

# Academic Integrity At M T S U

**MIDDLE  
TENNESSEE**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

**JUDICIAL AFFAIRS AND  
MEDIATION SERVICES**

*"I have learned that it is very easy to get caught if your teacher really enforces the rules. This has really made me realize what a bad student I have become and that I really need to change my life around. I guess they were fair in their actions even though it greatly upset me."*

*A student found responsible for academic misconduct at MTSU*

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

Office of Judicial Affairs and  
Mediation Services  
128 KUC  
P.O. Box 17  
Murfreesboro, TN 37132  
(615) 898-2750 (phone)  
(615) 898-5112 (fax)  
[www.mtsu.edu/judaff](http://www.mtsu.edu/judaff)

## INTEGRITY IN THE CLASSROOM & INTEGRITY IN LIFE

Integrity is a topic that has drawn a lot of discussion and interest in recent years. From the Enron and WorldCom scandals, to integrity in the classroom, people are searching for individuals of integrity. Most people cannot define integrity; they can only give you characteristics of a person who lacks integrity. Pat Riley, coach of the NBA's Miami Heat said, "Integrity is who you are when no one else is looking." Simply put, integrity is the person you really are—not the image you give of yourself.<sup>1</sup>



The word integrity is taken from the Latin word "integer" which means whole.<sup>2</sup> Integrity is a state of wholeness. In his book "Developing the Leader Within You," John Maxwell said, "Integrity is not what we do so much as who we are. Who we are determines what we do. Our system of values is so much a part of us that we cannot separate it from ourselves. It becomes the navigating system that guides us."<sup>1</sup>

Middle Tennessee State University strives to promote values and attitudes that are reflective of solid academic character and integrity. For this reason, MTSU expects each student to complete assignments that are original and reflective of that individual student. Academic integrity is an essential component of a quality education. When a student participates in behavior that is considered to be academic misconduct, the scholarly value of his/her education is lessened. This brochure is designed to help students and faculty better understand the University's policy on academic misconduct and to encourage a campus environment that strives towards integrity.



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*“The man of  
integrity walks  
securely, but he who  
takes crooked paths  
will be found out.”*

*Proverbs 10:9*

*“Image is what  
people think we are.  
Integrity is what we  
really are.”*

*John Maxwell*



## ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT DEFINED <sup>3</sup>

**Academic Misconduct.** Plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, or facilitating any such act. For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

- (1) **Plagiarism.** The adoption or reproduction of ideas, words, statements, images, or works of another person as one’s own without proper acknowledgment.
- (2) **Cheating.** Using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit or hours
- (3) **Fabrication.** Unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.
- (4) **Facilitation.** Helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of the institutional code of academic misconduct.

## MTSU’S ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY <sup>3</sup>

The official academic misconduct policy of Middle Tennessee State University is:

“Academic misconduct is defined as “plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, or facilitating any such act (*MTSU Rights and Responsibilities of Students*, p. 8).” The instructor should report allegations of academic misconduct to the head of the concerned department and to the assistant dean for Judicial Affairs (898-5812). The instructor should attempt to inform the student of the allegation and notify the student that the information has been forwarded to the assistant dean.

Prior to notifying the assistant dean and at the instructor’s discretion, the instructor may conduct a conference with the student in compliance with the following procedures:

1. the student will be provided notice that he/she is believed to have committed an act or acts of academic misconduct in violation of University rules;
2. the student will be presented with all evidence in the knowledge or possession of the instructor which tends to support the allegation(s) of academic misconduct; and
3. the student will be given an opportunity to present information on his/her behalf.

In either case, and based upon the TBR Policy # 3:02:00:01 regarding academic misconduct, the instructor will assign an appropriate grade. This information, along with all supporting documentation of the violation, will be forwarded to the assistant dean for Judicial Affairs.

**Implementation of Disciplinary Sanctions.** Consistent with the Student Code of Conduct (*MTSU Rights and Responsibilities of Students*, pp. 4-11) and, if applicable, following the instructor’s conference with the student, the assistant dean for Judicial Affairs will meet with the student to determine if implementation of disciplinary sanctions is appropriate.

In the event a student believes he/she has been erroneously accused of academic misconduct, and at the discretion of the assistant dean of Student Life, a hearing before the University Discipline Committee may be arranged. If the student is found responsible for the allegation(s) of academic misconduct, the grade, as assigned by

## MTSU'S ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT POLICY (CONTINUED)<sup>3</sup>

the instructor, will stand. Should the student be absolved of the allegations of academic misconduct by the Discipline Committee, the faculty member will reassess the student's grade based on the Discipline Committee's finding.

Consistent with other disciplinary cases, the Discipline Committee will forward their recommendation for sanctions to the vice president for Student Affairs.

**Class Attendance Pending Hearing.** The student may stay in class pending a hearing if the faculty member determines that the student's presence in the class does not interfere with the instructor's ability to teach the class or the ability of other class members to learn.

