

SINCLAIR COMMUNITY COLLEGE  
PARALEGAL PROGRAM  
HONESTY POLICY

**Introduction**

Paralegals are recognized as an integral part of the legal profession, assisting attorneys in providing competent, cost-effective services. A just legal system depends on lawyers and paralegals acting in an honest and ethical manner. Cheating is not honest or ethical and is prohibited.

Canon 1.2 of the Model Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility for NFPA (the National Association of Paralegal Federations) states, "A paralegal shall maintain a high level of personal and professional integrity." The Preamble states that in adopting an ethical code, ". . . [P]aralegals have confirmed the profession's commitment to increase the quality and efficiency of legal services, as well as recognized its responsibilities to the public, the legal community, and colleagues. "

Canon 6 of the Code of Ethics and Professional Responsibility of NALA (National Associations of Legal Assistants/Paralegals) states, "A paralegal must strive to maintain integrity ...to better assist the legal profession in fulfilling its duty to provide legal service. "

The Honesty Policy of the Sinclair Community College Paralegal Program has been approved by the Paralegal Advisory Board, made up of judges, attorneys, paralegals, and members of the community. The legal profession has set a high ethical standard for paralegals. To help students prepare for the profession, the program requires students to demonstrate the same high standard of ethical behavior in the courses and in the program. This Honesty Policy defines cheating and establishes the procedure to be followed when cheating occurs. The Honesty Policy of the Sinclair Paralegal Program affirms the same concepts and philosophies as Sinclair's Honor Code.

**DEFINITIONS**

**Cheating** includes, but is not limited to:

- Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials for exams.
- Having someone else do any part of your work for you.
- Doing someone else's work for them, or allowing them to use your work.
- Failing to use reasonable efforts to protect your electronic work. In a situation in which a student fails to use reasonable efforts, and another student steals that electronic work, both students will have been considered to be cheating.
- Presenting someone else's written work as your own. (Plagiarism) This includes the work of other students or any other persons, and works published elsewhere, including on the Internet. All sources must be given appropriate credit. Instructors can check for plagiarism with special computer software.
- Aiding and abetting dishonesty, including providing material, information, or other assistance to another person to help them cheat.
- Collaborating on assignments unless it is a team/group assignment.
- Using your student Lexis ID for personal use (non-educational use) or allowing others to use your student Lexis ID (for example, the office in which you work).

- Using your copier ID for personal use (non-educational use) or allowing others to use your copier ID.
- Collaborating on assignments unless it is a team/group assignment.

### **Individual and Group Work**

With the exception of assignments designated as group assignments by the instructor, **all assignments are to be completed individually**, not as a part of a pair or team. Assignments include exams, tests, quizzes, notebooks, extra credit, and any work completed for points.

Much of the PAR class work is done in groups. Students are encouraged to help each other understand concepts presented, find needed resources, solve technological problems, and promote each other's learning. Students are expected to be prepared for group work and fully participate with classmates.

### **Procedure**

1. A faculty member who identifies a situation involving suspected cheating must notify the department chairperson and then address the situation with the student(s) involved.
2. The faculty member will prepare a written summary of the events involving the suspected cheating.
3. The student(s) will meet with the chair to discuss the issue. After such discussion, the chair will review the statement of understanding with the student(s). If the facts concerning the cheating incident are in dispute, the faculty member involved will attend the meeting with the chair and student.
4. If the suspected cheating is determined not to have occurred, that shall be documented, and a copy provided to the student(s).
5. If the suspected cheating is determined to have occurred, the matter will proceed as set forth below.

### **Statement of Understanding**

Each incident of cheating will be recorded on a Statement of Understanding, which shall contain:

1. a summary of the events involving the cheating;
2. a statement that the student either agrees with the summary or disputes it;
3. a statement that the student understands that the penalty for cheating is a grade of F in the course;
4. a statement that the student understands the consequences of withdrawal from the course and that it does count as one attempt toward successfully passing the paralegal course;
5. a statement that the student understands that if it is determined that the student cheated twice, he/she will be removed from Sinclair's Paralegal Program;
6. the signatures of the student, chairperson and faculty member;
7. a copy of the evidence (e.g, the assignments that establish the student cheated), attached to the statement of understanding.

### **Penalties**

- First violation- If it is determined that a student has cheated, the student will receive an F for the course.
- Second violation – A student who violates the honesty for the second time will receive an F for the course and will be removed from the PAR Program.
- Withdrawal –A withdrawal from a course in which the student has been determined to be

cheating counts as an attempt towards successfully passing the course under the Repeating Courses Policy.

- Letters of Recommendation – A student who violates the honesty policy may not receive letters of recommendation from PAR faculty.
- The student(s) will be placed on a list of honesty policy violators.
- A report on the matter will be made to Student Judicial Affairs (Behavioral Intervention Unit) as an alleged violation of the Code of Student Conduct.

### **Appeal Procedure**

An appeal of the determination of cheating may be taken to the Dean of Business and Public Services. The chair will send a copy of the statement of understanding to the dean if the matter is appealed.

Revised December 16, 2009