

FACULTY GUIDELINES:

ETHICS AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

*College of Architecture, Urban, and Public Affairs
Florida Atlantic University*

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FACULTY GUIDELINES: ETHICS AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY SECTION 1: *Proactive Prevention Tips*

NOTE: Some of the suggestions in this section reflect material in Ronald B. Standler (2000), "Plagiarism in Colleges," located at <http://www.rbs2.com/plag.htm#anchor666666>.

Ideally, it is better to prevent academic misconduct than to deal with its consequences. Thus, it is beneficial to create an *atmosphere of awareness* among students by:

- Assuring that students understand what constitutes academic misconduct (i.e., plagiarism or cheating; see Section 2);
- Reinforcing the responsibility of students to do their own work on both papers and exams;
- Notifying students of what actions will be taken in response to academic misconduct and what penalties apply.

More specifically, faculty may find it helpful to incorporate proactive preventive practices into their courses; for example:

- Use new topics for papers each semester, (thereby defeating the utility of papers passed among prior students or maintained in dorm files).
- Make assignments unique and specific to the course, (thus diminishing the potential for "downloading" a generic paper from the Internet).
- Make term paper production an on-going developmental process that requires students to sequentially submit drafts throughout the semester, (rather than a one-time final submission at the end of the term).
- Require students to sign an "academic integrity pledge;" (see sample in Section 2). For projects, have all students sign-off on the final product.
- Have students present their papers or projects in class.
- On the day that papers are submitted, require students to write an in-class description of their paper and its major points, or ask them questions about what they have written, (orally or through a short essay exam).

- Require students to submit their papers electronically, and notify them that plagiarism detection software will be applied.
- Take proper precautions during testing (e.g., separate seats, keep all but test materials off student desks, and walk around rather than remain seated in front of the room).
- Assure that students are familiar with FAU policies which *require both students and faculty* to report incidents of suspected academic misconduct; (see Section 5).

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SECTION 2: *Sample Syllabus Material*

To further promote a proactive atmosphere of awareness among students, faculty may wish to include a statement similar to the following in their course syllabi:

The College of Architecture, Urban and Public Affairs expects students to communicate their ideas effectively and professionally. This includes legible text with proper spelling, punctuation, and grammar, as well as reference citations that meet the standards of your discipline for research and scholarly writing.

Once it is documented in writing or in drawing, an idea is the intellectual property of the author. When presenting anything that is not your own, you are legally and ethically bound to identify your source. To do otherwise is plagiarism, which constitutes cheating.

Using the ideas, writings, or drawings of another and attempting to pass them off as yours is plagiarism. Examples of plagiarism include, (but are not limited to): lifting material verbatim (or with minimal changes) directly from someone else's work without citing the original author, as well as submitting work prepared by someone else as your own.

Plagiarism is a very serious offense, as is submitting a product which was not originally prepared for this course, or one which is used to fulfill the requirements of more than one course. In any such case, the student will receive no credit for the written work, and/or a failing grade for the course. Moreover, depending on the severity of the offense and any previous violations, additional penalties may be assessed by the university, (which can include academic probation or expulsion from the university). A grade of "F" received for academic misconduct cannot be removed from your transcript through the university's forgiveness policy.

The university's honor code *requires* that both faculty and students report plagiarism and other forms of cheating. A detailed description of the honor code is provided in the FAU catalog under *Academic Policies and Regulations (Florida Administrative Code, section 6C5-4.001 Honor Code, Academic Irregularities, and Students' Academic Grievances)*. You can also find it on the FAU website at http://www.fau.edu/caupa/honor_code.

For more information about plagiarism and how to assure that you do not commit it, read the article, *What is Plagiarism and How to Avoid It*, which is available at:

http://www.fau.edu/caupa/no_plagiarism.

It may also be helpful to add to the syllabus a sample of the format required for footnotes and bibliographical references, (e.g., books, journals, Internet sites), presented according to the instructor's preferred referencing style.

