

**STUDENT FAQs – ACADEMIC INTEGRITY****1. What is academic integrity?**

Academic integrity is a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values in all University activities and relationships: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage (adapted from the *International Center for Academic Integrity's* definition).

**2. What is a departure from academic integrity?**

A departure from academic integrity is a failure to uphold any of the six fundamental values of academic integrity (honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage) in a University activity and/or relationship (adapted from the *International Center for Academic Integrity's* definition).

**3. What is plagiarism?**

Plagiarism is representation of another person's thoughts, writing/creative work, or inventions as one's own. In some cases, plagiarism can also include re-using one's own work without permission. Several specific examples of plagiarism can be found in Section 4.3.1 of the Academic Integrity Policy. If you are unsure about any of this, be sure to ask your course instructors for clarification.

**4. What is cheating?**

Cheating is any dishonest and/or deceptive action carried out as part of a University activity or within a University relationship. Several specific examples can be found in Section 4.3.2 of the Academic Integrity Policy. If you are unsure about any of this, be sure to ask your course instructors for clarification.

**5. What are the consequences of departing from academic integrity?**

Engaging in any behaviour or encouraging/helping another person to engage in any behaviour that departs from academic integrity can have serious consequences.

If you are found responsible for having departed from academic integrity, you may be required to participate in educational and/or other remedial activities to help you learn more about academic integrity and how to avoid departing from it in future. In addition or instead, you may receive academic sanctions (penalties) ranging from grade reductions on an assignment/exam to expulsion from the University or revocation of a received degree. Some sanctions are included on your academic transcript.

Because the consequences can be serious, you must make sure you understand the University's academic integrity expectations as well as those of your individual course instructors. Be sure to ask questions if you are not sure!

**6. Where/how can I learn more about how I can act with academic integrity?**

There are many resources on the BU campus who can help you learn about academic integrity and what it means in our community. First, your course instructors will be able to provide you with specific expectations for each of your individual classes. For more general inquiries/advice, any of the academic advisors on campus, the Learning Skills Specialists in Student Services, and

the librarians will be happy to assist you in understanding how to uphold academic integrity in all of your academic work.

Many resources outside of BU also provide helpful information and tools. Several examples are listed below:

- York University's SPARK Academic Integrity Module:  
<https://spark.library.yorku.ca/academic-integrity-what-is-academic-integrity/>
- University of Waterloo's Academic Integrity Module with scenarios and a quiz:  
<https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-integrity/integrity-students/undergraduate-academic-integrity-module>

**7. My professor is accusing me of departing from academic integrity, but I don't understand what I did wrong?**

You are responsible for understanding the University's and your instructors' definitions of and expectations for academic integrity. If your instructor suspects that you have departed from academic integrity, they need to invite you to a meeting (in-person or remote) to discuss the situation.

If you have been invited to such a meeting, it is a good idea to contact a representative of the Brandon University Students Union (BUSU). They will provide advice and support through the process and may even agree to attend the meeting with you. At the meeting with your instructor, ask specific questions so that you can understand clearly what the instructor is accusing you of.

If you did depart from academic dishonesty by accident because you did not understand what was expected, communicate this clearly to your instructor. However, be aware that you are still responsible for departures from academic integrity even if you departed accidentally, and the Dean may apply appropriate remedies/sanctions.

**8. I'm being accused of departing from academic integrity, even though I did nothing wrong on my own assignments. Can I really be punished for helping someone else cheat?**

Yes, you can be held responsible for helping another person depart from academic integrity. Because academic integrity is essential to the positive functioning of our community and because honesty, fairness, and responsibility are foundational values of academic integrity, helping someone else to depart from academic integrity is a departure in and of itself.

**9. What happens if I am accused of having departed from academic integrity?**

If an instructor suspects that you have departed from academic integrity, they will contact you and ask for a meeting where they can explain to you what they suspect and why. At this point, it is a really good idea to consult with a representative of the Brandon University Student Union (BUSU). They will provide advice and support to you at each stage of the process.

Once you have met with the instructor, if the instructor still believes you have departed from academic integrity, the instructor will make a report to the Dean of the Faculty/School offering the course/academic activity. The Dean will review the situation and make a decision about your responsibility for the alleged departure from academic integrity.

If the Dean does not find you responsible for having departed from academic integrity, the matter will be closed with no further action taken. If the Dean does find that you departed from academic integrity, after consulting the Academic Integrity Repository to see whether you have been found previously responsible for a departure from academic integrity, the Dean will determine the appropriate remedy(ies)/sanction(s). If the Dean believes that very serious sanctions are appropriate in the situation, the Dean will recommend additional sanctions to the President of Brandon University. The President will review the situation and determine the most appropriate additional sanction(s). You will receive notification of the Dean's (and President's, if applicable) decision.

