Academic Integrity Handbook

*The goal of this handbook is to create a centralized and easily accessible **reference guide** for both full-time and part-time instructional faculty. It can be used as a reference when faculty are dealing with academic integrity issues in their classes, regardless of subject. Although the details of each situation may be unique, this handbook serves as a road-map of best practices for interacting with students, a breakdown of suggested steps to follow, what to do when official action needs to be taken, and how to understand our college's policies/practices. The primary focus of this document is on cultivating positive interactions between students and instructors, especially at the early stages of intervention.*

Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty looks different depending on the area or content for a course. Thus, conceptually the definition of academic dishonesty depends on the instructor's course policies and expectations. For purposes of this handbook, academic integrity is when students:
- Always turn in their own work written in their own voice,
- Always give credit for ideas/words/images that are not their own,
- Never present the work of others as their own,
- Complete work within the parameters of the assignment/assessment,
- Maintain the confidentiality of assessments when appropriate, and
- Adhere to the academic integrity policies as stated on the instructor's syllabus.

Best Practices for Prevention

This section outlines various practices for maintaining academic integrity. These practices are categorized into three grouping of actions faculty can take. They are based both on education research as well as the experiences of the authors of this handbook. It is recommended to integrate these practices into the syllabus and course policies as applicable.

Communication
- Build a relationship with each student by getting to know them and using their name
  - Trust between the student and teacher is the biggest factor in preventing cheating (Miles et. al.)
  - Include dedicated time in class or a specific discussion board for asking questions
  - Use student names frequently
  - Include a "Getting to Know You" assignment/survey
  - Make time for community building activities (ice breakers) or metacognitive reflection journals

- Maintain regular effective contact with students in both online and in-person classes
  - Regular check-ins make interactions between students and teachers feel normal and comfortable
  - Try using Pronto messaging as an easy/quick way to communicate
- Set expectations of communication between yourself and the students
  - Define the hours in which you are available and more likely to respond
  - Request students check their messages on a specific basis depending on class structure
- Review and assess current written policies to ensure a supportive, approachable tone is being used to help build trust
- Continually encourage students to reach out for support when they are struggling, send reminders of office hour times or information about other support services

Preparation
- Define in the syllabus what constitutes academic integrity in your class
  - Write a contract of expectations for coursework and ask students to sign it, agreeing that they understand the standards
    - Option: add in a section about the fair uses versus inappropriate uses of generative AI in your class (see appendix below for sample syllabi statements)
    - Create an AI statement for your syllabus that outlines appropriate and inappropriate uses of AI and discuss this in the class orientation meeting. You can provide examples and instructions on how to use generative AI appropriately in your class. Additionally, include a question about generative AI usage in the syllabus quiz. If students answer it incorrectly, they will need to retake the quiz.
  - Include a section describing your step-by-step processes for reporting instances of academic dishonesty
- Provide clarity on the expectations and content to be covered by an assessment
  - Add to the schedule a test prep day prior to high stakes summative assessments
  - Co-create a study guide or cheat sheet for students to study from for the assessment
  - Include in the directions information about what you expect in their answers
  - Explain grading processes and policies (e.g. rubrics, partial credit, etc.)
- Use class time to teach students effective study strategies to learn course material
- Provide multiple opportunities for assessment preparation such as lower stakes formative assessments/assignments
- When possible or appropriate, provide flexible exam or assessment dates to ensure students are ready

Assessment
- Essay/Written assessments
  - Include formative steps of the writing process in person
  - Require citations or evidence from specific sources

