



WPI

Faculty Guide to Academic Integrity
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Academic Year 2022-2023

Faculty Guide to

Academic Integrity

at Worcester Polytechnic Institute

A Message from the Dean of Students Office

The Dean of Students Office, with support from the Faculty Committee on Advising and Student Life (CASL), has developed this guide to help faculty members create an atmosphere where academic integrity is recognized, and appreciated, as a core value of the institution.

The guide is intended to assist the community in understanding the subject of academic honesty and to orient faculty to WPI's specific policies and procedures. It also provides suggestions of how to minimize the occurrence of academic dishonesty in the classroom.

Topics include:

- WPI Aspirations for Academic Integrity
- Responsibilities of Faculty Members
- What Constitutes Academic Dishonesty at WPI?
- What If I Suspect Academic Dishonesty?
- Conduct Records
- Facts and Myths about Academic Dishonesty at WPI
- Suggestions to Discourage Academic Dishonesty

The Dean of Students Office welcomes comments and suggestions from faculty on ways to enhance this guide and/or make the inquiry process as easy as possible. Please feel free to contact us at 508-831-5201 or dean-of-students@wpi.edu.

Our Aspirations for Academic Integrity at WPI

Academic integrity is a fundamental principle of learning and a necessary foundation for all academic institutions, particularly those dedicated to independent project-based education, such as WPI. Students who engage in academic dishonesty lose the opportunity to use the material they are credited with knowing, cheat their classmates out of deserved rewards and recognition, and demean the degree that WPI awards. It is, therefore, imperative that a concerted effort be made to maintain high standards of integrity, both to protect the value of the educational process in which we are engaged and to maintain the credibility of the institution and graduates.

Responsibilities of Faculty Members

Faculty members should outline their policies concerning evaluation procedures and their expectations pertaining to academic integrity in the class syllabus, at the beginning of each course and frequently thereafter. Because of the differences in disciplines and the type of work involved, faculty interpretation regarding what constitutes academic dishonesty may vary across campus. Since project-based education places a strong emphasis on group work, faculty members should be particularly attentive to the distinction between group work and individual performance expectations. Faculty members are responsible for knowing and understanding WPI's policy and procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty, and are encouraged to implement measures designed to minimize or prevent academic dishonesty.



What Constitutes Academic Dishonesty at WPI

Individual integrity is vital to the academic environment, as education involves the search for and acquisition of knowledge and understanding. Evaluation of each student's level of knowledge and understanding is an essential part of the teaching process, and requires tangible measures such as reports, examinations and homework. Any act that interferes with the process of evaluation by misrepresenting the work being evaluated (or the resulting evaluation) and the student's actual state of knowledge is an act of academic dishonesty.

The following acts provide a broad overview, but not an all-encompassing definition, of what constitutes a violation of academic integrity.

Cheating: Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Using and submitting purchased papers
- Using unauthorized materials or sources of information, such as a cheat sheet, preprogrammed calculator, phone, illegally posted course materials (i.e. material from sites such as Course Hero, Chegg, etc.)
- Copying another student's academic work
- Unauthorized communication during an examination.
- Submitting the same paper for more than one course without explicit permission from the instructor(s)

Fabrication: Falsification, misrepresentation, or the invention of any information, data, or citation in an academic exercise.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Inventing or changing laboratory data and/or research
- Altering grades or other official records
- Citing a source in a bibliography that was not used
- Changing exam solutions after the fact

Facilitation: Helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of academic dishonesty.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Sharing test questions or answers from an exam, homework or lab with another student
- Doing any academic work for another student, such as homework or tests
- Allowing another student to copy a solution to a homework problem, exam or lab
- Making available previously used or submitted academic work to an individual who intends to resubmit the work for credit
- Uploading any WPI course material without the written permission of the faculty member (i.e. CourseHero, Chegg, etc.)
- Assisting in any act of academic dishonesty of another student

Plagiarism: Using as one's own the words, ideas, data, code, or other original academic material of another without providing proper citation or attribution.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Misrepresenting the work of another as one's own
- Inaccurately or inadequately citing sources
- Paraphrasing (using the ideas of others in your own words) without citation

What If I Suspect Academic Dishonesty in Coursework?

The WPI faculty and administration have developed a set of procedures (identified below) designed to ensure consistent (and fair) treatment of undergraduate or graduate students suspected of academic dishonesty. Faculty are encouraged to contact the Dean of Students Office (x5201) with any questions or concerns about the process.

