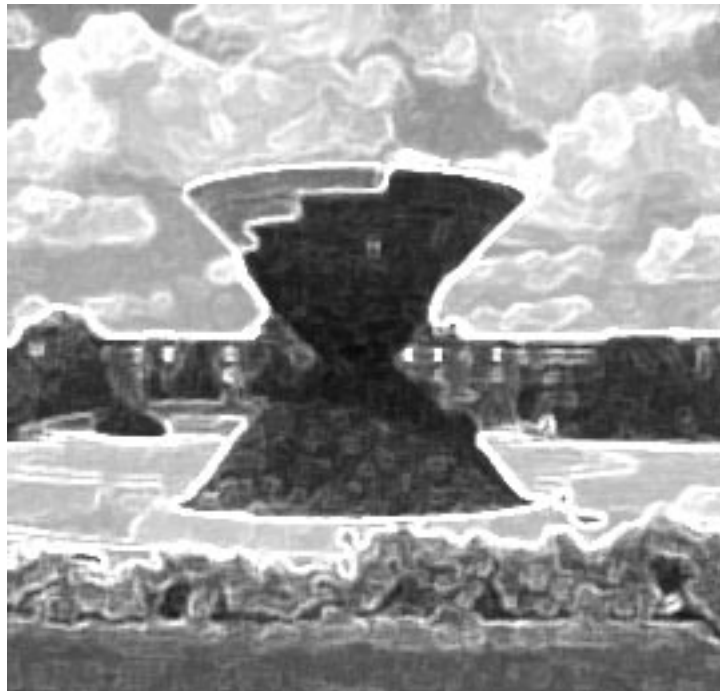


Ethical Considerations



Ethical Conduct

We're given a code to live our lives by. We don't always follow it, but it's still there.

~ [Gary Oldman](#) ~

Definition

“Ethics is a body of principles or standards of human conduct that govern the behavior of individuals and groups. Ethics arise not simply from [human’s] creation but from human nature itself making it a natural body of laws from which [human’s] laws follow” (Ethics and Culture Management Services for Organizations, 2004).

Ethics, generally defined, then, pertains to “doing something right.” Ethics cross a number of domains such as research, the Internet, computers, society, politics, and religion. As part of a University community, it is your responsibility not only to acknowledge and embrace ethical conduct, but also to advocate and expect ethical conduct of your students.

*NIU
Student
Judicial
Code,
Foreword,
p. 2*

As an academic community, Northern Illinois University is committed to providing an environment in which learning and scholarship can flourish. The members of the community – students, staff, faculty, and administration – have come together in voluntary association, not merely to fulfill individual responsibilities but also to contribute to the realization of the University objectives for the good of all.

To function effectively and provide a climate where members can achieve satisfaction in fulfilling their special obligations, guidelines defining rights and responsibilities must be articulated. Some of the guidelines concern opportunities and responsibilities that are appropriate to all communities and are affirmed in the Judicial Code because of their relevance to this University community. Other guidelines focus on factors unique to this community and its special attributes.

The Northern Illinois University community subscribes to and strongly supports the right of each student to study and work in a quiet, respectful, and non-violent atmosphere that is conducive to the pursuit and acquisition of knowledge. To provide such an atmosphere, students, staff, faculty, and administrators will conduct themselves individually and collectively in ways that offer the opportunity for individual and group examination, study, and discussion that encourage the students’ intellectual advancement. The right of each individual to peaceful and thoughtful pursuit of knowledge is a major premise of this institution, and each member of the community is expected to assume responsibility for creating such conditions in the residence halls, the library, and all academic areas created for and dedicated to such purpose.

In developing responsible conduct, the favored approaches are counseling, guidance, example, and admonition. In the exceptional circumstances where these preferred means fail to resolve problems of conduct, proper procedural safeguards are required both to establish disciplinary procedures and to protect the student involved from unfair imposition of serious penalties.

Academic Integrity

Knowledge without integrity is dangerous and dreadful.

~ Samuel Johnson ~

Definition

Defining academic integrity is more difficult than the term implies. However, one can infer from the meaning of the two words “integrity” and “academic” that a conceptual definition must include the adherence to an ethical code in the context of higher learning (Berube, 1991). This type of code-driven approach to academic integrity is often bottom-lined in academia as, “Don’t cheat!” (Hinman, 2002). More recently, academic integrity has been considerably broadened to include all aspects of learning, teaching and research (Hinman).

