

The NCWU Writing Center

PEL 146

Academic Integrity

North Carolina Wesleyan University's administration, faculty, and students are dedicated to upholding the integrity of the academic process and working together to prevent the occurrence of all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism and cheating. This handout seeks to explain academic integrity, academic integrity violations, and the consequences of a violation.

Faculty Responsibilities

As the guides for student learning, faculty members are responsible for ensuring that students are prepared to work with sources and each other ethically in the following ways:

- Design syllabi that make students aware of the academic integrity policy
- Explain how the policy applies to the particular course
- Hold regular office hours where students can ask questions about academic integrity
- Provide resources in class or on MyNCWU that instruct students on the citation style used in the course
- Create assignments that mitigate the possibility of plagiarism and cheating
- Include all steps of the writing process, where applicable, in major assignment design to help address possible violations before a final project is turned in for grading
- Evaluate students' work fairly based on criteria provided to the students on assignment sheets or associated grading rubrics

Student Responsibilities

Students are responsible for making sure that they act ethically as they complete their academic work:

- Read, understand, and follow NCWU's academic integrity policy
- Seek help from faculty members and campus resources to ensure that you are following assignment guidelines correctly
- Use sources ethically by citing them in the style used in the course
- Avoid situations that give you an unfair advantage or that undercut the guidelines put in place to uphold the integrity of an assignment

Plagiarism

The most basic definition of plagiarism is using someone else's work or ideas without giving them credit and claiming, implicitly or explicitly, that the work and ideas are your own. While this is a good working definition, it can be helpful to review some of the different forms plagiarism can take:

- Turning in work for a grade that does not give credit to any/all outside sources used.
 - **Example 1:** You use information from a source but do not put direct quotes in quotation marks or indicate where you paraphrased their ideas.
 - **Example 2:** You use information from a source but do not provide proper citations for sources you used.
 - **Example 3:** You use an idea or major term throughout your paper from a source that you read without giving credit.
 - **Example 4:** You write a paper in which all of the major arguments come from a source that you do not credit or build on.
- Turning in work for a grade on an individual assignment when all or part of it was created by someone else.
 - **Example 1:** You find an essay in the library or on the internet that answers all the questions on your assignment, and you turn it in as if it were your own.
 - **Example 2:** Your friend or classmate already wrote a paper like the one you are assigned. You turn in their paper as your own.
 - **Example 3:** You work together with a friend/classmate on a paper that you were supposed to do on your own.
- **Patchwriting:** Turning in work for a grade that gives credit to all sources but does not contain any of your own ideas or explanations.

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- **Self-Plagiarism.** Turning in work for a grade that you have already submitted in whole or in part to another class.
 - **Example 1:** You wrote a paper for your history class and received a grade on it. Your English professor assigns a similar paper. Instead of writing a new essay, you turn in the history paper.

Plagiarism may be willful—plagiarism that is done on purpose—or accidental—plagiarism that was unintentional. Accidental plagiarism usually happens when a student does not have enough knowledge about plagiarism or how to give credit to sources. It can also occur if a student has read a lot about their topic but has not taken careful notes on where got their information. Because it is almost impossible for an instructor to know if plagiarism is willful or accidental, accidental plagiarism is still plagiarism and can lead to disciplinary action.

Copyright, Fair Use, and the Public Domain

Copyright refers to the legal protections awarded to creators of original written, audio, and visual works. When a copyrighted work is used without the permission of the creator, this is called copyright infringement. Even if you cite a work correctly, you may still be committing copyright infringement. If you use a work without permission *and* do not give credit to the creator, you are also committing plagiarism.

Fair use allows for the limited use of copyrighted materials in certain circumstances **as long as credit is given** to the creator of the materials. When deciding if what you are doing is fair use, ask yourself these questions:

- **Am I using this material for commercial or educational purposes?** Using a work to complete a class project is usually considered fair use. Once you plan to profit financially, it becomes copyright infringement.
- **Is the material a factual or creative work?** The more creative a work is, the less likely it is to fall under fair use.
- **How much of the work will I be using?** Giving credit to the creator is not enough to guarantee fair use if you have used a substantial portion of a work in your project.
- **How will my use affect the value of the work?** If your use of the work will negatively affect its current or future value for its creator, then it is not considered fair use.
- **Is my use of the work transformative?** Satirical and digital remix projects tend to be considered fair use. In these cases, you are creating something new by changing the meaning of the work, adding to it, or providing criticism.

