

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

A Guide for Faculty

This handout outlines what to do when you suspect academic misconduct in your classes or assignments. It recognizes the complexity and variability in academic misconduct cases and outlines a range of responses based on the type of misconduct and the student’s level of study and experience. For more detailed information, see **Policy 4.17 Academic Integrity Policy**.



When you suspect academic misconduct:

STEP 1.
Meet The Student

Set up a meeting with the student to

- Determine the student’s intentions and/or understanding of the assignment
- Let the student know that you have concerns about a recent assignment

At the meeting, you might

- Explain what you have seen in the student’s work to raise your suspicions
- Let the student review the materials and explain
- If relevant, inquire about the student’s research and writing process

After the meeting

- Write up notes about the discussion, including any decision you and the student made together



STEP 2.
Determine your response
(see reverse for suggestions)

No Misconduct

Yay! No further action is required

Minor Misconduct
(Level 1 or 2)

- Determine an appropriate sanction
- Recommend remedial learning if appropriate
- Send a message to the student via the **Support Messaging System** detailing your concerns and any decisions made after your conversation

Major Misconduct
(Level 3 or 4)

- Send a full report to the Dean in an email, including any supporting materials
- Send a message to the student via the **Support Messaging System** detailing your concerns and any decisions made after your conversation



Considerations

In determining whether a student’s actions constitute academic misconduct, instructors may consider the following factors:

- a student’s level of study: developing research skills requires regular opportunities for practice over several years
- a student’s linguistic, cultural or contextual knowledge of North American concepts of ownership, intellectual property and citation practices
- whether there has been a demonstrable misunderstanding of the requirements of an assignment
- whether a lack of clear guidelines, instruction or resources directly contributed to the student’s actions

The presence of any of these factors does not absolve students of responsibility for academic misconduct. But it may influence an instructor to consider remedial learning activities as a principal response.

Have questions?
Email the Writing Centre
writingcentre@ecuad.ca

STEP 3.
The Dean will then

Communicate the allegation to the Registrar to prevent the student from withdrawing from the course until a decision is made

Meet with the student to

- Explain the nature of the allegation
- Review the procedures for academic misconduct with the student
- Outline the sanctions being considered
- Inform the student of their right to appeal
- Provide the student an opportunity to respond or provide additional materials

After the meeting

- Request any additional information needed
- Make a determination and impose appropriate sanctions
- Report the outcome to the student, instructor and the Registrar

Level 1 Misconduct

Level One Academic Misconduct involves misconduct that is not extensive, stems from a misunderstanding or incomplete understanding of citation practices, and/or occurs on a minor portion of an assignment.

Examples of Level One Misconduct include:

- Failing to cite or give proper acknowledgment to textual, visual or any other sources in a **small** section of an assignment. Examples might include:
 - A short quotation or paraphrase (no more than 1-2 sentences) without direct citation in the text
 - Misplacing citation information, where sources are included in the references but not cited appropriately in the text, or where citations are placed at the end of a paragraph rather than immediately following a direct quotation or paraphrase
 - a single image without formal attribution
- Asking another person to make substantial corrections or alterations to improve an assignment
- Failing to acknowledge collaboration on a studio project or other homework assignment in Foundation level studies

The recommended sanctions for Level One misconduct may include

- A meeting with the Writing Centre to learn about academic integrity, source use and citation
- Resubmission of the assignment, with or without a grade reduction
- A make-up assignment
- A grade reduction for the assignment

Level 2 Misconduct

Level Two Academic Misconduct represents misconduct of a more serious nature or which affects a more significant portion of the work.

Examples of Level Two Misconduct include:

- Committing Level One misconduct for a second time
- Copying directly or paraphrasing a whole paragraph or multiple sentences of text with no direct citation (though the source may be included in the references)
- Copying visual imagery, forms, designs, concepts etc. without acknowledging the source, except in the case of demonstrably intentional appropriation
- Submitting the same work or major portions thereof to satisfy the requirements of more than one course without permission from instructors
- Receiving assistance from others, such as paid tutors, translators, editors, researchers, or others to complete an essential element in the task, without acknowledging such assistance
- Failure to acknowledge collaboration in course assignments beyond Foundation

The recommended sanctions for Level Two Academic Misconduct may include

- a meeting with the Writing Centre to learn about academic integrity, source use and citation, plus one of the following:
- A significant reduction in the grade of the assignment
 - A grade of zero on the assignment
 - A grade of zero on the assignment and a consequent reduction in the final course grade equivalent to the value of the assignment

Level 3 Misconduct

Level Three Academic Misconduct entails misconduct that affects a major or essential portion of the work.

Examples of Level Three Misconduct include:

- Committing Level Two Misconduct for a second time
- Plagiarizing major portions (more than 25%) of a written or visual assignment
- Presenting the work of another as one’s own, except in the case of demonstrably intentional appropriation
- Using a purchased writing assignment, essay or other materials
- Fabricating data, or using unethical means of collecting data
- Altering examinations or assignments for the purposes of re-grading

The normal sanction to be sought for Level Three Misconduct is a failing grade for the course. The Dean of the Faculty imposes this sanction after being alerted in writing by the instructor.

Level 4 Misconduct

Level Four Academic Misconduct represents the most serious breach of academic integrity.

Examples of Level Four Misconduct include:

- Any Level Two or Three Academic Misconduct committed after return from suspension for previous academic misconduct
- Academic misconduct constituting criminal activity (such as forging a grade form, stealing an examination from a professor or university office, or falsifying a transcript)
- Having a substitute take a class, complete an assignment, take an examination, etc.
- Taking a class, completing an assignment, or taking an examination for someone else
- In a graduate thesis, fabrication of evidence, falsification of data, quoting directly or paraphrasing without acknowledging the source, and/or presenting the ideas or technical work of another as one’s own

Sanctions for all Level Four misconduct are serious and determined by the Registrar in consultation with the Dean and VP Academic.

Further Resources



The **Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)** has multiple handouts on plagiarism for both students and faculty: owl.purdue.edu



The Council of Writing Program Administrators has produced **Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practice** that can be helpful in both designing plagiarism-proof assignments and teaching about plagiarism in the classroom: wpacouncil.org/aws/CWPA/pt/sd/news_article/272555/_PARENT/layout_details/false



The **Citation Project** is a multi-institutional research project that evaluates students’ use of sources in writing. Their work has produced numerous articles to date, as well as several useful definitions: citationproject.net/about

