

## Increasing Academic Integrity for Courses, including Online Assessments

A student is most likely to compromise academic integrity when

- (1) that student is feeling stressed from circumstances occurring during the assignment and/or from feeling overly pressured to succeed on the assignment and/or academics overall;
- (2) the expectations and policies for the assignment or the College appear unclear or seem unfair to the student,
- (3) the student doesn't feel connected enough to the community (course and/or College) to feel compelled to adopt community standards, making it easier to justify sketchy choices, and/or
- (4) when the opportunity is present to make one or more shortcuts or dishonest actions possible.

*Below are some suggestions to encourage or facilitate academic integrity and learning in your course, separated by the time they would be most helpful (during course preparation, at the beginning of the course, before each significant or new assignment/assessment, and online assessment recommendations).*

### ***During Course Preparation:***

- Colby remote course information link: <http://www.colby.edu/acits/remote-learning/>
- Include syllabus language: Make sure your syllabus has an appropriate, up-to-date statement about academic integrity. A suggested statement is found here: <http://www.colby.edu/academicintegrity/academic-integrity-on-the-syllabus/> Does your syllabus language convey that you will be fair, transparent, and helpful? Are there suggestions for what a student should do that is struggling on any aspect of your course? Have you specifically addressed citation and collaboration expectations? Have you worked in some flexibility?
- Use more lower-stakes assessments: Consider making most or all assessments and assignments lower-stakes and/or break larger ones into smaller chunks whenever possible to help students avoid trying to do it all at the last minute and generally lower their anxiety levels.
- Adopt transparent assignment design methods: The transparent assignment template can be used as a guide for developing, explaining, and discussing class activities and out-of-class assignments. Making these aspects of each course activity or assignment explicitly clear to students has demonstrably enhanced students' learning. Moreover, transparent assignments directly highlight aspects of academic integrity so that students can best align their work with instructor expectations.  
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/16Fs8aGc8uKnHPISrc0XPKdAThgyERE4TmwRRAQ-9EnE/edit?usp=sharing>

- Use more than one assessment type: Allow students to shine in different ways. Use your targeted learning outcome(s) to choose different formats they can be met. For instance, have them do a project, presentation, portfolio, case study, etc. instead of a high-stakes exam. Giving students choices (on topics or mode of completing an assignment) should improve their buy-in. Consider how you can be sure that each student will have the technology and appropriate resources to complete each assessment and will be comfortable with the format.
- Plan strategies to build rapport with the students: This is especially challenging with fully remote courses. What can you do as part of your course to get to know your students, promote appropriate interactions between students, and have the students become acquainted with you? How can you help students feel comfortable contributing to class discussions and communicating their challenges to you so that you are able to help them navigate those challenges in order to learn the most and be able to do their best work in your course?

***At the Beginning and Periodically Throughout the Course:***

- Acknowledge the reason students are in your course and college: Remind students that they are here to learn, that learning requires effort, risks, and sometimes discomfort. We often learn the most from our mistakes, so they shouldn't strive for or expect perfection on every assignment (and if they knew everything already they wouldn't be here!).
- Discuss integrity and ethics generally: Make it part of your class discussions to talk about ethics and the importance of integrity in a positive and personal way well in advance of any assessment. Feel free to use the themes: Give Credit. Build trust. Reach out. You may include the consequences for academic dishonesty if desired to underline the importance of integrity if you can avoid making it seem like a threat of punishment. You could also collaboratively create an honor code with behavioral and integrity expectations with your class to increase their buy-in (they may even be more strict than you would be!).
- Discuss integrity and ethics specific to your course: Remind students of your policies (don't assume they have the same idea of what is allowed than you have) to make sure they understand what academic integrity will look like for your assignments and assessments. Be sure to specifically address internet use, your expected citation practices, and collaboration expectations for the course generally, as well as for specific assignments. And give students time for questions about what is acceptable or not.
- If using open-book and/or open-notes assessments: Add instruction for how to prepare for open-book assessments, including a reminder that they do have to study, but in a different manner than for closed-book exams. Thus, if it is open notes, explicitly address whether or not "notes" includes "the internet" accessed before or during the exam; whether or not students can collaborate on and use shared notes (including online, such as with a Google Doc) during the exam and whether or not passages copied directly into their notes from other sources then on the exam are allowed. If open textbook, would copying definitions, etc. essentially word-for-word be acceptable or expected? If needed based on your policies, remind and/or teach students to annotate their notes appropriately to avoid inadvertent plagiarism on the exam. Also remind them the forms that plagiarism takes to dispel misconceptions.