1. Faculty should report to the department head any suspected act of academic dishonesty.
2. The department head will review cases referred to him/her to determine if academic dishonesty may have occurred.
3. Faculty must allow the student to continue in the course without prejudice, pending resolution of the case.
4. The department head or faculty member must check with the Dean of Students Office to determine if the student has any record of prior offenses involving academic dishonesty.
5. The faculty member will meet with the student involved after completing step #4. If the academic dishonesty is admitted and is the first violation of that nature, the faculty member may resolve the complaint using the Departmental Agreement Form template, provided the academic penalty is accepted in writing by the student. The maximum penalty that can be applied at the department level by the faculty member is failure of a course or a project without credit.

In all cases, a signed Departmental Agreement Form on the matter, including the action taken, will be sent to the Dean of Students Office for record keeping.

6. Faculty and/or students may request that a case be heard by the Campus Hearing Board (CHB) in lieu of a Departmental Agreement Form, even if the student accepts responsibility. The CHB may impose any sanction, up to and including expulsion, for an act of academic dishonesty.
7. For the second and subsequent violations, the case must be submitted to the CHB for resolution. For any case before the CHB, a member of the Dean of Students Staff will meet with the faculty to discuss the hearing process.
8. The CHB shall hear the allegations following standard procedures for conduct hearings established by WPI. The CHB may impose conduct sanctions and may recommend the loss of credit or grade for the course or project; they may not stipulate a grade or credit requirement. If a student is found not responsible on a complaint of academic dishonesty, he/she may not be failed or penalized by the faculty member on the grounds of dishonesty. Instead, the instructor shall assign a grade based on his/her assessment of the student's mastery of the material being evaluated.
9. Student conduct records are maintained by the Dean of Students Office.

Conduct Records

Conduct Records are maintained by the Dean of Students Office, and may be shared both internally (e.g., GEO, honor societies) as appropriate without the student's permission to determine if the student has any record of prior offenses involving academic dishonesty.

Conduct records may also be shared externally (e.g., transfer applications, prospective employers, law school) in accordance with applicable state and federal law and regulations.

A student's conduct record does not preclude a student from participating in co-curricular or WPI-affiliated events, academic opportunities at WPI or another institution, or employment opportunities at WPI or outside of WPI, unless the sanction(s) imposed prohibits these activities at WPI and the sanction has not yet been completed.

In keeping with the Student Code of Conduct:

- (a) For cases where a student (1) has not completed the sanction(s) or (2) has been suspended or expelled for disciplinary reasons, the student conduct record is retained by the Dean of Students indefinitely.
- (b) For all other cases, the Dean of Students Office retains the student conduct record and will only report a student's conduct record with the student's permission and in accordance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations for two (2) years following student's date of graduation, transfer, or withdrawal from WPI. Students are expected to be honest when answering questions about their conduct record. The Dean of Students Office may report the following information upon request and with the student's permission: date of the violations(s), conduct violations, sanctions imposed and the status of the sanctions. After two (2) years, the Dean of Students Office will only report that the student does not have a conduct record from WPI on file.

A student's academic transcript does not include the existence, or outcome of, a student conduct proceeding.

For additional information on reporting of student conduct records, please contact the Dean of Students Office

Facts and Myths about Academic Dishonesty

***Myth:** Students never get punished for academic dishonesty by the administration or the Campus Hearing Board (CHB), so why should I bother wasting my time by reporting academic dishonesty?*

Fact: WPI takes the academic integrity of its students very seriously, and all cases of academic dishonesty are rigorously adjudicated. Cheating is the most commonly reported violation, followed by plagiarism and facilitation.

***Myth:** Unless a faculty member catches a student in the act of cheating, there is no way to prove that the student cheated, so I should not pursue the case.*

Fact: The standard used in campus conduct hearings is “preponderance of the evidence,” meaning more likely than not. Also, hearsay and circumstantial evidence are allowed to be considered by the CHB. (An example of circumstantial evidence: a faculty member presents to the board that it would be impossible for two students to do the same work on an assignment without cheating.) Lastly, while a conversation with a student about academic dishonesty may not result in a finding of ‘Responsible’, it still provides an educational and reflective moment for that student, showcasing our model of educational discipline.

