to the Dean of Academic Affairs.

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### **PROCEDURES FOR REPORTS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT**

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#### **Initial Report and Conference**

Any faculty member who receives information about, knows of, or suspects that a student has engaged in Academic Misconduct in their course, should promptly communicate with the student in writing, present the student with relevant evidence, and arrange a conference with the student to discuss the matter. At the conference, the faculty member will inform the student of their concerns, and the student will be given the opportunity to present their version of the facts.

- A. If the student can explain the incident to the satisfaction of the faculty member, no further action is warranted.
- B. If the student denies committing an act of Academic Misconduct at the conference and the faculty member continues to believe the Academic Misconduct may have occurred, the faculty member will refer the matter to the Dean of Academic Affairs or its designee (the “Dean”) or its designee for a hearing and potential consequence according to both this policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

- C. If the student does not respond in a timely fashion to the faculty member or does not attend a requested conference, the matter will be referred to the Dean for a hearing and potential consequence according to both this policy and the Student Code of Conduct.
- D. If the student admits to committing an act of Academic Misconduct, the matter will be referred to the Dean for potential consequence according to both this policy and the Student Code of Conduct.

If a report or allegation of Academic Misconduct occurs outside a particular course, or if the relevant faculty member is unavailable, the Dean for Academic Affairs or its designee will appoint a member of the University's academic leadership to assume the role of the faculty member for the Initial Report and Conference.

Once an allegation of suspected Academic Misconduct has been communicated to the student, the student may not withdraw from the course or academic project in question.

### **Hearings and Sanctions**

For matters referred to the Dean for a hearing or sanctioning, the following procedures will apply:

- A. The Dean will provide written notice (including e-mail) to the student alleged to have committed Academic Misconduct, including a link to these procedures, the specific allegations, and potential sanctions. The notice shall also include the date, time, and location (including an online meeting) of the hearing, to be held promptly following notice.
- B. The Dean will hold a hearing in which the faculty member (or designee) will present the evidence against the student. The student shall have the opportunity to provide additional and relevant information.
- C. The hearing will be closed to non-participants and the public. If preferred, the student may be accompanied by one AGMU academic advisor or another personnel the student chooses at any time during the process. The role of the advisor shall be limited to support and consultation; the advisor may not speak, except privately to the student. The Dean will decide who, in addition to the above, may be present at the hearing.
- D. A student who fails to appear at a scheduled proceeding without good cause (e.g., documented serious illness) after proper notice may be adjudicated in absentia and forfeits all rights to an appeal unless it is for lack of proper notice.
- E. The Dean will determine whether or not the evidence indicates that Academic Misconduct has taken place based on the preponderance of the evidence standard. Preponderance of evidence means that a greater weight of evidence supports the conclusion that a fact is true, or to establish that an event occurred. A preponderance of the evidence does not necessarily mean the greater amount of evidence, but rather the greater quality of evidence - making it more likely than not the matter in question is true.

If the Dean determines, based on the preponderance of the evidence standard, that Academic Misconduct has not taken place, the matter will be closed.

If the Dean determines, based on the preponderance of the evidence standard, that Academic Misconduct has taken place, the Dean will determine a sanction consistent with this policy and the following guidelines:

- For a student who seems mistaken in practice rather than guilty of intention, or in the case that seems to warrant leniency (such as a first offense):
  - Grade the work under question “zero” or “failing”;
  - Allow the student to demonstrate that they can fulfill an assignment through their own honest effort, such as resubmission, or
  - Receive a failing grade for the course.
- For an offense which seems to be a clear case of intentional academic misconduct or which does not seem to warrant leniency (such as a second or subsequent offense):
  - Receive a failing grade for the course;
  - Suspension; or
  - Expulsion.

The Dean may also consider additional sanctions, in their discretion, such as a written warning, a loss or restriction of privileges, loss of student employment with the University, or other reasonable sanctions. The Dean may consult with the relevant faculty member or academic division to determine the sanction.

The outcome will be conveyed to the student in writing, typically within fifteen (15) working days following the hearing.

**Appeal**

The student may appeal the Dean’s decisions in writing to the Vice President of Academic Affairs within fifteen (15) working days of the written notice of the outcome. The Vice President of Academic Affairs may:

1. Alter, amend, and/or overturn disciplinary sanction;
2. Schedule a rehearing with a different member of the University’s academic leadership; or
3. Uphold Dean’s determination and sanction.

One appeal is permitted. The decision on the appeal is final and shall be conveyed in writing to the student, typically within fifteen (15) working days after the submission of the appeal.

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**ENFORCEMENT**

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Further disregard and/or non-compliance in these areas, or with company policy in general, will result in further corrective action, up to and including termination of employment.

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**VALIDITY**

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This Policy will come into effect from the date of its publication and will be reviewed every three (3) years or when deemed necessary, whichever comes first.

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