

# ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

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[colby.edu/academicintegrity](http://colby.edu/academicintegrity)

*Honesty, integrity and personal responsibility are cornerstones of a Colby education and provide the foundation for scholarly inquiry, intellectual discourse and an open and welcoming campus community. These values are articulated in the Colby Affirmation and are central to the academic endeavor. Colby students are expected to aspire to the highest standards of integrity; to understand what is expected in each course or program; submit their best work; accurately represent sources; give credit to anyone whose work is relied upon; and to seek help when struggling with an assignment rather than resorting to unethical means. Course assignments and exams are given to facilitate and evaluate learning required to earn a Colby degree. These are compromised when academic dishonesty occurs. Students are encouraged to contribute to a culture of academic integrity in their interactions with classmates, faculty and College staff. Ethical behavior is highly valued and expected not only at Colby, but also by future employers.*

To facilitate ethical college practices, Colby students need to actively learn effective college study and time-management habits. Frequently, study habits used successfully in high school need to be expanded and refined in college. Well in advance of an exam or major assignment, pursue discussions of general, course, and/or discipline-specific study strategies with appropriate members of the Colby community (e.g., from the list of resource individuals below). Such study strategies include efficient in-depth reading, actively taking notes, appropriately spreading out study sessions for exams, breaking major assignments into manageable smaller pieces, etc. Using a planner/calendar system to document assignment due dates and test dates; to plan daily activities; and to effectively divide up larger assignments and exam studying sessions is prudent. Reflecting on experiences for each course after every major assignment or exam and at the end of the semester helps to determine what is working well and should be continued, and what needs to be modified to improve. Some college students find a few weeks into a semester that they have inadvertently overloaded themselves with academic, extracurricular, and other obligations. At that point, it is acceptable to seek help in prioritizing and deciding how to best deal with the situation, which may be best handled by dropping one or more nonessential activities.

The Colby experience is primarily about learning and growing, both personally and academically. Only students that have the potential to succeed at Colby are accepted into Colby. However, no student is expected to know everything. Thus all students that submit their own work will make mistakes and misassumptions, which provide some of the best (and most memorable) learning opportunities. Exploration (not avoidance) with a goal of competence (not perfection) is an appropriate strategy to move forward educationally. Strive to understand the value of the work assigned in each class (what is to be learned from the exercise or why the professor bothered to assign this work), develop a growth mindset, and learn what constitutes ethical behavior in college and in your chosen discipline. Be aware that each Colby course/program has its own policies and accepted practices as does most every company/institution and division outside of Colby.

Be sure you clearly understand what is or is not acceptable for each course and don't hesitate to ask the instructor for clarifications to do so. For example, is collaboration allowed on an assignment? If so, with whom can you collaborate, and to what extent are these collaborations

acceptable? Are you expected to acknowledge these collaborations? Can electronic resources be used on an assignment? If so, what are the citation requirements and limitations? Never assume that the accepted practices are the same between venues, such as between high school and Colby, or between Colby classes, even those taught by the same instructor. For example, while using and reposting images and text passages without acknowledgement is accepted and even encouraged in social media, the same behavior is almost always considered to be plagiarism in a college course. See also the section below entitled Further Academic Integrity Considerations for Students.

There are ample resource individuals available at Colby who are willing and able to help students with various aspects of their education to ensure the best experience possible. These include course professors (for instance, in office hours or an appointment set up by email), an assigned academic advisor, an assigned advising dean, a course teaching assistant or laboratory instructor, a librarian, a tutor, or even a coach, team captain, faculty liaison, learning consultant, counselor in the Health Center or community advisor, when applicable. If you feel desperate and are considering making a poor choice that is academically dishonest, first seek help from an individual that can help you consider other ethical options (e.g. one of the resource individuals listed above that you feel comfortable consulting). Also realize that the grade penalty in a course for late or substandard work done honestly will be much less than the grade penalty incurred by a sanction for academic dishonesty in that course.

Failure to meet standards of academic integrity at Colby may result in a report of either academic dishonesty or academic negligence. The reporting professor decides whether a particular situation warrants a report of academic dishonesty or academic negligence based on the following guidelines.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- Violating clearly stated rules for taking an exam, completing homework or working on any other academic assignment (such rules may be found in the course syllabus or given in the exam or assignment directions);
- Plagiarism (including material or ideas from sources without a citation and/or quotation marks around any borrowed words);
- Claiming another's work or a modification of another's work as one's own;
- Buying or attempting to buy papers or projects for a course;
- Fabricating information or citations;
- Misrepresentations to a faculty member within the context of a course, an academic assignment or an academic record;
- Submitting the same work (such as an essay) in more than one course without the permission of the respective faculty members;
- Knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty.

