Student Academic Integrity: A Handbook for Academic Staff and Teaching Assistants

Student Academic Integrity: A Handbook for Academic Staff and Teaching Assistants

TAYLOR INSTITUTE FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING | UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY

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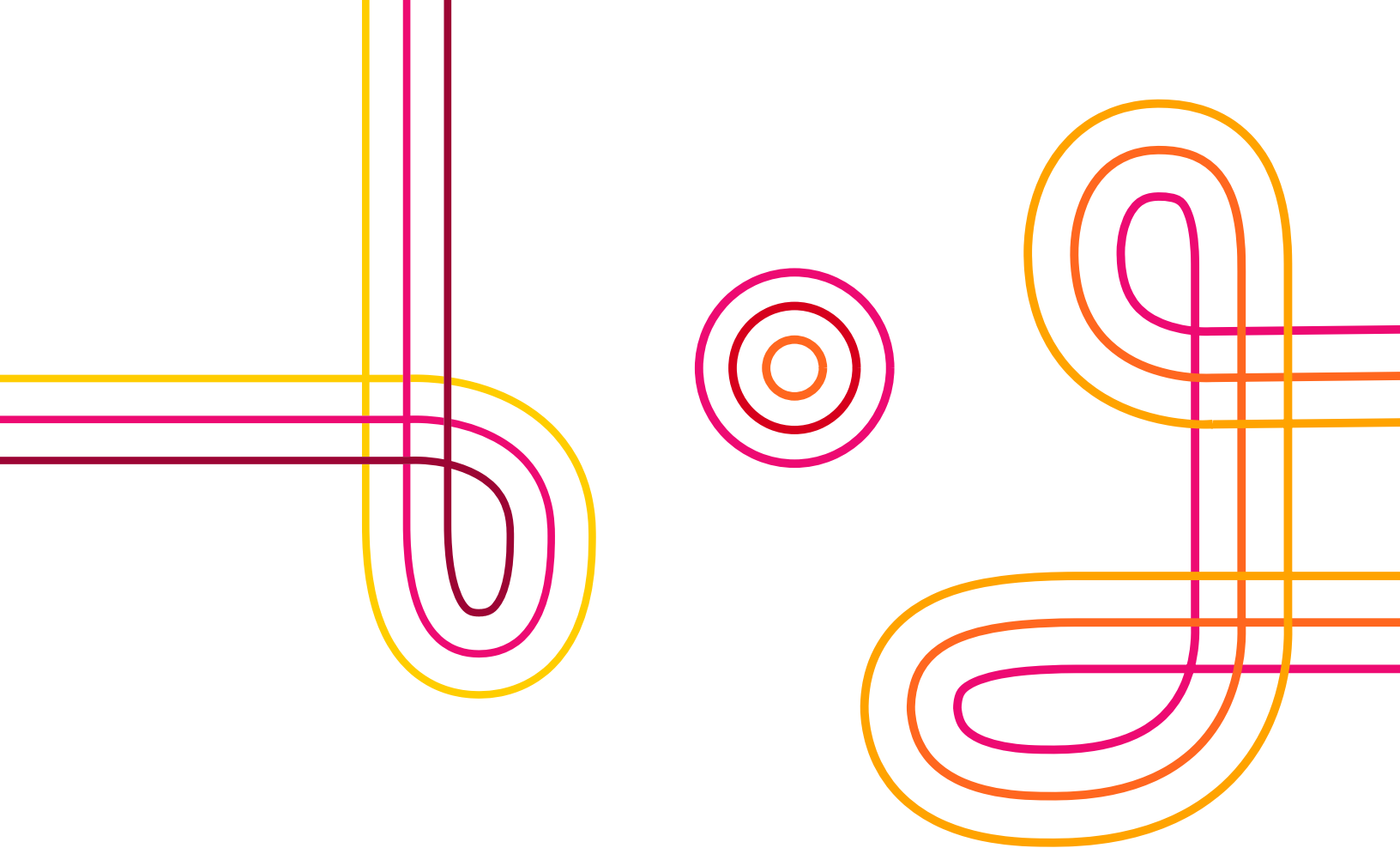
Acknowledgements

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Contents

Introduction

This guide is intended for academic staff at the University of Calgary, though it may also be useful to others on campus including graduate and undergraduate teaching assistants (TAs) and students. It is intended to serve as a companion to the ***Academic Integrity Student Handbook***.

The guide begins with background sections that provide an overview of what academic integrity is, roles and responsibilities related to academic integrity, and how to speak the language of integrity. From there, content is organized into broad chronological categories that guide you through academic integrity before the semester starts (when you are planning your courses) and during the semester (when breaches of integrity are most likely to occur), concluding with a look at the end of the semester and beyond. These are not absolute chronological categories and there can be overlap. Breaches of academic integrity (i.e., academic misconduct) can happen at any time, and these breaches can be complex. This guide is not meant to address all possible situations or outcomes, but instead to provide practical support to help you understand what you can do to promote academic integrity and what to do when a case of academic misconduct arises.

A key message woven throughout this guide is that you are not alone when it comes to promoting integrity or addressing academic misconduct. Cases of misconduct are not handled by individual academic staff members or teaching assistants at the University of Calgary. Instead, cases are investigated and managed by designated individuals within each faculty, usually an associate dean. There are units across campus that can help you promote academic integrity, and that manage alleged or actual breaches of integrity in your classes.

This guide is focused on, and limited to, academic integrity as it pertains to students. It does not address other forms of misconduct, such as issues relating to employee misconduct, (e.g., breaches of research ethics, research integrity or publication ethics). This guide also does not address issues related to non-academic misconduct (e.g., harassment or bullying).

What is academic integrity?

The University of Calgary's Statement on Academic Integrity can be found in our academic calendars and Student Academic Misconduct Policy:

Academic integrity is the foundation of the development and acquisition of knowledge and is based on values of honesty, trust, responsibility, and respect. We expect members of our community to act with integrity.

Research integrity, ethics, and principles of conduct are key to academic integrity. Members of our campus community are required to abide by our institutional code of conduct and promote academic integrity in upholding the University of Calgary's reputation of excellence.

