

# ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The Niagara University mission statement expresses the truth of Catholic and Vincentian traditions and is given meaning via teaching and learning activities throughout the university which foster a passion for learning, allow students to experience the vision of gospel-based education, inspire students to serve the poor and oppressed, and develop the whole person. Academic honesty – being honest and truthful in academic settings, especially in the communication and presentation of ideas – is required to experience and fulfill this mission. Academic dishonesty – being untruthful, deceptive, or dishonest in academic settings in any way – subverts the University mission, harms faculty and students, damages the reputation of the University, and diminishes public confidence in higher education.

All members of the university community share the responsibility for creating conditions that support academic integrity. In particular:

1. Students must abstain from any violations of academic integrity and set examples for each other by assuming full responsibility for their academic and personal development, including informing themselves about and following the university's academic policy;
2. Faculty members must foster a climate that is conducive to the development of student responsibility. They should provide guidance as to what constitutes violations of the Academic Integrity Policy and educate students about the ethical and educational implications of their actions. For instance, syllabi must call attention to the Academic Integrity Policy.
3. Faculty members, furthermore, have the authority and the responsibility to make the initial judgment regarding violations of academic integrity in the context of the courses that they teach. They may impose sanctions up to and including failure of a course at their own discretion in cases involving a violation of Academic Integrity policies. In cases such as alleged plagiarism, it is important that faculty members distinguish between an intentional violation of the Academic Integrity Policy and a technical error or careless work.
4. Deans of the various colleges, with the support of the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (AVPAA) or his/her designee and the chair of the Academic Integrity Board (AIB), are responsible for ensuring that their faculty, particularly new faculty and part-time faculty, are aware of the university's Academic Integrity Policy and of their responsibilities in this regard, to maintain the integrity of the academic review process.

These efforts are supported by detailed guidelines and procedures that are designed to deal with violations, to maintain the integrity of the institution and to ensure that university standards are upheld.

## Violations of Academic Integrity

Violations of academic integrity include but are not limited to the following categories:

This policy applies to all courses, program requirements, and learning contexts in which academic credit is offered, including experiential and service-learning courses, study abroad programs, internships, student teaching and the like. If an instructor finds that a student has violated the Academic Integrity Policy, the appropriate initial sanction is at the instructor's discretion ( see section D1). Actions taken by the instructor do not preclude the college or the university from taking further action, including dismissal from the university. Conduct that is punishable

under the Academic Integrity Policy could also result in criminal or civil prosecution.

## Cheating

Cheating is any action that violates university expectations or instructor's guidelines for the preparation and submission of assignments. This includes but is not limited to

- unauthorized access to examination materials prior to the examination itself, use or possession of unauthorized materials during the examination or quiz;
- having someone take an examination in one's place;
- copying from another student;
- unauthorized assistance to another student; or
- acceptance of such assistance.

## Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a major form of academic dishonesty involving the presentation of the work of another as one's own. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following:

1. The direct copying of any source, such as written and verbal material, computer files, audio disks, video programs or musical scores, whether published or unpublished, in whole or part, without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's.
2. Copying of any source in whole or part without proper acknowledgement.
3. Submitting as one's own work a report, examination paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment that has been prepared by someone else. This includes research papers purchased from any other person or agency.
4. The paraphrasing of another's work or ideas without proper acknowledgement.

## Fabrication, Falsification or Sabotage of Research Data

Fabrication, falsification or sabotage of research data is any action that misrepresents, willfully distorts or alters the process and results of scholarly investigation. This includes but is not limited to

- making up or fabricating data as part of a laboratory, fieldwork or other scholarly investigation;
- knowingly distorting, altering or falsifying the data gained by such an investigation;
- stealing or using without the consent of the instructor data acquired by another student;
- representing the research conclusions of another as one's own; and
- undermining or sabotaging the research investigations of another person.

## Destruction or Misuse of the University's Academic Resources

Destruction or misuse of the university's academic resources includes but is not limited to

- unauthorized access to or use of university resources including equipment and materials;

- stealing, destroying or deliberately damaging library materials;
- preventing, in an unauthorized manner, others' access to university equipment, materials or resources;
- using university equipment, materials or resources to destroy, damage or steal the work of other students or scholars.

