

Item: Recommendations With Respect to Academic Integrity

Recommendation 1 References to academic integrity should appear in course syllabi and be mentioned frequently throughout the course in order to make students explicitly aware of what constitutes dishonest/unethical behavior, and its consequences.

Rationale: Faculty are normally expected to make clear the expectation of ethical behavior by students in courses. Although in a remote teaching environment, this expectation should be made even more clear and intentional, this recommendation applies to both in-person and on-line teaching. Highlighting expectations about academic integrity throughout a course and as part of instructions for exams and assignments reduces students' dishonest behaviour/actions. It is important that faculty make very clear what the behavioral expectations are. References to the University's Policy on Academic Integrity are common in syllabi, but it is important to explain in clear language what the policy means and the behaviors it is intended to prevent and to promote.

Context: A positive approach toward academic integrity should be used at StFX as evidence shows that faculty can reduce dishonest behavior by taking steps to increase the engagement of students in the course. More engaged students feel a sense of ownership and are more committed to their learning. Faculty should make clear at the beginning of the course, and repeatedly throughout it, that as students begin and continue their university studies they are deepening their knowledge base and their ability to think critically about what they are learning. Instructors commit to holding students to the usual high expectations for academic conduct, which is part of the StFX culture.

Dishonest behavior is not tolerated and will result in consequences, such as course failure. Types of unacceptable behavior should be pointed out. The use of specific examples by faculty is encouraged. Some common examples include

1. The use of notes on an exam when not permitted
2. Collaborating with other students, or other individuals, when not permitted
3. Consulting online resources, such as 'homework sites' like Chegg or Quizlet
4. Using another student's work as a 'guide,' or offering work as such
5. Simply Googling a question and submitting the answer as their own

Exams and other assessments should be developed knowing that students can access a great deal of 'instructor' resources online. For example, it should be assumed that all textbook test bank questions (and answers) are available to students, as are all previous exams in any course. Faculty should make themselves familiar with resources used by students to get unauthorized help.

Faculty should use the process provided under the Academic Integrity Policy (<http://www2.mystfx.ca/registrars-office/academic-integrity>) when they suspect dishonesty, both to discourage unethical behavior and support honest students.

Recommendation 2: It is recommended that a form of integrity pledge be attached to items of assessment, and to the course itself.

Rationale: There is research to support the notion that when a student is frequently reminded of the need for ethical behaviour, including as part of the assessment process. Therefore, we recommend attaching some form of an integrity pledge. These are widely used in universities. Two examples are:

All members of St. Francis Xavier University are expected to conduct themselves in an ethical manner in their academic work. It is the policy of the University that academic dishonesty in any form is not acceptable. Academic dishonesty is defined as any act, practice or behaviour that gives a student an unearned academic advantage over another or that counteracts or undermines the integrity of academic or scholarly endeavour at St. Francis Xavier University (taken from the Academic Calendar).

With this in mind, I promise that the work I submit on this exam will be entirely my own. I will not collaborate with other students or with anyone else. I will not make use of any resources not expressly permitted for this exam, including those found online. I understand that breaking this promise will have serious disciplinary consequences.

By checking here, I signify that I have read and accept this statement: __

By submitting this exam (assignment), I confirm that the work submitted is entirely my own. Beyond what is permitted by the rules of this exam (assignment), I have not collaborated with other students, sought the assistance of any other person, or used any other resources. This includes textbooks, notes (my own or others'), online resources such as homework sites or tutorial services, or any other source of information or assistance not specifically permitted by the rules of this exam. I understand that the use of any such assistance is a violation of the StFX University Policy on Academic Integrity and can carry serious penalties, including permanent dismissal from the University. I also understand that any attempt to use forbidden resources or assistance, even if unsuccessful, is a violation of the policy and carries with it the same penalties.

By checking here I signify that I have read and accept this statement: __

Faculty can adapt one of these or create their own as needed. It is not necessary that the pledge be the first thing a student sees in an assessment, and the placement probably depends on the specific type of assessment. For examinations, it could appear after the instructions, in which the rules of acceptable use of resources are usually given. It makes sense to then have students affirm their agreement with those rules. Then the exam itself can begin. For assignments, it could appear at the end, as an acknowledgement of appropriate behavior.

References:

Academic Integrity in Online Learning

<https://www.edgenuity.com/academic-integrity-in-online-learning/>

University of Calgary Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning

<https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/academic-integrity-online-learning>

