



# Columbia College

Vancouver, Canada

<b>Category:</b> Education	<b>Responsible Owner:</b> Academic Board	<b>Effective Date:</b> January 2023
<b>Policy/Form Number:</b> 2.5	<b>Approval Body:</b> Board of Governors	<b>Policy/Form Name:</b> Plagiarism Policy and Procedure

## A. **POLICY:**

### **PURPOSE/COMMITMENT:**

The College is committed to developing outstanding teaching and learning and providing world-class education to meet the needs of all learners. This is grounded on a foundation of academic integrity.

The purpose of this policy is to articulate academic integrity by defining academic misconduct and the procedure to follow should academic misconduct occur. Academic misconduct covers cheating, attempts to cheat, plagiarism, collusion, and any other attempts to gain an unfair advantage in an assessment.

### **SCOPE:**

All students have the responsibility to establish, maintain, and develop the academic standards and values necessary for study. Students maintain academic integrity by doing their own work and by refusing to assist others in deception.

### **WHEN TO USE THE POLICY:**

The policy should be implemented if an Instructor believes that a student has plagiarized, cheated, colluded without permission, or used unsanctioned electronic devices, and if the offence is serious enough to warrant a plagiarism or cheating charge.

The policy and procedure are not intended to be used for minor academic infractions that have a relatively insignificant effect on course grading and which may be considered unintentional, naïve, or careless. These are best dealt with by the Instructor as part of normal classroom management and need not be formally reported.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

**CHEATING BEHAVIOUR:** any situation where a student attempts to obtain an unfair advantage when submitting or presenting assessed work or engages in inappropriate conduct during an examination. This also applies to the theft of another student's work for submission. Most cases of cheating, including (but not limited to) looking at another's test, talking during a test, allowing one's work to be copied, using crib notes, submitting an assignment, lab, or essay that is too similar to another student's, using unsanctioned electronic devices or codes, presenting

fraudulent documents, and not properly quoting or citing sources are typically assigned 1 demerit, which equates to zero on the assignment/test/lab/essay for a 1<sup>st</sup> offence.

**COLLUSION:** collaboration, without official approval, between two or more students in the preparation and production of work which is ultimately submitted by each in an identical or substantially similar form and/or is represented by each to be the product of their individual efforts.

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (EC):**

2<sup>nd</sup> Demerit: The Executive Committee to assign a 2<sup>nd</sup> demerit charge and is composed of the VPA or designate, Director of Student Services or designate, and Dean or designate of the Division where the charge incurred (if required). The VPA or Designate and Director of Student Services or designate will initially meet to assign 2<sup>nd</sup> demerit penalties based upon a holistic view of the student. If the VPA or designate and Director of Student Services or designate do not agree on the penalty, the Dean or designate is consulted to be part of the decision.

2<sup>nd</sup> Demerit:

3<sup>rd</sup> Demerit: Where a student is to be assigned a 3<sup>rd</sup> demerit penalty, the Executive Committee to make the decision, consists of the Principal or designate, Director of Student Services or designate and Dean or designate where the charge occurred (if required). If the Principal or designate and Director of Student Services or designate do not agree on the penalty, the Dean or designate is consulted to be part of the decision.

**FRAUD:** Wrongful or criminal deception intended to result in financial or academic gain.

**MINOR ACADEMIC INFRACTIONS:** Infractions that have a relatively insignificant effect on course grading and which may be considered unintentional, naïve, or careless are best dealt with by the instructor as part of normal classroom management and need not be formally reported. Any charge of plagiarism or cheating is not a minor academic infraction and must be reported.

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY APPEAL COMMITTEE (AIAC)/APPEALS:** All charges may be appealed by the student to the Academic Integrity Appeal Committee (AIAC), which will conduct a thorough examination of the facts related to the charge and then either deny or grant the appeal. The role of AIAC is to review charges and either grant or deny the appeal, based on the evidence presented. The AIAC is composed of 3 representatives from the academic divisions, who are appointed by their respective Deans for one year or less. The divisions represented on the committee will rotate each academic year. The position of Chair will rotate among the Division representatives on a case-by-case basis. Note: the AIAC is independent of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee's role is not to review or challenge the plagiarism charge but to determine the penalty.

