



Columbia College

Vancouver, Canada

Plagiarism and Cheating Policy and Protocols

(Revised September 25, 2018)

Definition

Plagiarism (the presentation of another's words, ideas, or creations as one's own) is regarded as a serious offence at Columbia College. Associated dishonest practices include cheating, the faking or falsification of data, and the uttering of false statements in order to obtain unjustified concessions.

Plagiarism and cheating include but are not limited to the following:

Exams, Tests, and Quizzes

1. Copying from another student, or making information available to another student knowing that it will be submitted as the borrower's own work.
2. Use of unauthorized material or resources (e.g., cell phone, electronic dictionary, unauthorized calculator).
3. Impersonation.
4. Submission of a take-home exam written by someone else.

Laboratories

1. Copying a lab report or allowing someone else to copy one's report.
2. Using another student's data unless specifically allowed by the instructor.
3. Allowing someone else to do the laboratory work on one's behalf.
4. Using direct quotations or large sections of paraphrased material in a lab report without acknowledgement.
5. Faking a laboratory report.

Essays and Assignments

1. Submission of an essay or assignment written in whole or in part by someone else.
2. Preparing an essay or assignment for submission by another student.

3. Using direct quotations or large sections of paraphrased or summarized material without acknowledgement.
4. The buying or selling of essays or assignments.
5. The submission of the same piece of work in more than one course.

Note: ACBO ruled that a student caught cheating on the LWA could not register. ACBO also ruled that the demerit system for Plagiarism/Cheating should also apply to placement tests such as the LWA, EPT, and MPT. In such cases, demerits will be assigned by the Principal or the Vice-Principal.

Guidelines for Proceeding with a Charge of Plagiarism/Cheating

1. The Instructor suspects that a student has plagiarized or cheated and gathers whatever supporting evidence is available.
2. The Instructor completes Part 1 of the CC Plagiarism/Cheating Report and submits it to a Counselor within 3 weeks of the offence having been committed, along with any supporting evidence, thereby initiating a charge of plagiarism/cheating against the student. Within one business day of receiving a plagiarism charge from an instructor, the Counselor will email the student at their CC email address, thereby initiating the 7 day appeal period. The email will advise the student of charge being filed, the consequences of the charge, the right to appeal, and the necessity to see a Counselor prior to returning to that particular class. The Instructor informs the student that a charge has been formally laid, explains the reason for the charge, and advises the student to immediately see a Counselor. The student is **not** permitted to attend future classes in that subject until they have seen a counselor and signed the Plagiarism Report. When the student complies, a Counselor will inform the Instructor and will tell the instructor what penalty to assign (zero on assignment or "F" in course; see Demerit System).
3. If the student is not available (e.g., end of semester/out of country) and, consequently, is not informed of the charge, the Instructor assigns a deferred grade (DE) for the course, and the charge is resolved according to the following procedure once the student becomes available.
4. If the student is available, the student sees a Counselor. The student signs the Plagiarism/Cheating Report in acknowledgement that they understand the nature of the charge and have been advised of their right to appeal the charge within 7 calendar days.
5. The Counselor checks the student's file for previous charges and demerits. If there **is no previous offence and no appeal is launched**, the appropriate penalty is assigned, and the student and Instructor are informed. The Counselor and Principal sign-off on the report, which is then entered in the student's file.
6. If there **is a previous offence, and the student does not appeal** the charge, the Executive Committee (composed of Principal, Instructor, and Counselor) reviews the charge and assigns demerit points based on the severity of the offence. A Counselor will then inform the student and Instructor of the committee's decision. The Principal and Counselor will then sign-off on the report and enter it in the student's file.

7. Appeals will be heard by the Plagiarism/Cheating Appeal Committee (PAC). The role of PAC is to review charges and either grant or deny the appeal, based on the evidence presented. PAC is composed of representatives from each of the College's six academic Divisions (3 reps alternate each academic year), who are appointed by the respective Deans for a one year term. The position of Chair will rotate among the Division representatives on a case by case basis. When a student launches an appeal (i.e., informs a Counselor and pays the \$50 appeal fee, refunded if successful), a counselor will convene a hearing of the PAC within 10 working days. Also attending the hearing will be the student appellant, a counselor, and the instructor who brought the charge. The instructor may bring one representative from his/her department, and the student may bring an advocate.

8. The PAC hearing proceeds as follows:

- a) Chair outlines the procedure.
- b) Instructor's presentation with all present.
- c) Student's presentation with all present.
- d) Student's response to instructor's presentation with all present.
- e) Instructor's response to student's presentation with all present.
- Steps f) and g) are optional – only if parties choose to exercise this option.**
- f) Student's response with instructor absent.
- g) Instructor's response with student absent.
- h) PAC deliberates in camera, with each representative casting a vote on the appeal. No abstentions are permitted. Majority rules.

Follow-up:

- i) The decision of PAC is conveyed to the instructor and to the counselor, who then informs the student. Accounting is also notified in the event of a refund.
- j) The decision of PAC is final (i.e., not subject to further appeal).
- k) Within three business days, the Chair submits a formal report of the hearing to the Registrar, who signs off on the decision before entering it in the student's file. The report will describe the circumstances of the case and explain the basis on which the appeal was decided. It will also include a summary of the dissenting opinions (if any) of the 3 Division representatives.

9. The student may apply to the Academic Board to have a record of plagiarism removed after three years following its entry date.

Guidelines for Instructors and Counselors

Grounds for filing a Plagiarism/Cheating charge

The decision to charge a student with plagiarism/cheating should be based entirely on the objective facts of the individual case. A student's past academic performance or personal circumstances should carry no weight in the decision to file a charge. An Instructor may choose not to file a charge if the transgression is relatively minor.

Appeals

All charges may be appealed by the student to the Plagiarism Appeals Committee (PAC), which will conduct a thorough examination of the facts related to the charge and then either deny or grant the appeal.

Plagiarism Penalties

1st offence: usually 1 demerit; may escalate to 2 or 3 demerits (Cheating Behavior)

2nd offence: typically 1 additional demerit but may escalate to 2 additional demerits

3rd offence: 1 additional demerit (resulting in 3 total demerits)

Demerits

1 demerit: zero on assignment

2 total demerits: “F” in the course

3 total demerits: suspension or expulsion (TBD by Executive Committee)

Cheating Behavior

Most cases of cheating, including (but not limited to) looking at another’s test, talking during a test, allowing one’s work to be copied, using crib notes, submitting an assignment that is too similar to another student’s, using electronic devices or codes, and not properly citing sources, are typically assigned 1 demerit, which equates to zero on the assignment/test for a 1st offence.

In the case of a 2nd offence, a minimum of 1 additional demerit would be assigned, resulting in 2-3 total demerits, which would equate to either an “F” in the course (2 total demerits) or suspension/expulsion (3 total demerits).

Although the usual penalty for an individual cheating offence is 1 demerit, instructors may, if they feel the offence is particularly egregious, recommend that 2 or even 3 demerits be assigned to an individual offence. Instructors should use the “Comment” section on reverse to indicate their recommendation, if beyond 1 demerit. In such cases, the Executive Committee (Principal, Counselor, Instructor) will determine (majority vote) the actual penalty.