**Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic)**

**Promoting Academic Integrity**

This guide provides information on how to promote academic integrity in five areas: course design, assessment design, assessment administration, classroom instruction, and marking.

Academic integrity is defined as following the six values of **honesty**, **fairness**, **respect**, **trust**, **responsibility**, and **courage** in our academic work (International Center for Academic Integrity[[1]](#footnote-2), 2014; 2021).

Figure 1. Academic integrity values

Successful integration of academic integrity in our courses requires an institution-wide commitment. The literature has supported this idea within the field (e.g., ICAI, 2021; Morris & Carroll, 2016). As instructors, we can promote academic integrity by embedding these values in our course design, assessment design and administration, and classroom instruction. In the following sections, some tips to promote academic integrity values in our educational practices are provided.

1. **Course Design:**
2. Add a reminder about academic integrity in your course syllabus. Specify the academic integrity policy, provide a link to the policy and procedures, and encourage students to seek help from resources available to them to learn about academic integrity practices and expectations at the university, such as the Student Academic Success Services department. Informing students about the policy and holding everybody accountable to it promotes **responsibility**.
3. Set clear expectations for assignments in the course syllabus, and make sure you cover them with the students. By specifying clear expectations for the assignments and evaluating the students’ works in a timely and equitable manner, you can promote **trust** in your courses (ICAI, 2021). Additionally, setting clear course objectives and communicating them with the students is one of the requirements of ensuring effective instruction has occurred (Tuckman & Monetti, 2013). As a tip, you can design some engaging activities to teach your course syllabus to students in the first week. For example, you can break down the syllabus into four parts and assign each piece to a group of students to read and present to the class as a group. You may design a scavenger hunt game to engage students in reading and learning your course outline. Finally, you can create a quiz on the course outline, ask students to answer the quiz questions using the course outline. Alternatively, it is possible to engage students in multiple short activities over the first two weeks to cover the course outline.
4. Create a fair and respectful work environment for the students when you assign group projects to them. Creating such an environment promotes **trust** among students. Walking students through future example scenarios of how trust is needed in their line of work can help them realize its importance in their academic work and thus promotes academic integrity. Some examples include trusting the mechanical engineers with designing safe parts for cars, trusting health professionals with their skills to safely help us with different health challenges, trusting policymakers to design inclusive policies, trusting administrators to be able to read, understand, and implement various policies, and trusting journalists to deliver professional and reliable information. Discipline-specific scenarios relevant to the students' fields are more effective in invoking students' future imagined identities, which can also increase their motivation. Imagined identities have been reported to effectively motivate learners to learn a specific subject or skill (e.g. Norton, 2000; 2013). For example, you can ask students to imagine themselves, sometime in the future, working in a specific job, which demands high levels of skills and knowledge. Ask them to think about how much trust they need to have in their own knowledge and skills to perform various responsibilities of their jobs, and how much the community they are serving can trust their knowledge and skills. These types of activities can motivate students to study harder and promote trust as an academic integrity value.
5. Reflect on how you want to assess your students' knowledge and skills. Using the Backward Design Model[[2]](#footnote-3) in your course design can be very helpful (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). First, think of what skills and competencies you want your students to have acquired at the end of your course. Then, think of how you wish to assess those skills and competencies. Next, design the course backward to reach those skills and competencies.

Figure 2. A sample procedure for applying the Backward Design Model

1. The Centre for Teaching and Learning has valuable resources for [course and program design](https://www.queensu.ca/ctl/resources/course-design) and developing [learning outcomes](https://www.queensu.ca/ctl/sites/ctlwww/files/uploaded_files/Resources/Course%20Design/Developing%20Effective%20Learning%20Outcomes%20Guide%20May%202015%20creative%20commons.pdf).
2. Provide a link to the academic integrity module, developed by SASS, and encourage students to do that early in the semester: [Online Module](https://sass.queensu.ca/courses/academic-integrity/#/)
3. **Assessment Design**

Clearly specifying the expectations in the course outline, including assignment expectations and academic integrity expectations, promotes fairness in our practices (ICAI, 2021).

