9 Things You Should Already Know About Academic Misconduct

Plus...

6 Excuses That Don’t Work

And...

3 Things You Don’t Need To Worry About
NINE THINGS WE WANT YOU TO KNOW ABOUT ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

1. What is academic misconduct?
Academic misconduct is being dishonest in your academic work. More precisely, it is any action that a student knows (or should know) will lead to the improper evaluation of academic work. Academic misconduct defeats the purpose of academic work because you are pretending to know more or write better than you actually do.

2. What are the most common types of academic misconduct?
Academic misconduct covers a variety of dishonest classroom behavior. The most common violations seen in the Office of Student Conduct are plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration or teamwork with other students, exam dishonesty, and forged attendance records.

3. What is plagiarism?
Plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct in which you represent someone else’s words or ideas as your own. The basic expectation in every class is that whatever you write will be your own words, generated from your own understanding. For more information on types of plagiarism, please review the plagiarism resource provided by the Office of Student Conduct.

4. What is unauthorized use of external sources?
Unauthorized sources are any sources that would lead to the improper evaluation of your knowledge about the course content. Unauthorized sources can include obtaining assignments, papers, or exams from other students or third party sources such as the internet and using those sources to complete course assignments or exams.

5. What is tendering of information?
Students may not give or sell their work to another person who plans to submit it as his or her own. This includes giving their work to another student to be copied, giving someone answers to exam questions during the exam, taking an exam and discussing its contents with students who will be taking the same exam, or giving or selling a term paper to another student.
6. Can I use sites like Study Blue or Course Hero?
Yes and no. Sites such as these are intended for students to organize their study materials. If you are uploading information that has been worded into your own expression and understanding, then this is ok. Sites such as these become an issue of academic misconduct when students upload test questions, homework questions, or direct quotes from lecture as these are University owned property. Additionally, when students upload items like test questions, they are tendering information (see #5).

7. How can teamwork turn into academic misconduct?
The amount of teamwork and collaboration permitted in a course is left to the discretion of the instructor. Some instructors allow teamwork to occur in labs or on other assignments, while others expect all work to be individual and unique. It is important for students to understand the expectations of their instructors and review the syllabus for guidance on teamwork. The Office of Student Conduct considers the syllabus and faculty instructions (written or verbal) to be an extension of the disciplinary regulations, therefore unpermitted teamwork or collaboration could be viewed as a violation of the regulations.

8. How does the course and syllabus affect expectations on academic misconduct?
The syllabus and faculty instructions are considered an extension of the disciplinary regulations. Students are responsible for adhering to these expectations and following directions given by faculty and instructors related to course assignments and exams. It is important for students to review each syllabus at the beginning of the semester and use it as a reference throughout the course. Individual faculty will have different expectations for their course; it is your responsibility to know these expectations and ensure you are not violating their expectations or the disciplinary regulations.

9. What are the penalties for academic misconduct?
At ISU, violations of the academic misconduct policy can receive institutional sanctions ranging from disciplinary reprimand to educational sanctions to suspension or expulsion. Academic misconduct offenses can also receive grade penalties as determined by the instructor. Grade penalties are not restricted to the value of the assignment and may be up to an F in the course.
"I didn't mean to cheat."
"I didn’t mean to” is the most common excuse to a charge of academic misconduct. The test in an academic misconduct case is whether the student knew or should have known that his or her actions amounted to misconduct. As an ISU student you are expected to know the basic rules of academic integrity. Understanding basic academic integrity will help ensure you do not violate the academic misconduct policy.

"I just forgot to go back and add the references."
Another frequently-heard excuse is that the student included material from another source and then either "just forgot to add the references" or put them in but "accidentally turned in the wrong draft." Even if such excuses are true, students will still be held responsible for violating the academic misconduct policy. It is important that students take the time to turn in complete and accurate work.

"The material was too difficult to understand."
Sometimes, students turn to plagiarism or other forms of academic misconduct when they don’t understand the work. ISU has a variety of resources for students to avoid this including the Writing and Media Center and Tutoring. We always recommend that students talk to their faculty one on one if struggling with course content. Not understanding is never an excuse to cheat.

"The faculty said we could consult with our classmates on the work, so my assignment is the same because we studied together all semester."
Some faculty members allow you to work in groups for certain projects, however, expect that individual and unique work is turned in by each individual. If the content or writing of an assignment would lead a reasonable person to believe that the work was completed together, you will be held responsible for academic misconduct. Concerning group work, it is important to note that some faculty do not allow any group work; you should review your syllabus and course expectations before working in a group on any assignment, project, or exam.

"I didn’t know they were going to use my assignment/test to cheat."
We often hear students say that they allowed someone to look at their homework, paper, or exam to assist another student in studying or preparing for the course. This is considered a form of academic misconduct; all students should complete their own work without the assistance of unauthorized outside resources.

"I ran out of time to do the assignment."
Time management and adapting to college demands can be challenging for many students. It is not, however, an excuse for academic misconduct. It is important that students implement strategies for time management to ensure they are not relying on external sources to complete their academic work. We also often hear that the particular assignment wasn’t a priority due to competing demands. Again, it is important for college students to develop strategies that allow all assignments to be completed with high academic integrity.
THREE THINGS YOU DON’T NEED TO Worry ABOUT

"Will my other faculty find out about a charge of academic misconduct?"
A student’s disciplinary record is a confidential file. The outcome of your academic misconduct hearing is shared with those who are need to know, including the reporting faculty member, but is not shared with other faculty members.

"I’ve been charged with a level 2 violation. Will I be dismissed from Iowa State?"
Iowa State has two charge levels for violations of the disciplinary violations: level 1 and level 2. Level 2 violations cannot result in suspension or expulsion from the institution. Students are typically charged with a level 2 violation for first time offenses of the academic misconduct policy, however, could be charged with a level 1 violation if the misconduct is severe.

“Will this affect my ability to get a job after college?”
In most cases, employers are not going to ask about disciplinary regulation violations that occurred while in college. Most employers are concentrated on criminal, employment, and/or credit background checks. Students applying to work for a government agency that requires security clearance may be asked about disciplinary regulation violations. We always encourage students to be honest on their application as the employers might obtain a release from you to view your file.

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