

Academic Integrity Resources: Department of
Psychology Brooklyn College

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Resource Documents

- Faculty Action Report
- CUNY Academic Integrity Policy
- Faculty Obligations for Syllabus Preparation
- Selling Term Papers

0.1 Contributing to this resource

The source code for compiling this document is in this github repository: <https://github.com/CrumpLab/AcademicIntegrity>

You can contribute to this resource directly by suggesting edits to the .Rmd files and submitting pull requests. You can also use the “issues” tab to leave comments and have discussions.

Chapter 1

Outline of Brooklyn College guidelines:

In brief, there are two important obligations: to inform students that they need to be aware of the CUNY Academic Integrity policy, and to report suspected violations. These two obligations are described more fully below:

1.1 Syllabus Requirements

According to the Brooklyn College “Fall 2016 Obligations of the Faculty and Syllabus Preparation” document, all syllabi must include the following statement concerning Academic Integrity:

“The faculty and administration of Brooklyn College support an environment free from cheating and plagiarism. Each student is responsible for being aware of what constitutes cheating and plagiarism and for avoiding both. The complete text of the CUNY Academic Integrity Policy and the Brooklyn College procedure for policy implementation can be found at www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/bc/policies. If a faculty member suspects a violation of academic integrity and, upon investigation, confirms that violation, or if the student admits the violation, the faculty member must report the violation.”

1.2 Reporting Requirements

When a suspected violation is confirmed through investigation, or if the student admits the violation, then faculty must report the violation. The reporting process currently involves filing the FAR report (Faculty Action Report for Incidents of Academic Dishonesty.) with the College’s Academic Integrity Officer, Mr. Patrick Kavanagh (Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Programs: 3208 Boylan Hall, 718-951-5771).

Patrick’s email is: kavanagh@brooklyn.cuny.edu

The language in the FAR report suggests a broader obligation to file this report whenever “a faculty member finds compelling evidence that a suspected violation of the CUNY policy on Academic Integrity has occurred”.

1.3 Reporting a suspected violation (FAR REPORT)

If you have questions about the process, Patrick is very helpful and knowledgeable and can guide you through the details. The FAR report is mostly self-explanatory and involves three sections

1.3.1 Section A: Information about the student

- fill out basic information about student name, CUNYFirst ID, email, date of incident etc.
- a. You are given space to “describe the incident”. You can attach an additional document if necessary
- b. You are required to “Indicate the outcome of your discussion of the violation with the student”. So, it is necessary to schedule a time to meet with or speak with this student.
- c. Section A notes that: “Evidence must accompany allegations. For plagiarism, please attach the syllabus and the assignment sheet in addition to the documentation of plagiarism, such as the Safe Assign Report or copy of the paper with portions found to be plagiarized highlighted along with the original source.”

1.3.2 Section B: Academic (Grade) Sanction

- given the option to recommend 1) failing grade on Exam/Assignment, 2) Failing grade for Course, or Other (please explain)
- required to report whether the student accepts the sanction

1.3.3 Section C: Disciplinary Complaint Option

- speak to Patrick about this one.

1.4 Helpful links:

<http://libguides.brooklyn.cuny.edu/plagiarism>

1.5 List of websites that students may use for cheating:

Most of these websites offer a similar set of services.

- <https://www.studyblue.com>
- <https://www.coursehero.com>
- <https://www.chegg.com>
- <https://studentshare.net>
- Brooklyn College Facebook in the know (a facebook group)
- <https://www.slader.com>

There are many more similar kinds of sites

Chapter 2

Websites and cheating

Students are sharing exams, assignments, old papers, homework questions, etc. across numerous online platforms.

- <https://www.studyblue.com>
- <https://www.coursehero.com>
- <https://www.chegg.com>
- <https://studentshare.net>
- Brooklyn College Facebook in the know (a facebook group)
- <https://www.slader.com>

2.1 Exam/Assignment Repositories

These sites offer large repositories of test banks, assignments, homework questions, papers, essays, answers etc., that can be downloaded for free, or for the cost of a membership. All of the materials have been uploaded by other students. You may be surprised to see most of if not all of your own assignments/exams etc. uploaded to these websites.

If you find your materials on one of these websites, and do not want your material there, then you may be able to contact have the material removed by making a takedown request.

2.2 “Tutoring” / paying somebody

Most of these sites offer personal tutoring services. For a fee, a student subscriber can post a question to the tutoring service, and then pay someone to “help” them with the question.

Many students use this to pay someone else to do their work for them, and then they cheat by handing in the tutor’s work as their own. Remarkably, many of these sites make the results of tutoring requests searchable. So, for example, if you had an account with the service, you could search your own assignment questions to determine whether a tutor has completed one of them. Then you could cross-reference the tutor generated work with the work submitted by your students.

