



# ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

## — Tips for Students —

### WHAT IS ACADEMIC INTEGRITY?

When people refer to Academic Integrity they are talking about an expectation that students will do their work – assignments and exams – in an honest and ethical way. In short, the university expects students' academic work to be an authentic demonstration of their own ability and effort. If a student has relied on the work of another, it should be openly recognized by the student so others can know where the student's contribution ends and another's begins.

### WHY IS ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IMPORTANT TO YOU?

1. **Effective teaching and learning depends on it.** Faculty and instructors improve teaching by accurately identifying the needs of student learners, assessing what learners know and how well they know it. When students cheat or plagiarize, it interferes with the accuracy of the assessment and forecloses opportunities for helpful correction and improvement that benefit both the learner and the teacher.
2. **Your reputation as a Nebraska graduate.** The reputation of our graduates is built upon the confidence others have in a graduate's ability to perform well. A Nebraska degree signifies to employers and community partners that our graduates are qualified and competent. Students who do not demonstrate academic integrity may not be qualified or competent, undermining confidence in the university, its faculty, and students.
3. **Consequences for academic misconduct are real.** You are responsible for knowing and complying with campus policies on academic integrity. If you choose to be dishonest or unethical in your academic work, the university can and will impose sanctions on you. Those consequences range from additional required training, a reduced grade, or even suspension or expulsion.

### WHAT ARE COMMON ACTS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY?

The UNL Student Code of Conduct identifies eight (8) distinct types of dishonest acts, but the most common are:

1. **Plagiarism:** Presenting another person's work as your own. Sometimes it is appropriate to rely on the ideas, research, or creative materials of someone else. However, you must recognize and attribute the work of others using references or citations. Note that this is not limited to work taken from a book, journal article, report, or website, but also includes work previously submitted by classmates or peers (for example, in a previous offering of the same class).
2. **Cheating:** There are many ways to cheat, but they almost always involve a student going to an unauthorized source for answers. Unauthorized sources can be a website, secret or concealed notes, using a book on a closed exam, or looking at another person's test/assignment. Faculty members or instructors decide what is authorized or unauthorized; always check the syllabus and ask.
3. **Fabricating or Falsifying:** When you make something up, falsely represent facts or previous accounts, or alter or manipulate something to support your position or idea, you are being dishonest or unethical.
4. **Impermissible Collaboration:** Working with others to complete an assignment or exam should only be done when a faculty member or instructor permits it. Assuming you can because the faculty member or instructor has not said anything is a mistake. Ask before you act.

To learn more visit <http://go.unl.edu/studentcode>.

## WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES FOR ACADEMIC DISHONESTY?

It depends. Faculty members or instructors can consider the following factors:

- Was the act spontaneous or did it involve forethought and/or planning?
- What is the impact in terms of the extent of dishonesty and the value/weight of the assignment?
- Is this the first act or has the student demonstrated a pattern of dishonesty?
- How were other students involved or impacted?
- Was the act self-disclosed or revealed or detected by others?

Depending on how these factors are evaluated by the faculty member or instructor, consequences can include:

- Reduced grades for an assignment or exam.
- Reduced grade for the course.
- A failing grade for the course ('F').
- Re-doing academic work for no additional points or value
- Referral to Student Conduct and Community Standards for non-academic sanctions such as probation, suspension, or expulsion.
- Required completion of the Academic Integrity Seminar at the student's expense (\$100).

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU ARE WORRIED ABOUT DOING SOMETHING THAT IS QUESTIONABLE?

Go to your faculty member or instructor and discuss what you are worried about. Tell them why you are worried and explain what seems unclear about the action you are thinking about taking. Because academic dishonesty involves making ethical choices, there may not always be one right answer. Context and circumstances sometimes matter. Don't let yourself become a victim of circumstance because you chose not to ask or seek clarification.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU OBSERVE OR HEAR ABOUT AN ACADEMICALLY DISHONEST ACT?

Go to the faculty member or instructor responsible for the class or lab in which you observed or heard about the dishonest act. Share as much information as you can about what you observed or heard. Indicate the date, time, and location; be specific about details of what you heard or saw.

You can also use an online reporting form that will notify Student Conduct and Community Standards (SCCS). Staff in SCCS can then inform the faculty member or instructor.

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU ALREADY DID SOMETHING DISHONEST AND NOW REGRET IT?

It is never too late to do the right thing. Tell your faculty member or instructor what you did or have done. Be honest and open. Being truthful is far more likely to invite a merciful or gracious response than being evasive or further concealing a wrongful act. There will still be a consequence for your choice, but the consequence may be less damaging.

## WHAT RESOURCES CAN HELP YOU AVOID ACTS OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY?

Graduate Studies website:

<https://www.unl.edu/gradstudies/current/integrity>

University Libraries website:

<https://libraries.unl.edu/citation-plagiarism-tools>

Student Conduct & Community Standards:

<https://go.unl.edu/academicintegrity>



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