

## Academic Integrity

There are a lot of reasons to attend university, but one of the most important is the opportunity to **further your own academic and personal growth**. Queen's University is committed to the "dissemination and advancement of knowledge, personal and professional development, and good citizenship" in its scholarly community (Queen's [Code of Conduct](#), p. 3).

In this module, you'll find information about

- what "academic integrity" means,
- why it matters,
- what counts as academic dishonesty, and
- how we can help you maintain your academic integrity while you're at Queen's.

### What is academic integrity?

Academic Integrity means **the practice of honest and responsible scholarship**. It's a key part of everything we do at university.



Academic Integrity consists of the "fundamental values of **honesty, trust, fairness, respect** and **responsibility**," which are "central to the building, nurturing, and sustaining of an academic community" (see the [Centre for Academic Integrity](#)).

It is **your responsibility** to adhere to the principles of academic integrity.

You probably have questions. Maybe you've heard of "plagiarism," but aren't sure *exactly* what it means. And then—how do you avoid committing it? Is plagiarism the only way you can violate academic integrity? And why does it all matter so much, anyway?

NEXT: [Why does academic integrity matter?](#)

For more information on policies and procedures specific to your faculty or school, click [here](#).

## Why does it matter?

Academic integrity matters because **it's what makes your degree worth something**. Studying at Queen's means you are part of a scholarly community, one in which all members (students and faculty alike) are held in mutual respect. Academic Integrity also supports the reputation of Queen's University; universities, and the degrees they confer, are only as strong as their reputations.

**Violating academic integrity can have [serious consequences](#)**, from failing a course to being expelled from Queen's. Keep the big picture in mind: you're paying a lot of money for the opportunity to learn and develop your knowledge and yourself.

Cheating affects those around you, but, most of all, it affects *you*—ultimately, you are cheating yourself.

Maryellen Weimer, professor emerita at Pennsylvania State University, outlines [some of the consequences of cheating](#) in a blog post on the [Teaching Professor Blog](#). Paraphrased from [that blog post](#), here are **six reasons not to cheat**:

### (1) Knowledge is cumulative.

- What you learn later will draw on what you're learning now. Cheating now means you'll have to do twice the work later to catch up.

### (2) Train your brain.

- When you cheat, you don't learn. You won't develop your writing, critical thinking, and problem solving. These critically important skills are ones that employers will assume you have upon graduation.

### (3) Once a cheater...

- Research shows that cheating is almost never a one-time thing. In fact, you might get used to cheating and do it after you leave Queen's (e.g., at work, on your taxes, with unethical business practices, in your personal life).

### (4) It's about integrity.

- It doesn't feel good when people are dishonest with you. Think about the kind of person you want to be: it probably isn't someone who cheats.

### (5) You've got this.

- You can achieve your goals without cheating! Successful university students are those who adopt positive and tested approaches to studying, not necessarily those with the most innate intelligence. There are resources on campus (like SASS) that can help.

### (6) Pride and self-respect from your grades.

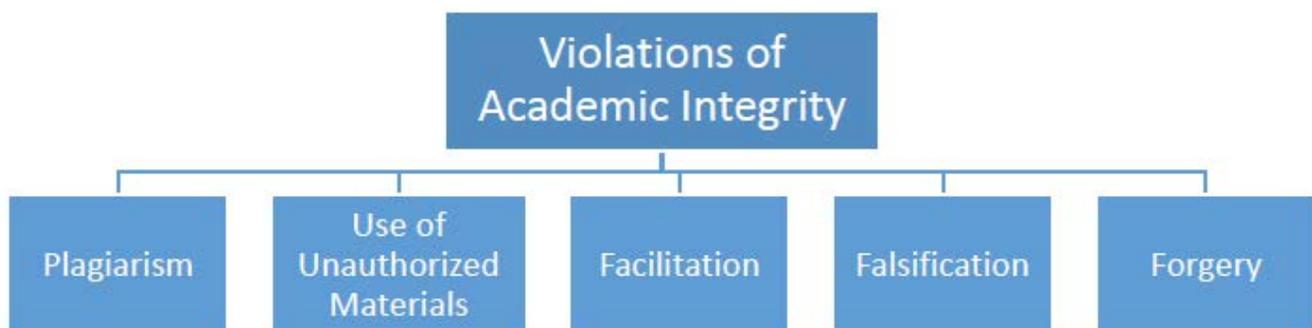
- You'll feel a sense of satisfaction and receive a self-respect boost from grades you've earned honestly.