Academic dishonesty is a serious offense. Sanctions for academic dishonesty are assigned by an Academic Review Board and may include no credit for the assignment, failure in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the College. As with all College disciplinary findings, a finding of academic dishonesty is placed in the student's file (though not on the transcript or academic record) until six years after graduation or leaving the College. Many applications to educational institutions, such as to graduate or professional schools, request that discipline or academic dishonesty findings be disclosed and addressed. If addressed appropriately (responsibility for the action taken, combined with an authentic statement of the lessons learned), such findings do

not usually preclude acceptance into those institutions unless a finding is quite egregious or there are multiple findings.

Academic negligence consists of a minor, usually unintentional lapse of ethical academic behavior that the student should have known. It may result from misunderstanding expectations; inadequate pre-college preparation; or improper citation practices due to cultural differences. Regardless of intent, academic negligence is a serious matter that identifies a need for further education, for instance on academic honesty and dishonesty or the U.S. standards for use of sources in academic writing. A finding of academic negligence, unlike a finding of academic dishonesty, is not a disciplinary finding of the College and is typically handled solely by the course instructor.

A student should not receive more than one report of academic negligence while at Colby. Multiple reports of academic negligence are generally treated as academic dishonesty, especially when similar in nature.

## **Academic Integrity Process**

*What will happen when a faculty member reports academic negligence?*

Upon determining that a student has engaged in academic negligence, faculty are required to submit a report and select the appropriate sanction(s). Reports of academic negligence are sent automatically to the student, the advising dean and the academic advisor(s). Students who are found responsible for academic negligence are required to have an educational conversation with the instructor about the transgression and/or to successfully complete an instructive module on plagiarism (and provide proof of completion to the instructor). Students are required to complete the sanctions well before the deadline for grade submission for the semester in which the negligence occurred or receive an administrative incomplete in the course.

*What will happen when a faculty member reports academic dishonesty?*

1. The Associate Director of the Office of Community Values, Conflict Resolution, and Restorative Practice (Associate Director of OCVCRP) and the Academic Integrity Coordinator will be notified and they will contact the reporting faculty member and the student in question (in that order) to learn more details.

2. An Academic Review Board will be formed to handle the case. An Academic Review Board consists of the following people: (1) The Academic Integrity Coordinator (currently Rebecca Conry, associate professor of chemistry). The Academic Integrity Coordinator chairs the board, unless this is the person bringing the charge of academic dishonesty; in which case another faculty member from the Academic Honesty Committee becomes acting Academic Integrity Coordinator. (2) Another faculty member, from a pool of three faculty members on the Academic Honesty Committee. (3) Two students, from a pool of seven students appointed by the Dean of Students. (4) The Associate Director of OCVCRP (a non-voting member of the board). The Associate Director also provides guidance to the student through the process and is responsible for record-keeping.

If the student accepts responsibility for the violation, the Academic Review Board will determine and assign a sanction in keeping with established norms for similar cases. In general, sanctions range from failure on an assignment, to failure in the course, to suspension or expulsion. Cheating on a low-stakes assignment or a small amount of plagiarism will generally result in receiving no credit for the assignment plus an additional grade reduction in the course. Cheating on a major project or exam will generally result in automatically failing the course. Students found responsible for academic dishonesty a second time are almost always suspended, and a third finding of academic dishonesty typically results in expulsion. Lying to the Academic Review Board investigating a case of dishonesty will generally result in harsher penalties. Often sanctions will include an additional educational or restorative justice component. These guidelines are intended to give an idea of the range and type of sanctions; the sanctions applied in any particular case depend heavily on the details of that case.

If the student does not accept responsibility for the alleged violation, members of the Academic Review Board will investigate the case by talking with all concerned parties, interviewing witnesses, and/or examining relevant evidence. The process may involve multiple conversations with any and all of the concerned parties. The Academic Review Board may also, in its discretion, consult with other officials or specialists as part of this investigation. The committee will work deliberately and carefully, but as efficiently as possible, since it is in everyone's interests for cases to be wrapped up in a timely manner. The Academic Review Board does not hold live hearings; students are asked to submit written responses to reports of academic dishonesty and reporting instructors provide electronic evidence.

