

Policy on academic integrity and misconduct

Academic integrity

The Department of English Studies aims at fostering **academic integrity** among its students. Integrity is the quality of adhering to a strong ethical code in a consistent and uncompromising manner. In the context of academia, integrity translates into upholding honesty and transparency in academic work by making ethical decisions even in the face of difficult situations; according to the International Centre for Academic Integrity (ICAI), academic integrity means committing to six fundamental values, namely honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage.¹ Examples of how each value is reflected in practice are shown below.

Students demonstrate **honesty** by:

- being truthful in having followed the instructor's directions, e.g. during examinations or when submitting an assignment.

Students promote **trust** by:

- being dependable in preparing honest and genuine work by set deadlines as per instructor's guidelines but also in keeping the instructor's intellectual property (e.g., lecture notes, slides etc.) private.

Students engage in **fairness** by:

- equitably treating others in not gaining unearned advantage over their classmates (e.g. by cheating in an examination) and in not putting other students at a disadvantage (e.g. by making noise during class or by hiding books in the library).

Students show **respect** (toward themselves and others) by:

- valuing (i) the intellectual properties of others (e.g. by properly citing their sources in their assignments or by not sharing academic material without permission), (ii) the right of peers not to be directly or indirectly compelled to violate their code of academic integrity, and (iii) the opportunities they are given to learn (e.g. by participating in discussions, actively listening to other opinions, being open to feedback etc.).

Students exhibit **responsibility** by:

- being accountable to themselves and others in safeguarding academic integrity; this is accomplished by seeking both to obtain classroom and institutional policies and to understand them (e.g. by asking for clarifications). Thus, being responsible means "standing up against wrongdoing, resisting negative peer pressure, and serving as a positive example" (ICAI, 2021: p. 9).

Students demonstrate **courage** by:

- holding "themselves and their fellow learners to the highest standards of academic integrity even when doing so involves risk of negative consequences, such as a bad grade, or reprisal from their peers or others" (ICAI, 2021: p. 10).

Students are expected to embrace, develop, and uphold these fundamental values during their studies. In doing so, they enable themselves to demonstrate the level of their knowledge, skills, and abilities, which in turn results in constructive feedback. Therefore, if students conduct themselves with academic integrity, they will maximise their potential to grow during their studies both as learners, but also as personalities. Giving oneself this opportunity to develop has a positive impact not only on academic achievements, but also (or more so) in the post-university life, such as in the job market.

¹ International Centre for Academic Integrity [ICAI] (2021). *The Fundamental Values of Academic Integrity* (3rd ed.). www.academicintegrity.org/the-fundamental-values-of-academic-integrity

Academic misconduct

A violation of academic integrity is called **academic misconduct**, i.e. any action or attempted action by a student which they know (or ought to know) that is likely to result in undermining fairness in academic assessment. In particular, academic misconduct is any attempt by a student to gain, or help others gain, unearned academic advantage or any attempt to create academic disadvantage for other members of the academic community. Such actions include, but are not limited to, plagiarism, cheating, and collusion. The main forms of academic misconduct are presented below.

1. Cheating

Cheating, in its broader sense, is an umbrella term for different kinds of academic misconduct, such as plagiarism, impersonation, fabrication, etc., that involve dishonesty in fulfilling academic requirements, such as examinations and other types of assessment. A more specific definition of cheating is the intentional attempt to **obtain or provide** unauthorised means for creating an unearned benefit in an examination or other types of assessment for oneself or others. Such unauthorised means include looking over someone's shoulder during an examination, communicating with others during an examination in order to receive, provide, or collaborate on answers, and also having access to, using, or attempting to use study aids, notes, books, and other materials that have not been explicitly permitted by the instructor to be used during an examination.

2. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the particular type of cheating involving representing the words, ideas, or other intellectual property (such as graphs, photographs etc.) as one's own by means of intentionally or inadvertently failing to acknowledge their published or unpublished source.

Students who plagiarise obtain an unfair academic advantage over other students, thus plagiarism seriously devalues higher education. It is important that students are educated on plagiarism and become fully aware of the departmental policy.

