

## Student Academic Responsibility

*The following statement was prepared by the Committee on Academic Conduct in the College of Arts and Sciences. It amplifies the Student Conduct Code (WAC 478-120).*

Students at the University of Washington are expected to maintain the highest standards of academic conduct. Most UW students conduct themselves with integrity and are disturbed when they observe others cheating. The information on these three pages should help you avoid unintentional misconduct and clarify the consequences of cheating.

Cheating harms the University community in many ways. Honest students are frustrated by the unfairness of cheating that goes undetected and therefore unpunished. Students who cheat skew the grading curve in a class, resulting in lower grades for students who worked hard and did their own work.

Cheaters also cheat themselves of a real education. They rob themselves not only of general knowledge, but also of the experience of learning how to learn, the very experience that makes a university degree so valuable to employers. The reputation of the University and the worth of a UW degree suffer if employers find graduates lacking the abilities their degrees should guarantee.

Finally, most professions have codes of ethics, standards to which you will be expected to adhere when you are working. At the University you practice the integrity you must demonstrate later. For all of these reasons, academic misconduct is considered a serious offense at the UW.

### WHAT IS ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT?

You are guilty of cheating whenever you present as your own work something that you did not do. You are also guilty of cheating if you help someone else to cheat.

#### Plagiarism

One of the most common forms of cheating is *plagiarism*, using another's words or ideas without proper citation. When students plagiarize, they usually do so in one of the following six ways:

- *Using another writer's words without proper citation.* If you use another writer's words, you must place quotation marks around the quoted material and include a footnote or other indication of the source of the quotation.
- *Using another writer's ideas without proper citation.* When you use another author's ideas, you must indicate with footnotes or other means where this information can be found. Your instructors want to know which ideas and judgments are yours and which you arrived at by consulting other sources. Even if you arrived at the same judgment on your own, you need to acknowledge that the writer you consulted also came up with the idea.
- *Citing your source but reproducing the exact words of a printed source without quotation marks.* This makes it appear that you have paraphrased rather than borrowed the author's exact words.

- *Borrowing the structure of another author's phrases or sentences without crediting the author from whom it came.* This kind of plagiarism usually occurs out of laziness: it is easier to replicate another writer's style than to think about what you have read and then put it in your own words. The following example is from *A Writer's Reference* by Diana Hacker (New York, 1989, p. 171).
  - Original: *If the existence of a signing ape was unsettling for linguists, it was also startling news for animal behaviorists.*
  - Unacceptable borrowing of words: *An ape who knew sign language unsettled linguists and startled animal behaviorists.*
  - Unacceptable borrowing of sentence structure: *If the presence of a sign-language-using chimp was disturbing for scientists studying language, it was also surprising to scientists studying animal behavior.*
  - Acceptable paraphrase: *When they learned of an ape's ability to use sign language, both linguists and animal behaviorists were taken by surprise.*
- *Borrowing all or part of another student's paper or using someone else's outline to write your own paper.*
- *Using a paper writing "service" or having a friend write the paper for you.* Regardless of whether you pay a stranger or have a friend do it, it is a breach of academic honesty to hand in work that is not your own or to use parts of another student's paper.
- *In computer programming classes, borrowing computer code from another student and presenting it as your own.* When original computer code is a requirement for a class, it is a violation of the University's policy if students submit work they themselves did not create.

**Note.** *The guidelines that define plagiarism also apply to information secured on internet websites. Internet references must specify precisely where the information was obtained and where it can be found.*

You may think that citing another author's work will lower your grade. In some unusual cases this may be true, if your instructor has indicated that you must write your paper without reading additional material. But in fact, as you progress in your studies, you will be expected to show that you are familiar with important work in your field and can use this work to further your own thinking. Your professors write this kind of paper all the time. The key to avoiding plagiarism is that you show clearly where your own thinking ends and someone else's begins.

## Multiple submissions

Multiple submission is the practice of submitting a single paper for credit in two different classes (in the same quarter or in different quarters). The UW does not have a general policy prohibiting this practice. However, because an individual professor may not permit the practice in their class, a student wishing to make a multiple submission must clear it with both professors involved. Non-compliance will result in a violation of the University's standard of conduct.

## Exams

Another common form of cheating involves exams. Copying from someone else's paper, using notes (unless expressly allowed by the teacher), altering an exam for re-grading, getting an advance copy of the examination, or hiring a surrogate test-taker are all flagrant violations of University policy.

## Collaboration

Educators recognize the value of collaborative learning; students are often encouraged to form study groups and assigned group projects. Group study often results in accelerated learning, but only when each student takes responsibility for mastering all the material before the group. For example, suppose a calculus study group is working on a set of homework problems. Little would be learned if each student worked only one or two problems and merely copied answers for the rest. A more beneficial approach would be for each member to work all problems and be assigned the task of explaining a few problems to the group.

Illegal collaboration often occurs on homework in computer programming courses. A common case is when two students outline a program in detail together, and then type it into the computer separately, perhaps making minor modifications or corrections as they type. To a grader's trained eye, the structure of the programs is identical and the students are guilty of cheating because they haven't turned in separate, original work.

Illegal collaboration also occurs on writing assignments in liberal arts courses. Typically, students will create a detailed outline together, then write separate papers from the outline. The final papers may have different wording but share structure and important ideas. This is cheating because the students have failed to hand in something that is substantially their own work, and because they haven't cited the ideas that they've borrowed from each other.

Group projects require careful division of responsibility and careful coordination to control the quality of the final product. Collective work quickly degenerates when some students see it as a way to get through an assignment with the least amount of effort. Group work calls for a different kind of effort, not less of it. When group projects are assigned, the instructor is usually interested in your mastery of group process as well as the subject. Ask the instructor to clarify individual responsibilities and suggest a method of proceeding.

