Code of Conduct for the McCombs School of Business

The Cabinet of College Councils and its committee, Students for Academic Integrity, the Undergraduate Program Office, and the Undergraduate Business Council present the Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty for the McCombs School of Business. The students of the University bring this proposal before the faculty with hopes of creating an environment of honesty and good faith. Each college is developing a statement specific to their individual needs. The students of the McCombs School of Business feel that this policy will help to deter academic dishonesty.

Introduction

The McCombs School of Business at The University of Texas at Austin is recognized nationally for its excellence. The success of the Business School is based on faculty and students who work very hard to achieve the college's goals of providing the best business education available anywhere. An important element of the success of the college is the perception by students, faculty and potential employers that students are evaluated fairly on the basis of their own work completed in accordance with the instructions provided. This perception can only be grounded in a culture of honesty and ethical conduct where there is no tolerance of scholastic dishonesty. Maintaining such a culture requires acceptance of certain responsibilities by both faculty and students. The purpose of this policy statement is to describe those responsibilities and to clearly define behavior that constitutes academic dishonesty.

It is in all students' interest to avoid committing acts of scholastic dishonesty and to discourage others from committing such acts. Each dishonest act can harm the quality and reputation of the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) degree and thereby lower the value of the honest work of all other students. In a culture of dishonesty, it is impossible to know whether achievements were honestly earned or accomplished through unethical means. In such a culture, grades are not a valid indicator of achievement, and the final degree is not a valid indicator of a minimum level of knowledge. Were the Business School to acquire a reputation for tolerating dishonesty, it would devalue the degrees of all present and future alumni.

Maintaining the quality and integrity of the undergraduate business programs at UT is not the only reason why it is important to emphasize ethical conduct. The curriculum within the Business School prepares students for a profession in which honesty and ethical behavior are essential characteristics. It is important for students to develop a strong sense of ethics while still in school and to carry it with them into the workplace. Students who have completed their education in a culture of ethical behavior should easily make the transition to a culture of ethical behavior as employees.

It is impossible to create an environment that is completely free of opportunities and temptations to behave unethically. In order to maintain the reputation and quality of the BBA degree, it is the responsibility of each individual to understand the definition of unethical behavior and to resist all temptations to behave unethically. This is easier to do in an atmosphere of honesty, where each student is confident that all other students are also behaving ethically. If all students and faculty fulfill their respective responsibilities as described in this policy statement, the culture of honesty that is so important to the success of the degree programs at UT will be maintained.
Responsibilities of the Students in the McCombs School of Business

1. To understand the definition of scholastic dishonesty

The first step in building a culture of honesty is to insure that students have a clear understanding of what is permissible behavior and what is not permissible behavior. The appendix to this policy statement discusses many examples of scholastic dishonesty in some detail. Each student has the responsibility to read both this document and the standards of conduct for the University carefully, and to make sure that he or she understands what actions constitute scholastic dishonesty. The official University policies on scholastic dishonesty are stated in Appendix C, Chapter 11 of The Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities. These policies may be found in the General Information catalog and may also be accessed from the Student Judicial Services website at http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/. If a student has any questions concerning the application of the rules prohibiting scholastic dishonesty in regard to a particular assignment, it is the responsibility of that student to seek clarification from the instructor of the course.

2. To understand the instructions for each assignment, quiz or examination

Course objectives differ, and there will be some variation in permissible behavior from one assignment to another, and from one class to another. In some classes exams may be open book, while in many others they will be closed book. For some assignments students will be allowed to collaborate with other students, while for other assignments students will be prohibited from collaborating with other students. It is the responsibility of the student to understand the instructions for each assignment, and to ask the instructor for clarification whenever necessary.

There are three particular sets of circumstances in which assignments may provide opportunities for dishonest behavior that students must be very careful to avoid. Both sets of circumstances are related to out-of-class "cases" or "projects" that may be assigned in many of the classes in the McCombs School of Business.

First, it is neither practical nor desirable for an instructor to prepare completely new assignments each time a course is offered. If the ethical implications are not considered, some students may seek assistance from a student who took the course previously. However, as is discussed in the appendix, to either seek or provide such assistance would be an act of scholastic dishonesty under all circumstances.

Second, students are usually directed by the instructor for the course to complete these cases and projects on either an individual basis or on a group basis. Collaboration between individuals or groups may be entirely or partially prohibited. If the ethical implications are not considered, some students may seek unauthorized assistance. However, as is also discussed in the appendix, to either seek or provide such assistance when it is prohibited would also be an act of scholastic dishonesty.

