

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY RESOURCES

Kevin Kraft, Director of Student Citizenship
W20-507, 617.258.8423, kkraft@mit.edu
<http://studentlife.mit.edu/citizenship/faculty>

Checklist of suggested faculty actions regarding Academic Integrity

In General

- Be knowledgeable about academic integrity and academic misconduct. Check out the Institute Policy on Academic Misconduct and Dishonesty (<http://web.mit.edu/policies/10/index.html>), a summary of the policy with excellent resources (<http://integrity.mit.edu>), and information for faculty members about how to handle academic misconduct cases (<http://studentlife.mit.edu/citizenship/faculty>).
- Communicate specific expectations to students early and often.
 - Include a description of your Academic Integrity policies in your syllabus (sample below).
 - Address specifics of Academic Integrity on the first day of class.
 - Be explicit about what students *should* do, not only what they *should not* do. For example, you might say it is OK to discuss ways to approach p-sets with other students and to work on them together, but not to split the problems up so that you each do half the work and copy each other's answers.
 - When quizzes, exams, or large projects are looming, or it is a known busy time of the semester, make a comment that you are available to answer questions student have about academic integrity. A simple comment like that will remind students that you care about this issue and will notice any violations. Consider sharing a challenge you once encountered (not knowing how to study for a specific kind of exam, for example) that is relevant to the project/exam and discuss how you solved the problem.
- Consider academic integrity when structuring your course.
 - What kind of assignments might you give that encourage original work from the student and make academic misconduct impractical or easy to detect?
 - What quiz or exam security measures make sense in your department? For example, you might choose not to reuse the same questions from past years on large common exams.
 - Consider a "drop the lowest grade" policy to lower the stakes of each individual assignment.
 - Is there value in using turnitin.com or other similar software to detect plagiarism on assignments?
- Be a careful observer of the work students submit, and give teaching assistants clear guidance on how to respond to possible violations they notice. If you get the feeling a particular assignment might involve academic misconduct, follow through by discussing it with the student and consulting with OSC.

When you suspect a violation

- Check with Student Citizenship to see if this student has had other academic misconduct violations before determining a course of action.
- "When a faculty member believes that a student has violated the expected standards of academic conduct, it is generally advisable to arrange to talk privately with the student as soon as possible. The request for a meeting should be in writing; before the meeting, the suspected student should be informed that he or she has a right to come accompanied by any other member of the MIT community. At this meeting, the faculty member should explain the reason for believing that a breach of academic honesty has occurred and to give the student the opportunity to respond fully to all allegations. Appropriate effort should be made during this meeting to avoid an atmosphere in which the student feels harassed." – MIT Policy 10.2.2
- "Prior to this meeting with the student, care should be taken to protect the student's privacy, especially since the facts will not yet have been determined. It is usually not advisable to discuss the incident with other faculty members, including the student's advisor..." – MIT Policy 10.2.2
- Document all violations, meetings with students, and outcome decisions by communicating them to Student Citizenship, even if the particular situation does not require a letter to file or formal action from the Committee on Discipline. Students take courses in different departments and with different faculty members, so a single place where violations are recorded is important for consistency and fairness across the institute.
- Evaluate what, if anything, can be learned from the student's behavior in this situation that can be applied to prevent similar infractions in future courses.

Options for resolving a suspected violation of Academic Integrity at MIT

There are several options available for resolving suspected violations of MIT's academic integrity policy. Before deciding on how to proceed with a case, it is important to check with the Office of Student Citizenship (617-253-3276) to see if the student involved has had any previous violations. OSC staff members are also happy to consult with you about individual cases. The options to resolve a suspected violation are:

1. Academic action within the subject or project

- Most commonly, faculty members determine an academic consequence that is appropriate. Examples include redoing the assignment for a reduced grade, failing the project or assignment, a failing grade in the course, and termination from participation in the research project. More serious violations should result in more serious consequences. Faculty members are encouraged to consult their Department Chair and the Office of Student Citizenship for information on precedent.
- When a faculty member assigns an academic consequence, s/he should also submit documentation to the Office of Student Citizenship in the form of a letter to file or a complaint. Those options are outlined below. Submitting documentation to the Office of Student Citizenship helps ensure that the student does not receive multiple academic action responses for repeated violations without being held responsible for a pattern of behavior across subjects.

2. Letter to file

- Letters to file can be done in conjunction with academic actions within the subject or project.
- Letters to file are generally maintained as internal records only. If a student has subsequent alleged violations, letters to file would be reviewed as part of the determination about how the newer case would be resolved.
- There is a template letter to file on our website (<http://studentlife.mit.edu/citizenship/faculty>) that faculty are encouraged to use. Submission of supporting documentation is also encouraged.

3. Committee on Discipline (COD) complaint

- A COD complaint can be submitted in conjunction with academic action within the course.
- A COD complaint will be reviewed by the COD Chair and considered for a hearing. Cases resulting in a hearing are subject to a full range of sanctioning outcomes, including warning, letter to file, probation, suspension, expulsion, and educational sanctions.
- Information and forms for filing a COD complaint are online at <http://studentlife.mit.edu/citizenship/faculty>.

Sample Syllabus Language on Academic Integrity

MIT's Academic Integrity policy reads, in part: "MIT anticipates that you will pursue your studies with purpose and integrity. The cornerstone of scholarship in all academic disciplines is honesty. MIT expects that you will approach everything you do here honestly – whether solving a math problem, writing a research or critical paper, or writing an exam" (see complete policy at integrity.mit.edu). In this course, I will hold you to the high standard of academic integrity expected of all students at the Institute. I do this for two reasons. First, it is essential to the learning process that you are the one doing the work. I have structured the assignments in this course to enable you to gain a mastery of the course material. Failing to do the work yourself will result in a lesser understanding of the content, and therefore a less meaningful education for you. Second, it is important that there be a level playing field for all students in this course and at the Institute so that the rigor and integrity of the Institute's educational program is maintained. If society is to view a degree from MIT as meaningful, we must ensure that the work done toward the degrees awarded is honest.

Violating the Academic Integrity policy in any way (e.g., plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, cheating, etc.) will result in official Institute sanction. Possible sanctions include receiving a failing grade on the assignment or exam, being assigned a failing grade in the course, having a formal notation of disciplinary action placed on your MIT record, suspension from the Institute, and expulsion from the Institute for very serious cases. Please review the Academic Integrity policy and related resources (e.g., working under pressure; how to paraphrase, summarize, and quote; etc.) and contact me if you have any questions about appropriate citation methods, the degree of collaboration that is permitted, or anything else related to the Academic Integrity of this course.