National Louis University subscribes to the principle that academic quality and a productive learning environment are inextricably linked to academic honesty.

Like other colleges and universities, National Louis University has expectations regarding academic honesty on the part of students, faculty and staff, and, indeed, to professional people at all levels of academic activity.

With respect to the academic honesty of students, it is expected that all material submitted as part of any class exercise, in or out of class, is the actual work of the student whose name appears on the material or is properly documented otherwise. The concept of academic honesty includes plagiarism as well as receiving and/or giving improper assistance and other forms of cheating on coursework. Students found to have engaged in academic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary action and may be dismissed from the University.

Faculty has the right to analyze and evaluate students’ coursework, including the electronic submission of student assignments to a third-party plagiarism detection service.

When evidence of academic dishonesty is discovered, an established procedure (see below) of resolution will be activated to bring the matter to closure. For additional guidance on how to apply these policies and procedures, faculty may contact their program administrator and/or the University Ombudsman.

Procedure for Handling Incidents of Academic Dishonesty

1. A faculty member (or other University employee) who has reason to believe that a student has violated the University’s Academic Honesty policy has an unequivocal obligation to confront the student for an explanation and resolution.

2. The faculty member (or other University employee) shall arrange a private meeting (on-line, by telephone, or in person) within fourteen (14) business days of the occurrence of the alleged incident of academic dishonesty or within fourteen (14) business days of the date s/he learned of the incident to: (1) explain the allegation(s) of violation of the Academic Honesty policy; (2) present the reasons or evidence to support such allegations; and, (3) provide a copy of the University’s Academic Honesty policy. The desired outcome of this meeting shall be the identification of a satisfactory remedy (see below) by which to correct the breach of the Academic Honesty policy. The outcome of this meeting will be documented in the university’s electronic student success system. If the faculty member and the student are unable to agree on an available remedy (see below), either party may petition for a formal hearing procedure to resolve the matter. In addition, if the electronic student success system reveals an incident to be a repeated violation of the academic honesty policy, the program administrator will be notified, and s/he may petition for a formal hearing procedure to resolve the matter.

3. The petitioning party shall file a petition for Hearing on Academic Dishonesty (hereinafter petition) within ten (10) business days of the private meeting described, above. Said petition shall be filed with the Senior Academic Officer of the University.
4. The Senior Academic Officer or designee, after determining that the petition falls within the purview of this policy will, within ten (10) business days of receiving the petition, or such other time as may be mutually agreed among the parties, convene a hearing committee (hereinafter committee) which shall hear and decide the matter. The petitioner’s presence is required. An accused student shall have a right to appear at the hearing with or without an advocate. However, the absence of an advocate shall not abrogate the Committee’s responsibility to proceed and reach resolution.

5. The Committee shall evaluate all available evidence and materials, including the direct personal statements of the parties in attendance, and others who have direct knowledge of the matters under review. The Committee shall then, in private session, decide upon the remedy (see below) to be applied. That decision shall be reported within five (5) business days to the Senior Academic Officer who shall inform both parties in writing of the decision and place a copy of said notification in the student’s file maintained by the Office of the Registrar.

6. Either party shall have the right to file a written appeal of the committee's decision. Said appeal shall be received in the Senior Academic Officer’s office within ten (10) business days of the council’s decision.

7. The Senior Academic Officer shall act on said appeal within ten (10) business days of receipt, using whatever means of fact-finding that may be available. All parties shall be notified of his/her decision. This action shall be the final administrative remedy available to resolve matters concerning academic dishonesty. Any remedy requiring further action by the President or Board of Trustees shall be carried out within a reasonable period of time.

It may be appropriate for the faculty member to have a witness present during the private meeting with the student.

The Hearing Committee shall be comprised of a hearing officer appointed by the Senior Academic Officer and two faculty members appointed by the Chair of the Faculty Senate. None of the above individuals may sit on the Committee if s/he is a party in the dispute.

Remedies

1. No further action after initial communication with student
2. Refer student to Learning Support: https://www.nl.edu/learningsupport/
3. Further investigation
4. Mediation by a third party
5. Extra or repeated assignments
6. Re-examination
7. Lowered grade or no credit for assignment, examination, thesis, course, or internship
8. Suspension from the University
9. Dismissal from the University
10. Rescission of an awarded certificate
11. Recommendation to the Board of Trustees to rescind an awarded degree

Note: Remedies 1-7 will be documented in the university’s electronic student success system. Remedies 8-11 shall be imposed only by the President.
Timelines

- Day 1 Date of alleged incident of academic dishonesty or the date the accusing party learned of said incident
- Day 14 Deadline for private meeting between accusing party and student
- Day 24 Deadline to petition Senior Academic Officer for a hearing on academic dishonesty
- Day 34 Deadline for Senior Academic Officer to convene the Hearing Committee
- Day 39 Deadline to report committee’s decision(s)
- Day 49 Deadline to file written appeal of committee’s decision
- Day 59 Deadline for Senior Academic Officer to act on appeal

*Note: All days are business days, not calendar days.*

Definitions and Guidelines

**Plagiarism**

In general, plagiarism is commonly defined as using the words or ideas of another person without proper acknowledgment. The term *plagiarism* applies to taking improper credit for anyone’s materials from any print or electronic source, whether or not that material has been previously published or copyrighted.

