

Science Department – Statement Regarding Academic Honesty

Collaboration on Written Assignments

In the “real world” science is a group endeavor. However, when two or more people work together on a project, the collaboration is acknowledged. At the same time, we want to be sure that you understand what constitutes appropriate collaboration and that you recognize when you must acknowledge the assistance you receive from others.

Often the best way to learn something is to try to understand it first on your own and then to explain your thinking to someone else. The point at which collaboration becomes dishonesty is when one person is doing all or most of the work while the other person takes no active part in the learning process but simply adopts the work and thinking of others as his or her own. If the work you hand in is simply the result of the thinking of others, you are being dishonest unless you carefully document the source(s) of those thoughts and that effort. This relates to data as well as to the interpretation of data. Tell-tale signs of dishonesty include, *but are not limited to*: solutions to complex problems that have identical structures and/or variable names; skipped steps; identical word-for-word responses to questions; the same, wrong answer; an inability to explain or re-do an answer or solution.

While it is acceptable and we encourage you to discuss ideas with other students, the Science Department considers it to be an act of academic dishonesty to share written work, including lab reports and other graded homework assignments. You should not read your work to others or give it to them to read. Likewise, you should not read somebody else’s work. If one student knowingly permits another student to read written work that will be graded, the Science Department believes that both students share equal responsibility and therefore any disciplinary action that follows may be directed at both.

There may be times when you are asked to turn in a group lab report or paper. In such cases, it is expected that all members of the group contribute to the ideas and the writing, and this collaboration is acknowledged by listing all authors of the report. There may also be times when your teacher organizes a “peer review” and asks you to read and edit a classmate’s paper. These are exceptions to the above policy.

When you wish to include thoughts or methods that you learned from one of your classmates, make sure that you give credit to the source of that material.

If you are confused as to whether or not your actions constitute academic dishonesty, talk with your teacher before handing in the work.

Use of Programmable Calculators and Electronic Devices

When you are instructed by your teacher to memorize material for a quiz or test, e.g. facts, reactions, formulas, equations, it is considered dishonest to enter this information into the memory of your calculator or any other electronic device and to use this information during a test. If you are in doubt about what information will be provided and what must be memorized, ask your teacher ahead of time.

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense and typically results in a disciplinary response.

As of September 2008