Most official communications, including those related to academic integrity, are sent to students via BU email, so it is very important that you are checking your BU email account regularly.

Details on the process followed when an instructor suspects a departure from academic integrity are found in Section 4.4 of the Academic Integrity Policy and a flow chart of the process is found on the [Senate Office website](#).

**10. If I've been accused of departing from academic integrity, can't I just withdraw from the course instead of going through the whole process?**

Because academic integrity is essential to the positive functioning of our community and because responsibility is one of the foundational values of academic integrity, BU does not allow students who have been accused of departing from academic integrity to withdraw from the course until the process (as described in Section 4.4 of the Academic Integrity Policy) is complete.

If, at the end of the process, you are not found responsible for having departed from academic integrity, your ability to withdraw from the course will be reinstated.

**11. I have been accused of departing from academic integrity, but my instructor has only been able to offer circumstantial evidence of my guilt. What kind of standard do the Dean and the Academic Integrity Committee use to determine whether a departure from academic integrity has taken place?**

In these cases, the Dean and the Academic Integrity Committee use a standard called "balance of probabilities", which means that the evidence provided by the instructor must be more credible and convincing than that presented by the student. It does not mean that the instructor needs to provide evidence "beyond a reasonable doubt." As a result, if the circumstantial evidence provided by your instructor is deemed more credible and convincing than your explanation of the situation, you may be held responsible for having departed from academic integrity.

**12. Can I appeal the decision if I have been found responsible for departing from academic integrity but I don't agree that I did anything wrong or I think the sanction applied is too harsh?**

If you have received a letter notifying you that you have been found responsible for having departed from academic integrity, you may submit an appeal to the Academic Integrity Committee if one of the following applies to your situation:

- There was a fundamental procedural error during the investigation and/or resolution of the situation; or



- New information has come to light that was not reasonably available to the instructor and/or Dean during the initial process; or
- The instructor and/or Dean demonstrated bias in the investigation and/or decisioning process; or
- The remedy(ies)/sanction(s) applied was inappropriate relative to the departure from academic integrity.

Details on the student appeal process are found in Section 4.6 of the Academic Integrity Policy, and a flow chart of this process is found on the [Senate Office website](#).

**13. If I submit an appeal of the Dean/President's decision, will I receive a worse sanction?**

If you submit an appeal based on one of the allowable grounds for appeal, the Academic Integrity Committee will review the entire situation and make a final decision. It is possible that the Committee could decide to impose stricter sanctions than those applied by the Dean (and/or President), but this would be unusual.

**14. What happens if my instructor or Dean fail to meet the timelines set out in the policy?**

The University understands that all processes related to departures from academic integrity are stressful and can have impacts on your current and future academic performance, course selections, degree completion timeline, etc. As a result, timelines have been included in the Academic Integrity Policy to keep these processes moving towards resolution in a steady and reasonable way.

However, unforeseen and extenuating circumstances can occur that make it impossible for an instructor and/or Dean to meet the specified timelines. If your instructor is not following the timelines and has not provided a reasonable explanation, you should follow the Student Grievance Procedure as outlined in the current Undergraduate Calendar or Graduate Calendar. You may also wish to contact a representative of the Brandon University Student Union (BUSU) as they will provide advice and support throughout the process.

If your Dean has not communicated their decision regarding the report submitted by your instructor within 15 business days of the instructor having reported the departure (or by the deadline indicated by the Provost if the Dean has been granted an extension), the report is closed, and you will be considered not responsible for having departed from academic integrity.

**15. I am an international student. If I am found responsible for having departed from academic integrity, what will happen to my study permit and/or visa? Will I be able to stay in Canada and at Brandon University?**

While your study permit and/or visa are valid, nothing will happen to them even if you are found responsible for having departed from academic integrity. You will be able to stay in Canada and at Brandon University.

However, if you need to renew your study permit and/or visa during your studies, as part of the renewal process, you may be asked to provide a transcript showing your academic progress to date. If you have received a sanction for departing from academic integrity that appears on your academic transcript, your ability to renew your study permit and/or visa may be affected.

If you find yourself in this situation, contact the Office of International Studies who can refer you to appropriate resources.

**16. Does my academic integrity history follow me after graduation?**

If you have been found responsible for departing from academic integrity, with a few exceptions, you may submit an appeal to the Academic Integrity Committee in your final term prior to graduation or at any time thereafter requesting that entries in the BU Academic Integrity Repository and/or notations on your transcript pertaining to the departure(s) be removed. If the appeal is granted and the entries/notations are removed, there will be no record of the departure(s) in your official academic history.

You may not appeal to have entries/notations related to expulsion from a Faculty/School, expulsion from the University, and/or revocation of a credential/degree removed from the repository or from your transcript. Those stay on your record permanently.