

Best Practices Related to Academic Integrity

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Introduction & Purpose

Academic integrity is the foundation of learning, scholarship, and research at NJIT. This document provides best practices for promoting and protecting academic integrity across teaching, learning, and research.

Originally developed by the Academic Integrity Task Force in 2006, this version has been updated to reflect new technologies, updated NJIT policy definitions, and current educational practices. It is intended as a practical guide for faculty, students, and administrators. These best practices complement, but do not replace, the NJIT Code of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity Policy.

Key Definitions (from NJIT Academic Integrity Policy)

- **Cheating/Copying:** the intentional use, provision, or attempted use or provision of unauthorized assistance, materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. It also includes actions taken to prevent another student from using authorized resources.
- **Plagiarism:** the use or attempted use of written, oral, visual, or graphic work created by another person, source, or tool—including artificial intelligence—without proper acknowledgment. It includes presenting someone else's language, ideas, code, media, or structure as one's own in any academic exercise. Plagiarism involves both the unauthorized use of content and the misrepresentation of its origin. **Self-Plagiarism** refers to the reuse of one's own previously submitted or published work without citation or instructor permission, including assignments, essays, lab reports, or creative work.
- **Fabrication/Falsification:** the intentional and unauthorized falsification, alteration, reporting, or invention of any information, data, or citation in any academic exercise.
- **Unauthorized Collaboration:** working with others, such as classmates, friends, family members, or online contributors, on academic work intended to be completed individually, without the explicit permission of the instructor. This includes in-class or take-home exams, quizzes, essays, lab reports, programming assignments, or homework. Any contribution to or receipt of help on work that is submitted as one's own independent effort may constitute academic misconduct. All students involved in unauthorized collaboration may be held responsible.
- **Contract Cheating:** Contract cheating is defined as: The use of a third party or source—including a person, company, website, or generative artificial intelligence tool—to complete academic work (e.g., labs, exam papers, quizzes, homework assignments, sketches, graphic design, programming, etc.), or facilitating the use of

such services, for which a student then submits the work for credit. This applies whether the assistance is paid or unpaid and includes unauthorized outsourcing of any portion of assigned work.

Faculty Roles & Responsibilities

Faculty play a central role in fostering a culture of academic integrity at NJIT. One of the most important steps is to clearly define expectations in course syllabi, including specific rules about collaboration, the use of technology, and the appropriate use of artificial intelligence.

Assessments should be designed to promote authentic learning and to minimize opportunities for misconduct. In many cases, incorporating more frequent, lower-stakes assessments can help reduce the pressure that often leads students to consider cheating.

When administering exams or assignments, faculty should proctor fairly and actively, whether the assessment is conducted in person or online. Any suspected violations of academic integrity must be reported through NJIT's centralized reporting system to the Office of the Dean of Students. Faculty should not attempt to resolve incidents informally, as consistency and due process are essential to maintaining fairness. Finally, it is important to ensure that exams and assessments are scheduled in appropriate spaces with adequate resources, so that students are evaluated under conditions that support both equity and integrity.

Best Practices by Category

1. General Prevention & Education

- Include an Academic Integrity statement in every syllabus with links to NJIT policies and resources.
- Discuss integrity and artificial intelligence (AI) expectations in the first week of class.
- Clear instructions should appear on all assessments, assignments, and exams. The expectations should be reviewed with students.
- Encourage integration of professional ethics into curricula.

2. Cheating on Exams & Assessments

In-Person Exams

- Use seating arrangements that minimize opportunities for misconduct.
- Require proctors to focus solely on monitoring students.
- Restrict use of unauthorized devices (phones, smartwatches, wireless earbuds, etc.).
- Clearly communicate policies on calculator use, formula sheets, or permitted materials.
- Develop exam versions with randomized or varied questions.
- Avoid reusing exams without significant modifications.
- Walk the room during exams in unpredictable patterns.
- Address errors in exams promptly and fairly to reduce undue stress.

- When possible, use multiple proctors and document unusual observations.

Online/Take-Home Exams

- Use question banks, randomization, or time limits to reduce copying.
- Consider oral follow-up checks or short presentations to verify authorship.
- State expectations for collaboration, open-book use, and AI tools in advance.
- Use secure platforms or proctoring tools where appropriate.
- Spot-check recordings from web-based proctoring services.

3. Plagiarism & Writing Integrity

- Use plagiarism detection software¹ (e.g., Turnitin), with clear communication to students about its role.
- Provide instruction on citation styles and proper attribution.
- Require students to cite their own prior work when reused.
- Be alert to sudden changes in writing style or ability.
- Train faculty about online services offering pre-written papers, contract cheating, or AI-generated content.
- Encourage scaffolded writing assignments (drafts, outlines, annotated bibliographies).
- Encourage or require tools that preserve document version history (e.g., Google Docs, Overleaf).

4. Fabrication & Research Ethics

- Require students to maintain lab notebooks or digital logs that can be periodically reviewed.
- Spot-check data sets, calculations, or citations in reports.
- Provide formal training in responsible conduct of research for undergraduates, graduate students, and research staff.
- Include ethics modules in research-intensive courses and labs.

5. Collaboration, Technology, and AI Use

- Clearly distinguish between individual work vs. group work expectations.
- State explicitly whether AI tools (ChatGPT, Grammarly, coding assistants, etc.) are permitted, and under what conditions.
- Encourage faculty to require AI disclosure statements (e.g., “I used Grammarly to check grammar” or “I used ChatGPT to brainstorm ideas for the introduction”).
- Discourage reliance on contract cheating services by educating students about risks (loss of learning, discipline, scams).
- Promote ethical and responsible AI use as a professional competency.

¹ Instructors can use the plagiarism detection tools as an additional resource to help determine whether content was created by AI. However, these tools should not be the sole basis for making this decision. The AI writing detector may produce false positives and is not reliable for identifying AI-generated text in non-prose formats.

Artificial Intelligence

Faculty are encouraged to review the NJIT [Artificial Intelligence Working Group \(AIWG\)](#) materials, which provide strategies and guidance for effectively incorporating and managing AI within teaching and learning. In addition, both faculty and students should carefully review the [Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence Statement](#), which outlines the expectations and standards for appropriate use of AI tools in academic work.

Resources & Support

- **Office of the Dean of Students:** Guidance, reporting, and adjudication. <https://www.njit.edu/dos> | dos@njit.edu
- **Academic Misconduct Report Form:** Report suspected violations. https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?NJInstofTech&layout_id=0
- **Artificial Intelligence Working Group (AIWG):** Guidance for integrating AI in teaching and learning. <https://www.njit.edu/emergingtech/ai-teachinglearning>