

ENSURING ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AMONG STUDENTS

Cheating and plagiarism will continue to be a growing problem on college campuses unless faculty are willing to be vigilant and active in combating it. Here are some points to be aware of regarding cheating and plagiarism.

The MTC *Student Handbook* states:

Academic Misconduct

All forms of academic dishonesty, including but not limited to cheating on tests, plagiarism, collusion and falsification of information, will call for discipline. Alleged violations will be handled as outlined in Section IV.

1. Cheating on tests is defined to include the following:
 - a. Copying from another student's test or answer sheet.
 - b. Using materials during a test not authorized by the person giving the test.
 - c. Collaborating with any other person during a test without permission.
 - d. Knowingly obtaining, using, buying, selling, transporting or soliciting in whole or in part the contents of any unadministered test.
 - e. Bribing any other person to obtain tests or information about tests.
 - f. Substituting for another student, or permitting another person to substitute for oneself.
 - g. Substituting one's work for another or allowing another person's work to be substituted for one's own work.
 - h. Cooperating or aiding in any of the above.
2. "Plagiarism" is defined as the appropriation of any other person's work and the unacknowledged incorporation of that work in one's own work offered for credit.
3. "Collusion" means knowingly assisting another person in an act of academic dishonesty.
4. "Fabrication" is defined as falsifying or inventing information in such academic exercises as reports, laboratory results, and citations to the sources of information. Students found responsible for acts of academic dishonesty will be subject to sanctions ranging from grades of zero on coursework, failure of course, disciplinary probation, suspension, and expulsion from the College.

Prevent cheating and plagiarism:

Here are some suggestions about preventing dishonest practices in the classroom:

- Sometimes students turn to cheating and plagiarism because they do not understand why these matter, or because they are frustrated by their inability to do the work required.

- Please discuss these issues and clarify what you expect in writing and testing situations (see Humanities Handbook for more information on avoiding problems with research)
- Be approachable
- Refer students to the Academic Success Center for assistance if they have problems with assignments and you have no time to help them
- Please do not leave the room during a test
- Walk around to be sure that you see everything that happens in class
- Be sure your syllabus states and you remind students that all cell phones and beepers must be turned off during tests and that they may not look at them during the test.
- Require topic proposals and rough drafts from students on research assignments, and make students aware that it will be THEIR responsibility to find sources and show them to you if you suspect they have not been used fairly

Follow due process: Some of the guidelines below may seem complex, but it's important to be sure that we follow due process when we suspect cheating—otherwise, it's possible that a student might be able to appeal and have the penalty reversed if the process is not followed. Also, it's sometimes possible that what appears to be cheating is not. Also, please be aware that student's intellectual property rights may conflict with use of plagiarism detectors such as Turnitin.com, so discuss ways of proving plagiarism with the Department Chair in each case.

Ask for guidance: If you suspect cheating or plagiarism, please be sure to keep copies of any papers that might be evidence. Also, please discuss the situation as soon as possible with either Hart Hayden (822-3441 or haydenh@midlandstech.edu) or Mary Holloway, Assistant Vice President of Student Development Services (822-3529 or hollowaym@midlandstech.edu) or with the Department Chair.

Be willing to confront plagiarists and cheaters: Probably one of the causes of the increase in plagiarism and cheating is the fact that it does take time and effort to confront and follow up on cheating, but that is part of your responsibility as a professional. You can minimize the work for you by requiring that the students bring you the sources if you think they've copied something. Also, the Director of Campus Life or the Department Chair can suggest ways of finding material online--and will also help you decide if plagiarism has actually happened and will even talk with the student if you prefer not to do that.

Keep copies of evidence: If you suspect cheating or plagiarism, be sure that you make photocopies of all work that could be considered evidence, including:

- the paper, test, or homework itself as well as examples of other work by the student that shows a different ability or knowledge
- possible papers by other students, books, or websites that might be original sources of the work

- careful documentation of any conversations, assignments, directions, and syllabi related to the situation

Talk with the student: Once you have conferred with the Department Chair and/or with Hart Hayden and/or with Mary Holloway, you may talk with the students, or Hart or Mary will be glad to do that for you if you prefer. If you do prefer to talk with the student yourself, please be sure you've discussed the best way to handle this with one of us.

Assign appropriate penalties: In general the penalty for the first offense is usually a grade of zero on the assignment. However, the nature of the assignment may suggest that some other penalty is more appropriate. Please discuss penalties with Hart Hayden and/or Mary Holloway or the Department Chair before assigning them.

Document the cheating: If you have determined that a student has cheated, in addition to other penalties, please send a written notice of this to Hart Hayden and Mary Holloway. They maintain a file that allows us to recognize a second offender, for whom more serious penalties may be appropriate.