Academic integrity is a principle that will follow you beyond any one class to graduation and into the workforce. Here's a **powerful example** of how cheating can haunt you from [the University of Ontario Institute of Technology](#) (Learning Module 1, pg. 3):

"[I]n 2013, Chris Spence was forced to resign as the director of education for the Toronto District School Board after he was caught plagiarizing parts of several opinion-editorial articles published in a Toronto newspaper.

Subsequently, he was also found to have plagiarized parts of his doctoral thesis which was completed in 1996. While no decision has been made yet regarding this allegation, Spence **risks having his degree revoked**. He now must work to restore his reputation in order to find new work. **Academic misconduct is a serious offence which may affect not only your university career, but also your professional career.**"

## Violations of Academic Integrity



According to the [Senate policy on academic integrity](#), the specific violations of academic integrity are: **plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, falsification, and forgery.**

## Plagiarism

### What is plagiarism?

- using someone else's ideas or phrasing without proper acknowledgement
- intentionally or inadvertently, representing some or all of another author's ideas as your own

### For example, it's plagiarism if you:

- copy and paste from the internet, a printed source, or other source and fail to provide appropriate acknowledgement
- copy from another student
- use direct quotations or paraphrased material in an assignment without appropriate acknowledgement
- paraphrase so closely that most of the phrasing resembles that of the original source
- submit the same piece of work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor(s).

### How to Avoid Plagiarism

Many students struggle with academic integrity simply because they do not understand what **scholarship** means: a key factor is *community*. Becoming part of a community of scholars means that you are joining an ongoing discussion. Counter to many students' expectations, it is not necessary, especially at the undergraduate level, to create new knowledge in every assignment. Instead, students are expected to build on and refer to established knowledge. Many students are tempted to cheat because, fundamentally, they don't understand the expectations: "the *more* [citations you] have, the *smarter* [you] look!" ([Prior, 2001](#)).

### Think of it this way:

**It's not that you *have to* cite sources, it's that you *get to* cite them.**

You can **avoid plagiarism** if you:

- follow and understand standard documentation formats (e.g., [MLA](#), [APA](#), [Chicago](#)),
- learn how to [take effective notes](#) from lectures and texts,
- [plan ahead](#) to make sure you have enough time to complete your assignments on your own, and
- properly [integrate sources with your own insights](#), so that it is clear which sources you consulted in order to support and supplement your own discussion.

For more on how to avoid plagiarism in your writing assignments, see our [handout on Avoiding Plagiarism](#).

**For students with English as an Additional Language:** Many EAL students struggle to meet their instructors' expectations for academic writing when they are learning not only the subject matter, but also the English language. It isn't always clear how to write in your own words. See [here for more information](#) on academic integrity, plagiarism, and instructors' expectations.

## Use of Unauthorized Materials

### What does it mean to use unauthorized materials?

- possessing or using unauthorized study materials or aids during a test,
- copying from another student's test paper,
- using an unauthorized calculator or other aids during a test,
- removing materials from the library without authorization, or
- deliberately concealing library materials.

This is the "classic" form of cheating that you have probably seen in movies or in stock photography. Leaning over to copy an answer from another student's paper, writing the formulae on your arm, using your phone to look something up, smuggling notes into an exam—these are all considered violations of academic integrity.

