

## Plagiarism and Cheating

“Students need to find the courage within themselves to resist peer pressure to cheat, to play instead of study, or to otherwise take the easy way out. Faculty members have the duty to create awareness about, monitor and enforce academic integrity, an often difficult and onerous task. Most importantly, however, educators must promote academic integrity by setting the tone from the top and leading by example”. Jeanette Teh, Assistant Professor of Business Administration at American University in Dubai

Part of creating awareness at UNB is to provide a links in your syllabi to the Academic Offences Policy, and call attention to it in class (<http://go.unb.ca/tlsPb0XX5>).

A syllabus template that contains this and other useful information is available for your use on one of the right sidebar buttons of this site.

For details on the process for addressing academic offences, see Academic Offences and AO FAQs (scroll down to Academic Offences (<http://unbtls.ca/teachingtips/thingsfacultyoughttoknow.html>)).

Some universities have an academic integrity honour code. Others encourage the development of such codes at the faculty or department level, and some encourage instructors to develop them at the course level. UNB does not yet have such a code. Here is an example of an institutional [Academic Honor Code](#) for State University of New York, Potsdam:

(<https://www.potsdam.edu/studentlife/studentconduct/honorcode>)

Part of building academic integrity into the institutional culture would be to use public university events, especially orientation and opening ceremonies, to emphasize it. (Kenny)

### Examples of Plagiarism on Assignments

- Buying papers online
- Submitting a student’s paper from a previous year
- Copying and pasting directly from electronic sources without attribution

### Examples of Cheating on Tests and Exams

(from Roy, 2014)

- While coming to front to ask question of instructor, students look at other students’ papers.
- Notes written on the back of water bottle labels—the original label is replaced with one with crib notes on the white back side of the label.
- Crib notes written on a leg or arm, just under a sleeve or skirt; or on the inside of calculator cover.

- Coordinated washroom visits to compare notes or to get crib notes.
- Texting during tests/exams. (Thomas and Sassi)
- Having someone impersonate the student and write the exam.

## How to Detect Plagiarism

(Schiller)

- Look for logical clues: lack of citations, datedness, logical inconsistencies, disjointed flow, change in writing style from one section to the next, overly sophisticated language, things that apply to the US without any explanatory prose (or lack of reference to context generally), similarity to papers submitted in previous course serials or for this current assignment.
- Check online papers for sale on the topic.
- Copy blocks of suspect text into Google searches. Then try [Grammarly Plagiarism Checker](#) for free, ([http://www.grammarly.com/?q=plagiarism&utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=cpc&utm\\_campaign=Search&utm\\_content=28542640686&utm\\_term=plagiarism&matchtype=p&placement=&network=g&gclid=CJiUkoXk9L0CFUpnOgodt0QAiQ](http://www.grammarly.com/?q=plagiarism&utm_source=google&utm_medium=cpc&utm_campaign=Search&utm_content=28542640686&utm_term=plagiarism&matchtype=p&placement=&network=g&gclid=CJiUkoXk9L0CFUpnOgodt0QAiQ)) or try low cost, commercially available products like [www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org) or Turnitin.

## How to Prevent Plagiarism

- Keep electronic copies of student work from year to year to deter cheating by students submitting assignments from previous years (Hall).
- Encourage students to submit drafts to online plagiarism software, get a report, then revise before submission (Walker).
- Have students select assignment topics from a very specific list, one that doesn't have topics covered by paper mills (Schiller, till next).
- Vary topics from semester to semester.
- Have assignment submission in stages. One of the early stages is to submit an annotated bibliography of sources. Give marks for each stage.
- Require specific numbers of types of sources (e.g., 2 original sources, 3 books, 2 Web articles from professional journals specific to the discipline).
- Require students to submit copies of the sources (or at least the first page).
- Require sources to be recent (last 2-3 years for example) where appropriate to the discipline/topic.
- On the assignment due date, have students write an in-class essay about what they learned, which sources were most helpful and why/how; time management issues they encountered,

things they struggled with, outside help that was sought and given. An alternative is to have them keep and submit an assignment journal that records and reflects on these things.

