

University of Wisconsin Colleges

Academic Misconduct Guide

Guide for Students

Academic Misconduct

Cheating (academic misconduct) may be a distasteful subject to consider. And yet, part of the value of the credits you earn at the University of Wisconsin Colleges lies in the standards of academic honesty and integrity maintained by the institution.

As a UW Colleges student, you have the right to expect that you and other students will be graded fairly, and you have rights of due process should you be accused of misconduct. You have an obligation to conduct your academic work according to University standards. Therefore it is important that you:

BECOME FAMILIAR with the rules of academic misconduct.

ASK YOUR INSTRUCTOR if you are unsure whether something is acceptable (for example, how to use sources in a paper or whether to work with another student on an assignment).

LET YOUR INSTRUCTORS KNOW if you think you see incidents of misconduct.

BE AWARE that helping someone else to cheat is a violation of the rules. Consider what you would do if a good friend asked you for illegal help.

Definitions

Academic integrity means that any work handed in is solely the work of the student whose name is on it and that it truthfully represents work done. Chapter 14 of the University of Wisconsin Administrative Code defines academic misconduct that is subject to disciplinary action as follows:

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT IS AN ACT IN WHICH A STUDENT:

- Seeks to claim credit for the work or efforts of another without authorization or citation;
- Uses unauthorized materials or fabricated data in any academic exercise;
- Forges or falsifies academic documents or records;
- Intentionally impedes or damages the academic work of others;
- Engages in conduct aimed at making false representation of a student's academic performance; or
- Assists other students in any of these acts.

EXAMPLES OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT INCLUDE, BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO:

Cheating on an examination; collaborating with others in work to be presented, contrary to the stated rules of the course; submitting a paper or assignment as one's own work when a part or all of the paper or assignment is the work of another; submitting a paper or assignment that contains ideas or research of others without appropriately identifying the sources of those ideas; stealing examinations or course materials; submitting, if contrary to the rules of a course, work previously presented in another course; tampering with the laboratory experiment or computer program of another student; knowingly and intentionally assisting another student in any of the above, including assistance in an arrangement whereby any work, classroom performance, examination, or other activity is submitted or performed by a person other than the student under whose name the work is submitted or performed.

Some special points ...

COLLABORATION

You will note that the examples state that collaboration with others on work to be presented is a violation only if it is “contrary to the stated rules of the course.” You should be aware that different instructors have different expectations about working with others. Be sure you know your instructor’s position on this. If you wish to consult with or work with another student on an assignment and you are not sure of the course rules, ask the instructor.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism means presenting the words or ideas of others without giving credit. You should know the principles of plagiarism and the correct rules for citing sources. In general, if your paper implies that you are the originator of words or ideas, they must in fact, be your own. If you use someone else’s exact words, they should be enclosed in quotation marks with the exact source listed. You may put someone else’s ideas in your words as long as you indicate whose idea it was (for example, “As Jane Smith points out...”). If you are unsure about the proper ways to give credit to sources, ask your instructor.

ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE

If you are accused of misconduct, you will probably have questions and concerns about the process. If so, you should feel free to contact the Office of Student Services. Although that office plays an important role in administering the misconduct codes, staff members are also available for advice and consultation.

If you are accused of academic misconduct...

If it appears to an instructor that you might be involved in an incident of academic misconduct---for example, cheating on an exam, plagiarizing a paper, or interfering with another student’s lab work---you must be offered a chance to meet with the instructor.* At this meeting the instructor will review the evidence, and you will have an opportunity to respond. If the instructor is persuaded that you have not been involved, that no misconduct has occurred, or that no action is warranted, that will be the end of the matter. On the other hand, the instructor might conclude that academic misconduct has occurred. The instructor may then decide on one or more of the following penalties. These are ranked in order of severity, and each group has somewhat different procedures.

