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Students’ responsibility

If you are accused

Improper reactions

Disciplinary actions

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How offenses are recorded

How to avoid cheating and plagiarism

If you suspect someone else of dishonesty

Reporting a suspect

Resources

We gratefully acknowledge permission to adapt “Cheating, Plagiarism and other Scholastic Offences” guide produced by the Office of the Ombudsman, University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.

Revised July 2012

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Academic Dishonesty
Cheating, Plagiarism & Fraud

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10. If you submit an assignment by sliding it under an instructor’s office door (not recommended), confirm the next day or as soon as you can that the assignment was received. Make a note of the actual time and date of submission. Better yet deliver it to the general office and have it signed for by the staff.

11. The assignment you prepare for one course must not be resubmitted in whole or in part at any time. This is called ‘duplicate submission’.

12. When in doubt about any practice, ask your instructor. Do not rely on friends, relatives or fellow students for information about what is acceptable academic practice in a particular course or discipline.

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- talk about your suspicions with the other person
- report the suspicion to the Instructor/Department Head/Dean
- remain uninvolved

Before deciding to remain uninvolved, consider the big picture. Who benefits most from your lack of action? The wrong-doer. If you feel a moral obligation to try to make your university a more fair and honest place, try to find a way to get involved. Please contact the Student Advocacy office for advice.

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2. Answer questions honestly. The disciplinary authority has an obligation to investigate and to try to determine the truth.

3. Remember, there is an appeal process available to you. If the disciplinary authority investigating the allegations against you seems unwilling to hear your side, you can appeal. Remember, too, that the burden of proof is on the University.

4. Consider the evidence against you. Evidence does not have to be conclusive. The burden of proof is based on the ‘balance of probabilities’ that is, if a reasonable person can say: “Based on this evidence, cheating probably took place.” An instructor who believes a student is responsible for an academic violation cannot impose a disciplinary action but must refer the matter to the Department Head/Dean.

If you run into a disciplinary authority who, in your opinion, is handling an academic dishonesty accusation poorly, seek advice from the Student Advocacy office. Here are examples of some improper reactions to academic dishonesty:

The disciplinary authority:

A. appears to take the matter very personally, looks at the alleged offender with loathing, and says some hurtful things.

B. warns the student not to appeal because much worse could happen than the sanction being imposed. The calendar may be cited in support of this claim, the instructor may say something like: “You could be expelled if you appeal!”

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How to avoid cheating and plagiarism

In tests and exams

1. Do not sit near friends.
2. Do not use study notes written on small pieces of paper.
3. Shield your answer sheet so that others cannot see it.
4. Do not take notes, books or other items into a test or exam except those expressly authorized. If unsure about what is permitted, always ask.
5. If calculators are permitted, remove the cover.
6. Do not gaze around the room when writing a test or exam.
7. Do not communicate with any other student during a test or exam: communicate only with the instructor or proctor.
8. Arrive on time. Hand in all papers as required.
9. If you hear of anyone obtaining information about a test or exam in advance, report it to the instructor without delay.
10. If procedures for administering or supervising tests or exams seem inadequate to you, let the instructor or other authority know what your concerns are.
11. Report to the invigilator or instructor any unusual or suspicious behaviour of other students writing the test or exam.

In essays, reports and other assignments

1. Know the rules, including the specific rules for the specific assignment.
2. Do not work with a fellow student on any assignment unless authorized to do so. It is called ‘inappropriate collaboration’ if you exceed the amount of group work expected by the professor. Make sure you clearly understand the professor’s expectations for individual and group work on each assignment/project.
3. Acknowledge all assistance received, including help from friends or others in terms of proofreading, suggestions or information.
4. Do not submit work that is not entirely yours, i.e., use of another student’s essay, use of a downloaded essay from the Internet, use of an assignment purchased from a service/agency.
5. Do not cite in your bibliography any books, articles or other sources, including the Internet, which you have not used for the assignment in question.
6. Do not lend your work to other students unless you feel certain they will not use it dishonestly.
7. Do not hand in the same work more than once; whether for different classes or if you are repeating a course.
Disciplinary Actions

Various factors are considered by disciplinary authorities when determining outcomes for academic dishonesty:
- was the offense planned or the result of an impulse?
- has the student been honest and cooperative during the investigative process?
- is this a first offense?
- does the student appear to be genuinely sorry for the offense?
- were other students compromised through the actions of this student?
- was this student irresponsible in not knowing that the offense was an offense?

The Student Discipline Bylaw outlines the specific disciplinary actions available for each disciplinary authority.

There is no rule about which disciplinary actions are applied for which violations, but there are patterns in the ways that disciplinary actions have been applied in the past. Patterns are not rules and disciplinary authorities are free to depart from them.

**Failure (FDisc).** This is the normal disciplinary action when the violation is considered intentional and is a first violation. Often a failing grade is given along with a grade classification DISC (disciplinary action).

A notation of academic dishonesty may also be added to the student's transcript. This may be removed by the student after the time period indicated in the decision letter has elapsed.

**Severe disciplinary actions apply if there is evidence of planning or involvement of others in the violation.** Suspension for one year or more is typical for a student who was previously found responsible, even if the violation resulting in suspension is less serious.

**Suspension** due to a disciplinary matter results in a transcript notation. After serving the suspension, a student may make a request in writing to the Registrar that this notice be removed.

Expulsion, unlike suspension, is deemed to be permanent. Expulsion is typically reserved for very serious cases which may also involve criminal prosecution. Criminal prosecution is reserved for criminal acts, such as fraud, forgery, theft and impersonation.

**Fraud**

The regulations on scholastic offenses in the Calendar describe a number of fraudulent acts. While innocent acts can sometimes be mistaken for cheating or plagiarism, this rarely happens with fraud. Fraud is usually a deliberate lie. For example, submitting a forged doctor's letter, failing to disclose information on an application or any other form of misrepresentation is fraudulent. Consequently, it is often dealt with more severely.

**How to appeal**

1. You may appeal a discipline decision. You have at least two levels of appeal open to you. Each faculty/school has its own Local Discipline Committee (LDC) that hears student’s appeals. The University Discipline Committee hears appeals arising from LDC decisions.

2. If you are responsible for the violation but you feel the disciplinary action is too severe, you can also appeal. You may obtain assistance/information from the Student Advocacy office, Room 519 University Centre.

**How offenses are recorded**

1. A copy of the decision letter and related material will be kept in your student file.

2. There will be a notation on the student record and the official transcript if a student is suspended or expelled.

3. The Student Discipline Bylaw outlines reporting responsibilities for the academic staff and disciplinary authorities.

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- **An instructor who believes a student is responsible for an academic violation cannot impose a disciplinary action but must refer the matter to the Department Head/Dean.**
- **You have a right to appeal the finding of facts (whether found responsible), the disposition determined by the disciplinary authority (disciplinary action) or both.**
- **Lying or fabricating evidence may lead to more severe disciplinary actions.**

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