Works in the public domain are not protected by copyright, either because the creator chose not to protect the work or because the copyright has been allowed to expire. These works are free to use. However, you may still need to give credit to the creator. Sites like the Creative Commons offer copyright free materials and provide rules for citing these materials. If you are using works from the public domain in an academic project, you will be expected to acknowledge that the material is not your own and provide citations where possible. While not illegal, not giving credit could still lead to an academic integrity violation.

Cheating

Cheating is any act that gives you or another student an unfair advantage. You can find a list of some common forms of cheating below.

- Knowingly permitting your work to be submitted by another student as their own original work.
 - **Example 1:** You lend/give your paper to a friend/classmate to turn in as their own work.
 - **Example 2:** You lend/give your paper to a friend/classmate as an example, and they copy all or part of it in their work.
- Violating procedures dictated by the professor to protect the integrity of the assignment.
 - **Example 1:** The professor asks that you turn in the articles that you used in your paper, but you do not.
 - **Example 2:** The professor asks you not to share the assignment with students in another class, but you give it to your friend in another section.
 - **Example 3:** The professor asks you to turn in the questions at the end of a test, but you do not.
- Lying in order to gain time on an assignment.
 - **Example 1:** You claim that you have a family emergency or illness when you do not.
 - **Example 2:** You claim you are having computer or car trouble when you are not.

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- Destroying or monopolizing resources to keep other students from gaining access to them or to sabotage their work.
 - **Example 1:** You know that a classmate has chosen a topic similar to yours, so you reserve every book in the library on the subject to keep them from being able to use them.
 - **Example 2:** You destroy a classmate's lab experiment to hurt their grade.

Appropriate and Inappropriate Collaboration

Academic collaboration is an important and exciting part of the college experience; however, some forms of collaboration may be a violation of academic integrity. The best thing to do is to talk to your instructor about what forms you are allowed to practice in their course. Below are some examples of what are usually considered appropriate and inappropriate collaboration.

- Appropriate Collaboration
 - Reviewing a classmate's work during an in-class peer review
 - Group work assigned by the professor
 - Visiting the Writing Center, Math Lab, and other academic support services
 - Forming a study group to review for a test
- Inappropriate Collaboration
 - Working with a group to complete an individual assignment
 - Asking a friend or classmate to do your work for you
 - Sharing assignment sheets and tests with students in a different section of the course

Academic Integrity Violations: Reporting, Penalties, and Appeals (Found in the *Student Handbook*)

While we hope it never happen, you need to be aware of the process that occurs when you are accused of an academic integrity violation.

Reporting

When a faculty member believes an academic integrity violation has occurred, they will discuss with the student the reasons for their suspicions. The student will be given the opportunity to respond and explain any circumstances they believe the faculty member needs to consider with regards to the situation. Following the discussion the faculty member will make a decision as to whether the student committed a violation.

If a faculty member determines a student is guilty of cheating or plagiarism, they will submit a written report to the registrar with copies for the student. This report will be filed in the student's permanent folder.

Penalties

The following penalties for cheating and plagiarism will apply:

- **First Offense:** The student will not receive credit for the work involved.
- **Second Offense:** The student will receive a grade of F in the course where the violation occurred.
- **Third Offense:** The student will be suspended for one semester and receive an F in all current courses.
- **Fourth Offense:** The student will be expelled from the college and receive an F in all current courses.

Appeals

Students may appeal all decisions for review by the Academic Policy Committee within eight weeks of the last day of the course. This committee will review the charges, consider the evidence, and either uphold or overturn the decision. However, they will not have the right to change the penalty. All decisions by the Academic Policy Committee will be by majority vote.

More information and details on academic integrity violations can be found in your NCWU Student Handbook.