Additionally, faculty may want to provide explicit examples of plagiarism and other types of cheating, such as the following, (which are offered in Cornell University's *Academic Integrity Handbook*):

✓ **In Examinations**

- Using unauthorized materials during exams.
- Having another student “pinch hit” for you—i.e., someone else taking your exam.
- Looking at another student's exam to obtain answers.
- Unauthorized collaboration during take-home exams.
- Giving unauthorized assistance to another student taking an exam.

✓ **On Papers**

- Having someone else write your paper.
- Representing someone else's work as your own without acknowledgment, (or with insufficient or improper acknowledgment).
- Paraphrasing without acknowledgment—i.e., using someone else's ideas, (although placed in your own words), as if they were your original thoughts.
- Receiving unauthorized help with writing your paper.
- Using the same paper for more than one course without explicit permission from faculty in both courses.
- Giving unauthorized assistance to another student writing a paper.

✓ **In Research**

- Fabricating data in support of laboratory or field work.
- Sabotaging other students' research.
- Stealing other students' research ideas.

- Not giving credit to those who assisted.

Faculty may also find it beneficial to require students to include on the cover page of their written submissions a signed “anti-plagiarism” pledge, similar to the one outlined below:

I verify that any other person’s work contained herein is fully referenced and properly attributed. I understand that misrepresenting another person’s material as my own is plagiarism. I understand that plagiarism will result in failing this class, and subsequently can lead to formal charges. Moreover, I verify that this paper was solely researched, prepared, and written exclusively for this class by:

_____ (Student's signature)

While signing such a statement is obviously not a fail-safe guarantee against plagiarism, it at least assures that students will “think twice” before engaging in such practices. Additionally, it diminishes the possibility that the student can claim “ignorance” as a defense against wrong-doing.

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SECTION 3: *Reactive Detection Tips*

NOTE: Material in this section has been compiled from several sources, including:

Fain, M. (2002, January 21). *Detecting plagiarized papers*. Retrieved December 2, 2002 from <http://www.coastal.edu/library/plagiarz.htm>

Hinchliffe, L.J. (1998, May). *Online plagiarism*. Retrieved December 2, 2002 from <http://alexia.lis.uiuc.edu/~janicke/plagiary.htm>

Hricko, M. (2001, June 19). *Internet plagiarism: Strategies to deter academic misconduct*. Retrieved December 2, 2002 from <http://www.mtsu.edu/~itconf/proceed98/mhricko.html>

Nowakowski, F. (2002, August 16). *Detecting plagiarism*. Retrieved December 10, 2002 from www.library.dal.ca/how/detect.htm

Although it is preferable to avoid dealing with plagiarism through preventive strategies, there are times when faculty will suspect that a student has plagiarized someone's work—either intentionally (see Scenario 1) or unintentionally (see Scenario 2). The following suggestions may be helpful in such situations.

Scenario 1: *The paper doesn't seem to be written in the student's normal style. The instructor suspects that all or part of the paper is not the student's original work.*

Detection steps:

- (1) Look closely, checking vocabulary, style, and grammar. Is the writing quality markedly different from the student's usual work?
- (2) As you read the paper, do the style and quality of the writing vary in some sections?
- (3) Does it appear that the student has interjected a paragraph or two of his/her own writing into an otherwise plagiarized work in order to tailor the paper to the class assignment? Conversely, do sentences or paragraphs appear which seem markedly distinct in style or quality from the rest of what appears to be the student's own work?

(4) As you look at the paper closely, can you detect signs that the paper (in whole or part) has been downloaded from the Internet? According to Fain (2002), such evidence includes certain clues; i.e.:

- Strange text at the bottom or top of printed pages.
- Gray letters in the text.
- Numbers, headings, and/or spacing that do not fit with the paper's general layout.

Scenario 2: It appears that the student has written his or her own paper, but there are problems with citations or bibliography.

Detection steps:

- (1) The student fails to cite sources for information included in the paper that is not considered general knowledge.
- (2) The student includes a mixture of citation formats and/or writing styles, leading you to suspect the use of secondary sources without proper citation.
- (3) References do not match citations in the text of the paper.