Strategies

Ten Principles of Academic Integrity

By Donald L. McCabe and Gary Pavela

1. Affirm the importance of academic integrity.

Institutions of higher education are dedicated to the pursuit of truth. Faculty members need to affirm that the pursuit of truth is grounded in certain core values, including diligence, civility, and honesty.

2. Foster a love of learning.

A commitment to academic integrity is reinforced by high academic standards. Most students will thrive in an atmosphere where academic work is seen as challenging, relevant, useful, and fair.

3. Treat students as ends in themselves.

Faculty members should treat their students as ends in themselves, deserving individual attention and consideration. Students will generally reciprocate by respecting the values of their teachers, including a commitment to academic integrity.

4. Promote an environment of trust in the classroom.

Most students are mature adults, and value an environment free of arbitrary rules and trivial assignments, where trust is earned and given.

5. Encourage student responsibility for academic integrity.

With proper guidance, students can be given significant responsibility to help protect and promote the highest standards of academic integrity.

Students want to work in communities where competition is fair, integrity is respected, and cheating is punished. They understand that one of the greatest inducements to engaging in academic dishonesty is the perception that academic dishonesty is rampant.

6. Clarify expectations for students.

Faculty members have a primary responsibility to help designing and cultivating the educational environment and experience. They must clarify their expectations in advance regarding honesty in academic work, including the nature and scope of student collaboration. Most students want such guidance and welcome it in course syllabi, carefully reviewed by their teachers in class.

7. Develop fair and relevant forms of assessment.

Students expect their academic work to be fairly and fully assessed. Faculty members should use, and continuously revise, forms of assessment that require active and creative thought and promote learning opportunities for students.

8. Reduce opportunities to engage in academic dishonesty.

Prevention is a critical line of defense against academic dishonesty. Students should not be tempted or induced to engage in acts of academic dishonesty by ambiguous policies, undefined or unrealistic standards for collaboration, inadequate classroom management, or poor examination security.

9. Challenge academic dishonesty when it occurs.

Students observe how faculty members behave and what values they embrace. Faculty members who ignore or trivialize academic dishonesty send the message that the core values of academic life, and community in general, are not worth any significant effort to enforce.

10. Help define and support campus-wide academic integrity.

Acts of academic dishonesty by individual students can occur across artificial divisions of departments and schools. Although faculty members should be the primary role models for academic integrity, responsibility for defining, promoting, and protecting academic integrity must be a community-wide concern, not only to identify repeat offenders and apply consistent due process procedures, but to affirm the shared values that make colleges and universities true communities.

**More
Strategies to
Ensure
Academic
Integrity**

Adapted from the University of Berkeley Instructors' Guide for Addressing Student Academic Dishonesty

- Keep course requirements reasonable and schedule due dates that are manageable, especially from the student's point of view.
- Assist students in learning and adhering to time management and planning skills. Lack of these skills can force students to cram for tests and produce poor quality work.
- Inform students of academic standards for scholarship and conduct.
- Explain how cheating (plagiarism, and academic dishonesty) harms students and describe campus sanctions.
- Minimize the opportunities for cheating and plagiarism (see Carbone, n.d.).

Here's what you can do to ensure academic integrity:

TIPS

Know your students!

Treat your students with sincere respect and, in turn, they will respect you. Getting to know your students on a personal level may foster academic integrity in your classroom. Here are just a few ideas:

- Start off on the right foot! Create a sense of well-being and acceptance of all students in your class.
- Learn the names of your students can call them by name during class discussions and activities.
- Engage your students – incorporate relevant, topic-related learning techniques such as hands-on, student-centered activities (group work, self-reflection, presentations).

The following sections, *Syllabus*, *Examinations*, and *Papers* are from Carbone (n.d.), *Taking About Plagiarism*.

Syllabus

First, your course syllabus is considered a contract between you and your students. The syllabus should clearly and succinctly lay out your expectations for your students.

Instead of including verbatim, specific parts of the actual NIU Student Judicial Code: 3-3, 3-5, create your own personal statement that includes ways you can help students learn about the do's and don'ts of academic integrity and plagiarism. Let's assume that our students are honest and desire to be

exemplary learners. Why not write a statement that reflects your own personal viewpoint on how you feel about plagiarism and academic integrity?

Below is an example of a teacher-created plagiarism statement (Carbone, n.d. *Taking About Plagiarism*) in “everyday language.”

Plagiarism

You should read your student handbook. (Has anybody read it?--I've never met a student who has unless and until they have a question it answers. It's not exactly scintillating stuff.) It has all the legal warnings you'll ever want to hear. But since you're likely not going to read the handbook, let's think about plagiarism more carefully and realistically than the handbook does.

