

Academic Responsibility

This statement was prepared by the Committee on Academic Conduct. It amplifies the Student Conduct Code (WAC 478-120), available at the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs, 476 Schmitz.

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 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 bachelor's degree so valuable to employers. The reputation of the University and the worth of a UW degree suffer if employees 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 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:

1. *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.
2. *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.
3. *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.
4. *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. For example (Hacker, 1989):

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.

5. *Borrowing all or part of another student's paper or using someone else's outline to write your own paper.*
6. *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.

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

Some colleges have a campus-wide policy against multiple submissions, 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 such a general policy, but your individual professors may not permit it in their classes. If you want to make a multiple submission, therefore, you must clear it with both professors involved.

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 regrading, 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 fail the student on the assignment or exam in question and refer the case to the Committee on Academic Conduct. A hold is placed on the student's registration until he or she meets with an officer of the Committee. Students have the right to appear before the Committee to offer testimony. If found guilty, the student will receive one of the following punishments, listed in order of increasing severity. All actions are reported to the Vice President for Student Affairs and recorded permanently in the student's record.

1. *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 receive a stricter response, with warnings reserved for cases with unusual mitigating circumstances.
2. *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.
3. *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.
4. *Disciplinary Probation*: an action that places conditions on the student 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.
5. *Dismissal*: a written statement notifying a student that his or her attendance at the University has been terminated for violating University policy. The statement includes the term of the dismissal and conditions for readmittance, if any.

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, you may demand that the case be referred. You may also refer the matter yourself by calling 543-7991.

Although the prospect of dismissal may seem the most serious consequence of dishonesty, there are others. For example, any disciplinary sanction that becomes part of your permanent record can be reported to other schools. If you apply to a medical, law, or other professional school, you are often required to provide a statement from the Vice President for Student Affairs attesting to your good conduct. Furthermore, the process of being brought up on charges of dishonesty--of having one's character and integrity questioned--is invariably a deeply embarrassing and troubling experience for a student, and one that leaves a painful memory.

Suggestions

The temptation to cheat can be eliminated by learning good time and stress management skills and 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.

1. *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, find a reasonable balance between work and school. Advising sessions are confidential and the privacy of your student record is guaranteed by Federal law.
2. *Don't work too many hours while in school.* 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 do. The brochure, "Putting College First," available at the Undergraduate Advising Center, suggests ways to balance school and work.
3. *Adjust your study habits to the demands of college.* The first thing 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 Bookstore. The Student Counseling Center offers short study-skills workshops. Contact an adviser for more information.
4. *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.
5. *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 and work out a solution. A handout on stress management resources is available at the Undergraduate Advising Center.

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.

Hacker, D. *A Writer's Reference*. (New York, 1989). p. 171.