Sometimes students fail to proofread their work, making detection even easier by noticing, for example, references to:

- Material not included in the paper.
- Readings, lectures or speakers that are not part of the course.
- More than one author (i.e., "we").

Action steps:

- (1) Ask the student to summarize and explain the main points of the paper, and to show you the written or Internet sources used .
- (2) If you suspect that the paper is a copy of another student's paper in a past class, compare it with copies you have on file.
- (3) If the paper has been submitted electronically, you can use one of the plagiarism detection websites or computer programs to aid in your investigation (see Section 4).
- (4) If you have WordPerfect on your computer, (and have an electronic version of the student's paper), turn on the "reveal codes" feature, which will indicate whether certain sections have been downloaded from an Internet site.

Overall, there are general clues that may indicate plagiarism. (See, for example, the website of Dalhousie University at <http://www.library.dal.ca/how/detect.htm>)

Visual cues

- Unusual formatting (or unusual source code);
- Web site page numbers or URL;
- Mixed citation styles;
- Strange layout;
- Use of jargon or advanced vocabulary;
- Strange grammar or syntax;
- Quotations out of place, or without references;
- Sections or sentences that do not relate;
- Anachronisms;
- Strange text at top or bottom of page;

Content cues

- Does the paper address the assignment requirements, or are portions left out?
- Is the nature of the paper correct--descriptive, narrative, analytic?
- Are recent sources included, or are all references 4-5 years old?
- Are there references to books not available at the library?
- Are there references to graphs or charts that are not included?
- Are there web sites listed that are inactive?
- Are references to historical persons or events made in the current tense?

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SECTION 4: *Plagiarism Detection Software*

There are several software programs that claim to be able to detect plagiarism in student papers, varying in price from free of cost to thousands of dollars for an institutional site license. Regardless of the price, the programs fall into two general categories:

- (1) Software is downloaded on the user's computer, and the plagiarism search is performed directly from the user's computer.
- (2) The user sends the paper to a service, which performs a search for plagiarism and sends the paper back within 24-72 hours.

Most programs/services use the same basic method--the difference is mainly in the detail of the search. First, they look for sentences and phrases that are uncommon. These sentences/phrases are then used to perform multiple searches with regular search engines. Based on these searches, a list with potential web pages from which the work could be plagiarized is constructed. Next, these sites are searched for similarities between the paper and the website. Finally, a report is created which highlights potentially plagiarized sections and/or sentences.

There are also some programs that search through electronic documents that have been downloaded by the instructor. These programs are fundamentally different, since they do not search for plagiarism from the web, but rather, look for similarities between papers that have been submitted to the instructor.

Table 1 compares the features of some of the more promising software and services. Overall, these programs have serious shortcomings; e.g.:

- EVE, Plagiserve and TurnItIn search only for htm/html files (regular web pages). PDF, Word, WordPerfect, Executable, Powerpoint and Spreadsheet files are not included in the search. In other words, any papers that are posted in any other format than htm/html are not detected. Since most web sites post documents in formats other than htm/html, this means that most cases of plagiarism will go undetected.
- Even though htm/html files are searched, pictures, graphs and tables that are on these pages are not included in the search.
- In many cases, the report includes false positives. The clearest problem occurs with reference pages. If the student references correctly, the references will appear to be plagiarized, since they follow a

common style. Another problem occurs when a student quotes from a web page. Since the programs do not distinguish between regular text and quotes, these quotes appear to be plagiarized.

- Both programs and services require an inordinate amount of time on the part of the instructor. Typically, files will have to be converted to a TXT format and individually submitted--or worse, require individual cut and paste work.
- In the case of a service, the instructor needs to wait 24-72 hours before the plagiarism report is returned. In the case of software, the program will take anywhere from 30 minutes to three hours to create a report. During this time, the computer can be used, but it is slow. Internet use during this time slows down the search process considerably. This problem can be circumvented by running the software at night, but not all software allows the user to set up a search for multiple papers.
- After the plagiarism reports are created, the instructor needs to go through each one of them to check for false positives and the extent of potential plagiarism.
- In a pilot test involving the use of several services/programs for different papers, one case of plagiarism was found. But none of the services/programs found two papers that were entirely downloaded in PDF format from the web.
- These electronic devices cannot replace an instructor's inherent ability to detect plagiarism by being familiar with the literature, knowing what can be expected from a student, and recognizing sudden changes in writing style, level of analysis, depth of understanding, etc.