Third, it is sometimes the case that a course examination is similar to an examination used in a previous semester. Different instructors have different policies on whether students are authorized to access previous examinations and their solutions. Such policies should be clarified for each individual course. Unless explicitly authorized, students should not seek or provide old examinations, nor should "test banks" be maintained by formal or informal student organizations.
3. To refrain from committing any acts of scholastic dishonesty

If each student understands the definition of scholastic dishonesty and the instructions for each assignment, then he or she should be able to avoid committing acts of scholastic dishonesty. Ignorance of the definition of scholastic dishonesty is not an excuse for dishonest behavior. In addition, although assignments in business classes are frequently very challenging, the difficulty of an assignment is never an excuse to behave dishonestly.

4. To take appropriate action when acts of scholastic dishonesty are observed

Commission of an act of scholastic dishonesty by a student is not a victimless offense. All of the other students in the class are victims because their honest efforts cannot be fairly evaluated if work by some students has been unfairly accomplished. All other students in the program, even if they are not in that class, are victims because the integrity of the program has been compromised. As a result, to passively observe dishonest behavior is to condone it and to encourage it. To avoid condoning or encouraging such behavior, students have the responsibility to take action that will prevent dishonest acts from occurring now or in the future.

Appropriate actions include confronting the student who has committed the act and reporting the observed behavior to the instructor. Failure to act allows dishonest students to victimize all of the honest students in the program, and serves to lower the value of the honest students' achievements.

Responsibilities of the Faculty in the McCombs School of Business

The faculty also assumes certain responsibilities to maintain a culture of scholastic integrity. However, these responsibilities are not a condition that must be met before students are expected to behave honestly. That is, even if a student perceives that a faculty member has not met one of the responsibilities detailed below; this does not justify dishonest behavior. The appropriate response in such instances is to discuss the issue with the faculty member and/or the Dean of the college.

1. To communicate clearly in writing the instructions for each assignment

One of the most important steps to take to reduce accidental scholastic dishonesty is to communicate clearly to students exactly what behavior is acceptable and what behavior is not. The faculty have agreed that written instructions should be provided for each type of assignment that will be made during the semester. These instructions should either be gathered together in the syllabus for all types of assignments for the course, or should be given on the face of each assignment. In particular, the instructions should clearly indicate with whom, and to what extent, the student may and may not collaborate on out-of-class assignments, and what other resources (books, computers, databases, etc.) may be used on out-of-class assignments.

2. To design assignments that minimize the opportunity for scholastic dishonesty while still achieving the educational objectives of the assignments

It is obvious that it is easier to commit dishonest acts on some assignments than on others. Under the second student responsibility discussed above, two situations were discussed in particular:
assignments that were used in prior semesters and out-of-class assignments for which collaboration is restricted. However, the judgment of the faculty is that it would severely reduce the quality of the education provided by the business curriculum to eliminate these types of assignments. Therefore, instructors are free to give such assignments when they are deemed appropriate, but the faculty will also attempt to minimize the opportunity for scholastic dishonesty when these assignments are designed.

3. To evaluate assignments on the basis of reasonable expectations given the difficulty of the assignment

The faculty has committed to consider the difficulty of the assignment when assigning grades. This does not mean that all students behaving honestly will be able to complete all assignments perfectly. Assignments in business classes are frequently designed to provide students with opportunities to work on real-world problems to which there are no clear answers.

4. To actively and consistently enforce the University rules governing scholastic dishonesty

Even though the faculty assumes that students are behaving honorably, from time to time individual instructors may have evidence that one or more students have committed an act of scholastic dishonesty. Under these circumstances it is the responsibility of the instructor to initiate the University procedures as outlined in "The Role of the Faculty in Confronting Scholastic Dishonesty" brochure published by the Student Judicial Services area of the Office of the Dean of Students. The college has determined that the appropriate penalty to recommend for acts of scholastic dishonesty is an "F" in the course, unless there are extenuating circumstances that indicate either a lesser or a greater penalty should be recommended. For example, a lesser penalty (such as an "F" on the assignment) may be recommended if there is clear evidence of significant mitigating circumstances. On the other hand, a greater penalty (such as suspension from the University) may be recommended if the dishonest act is especially egregious, or if the student has committed prior acts of scholastic dishonesty.

