

# Policy on Academic Integrity

## Principles of Academic Integrity

Academic integrity requires commitment to the values of honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. It is expected that students, faculty members and staff at the University of Victoria, as members of an intellectual community, will adhere to these ethical values in all activities related to learning, teaching, research and service. Any action that contravenes this standard, including misrepresentation, falsification or deception, undermines the intention and worth of scholarly work and violates the fundamental academic rights of members of our community. This policy is designed to ensure that the university's standards are upheld in a fair and transparent fashion.

**Students are responsible for the entire content and form of their work.** Nothing in this policy is intended to prohibit students from developing their academic skills through the exchange of ideas and the utilization of resources available at the university to support learning (e.g., ~~The Writing Centre~~ **Centre for Academic Communication**). Students who are in doubt as to what constitutes a violation of academic integrity in a particular instance should consult their course instructor.

## Definitions

In this policy:

- “work” is defined as including the following: written material, laboratory work, computer work, computer code, assignments, research materials, research results, musical or art works, oral reports, audiovisual or recorded presentations, lesson plans, and material in any medium submitted to an instructor for grading purposes.
- “Dean” is defined as the Dean of a student’s faculty and, in the case of graduate students, is defined as the Dean of Graduate Studies.
- “Chair” is defined as including the Chair or Director of a unit or, in the case of non-departmentalized faculties, the Dean.
- “instructor” is defined to include instructors and graduate supervisors.

## Academic Integrity Violations

Academic integrity violations covered by this policy can take a number of forms, including the following:

### Plagiarism

A student commits plagiarism when he or she:

- submits the work of another person in whole or in part as original work
- gives inadequate attribution to an author or creator whose work is incorporated into the student's work, including failing to indicate clearly (through accepted practices within the discipline, such as footnotes, internal references and the crediting of all verbatim passages through indentations of longer passages or the use of quotation marks) the inclusion of another individual's work
- paraphrases material from a source without sufficient acknowledgment as described above

The university reserves the right to use plagiarism detection software programs to detect plagiarism in essays, term papers and other work.

### Unauthorized Use of an Editor

An editor is an individual or service, other than the instructor or supervisory committee, who manipulates, revises, corrects or alters a student's written or non-written work.

The use of an editor, whether paid or unpaid, is prohibited unless the instructor grants explicit written authorization. The instructor should specify the extent of editing that is being authorized.

Review by fellow students and tutoring that do not include editing are normally permitted. In addition to consulting with their instructors, students are encouraged to seek review of and feedback on their work that prompts them to evaluate the work and make changes themselves.

### Multiple Submission

Multiple submission is the resubmission of work by a student that has been used in identical or similar form to fulfill any academic requirement at UVic or another institution. Students who do so without prior permission from their instructor are subject to penalty.

### Falsifying Materials Subject to Academic Evaluation

Falsifying materials subject to academic evaluation includes, but is not limited to:

- fraudulently manipulating laboratory processes, electronic data or research data in order to achieve desired results
- using work prepared in whole or in part by someone else (e.g., commercially prepared essays) and submitting it as one's own
- citing a source from which material was not obtained
- using a quoted reference from a non-original source while implying reference to the original source
- submitting false records, information or data, in writing or orally

## Cheating on Work, Tests and Examinations

Cheating includes, but is not limited to:

- copying the answers or other work of another person
- sharing information or answers when doing take-home assignments, tests or examinations except where the instructor has authorized collaborative work
- having in an examination or test any materials or equipment other than those authorized by the examiners
- accessing unauthorized information when doing take-home assignments, tests or examinations
- impersonating a student on an examination or test, or being assigned the results of such impersonation
- accessing or attempting to access examinations or tests before it is permitted to do so

Students found communicating with one another in any way or having unauthorized books, papers, notes or electronic devices in their possession during a test or examination will be considered to be in violation of this policy.

## Aiding Others to Cheat

It is a violation to help others or attempt to help others to engage in any of the conduct described above.

