

ACADEMIC CODE OF CONDUCT
GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY AND
TEACHING ASSISTANTS

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

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GUIDELINES FOR FACULTY AND TEACHING ASSISTANTS

In the Introduction to the Academic Code of Conduct, Concordia University explains why academic integrity is important. Article 1 states: “The integrity of University academic life and of the degrees, diplomas and certificates the University confers is dependent upon the honesty and soundness of the instructor-student learning relationship and, in particular, that of the evaluation process. Therefore, for their part, all students are expected to be honest in all of their academic endeavours and relationships with the University”.

The Academic Code of Conduct is available from the Faculty of Arts and Sciences website at <http://artsandscience1.concordia.ca/currentstudents/academicintegrity>. It outlines in detail definitions, offences, procedures and sanctions.

This document will summarize the information found in the official document including offences and procedures, will include some information on why students cheat, and some tips on how cheating can be discouraged.

WHAT IS AN ACADEMIC OFFENCE:

Academic offences include but are not limited to:

- Plagiarism
- Personation
- Multiple submission
- Knowingly contributing to another student’s act of misconduct
- Obtaining exam questions and/or answers or any other University-related material one is not authorized to possess
- Possessing, using or accessing non-authorized materials during an exam
- Using another person’s exam during the exam
- Communicating with persons other than invigilators and obtaining non-authorized help during an exam
- Tampering with an exam booklet or removing the exam booklet from the room
- Falsifying documents, most commonly medical notes, transcripts from other universities
- Falsifying facts, data, reference to sources

The most common academic offence is plagiarism.

WHY STUDENTS CHEAT

- Students do not have clear understanding of what is required/acceptable
- Students feel that the material/assignment/course is irrelevant or unimportant
- Students wish to achieve a higher or a passing grade
- Students are faced with a heavy workload and feel this is the only way to meet a deadline, particularly if professors state that late assignments will not be accepted
- Students think that they will not be caught
- Students view some acts such as copying from the internet as trivial or not serious cheating
- Students see others cheat and get away with it
- Students themselves have cheated and gotten away with it in other classes

WHO CHEATS

- ❑ Students with good and poor academic records; offenders' mean GPA last year was well above 2:00
- ❑ Approximately the same number of males and females
- ❑ Majority are between 20 and 24 years old; offenders' median age last year was 24
- ❑ Last year, the median offender completed 57 course credits!

WHEN TO REPORT:

According to the Academic Code of Conduct, all suspected academic offences must be reported. Supporting evidence is required. A feeling that someone cheated (although maybe correct) is not sufficient to uphold a charge.

All suspected offences should be reported to the Dean or Dean's delegate (Code Administrator) for two reasons:

- ❑ Students found to have committed an offence will be treated in a consistent manner
- ❑ The offence will be recorded to deter and to identify repeat offenders.

WHEN YOU IDENTIFY AN ACT OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

- ❑ Do not threaten to send the incident report to the Code Administrator and then bargain with the student.
- ❑ Do not assign a grade of F or 0 on the assignment or a failing grade in the course based on suspected misconduct.
- ❑ Do complete an incident report and forward the evidence to the Code Administrator.
- ❑ Do inform the student that you are obliged to submit the incident report according to the Academic Code of Conduct.
- ❑ Do inform the student that you are not obliged to discuss the matter further, and that discussion will take place with the Code Administrator.

Professors do have the discretion to deal with poor scholarship, for example, incomplete citations, incorrect citation styles, one or two missed citations. In dealing with poor scholarship, it would be helpful to provide the student with guidelines for assistance or improvement.

WHEN REPORTING:

Academic Code of Conduct incident reports can be downloaded from

<http://artsandscience1.concordia.ca/currentstudents/academicintegrity/procedures>

Include with your report:

- ❑ Original material submitted by the student (essay, assignment, lab report, etc.) with work in question highlighted
- ❑ Supporting documents such as sources for suspected plagiarism.
- ❑ Copy of course outline and assignment outline

Important to remember: Do not include in the incident report any information you would not want circulated. Copies of the incident report are sent to the student, and when applicable, to members of the Academic Hearing Panel.