Unfortunately, the term plagiarism is more technical than practical. It's used to describe equally mistakes in handling and citing sources and deliberate cheating and lying about the authorship of the work you hand in. In fact, one refuge of many cheaters is to say that they merely made mistakes in source handling. So by plagiarism in this course I want us all to distinguish between fraud and cheating, which is always wrong, and mistakes in learning, which are inevitable, correctable, and for many people, necessary for learning. Mistakes are welcome; deliberate fraud is not.

To help explain some of these differences, and how they play out in practical terms in the course, and to give us a way to talk about these issues, I'd like to invite you to think about plagiarism as a matter of Don'ts and Do's. Some of the Do's will vary in other courses, but most all teachers will agree and assume you'll abide by the Don'ts.

We'll talk about this stuff as the course goes on.

Do's (We've added a few Do's about areas other than writing, especially team projects – not italics)

- *Do share ideas with one another. Do swap writing. Do help one another write. Do edit and rewrite sections of one another's papers from time to time; writers do that kind of thing all the time, and editors do it with them.*
- Do talk with other students about their projects for ideas and suggestions.
- Do collaborate with others on projects; consider what role you will take in completing the project and always begin with a set of ground rules for each member of the team.
- Do write down the names and contact information of your team members.
- *Do learn to like your writing; even when it's bad, hand it in any way, and know I'll always find something to like about it.*
- *Do expect to make mistakes managing and citing sources. Do expect to correct them.*

correct them.

- *Do take care in downloading sources and taking notes. Do find a way to use sources wisely and fairly.*
- *Do learn the myriad rhetorical purposes that including and citing sources can serve.*
- *Do use the word processor to help you manage sources (for example, put sources you're quoting or paraphrasing in a different font and font color until the final draft so you don't accidentally forget they came from some other writer).*
- *Do make notes of phases of your project – use a notebook, or, better yet, create an electronic folder in which you place all notes, materials, and resources.*
- *Do include a header or footer for each draft that you print which contains the date and time to help you differentiate in which phase you are working.*
- *Do have fun with sources, think of using them as weaving, building, playing with blocks, or any other metaphor that you associate with “taking what’s at hand and making something of it.”*
- *Do write before, while, and after you research, but especially before.*
- *Do discover an argument so you have a distinctive voice in your own essay, and aren't overwhelmed and intimidated by sources.*
- *Do come see me whenever you have a question about the course, are feeling overwhelmed, or unhappy with an assignment or your work; we can talk and find a way to make things work.*

- ***Don'ts***

- *Don't cheat. Don't lie. Don't steal.*
- *Don't misrepresent others work as yours.*
- *Don't go to places like schoolsucks.com, evilhouseofcheat.com, termpapersrus.com, or any of the other hundreds of online and off line sources where term papers can be commissioned or bought or borrowed for research purposes only.*
- *Don't make up fake sources. Don't make up fake quotes. Don't make up fake interviews.*
- *Don't think that by copying something over and changing every couple of words that you've put it in your own words.*
- *Don't think that because something is on the Net it doesn't need to be cited. Don't think that because a lot of textbooks and other printed matter you read don't site sources that you don't have to cite them either.*
- *Don't think that because politicians have speech writers and actors have script writers who often go unacknowledged that you can get a writer to “secretary” your paper for you; rules that apply in other settings are different here, where the purpose is for you to do the writing.*
- *Don't go to the library, find a book that hasn't been checked out often then find a source in its bibliography, and then copy that source into a paper as yours.*
- *Don't procrastinate an assignment and homework so that you end up under too much deadline pressure and become tempted to take shortcuts.*

- *Don't be afraid to come see me if you feel overwhelmed, unsure, fear missing a deadline, or start falling behind.*
- *Don't try to get around any of these Don'ts by working so hard to disguise them that you might as well have just done the Do's.*

Examinations

No matter what form of assessment you incorporate in your classes, it's important to have safeguards to ensure academic integrity. Here are some points that may be useful.