(University of Calgary calendar 2021-2022, Section K.3)

Academic staff members are encouraged to use this statement in teaching and learning materials to help students understand academic integrity.
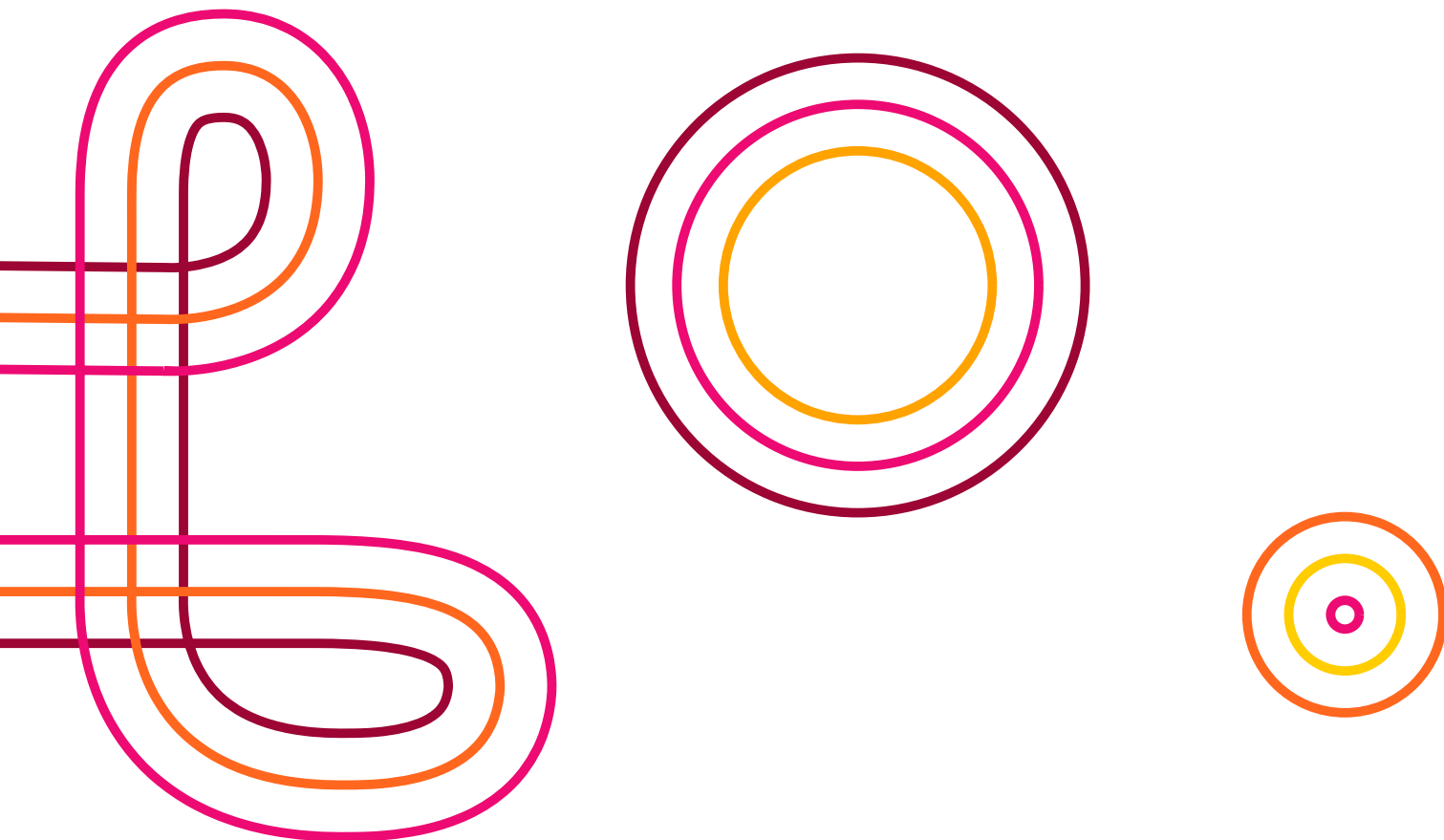
Academic integrity continuum

It is important to note that the terms "academic integrity" and "academic misconduct" are not synonymous. "Academic integrity" is used to speak about ethical conduct in academic contexts. "Academic misconduct" refers to breaches or violations of academic integrity (see Figure 1).

Academic integrity breach: Investigation, case management, hearing(s), sanction(s), appeal(s)

Academic integrity: Education, skill-building and communication of expectations

Critical incident and associated grey area: Identification of alleged or actual breach and initial steps

Figure 1: The Academic Integrity Continuum (Eaton et al., under review).

On the right-hand side of the continuum we have academic integrity, which includes education, skill-building and communication of expectations (see Figure 1). This is the part of academic integrity concerned with teaching and learning, and it is where academic staff and teaching assistants can have influence and impact by talking with students about what academic integrity is. This impact can include setting expectations for your class and providing opportunities for students to learn and practice skills related to academic integrity, such as paraphrasing, citing and referencing.

It is important not to assume that students will arrive at university with academic integrity skills. Whether students are coming to our campus from a local high school, another region or another country, it is up to us to set our expectations for upholding academic integrity at the University of Calgary. As this becomes part of the daily teaching, learning and assessment practices that students experience in a consistent way across their classes, they will quickly become acculturated to the expectations of integrity for our university.

We know that breaches happen. There is a moment when a violation of academic integrity is either suspected or has actually occurred. This is a critical moment at which the incident should be reported. This part of the continuum is addressed by the academic misconduct policies, procedures and guidelines. The processes for reporting a suspected or actual incident of misconduct are outlined later in this handbook. There can be some grey area around this critical incident in which it may be unclear if misconduct has occurred, so it is important to report it as quickly as possible so that it can be thoroughly and fairly investigated. If misconduct has occurred, shown on the left-hand side of the continuum, a sanction (i.e., consequence) is applied in accordance with university policy and procedures.

Following the principles of natural justice, students have a right to appeal the decision. The University of Calgary has an established **Student Misconduct and Academic Appeals Policy**.

If you find yourself in the grey area, and you are not sure if misconduct has happened or you know it has happened, reach out to your department head or, if you are in a non-departmentalized faculty, the associate dean who oversees the program in which you teach. Every faculty has one or more individuals designated to investigate and address academic misconduct. It is often an associate dean, but in some faculties the responsibility for addressing academic misconduct might be delegated to another individual, such as a director. The department head or the associate dean for the program should be able to refer you to the appropriate person.

Definitions and examples of academic misconduct

You can find the University of Calgary's definitions of academic misconduct in our **Student Academic Misconduct Policy**. These definitions apply to students' conduct in all academic activities, regardless of faculty or program.

Table 1: Academic misconduct definitions and examples, based on University of Calgary policy

Type of academic misconduct	Definition	Examples
Cheating	Trying to give or gain an improper advantage in academic activities	Copying from someone else's work, talking to another student during an exam, having, using or attempting to use unauthorized material or devices during an exam, attempting to read another student's exam papers, obtaining assistance from another in completing coursework
Fabrication	Creating or using false records	Fabricating a transcript or other document, or citing work that does not actually exist
Falsification	Altering or attempting to alter work or records for academic gain	Altering transcripts, attempting to change recorded grades, impersonating another student, manipulating, changing or omitting source material, data, methods or findings
Plagiarism	Presenting the ideas, expression of ideas or work of another individual as your own	This includes algorithms, code, composition, data, images, art and ceremonies, and scientific and mathematical concepts

Unauthorized assistance	Cooperating, collaborating or otherwise giving and receiving assistance without the instructor's permission	Working on an individual paper with another, purchasing papers online, receiving help on assessments from family, friends or peers
Failure to comply	Failure to comply with an instructor's expectations or with exam regulations	Not complying with an instructor's expectations regarding conduct required of students completing academic assessment in their courses, or with exam regulations applied by the Office of the Registrar

(Text from the table above has been re-used with permission from the **University of Calgary Student Success Centre**).

