Academic Integrity

The MS-BAIS program follow USF's official policies on academic integrity, which are described in detail at **https://www.usf.edu/undergrad/students/ethics-integrity.aspx** ⤷ **(https://www.usf.edu/undergrad/students/ethics-integrity.aspx)** . We encourage you to read through this page to familiarize yourself of our official policy and consequences for violations. Students are routinely expelled from USF (without degree) every year for violations of our official academic integrity policies. "I did not know" or "This is not considered plagiarism in the culture where I'm from" will not be considered an acceptable excuse if you happen to be involved in any of these transgressions.

What are violations of academic integrity?

Cheating: Cheating is using or attempting to use materials, information, notes, study aids, or other assistance in any assignment, group work, examination, or evaluation that have not been authorized by the instructor.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is representing someone else's work as your own. For example, you download materials from the internet for your class project and did not cite or give credit to the original source where we took the material from. Whether intentional or not, plagiarism is an offense liable under USF academic integrity policies.

Why is this a big deal?

The job of a university is not only to teach, but build responsible and productive members of our society. We don't believe we can accomplish the second goal if we allow or overlook ethical transgressions in the conduct of our academic and extracurricular activities. We understand that students don't start with an intention to cheat, but are forced to do so because of circumstances such as taking too many courses in one semester, try to work full-time while also taking a full academic load, and trying to be perfect for their friends and family. These things can put a good person in a bad situation. Before soon, "I would never cheat" becomes "Well, just this once" which turns into repeated instances of cheating. It is a slippery slope from where you can't get out. We must intervene to arrest the moral and intellectual slide, and hence, we rigorously enforce our academic integrity policies.

What are the consequences of academic integrity violations?

First, both cheating and plagiarism have the same penalty and are cumulative throughout your stay at USF, meaning they accrue over your different classes with different professors. The USF official

policy for transgressions can be found at **https://usf.app.box.com/v/usfregulation3027** ↪ **(https://usf.app.box.com/v/usfregulation3027)**

In general, we follow the following rules:

- First offense:
    - Zero in the concerned assignment or exam.
    - Added to SISM blacklist, which will prevent you from being hired in TA/GA positions and Practice Center projects.
- Second offense:
    - F (fail) grade in the concerned course.
    - Referral to the Dean's office for College-level action.
- Third offense:
    - FF (F for academic dishonesty) grade in the concerned course.
    - Expulsion from the MS-BAIS program.

Note that if the first offense happened in one course, and the second offense is your first violation in a different course, the second offense will count as your second offense in the MS-BAIS program and will lead to an F grade in that class. Academic integrity violations are cumulative over courses, and you don't get three fresh violation opportunities for every class that you take. We maintain an internal database of all violations for all students across all MS-BAIS classes, and we assess these transgressions cumulatively.

However, if a first offense is especially egregious, the professor for the course may apply a harsher penalty.

Online tests

If USF instructors make use of an online proctoring software, this will require the use of a webcam to watch/record you (and the associated audio) while you are taking a test. This software will track your use of the screen, your surroundings, and even where your eyes move before each question, and it will flag those moments when the instructor should check the video feed record to ascertain if cheating is going on. In short, any cheating you engage in here WILL be caught. Excuses such as "my webcam is not working" will not be entertained and you won't be allowed to take a test. If needed, you can borrow spare laptops from USF library for taking tests if your own laptop has problems with webcam, microphone, or other devices.

Real USF examples of academic integrity violations

- A student brought a cheat sheet into an exam. He was caught using the cheat sheet and received an F in the course.
- A student uploaded exam questions to an online cheating site, received answers to the exams, and then turned them in as her own work. She received an FF in the course.

- A student copied an assignment in Course A, then proceeded on to plagiarizing part of a group report in Course B, and cheating in an exam in Course C. Because those are three offenses, she received a F grade in Course B and was expelled from USF after being caught in Course C.

How to avoid plagiarism?

We use online plagiarism software to detect plagiarism in individual and group work. Some of you may try to push the software to see how much you can get away without the software flagging your work as plagiarized. This strategy NEVER works. We look for similarity of ideas, not similarity of words. Hence, taking an existing report, changing a few words, moving some paragraphs around, etc. will still flag your work as plagiarized. The best ways to avoid this problem are:

- Use quotation marks or appropriate indentation and proper citation to acknowledge sentences, words, or ideas taken from others.
- When material from another source is paraphrased or summarized, even in your own words, that source must be acknowledged by citation.
- Information gained in reading or research that is not common professional knowledge must be acknowledged by citation.
- You cannot submit your own work for more than one project in different classes. That's called self-plagiarizing, and it is not allowed!
- When working in a group, make sure everyone in the group understand the rules for the collaboration. If one person in the group commits a transgression, the entire group will be held responsible.