**PLAGIARISM:** a type of academic dishonesty in which another person's words, ideas, or creations are falsely presented as one's own, usually with the intention of gaining academic advantage. Plagiarism is regarded as a serious offence at Columbia College. Associated dishonest practices include other forms of cheating, the faking or falsification of data, and the uttering of false statements in order to obtain unjustified concessions and/or advantages.

Plagiarism and cheating include but are not limited to the following:

- A. Exams, Tests, Quizzes and Assignments (including the College's Language and Writing Assessment (LWA) or the equivalent thereof, or Math placement test (MPT)
  1. Copying from another student or making information available to another student.

2. Use of unauthorized materials or resources (e.g. crib notes, cell phones, electronic dictionaries, unauthorized calculators).
3. Impersonation.
4. Submission of an exam, test, quiz, or assignment written wholly or partly by someone else.

**B. Laboratories**

1. Copying a pre-lab report, lab report, or post-lab report, or allowing someone else to copy one's report.
2. Using another student's data unless specifically allowed by the instructor.
3. Allowing someone else to do the laboratory work on one's behalf.
4. Using direct quotations or large sections of paraphrased material in a lab report without acknowledgement.
5. Faking a lab report by inventing data.

**C. Essays and Assignments**

1. Submission of an essay/assignment written in whole or in part by someone else.
2. Using direct quotations or sections of paraphrased or summarized material without acknowledgement.
3. The buying or selling of essays or assignments.
4. The submission of the same piece of work in more than one course.

**D. Use of unsanctioned electronic devices**

**REMEDIATION:**

After the first offence, Instructors have the option of accessing student supports to help students understand their charge and learn from the charge.

**Responsible Owner:** Academic Board

**Category:**

2.0 Education

**B. PROCEDURES:**

1. If the Instructor believes that a student has plagiarized or cheated or used unsanctioned electronic devices, and that the offence is serious enough to be reported to the College for formal disciplinary measures, the instructor completes Part 1 of the Columbia College Plagiarism/Cheating report, explains the charge to the student in person or by email (if the student cannot be reached), submits the report to the Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator along with any supporting evidence, thereby initiating a plagiarism charge against the student. It is important that the instructor be explicit in the report, providing documented evidence and a clear rationale for the charge.
2. At times, an instructor may request students to submit an assignment, an essay, a quiz, group work, etc., and include one or more of the latter submissions as part of a student's participation mark. In this case, the purpose of the submission may be to demonstrate participation and, therefore, the submission may not be marked; however, a plagiarism or cheating charge could be submitted, if cheating/plagiarism is found.
3. As part of the investigation to determine if an academic integrity violation occurred, the instructor may require the student to take, without prior notice, an oral or written exam on the content of an assignment or exam.

**4. Grounds for filing a Plagiarism/Cheating charge:**

The decision to charge a student with plagiarism/cheating should be based entirely on the objective facts of the individual case. To respect privacy, a student's past academic performance in other classes or personal circumstances should carry no weight in the decision to file a charge.

An Instructor may choose not to file a charge if they believe the transgression is relatively minor and would be better dealt with through regular class management. In the latter case, there should be no charge of plagiarism or cheating and no report filed.

The Plagiarism Review Committee (July 2015) recommended that Instructors be reminded that they may distinguish between what they perceive to be "poor scholarship" and plagiarism. Instructors have the option of dealing with minor transgressions on their own, both through warnings and mark deductions. Treating minor transgressions as "poor scholarship" rather than as plagiarism may be particularly suited to students in their first semester who are still learning and adapting to academic norms in Canada. This option should not, however, be construed as a softening of plagiarism reporting standards, but as rationalization of the policy aimed at improving our students' understanding of plagiarism rules.

Therefore, minor academic infractions that have a relatively insignificant effect on course grading and which may be considered unintentional, naïve, or careless are best dealt with by the instructor as part of normal classroom management and are not considered justification for a plagiarism or cheating charge and need not be formally reported.