- - ○ Focus on argumentative and dialectical writing instead of summary and simple analysis
    - ○ Include metacognitive commentary on students' own writing (e.g. explain why they chose a phrase or rhetorical strategy)
    - ○ Have the prompts be unique to avoid predictability
- ● Exam/Test assessments
    - ○ Conduct exams in person when possible and allowable
    - ○ Adjust the number of questions as needed to focus on high order [Bloom's taxonomy skills](#)
    - ○ Provide clear instructions that explain the appropriate use of generative AI during an exam
    - ○ Have the written portion prompts be unique to avoid predictability
    - ○ Utilize a [lockdown browser](#) feature to ensure students only have the exam open
    - ○ Randomize the order of the questions, order of the answer choices, disallow backtracking, etc.
    - ○ Have different versions of the exam with similar but unique prompts/variables (chatGPT can help build these questions)
    - ○ Consider separating exams into multiple choice and then shift short answer questions into a project based assessment
    - ○ Require evidence of work/thinking as a separate assignment turned in after the exam
    - ○ Consider the use of open note assessments or allow a note sheet to be used during the exam
- ● Performance/Skill Assessments
    - ○ Have the concepts present in multiple assessment types
    - ○ Include individualized oral exams
- ● When grading, provide partial credit for the correct process if the answer is incorrect
- ● Include lower stakes assignments worth a smaller percentage of the grade or worth no points and graded as complete/incomplete
- ● Provide opportunities for students to revise assignments or retake assessments
    - ○ Plan for a certain number of graded assignments to include required or optional revision (e.g. allow students to retake one major test per semester)

Best Practices for Communication

If you suspect a student has cheated or not represented their work honestly, it is recommended to reach out to the student directly. This can be done by emailing the student, commenting on the assignment, or pulling them aside during class. It is not recommended to finalize a score for the assignment before speaking with the student. However, in a fully online class, it is recommended that you give the student a provisional 0 or F with an explanation in the comments section of the assignment saying you'd like to speak with them. The first step should be to attempt to set up a meeting. A best practice would be to offer to meet in the classroom, a public space, or via zoom rather than in your office to create a more approachable environment.

As a reminder, try not to personalize the student's actions. The relationship you've built still exists! It is likely something came up in the student's life that led to their decisions.

Here is a template email to send for the initial reach out:

"Hi [insert student name],

I hope this message finds you well. I am reaching out to discuss some concerns I have regarding your recent assignment. After reviewing the work, there are aspects that suggest it may not fully reflect your own original efforts. As you know, academic integrity is a core value of our class. I believe in your potential and commitment to learning. Mistakes happen, and this can be an opportunity to clarify any misunderstandings. I'd like to meet with you to discuss the assignment and ensure we're supporting your growth in the best way possible.

Please let me know your availability for a brief meeting.

Best regards,

[Insert your name]"

Here are possible phrases to use in person:

"I read your [assignment] and I'm a bit concerned about the phrasing and structure you used. Can you tell me about your thought process on this part of your [assignment]?"

"I noticed that this [assignment] you turned in seemed very different from the first few you turned in; can you talk me through what you did?"

During the meeting with the student, remain open minded and try to remember not to take their actions personally. Begin the conversation by asking how the student is doing. Then move into discussing how the student is completing the work for the course and how they prepared for the assignment. Then introduce the portions of the assignment that led to your suspicion of cheating. Be sure to allow the student to share how they experienced the assignment. During the conversation, try to focus on using language that highlights their growth and your belief in their abilities. Below are some options for resolutions and next steps.

Best Practices for Resolution

Prior to meeting with the student, it is recommended to know which options you plan to offer. It is reasonable that your offer may change from student to student since each instance of academic dishonesty is unique. The below options focus on restorative approaches for instances where students have acknowledged not meeting the expectations. Since most grading practices are based on averaging scores across an entire semester, the student's grade is heavily affected by zeros on assignments. Thus, it is recommended to offer a second attempt on an assignment, which allows the student's grade to more accurately represent their

knowledge and not one moment of poor judgement. It is also recommended to reach out to colleagues to see what they have offered for similar cases then decide on your course of action.