For students engaged in research, definitions in the **Research Integrity Policy** also apply. There may be different procedures to follow for instances of alleged breaches of research integrity, so check with your dean's office if you require further guidance regarding possible breaches of research integrity or research ethics.
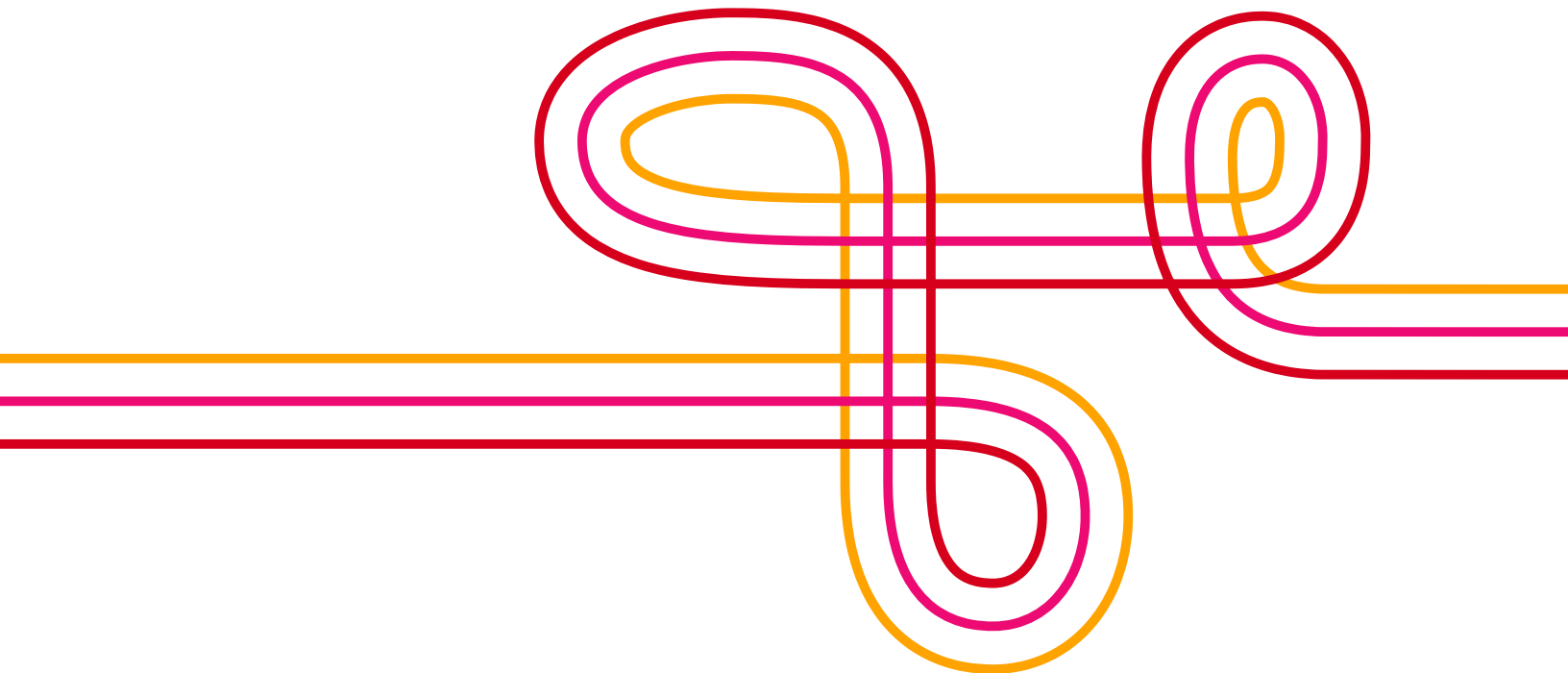
Who does what? Roles and responsibilities related to academic integrity

At the University of Calgary, we take a multi-stakeholder approach to academic integrity. This means that students, staff (including academic staff, support staff and teaching assistants) and administrators all have responsibilities, which can differ depending on your role. Roles and responsibilities can be broadly divided into three categories: Promoting academic integrity, engaging in a process to report and investigate suspected or actual academic misconduct, and enacting institutional policies when misconduct has been found (See Figure 2).

Promoting academic integrity

Academic staff

TAs

Student Success Centre

Libraries and Cultural Resources

Campus community

Process

Academic staff

Administrators

Student Ombuds Office

Professional and support staff might provide support

Policy

Administrators

Professional and support staff might provide support

Staff and students should be aware of the policies

Student Appeals Office

Figure 2: Roles related to academic integrity

In Figure 2, the arrows indicate directionality and sequence. For example, promoting academic integrity starts and continues throughout. Once the process of reporting and investigating misconduct has begun, this can result in the application of various policies and procedures. It is important to note that in some roles, such as those of teaching assistants, there is an expectation of promoting academic integrity, but no expectation of investigating cases, for example.

Responsibilities related to academic integrity differ, depending on your role:

Promoting academic integrity

Education

Mentoring

Coaching

Process

Documenting

Reporting

Communicating the process

Supporting student wellness

Policy

Investigating

Managing cases

Disciplining

Supporting student wellness
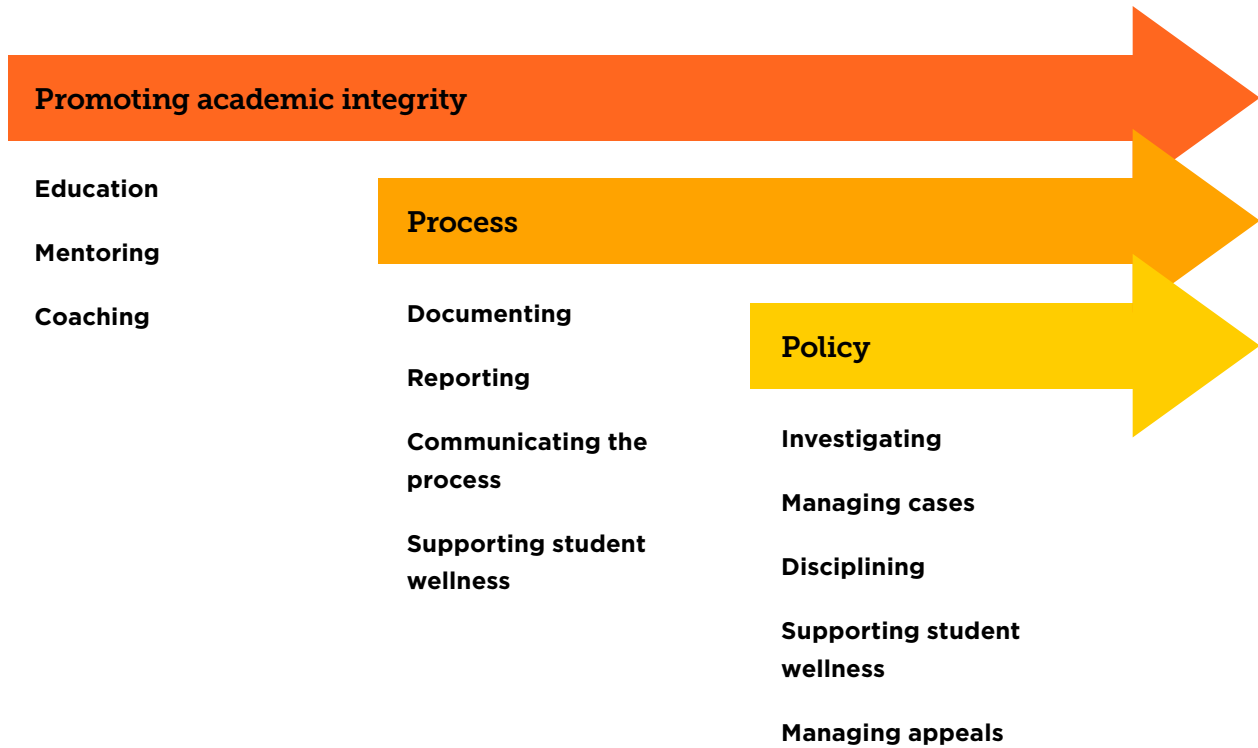
Managing appeals

Figure 3: Responsibilities related to academic integrity

In Figure 3, the arrows represent directionality and sequence. The responsibility of promoting academic integrity is constant. If there is an allegation of misconduct, a process of documenting and reporting begins at that point.