- **Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the following:**
 - Using an author's ideas without appropriately crediting the author.
 - Paraphrasing text from an author's work without appropriately crediting the author.
 - Duplicating portions of text from an author's work without indicating with either quotation marks or block quote format that the relevant text is directly quoted.

- **Plagiarism Prevention**

Plagiarism is defined and clarified in **ENG 101 – English for Academic Purposes**, **ENG 102 – Research Skills in the Humanities**, and **ENG 103 – Academic Essay Writing**. Following the end of these courses, all students are expected to understand the nature and consequences of plagiarism. Moreover, the University of Cyprus provides both instructors and students with advanced plagiarism detection tools, such as Turnitin and Blackboard SafeAssign. In cases whereby students are not sure if they are committing plagiarism, they must get in touch with either their course instructor or the Writing Centre (writingcentre@ucy.ac.cy).

- **Self-plagiarism**

A special kind of plagiarism is self-plagiarism, i.e. using one's own words, ideas and other material created by themselves in the past without acknowledging it and thus presenting it as if it were original work. Self-plagiarism can also take the form of **recycling**, i.e. submitting the same or substantially the same work for credit (without declaration) in two or more courses.

3. Collusion (Unacceptable Collaboration)

Collusion is an unauthorised collaboration of students in an assignment and the explicit or implicit representation of this joint work as a single student's own independent work. For example, collusion is accepting excessive assistance from another person in writing a paper or completing an examination without informing the course instructor of the nature and extent of that collaboration. Collusion also includes editing another's completed work to such a degree that its quality is significantly altered.

4. Misrepresentation of personal identity, performance, or other information

- **Deception**

Deception is the act of intentionally providing false information to an instructor or an academic administrator about an academic matter. Examples of deception include falsely claiming illness in order to request a deadline extension for an assignment or forging the advisor's signature on an academic form.

- **Fabrication (Falsification)**

Fabrication is an attempt to gain academic advantage in the context of academic assessment by faking, misrepresenting, counterfeiting, altering, or forging material (such as data, evidence, experimental results, bibliographical references, quotations, images) or knowingly making use of such material and representing it as legitimate. Fabrication also includes changing the answers in an examination after it has been returned.

- **Impersonation**

Impersonation is the act of assuming the identity of a student in order to deceive and gain unfair academic advantage for that student. Forms of impersonation include attending a class, sitting an examination, or going through an interview as someone else. Both impersonating someone else and arranging to be impersonated are serious offences. A special case of impersonation is **contract cheating**, which is the completion of an assignment by a person other than the student it was assigned to. Contract cheating often involves hiring a third party to complete the work on behalf of a student, who then submits it as part of a formal assessment as though it were their own.

5. Misuse of intellectual property

Misuse of intellectual property is the unauthorised use of copyright material, trademarks, and other intellectual properties (such as lecture slides) for distribution or profit.

6. Facilitating academic misconduct (Complicity)

Complicity is facilitating, encouraging, or otherwise contributing to academic misconduct by assisting or attempting to assist a student to violate any provision of this policy. Aiding and abetting academic misconduct may take the form of allowing work to be copied during an examination, sharing, or selling essays, exams, and other assignments without authorisation, etc.

Dealing with suspected academic misconduct

The Department of English Studies follows the procedure below in dealing with suspected academic misconduct:

- Step 1** Upon detection of academic misconduct, the instructor can immediately impose a penalty: depending on the extent and type of misconduct, this may include grade reduction or the award of a '0' (zero) grade for the assignment or exam (a penalty that may result in failing the entire course).
- Step 2** The instructor contacts the student, providing the evidence indicating their academic misconduct, informing them about the penalty, and inviting them to respond to the charges. Both the instructor and the student may request a meeting during which to discuss the issue.
- Step 3** The student is referred to the Departmental Board, who are to examine the case and decide on any further action to be taken. Depending on the extent and type of academic misconduct as well as on whether there were previous instances of such misconduct by the student, the Departmental Board may refer the student to the University of Cyprus Students Disciplinary Committee.
- Step 4** The Department Chair sends to the student a letter informing them about the decision of the Departmental Board.
- Step 5** The name of the student is included in the list of offenders kept by the Department for the duration of their studies and their performance and academic conduct is monitored through their academic advisor.