

## Tips for Avoiding Academic Dishonesty

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Listed below are several strategies for helping students avoid academic dishonesty.

**Cheating:** Understand and follow the guidelines your professors identify in the syllabus. Ask for clarification if there are any questions. Most WPI faculty have different expectations and policies in their classes. Check with class professors to see if they allow students to study from previous semesters' exams and tests. Set sufficient time aside to study for exams.

**Collaboration:** Follow the professor's rules when working with other students on in-class or out-of-class projects, papers, or speeches. Be careful about giving help when fellow students should be working alone. Avoid being dishonest by not lending homework, copies of exams or quizzes or providing answers to other students. Protect your work from being copied while doing assignments or taking tests. Report students that are cheating or being dishonest in any way to your professor.

**Facilitation:** Closely connected with collaboration, clarify with your professor whether it is allowed to share homework or group work, and if so, how to acknowledge group members work and contributions. Be cautious of allowing another student to copy homework, lab work or project work, unless explicitly permitted by the professor. Very few professors will allow students to work together on tests or share exam answers; generally, exams require individual work.

**Fabrication:** Avoid submitting graded work from another class without permission. Fabrication is a form of lying and students will be held accountable for giving false information or handing in work under false pretenses. Allow enough time to finish assignments by budgeting extra time for research, writing, and proofreading.

**Plagiarism:** Use research materials appropriately. Document all sources that are quoted or paraphrased in papers or material used. If there are any questions on how to cite, get help from appropriate sources, such as class instructors, librarians, or the WPI Writing Center.

There are numerous style guides (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.) that may be preferred or required by your major field, or specified by your professor. You are encouraged to visit the [WPI Writing Center](#).

All sources must be cited, including print books and scholarly articles, but also anything you borrow to craft your assignment. This includes primary sources, such as letters, diaries, federal documents, music, and films. Also include secondary sources, such as online books, online articles, websites, professor's lectures, and open source websites with no identifiable author, like Wikipedia.

Be sure you understand the assignment. Read the directions carefully to learn if your professor wants you to use outside sources for an assignment. Once you start surfing the web for ideas, it is more difficult to distinguish your thoughts and words from online sources. If your instructor does want you to use outside sources, clarify the citation style (e.g., MLA or APA).

Give yourself plenty of time to succeed. Don't take on too much or procrastinate. When you are overwhelmed with multiple demands or run out of time, you can be tempted to hand in an assignment that is not cited properly. The consequences of plagiarism are far greater than the consequences of handing in an assignment late or not at all.

When using sources in academic writing, be methodical, not haphazard. Always—starting with the first draft—include the reference information when you are adding quoted or paraphrased material in your paper. Adding sources is not the final cleanup activity; it is an essential first step.

When writing an academic paper, you are joining an intellectual conversation, not observing one. The goal is not to string a bunch of quotes from experts together, but to actively engage with the material and to add your unique voice.

**Group work can be tricky** when it comes to giving credit where it is due. Before you turn anything in, make sure you are clear on whether you need to turn in your own work or if the group can submit one assignment for everyone. ***This is a major area where many WPI students get tripped up!***

*This webpage uses information from WPI, Idaho State University, Harvard University, Purdue University, as well as others.*

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