

## Department Guidelines on Academic Integrity for Course Instructors, Recitation Leaders and Teaching Assistants

*The guidelines herein are intended for all courses in the Department of Statistics and are meant to be implemented by the course instructors<sup>1</sup>.* Teaching Assistants should also be familiar with these guidelines and provide assistance as instructed by the course instructors. Teaching assistants are often the first to spot academic integrity issues, and must report these issues to the course instructors as soon as possible. The course instructors should report to the Department Chair and the relevant Program Director, seek assistance from ADAA, Cindy Meekins, and then [report to the Center for Student Success and Intervention \(CSSI\)](#) and the dean's office of the school(s) of the student(s) of concern.

### The University on Academic Integrity

While the [Columbia University Board of Trustees](#) holds decisive authority on student discipline, the Deans of the schools and their designee(s) establish standards of behavior for their students, and define procedures by which discipline will be administered. **Ultimately, the University's [CSSI](#) is responsible for [defining violations of academic integrity](#), and reviewing and managing the adjudication process for all [academic integrity violation referrals](#).**

### The Department of Statistics on Academic Integrity

The Department fully supports the [Faculty Statement on Academic Integrity](#). The Department recommends that faculty adhere to [Best Practices for Faculty](#), prepared by an *Academic Integrity Working Group* that consists of Columbia faculty and administrative support units to help avoid incidents of academic misconduct by students.

### Reporting and Handling Potential Academic Misconduct

It is Departmental policy, and in line with University directives, that responses to academic misconduct are determined by the University's [CSSI](#). Here is the appropriate protocol to follow:

- **Teaching Assistants should report possible misconduct incidents to the course instructor.**
- **Course instructors should report possible incidents to the Department Chair.**

Responses to misconduct, including assessing penalties for cheating, should only be taken with guidance stemming from investigation and determination by the [CSSI](#). If you need assistance with this process or expected protocols, please request assistance from ADAA, Cindy Meekins.

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<sup>1</sup> **Graduate students who are instructors on record for undergraduate courses are supervised by the department's Director of Undergraduate Studies. A training session with DUS is required before such instructor appointments can be processed. For first-time graduate student instructors, DUS should be added as a second instructor. DUS should review the syllabus before the start of the course and check in with graduate student instructors at least three times during the course, such as after the midterm, before the final exam, and before final grades are submitted. This ensures that the Department applies supervision and oversight over our graduate student instructors as expected by GSAS policies and the schools these courses serve.**

## FAQs on the Academic Misconduct Process for Faculty

For more information on University policies and processes for violations of academic integrity, please see the [CSSI](#) website. More details for answers to the the FAQs below may be found on the [CSSI Academic Misconduct Faculty FAQ<sup>2</sup>](#) page.

- **What to report?**
  - *Well-founded suspicions of academic misconduct*
- **Why report?**
  - *Helps students to reason through ethical situations as part of the learning process, and promotes consistency and fairness, and identifies students who are repeat offenders.*
- **How to report?**
  - *Report alleged violations on the [CSSI Academic Integrity Violation Referral Form](#)*
- **How will reporting this incident impact the student?**
  - *Students found responsible for misconduct will be subject to appropriate sanctions, and will receive educational support on academic integrity.*
- **What if I don't want to report an incident or I am unsure if I should?**
  - *Contact CSSI to walk you through the Dean's Discipline process and possible outcomes*
- **Do I have to meet with the student if I am reporting them?**
  - *Faculty should meet with the alleged student to notify them that a referral will be made to CSSI prior to reporting the incident, and include the student response in the referral*
- **Do I have to attend the hearing?**
  - *Faculty members do not attend the hearing*
- **How is an outcome determined?**
  - *The standard of proof to determine if responsibility is a preponderance of the evidence.*
- **Will I be informed of the outcome?**
  - *CSSI will communicate with the faculty member once this process is concluded.*
- **What if the student is found not responsible?**
  - *This does not mean they did not violate, but rather, there was not enough proof.*
- **How do I grade the student?**
  - *Grading is determined by course instructors independent of decisions rendered by CSSI. Faculty are encouraged to consult with Program Directors.*
- **Who do I contact for questions?**
  - *Phone: (212) 854-6872; Email: [cssi@columbia.edu](mailto:cssi@columbia.edu)*

## Best Practices on Syllabi

The Department requests that all instructors include a statement on academic integrity on all course syllabi.

- **Sample Statements of Academic Conduct for Syllabi**
  - *GSAS and the Columbia University Undergraduate Colleges offer Sample Statements on Academic Integrity for syllabi.*
    - [Barnard College](#), [Columbia College/SEAS](#), and [College of General Studies](#) sample statements of academic integrity for undergraduate courses
    - [GSAS Statement on Academic Integrity](#) for MA/PhD courses
  - *[Example Statement] Columbia's intellectual community relies on academic integrity and responsibility as the cornerstone of its work. Students are expected to exhibit the highest level of personal and academic honesty as they engage in this class. In practical terms, [note: edit the following statements according to your class] you must be responsible for the full and accurate attribution of the ideas of others in all of your research papers and*

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<sup>2</sup> Responses adapted from [CSSI Academic Misconduct Faculty FAQs](#).