EXAM OFFENCES

- ❑ Stop questionable behaviour immediately.
- ❑ Follow examination regulations and code procedures.
- ❑ Make note of seating arrangement, if relevant.

WARNING STUDENTS:

When including warning statements in your course and/or assignment outlines, particularly at the 200 level, state the warning in clear, simple English. Statements such as “familiarize yourself with Concordia University’s Academic Code of Conduct” mean little to most students. Try using something like “Do not copy or paraphrase material from any source including the internet without citing the reference”. Warnings about possible consequences are appropriate, including a failing grade in the assignment, failing grade in the course, additional credits, possible suspension and expulsion.

ONCE INCIDENT REPORT IS RECEIVED:

- ❑ The incident report and supporting documentation will be reviewed.
- ❑ Further investigation may take place if additional information is required
- ❑ The student will be contacted with all information being forwarded, and the student will be asked to appear for an interview
- ❑ A decision will be made based on evidence presented with the incident report, information presented in the interview, and information from any additional investigation.
- ❑ After receipt of the decision letter, the student has 10 days in which to make a request for a hearing before an Academic Hearing Panel. In this case, the Hearing Panel will hear all evidence, and make a decision whether or not to uphold the decision of the Code Administrator. Note: This is not an appeal. Rather, it is a new hearing with all evidence presented.

CONSEQUENCES – SANCTIONS

- ❑ Failing grade in the course with ineligibility for a supplemental examination or any other evaluative exercise is commonly assigned. This could be a good warning statement for students.
- ❑ Failing grade for a piece of work is also frequently assigned. This is often accompanied by the obligation to complete an additional credits as outlined below.
- ❑ Additional credits can be assigned. Generally this will be a 3 credit course selected to correspond to the offence. Up to an additional 24 credits can be assigned.
- ❑ Direction to resubmit work is rarely imposed because this presents an advantage to students who have committed an academic offence.
- ❑ A reprimand will be given in cases where it is deemed that the student was not fully aware that an offence was committed.

- ❑ Expulsion can be recommended by the Code Administrator to the Academic Hearing Panel and will be confirmed by the Provost. Generally, this sanction is not applied to first offences, particularly for plagiarism. It may be recommended for second offences.
- ❑ Suspension can also be recommended by the Code Administrator to the Academic Hearing Panel, with confirmation by the Provost. Like expulsion, this is generally not applied to first offences.

Note: The Academic Code of Conduct does not consider intent to cheat. If the facts support the charge, then the charge is upheld.

PREVENTING PLAGIARISM

- ❑ Be absolutely clear about expectations.
- ❑ Explain why citations are important.
- ❑ Provide resources for correct citations.
- ❑ Make your assignments specific and relevant to your course material.
- ❑ Ask for papers in stages, and refuse to mark final paper if stages have not been received.
- ❑ Do not accept last minute topic changes or topics that do not quite fit course criteria.
- ❑ Encourage students to ask for help if they are unclear about expectations or about correct citation.

PREVENTING EXAM OFFENCES

- ❑ Be clear as to what materials and aids are and are not allowed during the exam, for example, calculators, dictionaries, etc.
- ❑ Have students place all personal belongings at the front, side, or back of room. This includes pencil cases, cell phones, hand-held devices, etc.
- ❑ Do not allow any communication devices such as cell phones, pagers, etc.
- ❑ Space students if possible.
- ❑ Scramble exam questions, multiple choice answers; color code exam versions.
- ❑ Discourage friends from sitting near each other and separate them if necessary.
- ❑ Be vigilant. Students will take advantage of situations where invigilators are not doing their job.

Created by Rose Fedorak in 2006
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