The above-listed shortcomings do not mean that these services and software programs are useless. In cases of flagrant plagiarism from web pages, the reports can often quickly lead the instructor to the origins of the work. Reports also help the instructor to locate potential starting points for further investigation of suspected plagiarism.

Perhaps most important is the general deterrent potential of electronic plagiarism detection. In other words, simply knowing that the instructor uses plagiarism detection devices can have an important deterrent effect on students.

(See Table 1 for further comparative details).

Table 1: Plagiarism Detection Software Comparisons

PROGRAM	SOFTWARE/SERVICE	PRICE	COMMENTS
Essay Verification Engine (EVE2)	Software	\$19.99 per person or \$400 for site license	Easiest program to use and relatively fast. http://www.canexus.com/eve/index.shtml
PlagiServe	Service	Free	Comprehensive but cumbersome, since the instructor has to cut and paste papers into a text box. Guarantees a report within 12 hours, but currently has a 72 hour backlog. http://www.plagiserve.com
TurnItIn	Service	Uncertain	Comprehensive but cumbersome, since the instructor has to cut and paste papers into a text box. http://www.turnitin.com
Wcopyfind 2.2	Software	Free	Cumbersome to use. Compares documents on user's computer. Valuable for comparing papers with those submitted by previous classes. http://plagiarism.phys.virginia.edu/Wsoftware.html
Glatt Plagiarism Screening Program	Software	\$250	Way to test if students understand their own work. Every fifth word is eliminated and student is asked to fill in blanks. http://plagiarism.com

FACULTY GUIDELINES: ETHICS AND ACADEMIC INTEGRITY SECTION 5: *Faculty and Administrative Responsibilities*

This section presents a summary of FAU's policy on academic irregularities. (The full text appears in the Undergraduate Catalog 2002-2003, pp. 75-76). Faculty and administrators--note *mandatory requirements* highlighted in italics [emphasis added].

“FAU has an honor code *requiring* a faculty member, student or staff member to notify an instructor when there is reason to believe an academic irregularity is occurring in a course. The instructor's *duty* is to pursue any reasonable allegation...”

When an irregularity is suspected by a faculty member, these procedures should be followed:

- (1) Determine if an irregularity did, in fact, occur.
- (2) Have a conference with the involved student(s) as soon as possible.
- (3) Based on this conference and other evidence, if you believe that an irregularity occurred, hand or mail to the student a written statement of the charges and proposed sanctions.

NOTE: Instructor penalties vary with offense severity, ranging from an “F” on the work submitted to an “F” in the course. (These grades cannot be changed by the forgiveness policy, or by dropping the course. Subsequent penalties assigned by the dean can include suspension or expulsion).

- (4) Send a copy of this statement to your department head.
- (5) The *department head is then required* to send notification of this incident to the Office of the Registrar, so that an electronic notation can be made in the student's record. (This will not appear on a printed transcript. If the charges are dropped as a result of successful appeal, the notation will be erased. If there are no further irregularities, it can also be expunged upon written request by the student after graduation or following two semesters of non-attendance).

Subsequent proceedings for all offenders:

- The student has 10 days to appeal.
- The appellate process begins with a conference that includes the student, the instructor, and the department head. (See p. 76 of the 2002-2003 catalog for further details on the appeals process).

Subsequent proceedings for additional offenses:

- The Registrar's Office will notify the department head if this is the student's second (or more) offense.
- If so, the department head will recommend a sanction of suspension or expulsion to the dean.
- The dean makes the final sanction decision, and informs the student in writing.