## Procedures for Dealing with Violations of Academic Integrity

Procedures for determining the nature of alleged violations involve primarily the course instructor and the Chair. Procedures for determining an appropriate penalty also involve Deans, the Vice-President Academic and Provost and, in the most serious cases, the President.

## Allegations

Alleged violations must be documented by the instructor, who must inform the Chair. The Chair shall then inform the student in writing of the nature of the allegation and give the student a reasonable opportunity to respond to the allegation. Normally, this shall involve a meeting between the instructor, the Chair, the student and, if the student requests in advance, another party chosen by the student to act as the student's adviser. If the student refuses to provide a response to the allegation or to participate in the process, the Chair may proceed to make a determination.

## Determining the Nature of the Violation

The Chair shall make a determination as to whether compelling information exists to support the allegation.

## Determining Appropriate Penalties

If there is compelling information to support the allegation, the Chair shall contact the Office of the Registrar to determine if the student's record contains any other confirmed academic integrity violations.

If there is no record of prior violations, the Chair shall make a determination with respect to the appropriate penalty, in accordance with this policy.

## Referral to the Dean

Where there have been one or more prior violations and the Chair has determined that compelling information exists to support the allegation, the Chair shall forward the case to the Dean (or the Dean's designate. In the Faculties of Humanities, Science and Social Sciences, the designate may be the Associate Dean Academic Advising). In situations where the student is registered in more than one faculty, the case will be forwarded to the Dean responsible for the course. The Chair may submit a recommendation to the Dean with respect to a proposed penalty.

## Letters of Reprimand

Any penalty will be accompanied by a letter of reprimand which will be written by the authority (Chair, Dean, President) responsible for imposing the penalty. The letter of reprimand will be sent to the student and a copy shall be included in the record maintained by the Office of the Registrar.

## Rights of Appeal

Students must be given the right to be heard at each stage, and have the right to appeal decisions in accordance with university policy, procedures and regulations. A student may:

- appeal a decision made by the Chair to the Dean of the faculty in which the student is registered within 21 business days of the date of the Chair's decision.
- appeal a decision made by the President under the provisions of section 61 of the University Act to the Senate Committee on Appeals in accordance with the Senate Committee on Appeals' Terms of Reference and Procedural Guidelines.

Deans who receive an appeal of the decision of a Chair should attempt to make a finding with respect to the appeal within 21 business days. In the case of a successful appeal, any penalty will be rescinded.

## Penalties

### Penalties for First Academic Integrity Violation

In situations where a determination is made that a student has committed a first academic integrity violation, the following penalties will normally be imposed. The penalties for violations relating to

graduate dissertations, theses or final projects are different than those for other violations.

## Plagiarism

Single or multiple instances of inadequate attribution of sources should result in a failing grade for the work. A largely or fully plagiarized piece of work should result in a grade of F for the course.

## Unauthorized Use of an Editor

Unauthorized use of an editor should result in a failing grade for the work.

In situations where unauthorized use of an editor to extensively edit work results in a student submitting work that could be considered that of another person, penalties for plagiarism may apply.

## Multiple Submission Without Prior Permission

If a substantial part of a piece of work submitted for one course is essentially the same as part or all of a piece of work submitted for another course, this should result in a failing grade for the assignment in one of the courses. If the same piece of work is submitted for two courses, this should result in a grade of F for one of the courses. The penalty normally will be imposed in the second (i.e., later) course in which the work was submitted.

## Falsifying Materials

If a substantial part of a piece of work is based on false materials, this should result in a failing grade for the work. If an entire piece of work is based on false materials (e.g., submitting a commercially prepared essay as one's own work), this should result in a grade of F for the course.

## Cheating on Exams

Any instance of impersonation of a student during an exam should result in a grade of F for the course for the student being impersonated, and disciplinary probation for the impersonator (if he or she is a student). Isolated instances of copying the work of another student during an exam should result in a grade of zero for the exam. Systematic copying of the work of another student (or any other person with access to the exam questions) should result in a grade of F for the course. Any instance of bringing unauthorized equipment or material into an exam should result in a grade of zero for the exam. Sharing information or answers for take-home assignments and tests when this is clearly prohibited in written instructions should result in a grade of zero for the assignment when such sharing covers a minor part of the work, and a grade of F for the course when such sharing covers a substantial part of the work.