#### **5. Penalties and Demerits:**

The Plagiarism Review Committee (July 2015) recommended that Instructors be advised that in cases they believe to be egregious offences, they have the option of recommending 2 or 3 demerits, potentially resulting in a "F" in the course or suspension/expulsion, even if it is the 1<sup>st</sup> offence. Instructors should use the "Comment" section on the front of the Plagiarism Report form to indicate their recommendation if beyond 1 demerit. In such cases, the Executive Committee will determine the actual penalty.

Each plagiarism charge is normally treated as a separate offence. If a student is charged with 2 or 3 charges at the same time, the default is 2 or 3 separate charges, with the right to appeal (AcB0, July 17, 2014)

However, if a 2<sup>nd</sup> charge is filed with the same Instructor, while an earlier charge is still outstanding - for example, if the student has not met with a Counsellor and the one-week appeal window is still open for the earlier charge - the charge will be considered a 1<sup>st</sup> offence.

#### **Penalties:**

1<sup>st</sup> offence: usually 1 demerit; may escalate to 2 or 3 demerits (see above)

2<sup>nd</sup> offence: typically 1 additional demerit but may escalate to 2 additional demerits

3<sup>rd</sup> offence: 1 additional demerit (resulting in 3 total demerits)

#### **Demerits:**

1 demerit: zero on assignment

2 total demerits: typically "F" in the course

3 total demerits: typically "F" in the course; may result in suspension or expulsion ("F"s in all courses that semester), with the actual penalty to be determined by the Executive Committee, whose members consider the severity of the 2 offences and any mitigating factors.

6. Timelines:

1. The Instructor suspects that a student has plagiarized or cheated and gathers whatever supporting evidence that is available.
2. **Within three weeks of the incident (unless there are extenuating circumstances):**  
If the Instructor believes that a student has plagiarized or cheated or used unsanctioned electronic devices and considers the offence to be serious enough to be reported to the College for formal disciplinary measures, the instructor completes Part 1 of the Columbia College Plagiarism/Cheating report, explains the charge to the student in person or by email (if the student cannot be reached), submits the report to the Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator along with any supporting evidence, thereby initiating a plagiarism charge against the student.
3. **Within one (1) working day of receiving the plagiarism charge from an instructor:** the Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator will email the student at their Columbia College email address, thereby initiating the one-week appeal period. The email will advise the student of the charge being filed, the consequences of the charge, and the right to appeal.
4. **Within one week of receiving notification of the plagiarism charge from the Counsellor:** the student must consult with the Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator and acknowledge that they understand the nature and consequences of the charge and that they have been advised of their right to appeal the charge within one week.
5. **Exception for Plagiarism Charges made in Week 14\*:** The appeal period for students charged with plagiarism in Week 14 and who do not consult with the Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator in Week 14, is extended to the end of the first week of classes in the next semester, and the AIAC hearing is extended to the end of the second week of classes in the next semester.

If the student is not available (e.g., end of semester/out of country) and, consequently, is not informed of the charge, the instructor assigns a deferred grade (DE) for the course, and the charge is resolved according to the Plagiarism Policy and Procedure once the student becomes available.

6. **Remediation:**

Students who have been charged with plagiarism, are contacted by the Rights and Responsibility Coordinator, and advised to seek advice, which could include a visit to an English tutor in the Learning Centre to review assignments based upon guidelines provided by the Instructor, advised to view a Plagiarism module available in the Library, or possibly a reflective response to the charge. The instructor could make such remediation mandatory.

If an instructor chooses to send their student to the Learning Centre, they should email the Learning Centre Manager with their comments on why they charged the student with a plagiarism offence and what they would like reviewed.

7. **No Prior Offences:**

After one week of having received the plagiarism charge from the instructor, if there is no previous offence, and the student does not appeal the charge, the Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator informs the instructor of the appropriate penalty. The Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator and VPA or Principal sign-off on Part 3 of the Plagiarism/Cheating report, which is then entered in the student's file by the Office Manager.

