**Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty refers to committing or contributing to dishonest acts by those engaged in teaching, learning, research, and related academic activities, and it applies not just to students, but to everyone in the academic environment. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense, regardless of whether it was committed intentionally or not.

1. **Cheating**

Cheating involves unauthorized use of information, materials, devices, sources, or practices in completing academic activities. Cheating is defined as fraud, deceit, or dishonesty in an academic assignment. It includes using or attempting to use materials, or assisting others in using materials that are prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment in question.

Cheating is any act or attempted act of fraud, deception or distortion of the truth by which a student misrepresents mastery or understanding of academic information or material.

For example, copying during an exam that should be completed individually is an unauthorized practice, and, therefore, is considered cheating. A student who allows another student to copy from his or her work is considered to be facilitating or contributing to cheating.

1. Use of sources beyond those authorized by the instructor in writing papers, preparing reports, solving problems, or carrying out other assignments;
2. Acquisition, without permission, of tests or other academic material belonging to a member of the university faculty or staff;
3. Engagement in any behavior specifically prohibited by a faculty member in the course syllabus or class discussion.
4. Copying or attempting to copy from others during an exam or on an assignment
5. Communicating answers with another person during an exam
6. Pre-programming a calculator to contain answers or other unauthorized information for exams
7. Using unauthorized materials, prepared answers, written notes, or concealed information during an exam
8. Allowing others to do an assignment or portion of an assignment, including the use of a commercial term paper service
9. Submitting the same assignment for more than one course without the prior approval of all the instructors involved
10. Knowing procuring, providing, or accepting unauthorized examination materials or study aids.

* Copying from another student's test, paper, lab report or other academic assignment.
* Copying another student's test answers.
* Copying or allowing another student to copy, a computer file that contains another student's assignment, homework lab reports, or computer programs and submitting it, in part of in its entirely, as one's own.
* Using unauthorized sources of information such as crib sheets, answers stored in a calculator, or unauthorized electronic devices.
* Storing answers in electric devices and allowing other students to use the information without the consent of the instructor.
* Using texts or other reference materials (including dictionaries) when not authorized to do so.
* Knowingly gaining access to unauthorized data.
* Altering grade class assignments or examinations and the resubmitting them for regarding or reconsideration without the knowledge and consent of the instructor.

1. **Collusion**

Collusion as a 'form of cheating which occurs when people work together in a deceitful way to develop a submission for an assessment which has been restricted to individual effort'.  This means that you have worked together on a task, that you were instructed to do by yourself.

YOU CAN PLAN SUCH ACTIVITIES TOGETHER. THAT IS KNOWN AS COOPERATION. BUT, WHILE WRITING YOU HAVE TO DO IT INDIVIDUALLY.

Collusion happens when more than one student contributes to a piece of work that is submitted as the work of an individual. Individual assessment work should be entirely the work of the student submitting that work.

* Unauthorized collaboration with other students without the knowledge or consent of the instructor impedes the instructor's ability to accurately evaluate an individual’s learning and is a serious academic offence.

Submitting work prepared collaboratively with another person or people without knowing that this would be inappropriate.

Deliberately submitting work prepared collaboratively with someone else without explicit permission from the instructor.

* Working collaboratively with other students *when you have been instructed by the university to do so* for group assessment is okay

Collusion is much more acceptable than plagiarism because some learning is taking place. It appears that there is no consensus on the boundary between collaborative behaviour and collusion’ (Barrett & Cox 2005, p.107). They concluded that large numbers of staff could not correctly identify instances of collusion in the scenarios, and as the staff did not consider collusion to be a serious offence, therefore, ‘it is perhaps not surprising that students also do not consider collusion to be a serious offence’

1. **Falsification / Fabrication**

Fabrication or falsification involves the unauthorized creation or alteration of information in an academic document or activity. For example, artificially creating data when it should be collected from an actual experiment or making up a source of information that does not exist, Submitting a paper, lab report, or other academic work that contains falsified, invented or fictitious data or evidence, Altering or falsifying medical, academic or other documents or records, purposeful omission of data, information, or results in documents, reports and presentations, hiding data, results, or information using inappropriate scales, magnification and representation in charts, graphs and other forms of representation.

