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ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:



A Guide for Truman Students

If we earn grades *dishonestly*, not only do we diminish the quality of a Truman education, we also *undermine* the value of the college experience and the *value* of our college degrees.

INTEGRITY.

We have all heard this word used countless times to describe something good, someone wise or worthy of a lot of respect. But what exactly is integrity? According to *Merriam-Webster's Dictionary*,¹ integrity can be defined as "firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values." The key to integrity is consistency--setting high personal standards for oneself (honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, respect for others, responsibility) and living up to those standards each day even when making life's hard choices (choices clouded by stress, pressure to succeed, or temptation).²

WHY INTEGRITY MATTERS.²

Were in big trouble if cheating becomes the norm. Each day, we rely on the honesty and good faith of others. If that faith didn't exist in others, we couldn't put money in the bank, buy food, clothing, or medicine, drive across a bridge, get on a plane, go to the dentist--the list is endless. There are numerous examples of the significant harm that is caused when individuals forget or ignore the effects of their dishonesty. Recent accounting scandals, the sexual affairs of a president, the savings and loan scandal of the late 80s, the stock market and junk bond swindles, and, of course, Watergate, have undermined the faith of many Americans in the integrity of political and economic leaders and society as a whole. These incidents have taken a tremendous toll on our nation's economy and our individual well-being. For example, funds might be available to reduce the national debt and pay for education if the savings and loan debacle of the late 80s had not occurred and required a huge government bailout.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY.

The Center for Academic Integrity (CAI) defines academic integrity "as a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility."³

- 📖 **HONESTY.** An academic community of integrity advances the quest for truth and knowledge by requiring intellectual and personal honesty in learning, teaching, research, and service.
- 📖 **TRUST.** An academic community of integrity fosters a climate of mutual trust, encourages the free exchange of ideas, and enables all to reach their highest potential.
- 📖 **FAIRNESS.** An academic community of integrity establishes clear standards, practices, and procedures and expects fairness in the interactions of students, faculty, and administrators.
- 📖 **RESPECT.** An academic community of integrity recognizes the participatory nature of the learning process and honors and respects a wide range of opinions and ideas.
- 📖 **RESPONSIBILITY.** An academic community of integrity upholds personal accountability and depends upon action in the face of wrongdoing.

The **2003 Student Conduct Code** and further information on academic integrity are available from:

Office of Citizenship and Community Standards

Truman State University
Kirk Building 112
100 E. Normal
Kirksville MO 63501-4221

Phone: **660.785.4111**

E-mail: stuaff@truman.edu

Web: <http://conduct.truman.edu>



ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT.

What does Truman have to say about academic misconduct? The Student Conduct Code⁴ (8.020.01) defines the term “academic dishonesty” to include, but not to be limited to any one of the following acts:

1. **CHEATING:** *Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary*⁴ defines cheating as “to be sexually unfaithful.” Oh, wait a minute – that’s not right. It is “to practice fraud or trickery; to violate rules dishonestly (as at cards or on an examination).” In the Student Conduct Code,⁴ it is defined as “using or attempting to use unauthorized (a) materials, (b) information, or (c) study aids in any academic exercise.”
2. **FABRICATION:** Defined in the Code as “unauthorized (a) falsification or (b) invention of any information (including research data) or citation in an academic exercise.”⁴
3. **FACILITATING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** Defined in the Code as “(a) assisting or (b) attempting to assist another to commit an act of academic dishonesty, whether or not that action is associated with any particular course.”⁴
4. **PLAGIARISM:** This can be a tough one to define and understand. Many students aren’t quite sure what is or is not plagiarism. A good rule of thumb: if you feel guilty or uncomfortable doing something, then most likely it is dishonest! Plagiarism is a unique kind of academic dishonesty in which one person steals another person’s ideas or words and falsely presents them as his/her own product.⁵ In the Student Conduct Code,⁴ plagiarism is defined as “representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise. The term ‘plagiarism’ includes, but is not limited to, (a) the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work or sections of a work of another person without full and clear acknowledgement; (b) the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials, including material taken from or ordered through the Internet; or (c) unacknowledged use of original work/material that has been produced through collaboration with others without release in writing from collaborators.”
5. **SABOTAGE:** Defined in the Code⁴ “as, but is not limited to, the unauthorized interference with, modification of, or destruction of the work or intellectual property of another member of the University community.”