Promoting academic integrity

Everyone on campus plays a role in promoting academic integrity. Educators (including academic staff, staff supporting instruction and TAs), the Student Success Centre, and Libraries and Cultural Resources provide leadership and support to students in classes, labs and other learning environments.

Promoting academic integrity is an ongoing activity that starts before the semester begins, carries on throughout the term and continues past the end of classes. This includes educating students about what it means to uphold academic integrity, as well as providing mentorship and coaching to students about how to make ethical decisions in their role as students.

This work is often thought of as prevention. Instead, think of it as providing students with the skills and opportunities to practise ethical decision-making. These are skills that will help them not only in their role as students, but also in everyday life.

Process

Academic staff and administrators hold responsibilities related to reporting and documenting alleged or actual academic misconduct. They are supported by the **Student Ombuds Office** and other professional and support staff on campus. Every faculty has standard operating practices (SOPs) for reporting and managing student academic misconduct. Check with your department head or the associate dean of the program in which you teach for further guidance.

Note that teaching assistants are not responsible for investigating academic misconduct or imposing sanctions on students. (See the **GSA Collective Agreement** for further details.)

Students are not responsible for reporting misconduct. Although student reporting of misconduct among peers can be an expectation at other institutions (particularly at traditional honour code schools in the United States), this is generally not the case in Canada or other Commonwealth countries. However, if students wish to report misconduct among their peers, there are provisions for this under the student academic misconduct **policy** and **procedure**.

Once the academic misconduct process begins, it can be a stressful and confusing time for students. The **Student Ombuds Office** provides support to students to help them understand how policies and procedures work. **Student Wellness Services** can provide wellness services to students (e.g., counselling).

Although every effort is made to resolve cases quickly, it may take some time for the administrator in charge of case management to carry out their investigation. It is important that investigations be done in a fair and thorough way, so please be patient during the process.

Policy

Administrators (e.g., deans or their designates, such as associate deans or directors) are responsible for conducting an investigation, managing cases and disciplining students found responsible for academic misconduct.

Course instructors and TAs are not responsible for disciplining students for academic misconduct. That is the role of the designated administrator within each faculty. In some cases, administrators are required to engage with the vice-provost of student experience and, in rare cases, the provost, as outlined in our policy and procedures.

The Student Appeals Office is responsible for student appeals related to academic misconduct. They engage other stakeholders on campus as needed.
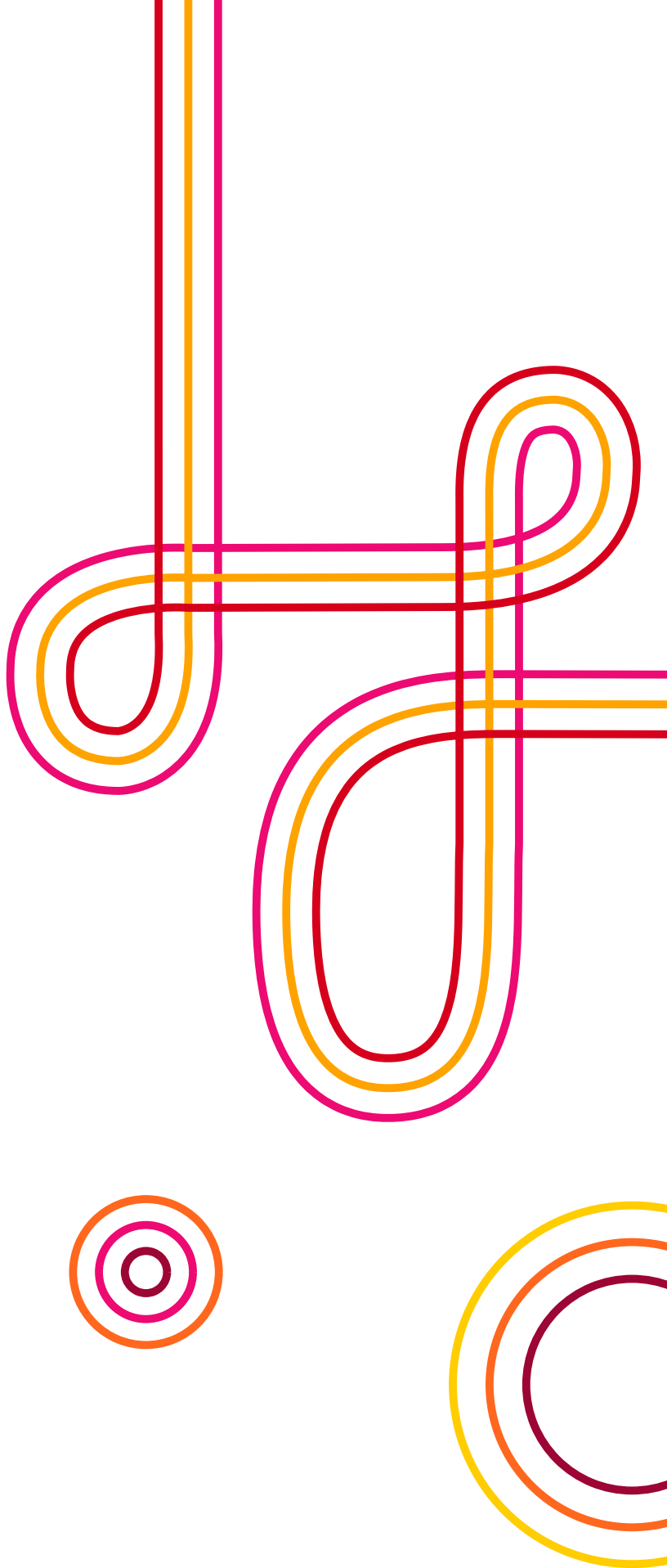
Using the language of integrity

We know that words matter and the language we use is important. A full list of terms related to academic misconduct is available in our policy. It should be noted that the terms "academic integrity" and "academic misconduct" are not interchangeable.

Academic integrity is about acting ethically in teaching, learning and research contexts. We do not report, investigate or manage cases of academic integrity. We report, investigate and manage cases of academic misconduct.

Academic misconduct is what happens when individuals do not act with integrity. This is currently the language used in our policy and procedures. When speaking and writing about academic misconduct, we can use the terms "breaches of integrity or "violations of integrity" as synonyms for academic misconduct.