* Furnishing false information in the context of an academic assignment
* Fabricating or altering information or data and presenting it as legitimate
* Providing false or misleading information to an instructor or any other university staff member
* Changing the wording, answers or score of an assessment after it was returned.
* Falsifying one's identification or falsely using another identification.
* Logging in or otherwise gaining access to a computer, computer network or protected web site, using the password or identity of another.
* Citing data or information not actually in the source indicated.
* Artificially creating data when it should be collected from an actual experiment
* Unauthorized altering or falsification of data, documents, images, music, art or other work
* Falsifying information pertaining to the subjects participating in an experiment
* Falsely recruiting subjects for experiments without revealing the purpose of the experiments or receiving institutional approval for involving subjects in the experiment
* Fabricating sources of information
* Unauthorized use of another individual's computer login ID and password
* Unapproved deviation from a predetermined experimental procedure

1. [**Deception**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deception)

Providing false information to an instructor concerning a formal academic exercise—e.g., giving a false excuse for missing a deadline or falsely claiming to have submitted work. This can be done individually or collectively. Eg. False reasons for postponement of a test.

Lying or making up excuses for late work and attendance issues.

Misrepresentation is any act or omission that is intented to deceive an instructor for academic advantage. Misrepresentation includes lying to an instructor in an attempt to increase your grade, or lying to an instructor when confronted with allegations of academic dishonesty.

* Misrepresenting the reason for requesting an extension on a test or assignment.
* Posing as another student to take an assessment or complete an online course.

## **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is a type of cheating that involves the use of another person's ideas, words, design, art, music, etc., as one's own in whole or in part without acknowledging the author or obtaining his or her permission. Plagiarism is not just restricted to written text, but is applicable to other works such as ideas, design, art, and music.

1. **Impersonation**

Personation is nothing but posing as another student and do the academic activity on his or her behalf. One common form of personation in academic settings is proxy attendance. Also, in entrance examinations it is happening. You might have heard of the NEAT scam a few years back.

1. Posing as another student to take an assessment or complete an online course.
2. the writing of an assignment, lab, test, or examination for another student.
3. It can also be the unauthorized use of another person's signature or identification in order to impersonate someone else.
4. Personation includes both the personator and the person initiating the personation"
5. Also called… writing a paper/assignment/lab for another student, forging signatures or names on class attendance records

Other examples are… signing an attendance sheet for another student, using fake ID or signature, posting online for a distance course for another student, grading a paper to imply instructor has graded it, asking another student to write your exam or writing an exam for another student

impersonating another student at an exam or other evaluation

* Knowingly allowing any examination or assignment to be completed, in part or in total, for himself or herself by another person (e.g. take-home exams or online assignments which have been completed by someone other than the student).

1. [**Sabotage**](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sabotage)

Sabotage involves disrupting or destroying another person's work so that the other person cannot complete an academic activity successfully. For example, destroying another person's artwork, experiment or design is considered sabotage. Failure to contribute as required to a team project can also be considered academic sabotage.

Acting to prevent others from completing their work. This includes cutting pages out of library books or wilfully disrupting the experiments of others.

Sabotage involves disrupting or destroying another person's work so that the other person cannot complete an academic activity successfully. Examples of sabotage include the following:

* Destroying another person's work (including documents, design, data, artwork, etc.)
* Not contributing to a collaborative effort adequately when required to do so
* Withholding information when it should be shared with others in a collaborative project
* Revealing confidential data about another person's project or procedures to others
* Disturbing the setup or calibration of equipment arranged by another person
* Colluding with others to falsely accuse others of academic dishonesty
* Installing viruses, spyware, or other damaging software in another person's computer
* Stealing another person's property, such as computers, experimental setups, data or designs, to prevent that person from completing his or her academic activities
* Destroying books and materials in the library, laboratory or similar places to prevent other students from completing their work successfully

Not contributing as required to a team project and allowing the team effort to fail is an example of sabotage.

**Bribery**

Bribery takes on two forms:

1. Bribing someone **for** an academic advantage, or accepting such a bribe (i.e. a student offers a professor money, goods, or services in exchange for a passing grade, or a professor accepts this bribe).
2. Using an academic advantage as a bribe (i.e. a professor offers a student a passing grade in exchange for money, goods, or services, or a student accepts this bribe).

