

Academic Integrity and You

A Guide for UNENE Students

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Introduction

The majority of UNENE students are currently working in industry. There are many situations in industry where it is standard practice to share, copy or use work without the need to acknowledge or reference the source or individual. This is quite a contrast from an academic environment. Although there are plenty of situations in University where collaborative work is encouraged, the primary focus is on assessing individual performance.

This document serves as an academic integrity guide specifically for UNENE students. This guide is not meant to replace official university policy; however it can be used as a supplement to the policy. The guide focuses on elements of the policy that are relevant to UNENE students and supports it with some practical examples / discussion where applicable.

The basis for this guide is the McMaster University Academic Integrity Policy (Reference [1]) as well as the Academic Integrity and You Presentation (Reference [2]). Generally the themes presented in this guide are consistent across all universities that are affiliated with UNENE. However, should an incident arise, the policy from the University in which you are registered will be followed (See Appendix A for a listing of the policies).

Expectations and Responsibilities

Academic dishonesty severely impacts the values of the University community and can ultimately devalue the credentials one may obtain. It is important to remember that as UNENE students you are members of the University community. As a member of the University community you have a responsibility to maintain an atmosphere of academic integrity. All members of the University community have the responsibility to:

- a) detect and report incidents of academic dishonesty and,
- b) provide assistance and co-operation in the prosecution of alleged offenders.

As UNENE students, there are specific responsibilities for in upholding academic integrity. As a student you are responsible for:

- a) performing your academic work in an honest ethical manner,
- b) adhering to the expectations / instructions given out by the instructors,
- c) asking for clarification of expectations / instructions if necessary,
- d) preventing academic dishonesty by identifying situations in tests or exams which may allow copying, and

- e) preventing your work from being used by others.

It is important to note that as UNENE students, you are formally-enrolled university graduate students. The Academic Integrity Policy specifically identifies the fact that graduate students are held to a higher standard. For example, you are expected to have a detailed understanding of how and when you must reference other people's work.

You should also be aware of the responsibilities of our instructors. Instructors are responsible for encouraging students to behave honestly and ethically. This can be accomplished by:

- a) clearly articulating expectations regarding appropriate academic behavior at the beginning of the course,
- b) setting expectations regarding the appropriateness of group collaboration,
- c) setting expectations for referencing sources,
- d) using test/exam mechanisms which reduce the opportunity for cheating,
- e) asking students where appropriate to sign declarations that the work submitted is their own. This serves as a reminder of the necessity for academic integrity.

Academic Dishonesty

The McMaster Academic Integrity Policy defines academic dishonesty as follows:

"Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage." It goes on to state that *"Wherever in this Policy an offence is described as depending on "knowingly", the offence is deemed to have been committed if the person ought reasonably to have known."* In other words, there is an expectation on the student to have a certain understanding of what is appropriate or not. Simply pleading ignorance is not acceptable; it is important to educate yourself on the things that you should know.

Academic Dishonesty Offences

The following section lists types of academic dishonesty (Items A through R) along with some discussion and/or practical examples where appropriate. Note that the list is not necessarily exhaustive.

A. Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the most common form of academic dishonesty. The Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as *"(To) submit academic work that has been, entirely or in part, copied from or written by another person without proper acknowledgement, or,*

for which previous credit has been obtained". In other words, you cannot use someone else's work without referencing it.

When referencing material from another source there are two types of situations you should be aware of. The first is the direct quotation of the reference material: it is important to distinguish what material is taken from the reference material and what is not. Material which is directly quoted from another source can be identified by utilizing quotation marks, italics, or any other format which separates the quoted material from the rest of the work. An example of this is shown in the above paragraph.

The second type of referencing involves indirect quotation from a source. This involves expressing an idea or concept from another source in one's own words. For example, a good portion of this guide has been interpreted from the McMaster Academic Integrity Policy.

Whether material is directly or indirectly quoted, there needs to be an appropriate reference. Also, it should be clear as to what work belongs to the student, and what has come from another source.

It is important to note that "common knowledge" is not plagiarism. For example, when using the formula for Newton's second law of motion ($F=m \cdot a$) it is not necessary to provide a reference.

B. Submit the same academic work for more than one course

Even if the work is your own, it is not acceptable to submit work for which you have already received academic credit, unless the instructor has specifically authorized it in advance.

C. Submit academic work for assessment that was purchased or acquired from another source

This can also be considered a form of plagiarism. If any part of the work is not your own, it cannot be submitted without the appropriate reference.

D. Inappropriate collaboration

Working together can be a very valuable tool used to enhance the learning experience. However, you need to understand the extent of collaboration that your professor allows for any given task. The instructor may allow you to:

- work jointly on a project,
- discuss assignment problems without copying or working through solutions together,
- collaborate completely on assignments,

Generally you will not be able to collaborate on a text or an exam. The instructor is responsible for specifying the way in which work is to be done; however if the extent of collaboration is unclear to you, you are expected to ask for clarification.

E. Aid or abet another student's academic dishonesty

It is not acceptable to help or support another student in acts of academic dishonesty. For example, allowing someone to copy your solutions on a test or assignment is a form of academic dishonesty and you both will be held culpable.