- Take time during syllabus review to discuss academic scholarship, intellectual property and copyright. Refer students to calendar (Christensen-Hughes, till next).
- Educate students on plagiarism, paraphrasing, proper referencing. Take them through the process and provide examples.
- Teach students how to assess the validity and reliability of Web-based sources. Let them know you are familiar with essay mills. Critique a few examples from one for quality and citation format.
- Provide detailed assessment criteria.
- Provide a broad and diverse range of resource materials accessible to all.
- Design assignments to focus on the process as well as the product. Ensure assignments are interesting and related to course outcomes.
- Have students publish their work online for the class to see and comment on, creating a “learning community” for the class.
- Have students demonstrate how peer feedback has been incorporated. Change assignments from year to year.
- Be flexible and supportive to students as they face academic pressures from projects and deadlines.

### How to Prevent Cheating

- You need to watch students during exam invigilation—don’t just sit at front and do other work (Roy).
- Design tests and exams to minimize cheating (Christensen Hughes, till next).
- Change exam formats and questions frequently.
- Have different versions of the same exam (e.g., questions in different order). If two exams are being written in the same room, alternate the seating. Provide scrap paper for calculations.
- (The usual—maintain order, ensure proper proctoring, be clear about what students can and cannot bring to the test or exam, if space is available, have students sit in every other seat. Check ID cards.)
- Use online test question selection and order randomization and answer option randomizing features in Desire2Learn.

## Why Students Plagiarize and Cheat

According to the CBC DocZone production *Faking the Grade*, those most likely to cheat are poor performing and high achieving students: the former to stay in the game, the latter to get the perks that come with success. In the US, Business students cheat most. Engineering and Communications & Journalism students are also near the top.

### Academic Offences by Institution, 2011-2012, CBC Special Report

Institution	Offence type(s)	# of cases	% of Student pop.	Comments
UNB	plagiarism	33	0.3%	
UPEI	plagiarism	19	0.5%	
Dalhousie	plagiarism, cheating	235	1.3%	No suspensions
Memorial	plagiarism, cheating	26	0.1%	
Guelph	plagiarism, cheating	298	1.3%	
McGill	plagiarism	100	0.3%	13 suspensions
St. Mary's	plagiarism, cheating	108	1.5%	5 suspensions, 1 expulsion

As you can see from the table above, reported plagiarism and cheating cases do not exactly represent a crisis of epidemic proportions. The actual incidence of plagiarism, according to several studies, ranges from 38-80% for undergraduates (Jones, 2011). And according to a survey cited by CBC, 18% of Canadian university undergraduates admitted to cheating on a test and 8% helped someone do so.

Students often think that instructors will not put in the effort to determine if something is plagiarized. (Shiller, 1060).

Often, students plagiarize because of life pressures—the need to work while bearing family responsibilities, so plagiarism is a way to save time; they may be overwhelmed by the volume of academic work and not be sure of the tasks required in assignments. Students in these instances don't see plagiarism as dishonesty, but simply an action that serves a purpose. They need to be shown otherwise (Kenny).

## Reasons Students Engage in Academic Dishonesty

<i>Why Do Students Engage in Academic Dishonesty—Cheating and Internet Plagiarism?</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Grades—want or need to make better grades	92
Procrastination	83
Too busy, not enough time to complete assignment or study for test	75
Lack of understanding or unable to comprehend information	58
No interest in the subject or assignment	50
Workload/schedule: too many classes	33
Everyone does it and get away with it	25
No big deal; does not matter to professor	17
Peer pressure	17

(Jones, 144)

“Cheating academically is very bad mainly because you are cheating others, the degree provided to any student is a badge of excellence in his/her field, and presenting that badge to others for future means of getting work is a lie if it is gained through way of even one cheat, I personally would not like to go to a doctor who has cheated on his final. As long as you cheat or have cheated even a handful of times, one will spend a life of cheating others just by presenting the degree for monetary gain, it will be insincere and is surely a slippery slope that the person will soon suffer.” Yazan Al Kawadri, a student at the American University in Dubai.

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