

Academic Integrity

Statement of Purpose

Academic integrity is vital to any university community for many reasons. Students receive credit for doing assignments because they are supposed to learn from those assignments, and the vast majority do so honestly. Anyone who hands in work that is not their own, or who cheats on a test, or plagiarizes a paper, is not learning, is receiving credit dishonestly and is, in effect, stealing from other students. As a consequence, it is crucial that students do their own work. Students who use someone else's work or ideas without saying so, or who otherwise perform dishonestly in a course, are plagiarizing or cheating. In effect they are lying. Such dishonesty threatens the integrity not only of the individual student, but also of the university community as a whole.

Academic integrity lies at the heart of the values expressed in the University's mission statement and inspired by the spirit of Saint Augustine. When one comes to Villanova, one joins an academic community founded on the search for knowledge in an atmosphere of cooperation and trust. The intellectual health of the community depends on this trust and draws nourishment from the integrity and mutual respect of each of its members.

Code of Academic Integrity

The following are some rules and examples regarding academic dishonesty. Since academic dishonesty takes place whenever anyone undermines the academic integrity of the institution or attempts to gain an unfair advantage over others, this list is not and cannot be exhaustive. Academic integrity is not simply a matter of conforming to certain rules; it must be understood in terms of broader academic purposes of a Villanova education.

1. Cheating:

While taking a test or examination, students shall rely on their own mastery of the subject and not attempt to receive help in any way not explicitly approved by the instructor; for example, members shall not try to use notes, study aids, or another's work. Such cheating includes trying to give or obtain information about a test when the instructor states that it is to be confidential. It also includes trying to take someone else's exam, or trying to have someone else take one's own exam.

2. Fabrication:

Students shall not falsify, invent, or use in a deliberately misleading way any information, data, or citations in any assignments. This includes making up or changing data or results, or relying on someone else's results. It also includes citing sources that one has not actually used or consulted.

3. Assisting in or contributing to academic dishonesty:

Students shall not help or attempt to help others to commit an act of academic dishonesty. This includes situations in which one student copies from or uses another student's work; in such situations, both students are likely to be penalized equally severely. (If the assisting student is not enrolled in the particular course, the student's Dean will formulate a suitable and equivalent penalty.) Students are responsible for ensuring that their work is not used improperly by others. This does not include team projects where students are told by their instructor to work together.

4. Plagiarism:

Students shall not rely on or use someone else's words, ideas, data, or arguments without clearly acknowledging the source and extent of the reliance or use. The most common way to acknowledge this reliance or indebtedness is to use footnotes or other documentation. It is the student's responsibility to show clearly when and where they are relying on others, partly because others may want to learn from the same sources from which the original writer learned. Since this indebtedness may be of many kinds, some definitions and examples of plagiarism follow.

- a. Using someone else's words without acknowledgement. If you use someone else's words, not only must you give the source, but you must also put them within quotation marks or use some other appropriate means of indicating the words, and mathematical equations, whether or not they have been formally published.
- b. Using someone else's ideas, data, or argument without acknowledgement, even if the words are your own. If you use someone else's examples, train of thought or experimental results, you must acknowledge that use. Paraphrasing, summarizing, or rearranging someone else's words, ideas, or results does not alter your indebtedness.
- c. Acknowledging someone else in a way that will lead a reader to think your indebtedness is less than it actually was. For example, if you take a whole paragraph worth of ideas from a source, and include as your final sentence a quotation from the source, you must indicate that your indebtedness includes more than just the quotation. If you simply put a page number after the quotation, you will lead the reader to think that only the quotation comes from the source. Instead, make it clear that you have used more than the quotation.

The examples above constitute plagiarism regardless of who or what the source is. The words or ideas of a roommate or of an encyclopedia, or notes from another class, require acknowledgment just as much as the words or ideas of a scholarly book do. Introductions and notes to books also require acknowledgment.

