ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND COMMUNITY STANDARDS

All University faculty, students, and staff are expected to know and abide by University policies. Copies of the full text are available in Essential Policies for the Columbia Community and at the Office of the University Senate, 406 Low Memorial Library.

Students in the School of General Students are part of a wider intellectual and social community that holds itself to the highest standards of tolerance, respect, integrity, and civility. As members of the Columbia University community, all students are expected to uphold the highest standards of respect, integrity, and civility. These core values are key components of the Columbia University experience and reflect the community's expectations of its students. Students are expected to conduct themselves in an honest, civil, and respectful manner in all aspects of their lives. Students who violate standards of behavior related to academic or behavioral conduct interfere with their ability, and the ability of others, to take advantage of the full complement of University life, and may be subject to disciplinary action. The continuance of each student upon the rolls of the University, the receipt of academic points, graduation, and the conferring of any degree or the granting of any certificate are strictly subject to the disciplinary powers of the University.

Disciplinary authority of the University is vested by the Trustees in the President and Provost and, subject to their reserved powers, in the dean of each faculty. The dean and her staff are given full responsibility for establishing the standards of behavior for all General Studies students beyond the regulations included in the Rules of University Conduct and for defining procedures by which discipline will be administered.

Civil Behavior and Community Standards

It is expected that in and out of the classroom, on and off campus, each student in the School of General Studies will act in an honest way and will respect the rights of others. Freedom of expression is an essential part of University life, but it does not include intimidation, threats of violence, or the inducement of others to engage in violence or in conduct which harasses others. Conduct which threatens or harasses others because of their race, sex, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, or for any other reason is unacceptable and will be dealt with severely. For all to benefit from the diversity to be found at Columbia, all must live up to these standards.

Additionally, it is the expectation of the School of General Studies that students will conduct themselves in a respectful and civil manner when working with fellow students, faculty, and university staff. This expectation includes the exercise of patience and the use of a respectful tone in all communications (electronic and verbal) as well as the assumption that fellow members of the community are acting with best intentions.

Honor Code and Honor Pledge

In 2013 the student councils of the undergraduate schools of Columbia University, on behalf of the whole student body, created an Honor Code to uphold the maintenance of academic integrity as a fundamental and jointly held responsibility for all students. The councils also created an Honor Pledge, which all students recite and affirm when they matriculate as Columbia students.

Academic Integrity

It is essential to the academic integrity and vitality of this community that individuals do their own work and properly acknowledge the circumstances, ideas, sources, and assistance upon which that work is based. Academic honesty in class assignments, term papers, examinations, laboratory reports, and computer projects is expected of all students.

Because intellectual integrity is the hallmark of educational institutions, academic dishonesty is one of the most serious offenses that a student can commit at Columbia. It may be punishable by suspension or dismissal from the School of General Studies.

Students who are unsure about the proper presentation of their own independent work should consult with their instructor or academic advisor.

Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to the following:

1. **Plagiarism:** Failure to cite or otherwise acknowledge ideas or phrases used in any paper, exercise, or project submitted in a course but gained from another source, such as a published text, another person's work, or materials on the Web.
2. **Self-plagiarism:** The submission of one piece of work in more than one course without the explicit permission of the instructors involved.
3. **Misrepresentation of authorship:** The submission of work as one's own which has been prepared by or purchased from another.
4. **Cheating on examinations or tests:** To give or receive assistance from written material, another person, his or her paper, or any other source during an examination or test, to hire or attempt to hire someone to take your exam for you.
5. **Falsification or misrepresentation of information** in coursework or lab work, on any application, petition, or forms submitted to the school.
6. **Fabrication of credentials,** in materials submitted as part of an admissions application or materials submitted to the University for administrative or academic review.
7. **Violating the limits of acceptable collaboration** in coursework set by a faculty member or department.
8. **Removing, hiding, or altering library materials** in order to hinder the research of other students.
9. **Facilitating academic dishonesty** by enabling another to engage in such behavior.
10. **Lying to a faculty member, dean, or advisor** about circumstances related to your academic work or failure to complete academic work.

Ignorance of the School's policy concerning academic dishonesty shall not be a defense in any disciplinary proceedings. The School of General Studies holds each member of the community responsible for understanding these principles and for abiding by them.