If the Academic Review Board finds a student not responsible for the alleged violation, no sanction will be imposed. The standard of proof for determining whether a violation has occurred is a preponderance of the evidence; that is, was it more likely than not that the violation occurred? If the Academic Review Board finds that the student is responsible for the violation, then the Academic Review Board will assign a sanction/s.

There is no right of appeal from a decision of the Academic Review Board. However, a student or faculty member may seek reconsideration of a decision by submitting a written request (preferably a letter) to the Academic Integrity Coordinator (or acting Academic Integrity Coordinator for the case) within 10 days of that student's receipt of the written finding. A reconsideration may only be sought for one of the following reasons: (i) a significant procedural error resulting in a denial of rights under this policy or impacting the fairness of the board's investigation/proceedings; (ii) the existence of new evidence, not available and not known during the proceedings, which would have significant bearing on the decision; or (iii) aggravating or mitigating circumstances, the existence of which the student or faculty member seeking reconsideration must prove, that would definitely affect the severity of a sanction and that were not previously presented to or considered by the board. The written request for reconsideration should contain all information, evidence and explanations to support the request. A reconsideration may not be sought purely because of dissatisfaction with the decision or sanctions. The Academic Integrity Coordinator (or acting Academic Integrity Coordinator for the case) will review the request, and may consult with the board and other officials or experts to determine the merit of the request. The coordinator will determine, typically within fifteen days of receipt of the request, whether to grant or deny the request. If the request is granted, the Academic Review Board will review any new evidence/ information, and/or address the claimed error or violation and determine whether the finding and/or sanction would or would not change and why. During the reconsideration process, sanctions will remain in effect unless the Academic Integrity Coordinator decides otherwise.

## Further Academic Integrity Considerations for Students

*For all the classwork you do it is imperative that you understand the guidelines and rules governing its completion. The list below is intended to help you determine whether or not you understand the instructor's expectations for an assignment/assessment, which are typically discussed in class, are found in the course syllabus and/or in the assignment/assessment instructions.*

*If any aspect isn't clearly or fully addressed by the course instructor, reach out for clarification before you complete the assignment. If the syllabus/instructions focus on what is allowed, assume everything else is not allowed for that work unless you have specifically cleared it in advance with the instructor (preferably in writing). Assume there are different expectations for each of your courses and for every assignment.*

*Be aware that you are responsible for understanding and following assignment/assessment requirements to ensure what you turn in is your own work. Failing to do so will likely compromise your learning in the class and may be an academic integrity violation, which can come with serious consequences, as discussed above.*

**For each assignment/assessment you should read its specific instructions AND read/reread relevant guidelines in the course syllabus to address at least these questions:**

1. *What reference materials or other sources of information can be consulted to complete the assignment or exam?*

Examples: anything you can find; your class notes; class notes from other students; the textbook; other books; the class website; all internet sites or only selected types; etc.

2. *What types of limited-scope communications with others are permissible while completing the assignment or test?*

Examples: the instructor and/or other students in the class can be asked to clarify an aspect; any other student, such as a tutor or student that has taken the class previously, can be asked to check an idea or give general guidance; a Writing Center tutor can help with formatting and/or language; a librarian can help you find appropriate resources; etc.

3. *What types of collaborations (extensive communications with one or more individuals that cover a significant portion of the assignment content) are permitted while completing the assignment or test?*

Examples: none, all work is to be done individually; potential solutions may be discussed verbally with others, but each student individually composes unique written answers that are turned in; students can work together and submit identical copies of work; work by a student in the course a previous semester can be solicited and used to check work; etc.

*4. If collaborations or gathering information/ideas from other places and/or people are allowed, how is that information acceptably incorporated and are those sources/collaborations credited (if so, is there a required citation format)?*

Examples: everything in your own words with MLA-formatted citations to all sources of information/ideas with (or except) citations to class notes, the textbook, and/or communications from the instructor; only directly copied passages need to be cited; other information and/or ideas may be used any way and without citation; collaborations are to be disclosed by giving names with (or without) extent of collaboration; etc.

*5. What kinds of supportive feedback will be available or is available from the instructor to use for the assignment or exam?*

Examples: comments on a draft that should be addressed in the final submitted work; comments or corrections on similar previous assignments; a sample test on the same material with answers to be able to generate one's own feedback; etc.