5. To place the following paragraph in a prominent position in their syllabus for every business course

The McCombs School of Business has no tolerance for acts of scholastic dishonesty. The responsibilities of both students and faculty with regard to scholastic dishonesty are described in detail in the Policy Statement on Scholastic Dishonesty for the McCombs School of Business. By teaching this course, I have agreed to observe all of the faculty responsibilities described in that document. By enrolling in this class, you have agreed to observe all of the student responsibilities described in that document. If the application of that Policy Statement to this class and its assignments is unclear in any way, it is your responsibility to ask me for clarification. Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty: Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. Since dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. You should refer to the Student Judicial Services website at http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/or the General Information Catalog to access the official University policies and procedures on scholastic dishonesty as well as further elaboration on what constitutes scholastic dishonesty.
Appendix

Definition of Scholastic Dishonesty

The official policies of the University are outlined in Appendix C, Chapter 11 of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities. Appendix C may be found in the General Information Catalog and may also be accessed from the Student Judicial Services website at http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/. This appendix elaborates on the policies and provides some examples that are relevant to courses and assignments in business classes.

The General Information Catalog says that "scholastic dishonesty" includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying scholastic records, and any act designed to give unfair advantage to the student, or the attempt to commit such an act.

Cheating

Appendix C of the Institutional Rules provides the following 13 examples of "cheating." Italic type indicates the material is quoted from the Institutional Rules, and plain type is the elaboration of the McCombs School of Business. These 13 examples do not cover all types of cheating.

1. Copying from another student's test paper

Copying from another student's examination will always be an act of scholastic dishonesty. In addition, reproducing all or a part of another student's homework, essay, or other written assignment for which a grade will be assigned will always be an act of scholastic dishonesty.

2. Using during a test materials not authorized by the person giving the test

Such materials might include programmable calculators, computers, notes, books, handouts, etc. Students should be sure to clearly understand what materials are permitted for each test.

3. Failing to comply with instructions given by the person administering the test

Students should comply with all instructions, including where to sit, when to begin working on the exam, and when to stop working on the exam.

4. Possession during a test of materials which are not authorized by the person giving the test, such as class notes or specifically designed "crib notes." The presence of textbooks constitutes a violation only if they have been specifically prohibited by the person administering the test

Not only is use of unauthorized materials during a test an act of scholastic dishonesty, but possession of such materials is also an act of scholastic dishonesty.

5. Using, buying, stealing, transporting, or soliciting in whole or part the contents of an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program

This includes obtaining or providing a solution (prepared either by a student or the instructor) for current semester assignments that are the same as, or similar to, assignments that were used in previous semesters or were otherwise available.
6. Collaborating with or seeking aid from another student during a test or other assignment without authority

In addition to seeking assistance from another student, this includes seeking unauthorized assistance from any non-student, such as a friend or relative. This also includes the use of another student's information with or without that student's knowledge. Any assistance from a tutor on a graded assignment is prohibited unless authorized by the instructor in advance.

Occasionally a student will inadvertently overhear information that may be beneficial in completing an exam or an assignment. It will constitute scholastic dishonesty if the student uses that information to his or her advantage without reporting the incident to the instructor.

7. Discussing the contents of an examination with another student who will take the examination

Frequently, students in different sections of the same course will take the same or similar exams at different times on the same day. In addition, because of illness or some other reason, students may take an exam before or after it is taken by the rest of the class. In these circumstances, it is scholastic dishonesty to seek or provide information that may in any way aid a student who has not yet taken the exam. It is the responsibility of the student who has taken the exam to determine whether another student has already taken the exam before discussing it, and it is the responsibility of the student who has not taken the exam to inform other students of that fact.

8. Divulging the contents of an examination, for the purpose of preserving questions for use by another, when the instructor has designated that the examination is not to be removed from the examination room or not to be returned to the student

At times, an instructor will seek to prevent copies of an exam from circulating generally, so that, for example, the exam may be administered to other students. When the instructor has indicated to the students that this is the case, it is an act of scholastic dishonesty to provide or receive information about the contents of that exam.

9. Substituting for another person, or permitting another person to substitute for one's self, to take a test

This standard of conduct applies to all out-of-class and in-class assignments for which collaboration is prohibited or constrained. Students are expected to do their own work for all assignments.

10. Paying or offering money or other valuable thing to, or coercing another person to obtain an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program, or information about an unadministered test, test key, homework solution, or computer program

This includes obtaining or providing solutions to current semester assignments or examinations that are the same as, or similar to, assignments or examinations that were used in previous semesters.