**Previous Offences:**

8. **After one week of having received the plagiarism charge from the Counsellor, if there is a previous offence and the student does not appeal the charge**, the Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator, having checked the student's file for prior charges and demerits and having found one (1) or two (2), organizes the Executive Committee to review the charge and assign the appropriate penalty based upon the severity of the offence.

When the Executive Committee determines the appropriate sanction for an academic integrity violation(s) the Executive Committee will prepare a written recommendation outlining the facts and the reasons for the recommendation on the Plagiarism/Cheating report. The VPA (2<sup>nd</sup> demerit) or Principal (3<sup>rd</sup> demerit), Director of Student Services and if agreement is not reached with the latter two, the Dean (designate) sign-off on the report, which is then entered in the student's file by the Office Manager.

A Counsellor will then inform the student and Instructor of the Committee's decision regarding the penalty.

#### **Appeals:**

9. **Within one week of being notified of the plagiarism charge from the Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator** if a student wishes to appeal a Plagiarism/Cheating charge, they must inform a Counsellor they wish to appeal the charge.
10. **Within two weeks of the appeal being reported to** the Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator, appeals will be heard by the AIAC. The role of AIAC is to review charges and either grant or deny the appeal, based on the evidence presented. AIAC is composed of representatives from the six academic Divisions, who are appointed by their respective Deans for at least one semester term. Three of the six Divisions will be represented on AIAC in each academic year. The student and Instructor are informed of the AIAC verdict after the meeting by the Chair of the AIAC.
11. **Within three (3) working days of the AIAC meeting:** the AIAC Chair submits a formal report of the hearing to the VPA or Principal, who signs off on the decision before the decision is entered into the student's file. The report will describe the circumstances of the case and explain the basis on which the appeal was decided. It will also include a summary of the dissenting opinions (if any) of AIAC members.

#### **12. AIAC:**

The position of Chair will rotate among the Division representatives. The Division representatives will each be paid \$50 per case and the Chair will be paid \$75.

When a student launches an appeal (i.e., informs the Rights and pays the \$50 appeal fee, refunded if successful), the Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator will convene a hearing of AIAC, usually within 10 business days.

Also attending the hearing will be the student appellant, the Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator and the instructor who brought the charge. The instructor may bring one representative from their department, and the student may bring an advocate.

The AIAC hearing proceeds as follows:

1. Chair outlines the procedure
2. Instructor presents with all present
3. Student presents with all present.
4. Student responds to the instructor's presentation with all present.
5. Instructor responds to student's presentation with all present.

6. Student responds with instructor absent (if student requests).
7. Instructor responds with student absent (if instructor requests).
8. AIAC deliberates in camera, with each representative casting a vote. No abstentions are permitted, and majority rules.
9. The decision of AIAC is conveyed to the Instructor and the Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator, who then informs the student. Accounting is also notified in the event of a refund.
10. The decision of AIAC is final (i.e., not subject to further appeal).
11. Within three (3) working days, the Chair submits a formal report of the hearing to the VPA or Principal, who signs off on the decision before sending it to the Office Manager to enter it in the student's file. The report will describe the circumstances of the case and explain the basis on which the appeal was decided. It will also include a summary of the dissenting opinions (if any) of AIAC PAC members.
12. The Rights and Responsibilities Coordinator will enter the verdict in the student's file.

**LINKS TO SUPPORTING FORMS, DOCUMENTS, WEBSITE:**

Plagiarism Flowchart  
Plagiarism Appeal Form  
Plagiarism Reporting Form

**REFERENCE TO EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT CLAUSES:**

**REFERENCE TO BYLAWS:**

**RELATED ACTS AND REGULATIONS:**

**RELATED POLICIES:**

**C. APPROVALS:**

<b>Chair, Academic Board:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Chair, Marketing and Recruitment Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Chair, Finance Committee:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

**APPROVAL FOR ALL POLICIES:**

<b>Responsible Owner:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Principal or Designate:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

<b>Chair, Board of Governors:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

<b>Proposed Review Date:</b> January 2028	<b>Dates(s) revised:</b> October 2022 Note: Plagiarism Committee changed name to Academic Integrity Committee	<b>Replaces Policy/Form Number:</b> December 2020
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