

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The University Community

A university is a community of learners bonded together by the search for knowledge; the pursuit of personal, social, cultural, physical, and intellectual development; and the desire for the liberating effects of an advanced education. California State University, Dominguez Hills (CSUDH) has a culture—the academic culture—shared with other universities and colleges across the nation. Integral to that culture is a set of values such as academic freedom, dedication to teaching and learning, diversity, civility toward others, and academic integrity.

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is of central importance in the university community and involves committed allegiance to the values, the principles, and the code of behavior held to be central in that community. Integrity concerns honesty and implies being truthful, fair, and free from lies, fraud, and deceit.

The core of a university's integrity is its scholastic honesty. Honesty is valued across all cultures and is a fundamental value in the academic culture. There are, however, cultural differences with regard to the ownership of ideas and the importance of individual efforts. Nonetheless, the university expects all students and other campus members to document the intellectual contributions of others and to ensure that the work they submit is their own.

Education provides students with the resources to master content, learn skills, and develop processes to maximize self potential and the potential of others. Students must demonstrate mastery of each step of learning by tangible products such as test performance, papers, and presentations. This process enables the student and the instructor to assess the student's readiness for the next steps and gives the student the confidence to undertake future steps. Students who cheat may not have mastered the necessary steps nor gained the necessary knowledge; they miss the opportunity to gain an accurate picture of what they know and what they do not know.

Cheating harms others and the institution in addition to limiting one's own potential. Other students are rightfully angry when dishonest students use inappropriate methods to get grades for which honest students work hard. The fairness of the grading process is compromised when a student falsely obtains a grade. Academic dishonesty may result in loss of confidence in the system and devaluation of the quality of the university degree.

The Nature of Academic Dishonesty

A standard definition of academic dishonesty has been provided by Kibler, Nuss, Paterson, and Pavela (1988):

Academic dishonesty usually refers to forms of cheating and plagiarism which result in students giving or receiving unauthorized assistance in an academic exercise or receiving credit for work which is not their own.

They further define the following specific forms of academic dishonesty:

Cheating—intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours.

Cheating also includes: unauthorized multiple submissions, altering or interfering with grading, lying to improve a grade, altering graded work, unauthorized removal of tests from classroom or office, and forging signatures on academic documents.

Fabrication—intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

Facilitating academic dishonesty—intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic integrity.

Plagiarism—the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgment.

(Presidential Memorandum 85-10) At the heart of any university are its efforts to encourage critical reading skills, effective communication and, above all, intellectual honesty among its students. Thus, all academic work submitted by a student as his or her own should be in his or her own unique style, words and form. When a student submits work that purports to be his/her original work, but actually is not, the student has committed plagiarism.

Plagiarism is considered a gross violation of the University's academic and disciplinary standards. Plagiarism includes the following: copying of one person's work by another and claiming it as his or her own, false presentation of one's self as the author or creator of a work, falsely taking credit for another person's unique method of treatment or expression, falsely representing one's self as the source of ideas or expression, or the presentation of someone else's language, ideas or works without giving that person due credit. It is not limited to written works. For example, one could plagiarize music compositions, photographs, works of art, choreography, computer programs or any other unique creative effort.

Plagiarism is cause for formal University discipline and is justification for an instructor to assign a lower grade or a failing grade in the course in which the plagiarism is committed. In addition, the University may impose its own disciplinary measures.

Further information about the various forms of academic dishonesty can be obtained from the office of any Instructional Dean or the Student Development office. Individual departments and faculty may also provide specific examples.

Who Has the Responsibility for Promoting Academic Integrity and Preventing Academic Dishonesty?

Faculty Responsibility

The faculty as representatives of the institution have the opportunity to encourage academic integrity and the responsibility to discourage and curtail academic fraud. At CSUDH, incidents should be reported to the Office of the Vice President of Student Affairs. Unless incidents are reported to a central location, repeated violations may go undetected as they occur in separate departments or with different faculty. The Vice President of Student Affairs will notify the student if a report is received.

Student Responsibility

Students are responsible for the integrity of their actions and must be willing to accept consequences for these actions. Students have the responsibility to be familiar with the University policies and to seek clarification with faculty if they are unclear about expectations for any assignment. Students are also encouraged to report academic

dishonesty. In the sense that a university is a community, students should understand their own role in the creation of the kind of environment that encourages honesty and discourages academic fraud. Students need not tolerate any action on the part of another that diminishes their own integrity or that of the university.

Options for Addressing Academic Dishonesty

When a faculty member detects dishonesty, he or she will address it. If appropriate, the faculty member will first confront the student and seek an "in-office" resolution. Remember the charge is an allegation that should be examined under due process.

If the faculty member is convinced that dishonesty has occurred, she or he will use one or more of the following options:

1. Adjust the evaluation of the student's work, i.e., nullify the effort or a portion of it. This action may be taken as part of a decision regarding assignment of a grade. The faculty member is not required to formally report the incident through the campus disciplinary process but is strongly encouraged to do so.
2. Refer the matter to the Vice President for Student Affairs for an investigation as part of the Student Disciplinary Procedures. These procedures call for due process, a hearing or the opportunity to waive a hearing and accept a sanction without admitting guilt. (An "F" grade supported by a decision in a disciplinary case may not be the subject of a grade appeal and may not be repeated and canceled.)
3. Use both "a" and "b" above.

The California State University Disciplinary Procedures

Student enrollment is a voluntary entrance into the academic community of learners. By such entrance, the student voluntarily assumes, and is expected to assume, obligations of performance and behavior that are imposed by the University relevant to its lawful missions, processes, and functions. The University reserves the right to discipline students in order to secure compliance with these obligations.

Students who engage in dishonest behavior are charged with violating Title 5, California Administrative Code, Section 41301, under the Student Disciplinary Procedures for the California State University established by Executive Order #1098 by the Chancellor. A copy of these procedures may be obtained from the Offices of the Vice President for Student Affairs or Student Development.