2.3 Are your materials online?

Find out easily by googling your portions of your materials. You can also find yourself as an instructor on many of these sites, and then find materials that students have uploaded and associated specifically with your course.

Chapter 3

Preventative Measures

The following are some suggestions for preventing academic integrity issues before they start.

3.1 Make your syllabus clear

1. Your syllabus must include the previously described language from the obligations of the faculty document
2. The mandatory language above does **not** prescribe how you, as the instructor, will sanction students for cheating/plagiarism. My opinion is that student expectations would be better managed by including specific language about how cheating/plagiarism will be handled in your course. This could be similar to a section about how late or missed assignments are dealt with. Here is some example language that I am developing for Experimental Psychology.

3.1.1 Cheating and Plagiarism in this course

This class has a zero tolerance policy for cheating/plagiarism. If you are caught cheating and/or plagiarizing then you will receive a failing grade for this course, and a Faculty Action Report will be filed against you.

You should assume that unless explicitly told otherwise, that all assignments in this course are to be completed by you alone. All of your written work should be your own. Specifically, the following assignments and papers are to be completed by you alone: list assignments here. The exceptions to this rule include any group work, such as the following: list group work here.

By handing in each assignment you are pledging your honor that you did not violate the CUNY policy on Academic Integrity, which you are responsible for reading and understanding.

All of the following are examples of cheating/plagiarism, that if detected will result in serious academic sanctions:

1. Copying work from another student and handing it in as your own.
 - including, copying a few sentences from someone else
 - including, paraphrasing parts of someone else's work
 - including, working together on assignments that are individual assignments
2. Aiding cheating/plagiarism by sharing your work or giving your work to other students
3. Copying from a website
4. Having an online tutor, or other person, complete an assignment for you, and handing in that work as your own

5. Paraphrasing someone else's writing (e.g., from a website, from a textbook, from an article, from another student etc.) by substituting words and making changes and handing this work in as your own.
6. Self-plagiarising, including handing in a previous assignment from another class as part of completing an assignment for this class
7. All of the examples listed in the CUNY policy on Academic Integrity

In this class, when an investigation of a suspected violation of the Academic integrity policy demonstrates that a student knowingly and deliberately violated the policy, the student will receive a failing grade in this course. Following Brooklyn College policy, any time an instructor detects compelling evidence of a suspected academic integrity, they must report it using the Faculty Action Report. When compelling evidence of a suspected violation occurs in this course, the following steps will be taken:

1. You will be notified by me that I have detected compelling evidence of cheating/plagiarism
2. I will schedule a time to meet with you
3. I will fill out and submit a Faculty Action report, which describes the evidence, the result of our discussion, and whether you accept the academic sanction
4. **The academic sanction will be that you receive a failing grade for this course**
5. The FAR report (Faculty Action Report) will be filed with the College's Academic Integrity Officer Mr. Patrick Kavanagh (Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Programs: 3208 Boylan Hall, 718.951.5771 fax: 718.951.4559).
6. All students who have a FAR report filed against them can file an appeal, and should contact Mr. Patrick Kavanagh to arrange for an appeal.

3.2 Honor Pledges

Some students may be unaware that their actions constitute cheating and plagiarism, additionally some students who violate academic integrity rules may claim after the fact that they were unaware that their behavior constituted cheating and/or plagiarism. Consider instituting an honor pledge on exams and assignments to make sure that students are aware prior to completing the assignment. An example honor pledge that can be placed at the beginning of an exam or assignment is:

"I pledge my honor that I am submitting my own work, that I did not receive or give help on this individual assignment, and that I did not violate the CUNY Academic integrity rules. I understand the consequences for violating the CUNY academic integrity rules as described in the syllabus for this course. Sign here:
_____"

3.3 Talk about cheating and plagiarism in class

Consider discussing cheating and plagiarism and how you will deal with these issues in your class during class time.

3.4 Turnitin and SafeAssign

The blackboard system offers two services for detecting plagiarism in written work, these are turnitin and SafeAssign. You can enable SafeAssign and Turnitin on blackboard, and have students submit written work on Blackboard. Both services check the pool of submitted documents for verbatim similarities. They do not detect paraphrasing. SafeAssign checks similarities between the submitted documents for the assignment, whereas Turnitin additionally compares the submitted documents to websites, and previously submitted documents in their database.

Neither service works perfectly, or even near perfectly. For example, a student's paper might return a very high similarity score ($> 90\%$). This could mean that 90% of their document was lifted verbatim from another single source (obvious cheating), or it could be a sum total of small partial matches across many different documents. A student's paper could also return a very low similarity score ($< 10\%$), consistent with no cheating. However, further scrutiny of the reason for the match might show that one or two entire sentences have been directly copied verbatim from another student or source.

Instructors have the option of letting students pre-submit their work to determine their safeassign or turnitin similarity score prior to submitting their work. This may be useful in preventing cheating and plagiarism.

Bibliography