At the University of Calgary we take a proactive approach to academic integrity, including in the language we use and in keeping the focus on teaching, learning and fairness to students. In our conversations with students and others, it can be helpful to use the language of integrity that focuses on education and support (see Table 2 below).

Table 2: The language of academic integrity

Preferred language	Language to avoid	Explanation
Hold responsible	Guilt Guilty	The words "guilt" and "guilty" do not appear anywhere in our polices or procedures. We do not find students guilty of academic misconduct, but instead we hold them responsible for their behaviours.
Sanctions Discipline	Punish Punishment	When disciplinary actions are taken in response to academic misconduct, we do not use the terms "punish" or "punishment" in our institutional documents. We opt instead for "sanctions" or "discipline," which can include educational responses depending on the misconduct.
Hearing	Trial	The University of Calgary does not conduct trials related to academic misconduct. In other countries, various forms of academic misconduct can be considered an offense under the criminal code and students may be required to attend a criminal trial. That is not the case at the University of Calgary or anywhere in Canada. In the case of an appeal, a hearing might occur. In rare cases, an appeal case might escalate to an externally reviewed case in court, but these proceedings are not administered by the university itself.

Before the semester starts

The time to start thinking about and planning to promote academic integrity is before the semester begins. There are a number of ways for educators to model ethical behaviour in teaching, research and service. This includes ethical assessment of student work, planning activities to help students understand academic integrity, and providing students with formative assessment and opportunities to practise skills such as citing and referencing.

Another example of modelling ethical behaviour is to use proper citing and referencing in one's own teaching materials, including slide presentations. This includes referencing both text and non-text elements of slide decks. For example, even if you have permission to use images from a textbook in your slide deck, you model ethical behaviour when you provide attribution.

These are a few examples and there are many more. The point is that if we expect students to act with integrity, then it is up to educators and administrators to model ethical conduct.

Assessment design

Ethical assessment of student work is a key responsibility of academic staff. This includes designing assessments that provide opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge and providing students with clear assessment criteria. The Taylor Institute's ***Guiding Principles for Assessment of Students' Learning*** is an excellent resource on assessment.

There is no such thing as a "cheat proof" assignment, quiz or exam. Instead of trying to make your assessments impervious to cheating, it can be more helpful to think about how to design assessments to promote learning by providing students with opportunities to showcase what they know, and give them opportunities to build their skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis throughout your course, as well as throughout their entire program.

Check out ***Universal Design for Learning in Higher Education*** (La et al., 2018) for more ideas.

There are disciplinary differences and traditions related to assessment. In some fields, tests and exams are the norm, but in other fields, learning tasks, field experience or projects might be more common. There is no "one size fits all" approach to assessment, but there are guiding principles for assessing students ethically that can apply in any subject area. These include:

- Providing opportunities for formative assessment
- Communicating assessment expectations clearly
- Providing a clear deadline for submission of work
- Providing clear assessment criteria in advance
- Providing opportunities for students to ask questions or seek clarification about assessment

Ethical assessment checklist

This 10-point checklist can help ensure assessments are ethical and model academic integrity for students. This is not an exhaustive list, but rather it highlights some key aspects of ethical assessment.

- I focus on developing meaningful assessments that provide students with an opportunity to practice and show what they have learned throughout the semester.
- I provide an overview of the assignment, noting how and why the assessment relates to the learning outcomes of the course.
- I provide clear and detailed instructions about how to complete the assessment.
- I provide clear expectations related to collaboration, including if the assessment is based on individual or group work.
- I explicitly state what outside resources, if any, can or should be used to complete the assessment.
- I provide clear summative assessment criteria.
- I provide opportunities for students to practise and receive formative feedback on their learning.

- There are clear deadlines to submit work for both formative and summative feedback and evaluation.
- I provide students with opportunities to seek clarification and ask questions related to the assessment.
- I adapt and update previous assessments rather than recycling them verbatim from previous course offerings.

Planning educational activities related to academic integrity

Academic integrity is a foundation for ethical decision-making in the workplace, as well as in daily life. As such, it is appropriate to incorporate educational opportunities for students to learn about academic integrity in class. Activities to learn about academic integrity in class can vary according to discipline. For example, Dr. Mairi Cowan, a history professor at the University of Toronto, developed a footnote treasure hunt to help her students learn about the importance of footnotes, citing and referencing in the discipline of history (see Eaton, 2021).

As you are developing your course, think about incorporating activities that help students learn about academic integrity in proactive and positive ways. The Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning has an excellent section on academic integrity in their **Resource Library**, and can provide individual **consultations** to help provide further support.

Planning formative assessment and opportunities to practice academic integrity

In addition to supporting students with learning activities, it is important to give them opportunities to practise skills related to academic integrity, such as citing and referencing. These skills are built over time and require lots of practise. Offering students feedback on draft written work that includes a formative review of references can be helpful.

Citing and referencing can be particularly difficult skills for students to learn, especially if they are taking courses in more than one discipline where referencing styles differ.

Libraries and Cultural Resources has a number of **downloadable citation guides** available to help students learn citing and referencing practices.

Planning academic integrity support for students

You can reach out to the Student Success Centre (SSC) to invite a member of their staff to your class to speak with your students about the services and workshops they offer to help students learn about academic integrity.

In addition, you can add academic integrity support to the D2L sites for your courses. Academic staff can request quizzes and specific content to direct students towards.

Although you can reach out to the SSC at any time during the semester, you can also work with them prior to the start of the term to schedule an in-class presentation. **Contact the SSC for more details**.
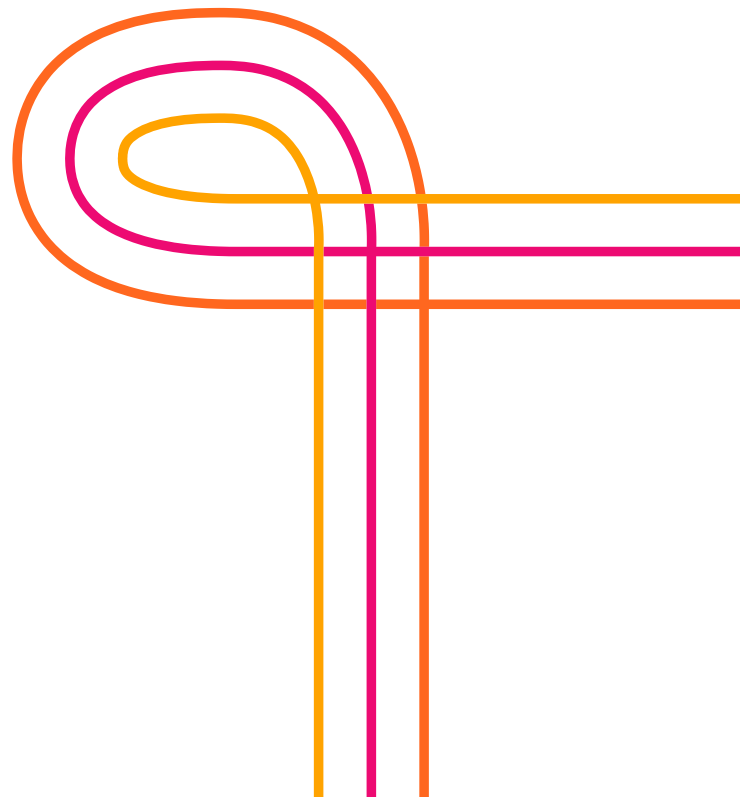
During the semester

Communicating with your students about academic integrity does not end with having a statement in the course outline. It is important to create ongoing opportunities for students to learn about expectations related to academic integrity, to have opportunities to ask questions and seek clarification, and to practise skills such as citing and referencing as learning activities.

