

Academic Integrity Code

The Academic Integrity Code, developed through the College's governance system and approved by the Board of Trustees in the spring of 1980 as the Academic Behavior Code, provides a clear definition of the College's expectations regarding academic honesty and integrity, and a system of enforcement of the Code. First implemented in the fall of 1980, the Code underwent revision in the spring of 1983 and again in the spring of 1987. The 1983 revisions provided for improvements in the definition of faculty responsibility for enforcement of the Code. Revisions were approved by the faculty in 1987, 2001, 2004 and 2009. The entire Code is outlined below.

I. Standards of Academic Conduct

As an academic community devoted to the discovery and dissemination of truth, Muhlenberg College insists that its students will conduct themselves honestly in all academic activities. Students are expected to refuse to engage in any activity unauthorized by College policy and the faculty member(s) which profits themselves of which helps or hinders others in any work which is submitted for a grade or in any work which leads ultimately to a grade including but not limited to exams, quizzes, tests, essays, reports, recitation, laboratory exercises, and any work utilizing library, computer and laboratory facilities.

A. Academic Pledge

Muhlenberg College has established these standards of academic conduct because of its belief that academic honesty is a matter of individual and College responsibility and that, when standards of honesty are violated, each member of the community is harmed. At Muhlenberg, therefore, each student, as a prerequisite for matriculation and registration each semester, must pledge to adhere to the provisions of this Academic Integrity Code thereby accepting a share of the responsibility for maintaining the College's standards of academic integrity. Furthermore, on all forms of work submitted for a grade (e.g. paper, oral, digital, and electronic), students shall write and sign the following pledge: "I pledge that I have complied with the Academic Integrity Code in this work." Some professors accept "I pledge the A.I.C."

B. Violations of the Academic Integrity Code – Definitions

1. **CHEATING** (Includes but is not limited to examinations, quizzes, assignments, projects, and labs) - Any attempt to (1) look at another student's work, (2) communicate with another student verbally, by signal, or in any other manner any information concerning the content of the work, (3) use any unauthorized materials, such as notes, books, laptop computers, cellular phones, or other programmable electronic devices or sources, not specifically designated by the professor of the course for student use during the examination period, or (4) engage in any other activity for the purpose of seeking aid not authorized by the faculty member(s).
2. **PLAGIARISM** – Intentional or unintentional copying from a book, article, notebook, or other paper or electronic source material whether published or unpublished, without giving proper credit through the standard use of quotation marks, footnotes, and other customary means of identifying sources, or passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, and experiments of another. Plagiarism shall also include submitting without the consent of the professor an assignment already tendered for academic credit in another course.
3. **COLLUSION** – Working together in preparing separate assignments in ways not authorized by the faculty member(s). Academic work produced through a cooperative effort of two or more students is permissible only upon the explicit consent of the instructor. The collaboration must also be acknowledged in stating the authorship of the report.

4. **FALSE INFORMATION** – Furnishing false or misleading information to the College (including advisors, registrar, faculty or any other College official) (i) for the purpose of obtaining special consideration or privilege, e.g. postponement of an examination or a deadline for written work; (ii) in connection with any actual, alleged or suspected violation of the Academic Integrity Code; and/or (iii) in connection with any hearing before the Academic Judicial Board (AJB).
5. **HELPING OR HINDERING OTHERS** – Engaging in any activity not authorized by the faculty member(s) which helps or hinders another in any work being submitted for a grade. In the event that a student is found guilty of helping or hindering others in a course in which the first student is not enrolled, the penalty shall be a notation of the offense placed in the student's Permanent Record File located in the Office of the Registrar.

II. Student Responsibilities for the Effective Operation of the Academic Integrity Code

Students are expected to be familiar with and to adhere to the Code and will be held accountable for their adherence by faculty, administration and fellow students.

Students will foster such compliance by urging any student suspected of violating the Code to discuss the matter with the faculty member(s) teaching the course in which the alleged violation occurred. Should the suspected student, so advised, fail to heed this advice, the suspecting student shall direct his or her concerns to the faculty member(s) teaching the course in which the alleged violation occurred.