## Collaborative Work

In cases in which an instructor has provided clear written instructions prohibiting certain kinds of collaboration on group projects (e.g., students may share research but must write up the results individually), instances of prohibited collaboration on a substantial part of the work should result in a

failing grade for the work, while instances of prohibited collaboration on the bulk of the work should result in a grade of F for the course.

In situations where collaborative work is allowed, only the student or students who commit the violation are subject to penalty.

## Violations Relating to Graduate Dissertations, Theses or Final Projects

Instances of substantial plagiarism, ~~or~~ falsification of materials **or unauthorized use of an editor** that affect a minor part of the student's dissertation, thesis or final project should result in a student being placed on disciplinary probation with a notation on the student's transcript that is removed upon graduation, and being required to rewrite the affected section of the dissertation, thesis or final project. While the determination of the nature of the offence will be made by the Chair, this penalty can only be imposed by the Dean.

Instances of plagiarism, ~~or~~ falsification of materials **or unauthorized use of an editor** that affect a major part of the student's dissertation, thesis or final project should result in the student being placed on disciplinary probation with a notation on the student's transcript that is removed upon graduation, and rejection of the dissertation, thesis or final project, and the student being required to rewrite the work in its entirety. While the determination of the nature of the offence will be made by the Chair, this penalty can only be imposed by the Dean.

The penalties for violations relating to graduate dissertations, theses or final projects may apply where a violation occurs in submitted drafts, as well as in the final version of a dissertation, thesis or final project.

### Particularly Unusual or Serious Violations

In the case of a first-time violation that is particularly unusual or serious (e.g. falsification of research results), the Chair may refer the case to the Dean, with a recommendation for a penalty more severe than those normally imposed for a first violation.

## Penalties for Second or Subsequent Academic Integrity Violation

### Repeat Violations

Any instance of any of the violations described above committed by a student who has already committed one violation, especially if either of the violations merited a grade of F for the course, should result in the student being placed on disciplinary probation. Disciplinary probation will be recorded on the student's transcript. The decision to place a student on disciplinary probation with a notation on the student's transcript that is removed upon graduation can only be made by the Dean.

In situations where a student commits two or more major academic integrity violations, the student may be placed on disciplinary probation with a permanent notation on the student's transcript. The decision to place a student on disciplinary probation with a permanent notation can only be made by the Vice-President Academic and Provost (or delegate), upon recommendation of the Dean. In making this decision, the Vice-President Academic and Provost will consider factors such as the nature of the major violations, and whether there has been an interval between violations such that learning could have

taken place.

If a student on disciplinary probation commits another violation, this should result in the student's permanent suspension. This decision can only be taken by the President, on the recommendation of the Dean.

In situations where a graduate student who has been placed on disciplinary probation after a first offence commits a second offence, the student should be subject to permanent suspension. This decision can only be taken by the President, on the recommendation of the Dean.

## Non Course-Based Penalties

If a student has withdrawn from a course or the university, or is not registered in a course associated with a violation, this policy must still be followed. If a determination is made that compelling information exists to support the allegation against a student, a letter of reprimand and, if appropriate, a more serious penalty in this policy should be imposed, although no course-based penalty may be imposed.

## Records Management

Violations of academic integrity are most serious when repeated. Records of violations of this policy are kept to ensure that students who have committed more than one violation can be identified and appropriately sanctioned. Access to these records is restricted to protect students' right to privacy.

### Records

Records relating to academic integrity violations will be stored in the Office of the Registrar. Chairs, Directors and Deans (whichever is responsible for imposing the penalty) will report academic integrity violations and will forward all documentation relating to a violation to the Office of the Registrar once the decision regarding a violation has been made. Records will only be kept in cases where it is determined that compelling information exists to support an allegation. In the case of a successful appeal, the record maintained by the Office of the Registrar will be removed.