11. Falsifying research data, laboratory reports, and/or other academic work offered for credit

This includes fabricating events or accomplishments related to outside projects such as audit engagements or consulting engagements.
12. Taking, keeping, misplacing, or damaging the property of the university, or of another, if the student knows or reasonably should know that an unfair academic advantage would be gained by such conduct

This is particularly important in business classes with regard to library and computer resources. Frequently, case assignments may involve doing library research, where many students will rely on the same library resources to complete the case. It will constitute scholastic dishonesty for a student to take, misplace or damage library resources in such a way as to render them unavailable or unfit for other students. Similarly, many students may rely on computer data bases for completion of an assignment. It will constitute scholastic dishonesty for a student to in any way damage the accessibility of computer resources in such a way as to render them unfit for use by other students.

13. Misrepresenting facts, including providing false grades or resumes, for the purpose of obtaining an academic or financial benefit or injuring another student academically or financially

In general, any misrepresentation of facts to gain an unfair advantage will constitute scholastic dishonesty. For example, a student who misleads his or her instructor about the reasons for not taking an examination or for turning in an assignment after the deadline has committed an act of scholastic dishonesty. Similarly, it will be considered an act of scholastic dishonesty for a student to report false information on a resume.

**Plagiarism**

According to the Institutional Rules "Plagiarism" includes, but is not limited to, the appropriation, buying, receiving as a gift, or obtaining by any means another's work and the submission of it as one's own academic work offered for credit.

Plagiarism can usually be avoided by clearly citing the work of others when it appears in your own work. This means that the full extent of the reliance on the other work is clearly indicated. Whatever is being quoted should either appear in quotation marks (if it is relatively brief) or be indented (if it is more than a sentence or two). If a summary of facts or an argument is presented that is a paraphrase of another's work, that should be clearly indicated even if the material is not directly quoted.

Plagiarism is not restricted to copying from a published source. Copying without acknowledgment from an unpublished manuscript that was, for example, written by another student would also constitute plagiarism.

If a student completes an assignment and then uses all or a portion of that assignment as full or a partial completion of another assignment, in the same class or in a different class, without the express permission of the instructor, the student has committed scholastic dishonesty. In general, substantially the same work product should not be turned in for credit in more than one class without the instructor's permission.

**Collusion**

According to the Institutional Rules "Collusion" includes, but is not limited to, the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing academic assignments offered for credit or collaboration with another person to commit a violation of any section of the rules on scholastic dishonesty.
"Collusion" is an important issue in many business classes. On the one hand, the faculty want to encourage students to interact outside of class. Often this type of interaction facilitates the learning process for everyone. On the other hand, the faculty wish to reserve the right to give students assignments that are to be completed either individually or in small groups outside of class without consulting with others. Such assignments often cannot be completed in class because they require too much time, or because they require library or computer resources not available in the classroom.

It is the responsibility of the instructor to provide clear instructions on the extent of collaboration that is acceptable, and it is the responsibility of the student to understand and to conform to those instructions. The student has the responsibility to clarify any ambiguity by consulting the instructor. Here is a partial list of the types of collaboration instructions that may be given for individual and group assignments:

1. **Unlimited collaboration with all other students in the class for individual assignments, or with all other groups in the class for group assignments.**

2. **Unlimited collaboration with all other students (groups) in the class prior to producing the final work product such as an essay or report. The writing of the essay or report is to be done strictly on an individual student (group) basis.**

3. **No collaboration is permitted with other students (groups) at all. All aspects of the assignment are to be completed on a strictly individual student (group) basis.**

As a general rule, collaboration with anyone who is not a student in that class will always be prohibited. This includes other students who are not enrolled in the class, MPA/PPA students, other faculty members, and friends and relatives.

**Falsifying Academic Records**

According to the Institutional Rules "Falsifying Academic Records" includes, but is not limited to, the altering of grades or other falsification of academic records such as applications for admission, the award of a degree, grade reports, test papers, registration materials, and reporting forms used by the Office of the Registrar. In the context of a particular course, the most important example of "falsifying academic records" would be changing an answer on a test or other assignment after it has been graded, and then submitting it to be regraded as though it had not been changed. This would be a clear case of scholastic dishonesty.

*Adapted from the "Policy Statement on Scholastic Dishonesty in the MPA Program and the Professional Program in Accounting" (1995)*