1. Divide more significant assignments into smaller ones taking the same accumulative time for the students to do and for the marker to mark. Breaking more extensive tasks into smaller ones will decrease the possibility of contract cheating[[3]](#footnote-4), i.e., purchasing assignments or asking someone else to do your academic work for you (Lee, 2019). Additionally, it can reduce the pressure students might feel for doing heavy-grade-bearing assignments.
2. Consider a late assignment submission policy for the assignment. It is recommended to accept late assignments to minimize the probability of contract cheating (Lee, 2019). Some instructors might decide to have a tentative and a firm deadline. Assignments can still be accepted for a few days after the firm deadline, with minor penalties for each day of late submission.
3. For project assignments that are mainly completed outside of class, include an in-class portion to ensure students do the assignments themselves (Lee, 2019).
4. Consider some form of oral evaluation as part of your assessment (Lee, 2019). When students expect to be evaluated in person and orally, they lose interest in purchasing assignments. For example, the assignments can have various forms such as videos, pictures, different forms of arts, and writings. However, there would also be a short in-person component to the evaluation as well.
5. Provide an academic integrity pledge or reminder for students to accept when submitting assignments (Gallant, 2020).
6. Think of authentic assessment as the main or part of your course assessment. Authentic assessment refers to the evaluation that directly assesses the knowledge and skills (Ajjawi et al., 2020; Jensick, 2006; Mueller, 2018; Wiggins, 1990). The focus here is on direct versus indirect ways of assessing their knowledge through different tests and exams. Proposing real-life scenarios and problems to be addressed are common ways of implementing the authentic assessment.
7. Use randomization functions to provide different orders of questions for students when they attempt online tests. This practice can minimize the probability of inappropriate collaboration among students.
8. After you finish designing assessments, read the assignment and exam instructions to make sure they are clear for your students. Having clear instructions makes it easier for students to understand the expectations. Having clear guidelines is also one of the key contributors to promoting trust as a fundamental value of academic integrity (ICAI, 2021).
9. **Assessment Administration:**

Some faculty members might find it useful to give a mock assignment to their calsses at the beginning of the semester. The purpose of this assignment is to orient the students into the genre of the course/discipline. You can look at it as a playground for learning through mistakes. This practice would create an opportunity to find out the strengths and weaknesses of your students in producing content as a demonstrative of their acquired skills. If any of the students do not follow the conventions of academic integrity, you can use their mistakes to educate them on the academic integrity conventions within your field.

Pressure is the main underlying reason for academic integrity departures (Woolfolk, Winne, & Perry, 2012). Lack of academic skills and time management skills can increase the pressure on students, which in turn increases the probability of academic integrity departures (Awasthi, 2019). Minimizing pressure on students can reduce the possibilities of academic integrity departures. Here are three ways to address this issue:

1. Direct students to the time management and academic skills resources (such as [SASS resources](http://sass.queensu.ca/time-management/)).
2. Set clear expectations in your course outline for your students and follow through with them. By doing so, you can create trust in the academic environment (ICAI, 2021). In education, it is recommended to develop and communicate clear learning outcomes to improve the teaching and learning experiences for the instructors and students (Snowman & McCown, 2013).
3. Coordinate with other faculty members to schedule deadlines and exam dates. Coordinated deliverable schedules can minimize unintended pressure created through busy schedules. This can be done by creating an Excel sheet or a faculty calendar. Instructors can add their name, course name, and their assignment and exam dates. If two or more assignments or exams are too close together, the instructors can communicate with each other to move one of them to a different date. Online appointment-making systems are the other option for coordinating dates. Research has shown that for promoting a culture of academic integrity, coordinating course deliverable dates can help (Packalen & Rowbotham, forthcoming).
4. Use tools such as the [Student Workload Calculator](https://cat.wfu.edu/resources/tools/estimator2) to avoid overloading students with academic works in busy times.

