Best Practices for Academic Integrity in Online Courses

Academic integrity represents an honest approach to scholarship, while academic dishonesty diminishes the value of the educational experience. Although academic dishonesty is not unique to online education, it is an area of concern. It may not be possible to eliminate all instances of academic dishonesty; however, there are many ways to greatly reduce its frequency.

# Students are more likely to cheat when they:

* Lack confidence in their ability to complete coursework--especially high stakes, summative assessments such as major exams and projects.
* Feel they are being treated unfairly and the instructor does not care about their learning.
* Do not see the connections between instructional materials, learning activities, and grades.
* Do not feel invested in a community of learning.
* Feel as if cheating would be easy and free of consequences.

# To help reduce cheating:

* Assign at least some low-stakes, formative assessments to build confidence and reinforce learning.
* Scaffold large assignments to reduce the temptation to procrastinate, and enable students to frequently check their progress.
* Use multiple types of learning activities and assessments, and craft at least some of them specifically for your course.
* Be present and communicate openly within the course: interact with your students.
* Assign collaborative, interactive work that helps students engage with the course content and their peers.
* Design the course so that learning objectives, instructional materials, learning activities, and assessments are transparently interconnected.
* Set clear expectations for academic integrity from the outset of the course; help your students understand what constitutes academic dishonesty and how to avoid it.
* Ensure that students understand the consequences of academic dishonesty.
* Provide rubrics so that students see how their work will be graded.
* Provide constructive feedback so that students learn how to improve.
* Craft assignments that are difficult to plagiarize, such as papers or projects that are tailored to the individual student, groups of students, or your class.
* Change assignments/assessments from one session of the course to the next; don’t use the same version every time.
* Scramble the order of questions and answer choices in online quizzes; have quiz questions selected randomly from a question bank.
* Use a cheating prevention/detection service, such as [**TurnItIn**](https://inside.nku.edu/cite/technologyresources/turnitin_faculty.html) to detect plagiarism, [**Respondus LockDown Browser**](https://inside.nku.edu/cite/technologyresources/ldb_faculty.html) to prevent students from opening other browser windows or tabs during online quizzes, and/or [**Respondus Monitor**](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=lGyc_HBchOw&feature=emb_logo) to record students while they are taking online assessments and flag instances when they go off-camera.