F. Copy or use unauthorized aids in tests, exams or reports

The instructor should clearly state what types of aids (if any) are acceptable for a test or exam. For example, utilizing a mobile phone to access the internet for additional information during a test is generally not acceptable.

G. Procure, distribute or receive an examination, test or course materials that are in preparation or storage for an academic assessment

Acquiring or distributing test / course materials that are not meant for distribution is not acceptable. If you do receive some material, and you are in doubt as to whether it is acceptable or not, you should ask the instructor.

H. Remove, without authorization, academic work (e.g. previous assignments or laboratories) submitted by other students to the instructor

Illegally acquiring academic work that was submitted by another student is not acceptable. If you have acquired some past exams / assignments in a legal manner, this is normally acceptable, although you may wish to confirm that the instructor considers these to be acceptable study aids.

I. Alter a grade on academic work after it has been marked and using the altered materials to have the recorded grade changed.

J. Steal, destroy or tamper with another student's academic work

K. Prevent another student(s) from completing a task for academic assessment

L. Fail to take reasonable precautions to protect academic work such as assignments, projects, laboratory reports or examinations from being used by other students

It is not acceptable to allow someone else to utilize your academic work for their use. For example, giving away current assignments / tests projects is not acceptable unless the instructor has indicated that it is ok; giving away past projects may be OK if you acknowledge exactly how much you used of them; as noted earlier, it is normally OK to give away and read past exams if obtained legally.

M. Misrepresent academic credentials from other institutions or submit false information for the purpose of gaining admission or credits

N. Submit false information or false medical documentation to gain a postponement or advantage for any academic work

For example, telling the instructor that you have an illness in order to gain an extension on an assignment when in fact you are healthy.

O. Forge, alter or fabricate University documents

P. Forge, alter or fabricate transcripts, letters of reference or other official documents

Q. Impersonate another student either in person or electronically for the purpose of academic assessment

R. Provide a false signature where the signature is used as proof of authenticity or participation in the academic assessment

S. Commit research misconduct

Although UNENE is primarily a course based program, many instructors will have you perform a project. An example of research misconduct would be the falsification of data for your project in order to provide favorable results.

Procedures and Penalties for Academic Dishonesty

If the instructor has sufficient reason to believe that some form of academic dishonesty has occurred, he/she begins a formal procedure. The following are the main steps to be followed:

- a) The instructor will contact the student and describe the charge of academic dishonesty and the evidence against him or her. He will also contact the UNENE Programme Director.
- b) The student has two weeks to provide an explanation / response to the charge.
- c) Based on the evidence and discussions from both sides (instructor / student), the UNENE Program Director shall determine whether an offence has been committed. If there are unclear circumstances, the professor and the Programme Director may propose to e.g. give a zero on the assignment or test and not proceed further with the formal process. Otherwise:
- d) There will be a review by the department and then the case will be referred to the Office of Academic Integrity who will inform the appropriate Faculty Adjudicator.
- e) The Faculty Adjudicator will ultimately determine if the student is found guilty. The decision is based on the preponderance of evidence, meaning that the

evidence shows that it is more likely than not that the offence has been committed.

- f) It is again important to note, as graduate students there are tougher punishments for academic dishonesty. There is not necessarily any leniency for first time offenders.
- g) If found guilty by the formal process, the student **will** almost certainly fail the course, may be expelled from UNENE, and may have a permanent notation on his/her academic record.

Conclusion

Standard industry practices differ significantly from those in the academic world. As members of the University community we have a responsibility to maintain an atmosphere of academic integrity. The penalties for committing offences of academic dishonesty are severe. You are responsible for your own actions; and remember, when in doubt, ask!

References

- [1] McMaster University, "Academic Integrity Policy", February 2008. Retrieved from McMaster website: <http://www.mcmaster.ca/univsec/policy/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>
- [2] Snell, V., "Academic Integrity and You, Rev. 2". November 2009. Retrieved from UNENE website: <http://www.unene.ca/un-acad-integrity/AcademicIntegrityAndYouminustest.pdf>

Appendix A – Links to Academic Integrity Policies

McMaster University

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity/>

<http://www.mcmaster.ca/univsec/policy/AcademicIntegrity.pdf>

Queens University

http://www.queensu.ca/calendars/sgrs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_Statement.html

<http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/senate/policies/AIprocedures.pdf>

University of Waterloo

<http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>

http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/Policy_71.pdf

University of Western Ontario

http://www.uwo.ca/tsc/academic_integrity_tutorial.htm

<http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/>

University of Ontario Institute of Technology

<http://www.uoit.ca/EN/academicintegritystudent/>

http://www.uoit.ca/assets/Section~specific/Current~students/Academic~resources/Academic~Calendar~2007-2008/PDF/UOIT_Academic_Calendar_2007-2008_Section05.pdf

University of Saskatchewan

http://www.usask.ca/university_secretary/council/reports_forms/reports/guide_conduct.php

http://www.usask.ca/university_secretary/honesty/policies_and_procedures.php

University of Windsor

<http://www.uwindsor.ca/aio/>

<http://web4.uwindsor.ca/units/senate/main.nsf/SubCategoryFlyOut/FDB5CEF43E8D608B8525762600519507>