Causes of Academic Dishonesty

Literature on academic dishonesty cites a number of factors that contribute to dishonest academic practices (Whitley & Keith-Spiegel, 2002). Contributing factors include:

* Peer pressure
* Performance anxiety
* Excuse making
* Inability to manage the demands of student life
* Situations that encourage academic dishonesty
* Self-justification habits
* Unfamiliarity with what constitutes academic dishonesty
* Lack of understanding about consequences

### Peer pressure

Students can pressure other students to commit acts of academic dishonesty in many ways: pressuring others to work together or split assignments when course policies prohibit collaboration, seeing other students cheat and then joining them, engaging in academic dishonesty as a group and helping friends on assignments or exams when the professor has prohibited collaboration.

### Performance anxiety

Anxiety about academic performance can cause some students to cheat in academic activities. Students may cheat to avoid failing a course or receiving a bad grade. Some students may use cheating as a way to cope with poor test-taking skills.

### Excuse making

Some students blame their professors for their cheating, complaining that the professors expect too much or are too difficult to understand. Students also may use the excuse that the exams were unfair or a course was not in their major. Occasionally, students reason that other students are cheating, so they have no alternative but to cheat as well.

### Inability to manage demands of student life

One of the most common reasons for academic dishonesty is students' inability to manage the pressures of their social and academic lives. Students who cannot plan and manage their workload and other activities and are usually behind in meeting their deadlines and can at times resort to cheating or plagiarism as an easy solution.

### Situations that encourage academic dishonesty

When course policies do not spell out clearly what students can and cannot do, or when an instructor is not careful in enforcing academic integrity standards, some students may use the situation to commit acts of academic dishonesty. If the penalties for violating academic integrity standards are minimal, some students may consider cheating to be worth the risk of being caught.

### Self-justification habits

Some students engage in self-talk in order to justify their actions to themselves, even though those actions may not be appropriate. For example, they justify cheating by telling themselves that they were cheating:

* Only once
* Only in one academic activity
* Because they were sick and couldn't catch up
* "This particular assignment is not very important"
* "I do not need this particular course for graduation, so it's okay"
* "No one will get hurt by this"
* "I had to help a friend in need"
* "The instructor doesn't really care"
* "Everyone cheats in this class"

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### Unfamiliarity with what constitutes academic dishonesty

Some students genuinely may not know what constitutes cheating or plagiarism and may not ask the course instructor for clarification. Some instructors may assume students understand the guidelines already. As a result, students can unintentionally commit acts of academic dishonesty. Further, uncertainty about technological issues and, particularly, international students' unfamiliarity with American standards of academic integrity, can also lead to problems involving questions of academic integrity.

It is also important to mention that many students resist committing acts of academic dishonesty for a variety of reasons. These reasons include the recognition of the fact that it is wrong, desire to earn their grades, genuine interest in learning, concern about how they would feel in the long run if they cheat, fear of getting caught and the associated embarrassment and penalties, respect for course instructor and classmates, ability to manage their workload well, and religious beliefs

Consequences for Academic Dishonesty

The most obvious consequences of academic dishonesty are the penalties the university can impose on the offending student. A discussion of these penalties can be found in the undergraduate and graduate catalogs ([NIU, 2019a](http://catalog.niu.edu/content.php?catoid=48&navoid=2318); [NIU, 2019b](http://catalog.niu.edu/content.php?catoid=49&navoid=2374#acad_inte)).

In addition to official university sanctions, other consequences include serious moral, ethical, social and academic concerns, as cited by Cizek (2003).

### Social consequences

Cizek (2003) discusses the moral consequences of cheating, including the "habit-forming" nature of cheating and cheating's devaluation of hard work, integrity, and fairness. The habitual nature of cheating indicates that those who cheat in academic activities and think they can get away with it may continue to cheat at work, in family life, and in other aspects of life. In the long run, this attitude can be harmful not only to the cheater, but to everyone else affected by his or her actions.

### Loss of intellectual property

Academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism, is the equivalent of stealing another person's property. An original work (idea, writing, design, art, music, etc.) created by someone is the "currency" for that individual and when another person uses it without permission, the author loses his or her intellectual property, recognition and possible income.

### Inaccurate assessment

When students cheat or plagiarize in academic activities, instructors cannot accurately assess student performance or evaluate students' mastery of the knowledge, skills and applications necessary in their field. As a result, institutions may grant credentials to those who do not really deserve them, which can have serious practical ramifications in the workplace.

