

**FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY  
COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND COMPUTING  
BEST PRACTICES FOR DISCOURAGING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY**

The Faculty Council on Governance prepared this document to outline some of the best practices to avoid cheating:

**1. SYLLABUS**

- A. The provost wanted us to add the following quote in the syllabus: "Florida International University is a community dedicated to generating and imparting knowledge through excellent teaching and research, the rigorous and respectful exchange of ideas, and community service. All students should respect the right of others to have an equitable opportunity to learn and honestly to demonstrate the quality of their learning. Therefore, all students are expected to adhere to a standard of academic conduct, which demonstrates respect for themselves, their fellow students, and the educational mission of the University. All students are deemed by the University to understand that if they are found responsible for academic misconduct, they will be subject to the Academic Misconduct procedures and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Handbook."
- B. The course syllabus is your first line of defense against cheaters. In an effort to thwart students from cheating, the professor should have a clear statement concerning cheating located in a conspicuous area of the class syllabus.
- C. It is recommended that the Professor require each student to sign an Academic Honesty statement on the first day of class.
- D. It is a good practice to indicate in the syllabus that all written assignments will be submitted to the turnitin.com Website.
- E. Particularly in crowded undergraduate classes, it is beneficial to all parties to discuss the concept of academic honesty during the first class meeting. Generally, students are discouraged from cheating if they are made aware of the fact that the professor can and will seek out and prosecute students suspected of cheating.
- F. The process of confronting and prosecuting suspected cheaters could also be discussed at the beginning of each semester. By taking time to discuss academic honesty, the professor establishes the importance of same to the class. The more emphasis the professor puts on academic honesty and misconduct, the more seriously students will approach the subject.

## 2. EXAMINATIONS

- A. Some professors give slightly different question sets in crowded classes if it is difficult to control the class. The use of two (2) to four (4) different exams is recommended. The differences between exams can be as simple as mixing up the order of the questions.
- B. If an exam is closed book and/or notes, the professor should take steps to assure that all items other than the exam itself are on the floor and not on the exam table. Some professors ask for cell phones to be disabled and put away unless a student is expecting an emergency call and so notifies the instructor ahead of time.
- C. As many of you know, some students cheat on closed book exams by writing on the desk top prior to the exam. Be aware of this technique and look for writing on the desktop.
- D. Some students within the College have developed a more sophisticated technique of using hand signals during the exam, to send answers to one another. Watch for any unusual or repetitive hand motions from any students.
- E. Students may also attempt to pass notes back and forth between neighbors. If at all possible, students should be seated so that there is at least one empty seat on each side of every student.
- F. It is a good idea to change the seats of the students before starting the exam. The new arrangement may help if the students plan to cheat as a group.
- F. Some students may try to take advantage of the situation when TA(s) proctor an exam. They believe that TA(s) may not detect cheating or would not confront students who appear to be cheating. Particularly in a crowded class room, assigning several graduate students to proctor the class, giving different version of the question sets and distributing the students in the class with as large distances as possible may help.
- G. Make up exams should be given on a very limited basis. The makeup exam should always be different from the main exam. If a student cannot take the exam at the regularly scheduled time, it is better if he or she takes the exam after the class. Giving the exam early can compromise the regularly scheduled exam for the rest of the class.

### 3. PAPERS

- A. Submitting the written papers of the students through “Turn It In” is beneficial to avoid copying from the internet resources.
- B. Please remember that “Turn It In” reports similarities between addresses, names, names of affiliations, and some common expressions. It will indicate similarities between papers, even if the copied sections are quoted and/or proper references are provided. Please confirm that the reported similarities refer to full sentences or sections of paragraphs before taking any actions.

### 4. PROCESS

- A. The process of confronting students suspected of cheating is articulated on the Office of Academic Affairs website “<http://www2.fiu.edu/~oabp/misconductweb/1acmisconductproc.htm>.” Each Professor should be knowledgeable of their rights and responsibilities.
- B. It is highly recommended that, when a professor confronts a suspected student about cheating, he or she has one or more faculty members in attendance. It is always best to have your direct supervisor, i.e., chairperson, attend the meeting.
- C. The suspected student should be confronted as soon as possible after the cheating occurrence is discovered.
- D. Never discuss the incident with anyone other than the student and your superior.
- E. Some professors penalize the student based on the severity of the incident. A penalty could range from invalidating the current incident’s (text or exam) grade towards the overall course grade, a decrease in the grade level compared to what the student would otherwise earn, or an “F” grade in the course. Please be sure to document the case and keep the documents in a safe place for a few years. It may be even wise to prepare an agreement with the student. If students believe that you have no evidence, they may file a complaint against you for false accusation or capricious grading. Some professors would rather report the incident to Academic Affairs, to discourage the student from repeating the same practice in other courses.
- F. In case of confirmed cheating, you have the authority to seek an Informal Resolution, to initiate a formal procedure for Academic Misconduct or to take no further action. Please try to stay calm, do not take cheating personally. Work within the deadlines without hurrying, evaluate the situation and evidence from a neutral point of view, consider the possible accusations you may encounter and finally take the most logical steps. You can download the FIU’s informal resolution form from the following web site: [Informal Resolution Form](#)