Policies and Procedures Governing Graduate Academic Honesty and Scholarly Conduct

As articulated in the Stony Brook University Graduate Bulletin, the University expects all students to cooperate in maintaining high standards of scholarship and conduct. Graduate students fall under the rules and regulations in the *Grievances and Appeals* section of the Graduate Bulletin. The Graduate School has delegated to Departments and Centers the responsibility for dealing with issues involving academic honesty. The following guidelines governing academic honesty and scholarly conduct have been adopted by the Center for Science and Mathematics Education (CESAME) for its PhD program. The PhD in Science Education Grievance and Appeals Committee (PiSE-GAC) is an ad hoc committee, appointed by the Program Director of the PhD program in science education and given responsibility for dealing with issues concerning academic honesty and for the consideration of complaints as outlined below.

**Academic Honesty**

As noted in the Graduate Bulletin, intellectual honesty is a cornerstone of all academic and scholarly work. Therefore, the PhD program views any form of academic dishonesty as a serious matter. Academic dishonesty includes any act that is designed to obtain fraudulently academic credit, grades, or other recognition that is not properly earned. Some examples are:

- **Plagiarism**: the submission of another’s work as one’s own without the proper acknowledgment of the source. SBU definition “Plagiarizing: copying someone else's writing or paraphrasing it too closely, even if it constitutes only some of your written assignment, without proper citation, even instructor notes & presentation slides.”

- **Falsifying documents or records related to credit, grades, change-of-status-forms.**

- **Altering an examination or paper after it has been graded for the purpose of requesting a revision of the grade.**

- **Submission of the same paper in more than one course without informing the instructors.**

- **Cheating on examinations or assignments by the use of books, electronic devices, notes, or other aids when these are not permitted, or by copying from another student.**

- **Collusion**: two or more students helping each other on an examination or assignment when this is not permitted. Use of ringers: sitting in for another student at an examination, or permitting someone else to sit in for oneself.

- **Use of unauthorized resources or materials for an exam or project.**
Preventing relevant material from being subjected to academic evaluation.

As per the University policy, faculty members are responsible for reporting any instances of academic dishonesty as soon as they are discovered. Any complaints regarding academic dishonesty should be reported in writing to the PhD program director.

The procedure for dealing with allegations of academic misconduct will be adjudicated as follows:

a) The student(s) will be made aware of the allegation by the reporting party.

b) A resolution of the grievance will be sought through a conference between the relevant parties and the PhD program director.

c) If the matter cannot be resolved by direct mediation, then a meeting of the program’s grievance and appeals committee (PiSE-GAC) will be convened. The program’s grievance committee will receive written documentation of the alleged violation, and the relevant parties will be given the opportunity to respond. After a thorough investigation, the committee’s decision on the disposition of the case will be sent to the relevant parties and to the PhD program director.

d) The PhD program director will accept the disposition of the case from the committee and will implement any penalties in the case.

Composition of the Committee

The membership of the PiSE-GAC will consist of at least two PhD program faculty members and at least two PhD graduate students. One of the faculty members of the committee will serve as Chair. The faculty members will be selected by the PhD Program Director and will not include faculty named in the grievance case nor any faculty or student who have a conflict of interest in the case. In the event that there are insufficient numbers of faculty to serve in this role, then representatives will be sought from the Office of Academic Integrity. Student members of the committee will be chosen by the PhD Program director from the list of students who have volunteered to serve on program student committees, they will not include individuals involved in the grievance case or with a conflict of interest. Decisions regarding particular grievances before the committee will always be made by a formal vote of the committee.

Procedures in Making an Accusation of Academic Dishonesty

Complaints

Any member of the academic community may bring a complaint of academic dishonesty to the PiSE-GAC. The complaint should be submitted in writing to the graduate program director. It is the responsibility of instructors to report cases of alleged academic dishonesty and to set suitable penalties. However, any penalties issued by an instructor must only be made in conjunction with the submission of a formal complaint to the committee. Complaints should contain enough particulars so that all parties can
understand clearly what allegations are being made. Full evidence in support of the allegations need not be provided unless the allegations are appealed by the accused.

**Penalties for Academic Dishonesty in Course Work**

It is the responsibility of the instructor to report cases of academic dishonesty involving students and to set suitable penalties. The PiSE-GAC usually considers a grade of F for the course an appropriate penalty for a first offense, although a different penalty may be justified by mitigating circumstances. The usual penalty for a second offense would be expulsion from the Graduate Program. The instructor may request that the PiSE-GAC consider a more severe consequence if he or she feels it is justified. In all cases a written report of the offense and the recommended action taken must be forwarded to the PiSE-GAC in order that students may be formally notified of the academic dishonesty charges and of the mechanism of appeal, and so that students who have been charged with academic dishonesty more than once can be identified. The instructor may choose to assign a grade of Inc. (Incomplete) pending a decision by the PiSE-GAC.

**Challenging Academic Dishonesty Allegations**

When the PiSE-GAC receives a complaint, it shall be sent to all persons named in the complaint and include written notice of the charges, the penalties proposed, and a copy of the guidelines. Anyone accused of academic dishonesty may challenge the accusation to the PiSE-GAC. Appeals must be presented to the committee in writing. The committee will then decide, based on the charges, appeals, and supporting statements it has received, whether a formal hearing is necessary in order to reach a decision. Normally, charges that have been contested by the accused will merit a hearing.

An accusation of academic dishonesty that is not appealed will normally result in a finding of academic dishonesty by the committee. If a graduate student is found guilty of academic dishonesty in this way, the committee will provide to the Graduate Program Director a copy of the complaint together with a report stating the finding of the committee and the fact that the accusation was not appealed. The Graduate Program Director will place these materials into the accused student’s academic file and a report made to the Graduate School about the action.