1. Proctoring.
Never leave students unattended during an examination. Proctor the exam either by yourself, with another faculty member, a graduate assistant, or a combination of all three.
2. Multiple forms of exams.
Using more than one exam form can easily be done using software to scramble test questions; using different colored papers, or using identifying marks that help you identify different forms.
3. Have students sign an honor statement on the front page of every exam.
Create your own and be sure to let students know you will be including these before the day of the examination.
4. Frequent changing of exams.
Try not using the same examination over and over again. Modify existing examinations to cover new content and information, new textbooks, or material from discussions and guest speakers.
5. Resubmission of exams.
Make marks in ink with instructions for students and have them submit the originals.
6. Bluebooks.
If you require students to bring bluebooks to an exam, collect all and redistribute them randomly.
7. Assigned seating by quiz sections.
Reassignment of seating during examinations lessens the opportunity for students to sit near a "helper," whether they have previously arranged the seating or to discourage a student sitting by a classmate who may be an "A" student.
8. Never post grades, electronically or on walls or doors.
University policy states that it is illegal to post grades in any format that may identify students, by using social security numbers and or an alphabetical listing of names.

Never leave exams in hallways or public areas when they are returned after grading where grades can easily be seen or where the exams could be taken by other students.

9. Grade exams in ink.
Using indelible ink lessens the opportunity for your marks and comments to be changed or altered.
10. Be aware of unusual clothing worn on examination day.
Ball caps, sunglasses should be removed and stored away. Walk around to ensure shoes do not have “mysterious” writing on them. All book bags and backpacks should be placed under desks or tables.
11. Electronic devices.
Require that all electronic devices be turned off and stored away (cell phones, PDAs, headphones, laptop computers).
12. Copying and discarding examinations.
Keep copies of all examinations and quizzes for at least 18 months. When you do decide to get rid of these materials, they should be placed in a shredder box or destroyed in such a way that they cannot be accessed by another individual. DO NOT put exams, quizzes, and projects in waste paper or recycling bins.

Papers

1. Provide rules of documentation when necessary regarding referencing styles (APA, MLA, etc.).
2. Provide a list of expectations regarding writing style, grammar, punctuation, font style and size, cover page, introductions and conclusions.
3. Make clear limitations of peer collaboration.
4. Allow student to turn in hand-written rough drafts (with a photo copy for you to keep) to lessen potential of using paper writing services or other student’s papers.
5. If you keep copies of papers, keep them for at least 18 months
6. Never leave papers or assignments in hallways or public areas when they are returned after grading.

TIPS

Too busy to grade papers?

Do you teach large section or lecture classes?

Here are some suggestions to help your students learn content and, at the same time, keep your grading activities to a minimum.

1. Allow students to collaborate on papers and projects.
2. Teach students the dynamics of working in teams such as team member roles, ground rules, and project management.
3. Have students create and use peer-assessment forms when they work in teams.
4. Have students turn in an outline of their assignment before it’s due. Keep this outline and compare it with the one they hand in again with the final

assignment. This strategy may be helpful for problem-based assignments where students may copy other's work.

5. Allow students to self-assess their assignments. Create a self-assessment form that corresponds to your own grading rubric.
6. Create grading rubrics that will assist in assessment impartiality.
7. Consider smaller assignments that focus on course content (analyses, reviews, and short reports can replace large term papers).
8. Incorporate discussion forums in Blackboard for after-class reflection and commentary. Online assessment is effective and efficient.

Plagiarism

Perish those who said our good things before we did.

~ *Donatus* ~

Definition

- v. tr.* - 1. To use and pass off as one's own (the ideas or writings of another).
2. To appropriate for use as one's own passages or ideas from (another).

v. intr. 1. To put forth as original to oneself the ideas or words of another.
(from the *American Heritage Dictionary*).

Strategies

Here are some useful strategies to help you and your students avoid plagiarism:

- Spend time at the beginning of the term discussing the different types of plagiarism.
- Take the time to inform students on your expectations of proper writing style (APA, MLA, etc.).
- Teach your students how to paraphrase and how to properly cite and quote source material.
- Provide copies of exemplary papers, projects, and other assignments to assist students in writing their own papers.
- Develop grading rubrics to assist students in following your expectations and to ensure fair and equitable assessment.
- Suggest that your students visit the NIU Writing Center. The Center is located in Stevenson Towers South, Lower Level.

TIPS

The following tips are from *The Plagiarism Handbook: Strategies for Preventing, Detecting, and Dealing with Plagiarism* by Robert A. Harris, as cited in *Thinking and Talking About Plagiarism*, <http://www.bedfordstmartins.com/technotes>

- Don't assume students know what plagiarism is.
- Teach plagiarism not from a punitive approach, but rather by emphasizing good writing and source management skills.
- Distinguish between writing mistakes and deliberate cheating.
- Talk about plagiarism in class, and not just as a hectoring admonishment warning students to avoid it.
- Make the writing process visible to students (and you) by collecting drafts, annotated bibliographies, and copies of sources used.
- Teach students how to manage sources.
- Design assignments to both mitigate against plagiarism and at the same time help students learn good scholarly habits.
- Know your school's plagiarism policies and procedures before you begin the course, so you know your options and rights as a teacher in advance.
- Remember due process and student confidentiality if you need to make a plagiarism charge.
- Put students at ease in office conferences to discuss plagiarism. Give students a chance to explain their paper.