### RESULTS OF RESEARCH BY DON MCCABE, FOUNDER OF THE CENTER FOR ACADEMIC INTEGRITY<sup>4</sup>

- "On most campuses, over 75% of students admit to some cheating. In a 1999 survey of 2,100 students on 21 campuses across the country, about one-third of the participating students admitted to serious test cheating and half admitted to one or more instances of serious cheating on written assignments."<sup>4</sup>
- "Internet plagiarism is a growing concern on all campuses as students struggle to understand what constitutes acceptable use of the Internet. In the absence of clear direction from faculty, most students have concluded that 'cut & paste' plagiarism - using a sentence or two (or more) from different sources on the Internet and weaving this information together into a paper without appropriate citation - is not a serious issue. While 10% of students admitted to engaging in such behavior in 1999, this rose to 41% in a 2001 survey with the majority of students (68%) suggesting this was not a serious issue."<sup>4</sup>
- "Faculty are reluctant to take action against suspected cheaters. In a 1999 survey of over 1,000 faculty on 21 campuses, one-third of those who were aware of student cheating in their course in the last two years, did nothing to address it. Students suggest that cheating is higher in courses where it is well known that faculty members are likely to ignore cheating."<sup>4</sup>
- "Longitudinal comparisons show significant increases in serious test/examination cheating and unpermitted student collaboration. For example, the number of students self-reporting instances of unpermitted collaboration at nine medium to large state universities increased from 11% in a 1963 survey to 49% in 1993. This trend seems to be continuing: between 1990 and 1995, instances of unpermitted collaboration at 31 small to medium schools increased from 30% to 38%."<sup>4</sup>
- "A study of almost 4,500 students at 25 schools, conducted in 2000/2001, suggests cheating is also a significant problem in high school - 74% of the respondents admitted to one or more instances of serious test cheating and 72% admitted to serious cheating on written assignments. Over half of the students admitted they have engaged in some level of plagiarism on written assignments using the Internet."<sup>4</sup>



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*"Integrity is not a given factor in everyone's life. It is a result of self-discipline, inner trust, and a decision to be relentlessly honest in all situations of our lives."*

*John Maxwell*

*"You will only become what you are becoming right now."*

*John Maxwell*





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*“We struggle daily with situations that demand decisions between what we want to do and what we ought to do. Integrity establishes the ground rules for resolving these tensions. It determines who we are and how we will respond before the conflict even appears.”*

*John Maxwell*



## DESCRIPTIONS OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

### Descriptions of Academic Misconduct

#### Plagiarism <sup>5</sup>

Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's product, words, ideas, or data as one's own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. Expectations may vary slightly among disciplines. By placing one's name on work submitted for credit, the student certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. On written assignments, if verbatim statements are included, the statements must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from regular text as indented extracts.

A student can avoid being charged with plagiarism by acknowledging sources used. Sources must be acknowledged whenever:

1. one quotes another person's actual words or replicates all or part of another's product;
2. one uses another person's ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one's own words;
3. one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative materials--unless the information is common knowledge.<sup>6</sup>

Unauthorized collaboration with others on papers or projects can inadvertently lead to a charge of plagiarism. If in doubt, consult your instructor in advance. In addition, it is considered to be plagiarism when you submit as your own any academic exercise (for example, written work, printing, computer program, art or design work, musical composition, and choreography) prepared totally or in part by another.

Plagiarism also includes submitting work in which portions were substantially produced by someone acting as a tutor or editor.

#### Cheating <sup>5</sup>

Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents or misleadingly demonstrates that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered, including the giving or receiving of unauthorized help in an academic exercise.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. copying from another student's test paper, computer program, project, product, or performance;
2. collaborating without authority or allowing another student to copy one's work;
3. using the course textbook or other material not authorized for use during a test or other academic exercise;

4. using unauthorized materials during a test; for example, notes, formula lists, cues on a computer, photographs, symbolic representations, and notes written on clothing;
5. resubmitting substantially the same work that was produced for another assignment without the knowledge and permission of the instructor;
6. taking a test for someone else or permitting someone else to take a test for you.

### **Fabrication <sup>5</sup>**

Fabrication is the intentional use of information that the author has invented when he or she states or implies otherwise, or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. citing information not taken from the source indicated;
2. listing sources in a reference not used in the academic exercise;
3. inventing data or source information for research or other academic exercises.

### **Facilitation**

Facilitation is assisting another individual or group of individuals in being dishonest in their academic endeavors.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

1. Letting another individual copy your homework, test answers, etc.
2. Giving you assignment, paper, homework, etc. to another student for any reason with permission of the instructor.
3. Giving test questions to another individual that has not yet taken the exam.
4. Having an awareness that a student has committed academic misconduct (or

## **TIPS FOR STUDENTS <sup>5</sup>**

1. Prepare thoroughly for examinations and assignments.
2. Take the initiative to prevent other students from copying exams or assignments; for example, shield answer sheets during examinations, and do not loan completed assignments to other students.
3. Check the course syllabus for a section dealing with academic dishonesty for that course. There may be special requirements. If there is no written section in the syllabus, ask the instructor what his or her expectations are, particularly concerning collaboration and citation.
4. Do not look in the direction of other students' papers during examinations.
5. Utilize a recognized handbook for instruction on citing source materials in papers. Consult with instructors or academic departments when in doubt.
6. Discourage dishonesty among other students.
7. Refuse to assist students who cheat.
8. If extraordinary circumstances cause anxiety over taking an exam or getting an assignment in on time, talk to the instructor in advance. It is better to request special arrangements rather than resort to dishonesty.
9. Inform the instructor if you are aware of other students cheating.



