



Preventing Academic Dishonesty

Texas Tech University students, faculty, and administrators are committed to creating a university atmosphere free from academic dishonesty. All members of the university community are responsible for upholding standards of excellence and for having integrity in the work they produce. Members of the Texas Tech community should contribute to the campus environment in an ethical and honest manner.

Promoting Academic Integrity

Stress the importance of integrity to the Learning Process. Honest work builds self-esteem, knowledge, and skills. Those who violate the Academic Integrity policies undermine the quality of education we provide and devalue Texas Tech's reputation and the degrees we confer.

Highlight the Code of Student Conduct and the importance of academic honesty in class and in handouts; remind students of the Code before exams; link your website to the Code; and refer suspected violations to The Office of Student Conduct.

Discuss issues of integrity with your class, especially those relevant to the course and to students' future careers. Give criteria for the "hard choices" in your field, with examples of how ethical issues can/should be solved.

Enlist students' help in creating a climate of integrity in your class. Give students opportunities to earn your trust. Encourage them to tell you immediately if they see cheating.

Inspire, encourage, and model integrity. You don't have to threaten or scold. Positive reinforcement works better than scare tactics, and internal constraints (morals, ethics, character) are the most effective. As educators, faculty influence students' attitudes and development and can reinforce student integrity.

Set clear standards for assignments and grading, outline them in your syllabus, and discuss them in class. Tell students whether they may collaborate, and if so, how much. You may consider having a "syllabus quiz" or have students sign a "class policies agreement."

General Preventative Steps

Have students sign an honor statement on exams and papers, attesting that all work is their own and that no unfair advantage has been taken.

Provide and collect all exam materials. Inspect formula sheets and scratch paper after the exam.

Develop multiple exams by mixing up the question order, change constant numbers, and print on different colored paper.

Prohibit communication among students during exams; for questions about the test, have them talk to you.

Number exams and include the number at the top of each page

Use a sign-in sheet for each row, by exam numbers, to record where students sit.

Check the student ID of each student before and after exams.

Require written excuses for make-ups or extensions, and check authenticity.

Encourage students to sit away from study partners or friends during exams and to cover their work.

Refrain from using textbook test banks. Students have discovered ways to access these "instructor-only" resources.

Be clear about writing expectations and offer in and out of class resources to help students in the research/writing process.

Require the use of a style guide (MLA, APA, etc.) in ALL written work done outside of class.

Confronting Possible Dishonesty

Discreetly confront suspicious conduct as described below, identify those involved and record their names.

If students appear to be talking or exchanging information, announce to class that no talking is permitted during exams, record names and quietly ask student(s) to move to new seats.

If students appear to be using unauthorized materials, promptly and discreetly confiscate notes. These materials may be important in proving the cheating if a student denies responsibility.

If you see "wandering eyes," announce that eyes must be kept on one's own paper, and quietly warn specific student(s) and record the student's name and those sitting around him or her.

If you learn a "ringer" may be taking an exam for another student, approach quietly and ask for ID. If he/she cannot or will not provide proper ID, confiscate the exam and record a description of the individual.

Review exam(s) for evidence of cheating and report suspected misconduct to the Office of Student Conduct.



Deterring Copying or Collaborating

Use multiple exam versions. Scramble the order of questions and change key variables and/or constants.

Use alternate seating if no extra rooms are available

Combine classes for exams seating students from each class alternately.

Arrange exams by putting multiple choice and true/false questions at the bottom of the page where it is harder to copy.

Use essay and short answer questions. It is much more difficult to copy someone's essay than a multiple choice answer.

Refuse credit for correct answers unless ALL WORK is shown

Require students to remove hats and sunglasses during exams, unless they have a medical reason.

WATCH FOR: Wandering eyes; talking; passing notes; or other communication (e.g., cell phones, headphones, iPods) that can transmit and receive information by voice, email, data transfer, or message function).

Deterring Use of Unauthorized Materials or Notes

Give oral and written instructions regarding, which materials can or cannot be used on the test.

Have students put away books, notes, or other prohibited items and store them out of sight.

Change exam questions often, preferably every semester.

Do not permit programmable calculators, or require students to "clear" all programs before exams begin.

If you provide sample questions or study sheets, do not use the exact same questions on the exam.

Have students turn in blank blue books to you at the class before the test, mark to show you've seen them, and redistribute at random, or have students pass blue books two seats down.

Require students to begin writing on a certain page in their blue books, leaving a specified number of lines/pages blank.

WATCH FOR: Crib notes up sleeve, under leg; inside pockets, clothing, pen, calculator cover, or cap brim; written on hands, arms, pencils, desks, chairs, blackboards, walls; visible on clipboard or floor, binders or backpacks, stored in programmable calculators; pre written in blue books; or hidden in bathroom or nearby classroom.

ALSO WATCH FOR: Students leaving room without submitting test (to use notes or key outside class); attempting to sneak completed exam back into room at end of exam, or into faculty office, or having accomplice "find" and turn in "lost" exam.

Avoiding Fraudulent Re-Grade Requests

Photocopy graded test/scantrons before handing back.

Mark wrong answers or blank space with an "X" or slash mark.

After re-grade, keep record of original score in grade book and database, with page totals, problem scores, and total exam score.

Have one person review all re-grade requests and record changes.

WATCH FOR: Erased or changed scantron answers; new, correct answers in place of previously blank or incomplete response; photocopied tests with original answers and grading marks blanked out, then redone with correct answers and forged grading marks; pages or entire exam with higher scores stolen from return bin, name changed, then submitted for more credit under thief's name. Red Flags: poor quality "second generation" copy inconsistent with original exam; copies of staple holes; entire pages erased and rewritten (to avoid detection of different handwriting); major discrepancies with grade book (resubmitted exam shows different score).

Preventing "Ringers" & Loss/Theft of Exams

Count the number of exams handed out, of students taking the test, and of exams turned in (before leaving the room), and make sure numbers match. Use exam numbers and sign in sheets.

Collect exams from students while seated rather than having a chaotic rush to the front.

Have consistent "loss-proof" method of transporting papers between class, office, and home (e.g., locked briefcase).

Keep office and desk locked and papers secure when you are out.

WATCH FOR: Ringer taking test for enrolled student (who may be present or not). Ringer may do own test, then re-copy Scantron for student, or ringer may do real exam while enrolled student does "fake" exam. When done, switch papers, enrolled student writes own name and submits test. Fake exam is discarded or submitted with phony name.

ALSO WATCH FOR: Theft of ungraded exams/papers from submission box; or from office, computer lab print-out tray; or other student's computer, account backpack, or room. Thief erases name and submits as own. May destroy original work to avoid detection. Student may come to test (or earlier section), take exam copy (or have friend get copy) then go study before own section test/ scheduled make-up. Rarely exam questions or answer key taken from faculty office or computer. Students who fails to submit paper or exam, then claims faculty error caused loss of work (goal: make-up exam or extension).