Here are some tips that can help *during* the exam administration:

1. Create a document that outlines expectations from students during the exam. Share the document with students at the beginning of the exam. It is good to write the expected behaviours during exams on the board in the exam room and review them quickly with the students. In online exams, the expected behaviour sheet can be displayed for the students before exam starts.
2. Remind students before beginning the exam that they can check their belongings, and if they have unauthorized material, they should leave them outside the exam room. Sometimes, they might have forgotten to leave their study notes outside the exam room.
3. Have multiple versions (in terms of question order) of the exam and give different versions to students sitting near each other.
4. **Classroom Instruction:**
5. Remember to cite your references in your slides and create a reference list. Referencing your sources will promote honesty and trust, which are two fundamental values of academic integrity (ICAI, 2021). Doing so will also model the way to cite for students. Additionally, it will increase the resourcefulness of your slides.
6. Use scaffolding to educate students on academic integrity practices within your field. Scaffolding, initially introduced by Vygotsky, is the process of assisting learners in acquiring new knowledge and skills through step-by-step assistance (Tuckman & Monetti, 2013). For example, having workshop-like sessions in class, where students use their acquired skills in a guided way, can help consolidate their skills while orienting them to the conventional academic integrity practices in their field. Another example would be to invite SASS staff to give short presentations on academic integrity and help students promote it.
7. Design engaging classroom and assessment activities to fertilize respect among students (ICAI, 2021). Using engaging classroom activities promotes collaboration among students and increases their involvement with the learning material. In addition, when students are involved in creating a learning community, their sense of responsibility and chances of flourishing academically increases (Tuckman & Monetti, 2013).
8. Create a classroom environment that is open to honest and respectful feedback. The use of active listening, realizing differences in worldviews, and creating an open communication channel in class are ways to promote respect (ICAI, 2021).
9. Engage students in activities that help them think about how they can commit to every value of academic integrity. Taking a stance for academic integrity, doing right while others might do differently, and promoting risk-taking in evaluating our academic integrity practices promote **courage** (ICAI, 2021).
10. Make sure you remind students of the academic help available to them at the university. One of the recommendations student participants in Packalen and Rowbotham's study (forthcoming) gave was to seek help if one is struggling academically. Therefore, providing information about different support services students have access to will help promote academic integrity among them by (a) showing them how to study well and (b) minimizing the pressure that they might otherwise experience.
11. **Marking:**
12. Accurate and impartial evaluation significantly promotes academic integrity by creating a fair and trustworthy relationship between students and instructors (ICAI, 2021).
13. We can promote fairness by marking assignments accurately and impartially (ICAI, 2021).

Tip: To be fair to all students, you can cover the students’ names while marking their assignment.

Note: When ingraining academic integrity initiatives in our instruction, we need to be cautious not to extend our teaching or workload. Ingraining it into the instruction means having it present at various aspects of the education.

A final note is that for designing courses and assessments, pay attention to the course delivery. Online, hybrid and in-person delivery modes may aim to achieve the same objectives; however, instructors need to adapt their course design, assessment, and delivery based on the course delivery mode. When delivering an online course, use of the SAMR[[4]](#footnote-5) Model (Puentedura, 2014) can be helpful. This [document](http://www.hippasus.com/rrpweblog/archives/2014/06/29/LearningTechnologySAMRModel.pdf) can be beneficial in understanding and implementing the SAMR Model. When preparing to deliver courses online or in a hybrid model, we need to think about safeguarding academic integrity in our assessment. For example, while using essay questions for an in-person exams might be an acceptable assessment technique, administering a similar exam online might increase the opportunities for cheating. As another example, for in-person tests, we might design two sets of a test with different question orders. However, in online evaluation, it is better to use different techniques such as limited time for tests, academic integrity pledge before the test, and question randomization tools to minimize academic integrity departures.