*projects; you must be honest when taking your examinations; you must always submit your own work and not that of another student, scholar, or internet source. Failure to observe these rules of conduct will have serious academic consequences, up to and including dismissal from the university. If a faculty member suspects a breach of academic honesty, appropriate investigative and disciplinary action will be taken following Dean's Discipline procedures.*

- We encourage faculty to define and provide examples of what students are and are not permitted for quizzes, tests and exams, homeworks and course projects. For more details, see the [Preventing Academic Dishonesty: Establishing Standards for Academic Honesty](#) drop down for suggestions on the [Best Practices for Faculty](#) page.

### **Best Practices for Exams**

- Include an explicit statement on **exam conditions** with every exam
- Reserve rooms with enough seats *with a writing space*<sup>3</sup> to space students apart (reservations can be requested through the department; contact ADAA, Cindy Meekins.)
  - Request exam rooms be booked next to each other, if possible
- Implement assigned seating for exams, and/or consider distributing different versions of the exam(s)
- Check student identification (as needed)
- Notify students in advance and at the start of the exam of *test taking expectations and protocols*.
  - Students should have only faculty-approved items on or around their desks. These items should be specified in the syllabus and on the front page of the exam paper as part of the *exam conditions*. For example,
    - Faculty will determine what students may keep on their desks, such as calculators, pencils, erasers, scratch paper/blue books distributed by the course instructor or exam proctors, (calculators on phones are NOT permitted)
    - All electronics, phones, headsets, earbuds, sunglasses, hats, watches, food, drinks, books, scratch paper, backpacks, extraneous or unworn clothing, and accessories should be stowed away from the desks.
    - Faculty may ask students to leave all belongings in the front of the classroom (with phones silenced).
    - Cheat/information sheets are not permitted unless arranged in advance with faculty approval.
    - Students are expected to keep their faces visible at all times (except for medical face masks)
      - No dark glasses, no hats, no hoodies, etc.
- Exams must remain stapled (no restapling)
- Students must be in their seats at the start of the exam
- No reentry after an exit; no breaks without ODS documentation
- Include the rules for exams in the syllabus, and repeat them to students prior to exams in lecture, in practice exam sessions, and by notices and/or emails
- Include an affirmation page, which must be signed by the student, stating that they read and understand the exam conditions, the work on the exam is theirs alone, and they will not provide assistance to, or share the information with, anyone who will take an exam for the same course.
- Review the [Preventing Academic Dishonesty: Establishing Standards for Academic Honesty](#) drop down for suggestions for [Best Practices for Faculty](#), which includes strategies for writing exams.

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<sup>3</sup> Some classrooms have chairs without a writing table. While these chairs are acceptable for lectures, they are problematic for exams. Instructors should reserve additional classrooms for exams.

## Best Practices for Proctoring

- **Proctor's suspicions of academic violations must be reported to course instructors**
- Instruct all proctors to walk around the classroom and keep eyes on students during the entirety of exam periods. (Recitation Leaders and Teaching Assistants are responsible for proctoring exams; Graders can also support proctoring needs.)
- Before each exam, inform and/or remind Recitation Leaders (RLs) and Teaching Assistants (TAs) of how to handle suspected academic violations.
  - Quiet verbal warnings (during the exam) can be given to students who violate exam conditions.
  - Some faculty prefer that the RLs and TAs draft a brief note to the course instructor during the exam period.
  - When applicable and possible, students could be asked to move to different seats
- Provide accommodations determined by the Columbia Office of Disability Services (ODS) and the Barnard Center for Accessibility Resources and Disability Services (CARDS), as long as they do not undermine the academic integrity of the exam and/or course. When there are concerns about these accommodations, reach out to ADAA, Cindy Meekins for assistance.
  - Direct students who request accommodations to ODS or CARDS.
  - Plan ODS/CARDS accommodations in advance, as needed (such as for extra time, special testing locations, etc.)

## Best Practices for Homework

- Expectations and policies regarding collaboration, and/or the [use of AI](#) and other resources, online or otherwise, should be included on syllabi and explained to students in lectures.
- Inform RLs and TAs about faculty expectations and policies regarding collaboration, etc., and how to administer faculty expectations and policies.
- Guide RLs and TAs on how to report concerns to the course instructor, and on uniform application of the expectations and policies.
- Clarify on syllabi and in class what are permitted collaborations for homework, projects, labs, etc, as suggested in the *Preventing Academic Dishonesty: Establishing Standards for Academic Honesty* drop down on the [Best Practices for Faculty](#) page.