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*“Doing my best at this present moment puts me in the best place for the next moment.”*

*Oprah Winfrey*







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*"There are no  
degrees of honesty.  
You are either  
honest or you're  
not."*

*Anonymous*



## TIPS FOR INSTRUCTORS <sup>5</sup>

1. Include a statement in the course syllabus regarding academic misconduct as it relates to that particular class. A model statement to use would be:

***"It is expected that all work you complete for this course is your own. You are expected to include appropriate citations (when applicable) in all of your work for this course. The University policy for academic misconduct will be followed. Academic misconduct includes the following behaviors:***

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***Any student suspected of committing academic misconduct will be required to meet with me to discuss the situation. Your name will also be forwarded to the Assistant Dean for Judicial Affairs and Mediation Services for possible disciplinary action. If you are found responsible for committing an act of academic misconduct, you will (list the action you plan to take if someone violates the academic misconduct policy in your course, i.e., an "F" for the assignment, an "F" for the course, reduced grade, etc.). For more information concerning academic integrity and academic misconduct, please go to the Judicial Affairs website ([www.mtsu.edu/~judaff](http://www.mtsu.edu/~judaff)).***

2. Discuss the issue of academic misconduct and academic integrity at the beginning of each semester and before examinations and papers.
3. In assigning term papers and projects, discuss the issue of plagiarism; make certain that students understand referencing requirements, or the extent of allowable collaboration on class/team projects.
4. International students bring diverse learning styles to the classroom. It is particularly important that instructors clarify plagiarism issues, as understood in this country, for these students. Any student for whom English is a second language may also need special help in understanding plagiarism issues.
5. Give essay tests, instead of multiple choice tests, when appropriate and class size permits.
6. Use proctors when students are taking a written exam. Prior to the exam, instruct proctors about their responsibilities during exams.
7. Require positive photo identification from students (university student identification card, driver's license) when students enter the classroom to take an examination or when they turn in their answer sheets if the students are not familiar to you. This is particularly important in large classes.
8. Unless the examination is to be "blind-graded," have each student sign his or her answer sheets. Signatures can be compared if a question arises over who actually took the examination. (You may want to have students sign a

8. statement that reads: "I certify that I am the person whose name and student number appear on this exam or answer sheet. I have neither received nor given any inappropriate aid with this exam.")
9. Keep examinations in a secure location; for example, locked desks and locked files. Faculty offices may not be secure locations for examinations.
10. Do not have the file or backup copy of exams on a computer or network that is not secured.
11. Number written exams and count the number distributed and returned.
12. Alternate forms of the same examination--particularly matching, true-false, multiple choice, and short answer examinations--should be administered during the test period. Color coding the alternate forms will emphasize the difference.
13. When blue books are used for examinations, faculty should collect the blue books from students and redistribute them before the examination begins.
14. The question of whether students may have materials in their possession (for example, books, notes, scrap paper, calculators, programmable portable computers, and illustrative materials) should be specified before the examination. Scrap papers should be turned in with the examination so that information related to the examination may not be taken from the classroom. Instructors may wish to supply scrap paper as a part of the examination packet.
15. Design a prearranged seating plan or sign-in sheet by seat number so that the location of each student may be determined.
16. When possible, students should be seated so that there is at least one seat between each person during an examination.
17. Files of past examinations are maintained by many organizations and are readily available to students. Faculty members are encouraged to prepare new examinations each term and to consider making copies of past examinations available to all students.
18. Do not use student workers to type or duplicate examinations.
19. When assigning term papers or projects, ask for confirmation of the student topic and/or require a draft a week or more before the final due date. Do not accept photocopied papers.
20. When returning machine scored answer sheets to students, keep the original and give students a photocopy.

### Sources Used

1. Maxwell, J (1993). "Developing the leader within you." Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers: Nashville, TN.
2. www.dictionary.com (keyword, integrity).
3. Middle Tennessee State University Rights and Responsibilities of Students Handbook.
4. The Center for Academic Integrity website ([http://www.academicintegrity.org/cai\\_research.asp](http://www.academicintegrity.org/cai_research.asp)).
5. With permission, contents of this brochure were used verbatim and also adapted from the "Academic Honesty" brochure produced by the University of Oregon (<http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~conduct/sai.htm>). Quotation marks were not used to the large amount of material.
6. Robert M. Gorrell and Charlton Laird, Modern English Handbook, 6th Edition (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall, 1976) p. 71.



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*"The first key to greatness is to be in reality what you appear to be."*

*Socrates*