- Require students complete the Academic Integrity Canvas Module written by our librarians prior to any second attempts or alternate options
- Offer a second attempt on the same assignment using the same or new questions
  - Option: require this attempt happens in person or via zoom for online course, this can also help mitigate generative AI usage
- Offer an alternative assignment
  - Options: an oral report or project
- Excuse or remove the assignment from their grade
- Assign a 0 for the assignment (not recommended for high stakes assessments)
  - Keep in mind the overall impact of this on their final letter grade

Reporting Processes

Faculty are encouraged to report instances of academic dishonesty when strongly suspected. The process should be clearly and promptly explained to the student along with what they can expect to occur next. To report the incident, faculty need to fill out the [Student Code of Conduct Report Form](#) (sometimes referred to as a Maxient report). There are two types of reports: (1) Formal- requires a follow-up meeting between the student and a Disciplinary Officer or (2) Informal- used for the purpose of record keeping to identify repeated actions. The faculty chooses which type of report they are filling out. This form can be used for academic dishonesty, fraudulent students, hazing, disruptive behavior, etc. Within the form, there is a section to fill in about what next steps the faculty would like to occur.

Once the form is filled out, the Director of Student Development Office (SDO) reviews the information and the requested next steps. An email is sent to the student detailing the information and any next steps needed from the student (see the links in the appendix for what these emails look like). The student and the Director of SDO or designee will schedule a meeting. During this meeting, a course of action is determined and the student is provided a notice of decision. A student may have an advisor present during the meeting as well as appeal during any step of the process.

Non-responsive Students

There are times when students do not respond either to the initial email or comment from the faculty or they choose to continue turning in work that breaks the standards set. If this is the case, below are some practices or actions that could be taken. Through these additional communication steps, faculty should continue to maintain the relationship and remember that it is most likely that something came up in the student's life preventing them from performing at their best.

Communication Issues
- Attempt sending a second email/message including when you expect a response by and what the next steps would be if you do not hear from the student

○　Change the score to a 0 or let the 0 remain in the gradebook
　　　　○　Discuss options of withdrawing from the course
　　●　Remind the student of the process and syllabus policies
　　●　Include information about what will happen if the issue occurs again or the email is not responded to

Repetitive Instances
　　●　Increase the grade/score repercussions
　　●　Provide an explanation of the steps to be taken
　　●　Report the instance using the [Student Code of Conduct Report Form](#) asking SDO to reach out
　　●　Have your dean reach out to the student on your behalf

Note on Generative AI Usage

Although generative AI tools can be used for academic dishonesty of all kinds, this is a complicated issue because proof of wrongdoing will often be impossible to find or produce. This is a constantly changing landscape. However, you still have a responsibility and a right to evaluate your students' work for authenticity and to investigate when you suspect dishonesty. There is a sample syllabi statement in the appendix below. Many cases involving AI and academic dishonesty will exist in an uncomfortable, gray area. Even though you may not be able to prove it, you are always allowed to bring your concerns to the student and have them explain their work/processes.

On the other hand, it's recommended to consider how to help prepare students to live and work in a world where everyone has easy access to generative AI tools, like ChatGPT. In many cases, students from more privileged backgrounds will have access to more powerful AI tools and will also be more proficient with them. In addition, commonly used applications, like Google Docs, Excel, and MS Word, increasingly have AI tools built into them that run with or without the user's knowledge. As a content expert in your area, you'll need to make determinations about when, how, or if AI tools should be permitted for assignments. Think about what your line is- what's ok and what's not. It is okay if this line changes. Regardless of your personal policies and practices, it's important to state them clearly in your syllabus and communicate them to your class frequently and directly, either in-person or through emails.

Resources and References

Miles, Paula J. et. al. "Why Students Cheat and How Understanding This Can Help Reduce the Frequency of Academic Misconduct in Higher Education: A Literature Review." *J Undergrad Neurosci Educ*. 2022 Jun 1;20(2):A150–A160. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10653228/

College Policies

El Camino College has two relevant Administrative Policies focusing on academic integrity: Standards of Student Conduct (AP 5500) and Student Discipline Procedures (AP 5520). In addition, there is the Student Bill of Rights (AP 5530). In addition, the Academic Senate has written and approved sample syllabi statements seen below.