Academic Integrity in the Virtual and Hybrid Class Environment

The Columbia undergraduate classroom, whether real or virtual, is a vital and dynamic space for learning, sustained by the expectation that the class experience is shared only by participants in the course. The free and respectful exchange of ideas is the foundation of teaching and learning and can occur only if all course participants agree as a matter of academic integrity (subject to standard penalties) to respect the guidelines established below.

To support and sustain the class experience, the Columbia undergraduate Committee on Instruction sets forth the following expectations, pertaining both to course materials and to course meetings:

- Course materials, including handouts, readings, slides, and attendant materials must not be broadly shared, distributed, or sold outside the course environment (including on social media) without permission of the instructor. They must be understood as the product of instructors' intellectual work, and treated as their property.
- The contents of class discussion and breakout rooms may not be circulated outside the classroom, in whole or in part, for non-educational purposes (e.g., on social media) or outside the Columbia community. Students are expected to respect the complex dynamics of class discussion and use discretion when repeating the ideas of others outside of the classroom. The audio and visual recordings of class discussion and breakout rooms belong to the course participants and must be understood in the context of the course. This is especially crucial to protect the identity of speakers; in certain circumstances, failure to do so could be a form of bullying and could endanger course participants.
- Recordings of class sessions must not be shared, in whole or in part, with those outside the class. Students are not permitted to record any portion of class sessions without the explicit consent of the instructor.

The Dean's Discipline Process

All members of Columbia University's community are expected to conduct themselves in ways that are honest and that respect for the rights of others at all times. Dean's Discipline refers to the process through which General Studies responds to allegations of student academic or behavioral misconduct. The primary aim of the Dean's Discipline process is to educate students about the impact their behavior may have on their own lives as well as on the greater community, and therefore it is not designed as an adversarial or legal process.

The Dean's Discipline process is initiated when the GS team receives a report that a student has allegedly violated University policies or local, State, or Federal laws. Students may be subject to Dean's Discipline for any activity that occurs on or off campus that impinges on the rights of other students and community members.

The Center for Student Success and Intervention (CSSI) is responsible for all disciplinary affairs concerning General Studies students that are not referred to some other office or organization within the University. CSSI uses a "360-degree lens" approach to its work with students, which includes matters of student conduct, intervention case management, and student support initiatives.

General Studies students are expected to familiarize themselves with Standards and Discipline and the comprehensive list of policies and expectations available on the Center for Student Success and Intervention website.

Disciplinary Charges

Students, faculty members, or Columbia staff who have concerns or complaints about a student's behavior, including issues pertaining to academic integrity, are asked to contact the Dean of Students' Office or the Center for Student Success and Intervention (CSSI) to discuss the concern. Based on the conversation with the complainant, the Dean of Students, in consultation with CSSI, will determine whether or not the complaint warrants an informal meeting with the student or a formal disciplinary hearing. If a formal disciplinary hearing is to be held, the Dean of Students will forward the complaint to CSSI who will in turn contact the student, explain the procedure, and set up an appropriate time and place for the disciplinary hearing.

Disciplinary Hearing

A disciplinary hearing is held to discuss the allegations with the student and, when necessary, to determine appropriate sanctions. Present at the hearing are the student accused of the inappropriate action, members of the CSSI team who serve as hearing officers. At the discretion of CSSI and/or the respective Dean (GS Dean of Students or Dean for the Postbac Premed Program) a GS hearing officer may also preside over the proceedings. A student's advisor may be asked to participate, usually in academic cases. A support person may also be present at the request of the student, School or Conduct office. On the strength of the evidence and the student's response, the CSSI representative (often in consultation with the GS Dean of Students or Dean of the Postbac Premed Program) will reach a determination and notify the student of their decision after the hearing has concluded.

Sanctions

For students found guilty of academic dishonesty or misconduct, the sanctions may range from warning to probation, suspension, or dismissal. As the primary objective of CSSI is to ensure that the Dean's Discipline process is educational, every effort is made to refer students to appropriate resources and support services that will help them learn from the experience. In cases of academic dishonesty, the outcome of the hearing is deliberately separate from the decision an instructor shall make concerning how the breach of the academic contract might impact a student's grade. In cases that have been referred to the Dean's Discipline process, a student may not drop or withdraw from the course in question. GS premedical, predental, and preveterinary students who have been found to have committed academic impropriety will be ineligible for committee support, until the expiration of the sanction even where the student remains in good standing. Students have the right to appeal the decision of the Dean's Discipline hearing. Appeals must be submitted in writing within the deadline given in the letter informing the student of the disciplinary action taken. Appeals must be addressed to the Dean of the School.

