

THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Guidance Notes on Academic Honesty

1. What is Academic Honesty?

The University upholds the principles of honesty in all areas of academic work. We expect our students to carry out all academic activities honestly and in good faith. This means that you

- take full responsibility for all your submitted work;
- must ensure that all submitted work is your original work; and
- must make a full and proper acknowledgment of the sources of your work and of their intellectual property.

You should always approach your work in a spirit of integrity and honesty, avoiding any actions which might call into question your present and future academic reputation, or that of the University and your fellow students.

2. The Significance of Academic Honesty

The objective of university education is not only to further knowledge and academic excellence, but also to nurture human beings with high moral standards, who will be responsible citizens. One of the ways through which you can acquire these highly-valued qualities is **by making sure that you keep to the following guidelines:**

- submit original work in all areas of your study including Field Experience;
- present genuine (i.e. not falsified or fabricated) information and data;
- properly acknowledge all uses of the work of others, which may include their words, ideas, artistic products, inventions, lesson plans and research findings, etc.; and
- correctly apply the citation system accepted by the University in referencing the works used.

3. Breaches of Academic Honesty

Forms of Academic Dishonesty

- **Plagiarism:** This is not just confined to copying another's words, sentences and/or paragraphs, but also means borrowing another's idea, concept or argument without proper acknowledgment. It is a serious academic offence in the intellectual world as it stifles creativity and originality, whilst denying you the opportunity of learning from your work. There is zero tolerance for plagiarism at any level at the University as clearly spelt out in the Policy. Even if you just copy a phrase or sentence, or borrow an idea and/or concept without proper referencing, you have already committed plagiarism, an academic theft similar to stealing. You should avoid it at all costs. Also, it does not matter what the nature of the source is. It may be a book, a magazine, a newspaper article, a table or passage from the internet, or simply a course work of another student or even teaching material distributed by your course teachers.

The most obvious form of plagiarism is direct copying without referencing. Modifying the way the author expresses his idea and passing this off as your own, that is, paraphrasing the author's idea, is another form of plagiarism though it is less explicit. Students, however, often fall prey to this form of plagiarism. Other forms may include borrowing the work of others by attaching one's name to it or the indirect borrowing of work from a secondary source cited in the original source without properly acknowledging both sources. The following example may help you to grasp the meaning more thoroughly:

In Hong Kong, women are expected to live longer than men.

(This fact has been widely known to Hong Kong people, so it is already common knowledge and there is no need to acknowledge the source.)

In Hong Kong, women outlive men. According to the statistics of the Centre for Health Protection in 2021, the average life expectancy of women is 87.9 years while that for men is only 83.2 years.

Centre for Health Protection's Major Health Indicators in 2020 and 2021. Retrieved 30 May, 2023, from <http://www.chp.gov.hk/en/statistics/data/10/27/110.html>

(When we give exact figures, unless you are the source provider, you have to acknowledge the source. If you don't do so, you commit plagiarism!)

- **Cheating:** This mainly concerns cheating in examinations and tests/quizzes. It could be copying from notes (with the exception of open book examinations), giving or receiving assistance, altering an examination answer for re-grading, or getting the examination paper in advance.
- **Multiple Submissions:** You are not allowed to submit one paper for two or more courses without prior approval from all the course teachers concerned. You are also prohibited from re-submitting any already assessed paper for another course, or using any part of the same without proper acknowledgement.
- **Impersonation / Surrogate:** You must not engage anyone to take an examination or to complete a paper / coursework on your behalf, neither should you sit an examination for other nor complete a paper / coursework for other nor submit a paper / coursework in another's name.

- **Fabrication / Falsification:** You must not fabricate data for research or provide falsified information or facts (e.g. forging medical certificates in case of absence from examinations).
- **Collusion:** You must not work with another student in the preparation and production of work which is presented as your own or his / her own.

Sometimes students may think that they have not committed plagiarism if their work includes only a small portion of plagiarized passages but a substantial part of their own work. This is wrong. Also, the internet provides students with easy access to various forms of academic work. Some students may think that using material found on the internet does not constitute plagiarism as the material is accessible by the public. Again this is wrong. You should give due acknowledgement to the author whose work you are using, regardless of the portion of plagiarized passages or sources.

4. How to avoid academic misconduct

You safeguard yourself against possible breaches of academic honesty by:

- taking the actions recommended in para. 2;
- consulting your lecturer / instructor / supervisor when you are in doubt about any of the items in para. 3;
- planning ahead in order to avoid doing your writing or research at the last minute;
- seeking the approval of your lecturer / instructor / supervisor when you wish to use your previous work as a foundation or part of your present work; and
- making reference to the appropriate materials at the Library which provide detailed information on plagiarism and how to avoid it. For details, please visit:
- <https://libguides.eduhk.hk/citing-information/>

Students may be required to submit assignment to 'TURNITIN' (an online web-based text-matching software that searches for matching text and which aids the detection of plagiarism), as a deterrent to plagiarism. Students must be informed by their course teachers that TURNITIN will be used. For clarification, please consult your course teachers.

5. Consequences of Academic Misconduct

Ignorance of the meaning or scope of academic misconduct is not an excuse under any circumstances. For example, if you do not know what plagiarism is, it is your duty to find it out such as consulting your teachers instead of just waiting to be told. Any alleged cases of academic misconduct will be handled by the Head of the academic department concerned who shall then establish an investigation committee to conduct a thorough investigation if a prima facie case for academic misconduct exists. Where a case of academic misconduct is established, the Head of academic department may consider imposing penalties which include written reprimand; make-up work; a lower grade for the assignment/course concerned; and/or a failure grade for the assignment / course concerned.

Where the alleged offence is considered to be serious or is a second offence of academic dishonest, Head of academic department shall refer the case to the Student Disciplinary Committee (SDC) via Associate Dean of the student's home Faculty / Graduate School for further consideration. Any proven acts of academic misconduct may result in the imposition of penalties which include but not limited to suspension of studies for a period of time; deferment of graduation* for a period of time; and / or dismissal from the university.

** For non-local students, the deferment of graduation may affect your applications to stay/return and study/work in Hong Kong. For details of the Immigration Guidelines, you may refer to the website of the Immigration Department (<http://www.immd.gov.hk/eng/services/index.html>), if necessary.*

6. Suggestions

With a view to enabling you to follow good practice, you are required to indicate your agreement that you will uphold the principles of academic honesty throughout your studies upon your admission to the University. Additionally, in order to avoid falling into the trap of academic misconduct, you should:

- plan your work in advance and know what you have to do and when;
- keep a reasonable work, study and life balance;
- give yourself sufficient time for research, field work or preparation of your course assignment;
- strive for originality, creativity and independence;
- know what plagiarism and copyright violation mean and what you have to do to avoid them;
- deal with your personal and health problems properly and in a timely manner, so as to prevent unfavorable factors from affecting academic progress. Please do not hesitate to seek assistance or counseling from the Student Affairs Office if need be; and
- contact academic staff for guidance and assistance in case of uncertainties or difficulties.

7. Further Advice

You have been studying hard to become a student of higher education. Following these guidelines will help you to thrive academically and get the most from your time at EdUHK.