Academic Senate Syllabi Statement on Academic Integrity
El Camino College is dedicated to providing a learning environment where you can succeed. In return, we need you to do your part in maintaining academic integrity. To uphold the academic integrity of the institution as a student, you are responsible for behaving in a manner which encourages learning and promotes honesty and to act with fairness toward others.

At El Camino College, academic integrity includes:
- Always turning in your own work written in your own voice
- Always giving credit for ideas/words/images that are not your own
- Never presenting the work of others as your own

In short, as long as you take ownership of your own original quality work, we will do everything we can to support your success. I encourage you to meet with me if you have questions about how to maintain academic integrity in my course. For more information on ECC policies regarding Student Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity and resources for students and faculty visit the Academic Integrity web page.

Academic Senate Syllabi Statement on Use of Generative AI (multiple options)
Encouraging General Use
I regard Generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, DALL-E, etc.) as essential developing technology for doing academic work.

1. For this reason, I will require you to make use of them in a specific way for some assignments. I will generally encourage you to make use of them for your work in my course, and there are rules you need to follow when using these tools.
2. You must always properly cite these tools when using them and document how you made use of them to complete your work.

3. Understand that these tools do not always generate reliable information. You are responsible for ensuring that your work is correct and accurate in general and when using Generative AI.
4. You are responsible for making sure that the work you submit does not violate intellectual property law, and that it does not violate the El Camino code of student conduct or the school's core values.

If you use Generative AI tools without following these rules, I may need to approach it as an instance of academic misconduct and the relevant provisions from El Camino's Administrative Procedure 5500: Standards of Student Conduct will apply.

In addition, please remember that the rules for using Generative AI tools in your work at El Camino are set by each faculty member for their course. The permission I am providing you for using these tools in my course does not extend to other classes you take here.

Restricting Specific Use
You are only allowed to use Generative AI tools (e.g. ChatGPT, DALL-E, etc.) in this course for specific assignments as described in the assignment directions. Apart from assignments with instructions allowing or requiring you to use Generative AI tools in specific ways, you are not allowed to use these tools on any activities. When you are required to use Generative AI tools, you will also be required to cite your use of the tool and/or submit copies of your interaction with the AI app. If there is sufficient evidence that you have used generative AI tools in this course in ways that are not described in assignment directions, I will treat it as an instance of academic misconduct and the relevant provisions from El Camino's Administrative Procedure 5500: Standards of Student Conduct will apply.

In addition, please remember that the rules for using Generative AI tools in your work at El Camino are set by each faculty member for their course. The permission I am providing you for using these tools in my course does not extend to other classes you take here.

Canvas Modules

As mentioned above, the librarians wrote two different Canvas Modules for students. Faculty are welcome to import these into their courses and use them as they see fit.
- [Academic Integrity at ECC: Avoid Plagiarism](#)
- [Academic Integrity at ECC: Avoid Cheating](#)

Sample Letters/Emails ECC Sends to Students

Below are examples of the emails/letters that are sent to students after a faculty submits the Student Code of Conduct Report Form. These samples do not include actual student information.
- [Notice of Alleged Violation](#)
  - Sent if faculty selects to have SDO reach out to the student. This email requests that the student set up a meeting with an SDO representative.
- [Outcome Letter](#)

- ○ This email is the follow-up summary of the meeting between the student and the SDO representative.

Additional Resources

If a student shares something personal is going on in their life and they might benefit from additional support by our campus, here is our quick reference guide of our services.
[Student Support & Resources Quick Guide](#)

Example Scenarios

This section includes real examples of how faculty responded to and resolved different instances of cheating in their classes.