Talking to your students about academic integrity

Academic integrity can be an uncomfortable topic to talk about. Educators are in a unique position to demystify this topic for students and create opportunities for dialogue with students. How you do this will depend on your academic discipline and your own teaching approaches. Below are some prompts to help get the conversation going. Feel free to adapt these or add your own. The goal is to have open and clear conversations with students.

Conversation starters

- What does academic integrity mean to you?
- What do you think I expect from you as your instructor? What do you expect from me? What do you expect from each other?
- Academic integrity provides a foundation for ethical decision-making in life and in your future profession. What are your thoughts on this?
- What can we do to demonstrate academic integrity in our class?
- What skills do you need help with when it comes to demonstrating your academic integrity?

The SSC also has a wide variety of **resources** that course instructors can draw upon to help support students' awareness of academic integrity.

Check out the Taylor Institute's Resource Library page on **Academic Integrity** for activities and resources for more help. One example of the resources available is a set of tips on how to promote **Academic Integrity in Large Classes**.

Working with teaching assistants

Teaching assistants play an important role on our campus with regard to upholding academic integrity. You can work with your TAs to help them understand their role. Note that the Graduate Student Association (GSA) Collective Agreement includes information about limitations of TA responsibilities related to student academic misconduct. Please review the GSA Collective Agreement with your TAs as early as possible.

The following table offers practical tips for teaching assistants on academic integrity.
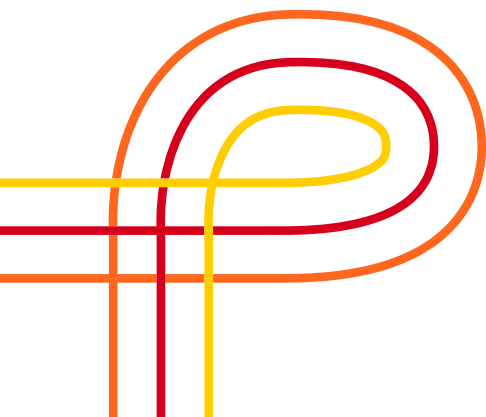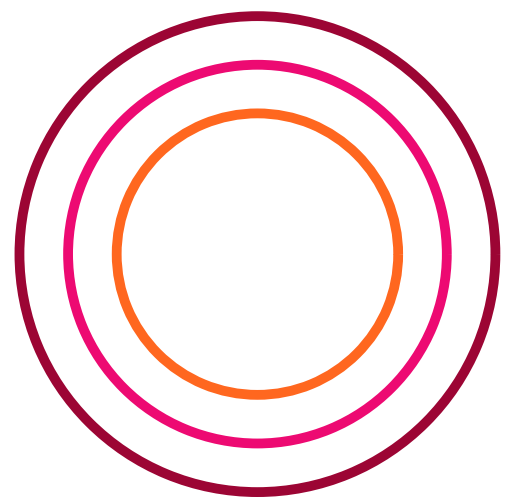
Table 3: Guidance for teaching assistants on academic integrity

What to do	What to avoid
Familiarize yourself with the University of Calgary **Student Academic Misconduct Policy** and **Student Academic Misconduct Procedure**.	Do not keep the incident a secret (even if the student asks you to). Talk to the course instructor.
Familiarize yourself with the resources and services offered by the **Student Success Centre** about academic integrity.	Do not discuss an academic misconduct matter with any other teaching assistants, students, etc.
Start a conversation with your course instructor at the beginning of the term about what they expect from you in terms of upholding integrity in your role. It is a good idea to do this before you undertake your work so both parties have clear expectations.	Do not confront a student. It is the role of the course instructor to address alleged or actual academic misconduct with the student(s) involved.
Act as a role model for academic integrity.	Do not impose any sanctions (punishments) on your own. The course instructor (not the TA) is responsible for following the guidelines established within the faculty about how to address actual or suspected cases of academic misconduct.
Discuss any alleged or actual breaches of integrity with the course instructor.	Do not share details (even if they are de-identified) on social media, even in closed or private groups.
Gather evidence related to the alleged misconduct. Keep detailed notes of the incident, including dates and times, who was involved, etc. Provide this information to the course instructor.	

(Text from the table above has been re-used with permission from Libraries and Cultural Resources' ***U Have Integrity: Resource for Teaching Assistants***)

Contract cheating

One commonly accepted definition of contract cheating is when a "third party makes a contribution to the work of the student, such that there is reasonable doubt as to whose work the assessment represents" (Draper & Newton, 2017, p. 1). Contract cheating occurs when students outsource academic work to commercial services or to family, friends or partners. Money does not have to change hands for contract cheating to occur.

Other terms used to describe this behaviour include "term paper mills," "essay mills," "homework help services" or "thesis writing services." Two computer scientists in the U.K. coined the term "contract cheating" to include academic outsourcing behaviours in both text-based and non-text based disciplines (Clarke & Lancaster, 2006). Today, "contract cheating" is the preferred term worldwide, as it includes all kinds of academic outsourcing.

Companies who provide contract cheating services operate on a global scale and can be predatory towards students, engaging in deceptive marketing practices aimed to convince students it is acceptable to use their services, when this is not at all the case. Contract cheating is a serious form of academic misconduct.

Contract cheating companies have also been known to retain student data and extort more money from students after an initial order has been placed. The Better Business Bureau (2021) has issued a global scam alert about contract cheating companies. Students are often unaware of these risks (Yorke et al., 2020).

One way to mitigate the risks of contract cheating in your course is to have open conversations with students about why it is important for them to do their own work. It is never acceptable for students to outsource their academic work because the purpose of being a student is to learn. If students outsource any of their academic work, they are not learning. The credential awarded at the conclusion of their program is meant to be a representation of successful learning.

If students need help learning course content or completing their assignments, they have several options available to them:

- Talk to the course instructor or TA
- Seek help from the Student Success Centre
- Start or join a study group with other students

Third-party file-sharing and online chat services

Similar to contract cheating, third-party file-sharing companies have become increasingly prevalent in recent years. It is not uncommon to find student notes, course materials, slide decks, old tests or even answer keys on these sites.

It can be a violation of copyright for an individual to upload content to these sites, unless they hold the rights to the materials or have obtained permission to post and share the content. Third-party companies may claim they own the copyright to any materials uploaded to their site, which may not be true. In many cases, these companies put all of the copyright responsibilities and liability on the individual who provides the content. This can put the student at risk for potential infringement of copyright in addition to breaching academic integrity.

Some companies offer additional academic cheating services for subscribers, such as a "tutor" who colludes with students to complete their assignments or online tests.

In this guide we do not name specific companies, but you might know the names of some already. It is important to communicate with your students about your expectations regarding the use of these sites and make it clear if or how it is permitted for your students to access files shared outside the course.