***Myth:** As a faculty member, I have the freedom to lower a student’s grade or to give an “NR” on an assignment (or an “F” for a graduate student) if I believe the student has committed academic dishonesty.*

Fact: Faculty may impose punitive action only if the student has admitted responsibility and has agreed to the professor’s sanction. The maximum penalty that can be applied by the faculty member is dismissal from a course or a project without credit if the student agrees to the academic penalty and signs the Departmental Agreement Form. If a student has a previous record or if the student claims innocence, the case must be referred to the CHB. If the CHB finds the student responsible, it can recommend a grade action to the professor, but the professor makes the final decision about the grade. The CHB has a greater range of sanctions, up to and including expulsion from WPI.

***Myth:** If a student admits to academic dishonesty and accepts an agreed upon sanction, I have the option to retain all records for the case without reporting the case to anyone other than my department head.*

Fact: All cases must be reported in writing, via the Departmental Agreement Form, to the Dean of Students Office citing the student’s name, student ID number, facts of the case, and sanction imposed. The student and faculty member must sign the Department Agreement Form before it is sent. This is the only way that the Dean of Students Office can accurately report to another faculty member if a student has a previous record and ensure that a student does not have multiple violations in different courses that go unreported.

***Myth:** International students will be deported if they are found responsible of academic dishonesty.*

Fact: Academic violations are not reported to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for action against an international student. If a student is in the United States on a visa and is suspended or expelled, the university must report that the student is no longer registered as a full-time student. Unless that student is accepted and enrolled as a full-time student at another institution, the ICE may begin the deportation process because the student is no longer “in status.”

***Myth:** Students found responsible of academic dishonesty are always suspended from the university.*

Fact: WPI does not subscribe to an automatic sanction for violation of its Academic Honesty Policy. Rather, each violation is reviewed individually, and sanctioning takes into consideration the unique situation surrounding the incident. Conduct sanctions may range from a “0” for the assignment up to an “NR” or failing grade for the course. In cases that go before the Campus Hearing Board (CHB), the CHB has broad discretion to impose any sanction, up to and including Disciplinary Suspension or Expulsion.

Suggestions for Faculty and Students for Remote or Hybrid Classes

Faculty Suggestions	Student Suggestions
Have canvas quizzes/exams be more difficult, yet make them open note/open book. Students will need to know the material if they only have a certain allotted time.	Learn the material, so that during a timed test/quiz, you don't have to go searching through a book for the correct answer or formula. Make sure you study/start projects in advance so you can ask for help.
Clearly explain expectations on the first day of class and on any test/quiz days. Identify exact parameters of what is allowed (i.e. notes, calculators, working with a partner, etc).	Be aware that each professor may have different expectations of what is permitted in their specific class. Rule #1: Ask <u>before</u> you do so!
Talk about the consequences of academic dishonesty for your course (0 grade on assignment, NR entire course, etc.).	Understanding that knowing the material is more important than getting an A and cheating your way to the top.
Create mock quizzes or exams to allow students to understand the format of the exam or quiz.	Use all your resources before exam day (office hours, practice problems) so you are prepared. Attend MASH sessions, one-on-one tutoring through the Academic Resource Center, or the Writing Center to get coursework assistance.
Stay consistent with the typical class workload, whether in-class learning or Remote/Hybrid. Don't assume that students have "more time", due to classes/learning occurring via Zoom.	If you have an unexpected issue that impacts your ability to complete an assignment or exam, contact your professor to explain the situation. Your faculty may be able to offer scheduling flexibility if they have advance notice...yet don't rely on this.
As an alternative to Honorlock or other exam monitoring systems, during online exams that are closed book, require students to be on zoom with their camera and mic on so that TA's can monitor. Students can turn their volume off, so they do not hear any distractions, but keep their mic on so the TA/faculty member can see each student and their testing environment.	Don't be hesitant to ask your faculty about using Honorlock or other software and how to leverage the software for your academic benefit.
Altering exams and quizzes from past years is a good way to make sure the students can formulate their own solutions to problems without using past exams to cheat.	While it is good to have someone else read your papers, don't share your homework, exams, or papers. If you are permitted to work with someone else on an assignment, make sure everyone's names are on the assignment.
Use strategies, such as different colored exams, or reposition questions on different versions of exams to lessen the risk of academic dishonesty.	Understand that your faculty will disseminate different exams/quizzes to students....so know your material!