III. Faculty Responsibilities for the Effective Operation of the Academic Integrity Code

- A. Faculty members are expected to be familiar with the Academic Integrity Code. At the beginning of each semester, each faculty member shall identify the procedures to be used for classroom exams and other assignments in his/her courses.
- B. Ordinarily class tests and final exams should be proctored. Proctoring is defined as having a faculty member present in the room. Proctoring is the responsibility of the faculty member teaching the course but in special situations that responsibility may be delegated to colleagues.
- C. Faculty Resolution of the Academic Integrity Code Violations.
 1. If the faculty member has sufficient reason to suspect that a violation may have occurred on any work submitted for a grade, he/she must discuss this matter with the student in question. Written communication to the student may initiate the discussion. Faculty members may not raise the issue of an alleged Academic Integrity Code violation after the last day of the semester following the semester during which the alleged violation occurred.
 2. If, after discussing the matter with the student, the faculty member is convinced that a violation did occur, he/she should assess an appropriate penalty. Depending on circumstances as assessed by the faculty member, the penalty imposed could be: re-submission of the assignment; failure on the assignment; reduction of a course grade; failure in the course; or forced withdrawal from the course with no credit received. The specific penalty imposed should be one which the faculty member deems appropriate. Should the penalty be forced withdrawal, the course would then count at the value of an F grade in the total hours attempted and cumulative average of the student. In that case "VF" shall be recorded on the transcript and a full explanation of the reasons for no credit and the forced withdrawal shall be placed in the student's Permanent Record File. The notation "VF" shall be listed in the College catalog as part of the grading system and shall be explained as meaning "no credit: Academic Integrity Code."
 3. The faculty member must notify the Dean of Academic Life in writing of any penalty more severe than resubmission of the assignment within five days of the imposition of the penalty.

4. Upon receiving notification of the penalty imposed from the faculty member, the Dean has the responsibility to notify the student by conveying to that individual a written statement setting forth the decision of the faculty member. After the student reviews this notice, s/he should discuss the matter with the Dean of Academic Life and review his/her rights and responsibilities.
 5. If the student does not contest the faculty member's decision within ten academic days of the date of the Dean's written notification, the penalty shall be officially recorded. No further recourse is available to the student.
- D. Faculty members are expected to carry out their role in the implementation of the Academic Integrity Code. Should they not, the student may direct his/her concern to the appropriate department chair. Such concerns may be reflected in the evaluation process. If the department chair is the person in question, the student may direct his/her concern to the Dean of Academic Life.

IV. Student's Right to Appeal

- A. If the student believes the decision of the faculty member to be unjust, he/she has the right to bring the matter to the AJB.
- B. In seeking a hearing, the student has the following procedural rights:
 1. The right to a hearing in which the accused may present evidence on his/her own behalf, provide witnesses and bring to the hearing a Judicial Advisor chosen by the Dean from a list of Judicial Advisors.
 2. The right to a hearing within a reasonable amount of time.
 3. The right to question those presenting information against him/her.
- C. The student must notify the Dean of Academic Life in writing of his/her intention to bring the matter to the AJB within ten days of the date of the Dean's written notification to the student.
- D. Failure of Accused to Appear – If a student fails to appear for a scheduled hearing, the AJB will hear the case in absentia and impose additional sanctions if deemed appropriate.
- E. As the case is presented to the AJB, there shall be no presumption of guilt based on the earlier decision of the faculty member.
- F. During the deliberations of the AJB, the student shall continue to attend the course in question and fulfill all normal obligations and responsibilities.
- G. The student's failure to comply with the procedures set forth in Section IV shall result in a forfeiture of appeal rights.

V. Composition and Function of the Academic Judicial Board

- A. There shall be established an AJB consisting of twelve persons: six faculty members and a pool of students from which six students shall be selected. If additional faculty are needed, they will be chosen from faculty who have previously served on AJB.
- B. The faculty participants shall be selected by the faculty. Selection of each faculty shall be for a three-year term.
- C. Student participants shall be selected by the Dean of Academic Life in consultation with the Judicial Officer, Dean of Students Office, and shall serve a one-year term.
- D. The faculty participants of the AJB shall meet early in the fall semester of each academic year and shall select from its members a chairperson for that year.
- E. For any case brought to AJB three student members and three faculty members shall actually participate in the deliberations.
- F. The AJB shall have the right to subpoena any persons or materials which it considers relevant to its deliberations.

- G. A verdict of guilty shall require a simple majority of those hearing the case. All votes will be by secret ballot. If the AJB finds the student guilty, the penalty imposed by the faculty member will stand or be increased. The AJB will make recommendations about the penalty to the Dean of Academic Life.
- H. If the student is found innocent of the charge, he/she shall maintain his/her full status as a registered member of the course in question without prejudice and no record or other mention of the allegation or the hearing will be kept in his/her Permanent Record File located in the Office of the Registrar.
- I. The AJB shall notify the Dean of Academic Life of its findings and recommendations in writing within five academic days.
- J. The Dean of Academic Life shall notify the student, faculty member, advisor, Registrar and the Dean of Students of a decision in writing.
- K. All documents pertaining to a decision made by the AJB are on file with the Dean of Academic Life and are open for the accused student's review.