The following narrative is the full text from FAU's policy on "Academic Irregularities and Students' Academic Grievances," (6C5-4.01 FAU Honor Code; emphasis added):

Academic irregularities frustrate the efforts of the faculty and serious students to meet university goals. Since faculty, students and staff have a stake in these goals, the responsibility of all is to discourage academic irregularities by preventive measures and by insuring that appropriate action is taken when irregularities are discovered. Thus, FAU has an honor code *requiring* a faculty member, student or staff member to notify an instructor when there is reason to believe an academic irregularity is occurring in a course. The instructor's duty is to pursue any reasonable allegation, taking action, as described below, where appropriate.

The following shall constitute academic irregularities.

- (1) The use of notes, books, or assistance from or to other students while taking an examination or working on other assignments unless specifically authorized by the instructor--acts defined as cheating.
- (2) The presentation of words or ideas from an existing source as one's own--acts defined as plagiarism.
- (3) Other activities which interfere with the educational mission within the classroom.

Initially, the instructor will determine whether available facts and circumstances demonstrate that there is reason to believe that a student is involved in an academic irregularity.

The instructor will, in conference, apprise the student of the instructor's perception of the facts. Early appraisal is desirable.

If, after this conference, the instructor continues to believe the student was involved in an academic irregularity, the instructor will mail or give the student a brief written statement of the charges and the proposed penalty.

A copy of the statement *shall be sent to the department head, who will notify the registrar* that an electronic notation of the irregularity should be attached to the student's transcript. The notation will be part of the student's internal university record, but will not appear on the printed transcript.

If the charges are dropped in the appeal process, or if there is no second offense during the student's stay at the university, the notation will be expunged from the record upon written request from the student following graduation from, or two semesters of non-attendance at, the university.

The student may appeal the instructor's actions by requesting a departmental conference within 10 days. The conference, held as soon as possible, will be among the student, the instructor, and the head of the department administering the course. An advisor may attend to provide counsel to the student, but not to answer in place of the student. The department head's written statement of action taken pursuant to the conference will be delivered to the student and the dean of the college administering the course.

When the department head notifies the registrar of the irregularity (Section 3c), the registrar will inform the department head as to whether the student is a repeat offender. *If the student is a repeat offender, the department head will recommend to the dean a penalty of suspension or expulsion.* The dean will make the decision as to the penalty and notify the student in writing.

The student may appeal the actions of the departmental conference or the dean at a faculty/student council. This council will be established by each college and will be composed of the dean, two faculty members, and two students. Requests for a hearing must be presented in writing within 10 days of the departmental conference. Records of appeal and minutes will be maintained by the dean. These hearings are considered to be educational activities. The strict rules of evidence do not apply. Students may be assisted by attorneys, but may not abdicate the responsibility to respond to charges to their legal advisors.

The student may appeal the faculty-student council's actions to the Provost by requesting a hearing within 10 days of the committee's decision. These appeals are limited to the following basis:

- Failure to receive due process.
- Arbitrary actions, including lack of commensurateness of penalty to offense.
- New pertinent information not available during earlier proceedings.

Penalties will vary with the offense:

- The instructor's penalty ranges from a grade of F on any work involved up to an F in the course.
- Penalty grades cannot be removed by a drop or the forgiveness policy.
- Penalties assigned by the dean may include suspension or dismissal.

Each college or department may adopt a policy of penalties more severe than prescribed above. Such a policy must be widely distributed in the college or department's courses.

The Provost may act on an appeal as follows:

- Dismiss the appeal and uphold the action taken by the college.
- Order a new hearing by a different student/faculty council.

- Reduce the severity of the penalty administered.

Student grievances arising from academic activities require a written request for conference with the instructor. If unsatisfied, the student may request further discussion in a department conference similar to the one described above. Grades will not be changed except by the instructor, and grievances involving the judgment and discretion of a faculty member in assigning grades shall not proceed under this rule beyond the conference with the instructor. This is an application of the concept of academic freedom. The exception to this rule occurs if the student can demonstrate malice on the part of the faculty member.

A grievance involving a charge of malice may be appealed to the faculty/student council, as above, and subsequently to the Provost. In the event of a finding of malicious action, the university may take disciplinary action against the faculty member and, at the option of the student, remove the grade from the record and refund the student's fees for the course. Students whose accusations of malice are found to be frivolous by the Provost are subject to disciplinary action.