In summary, when a professor says, "Go ahead and work together," don't assume that anything goes. Professors often don't state the limits of collaboration explicitly. It is your responsibility to avoid crossing the line that turns collaboration into cheating. If you're not sure, ask.

## WHAT HAPPENS IN A CASE OF SUSPECTED MISCONDUCT?

Instructors who believe they have discovered cheating will submit a grade of X (the equivalent of an unreported grade) for the course until the academic misconduct charge is resolved. A hold is placed on the student's registration if he or she fails to respond in a timely manner (within two weeks) to the written request that the student meet with the Dean's Representative for Academic Conduct. Students have the right to appear before the Committee to offer testimony. If found guilty, the student will receive one of the following sanctions, listed in order of increasing severity. All actions are reported to the Office of the Vice President and Vice Provost for Student Life. A student may, by written request to the Vice President and Vice Provost for

Student Life (usually at the time of graduation), request that the confidential disciplinary record be expunged.

- *Disciplinary Warning*: verbal or written notification that the student has not met the University's standards of conduct, and that a repeated offense will result in more serious disciplinary action. It is not the case that first offenses automatically receive a warning; most first offenses receive a stricter response, with warnings reserved for cases with unusual mitigating circumstances.
- *Reprimand*: a written statement censuring a student for violating University regulations, and stating that another offense will result in more serious action. This is normally considered a lenient response, even for first offenses.
- *Restitution*: requirement that the student compensate the University or other persons for damages, injuries, or losses. Failure to comply results in canceled registration and a hold on future registration.
- *Disciplinary Probation*: an action that places conditions on the student's continued attendance at the University, including the statement that further violation of University policies will likely result in dismissal. The Committee fixes the term and conditions of academic probation. First offenses often result in probation.
- *Suspension*: a written statement notifying a student that his or her enrollment has been suspended for a specific period of time for violating University policy. The statement includes the terms and length of the suspension, as well as the conditions for re-admittance.
- *Dismissal*: a written statement notifying a student that his or her attendance at the University has been terminated for violating University policy. Unlike suspension, dismissal is considered to be a permanent action. However, the institution may also provide conditions for re-admittance.

**Note.** *It is a student's right to appear before the Committee on Academic Conduct. If you believe you have been wrongly accused, and your instructor has handled the situation without reference to the Committee or the appeal process, you may request that the case be referred or refer the matter directly yourself by calling 206-543-9233 (e-mail [kcarter4@u.washington.edu](mailto:kcarter4@u.washington.edu)).*

Although the prospect of dismissal may seem the most serious consequence of dishonesty, there are others. If you apply to a medical, law, or other professional school, you may be required to provide a statement from the Vice President and Vice Provost for Student Life attesting to your good conduct. (Please note, however, that the existence of the file and/or its contents -- cannot be disclosed without the written permission of the student.) An additional consequence of being charged with an academic violation is the act of having one's character and integrity questioned. This may be a deeply embarrassing and troubling experience for a student, one that leaves a painful memory.

## Suggestions

The temptation to cheat can be eliminated by developing effective time and stress management skills and practicing sound study habits, by making good use of the academic support resources at the University, and by engaging in educational planning with the help of academic counselors.

Certain common patterns in student behavior increase the temptation to cheat: falling behind in coursework or leaving large projects until the last minute; working too many hours to keep up with courses; taking too many difficult courses at once; encountering emotional or health problems that distract from studies and interfere with concentration. Here are some tips for preventing or dealing with these situations.

- *Get in the habit of planning your education.* Academic counselors can help you determine your educational goals, plan your classes, keep your quarterly load manageable, and find a reasonable balance between work and school. Advising sessions are confidential and the privacy of your student record is guaranteed by federal law.
- *Don't work too many hours while in school.* Unfortunately, you are either a student first or an employee first; you must choose between the two. In general, a student carrying a full-time load (15 credits) should limit work hours to 10-15 hours a week. A student working 25 hours a week should carry 10 credits, 30 hours a week 5-10 credits, and 40 hours a week no more than 5 credits. To try to do more than this is to put yourself in a no-win situation by asking more of yourself than you can reasonably achieve. The brochure, "Putting College First," available at the Undergraduate Advising Center, suggests ways to balance school and work.
- *Adjust your study habits to the demands of college.* First, this means studying more. While many students report that they had no homework in high school, most college professors expect you to study two hours for each hour you spend in their class. In other words, it's a full-time job. Second, the pace of college coursework demands that you don't fall behind in your classes. Learn to schedule your weekly assignments, and learn to break large projects down into manageable pieces and schedule intermediate deadlines for yourself. Third, learn a good array of study techniques and practice them. Many good study skills books are available at the University Book Store. The Student Counseling Center offers short study-skills workshops. Contact an adviser for more information.
- *Learn to manage your time.* There is enough time to study hard, work, and play hard too, if you handle your day in the right way. A handout on time management is available at the Undergraduate Advising Center, 9 Communications.
- *Deal with personal and health problems.* One of the worst mistakes students make is to deny that they're overloaded or unable to cope. You may need to lighten your load by dropping a class, you may decide to leave school for a quarter-or you may just need to re-negotiate a deadline with your instructor. If a personal problem is keeping you from concentrating on your studies, discuss the situation with an adviser or University counselor and work out a solution.

## **In conclusion**

You will be expected to live up to the University's standards of academic honesty no matter what temptations you face. The good news is that this standard is not hard to maintain. It only requires that you clarify assignments and procedures with your instructors, that you study diligently, and that you seek help when you need it.