You can **avoid use of unauthorized materials** if you:

- understand the course material and expectations (for help with this, see [how to think at university](#), the value and importance of [distributed practice](#) for learning and of [time management skills](#))
- make sure you're prepared for the exam (e.g., [understanding the exam expectations](#), effective [study techniques](#))

## Facilitation

### What is facilitation?

Facilitation refers to deliberately enabling another person's breach of academic integrity. For example,

- knowingly allowing your essay or assignment to be copied by someone else,
- buying term papers or assignments and submitting them as your own, or
- selling term papers or assignments.

Buying and selling academic work are more explicit examples of facilitation, ones that most students would identify as breaches of academic integrity. However, allowing a friend to copy your assignment (in whole or in part) is also cheating. If either of you is caught, you could *both* face consequences.

You can avoid **facilitation** if you:

- understand your professor's expectations for all assignments,
- [make sure you have enough time](#) to complete assignments, and
- [collaborate \(e.g., on group work\) with integrity](#).

### Inappropriate Collaboration

Is it all right to work together on an assignment? Never guess or assume, no matter what "everyone else" is doing—ask your professor to be sure!

"Collaboration" includes group work (e.g., on a lab or assignment), jointly working on homework problems, having a friend help you rewrite a paper—even checking homework answers prior to submission. In all these cases, it is **your responsibility** to ensure that the work you submit is **the result of your own effort**—if the work has your name on it, you are responsible for all of it.

So when is it *not okay* to collaborate? If "[two or more students submit identical or nearly identical work, claiming it is their own](#)," it's inappropriate—and it's cheating. More broadly, it's cheating if students "[work together or share information without specific instructions \[to do so\] by the professor](#)"—on *any* assignment or task that will be submitted for marks!

For more information, see "[Collaborating with Integrity](#)."

## Falsification

### What is falsification?

You commit an act of falsification when you misrepresent yourself, your work, or your relationship to Queen's. For example, you cheat by falsification if you:

- create or alter a transcript or other official document,
- impersonate someone in an exam or test, or
- falsify or fabricate research data.

While most students violate academic integrity inadvertently, it is difficult to commit falsification by accident. This category of academic dishonesty takes purposeful effort.

You can **avoid falsification** if you:

- just don't do it! There's always another way.
- plan ahead (see [time management in grad school](#), [goal setting](#), [planning your assignments](#), and [prioritizing your time](#))
- keep lines of communication open with your professor or supervisor and discuss challenges.

## Forgery

### What is forgery?

Forgery is falsification taken to the extreme: it is not the altering of official documents, but the submission of documents which are entirely fraudulent (e.g., medical notes, transcripts, etc.).

It is extremely unlikely that you could commit forgery by accident; just as with falsification, this category of academic dishonesty takes purposeful effort. Forgery is a transparently deliberate act of cheating.

You can **avoid forgery** if you:

- just don't do it! There's always another way.
- plan ahead (see [time management in grad school](#), [goal setting](#), [planning your assignments](#), and

[prioritizing your time](#))

- keep lines of communication open with your professor or supervisor and discuss challenges.

## How SASS Can Help

It can be challenging to maintain your GPA, balance the demands of a full course load, keep up with coursework, submit assignments on time, and still have time to manage the rest of your life.

We get it. Student Academic Success Services is here to help make sure that students have the skills in place to avoid violations of academic integrity. In fact, [two of the most common reasons](#) why students violate academic integrity are poor time management and lack of knowledge, both of which can be overcome with a little effort. You can do it and we can help!

We offer a variety of resources, from workshops to online resources to one-on-one consultations.

## Academic Integrity Workshops

Throughout the term, SASS [offers workshops](#) on issues related to the effective practice of academic integrity. For example, we have workshops on

- **effective time management** that can help you avoid time-crunches that might tempt you to cut corners;
- **note-taking skills** that can help to ensure that you've accurately recorded source material and the sources from which you've borrowed;
- the [practice of academic integrity in student writing](#).

