

Avoiding Academic Misconduct

 canvas.ubc.ca/courses/50736/pages/avoiding-academic-misconduct

As a student at UBC, it is your responsibility to understand and follow the [UBC rules](#)[Links to an external site.](#) on [academic honesty](#)[Links to an external site.](#) Those rules might be different than the rules that you were expected to follow in other schools that you have attended. Failing adhere to these rules might result in disciplinary action that could include being given a grade of zero on course work, being given a grade of zero on a course, being suspended from the university for four, eight or twelve months and a notation on your transcript indicating that you have committed an academic misconduct offence.

The purpose of this module is to explain the rules on academic honesty and to let you know what to expect if you are ever suspected of committing academic misconduct.

UBC rules for academic misconduct

Academic misconduct is, essentially, any behaviour in an academic setting that no reasonable person would consider ethical behaviour. Below is a list of examples of academic misconduct. It is important to note that this list is not comprehensive; there are other behaviours that would be considered academic misconduct that does not appear on this list.

Here are some examples of academic misconduct:

1. Falsifying materials, such as changing an answer on an exam and submitting that work to be regraded.
2. Unauthorized collaborations, such as submitting group work when group work was not permitted.
3. Using unauthorized materials in an exam, such as accessing a website with answers to questions.
4. Accessing outside help during an exam or quiz, such as setting up a group chat to share answers or chatting with friends.
5. Plagiarism, such as portraying another person's work as you own.
6. Submitting the same piece of work, such as an essay, in more than one class.
7. Asking another person to write an exam on your behalf (or writing another student's exam).
8. Making false claims, such a requesting a concession based on poor health when that is not true.
9. Submitting false documents, such as forged doctor's notes or death certificates to support false claims.

10. Failing to submit documents when they are requested, such as doctor's notes and death certificates to support requests for concessions.

Real Life Examples of Academic Misconduct

Here are some examples of real academic misconduct cases in economic's classes at UBC and the consequences faced by the students:

- (1) A student altered their midterm exam and resubmitted that altered exam to be re-graded by the TA for the course. The student was given a grade of zero on the exam by the VSE and subsequently given a grade of zero in the course by the President's office. Additionally, a notation was placed on the student's transcript indicating they had been disciplined by the President's office.
- (2) A student used their phone during a make-up exam to complain to a friend that another person in the exam was cheating on the exam. Because they used their phone in the exam the student was given a zero on the exam by the school and suspended from the university for four months by the President's office. Again, the student received a notation on their transcript indicating they had committed an academic offence
- (3) A student lied to their instructor regarding travel and provided fake documentation in an attempt to be given an academic concession for missed work. That student was suspended from the university for 4 months with a notation was placed on their transcript indicating they had committed an academic offence.
- (4) A student was caught using unauthorized materials during a final exam. The student was originally given a zero on the final exam and, as a result, failed the class. The student's name was recorded in the university central database for academic misconduct. When a second offence was recorded in another program, the student was suspended from the university for 12 months with a notation added to their transcript.
- (5) A student used an unauthorized internet search to write an essay on a final exam and plagiarized uncited sources in their written answer. The student was given a grade of zero on the final exam and the case was forwarded to the Dean's office with a request for further penalties. While this case is ongoing, the student had a previous academic offence recorded on the university-wide system that tracks academic misconduct and will like be referred for further penalties.

The President's Advisory Committee for Student Discipline produces an annual summary of academic misconduct cases heard by that committee and the final disciplinary decisions made by the UBC President. It is worth your time to take a look through those reports and

seeing the consequences students who commit academic misconduct have faced. Note that only the most serious cases are dealt with by that committee and that many other cases are handled by the Dean's office.

What to expect if you are suspected of academic misconduct

Faculty members at UBC are required to report all instances of suspected academic misconduct to their department. If there is sufficient evidence to support that allegation, the department will assign a grade of zero on the course work(s) on which the misconduct took place; exams, papers, assignments etc. The allegation will then be forwarded to the relevant dean's office for further investigation and, if deemed warranted, the student will receive further discipline. Penalties may include being given a mark of zero on the whole course and/or being suspended from the university for four, eight or twelve months. In most cases, a notation will be placed on the student's transcript indicating that they have committed an academic offence. The student's name will also be added to the university-wide database of cheaters.

When a VSE professor observes a student behaving in a way that they consider dishonest, they will report that behaviour to the VSE Academic Integrity Coordinator - Professor Adshade - for further investigation.

Professor Adshade will contact the student and arrange a meeting to discuss the behaviour with a notetaker present. In that meeting, the student will be asked to explain their behaviour and the decisions that were made in the lead up to the alleged misconduct.

If Professor Adshade determines that there is sufficient evidence that the alleged academic misconduct has taken place, she will request that the student zero on the relevant work. She will then write a report to the Dean of Art's office identifying the misconduct and make a recommendation regarding the need for further discipline.

The office of the Associate Dean, Academic will then contact the student and arrange a second meeting to discuss the allegation of the offence (again with a notetaker present). If the Associate Dean feels that further penalties are warranted the case will be forwarded to the President's Advisory Committee for Student Discipline[Links to an external site.](#) (PACSD).

PACSD will then ask the student to submit a written response to the allegation and to attend a full hearing before the committee to explain their behaviour. Following that hearing and deliberation, PACSD will make a recommendation to the UBC President who will ultimately decide if further penalties are warranted. The student will then be informed of those penalties by the President.

Any student who has had a previous academic misconduct offence will be automatically put forward to PACSD and can expect to receive further discipline beyond that imposed by the VSE.

There is no excuse for academic misconduct

We are well aware that student life can be stressful and that often the workload can seem overwhelming. Under these circumstances, it is very tempting to try to find ways to make your life easier by finding outside help and/or submitting another person's work as you own.

You might even justify that unethical behaviour based on your preconceptions that other students are better prepared than you are, have a lighter workload than you do, or also getting outside help or submitting someone else's work. From this perspective, it might seem that academic misconduct is simply a means to 'levelling the playing field' with other students.

The truth is that other students have their own burdens, even if they are not visible to you. When you cheat you are not levelling the playing field, you are attempting to give yourself an unfair advantage over other students who are working hard and acting with integrity.

There is a perception that "everyone else is doing it". In fact, the profit-motivated companies that provide tutoring services have an incentive to convince students that many of their classmates have this unfair advantage. This is emphatically not true. The overwhelming majority of your classmates are hardworking students who adhere to the ethical standards of the university and submit work that reflects their own efforts.

Do not be deceived by false information that is provided by outside tutoring services that claim to access to course materials and exams that have not been made available to all students. There are no faculty members or graduate students in the Vancouver School of Economics that cooperate with these services.

Please speak to your professor if you need additional guidance on avoiding academic misconduct.