Cheating

Keep true, never be ashamed of doing right;
decide on what you think is right and stick to it.

~ George Eliot ~

Excerpted from the University of Berkeley, Office of Student Life.

Definition

Cheating is defined as fraud, deceit, or dishonesty in an academic assignment, or using or attempting to use materials, or assisting others in using materials which are prohibited or inappropriate in the context of the academic assignment in question, such as:

- Copying or attempting to copy from others during an exam or on an assignment.
- Communicating answers with another person during an exam.
- Preprogramming a calculator or cell phone to contain answers or other unauthorized information for exams.
- Using unauthorized materials, prepared answers, written notes, or concealed information during an exam.
- Allowing others to do an assignment or portion of an assignment for oneself, including the use of a commercial term-paper service.

- Submitting the same assignment for more than one course without prior approval of all the instructors involved.
- Collaborating on an exam or assignment with any other person without prior approval from the instructor.
- Taking an exam for another person or having someone take an exam for oneself.

False Information

- Furnishing false information in the context of an academic assignment.
- Failing to identify oneself honestly in the context of an academic obligation.
- Fabricating or altering information or data and presenting it as legitimate.
- Providing false or misleading information to an instructor or any other University official.

Theft or Damage of Intellectual Property

- Sabotaging or stealing another person's assignment, book, paper, notes, experiment, project, electronic hardware or software.
- Improperly gaining access to, or electronically interfering with, the property of another person or the University via computer or other means.
- Obtaining a copy of an exam or assignment prior to its approved release by the instructor.

Strategies

To reduce the possibility of cheating in your courses, refer the **TIPS** material earlier in this section. Here are some more ideas to prevent cheating.

- Review the use of the Internet as a source of information. Ensure your students realize that all information on the Internet is not reliable! Teach your students how to properly reference and cite electronic source material.
- Discuss with your students how you define cheating and the consequences of cheating.
- Inform students that you are aware of paper mill web sites and that access to these sites is as easy for you as it is for them.
- Avoid general topics for term papers to prevent students from using previous papers and paper mills.
- Encourage collaborative efforts on papers and assign one grade to ensure responsibility of each team member.

- Use a range of assessment instruments including essay examinations, objective tests and quizzes, written feedback forms, and assignments. Modify them on a regular basis to avoid duplication.

Concluding Remarks

The *Ethical Considerations* section of the *Instructional Guide for University Faculty* has provided definitions, strategies, and tips on ethical conduct, academic integrity, plagiarism, and cheating. We have stressed the importance of modeling ethical behavior to your students, though your own actions in and outside the classroom, and by proper citation of source material. In addition, it's important to maintain these actions when conducting your own research.

Conducting research in your classes

Sometimes it's easy to conduct research using convenience samples – in other words, your own students. In conducting research, you must consider three IRB criteria or standards: Informed Consent, Right to Privacy, and Protection from Harm (McKinney, 2004).

IRB standards specify that consent must be received prior to initiation of research activity with human subjects. Therefore, although you may be tempted to use students enrolled in your courses for your research, you must first obtain informed consent from all students, prior to asking or involving them in your study.

Confidentiality of subject or participant responses or data is of utmost importance; all persons involved must be ensured that any information they reveal must not be connected to them. All data must remain anonymous or confidential yet private.

Finally, and without question, when involving human subjects in our research, “we are obligated to protect them from physical, emotional, and social harm” (McKinney, 2004). Although we may assume that our research may not be causing harm, all consequences must be considered, including physical, emotional, and social harm.

Thus, don't be tempted to “slip in a survey” during one of your courses or collect data from online discussions without first following correct IRB protocol and procedures. It's not worth the risk, to you or your students.

We hope you are able to utilize the material presented in this guide to assist you and your students understand ethical behavior that will lead to excellence in teaching and learning. Please contact us for assistance in any of these or other areas to enhance and further develop your contributions to the NIU community.

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Many sources exist on the topics of ethical conduct, academic integrity, plagiarism, and cheating. Visit online book sources and a meta search engine such as google.com, dogpile.com) for more information on these subjects.

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