The examples above constitute plagiarism even in cases where the student uses material accidentally or unintentionally. So, for example, a paper can be plagiarized even if you have forgotten that you used a certain source, or even if you have included material accidentally without remembering that it was taken from some other source. One of the most common problems is that students write a draft of a paper without proper documentation, intending to go back later to "put in the references." In some cases, students accidentally hand such papers in instead of the footnoted version, or they forget to put in some of the footnotes in their final draft. So the fact that the wrong draft was submitted is not a defense against an accusation of plagiarism. In general, students are held accountable for the work that they actually hand in, rather than the work that they intended to hand in. Furthermore, students are responsible for proper documentation of drafts of papers, if those drafts are submitted to the professor. In general, students are responsible for taking careful notes on sources, and for keeping track of their sources throughout the various states of the writing process. Notes must clearly identify the information you have obtained and where you acquired it, so that later you can acknowledge your indebtedness accurately. Do not look at a source without having something handy with which to take such notes.

You need not provide footnotes for items that are considered common knowledge. What constitutes common knowledge, however, varies from academic field to academic field, so you should consult with your instructor. In general, the harder it would be for someone to find the fact you have mentioned, the more you need to footnote it.

5. Multiple submissions of work:

Students shall not submit academic work for a class which has been done for another class without the prior approval of the instructor.

In any assignment, an instructor is justified in expecting that a certain kind of learning will be taking place. Handing in something done previously may preclude this learning. Consequently, if a student hands in work done elsewhere without receiving their instructor's approval, they will face penalties.

6. Unsanctioned collaboration:

When doing out-of-class projects, homework, or assignments, students must work individually unless collaboration has been expressly permitted by the instructor. Students who do collaborate without express permission of their instructor must inform the instructor of the nature of their collaboration. If the collaboration is unacceptable, the instructor will determine the appropriate consequences (which may include treating the situation as an academic integrity violation.)

Many Villanova courses involve team projects and out of class collaboration, but in other situations, out of class collaboration is forbidden. Students should assume that they are expected to do their work independently unless cooperation is specifically authorized by the teacher.

7. Other forms of dishonesty:

Acting honestly in an academic setting includes more than just being honest in one's academic assignments; students are expected to be honest in all dealings with the University. Certain kinds of dishonesty, though often associated with academic work, are of a different category than those listed above. These kinds of dishonesty include (but are not limited to) the following:

- a. Misrepresenting oneself or one's circumstances to an instructor (for example, in requesting a makeup exam or due date for an assignment, or in explaining an absence).
- b. Forging part of, or signatures on, official documents (including both university documents, such as drop- add slips or excused absence slips, and relevant outside documents, such as doctor's notes).
- c. Taking credit for work in a team-project even when the student has made little or no contribution to the work of the team.
- d. Stealing or damaging library books.
- e. Unlawfully copying computer software.

These serious offenses will be handled by the University's disciplinary procedures.

Penalties

Individual Course Penalty

In the School of Business, all faculty members assign a grade of zero to any work in violation of the Code. Students who feel the penalty is too harsh may appeal their grade through the normal University procedure for resolving grade disputes.

University Penalty

Students who violate the code of Academic Integrity are also referred to their Dean for a University penalty. Two kinds of penalty are available. A full academic integrity violation is a Class I violation. Typically a student with two Class I violations will be expelled from the school. In some cases, the Dean may choose to treat a violation of the Academic Integrity Code as a Class II violation. Class II violations are usually appropriate for less serious cases, or in cases where there are mitigating circumstances. Typically a student may receive only one Class II violation during their four year career as an undergraduate. All subsequent violations are treated as Class I violations.

Students who have committed an academic integrity violation will be expected to complete an educational program, supervised by the student's college Dean, to help the student come to a fuller understanding of academic integrity. Students who fail to complete the educational program to the satisfaction of the Dean, and within the timelines specified by the Dean, will have a hold placed on their transcript until the program has been completed.

Students who receive an academic integrity penalty may, if they believe that they have not committed an academic integrity violation, take their case to the Board of Academic Integrity. Detailed descriptions of the University's Academic Integrity Policy are available from department chairs and deans.