



Union
Theological
College

Academic Integrity Policy

Understanding What Is Required in Academic Assessments

Version:	Date approved:	Approved by:	Date of Review:
V9.0	June 2020	Faculty	June 2023



Academic Integrity Policy

Understanding What Is Required in Academic Assessments

Contents

Developing Good Practice.....	3
1) Time Management.....	3
2) Research Skills.....	3
3) Mastering the Referencing System	3
Academic Dishonesty	3
1) Collusion	3
2) Plagiarism	4
2.1) How the College Detects Plagiarism	5
2.2) How the College Disciplines Plagiarism	5
3) Cheating.....	5
4) Submitting or Commissioning Work from a Third Party.....	6
Student Responsibility.....	6
Conclusion.....	6



Developing Good Practice

Academic integrity is much more than simply avoiding plagiarism, but rather is about demonstrating good practice in all your academic work. It relies on the following good practices:

1) Time Management

Make sure that you allow sufficient time to produce your assignments – you are unlikely to produce your best work by cramming your study and writing into a short period of time. If you are pushed for time in the run-up to a deadline it is possible that you will not leave enough time to check that all sources have been quoted and referenced appropriately.

2) Research Skills

Strategies such as reading the introduction and conclusion of a book and then the beginnings and endings of chapters will help you engage with the main argument of a book. This in turn will help you to be much more intentional in your notetaking. Try to take notes in your own words which summarise and begin to analyse what you have read. Avoid close paraphrasing of an author's words and if you do record the text verbatim make sure the material is placed within quotation marks and that the relevant page number has been noted.

3) Mastering the Referencing System

The ability to reference other works in an appropriate manner is a very important aspect of academic integrity. The transparent use of sources not only helps guard against inadvertent plagiarism, but it also provides substantiating evidence in support of your own arguments. For any Union programme the module documentation will provide details of the referencing style that you are required to follow. If you have outstanding questions, you should seek advice from the module coordinator or your tutor.

Academic Dishonesty

Students must not, at any stage of their programme engage with the following academic offences:

1) Collusion

Collusion is the unauthorised and unattributed contribution of two or more individuals towards a piece of assessed work which is intended to be the work of one student. Whilst the College encourages students to discuss and share ideas together it is important to understand the difference between collaboration and collusion. If you utilise the work of others you must acknowledge their contribution. If you offer to provide



work to another student to be passed off as their own work you are guilty of collusion. If you allow someone to copy your work which they then present as their own you are guilty of collusion.

Acceptable collaboration may take the following forms:

- Talking about lectures, tutorials and books with other students
- Discussing the requirements of an assignment
- Comparing essays and feedback after the work has been marked.

If someone proofreads your work, in order to avoid collusion, they may not add to the content in any way e.g. they may not rewrite content where meaning is ambiguous, rearrange the order of paragraphs to enhance the argument, or rewrite sections to improve style. A proofreader may only identify issues in the text which may need to be addressed e.g. typographical errors, spelling errors, grammatical or syntactical errors, lexical repetition or omissions, and minor errors in formatting. It is a student's responsibility to ensure that they are entirely clear about the extent of collaboration permitted, and which parts of the work must be your own.

2) Plagiarism

The most basic definition of plagiarism is presenting someone else's work or ideas as your own. It does not just apply to situations in which there is the deliberate intent to deceive; the unintentional use of someone else's work is also classed as plagiarism. Consequently, whenever you are using or relying upon someone else's work, it is vital that your sources be appropriately referenced.

Plagiarism may take the following forms:

- Borrowing someone else's words e.g. cutting and pasting material without due acknowledgement of the source
- Paraphrasing the words, ideas, or structure of others without giving due acknowledgment to the work that you are relying on e.g. simply changing some of the words or the order of the words without referencing the original author
- Including material in your bibliography that you have not consulted but which you derived from another scholar
- Submitting someone else's work e.g. buying or commissioning work from a commercial organisation
- Self-plagiarism i.e. submitting work which you previously have submitted for assessment in order to satisfy the requirements of another academic qualification.

Students should take special care to avoid infringing regulations concerning duplication or auto-plagiarism. This is especially important whenever a student might legitimately draw on their own prior preparatory work for credit-bearing assessments.

For example, a student might have occasion to present for credit – in an assignment, or an exam – material that they previously drafted for (say) a worksheet or a forum-post or other written (or verbalised) submission, and for which they may have received informal or formal tutor feedback.



To use such material as part of a credit-bearing assessment may be appropriate, if it has not previously been submitted for credit and if the material in question is the student's own work (albeit perhaps incorporating tutor feedback with which they are interacting). However, in any such case, students should explicitly state its prior use as draft material originating in any previous, not-for-credit submission, as a formative learning activity, and acknowledge interaction with any feedback received.

Plagiarism is not restricted to published books and articles but applies to work of others in any form, including lectures, class notes, and online resources. For examples of plagiarism and how to avoid it please see Appendix 1.

2.1) How the College Detects Plagiarism

The College takes plagiarism very seriously and is committed to ensuring that, so far as possible, it is detected and dealt with appropriately. Your examiners are experts in their subject areas and so are very likely to identify work that is not referenced appropriately. Furthermore, all work submitted via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) is subject to scrutiny by the plagiarism detection application Unicheck which helps the College to assess the authenticity of your assessed work. In submitting your work for assessment you are giving the College permission to subject the work to scrutiny by plagiarism detection software.

2.2) How the College Disciplines Plagiarism

Plagiarism is an academic offence and, in order to maintain academic standards, it is the College's responsibility to investigate suspected cases of plagiarism. The College will investigate suspected cases and, where appropriate, take disciplinary action (see relevant undergraduate and postgraduate procedures).

3) Cheating

Students must comply with the rules governing any examinations or class tests. Cheating is defined as using, or making arrangements to have, unauthorised access to information during an exam or class test.

Cheating includes the following forms of misconduct:

- Regardless of intent, the use or possession of unauthorised books, notes, electronic devices or other materials in a test or exam (unless specifically permitted)
- Sharing information or resources (in person or via social media) that facilitates an unfair advantage for one or more students.
- Seeking to obtain a test or exam paper ahead of its authorised release
- Copying from another student's work or communicating with other students during a test or exam
- Attempting to impersonate, or to be impersonated by, another individual during a test or exam.



4) Submitting or Commissioning Work from a Third Party

Students must not seek to gain advantage by using or incorporating into an assessment material that had been purchased or obtained from an unauthorised third party e.g. another student, essay mills, or family and friends.

Student Responsibility

It is important that you read and understand this document and that you familiarise yourself with the guidance contained in it. If you are in doubt about what is required please consult your tutor.

Conclusion

The College is an institution which prizes intellectually honest and transparent scholarly discourse and academic dishonesty, such as plagiarism, squanders the opportunities before you during your time of study. It damages relationships between tutors and students and it damages the relationship between students because left unchecked it has the potential to devalue the reputation of a Union College degree. More positively, plagiarism is to be avoided because it undermines the very essence of your own learning and development. By referencing your sources in an appropriate manner you will give due acknowledgement to your sources, present evidence of your familiarity of literature within the discipline, and demonstrate how you have arrived at your conclusions.