### Access to Records

Only Deans, the Registrar and the Directors of Undergraduate and Graduate Records will have access to student records regarding academic integrity violations, and normally only to check for repeat violations. Access to records will not normally be granted to instructors, Chairs, or other staff. Chairs may contact the Office of the Registrar to determine if the student's record contains any confirmed academic integrity violations.

- i. In some special circumstances, there may be reasons why Deans or faculty members need to have access to this information (e.g., character attestation for purposes of professional accreditation). If a faculty intends to request access to students' records for any such purpose, that purpose must be disclosed by the faculty to students.

- ii. Deans and Chairs may request aggregate information from the Office of the Registrar on numbers of violations for purposes of analysis, but in this case the information is to be provided without revealing personal information.

## Records Retention

The following retention periods apply to records relating to academic integrity violations:

- i. First violations - 5 years after the final decision regarding the violation has been made.
- ii. Second or subsequent violations where no permanent notation has been made on a student's transcript - 5 years after the final decision regarding the violation has been made.
- iii. Second or subsequent violations where a permanent notation has been made on a student's transcript – permanent retention.

Notations on a student's transcript will be removed upon graduation or maintained permanently, in accordance with the penalty imposed under this policy.

A student who has had a permanent notation imposed on his or her transcript may make an application to the Vice-President Academic and Provost to have the notation removed. This application may be made 10 years after the final decision regarding the violation has been made and must include compelling evidence to explain why the notation should be removed.

## **Guidelines for Instructors on the Use of an Editor for Student Work**

The Policy on Academic Integrity (PAI) specifies that use of an editor for student work is prohibited unless the instructor grants explicit written authorization, either in a course outline or some other form. The PAI defines an editor as an individual or service, other than the instructor or supervisory committee, who manipulates, revises corrects, or alters a student's work. Editors may be paid or unpaid. The PAI applies to both undergraduate and graduate students. The PAI statements regarding editing do not apply to review by fellow students or tutoring, both of which are usually permitted by instructors.

To ensure consistency with their programs' learning outcomes, a unit may choose to establish a policy specifying the extent of editing that is authorized in its courses. If their unit has such a policy, instructors must apply it when authorizing students' use of an editor.

### **Extent of Editing**

The Policy on Academic Integrity applies to all types of student work, both written and non-written. In granting authorization to students to use an editor for any type of work, instructors must specify the extent of editing that is being permitted.

#### Written Work

In the case of written work, the following list specifies three types of editing:

1. Proof-reading: reviewing work for accuracy of inputting; adherence to a specified design; mechanical or typographical errors in text or formatting; identifying inconsistencies in elements (e.g. headings); and identifying errors in spelling, punctuation and visual elements.
2. Copy editing: editing work for grammar, spelling, punctuation, usage and other mechanics of style; reviewing work for consistency of mechanics and internal consistency of facts; indicating the hierarchy of headings and placement of art; identifying citation errors; editing captions and credit lines; and editing front matter.
3. Stylistic editing: clarifying meaning; polishing language; querying confusing sentence structures; identifying wrong word choices and ambiguous passages; checking tables, figures and visual materials for clarity; identifying faulty connections and transitions; and/or identifying jargon, redundancies and verbosity.

#### Non-Written Work

Examples of non-written work include, but are not limited to, laboratory work, computer work, computer code, musical or art works, and audiovisual or recorded presentations.

## **Additional Resources**

Centre for Academic Communication -  
<http://www.uvic.ca/learningandteaching/home/home/centre/>

Editors' Association of Canada's Guidelines for Ethical Editing of Theses/Dissertations -  
[http://www.editors.ca/files/public/Guidelines\\_Editing\\_Theses\\_2012-06-02\\_APPROVED.pdf](http://www.editors.ca/files/public/Guidelines_Editing_Theses_2012-06-02_APPROVED.pdf)