Given the importance of computers to the academic functioning of the university, computer usage is of particular concern under this general heading. Violations of this nature may also fall under the Code of Student Conduct and Judicial Proceedings.

## Alteration or Falsification of Academic Records

Alteration or falsification of academic records includes any action that tampers with official university records or documents. This includes but is not limited to:

- any alteration through any means whatsoever of an academic transcript, a grade or grade change card;
- unauthorized use of university documents including letterhead; and
- misrepresentation of one's academic accomplishments, awards or credentials.

Violations of this nature may also fall under the Code of Student Conduct and Judicial Proceedings.

## Academic Misconduct

Academic misconduct is any action that deliberately undermines the free exchange of ideas in the learning environment, threatens the impartial evaluation of the students by the instructor or advisor, or violates standards for ethical or professional behavior established by a course or program. This includes but is not limited to

- attempts to bribe an instructor or advisor for academic advantage;
- persistent hostile treatment of, or any act or threat of violence against, an instructor, advisor or other students; and/or
- actions or behavior that violate standards for ethical or professional behavior established by a course or program in an off-campus setting and could damage the university's relationship with community partners and affiliated institutions.

Violations of this nature may also fall under the Code of Student Conduct and Judicial Proceedings.

## Complicity

Complicity is any intentional attempt to facilitate any of the violations described above. This includes but is not limited to

- allowing another student to copy from a paper or test document;
- providing any kind of material – including one's research, data, or writing – to another student if one believes it might be misrepresented to a teacher or university official;
- providing information about or answers to test questions.

## Copyright Infringement

Copyright infringement, which is the unprivileged use of another's original work of authorship, is an offense distinct from plagiarism, although the two can overlap. Copyright infringement can occur when a large amount of a work is copied (with or without credit), if a film or song is duplicated

(digitally or otherwise), or a translation or sequel is created. Students who must sample significant quantities of a work protected by Copyright should familiarize themselves with the academic "Fair Use" defense to infringement to ensure they are engaging in privileged activity. Examples of copyright infringement could include:

- unauthorized downloading of an entire movie from the internet, even for purposes of academic criticism;
- copying an entire poem into a thesis;
- use of a photograph without permission;
- translating a protected work and publishing it online.

## Artificial intelligence

Artificial Intelligence in higher education encompasses a range of computer-based systems and technologies that exhibit capabilities typically associated with human intelligence. This includes, but is not limited to, text and image generators, machine learning algorithms, natural language processing tools, machine translation, predictive analytics, and intelligent tutoring systems. These technologies are capable of performing tasks such as generating creative content, analyzing complex data, personalizing learning experiences, and automating administrative tasks. AI in this realm is not static but continually evolving, potentially incorporating emerging technologies such as advanced neural networks, augmented reality in learning environments, and sophisticated AI-driven research tools.

At Niagara University, the use of artificial intelligence in course assignments is subject to the discretion of individual faculty members, reflecting the institution's strong commitment to academic freedom. Faculty members have the autonomy to determine whether and how AI tools and technologies can be integrated into course assignments and assessments. This approach allows for a diverse range of pedagogical strategies and acknowledges the unique requirements and learning objectives of different courses. Students must understand the specific guidelines provided by their instructors regarding the use of AI in their academic work.

In line with section two above, the policy for citing AI usage in assignments is determined by individual faculty members. Each instructor may set their own guidelines regarding how and when AI tools and technologies should be cited in student work. This approach allows faculty members to tailor citation requirements to the specific context and objectives of their courses. Students are responsible for understanding and adhering to the citation guidelines provided by their instructors, ensuring that the use of AI is transparently and appropriately acknowledged in their academic submissions.

The misuse of artificial intelligence in academic work at Niagara University is treated as a serious breach of academic integrity. Misuse can manifest in various forms, such as relying excessively on AI for creating entire assignments, failing to cite AI assistance, or using AI to bypass learning objectives. This is key: AI represents a continuum where the teaching approach and learning objectives dictate what is misuse. For instance, if a student submits an essay largely generated by an AI text tool without proper acknowledgment or beyond the scope allowed by the instructor, it would be considered a violation.