Scenario 1: A student brings in a note sheet when it is not allowed.
    Samanatha is clearly looking through notes on a paper they brought in during the test. The instructor has clearly communicated that this test is closed-notes, so the violation of academic integrity is clear. This is a first-time offense.
- ● Explain to the student that they are violating the standards and rules of the assignment
- ● Give them an opportunity to explain
- ● Ask further questions to determine the cause of the issues
    - ○ Are they experiencing issues outside of class?
    - ○ Do they need to work on their time management or studying skills?
    - ○ Do they need extra tutoring or campus resources?
- ● Explain the short term consequences
    - ○ "You'll get a 0 on this test"
- ● Offer a reasonable way for the student to make-up the missed points
    - ○ "You can take an alternative version of the test at a later date"
    - ○ "You can complete the Academic Integrity Module in Canvas to make up the points"
    - ○ "You can complete an alternative assignment to make up the points"

Scenario 2: A copied homework/collab on assignment when not allowed.
    Patrick has turned in a report that appears to be partially copied from another student's work. After asking about it, you learn that Patrick worked with his classmate, Jorge, on the report. It comes to your attention that Jorge showed Patrick his own work as an example to help him get started, but he didn't realize Patrick had totally copied part of it. Although most of the report is Patrick's own work, it is not the first time that he's used parts of another student's work without permission or attribution.
- ● Explain to the student that they are violating the standards and rules of the assignment
- ● Remind them that this isn't the first time they've done this
- ● Explain short term consequences
    - ○ "You'll get a 50% (F) on this assignment"

- - "You won't have any opportunity to make up the missing points because this is the second time you've done this"
  - Discuss long term consequences
    - What steps will you take if this happens again?
    - Consider filing a [Student Code of Conduct Report Form](#) report if the offense is flagrant
  - Ask further questions that include more serious interventions
    - Make sure the students understands both what the issue is and why it matters to you
    - Explain how this behavior could negatively impact their academic future
    - Strongly encourage them to connect with campus resources: tutoring, counseling, mental health services, and so on

Scenario 3: Repeated inappropriate use of chatGPT and other classmate's work.

Courtney has turned in 4 different discussion posts that all bear the hallmarks of AI generated writing. Besides the suspicious tone of the writing, you notice that important details about the class topics and concepts are never used or are only generally commented on; in some cases, the writing seems totally disconnected to the discussion's goals. After sending the student an email, you notice that the writing style of the email diverges greatly from that of her discussion posts. After asking for an on-camera meeting with the student, they reply that they aren't available. They deny using AI for the assignments.

- IF you have a statement requiring on-camera interactions in your syllabus, we recommend requiring that the student meet with you on camera to discuss their work.
  - Note: if you do not have a statement requiring on-camera interactions in your syllabus, you can't require them to meet on-camera
- You don't have a way to prove that the student cheated, so there will be a certain level uncertainty
- If the discussion posts are off-topic, missing key details, or seem too general, you can grade them accordingly; for example
  - "This is missing some of the required class terminology, so it's getting a 0 for now. If you'd like to redo it and add the necessary elements, email me back."
  - "This reply seems off-topic to me, so it's getting a 0 for now; reread the instructions and write back to me if you have any questions or need any help."
- Share your concerns explicitly
  - "This seems like AI generated writing to me. It's important to the course that you compose your work in your own words. Can you please write back to explain what's going on with these assignments?"
- Remember, AI checking applications are never 100% accurate (even if they are advertised as such); it may be appropriate to share the results of a plagiarism checker with the student, but it isn't the same proving they cheated.

Here's the hard part:
- If no interventions succeed, OR if the student never admits to using generative AI inappropriately, we recommend:
  - Letting it go, especially if the assignments are not adding up to a majority of the final grade
  - Reviewing your assignments' structure and wording so that quick AI responses are less likely to work
  - Looking for ways to connect with students to build a trusting relationship- remember, this is the most important factor in preventing academic dishonesty