

# Tips to Prevent Cheating

As stated in the OSU Academic Integrity policy, OSU students are expected to be honest and fair in their studies, and to treat others with respect. In turn, faculty maintain high academic standards by encouraging honest work, setting and communicating clear expectations, using assignments and test formats that discourage cheating, and reporting violations to the office of Academic Affairs. The following suggestions can help you promote academic integrity:

## Promoting Academic Integrity

- **Stress the Importance of Integrity to the Learning Process.** Honest work builds self esteem, knowledge, and skills. In contrast, cheaters don't learn, they undermine the quality of education we provide, and they devalue OSU's reputation and the degrees we confer.
- **Highlight our Academic Integrity Policy** and the importance of academic honesty in class and in handouts; remind students of the policy before exams; link your website to the policy; and refer suspected violations to the Office of Academic Affairs.
- **Discuss issues of integrity** with your class, especially those relevant to the course and to students' future careers. Give criteria for the "hard choices" in your field, with examples of how ethical issues can/should be resolved.
- **Enlist students' help in creating a climate of integrity in your class.** Give students opportunities to earn your trust. Encourage them to tell you immediately if they see cheating.
- **Inspire, encourage, and model integrity.** You don't have to threaten or scold. Positive reinforcement works better than scare tactics, and internal constraints (morals, ethics, character) are the most effective. As educators, faculty influence students' attitudes and development, and can reinforce student integrity.
- **Set Clear Standards** for assignments and grading. Tell students whether they may collaborate, and if so, how much.



## General Preventive Steps

Have students **sign OSU's commitment to Academic Integrity** on exams and papers.

**Monitor exams** to assist students in maintaining academic integrity and confront suspicious conduct promptly.

**Prohibit talking or any communication** among students during exams; for questions about the test, have them talk to you.

**Number exams** and include the number at top of each page.

Use a **sign-in sheet** for each row, by exam numbers, to record where students sit.

Have **one person grade all answers** to the same questions.

Tell students **not to leave the room** during exams.

**Have students sign each page** of exam in ink.

Require **written excuses** for make-ups or extensions and check authenticity.

Encourage students to **sit away from study partners** or friends during exams **and to cover their work.**

## Confronting Suspected Cheating

**Do not stop a student from completing an exam**, even if you believe he/she is cheating.

**Confront suspicious conduct** as described below, **identify** those involved and **record** their names.

**Announce to class that no talking is permitted** during exams, **record names** and **quietly ask specific student(s) to stop** talking.

If students appear to be **exchanging information** (talking or copying), record names and **quietly ask student(s) to move** to new seats.

You may **take and/or photocopy** what the student has done so far and give the student a blank exam or the copy to complete the test.

If students appear to be **using notes or have notes visible** promptly and **discreetly confiscate** notes. These materials may be important in proving the cheating if a student denies responsibility.

If you see "wandering eyes," **announce that eyes must be kept on one's own paper** and **quietly warn specific student(s).**

If you learn a "ringer" may be taking an exam for another student approach quietly and ask for ID. If he/she cannot or will not provide ID **confiscate exam** and record a description of the individual.

**After the test, review exam(s) for evidence of cheating and report** suspected violations.

## Deterring Copying or Collaborating During Exams

Use **multiple exam versions**, "scrambling" the order of questions or changing key variables.

Use **alternate seating**. If no extra rooms are available, **combine classes for exams**, seating students from each class alternately (e.g., Math, Econ, and French). Use different color exams for each class so it's obvious if those from same class are seated adjacently.

Put **multiple choice and true/false questions at bottom of page** where it's harder to copy.

Refuse **credit** for correct answers **unless ALL WORK** is shown.

Require **students to remove hats and dark glasses** during exams, unless they have a medical reason.

### Watch for:

*wandering eyes; talking; passing notes; or other communication [e.g., cell phones, headphones, and pagers can transmit and receive information by voice, e-mail, data transfer, message function, or "pager code" and recorded MP3 players may contain notes.*

## Deterring Use of Unauthorized Materials or Notes

Give **oral and written instructions** regarding which materials can or cannot be used on the test.

Have students **put away books, notes, or other prohibited items** and store them out of sight.

Change **exam questions often**, preferably every semester.

**Do not permit programmable calculators** or require students to "clear" all programs before exams begin.

If you provide **sample questions or study sheets**, do not use the exact same questions on the exam.

Have students **turn in blank blue books to you at the class before the test**, mark to show you've seen them, and redistribute at random, or have students pass blue books two seats down.

Require students to **begin writing on a certain page in their blue books**, leaving a specified # of lines/pages blank.

### Watch for:

*crib notes up sleeve, under leg, inside pockets, clothing, pen, calculator cover, or cap brim; written on hands, arms, pencils, desks, chairs, blackboards, walls; visible on clipboard or floor, binders or backpacks; stored in programmable calculators or electronic datebooks; pre-written in blue books; or hidden in bathroom or nearby classroom.*

### Also watch for:

*students leaving room without submitting test (to use notes or key outside class); attempting to sneak completed exam back into room at end of exam, or into faculty office, or having accomplice "find" and turn in "lost" exam later.*

## Avoiding Fraudulent Regrade Requests

Photocopy **graded tests/scantrons** before handing back.

Mark **wrong answers or blank space** with an "X" or slash mark.

Use **numbered exams and sign-in sheets**.

**After re-grade, keep record of original score** in gradebook and database, with page totals, problem scores, and total exam score.

Have **one person review all re-grade requests** and record changes.

### Watch for:

*erased or changed Scantron answers; new, correct answers in place of previously blank or incomplete response; test that has been photocopied with original answers and grading marks blanked out, then redone with correct answers and forged grading marks; pages or entire exam with higher scores stolen from return bin, name changed, then submitted for more credit under thief's name. Red flags: poor-quality "second generation" copy inconsistent with original exam; copies of staple holes; entire pages erased and re-written (to avoid detection of different handwriting); major discrepancies with grade exam shows score of 90, grade book shows 40).*

## Preventing "Ringers" and Loss/Theft of Exams

Count the number of exams handed out, of students taking the test, and of exams turned in (before leaving room), and **make sure numbers match**. Use exam numbers and sign-in sheets.

Collect exams from students **while still seated** rather than have a chaotic rush to the front.

Have consistent **loss-proof method of transporting papers** between class, office, and home (e.g., locked briefcase). **Keep office and desk locked**, papers secure when you are out.

### Watch for:

*ringer taking test for enrolled student (who may be present or not). Ringer may do own test, then re-copy Scantron for student. Or, ringer may do real exam while enrolled student does "fake" exam. When done, switch papers, enrolled student writes own name and submits test. Fake exam is discarded or submitted with phony name.*

### Also watch for:

*theft of ungraded exams/papers from submission pile/box; or from office, computer lab print-out tray; or other student's computer, account, backpack, or room. Thief erases name and submits as own work, or copies/alters work and submits as own. May destroy original work to avoid detection. Student may come to test (or earlier section), take exam copy (or have friend get copy) then go study before own section test/scheduled make-up. Rarely, exam questions or answer key taken from faculty office or computer.*

### Still more to watch for:

*student who fails to submit paper or exam, then claims faculty error caused loss of work (goal: make-up exam or extension).*