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**Some Useful Resources:**

'Queen's Centre for Teaching and Learning: [Learning Outcomes; Course/Curriculum Design and Review](https://www.queensu.ca/ctl/teaching-support/course-and-program-design)

'Queen's Centre for Teaching and Learning: [Developing Effective Learning Outcomes: A Practical Guide](https://www.queensu.ca/ctl/teaching-support/learning-outcomes)

'Queen's Center for Teaching and Learning [Academic Integrity: In-Course Approaches and Resources](https://www.queensu.ca/ctl/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.ctlwww/files/files/Publications/Academic%20Integrity%20Guide%20April%202017%20creative%20commons.pdf)

'Queen's Student Academic Success Services: [Time Management Resources](http://sass.queensu.ca/time-management)

'Queen's Student Academic Success Services: [Academic Integrity](https://sass.queensu.ca/onlineresource/topics/academic-integrity/) (web-based training)

[Academic Integrity](https://sass.queensu.ca/courses/academic-integrity/#/) (Module)

Academic Integrity Council of Ontario: [Resource Page](https://sites.google.com/view/ai-council-ontario/resources)

International Center for Academic Integrity: [Educational Resources](https://academicintegrity.org/resources/educational-resources)

**Appendix A**

Sample 1: Academic Integrity Statement for Course Syllabi

Academic integrity is central to the educational activities at 'Queen's University. As a student, you are required to be familiar with the academic integrity policy and practices at the university. We follow the six values of academic integrity as outlined by the International Center for Academic Integrity (2021): honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage in our work. Departures from academic integrity are not tolerated. Different forms of departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, cheating in exams, facilitation of departure for other students, forging documents, contract cheating, and departures from the core values of academic integrity. Please familiarize yourself with the Academic Integrity Policy and Procedures. The Academic Integrity Module offered by the Student Academic Success Services is an excellent start point to learn more about the matter.

Sample 2: Academic Integrity Statement for Course Syllabi (Verbatim from Faculty of Arts & Science - Learner-Centred Syllabus Guide)

Queen's students, faculty, administrators and staff all have responsibilities for upholding the [fundamental values of academic integrity](http://www.academicintegrity.org/); honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage. These values are central to the building, nurturing, and sustaining of an academic community in which all members of the community will thrive. Adherence to the values expressed through academic integrity forms a foundation for the "freedom of inquiry and exchange of ideas" essential to the intellectual life of the University (see the [Senate Report on Principles and Priorities](http://www.queensu.ca/secretariat/policies/senate/report-principles-and-priorities)).

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the regulations concerning academic integrity and for ensuring that their assignments and their behaviour conform to the principles of academic integrity. Information on academic integrity is available in the Arts and Science Calendar (see [Academic Regulation 1](http://www.queensu.ca/artsci/academic-calendars/regulations/academic-regulations/regulation-1)), on the [Arts and Science website](https://www.queensu.ca/artsci/students-at-queens/academic-integrity), and from the instructor of this course. Departures from academic integrity include plagiarism, use of unauthorized materials, facilitation, forgery and falsification, and are antithetical to the development of an academic community at Queen's. Given the seriousness of these matters, actions which contravene the regulation on academic integrity carry sanctions that can range from a warning or the loss of grades on an assignment to the failure of a course to a requirement to withdraw from the university.

**It is recommended that instructors add a paragraph here to explain issues of academic integrity that are particularly relevant to the course.**

1. Hereafter ICAI. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. The backward Design Model advocates for thinking of what we want our students to have achieved first, and then start developing our courses based on those objectives (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. A useful resource on how to prevent contract cheating was developed by the [Academic Integrity Council of Ontario](https://sites.google.com/view/ai-council-ontario/home?authuser=0) —link to the [Tip Sheet](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EsF3u_ZDmIWPSh0q_L0RJcIl9hrFT-NE/view). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. SAMR stands for Substitution, Augmentation, Modification, and Redefinition. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)