Confidentiality

In general, under University policy and federal law, information about disciplinary proceedings against a student is confidential and may not be disclosed to others. However, when a GS student is applying to health professional programs with the support of the Prehealth Committee, the violation and sanction may be discussed in the committee letter.

Sexual Assault, Sexual Harassment, and Gender-based Harassment Policies

For information on the procedures for handling such complaints, please refer to the Sexual Respect website.

If the alleged misconduct involves sexual discrimination, the complaint should be filed with the Associate Provost for Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action. To report an incident involving sexual assault, sexual harassment, or gender-based harassment, students should complete this form or contact the Gender-Based Misconduct Office at 212-854-1717.

Informal Complaints Concerning Misconduct

Any instructor, officer, staff member, or student who chooses not to put a complaint in writing can instead make an informal complaint. In these cases, the GS advisor usually discusses the matter with the student, though it is possible the advisor will be required to report the complaint to additional campus offices. In these situations, the student may receive a formal warning, which will be noted in the student's educational file, along with any recommendations made to the student. Such warnings will be taken into account if and when similar complaints are made in the future, and a pattern of informal complaints can lead to formal disciplinary action.

Academic Complaints and Grievance Procedures

Occasionally students experience dissatisfaction with specific courses or instructors, find themselves in an untenable situation in a course due to an interaction with an instructor, or have an academic grievance. Columbia faculty hold themselves to the highest professional standards. The rights, duties, and obligations are delineated in the University Statutes and in the Faculty Handbook and can be found online.

Consistent with those duties and obligations, conduct that is grievable includes:

- Failure to show appropriate respect in an instructional setting for the rights of others to hold opinions differing from their own
- Misuse of faculty authority to promote a political or social cause within an instructional setting
- Conduct in the classroom or another instructional setting that adversely affects the learning environment

In such cases, students are advised to discuss their grievances with their GS advisors. Depending on the nature of the complaint, a student may be counseled to discuss the matter directly with the instructor, or with the director of undergraduate studies or chair of a given department or program. The School will direct a student to the appropriate office if the University has specific university-wide procedures that govern the matter. Links to those offices, resources and procedures are provided below. Students should raise any concerns not later than thirty days after the end of the semester in which the alleged misconduct took place.

Advisors recognize and respect a student's need for confidentiality when discussing certain kinds of complaints, so students should make sure to bring up any concerns about confidentiality when speaking with their advisors about grievances. While advisors within the Office of the Dean of Students counsel students on appropriate avenues for addressing or resolving their complaints, students should understand that advisors are not in a position to arbitrate grievances. The Ombuds Office is an additional and alternative confidential source available to students to advise on various avenues of redress and can mediate a dispute, if both parties agree. Ombuds officers, however, do not have authority to adjudicate any complaint.

While resolutions are most often reached informally, formal procedures for addressing grievances do exist and in some cases may be the only way to adjudicate a particular complaint. These grievance procedures, available through the Office of the Vice President for Arts and Sciences, are intended to complement, not substitute for, the procedures available in each of the Schools, and they concern a considerably more limited range of issues. They are designed to address only those cases involving professional misconduct by a faculty member of Arts and Sciences in an instructional setting in which there were significant irregularities or errors in applying School procedures. Information on this process can be found on the website of the Office of the Executive Vice President for Arts and Sciences. Resolutions to complaints about academic assessments or grade disputes are usually handled informally (see Grade Appeals and Grade Changes).

The University has alternative procedures to address other specific concerns:

- In situations involving allegations of discrimination and/or harassment, the complainant should consult the Student Policies and Procedures on Discrimination and Harassment.
- In situations involving gender-based and sexual misconduct, students should consult the Gender-Based Misconduct Policies for Students
- In situations involving concern about scientific or scholarly misconduct, students should consult the Columbia University Institutional Policy on Misconduct in Research
- The policy on romantic relationships is outlined in the Consensual Romantic and Sexual Relationship Policies.

Ombuds Office

Students are also encouraged to seek advice regarding handling academic complaints at the Ombuds Office, a neutral and confidential resource for informal conflict resolution. For further information, contact the Ombuds Office, 660 Schermerhorn Extension; (212) 854-1234; ombuds@columbia.edu.