### Practical concerns

When students who commit acts of academic dishonesty are granted credentials confirming that they have successfully completed a course or program of study when they have not, it can have serious consequences in the workplace. For example, if someone obtained the credentials to practice medicine, engineering or law through habitual academic dishonesty, public safety and welfare could be jeopardized.

The practical concerns that impact employers ultimately impact alumni as well. If an employer hires someone who obtained his or her credentials dishonestly, the potential incompetence of the graduate would reflect badly on the graduate's alma mater-a situation that could hurt future graduates' employment prospects.

### Legal consequences

At times, faculty may involve students in projects granted to the university by external sponsors (businesses, government agencies or professional organizations) to provide students with opportunities for working on real-life problems. If students cheat, plagiarize, falsify or fabricate data in such projects, sponsors can take formal actions against the university. These actions could include fines, loss of future projects to the university or lawsuits. Such actions have serious consequences, as they not only ruin the reputation of the university, but also result in loss of opportunities for other students in the future.

### Other social/academic consequences

If students continue to be academically dishonest, educators must spend time policing students instead of educating them. An educational atmosphere such as this stifles educators' enthusiasm and saps their energy for more productive student/teacher interaction. Ultimately, morale declines, along with the quality of education. Thus, academic dishonesty has long-term societal consequences.

### Students' self-esteem

Students who cheat and at first get away with it may, in the long run, feel guilty and suffer from low self-esteem. This loss of self-respect can lead to a host of other problems, including difficulties with their careers, families, and other important aspects of life.

Although some students may think cheating is harmless and that its potential penalties would impact only themselves, it is crucial that they understand the far-reaching consequences of academic dishonesty and the serious societal and personal ramifications it can have

## **Prevention Strategies**

Academic dishonesty may not always occur within the confines of the classroom; it can occur in residence halls, library study areas, laboratories, homes or wherever students study and interact. Therefore, you may not always be able to immediately consult your instructor or teaching assistant when faced with a situation in which your actions could be construed as academic dishonesty. For this reason, you must be able to make decisions on your own when confronted with situations that compromise your academic integrity. In such situations, you should be able to analyze the problem, understand the consequences and choose an appropriate course of action.

Most often, the question of "right or wrong" is fairly straightforward and a decision is easy to make. However, some situations are more problematic and may present you with a dilemma. In such cases, you may need a strategy to make the right decision. Below are Michael Davis's (1995) strategies for dealing with these types of dilemmas.

### Give yourself time

When faced with an academic dishonesty dilemma, do not respond immediately, but rather give yourself time to analyze the situation and take the appropriate course of action. Your best option is to begin by consulting your course instructor or faculty advisor, even if you have to respond quickly. You may also consult the university's legal counsel, ombudsperson or other appropriate personnel.

### Analyze the situation and identify the facts

Analyze the situation to understand exactly what the questionable activity is all about and who is involved in it. Identify all the facts and information relevant to the activity. These facts could be gleaned from the course syllabus, exam guidelines, computing policies, etc. If it is easier to consult the course instructor or teaching assistant, do so. Usually, once you have identified and understood all of the relevant facts and participants, the dilemma will disappear and the decision will become clear.

### Identify options

Once you understand the facts of your situation, you have several options, depending on the nature of the dilemma. These options include refusing to participate in the act that can result in academic dishonesty, finding out appropriate honest strategies to complete the activity, reporting the situation to the instructor or other appropriate personnel (such as legal counsel or ombudsman in the university) and consulting resources available online and other places to clarify the situation.

### Analyze the consequences

For each option identified for the dilemma, analyze the consequences. The consequences can be analyzed from several perspectives, such as potential harm to others or to your reputation, the defensibility of the decision should any questions arise and possible penalties.

### Make an informed decision

Based on your analysis of the consequences, decide which option to pursue and implement the option. At this point, it may also be helpful to document the reasoning behind your decision-making for future reference.

### Review the decision

After implementing your decision, review the outcomes and learn from them to help you process similar situations in the future. Effective handling of academic dishonesty situations requires reflection, critical thinking and ethical decision-making skills. You should learn and discuss strategies for avoiding and dealing with academic dishonesty situations in your classes so that you become comfortable with ethical decision-making and can continue to apply what you learn to other areas of your life