VI. Other Participants in the Hearing

- A. Witnesses may be called by the student or faculty member, who must, if requested, present a brief written explanation of the likely content of the witnesses' testimony. Testimony should be germane to the case. Ultimately, the Chair of the AJB shall determine the admissibility of any testimony. Normally, character witnesses will be allowed to present a written document rather than appear in person.
- B. The student will be assigned a Judicial Advisor who can help prepare for, attend, and consult during his/her hearing. During a hearing, the Judicial Advisor does not speak directly to the Board. The Judicial Advisor will be a faculty or staff member selected from a list of trained Judicial Advisors as determined by the Dean of Academic Life.
- C. No attorney as legal counsel shall be present.
- D. No parents shall be present at the hearing.

VII. Additional Offenses

- A. A case of a second violation of the Academic Integrity Code will mandate a hearing to the AJB. Upon a finding of guilt, the AJB will recommend a penalty, which may be as severe as expulsion, to the Dean of Academic Life who will act upon that recommendation.
- B. An allegation of a third violation will mandate a hearing before a Board of three faculty and three students. A finding of guilt for a third offense mandates a recommendation of the expulsion of the guilty student.

VIII. Miscellaneous

- A. If a student withdraws from a course after the inception of an Academic Integrity Code violation investigation by the faculty member teaching that class, a VW (Violation Withdrawal) will appear on the transcript for that course.
- B. False Testimony – Any student who lies or gives false testimony during any hearing held pursuant to these Rules and Procedures shall be deemed to have violated the Social Code.
- C. Failure to Cooperate – Any student who refuses to cooperate with these Regulations shall be deemed to have violated the Social Code.
- D. Failure to Fulfill Sanctions – Any student who fails to comply with the parameters of a sanction shall be deemed to have violated the Social Code.
- E. Failure of Accused to Appear – The AJB will hear the case of any accused student who fails to appear for a scheduled hearing in absentia and may impose additional sanctions if deemed appropriate.

- F. Notice – Notices shall be addressed to the student's post office box or to the student's home address listed in the official college records if the College is not in session.
- G. Days – A day, as defined in this document, shall refer to academic days, Monday through Friday, when the College is in session. Where matters are unresolved as of the last day of finals, "days" shall mean calendar days immediately following the last day of finals.
- H. Vacation Periods – Any hearing that is based on an allegation of a violation of the Academic Integrity Code occurring or reported after the last day of classes of the fall or spring semester may be deferred until the first month of classes of the following semester.
- I. An outline of the procedures for a hearing are available for review in the Office of the Dean of Academic Life.

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IX. Statement on Plagiarism

Writing Across the Curriculum Jill Stephen & David Rosenwasser, Co-Directors

As in most of the country, there has been a significant rise in the number of plagiarism cases at Muhlenberg. What are we going to do about it? The College is determined not to look the other way, but rather to use this rise as an occasion for rededicating ourselves to the values that support an environment of open and honest communication. This document is part of that conversation.

Many commentators blame the Internet, with its easily accessible, cut-and-pasted information, for increasing the likelihood of plagiarism. Others cite a lack of clarity about what plagiarism is and why it is a serious problem. So let's start by clarifying.

Most people have some idea of what plagiarism is. You already know that it's against the rules to buy a paper from an Internet paper mill or to download others' words verbatim and hand them in as your own thinking. And you probably know that even if you change a few words and rearrange the sentence structure, you still need to acknowledge the source. The Academic Behavior Code at Muhlenberg defines plagiarism as follows:

Copying from a book, article, notebook, or other source material, whether published or unpublished, without giving proper credit through the use of quotation marks, footnotes, and other customary means of identifying sources, or passing off as one's own the ideas, words, writings, and experiments of another (Muhlenberg College Student Handbook, 2001-2002, 45).

In short, plagiarism (as one handbook puts it) gives "the impression that you have written or thought something that you have in fact borrowed from someone else" (Gibaldi 30). It is a form of theft and fraud. Borrowing from someone else, by the way, also includes taking and not acknowledging words and ideas from your friends or your parents. Put another way: any assignment with your name on it signifies that you are the author—that the words and ideas are yours, with any exceptions indicated by source citations, and if you're quoting, quotation marks.

Knowing what plagiarism is, however, doesn't guarantee that you'll know how to avoid it. Is it okay, for example, to cobble together a series of summaries and paraphrases in a paragraph, provided you include the authors in a bibliography at the end of the paper? Or how about if you insert a single footnote at the end of the paragraph? Answer: both are still plagiarism, because your reader can't tell where your thinking starts and others' thinking stops. As a basic rule of thumb, "Readers must be able to tell as they are reading your paper exactly what information came from which source and what information is your contribution to the paper" (Hult 203). More on this later.

Why Does Plagiarism Matter?