## SASS Handouts and Resources

Looking for resources online you can read right now? We have

- a module on how to [Avoid Plagiarism in Academic Writing](#);
- a comprehensive presentation called [Understanding Academic Integrity in Your Writing](#) (video; includes practice questions);
- a number of tools for [Planning Assignments](#), [Managing Your Time at University](#), and [Preparing For Exams](#).

### 1:1 Writing & Learning Consultations

Our staff of professional **writing consultants** and **learning strategists** can help you learn to

- integrate sources into your work
- properly paraphrase, quote, and use citations
- manage your time to avoid the temptation to take short cuts
- and more!

[Book an appointment online](#) to find out how we can support your writing and learning.

### Additional Sources of Information

There are number of useful resources from other post-secondary institutions that address academic integrity. The following resources can help you further develop your understanding of and adherence to the principles of academic integrity.

- [“How to recognize plagiarism” \(Indiana University\)](#) includes detailed examples with explanations and practice tests
- [AI Tutorial for First Year Students \(University of Waterloo\)](#) includes definitions, values, scenarios, and a “how to” section
- [“You quote it, you note it!” \(Acadia University\)](#) is a fun 10-minute animated tutorial (requires Flash)
- [SPARK: Academic Integrity for Students](#) is a module that includes case studies and a self-test
- A funny video made by University of Alberta students called [Acceptable/Unacceptable](#)

### Video: Academic Integrity at Queen’s University

[Who’s with you in your writing?](#) is a video presentation created by some of the writing experts at [Student Academic Success Services](#). It covers topics such as what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid it, how sources can enhance your argument(s), how to work with sources, and how to quote with accuracy and integrity. [32:32 in length]

## Frequently Asked Questions

Students often have specific questions about what is considered an academic integrity issue and what is not. Some of these questions are below (adapted from the [Academic Integrity @ Queen's website](#)):

### **Is it true that if I paraphrase or slightly alter the wording from a source, I do not have to give credit?**

This is not true. If you take anyone's ideas or words and present them as your own argument or use them to support your argument, you must give appropriate credit. If you are unsure how to do so, [click here for citation resources](#) or ask your instructor for help.

### **Is it true that as long as I provide a citation when I copy something, I am not plagiarizing?**

Providing a citation is a good start, but you must add quotation marks if you are copying someone's idea word for word.

### **Am I allowed to re-submit previous assignments since I own them?**

Although this may seem logical, it is prohibited and an example of "self-plagiarism." If you truly feel that your previous work is related to your current assignment or project, talk to your instructor(s) to see if it can be re-submitted or revised for an alternate submission.

### **Since my instructor did not ask for my sources, do I need to include any?**

Just because your instructor did not ask for them, it is not a legitimate excuse to avoid giving proper credit. You may still be found to have committed plagiarism if you don't. Further, it is good practice to include your sources in order to acknowledge where your ideas come from.

### **Is it okay if I forgot or didn't know that I was plagiarizing/breaching other aspects of academic integrity?**

It is your responsibility to understand what conduct is not permitted at the University. "Not knowing" is not an excuse, so you should familiarize yourself with the forms of academic dishonesty and school policies, or ask your instructor if you are still unclear.

### **Is sharing information with friends on an assignment all right?**

There is a distinction between [inappropriate collaboration and ethical group work](#). If the work is meant to be independent, you are breaching academic integrity by discussing answers with others. If your instructor does not address the issue, it is your responsibility to find out, rather than assume that it is

collaborative group work.

**Is it true that submitting papers that I buy online is not plagiarizing, since they are available?**

This is definitely not true. The act of purchasing a paper to submit is cheating.

**Will I be at a disadvantage if everyone cheats except for me?**

If others are earning their marks and even degrees by cheating their way through, it won't be long before they get caught. Furthermore, they will not develop the necessary skills for life and work after university. Holding yourself to high standards of academic integrity in learning will pay off in the future and make you proud of a degree that you worked hard to get.

**Have a question about academic integrity? [Email us!](#) Or [book a 1:1 appointment](#) with a learning strategist or a professional writing consultant.**