



College Policies

Guidelines Addressing Cheating and Plagiarism

Introduction

College of San Mateo Catalog states, "The principle of personal honor is the basis for student conduct. The honor system rests on the sincere belief that College of San Mateo students are mature and self-respecting, and can be relied upon to act as responsible and ethical members of society."

Although instructors may hope that students will act responsibly and ethically at all times, situations will arise in which it is clear, beyond a reasonable doubt, that a student cheated or plagiarized. The following sections provide guidelines for such situations by providing specific definitions of cheating and plagiarizing, and addressing the related instructor responsibilities, student responsibilities and sanctions.

Definitions

"Cheating" refers to unauthorized help on an assignment, quiz, or examination as follows: (1) a student must not receive from any other student or give to any other student any information, answers, or help during an exam; (2) a student must not use unauthorized sources for answers during an exam, must not take notes or books to the exam when such aids are forbidden, and must not refer to any book or notes while taking the exam unless the instructor indicates it is an "open book" exam; and (3) a student must not obtain exam questions illegally before an exam or tamper with an exam after it has been corrected.

"Plagiarism" means submitting work that is someone else's as one's own. For example, copying material from a book or other source without acknowledging that the words or ideas are someone else's, and not one's own, is plagiarism. If a student copies an author's words exactly, he or she should treat the passage as a direct quotation and supply the appropriate citation. If someone else's ideas are used, even if it is paraphrased, appropriate credit should be given. Lastly, a student commits plagiarism when a term paper is purchased and/or submitted which he or she did not write.

(Note: the above two definitions are adapted from Tools for Teaching, by Barbara Gross Davis, Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1993, p. 300).

Instructor Responsibilities

1. At the beginning of every semester, the instructor shall [should] ensure that students understand the above-stated definitions of cheating and plagiarism. Instructors should focus on those aspects of these definitions which will probably be most relevant in their particular courses. Issues of plagiarism will clearly be more relevant in classes which require students to write papers. Issues of cheating will probably be most relevant in classes which use multiple-choice and true-false type questions. Instructors are encouraged to make reference to these guidelines in their course syllabi.
2. The instructor should minimize opportunities for cheating and plagiarizing (e.g., see Tools for Teaching, pp. 299, 310, or other appropriate sources for specific examples).

- 500 – 510, or other appropriate sources for specific examples.)
3. Before applying sanctions, the instructor must be able to establish, beyond a reasonable doubt, that the alleged incident actually occurred. For example, a student may admit to cheating or plagiarism, eyewitnesses may corroborate the instructor's account, or an original source of ideas may prove that a student's ideas and/or words are not original. Additionally, instructors must document the details of the alleged incident.
 4. The instructor should report the violation to the Division Dean and Vice President, Student Services for disciplinary action using the Notice of Student Violation of Guidelines Addressing Cheating and Dishonesty.

Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to complete assignments to the best of their ability without resorting to cheating or plagiarizing, as defined above.

Sanctions

Among academic sanctions an instructor may choose to utilize are the following:

1. Warn the student, if the infraction is not intentional or flagrant, that any future violation will be dealt with in a more severe manner.
2. Assign the student an "F" grade (no credit) on that exam or assignment. Students should also be warned that a more serious sanction will be applied should another violation occur in the future.

The instructor shall report the violation to the Vice President, Student Services, whose office maintains such information. The instructor should complete the Notice of Student Violation of Guidelines Addressing Cheating and Dishonesty which includes the following: 1) name and identification number of the student, 2) the specific nature of the violation, 3) the date of its occurrence, 4) how the violation was determined, and 5) any additional comments that the instructor wishes to include.

The Vice President will determine the Collegelevel discipline that is appropriate based on the magnitude and severity of other documented reports related to the same student. Note that disciplinary actions are not part of the academic record, and disciplinary actions are not recorded on student transcripts. All disciplinary information is maintained only in the Office of the Vice President, Student Services, and is confidential in nature.

Nothing in these guidelines shall be construed to restrict a student's right to appeal through the appropriate process described in the "Student Grievances and Appeals" section of the college catalog