

Academic Integrity: Cheating

Hi, my name is Jackie Stapleton, liaison librarian at the University of Waterloo.

This video will discuss various forms of cheating and the penalties associated with academic misconduct.

During your graduate studies, you are asked to uphold the values of academic integrity, both in your research practice and scholarship activities.

While trying to uphold these values, the realities of your everyday life can lead to stress and a feeling of being overwhelmed.

You may find yourself battling the temptation to cheat in order to succeed.

Bringing a cheat sheet or whispering to a neighbour, having someone impersonate you during a test are all obvious forms of cheating.

Making a copy of a test, studying from past exams, which have been circulated without the instructor's knowledge, or obtaining the test questions from someone who has already taken the test is also cheating.

Revising or editing a test or assignment after it has been marked and then resubmitting it for remarking is cheating.

These behaviours degrade the quality of scholarly pursuit at the University of Waterloo.

In this scenario: Mary is a masters student juggling coursework, research for her thesis and taking care of her family at home.

Due to an illness, Mary has to miss a full week of classes and has no time to study for her midterm.

Mary decides to bring a cheat sheet to her test.

While writing the midterm, Mary is caught with the cheat sheet.

What happens next?

The instructor reports the incident to the Associate Dean.

This is Mary's first offense of academic misconduct, and after deliberation, the Associate Dean and the instructor decide that Mary will receive a 0 on the midterm and she will be docked an additional 5 marks off her final course grade.

A record of this action is added to Mary's discipline record.

Mary should have explained the situation to her instructor.

If you are feeling overwhelmed or find yourself in a difficult situation, do not assume that your instructor won't be sympathetic.

A simple discussion can avoid potential problems; however, it is too late to have this conversation after the misconduct has occurred.

In addition to losing marks, more serious forms of cheating or repeated misconduct may justify more serious penalties, including:

- Failure of the course
- A 1-3 term suspension, which can be devastating, and can include loss of university privileges, such as office space, funding, computing and library accounts, university housing, scholarships and TA support.
- And finally expulsion.

You may be asked to leave the program after which the expulsion remains permanently on your transcript.

It is important that you are aware of these serious consequences to academic misconduct.

These tips will help you to avoid the temptation to cheat.

Time management is important to balance all of the things competing for your time.

Clarify any course material or questions you may have before the test or exam.

In order to avoid even the impression of cheating, do not talk or sit next to a friend while writing a test.

And finally, if you wish to resubmit or discuss your exam or test questions, do not alter the original answers.

I'll leave you with these questions for self-reflection:

- If you decide to cheat, who is affected?
- And is cheating worth the risk?

Contemplate your response as cheating affects all the people around you and the risks are high.