A recent survey indicated that 53% of Who's Who High Schoolers thought that plagiarism was no big deal (Cole 6). So why should the College care about it? Here are two great reasons:

* It poisons the environment – students who don't cheat get alienated by students who do and get away with it; faculty can become distrustful of students and even disillusioned about teaching when constantly driven to track down students' sources. It's a lot easier, by the way, than most students think for faculty to recognize language and ideas that are not the student's own. And now there are all those search engines provided by firms like Turnitin.com that have been generated in response to the Internet paper mill boom. Who wants another Cold War?

* Plagiarism defeats the purpose of going to college, which is learning how to think. You can't learn to think by just copying others' ideas; you need to learn to trust your own intelligence. Students' panic about deadlines and their misunderstandings about assignments sometimes spur plagiarism. It's a good bet that your professors would much rather take requests for help and extra time on assignments than have to go through the anguish of confronting students about plagiarized work.

So, plagiarism gets in the way of trust, fairness, intellectual development, and ultimately, the attitude toward learning that sets the tone for the college community.

Frequently Asked Questions

The following FAQs are not exhaustive. Consult a writing handbook for more information on such matters as paraphrasing, summarizing, and using various systems of citation. Some professors will hand out sheets with citation guidelines; as always, when in doubt, ask.

Q: Is it still plagiarism if I didn't intentionally copy someone else's work and present it as my own, that is, if I plagiarized it by accident?

A: Yes, it is still plagiarism. The College puts the burden of responsibility on students for knowing what plagiarism is, and then making the effort necessary to avoid it. Leaving out the quotation marks around someone else's words or omitting the attribution after a summary of someone else's theory may be just a mistake—a matter of inadequate documentation—but faculty can only judge what you turn in to them, not what you intended. Any good writing handbook will tell you how to cite sources and how to take notes in ways that guarantee that you will not accidentally plagiarize.

Q: If I include a list of works consulted at the end of my paper, doesn't that cover it?

A: No. A works cited list (bibliography) tells your readers what you read but leaves them in the dark about how and where this material has been used in your paper. Putting one or more references at the end of a paragraph containing source material is a version of the same problem. The solution is to cite the source at the point that you quote or paraphrase or summarize it. To be even clearer about what comes from where, also use what are called in-text attributions. See the next FAQ on these.

Q: What is the best way to help my readers distinguish between what my sources are saying and what I'm saying?

A: Be overt. Tell your readers in the text of your paper, not just in citations, when you are drawing on someone else's words, ideas, or information. Do this with phrases like "According to X . . ." or "as noted in X . . ."—so-called in-text attributions.

Q: Are there some kinds of information that I do not need to document?

A: Yes—common knowledge and facts you can find in almost any encyclopedia or basic reference text generally don't need to be documented (e.g., John F. Kennedy became President of the U.S. in 1960). This distinction can get a little tricky because it isn't always obvious what you discover what others take to be known to all. When in doubt, cite the source.

Q: If I put the information from my sources into my own words, do I still need to include citations?

A: Yes. Sorry, but rewording someone else's idea doesn't make it your idea. Paraphrasing is a useful activity because it helps you to better understand what you are reading, but paraphrases and summaries have to be documented and carefully distinguished from ideas and information you are representing as your own.

Q: If I don't actually know anything about the subject, is it okay to hand in a paper that is taken entirely from various sources?

A: It's okay if (1) you document the borrowings, and (2) the assignment called for summary. Properly documented summarizing is better than plagiarizing, but most assignments call for something more. Often comparing and contrasting your sources will begin to give you ideas, so that you can have something to contribute. If you're really stumped, go see the professor. You will also reduce the risk of plagiarism if you consult sources after—not before—you have done some preliminary thinking on the subject. If you have become somewhat invested in your own thoughts on the matter, you will be able

to use the sources in a more active way, in effect, making them part of a dialogue (Rosenwasser and Stephen 220-221).

Q: Is it plagiarism if I include things in my paper that I thought of with another student or a member of my family?

A: The Academic Integrity Code, under the category called “collusion,” allows for students’ cooperative efforts only with the explicit consent of the instructor. The same general rule goes for plagiarizing yourself—that is, for submitting the same paper in more than one class. If you have questions about what constitutes collusion in a particular class, be sure to ask your professor.

Q: What about looking at secondary sources when my professor hasn’t asked me to? Is this a form of cheating?

A: It can be a form of cheating if the intent of the assignment was to get you to develop a particular kind of thinking skill. In this case, looking at others’ ideas may actually retard your learning process, and leave you feeling that you couldn’t possibly learn to arrive at ideas on your own. Professors usually look favorably on students who are willing to take the time to do extra reading on a subject, but it is essential that, even in class discussion, you make it clear that you have consulted outside sources. To conceal that fact is to present others’ ideas as your own. Even in class discussion, if you bring up an idea you picked up on the Internet, be sure to say so explicitly.

Works Cited

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