**Procedures for Hearing Cases of Academic Dishonesty**

**The Hearing**

1. The appellant shall be given an opportunity to address the hearing. The appellant may bring witnesses, when directly relevant to the case. The hearing Chair should be notified of the intention to bring witnesses.
2. The accuser should be present at the hearing and may also bring any witnesses. If the accuser is unavailable for the hearing, the charge must be detailed in writing and the accuser represented by another member of the faculty.

3. Witnesses may be allowed at hearings only during their testimony and to answer questions.

4. The hearing committee members may question all parties concerned.

5. The hearing committee may call its own witnesses and introduce pertinent information to the hearing.

6. At the Chair’s discretion, the accuser and the appellant may ask each other questions, as well as ask questions of each other’s witnesses.

7. When two or more students are accused of collusion in an academic dishonesty case, each shall have the opportunity to meet with the hearing committee members independent of the other.

8. The hearing board Chair may dismiss any participant who exhibits disruptive behavior during the hearing.

9. The hearing committee will attempt to reach a decision on the basis of the evidence before it regardless of the presence or absence of the persons concerned, their witnesses, or their advisers.

**Committee Action**

1. At the conclusion of the hearing, the committee shall make a decision of guilty or not guilty. On the basis of its decision, committee will decide either to dismiss the appeal or, in the case of a guilty finding, make specific recommendations regarding the penalty to the instructor and/or the PhD Program Director.

2. The finding of the committee, and the recommended penalty, shall be reported to the appellant within one week of the date of the hearing, after the PhD Program Director has had an opportunity to review the finding. In case a student is found guilty, the PhD Program Director will place a copy of the board’s report into the student's academic file and notify the Graduate School.

**Completion of Case**

Once a charge has been initiated, the hearing or review procedures prescribed by these rules shall be completed whether or not the accuser or student remains associated with the university.

**Confidentiality**

When the committee issues a finding of academic dishonesty against a student, whether said decision results from an uncontested complaint or from an explicit committee action, a
copy of the complaint and a report of the finding will be placed into the student’s academic file. In a case where the committee itself determines a penalty, this penalty may include a specific request that certain information, for example, the placing of failing or a “Q” grade on the transcript, be entered in the student’s academic file. Such information entered into the student’s academic file will be accessible only to those persons who would normally have access to this file. Committee records are confidential, and are accessible only to the committee, the Ph.D. Graduate Program Director, the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the Dean of the Graduate School and their designees, and to others specifically granted access by the student(s) named in the case.

**Appeal of Committee Decision**

If either the faculty or student wish to appeal the decision of the committee, a written appeal of the program’s decision must be presented to the Dean of the Graduate School within two weeks. The Dean may choose to forward the case to the Graduate Council Appeals Committee (GCAC), who will then advise the Dean on the disposition of the case and possible penalties. The Dean of the Graduate School will determine and implement penalties for academic or professional misconduct. The Dean’s disposition of the case will be forwarded in writing to the relevant parties and to the program director or department chair.

**Graduate Council Appeals Committee (GCAC)**

The Graduate Council Appeals Committee (GCAC) will consist of an equal number of graduate students and faculty. Faculty members, including the committee chair, will be appointed by the Graduate Council. Graduate student members will be appointed by the Graduate Student Organization.

The goal of the GCAC is to resolve and/or adjudicate grievances and appeals as fairly and expeditiously as possible. The GCAC may consider appeals either on technical issues of procedure or substantive conclusions of the program’s grievance committee and may suggest other resolutions of the problem. In addition to addressing specific appeals brought to it by the Dean of the Graduate School, the GCAC may recommend changes in policies of the program or University.

The GCAC will consider all appeals addressed to it unless the committee unanimously denies standing. The person who is appealing a program grievance decision is responsible to state clearly and concisely the nature of the grievance and the cause for request of an appeals hearing. Criteria for assessing the initial standing of an appeal include those policies addressed in this Bulletin or in published and approved program handbooks or guidelines.

Cases of academic or professional misconduct that are referred to the GCAC will be adjudicated in the following manner.
Upon receiving a written appeal, the chair of the GCAC will convene a meeting of the full committee. This initial full meeting of the GCAC must occur within two weeks of receipt of the appeal, or as soon as the committee can be convened if classes are not in session.

All GCAC members will have equal access to all documents and information. The Graduate School will appoint a faculty/staff member to assist the GCAC in obtaining, reproducing and disseminating the relevant information.

The proceedings of the GCAC are confidential. Since information concerning an appeal may be of sensitive, highly personal and confidential nature, such information must not be disseminated outside the committee, except as necessary to the Graduate Student Advocate.

The person who is filing the appeal must communicate with the GCAC only through its chair, and all such communications must be written. The GCAC will arrange for an interpreter or similar assistance if it deems that such aid would be useful.

The GCAC should attempt to reach a consensus on all issues. Upon reaching a decision, the GCAC will issue a single written report to the Dean of the Graduate School, who will make recommendations on all points raised in the formal appeal that the committee has agreed to consider. The report should present the rationale for its decision(s). The substance of any dissent must be included in the text of the report.

All GCAC members must sign this report, which will be forwarded to the party who filed the appeal, the program director or department chair, and the Dean of the Graduate School.

The GCAC will present to the Graduate Council and the Graduate Student Organization an annual report documenting its activities but not disclosing the substance of the appeals.

**Appealing the Dean’s Decision**

A person may appeal the final disposition of the Dean of the Graduate School to the President of the University. This appeal must be in writing and must be received within two weeks of the decision.