It is important to note that the definition of plagiarism does not apply only to extensive borrowing (e.g., a sentence or more). Using a few words, or even one single word (if it is a key term or a freshly coined term), can be considered plagiarism, if not properly attributed to the original author. Moreover—and here is where many writers run into trouble—ideas contained in the work of another, even if they are rewritten into new words, must be attributed to their original author unless they fall into the category of *common knowledge*, a term which will be explained shortly.

To summarize: (1) any verbatim reproduction of the work of another, no matter how brief, must be properly documented; (2) any summary or paraphrase of the ideas of another, unless they are common knowledge, must be properly documented.

By way of example, consider the passage below taken from the following source:


In this passage, the authors are explaining what kinds of online discussions successfully foster connection and engagement:

“…as our findings illustrate, connection to others via discussions must be *authentic*, with questions or topics that are challenging and not rote, and must occur in an environment in which students feel able to express differing opinions and engage with one another about nuances and divergences. This places an onus on instructors not only to draw out experiences and opinions but also to ensure that students can do so in an appropriate and respectful manner.”
Almost everybody knows that copying and pasting these exact words, without quotation marks and a reference to the original source, would be plagiarism. However, these following samples would also qualify as plagiarism.

1. The use of key phrases:
Effective discussion questions must be challenging and not rote, and students must feel comfortable engaging with each other about nuances and divergences.

2. The patchwork of borrowed words and phrases:
Connections made during a discussion must be authentic, which requires questions or topics that are challenging and an environment in which students feel able to express differing opinions. This means instructors must not only draw out experience and opinions but also ensure that students share their perspectives in an appropriate and respectful manner.

3. The unattributed use of ideas:
Online discussions will only foster student engagement if the connections students make in those conversations are truly authentic. To inspire this kind of connection, instructors must create a course environment in which students feel comfortable sharing and engaging with a wide range of differing perspectives on intellectually challenging topics.

As they presently stand, all three of the above samples exhibit incorrect (and unethical) use of a source, and would be in violation of NLU’s Academic Honesty policy. What might be done, in each case, to correct the problem? In simple terms, the writer must make it clear that they are using a source and that they are not attempting to conceal that fact.

In cases #1 and #2, the writer must first decide whether the phrases copied from the original are valuable enough as quotations to be kept as such. If so, each word or phrase must be enclosed in quotation marks and a reference must be added to indicate the source. The reference should be formatted according to the specific style (e.g. APA style) indicated by the course instructor.

For example, case #1 may be rewritten as follows, using APA style:

Effective discussion questions must be “challenging and not rote,” and students must feel comfortable engaging with each other about “nuances and divergences” (Buelow, Barry & Rich, 2018, p. 328).

In #3, the writer has decided not to use exact phrases and has instead paraphrased ideas from the original passage. In this case, no quotation marks are necessary. However, the source must still be cited, because even though the writer has not used Buelow, Barry and Rich’s exact wording, the writer has still used their ideas.

There is one situation where ideas found in the work of another do not need to be documented as a source. That is the area of common knowledge. Common knowledge is information that's considered widely known or easily verified. It might be that there's no one person or entity who first developed the idea, or maybe it's something that everyone in your audience already knows. Information that would be considered common knowledge are facts such as “Water boils at 100°C or 212°F” or “Illinois became the 21st state in 1818.” Remember to consider your audience when deciding if something is common knowledge. For example, American presidents would be considered common knowledge in the United States but may not be so in other countries.
It may sometimes be difficult to determine whether or not an idea should be cited. In all cases, a general rule applies: WHEN IN DOUBT, CITE.

**Receiving and/or Giving Improper Assistance and Other Forms of Cheating**

In addition to plagiarism, the academic community categorizes several other kinds of behavior as “dishonest” and liable for disciplinary or even legal action. In general, these can be divided into five types:

- Turning in an assignment (test, paper, presentation, or discussion post) that was written wholly or partly by another person or agency without so specifying (for example, turning in a paper purchased online)
- Turning in an assignment (test, paper, presentation, or discussion post) substantially edited or otherwise improved by another person without so specifying. (The relative or friend who retypes a paper and corrects all of its errors fits in here.)
- Turning in an assignment (test, paper, presentation, or discussion post) written wholly or partly for another course for which academic credit was received without so specifying.
- Cheating on an assignment (test, paper, presentation, or discussion post).
- Otherwise defeating the purpose of the course by dishonestly violating the NLU policies.

Students, like all professionals, must recognize the following fact: Since the evaluation of student work results ultimately in a formal grade recorded on a student’s official transcript, any work offered in support of that grade which reflects the unacknowledged efforts of another person is an attempt at fraud and must be dealt with as such.

For resources on how to cite properly and avoid plagiarism, go to Learning Support (https://www.nl.edu/learnsupport/) and the NLU Library (https://www.nl.edu/library/).