PENALTIES

Chapter 14 lists penalties (sanctions) as “a” through “j”. They are grouped by degrees of severity and procedural process as follows:

GROUP A

- a) An oral reprimand
- b) A written reprimand presented only to the student
- c) An assignment to repeat the work to be graded on its merits

GROUP B

- d) A lower or failing grade on the particular assignment or test
- e) A lower grade in the course
- f) A failing grade in the course
- g) Removal of the student from the course in progress
- h) A written reprimand to be included in the student’s disciplinary file

GROUP C

- i) University disciplinary probation
- j) Suspension or expulsion from the University

*If you are not enrolled in the class involved, the instructor must refer the matter to an Investigating Officer.

Procedures

Group A Penalties (“a” through “c”)

The instructor may decide on a reprimand, oral or written, and/or ask you to repeat the work affected by the misconduct. If the instructor chooses to have you repeat the work, she or he must grade it on its merits, making no deduction for the previous misconduct. No permanent disciplinary record is made for penalties in this group. You do have the right to contest any penalty imposed, even these very mild ones (see hearing section). You should keep some notes about the incident in case they are needed.

Group B Penalties (“d” through “h”)

Penalties *d-h* require the instructor to prepare a written report, summarizing the reasons for the belief that misconduct has occurred, and to propose one or more appropriate sanctions. The instructor must send or give a copy of this report to you, along with a copy of the rules governing academic misconduct. Copies of the report will be sent to the Investigating Officer at your campus and to the Assistant Campus Dean for Student Services who serves as the Student Affairs Officer under Chapter UWS 14 for your campus. If you wish to appeal either the factual conclusions in the report or the proposed sanction(s), you must file a request for a hearing with the Assistant Campus Dean for Student Services within 10 days; otherwise the recommended sanction will be imposed.

Group C Penalties (“i” and “j”)

If disciplinary probation, suspension, or expulsion is recommended as a sanction, the instructor must refer the case to the Investigation Officer (a faculty member at your campus). The Investigating Officer will meet with you to hear your statements, examine the evidence, and prepare the written report. A hearing will be scheduled for these sanctions unless you formally waive your right to such a hearing.

Your right to a hearing

If you wish to contest a report of any misconduct, a hearing will be scheduled. You must request such a hearing for penalties “a” through “h” within 10 days of the instructor’s oral or written decision. Requests for hearings should be filed with the Assistant Campus Dean for Student Services.

For penalties “i” and “j” (probation, suspension, or expulsion), a hearing will automatically be scheduled unless you waive your right to such a hearing in writing.

The hearing will be before the Academic Misconduct Hearing Committee (the Academic Action Committee at your campus serves as the Academic Misconduct Hearing Committee under Chapter UWS 14) which will include one or more student members. At the hearing, the instructor will be asked to present information and you will be asked to present any statements you wish to make. You may be accompanied by a person of your choosing if you wish, but only one of you shall have the right to present evidence and question witnesses. This shall not preclude your right to give testimony.

The committee will listen to the evidence and statements and then decide whether academic misconduct has occurred and what the sanction should be. The committee is not limited to the sanction (penalty) recommended by the instructor. In cases in which the hearing committee prescribes the sanctions of suspension or expulsion, a further appeal to the chancellor is possible. In exceptional cases, the Board of Regents has the right to review the record further.

What to do if you see cheating occur

Honest students are rightfully distressed when they see cheating occur. Often other students see behaviors which are not noticed by instructors. The integrity of the classroom is threatened, and grading outcomes may be affected.

You should feel free to discuss your concerns and observations with your instructor. She or he will want to know about it, whether it is to take action in a particular case or to take steps to prevent such cheating in the future. The instructor may ask you if you would be willing to testify at a hearing although you will not be forced to do so. If you still have concerns after talking with your instructor, you may consult with the Assistant Campus Dean for Student Services or the Dean.

You may help other students by warning them that what they're doing is in violation of the rules and that you might feel compelled to report it. Engage your friends in discussions of tough questions like: What do you do if a friend offers to pay you to do a term paper in your area of expertise?

Cheating will remain a problem until all members of the University community – faculty, students, and staff – make clear and open their values on and commitment to academic honesty.

Questions?

Refer to the Student Rights and Regulations publication for more information at <http://www.uwc.edu/students/uwc-student-rights-regulations-booklet.pdf>

For a full text of Chapter 14, contact the Office of Student Services at your campus.