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Academic integrity can be defined “as a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to five fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility.”

— Center for Academic Integrity, 1999

CONSEQUENCES:

Students who engage in academic misconduct may be subject to:⁶

1. **Punitive grading** such as receiving an “F” on the assignment or in the class.
2. **Being reported** to the Division Head, the Vice President for Academic Affairs, and the Dean of Student Affairs.
3. **University Conduct action** for violating the Student Conduct Code.
4. **Being suspended or expelled** from the major or division by the Division Head.
5. **Being suspended or expelled** from the University as a sanction for violating the Student Conduct Code.

CONCERN?

Truman only recruits and accepts the best and brightest students and, as we all know, is the premiere public liberal arts and sciences University in the Midwest. Along with the blessings of determination and intelligence come the burdens of responsibility, moral integrity, and striving to achieve and maintain the high standards of behavior established for us, leaders of the future. Truman upholds a liberal arts and sciences tradition that focuses on facilitating ethical, moral, and intellectual growth. We are the next generation of leaders. To live up to that expectation, we must make a conscious decision to practice ethical behavior, personally and professionally.⁷ We need to show pride in our work. Acting with integrity is not only best for the community and the future, but it is in our best interests, as well.⁷ If we earn grades dishonestly, not only do we

diminish the quality of a Truman education, we also undermine the value of the college experience and the value of our college degrees. In summary, we all have a common stake in our University, our community, our society, and our world. Our individual and collective actions do matter. In order to build the kind of world in which we want to live, it is essential that we each act with integrity!²

WITNESS AN ACT?

Students who engage in academic dishonesty end up gaining an unfair advantage over students with integrity (the academic “playing field” becomes uneven).⁸ All students at Truman have a shared responsibility with the faculty and administration for enforcing the academic misconduct policy. Although reporting an act of academic misconduct to a professor or division head can be tough, not doing so will only hurt you and every other honest, hardworking student at Truman. If you feel uncomfortable talking directly with a professor or division head, contact the Student Affairs Office at x4111. They will be happy to advise and help you in addressing the problem.

AVOID:

The best way to stay out of trouble is to pay careful attention to your own academic responsibilities.^{5,9}

- ☞ **Do not look around during a test** since it may appear that you are trying to copy from others and make sure to cover your work.
- ☞ **Make sure that no notes** or materials are exposed or accessible during a test that could cause someone to believe that you are using unauthorized aids.

- ☞ **Refuse to discuss an exam** with students in other sections.
- ☞ **Do not provide old exams** to other students without the consent of the faculty.
- ☞ **Refuse to give away** old term papers.
- ☞ **If there is any doubt**, clarify with your professor how much collaboration, if any, is permitted or expected when working on group projects and assignments.
- ☞ **Demonstrate consideration** and respect for your fellow students in the libraries by following proper procedures for re-shelving books and respecting University books and magazines (not damaging, defacing, or destroying library materials).
- ☞ **Protect your computer log-in** identifications, passwords, and do not allow others to use or access your computer accounts or programs. Other students could use them to access your work and subsequently get you involved in an academic dishonesty case.
- ☞ **Since we all know** that it is impossible to write everything with complete originality, use quotes and/or footnotes to acknowledge other peoples’ words or ideas used in your paper. Check with the professor for proper techniques for citations if you have any doubts.
- ☞ **Do not leave copies** of assignments in computer labs.

DON’T FORGET:^{5,9}

- ☞ **Check with your instructor** before turning in a paper or project you submitted in another class.
- ☞ **When completing take-home tests**, do not collaborate with other students unless approved by the professor.
- ☞ **Also, it is a good idea** to ask professors before using the course’s prior tests from friends or test files as study guides.
- ☞ **Accept responsibility** for academic integrity by confronting students you suspect of cheating and discussing the issue of academic integrity; providing positive peer pressure; and raising the issue in classroom discussions and stating your expectations.