### ***Before Each Significant or New Assignment/Assessment:***

- Put each assignment into perspective: Explain why you have chosen this assignment in terms of what they will learn or how they will benefit and how the assignment connects to course material. Students often see every question as importantly grade-determining, so a reminder that each question is only worth 0.2% (or whatever) can help give them a perspective they don't often have.
- Remind students of your policies specific to that assignment or assessment. This can be in separate instructions, a short video, or the first question and/or the last question. Address internet, textbook and notes use, plus citation and collaboration expectations. Suggest students avoid circumstances that might facilitate unintentional but inappropriate collaborations or give the impression that those collaborations occurred, such as taking an individual assessment together at the same time. Solicit questions (or ask students to tell you their interpretation of what they think is acceptable and not acceptable) to ensure everyone understands your expectations. If instructions focus on what *is* allowed, also be sure to explicitly say that everything else should be considered *not* allowed unless it is cleared with you.
- Have them do similar work before major assessments of learning: Give practice, no stakes exams or quizzes with the same format and level of difficulty, with unlimited attempts to lower pressure and avoid potential confusion on graded ones.
- General reminders: What help and resources are available that students can and/or should use to prepare the assignment or to get ready for the assessment? What should a student do that is struggling?

### ***Online Assessment Recommendations:***

- Recommendations for constructing exams
  - In advance of the exam, provide students the exam instructions and necessary details, format, number of questions, time span the quiz is available, time allowed once started and time the exam is designed to require.
  - Give your students similar format practice exams to lower their stress during the assessment.
  - Include questions that are less easy to share or answer with a quick web search.
  - Make questions specific to the student's experience and/or give students question choices in order to make answers harder to share.
  - Incorporate some written- or verbally-answered longer questions or problems. There are phone apps that convert photos to pdf files for easy submission (Scanable, ScannerPro, Genius scan, etc.).
  - Write your own unique questions for each assessment that cannot be answered with a web or textbook search (or from ones shared by previous students in the same course).
  - Create clear opportunities for students to demonstrate their process or thoughts as part of the exam. Examples include an uploaded or emailed document, a video or a brief Zoom meeting, or even an item on the exam where students report how they got their answer.
  - Use different versions of the same assessment when possible. This might include rearranging exam items, or exam response options for multiple-choice exams. It also

might include having a pool of similarly difficult items, and giving half of those items to half of the students, and the other half of the items to the other half of the students.

- Recommended settings for multiple-question online quizzes:
  - Shuffle questions and answers within questions. Also, display one question per page. These settings make it more difficult to share questions or collaborate on the quiz.
  - Limit the period of time a quiz is open as well as the amount of time allowed per student (starting at the time the student starts the quiz).
  - Set the number of attempts to one so students cannot do the quiz more than once.
  - Do not allow review until after the quiz is closed, all students have finished it, and the quiz is graded.
  - Suggest that the student show their work and answer the quiz on paper simultaneously, to be able to immediately send a photo of that paper using their phone in case their local internet or the course-management system goes down during the quiz.
- Helpful links: Moodle quiz help: <http://www.colby.edu/acits/2020/03/18/moodle-quiz/>  
Moodle downloadable timed take-home quiz (to upload answers):  
<http://www.colby.edu/acits/2020/03/24/moodle-timed-take-home-quiz/>  
Google forms quiz help: <http://www.colby.edu/acits/2020/03/20/create-quizzes-with-google-forms/>  
Google classroom help: <http://www.colby.edu/acits/2016/01/20/getting-started-with-google-classroom-2/>
- Limit resources that are off-limits when you can. Disable Moodle during assessments or hide anything you don't want students to access during the assessment if you are using Moodle to administer the assessment.
- Use open-book and/or open-notes assessments if you think it would discourage student interactions and collaboration during the exam. This means the exams can be made more challenging. If you use an assessment that is open notes and/or open textbook, remind students of your expectations (discussed above).
- Use on-campus and off-campus components. Give a last exam with in-person and online chunks, perhaps by giving more quantitative/objective questions while still on campus and more qualitative/subjective questions during the final exam period.
- Add group learning opportunities. For example, utilize two-stage exams, where each student completes and submits the exam individually first for the majority of the grade ([see this document for inspiration](#), but adapt for your own preferences). Then students meet in Zoom breakout rooms to redo the exam in small groups.
- Zoom proctoring has been used for an individual student taking an exam remotely, for instance a student in isolation when the rest of the class is being proctored in person. Here is how one professor has done this for a written exam: the student sets up a desk/table in view of their electronic device (phone or laptop computer) with only the required materials on the surface, including the exam delivered shortly before the exam time in a sealed envelope. The student pans the camera view around the room to confirm nothing forbidden is visible, then puts the device in place to monitor the student opening and working on the exam. As soon as the exam is

completed, the student takes pictures of all pages, sends them to the professor and then sends the written exam back to the professor in a provided envelope via the delivery person.