It is important to remember that even though it may be legal for such companies to operate, that does not mean it is ethical. Students can be held responsible for academic misconduct if they engage with commercial file-sharing or contract cheating companies.

Copyright statement for course outlines

This standard text is often used in course outlines regarding copyright:

> *All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (**ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy**) and requirements of the Copyright Act (**laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index**) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks, etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.*

You might also consider supplementing this with an additional optional statement regarding the use of external materials:

> *Authorized materials for this course are provided on the D2L site for the course. Consult the course instructor, preferably in writing, about using external materials unless explicitly required for a learning task or assignment.*

Many departments and faculties also have course outline templates to refer to for these statements.

Where to refer students for help

There are complex reasons why students may compromise their academic integrity, such as experiencing stress, or lacking the skills to organize themselves as they transition into higher education. This section outlines the units on campus that can help students build skills, manage stress and navigate university systems and processes.

Student Success Centre (SSC)

The **Student Success Centre** (SSC) provides services and programs to help students enhance their skills and achieve their academic goals, such as academic development support, writing support, and time management and study skills workshops, among others. The SSC is located on the third floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.

Also consider the **Thrive Priority Network** (early alert) for students if you notice a drop in academic performance. These situations can be a precursor to academic misconduct and early supportive intervention by the SSC may be beneficial in avoiding a breach.

WHEN TO REFER A STUDENT TO THE SSC

- Throughout the semester as an educational measure for all students
- When a specific student may need support

Student Wellness Services

Student Wellness Services is an on-campus resource for health and wellness support for students. They offer a wide range of services including mental health supports. They are located on the third floor of the MacEwan Student Centre.

WHEN TO REFER A STUDENT TO STUDENT WELLNESS SERVICES

- Throughout the semester (e.g., in verbal reminders, in the course outline)
- During a suspected breach of academic integrity
- If you are concerned about a student in distress, you can contact the Student-At-Risk team (**sar@ucalgary.ca**) who can make sure the student receives necessary support. If there is an immediate risk of harm, call 911 or Campus Security at 403-220-5333

Student Ombuds Office

The **Student Ombuds Office** (**ombuds@ucalgary.ca**) offers a safe place for students to discuss a variety of issues including academic and non-academic concerns. With regards to academic misconduct, the student ombud can help students understand the university processes and procedures related to the management of a misconduct case.

WHEN TO REFER A STUDENT TO THE STUDENT OMBUDS OFFICE

- During an academic misconduct case
- During an appeal process

What to do when you suspect academic misconduct

Every faculty has standard operating practices (SOPs) for addressing academic misconduct. It is important to familiarize yourself with your faculty's SOPs and follow them. The first step is to contact the individual (often a director or associate dean) responsible for academic misconduct case management. If you do not know who to contact, check with your dean's office and they can put you in touch with the appropriate person.

If you find yourself in a situation that requires immediate attention (e.g., you discover cheating happening in real time during a test or an exam), remain calm. Inform the student that you will be following up with the appropriate administrator as soon as possible. Begin to document as many details as you can as soon as you can (e.g., date, time of the offense, course number, who was involved, what happened, etc.).

It is important not to impose or discuss sanctions with students at the time you discover an instance of academic misconduct. Sanctions are determined by administrators following a thorough investigation.

It is important to follow the SOPs for reporting academic misconduct, so students are treated fairly. It is unfair to students when individual instructors attempt to address misconduct without following the standard practices, as this can lead to inconsistencies in how students are treated during case management. The administrators in each faculty who are responsible for case management are trained in how to follow the standard operating practices and ensure all students alleged to have engaged in misconduct are treated fairly and equitably.

How to report academic misconduct

Students who are reported for alleged misconduct should be treated in a fair and consistent manner, so it is important to follow the SOPs for your faculty.

When reporting a case of academic misconduct, include as many details as you can about what happened, when it happened and who was involved. This information will help the investigating administrator when they follow up.

FOIP considerations related to allegations of academic misconduct

The University of Calgary is subject to Alberta's Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIP). An individual's rights under the Act include access to and privacy of information related to their academic misconduct allegations and cases. The **FOIP office** can provide you with further guidance if you have questions about information management and retention of records related to misconduct cases. They also provide specialized group sessions related to academic integrity upon request. Some basic principles to be aware of regarding the management of information and records relating to student misconduct include:

- Only discuss an allegation or case with individuals who are directly related to a particular incident. For example, do not ask other instructors or teaching assistants if they have encountered misconduct with a particular student.

- Avoid discussing the details of an academic misconduct allegation or case with other students who were not directly involved.
- When recording details of an incident, document facts such as dates, times and individuals involved. Avoid recording unsubstantiated opinions or editorial comments, as records relating to the case are subject to disclosure under FOIP. For example, a student could request all records relating to an allegation of academic misconduct.
- Under no circumstances should a misconduct case or allegation be posted or discussed on social media platforms, even if the details are anonymized.
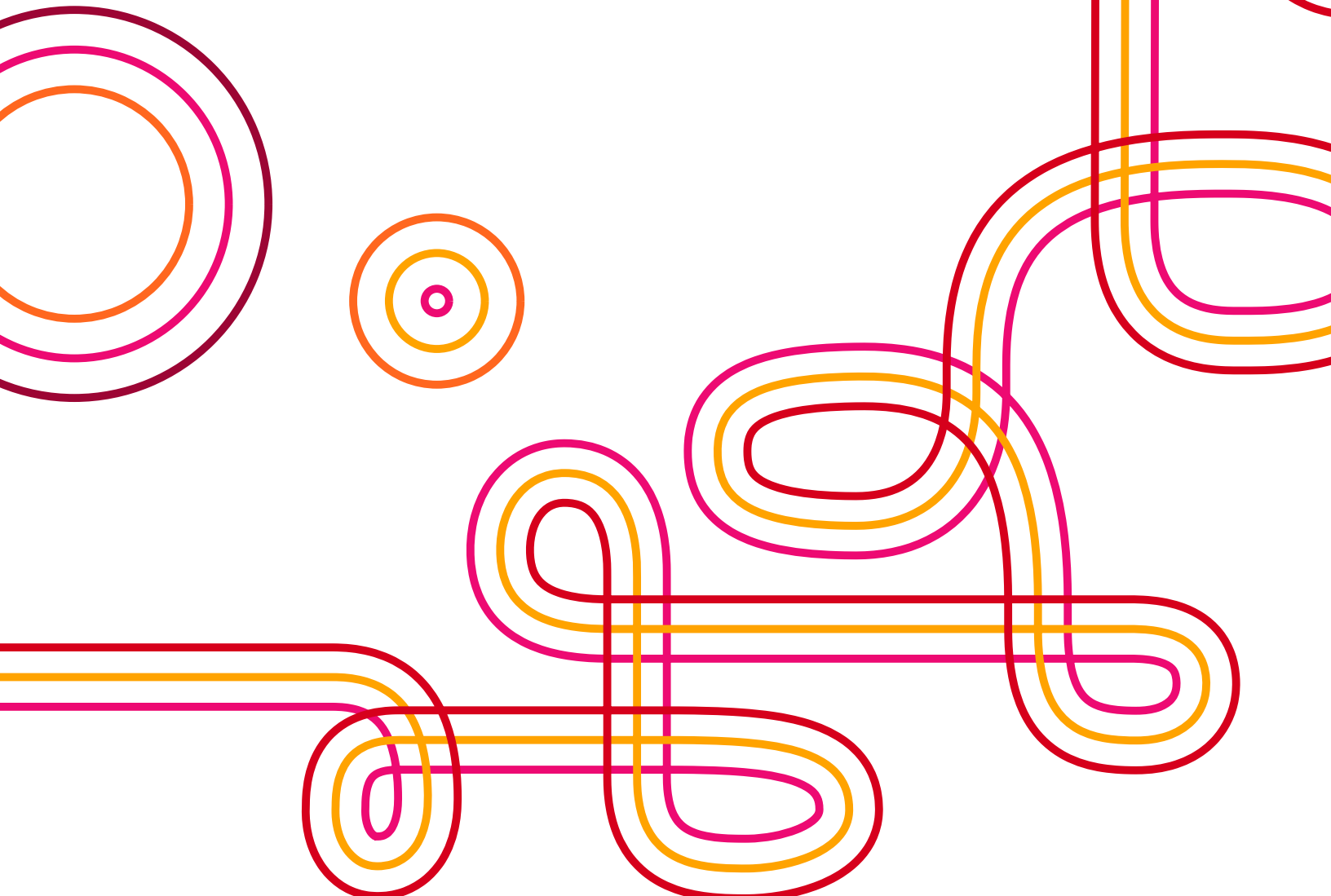
End of the semester and beyond

