

Academic Integrity

First Year Sophomore Fact Sheet

What is Academic Integrity?

“Academic Integrity is a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values:

Honesty, Trust, Fairness, Respect, and Responsibility

From these values flow principles of behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideas into action.” (Center for Academic Integrity, October 1999). As a student at Columbia, you are part of such an academic community and are expected to honor intellectual work and respect its origins. Because intellectual integrity is the hallmark of educational institutions, academic dishonesty is one of the most serious offenses that a student can commit. It is punishable by suspension or dismissal.

What is Academic Dishonesty?

Academic Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, deceitfulness in academic assignments or in dealing with University officials, including faculty and staff members, plagiarism, forgery and cheating. Some specific examples, as outlined in the Columbia College Bulletin, are as follows:

1. Submitting essays, or portions of essays, written by other people as one’s own;
2. Failing to acknowledge, through proper footnotes and bibliographic entries, the source of ideas essentially not one’s own;
3. Failing to indicate, through proper use of quotations and footnotes, paraphrases of ideas or verbatim expressions not one’s own, including materials on the Web;
4. Submitting written work for one course to a second course without having received prior permission from both instructors;
5. Collaborating on an assignment or examination without specific permission from the faculty member to do so.

In addition, infringement of copyright (breaking a copyright law) is a serious breach of the commitment to academic integrity that you made when you came to Columbia. An infringement of copyright may include reproducing copyright material without the owner’s permission.

What is Plagiarism?

Plagiarism is the use of words or ideas of others without quotation marks or proper citation. It includes, but is not limited to: cheating on examinations, copying computer programs, submitting work for one course already been used for another course, and in some cases, collaboration on homework.

May I use the internet when conducting research for a course?

While the internet can provide a wealth of information, sources obtained online must be properly cited just like any other source. One of the prevalent forms of plagiarism involves students using information from the internet without proper citation.

What if I am uncertain how to properly cite an Internet source?

If you are uncertain how to properly cite any source, speak with your instructor or check with the Writing Center.

What if I am uncertain if homework collaboration is allowed in a course?

If you are uncertain whether or not homework collaboration is allowed in course, speak with your instructor. Don’t assume that group work is appropriate unless it is clearly outlined in the syllabus.

What if I make a mistake, because I didn’t know the course guidelines regarding collaboration and/or proper citation?

Ignorance does not exonerate you from responsibility to Academic Integrity. If there is ever a question, speak with your instructor. Faculty members are available to answer questions about proper citations, references and the appropriateness of group work on assignments.

What happens if a student is found responsible for academic dishonesty?

Students who are found responsible as the result of a formal hearing of cheating, forgery, plagiarism (whether intentional or not) or any other form of dishonesty may be placed on disciplinary probation. Reports of such offenses will appear on future recommendations for law, medical or graduate school.