In this section, you will find information about student academic appeals and other topics that might be applicable after the course has finished.

Student academic appeals and challenges

Although some appeals happen during the semester, there is a surge in requests for appeals after the semester has concluded. Students have the right to challenge graded term work, final course grades, or decisions regarding academic misconduct or academic progression matters (e.g., requirement to withdraw due to poor academic standing).

Information about appeals can be found in the undergraduate and graduate **university calendars**. The section on Academic Regulations provides information about reappraisal of graded term work, reappraisal of academic assessments (final grades) and appeals.

The **University Student Appeals Office** provides information and resources related to academic and misconduct appeals. Links to the university's policies and procedures related to appeals can be found on the University Student Appeals Office web page.

If a student approaches you to challenge graded term work, a final course grade or another type of appeal, you can seek support from your dean's office about how to proceed. There are established procedures, timelines and expectations for addressing these matters and your dean's office (or delegate, such as a designated associate dean) can help you.

End-of-term gifts: An ethical approach

Sometimes students wish to show their appreciation to a course instructor with a gift. We recommend that you do not accept gifts from students, no matter how small, until after final grades have been submitted.

Avoid accepting lavish or expensive gifts from students at any time. If a student asks you if they can give you a gift, you might consider saying something like, "That is very kind of you. I appreciate your thoughtfulness, but instead of giving me a gift, may I suggest instead . . ." and choose an alternate option, such as:

- A donation to the **SU Campus Food Bank**
- A donation to **another cause at the University of Calgary**

Although most students who give their instructors gifts do so as an expression of appreciation and gratitude, in some cases gifts can be a form of bribery, so it is important to take an ethical approach to accepting gifts from students. Please note that the University of Calgary has a Gifts, Donations and Sponsorship Policy.
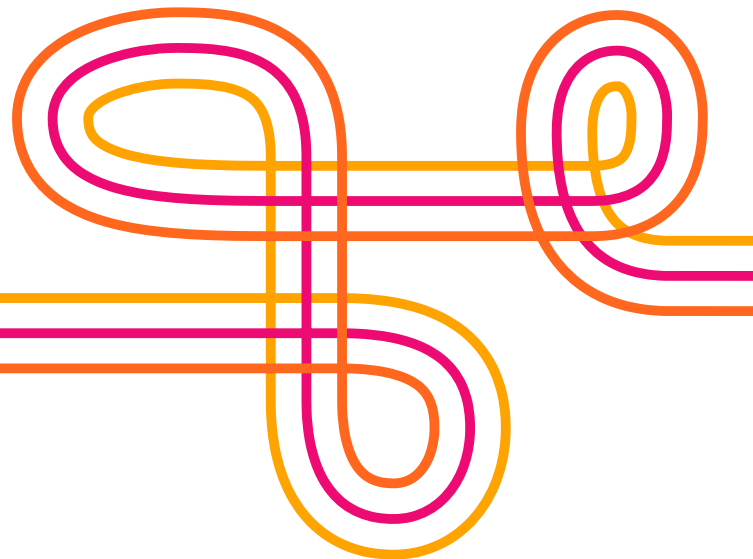
Summary

Upholding academic integrity is part of our daily professional practice as academic staff; and it is about more than the prevention or management of academic misconduct. If you have more questions about academic integrity, there are many people on campus who can help you. The academic staff at the Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning are available to assist colleagues with questions related to teaching, learning and assessment. Your dean's office can provide you with details on who to contact at the departmental or faculty level if you need help with an alleged or actual case of misconduct.

Academic integrity is about more than reporting or investigating misconduct. Academic integrity includes the promotion and modelling of ethical behavior in teaching, learning, assessment and related activities.

University of Calgary references and resources

Academic Integrity Student Handbook. **https://www.ucalgary.ca/live-uc-ucalgary-site/sites/default/files/teams/9/AI-Student-Handbook-3.pdf**

eLearn@UCalgary. *Other Platforms* (Third-party communication tools). **https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/third-party-platforms/**

Graduate Students' Association. **https://gsa.ucalgary.ca/**

Libraries and Cultural Resources. *U Have Integrity: Resource for Teaching Assistants.* **http://hdl.handle.net/1880/111012**

Research Integrity Policy. **https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/research-integrity-policy**

Student Misconduct and Academic Appeals Policy. **https://www.ucalgary.ca/secretariat/sites/default/files/teams/2/student-misconduct-and-academic-appeals-policy.pdf**

Student Academic Misconduct Policy. **https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-academic-misconduct-policy**

Student Academic Misconduct Procedure. **https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-academic-misconduct-procedure**

Student Success Centre. *Academic Integrity.* **https://www.ucalgary.ca/live-uc-ucalgary-site/sites/default/files/teams/1/academic-integrity.pdf**

Student Wellness Services. **https://www.ucalgary.ca/wellness-services/medical-services**

Student Ombuds Office. **https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/ombuds**

Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning. *Guiding Principles for Assessment of Students' Learning.* **https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/resources/guiding-principles-assessment-of-students-learning**

Taylor Institute for Teaching and Learning. *Academic Integrity.* **https://taylorinstitute.ucalgary.ca/resources/academic-integrity**

University of Calgary's Gifts, Donation and Sponsorship Policy. **https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Gifts-Donations-and-Sponsorship-Policy.pdf**

University Legal Services (including FOIP). **https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/contact-us**

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Yorke, J., Sefcik, L., & Veeran-Colton, T. (2020). Contract cheating and blackmail: A risky business? *Studies in Higher Education, 47*(1), 53–66. **https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2020.1730313**

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Academic Staff and Teaching Assistants**

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