What is ACADEMIC DISHONESTY?
It’s not just cheating on tests or plagiarizing on papers!

Students are often confused by what sorts of actions or inactions constitute academic dishonesty, and are sometimes shocked to find out that they have committed academic dishonesty. The following is a list of actions and inactions that would constitute academic dishonesty and or cheating, some are specific to engineering and the sciences. Broadly, the following would constitute (and be punishable as) academic dishonesty, cheating, or unethical behavior (Several examples of these are given below.)

1) Claiming credit for someone else’s ideas, work, thoughts, contributions etc.
2) Failing to give credit to others for their ideas, work, thoughts, contributions etc. (Note: this means you can be guilty for something you didn’t do just for something you did.)
3) Doing anything that gives you an unfair advantage over your peers.
4) Doing anything that gives a friend or associate an unfair advantage over your peers.
5) Falsifying data or results.

Whenever you turn in something you are claiming credit for that work. Even if you are receiving no academic credit for the work (it is un-graded, it is worth zero points, it is optional etc.) that DOES NOT RELIEVE YOU OF THE RESPONSIBILITIES ASSOCIATED WITH POINTS 2-5 above. That is you could fail a class and be expelled for your actions (or inactions) on an UN-GRADED assignment or project (e.g. you can’t plagiarize just because no academic credit is given for your writing).

Some specific examples of well known types of cheating or academic dishonesty and how they violate the above principles.

- **Plagiarism** is using someone else’s written work without giving credit. It violates points 1 and 2 (and sometimes 3)
- **Copying on exams / quizzes** (cheating) ... clearly violates point 3 and also points 1 and 2
- **Copying homework or lab reports** ... this violates points 1, 2, and 3. If you copy lab data that is not your own you also violate point 5.
- **Allowing someone else to copy your exam, quiz, lab report or homework** – this clearly violates 4.
- **Not contributing** to a team project or assignment but accepting credit for the result violates point 1 and possibly points 2 and 3.
- **Falsifying data** (changing existing data to make it ‘look good’ or prove a point), making up results (outright creating data for tests / analysis that have not been done), or ignoring or eliminating ‘bad’ data are all clear violations of point 5.
- **Using disallowed aids** on tests or quizzes (and more broadly on homework etc.) violates point 3. Examples include (but are not limited to):
  - The use of unauthorized cheat sheets, on tests or quizzes
  - Notes written in the text for open book exams,
  - Cell phone text messages
  - Pre-programming formulae into calculators etc.

**Note:** While your Professor should explain what is and isn’t allowed ... it is your responsibility to know this. Ignorance of a rule is not a valid excuse.

This list is not intended to be comprehensive, only illustrative.

**IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO KNOW WHAT IS AND WHAT IS NOT ALLOWED IN ANY GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCE. IF YOU HAVE ANY DOUBTS ASK!!!**
Practical Advice to help you AVOID Academic Dishonesty Problems

The following tips and techniques should help keep you from inadvertently cheating even when dealing with gray areas like working together on homework assignments.

Two Basic Principles:

(1) FULL DISCLOSURE

Your best defense against ending up on the wrong side of an academic integrity case is to be meticulous about GIVING CREDIT to your sources ... even informal sources. This will prevent you from accidentally accepting credit for other’s work, and will make it clear that your intentions are honest.

No one will think that you are trying to cheat on a homework problem if you clearly say, for example: “I worked with Jane on this ... she did most of it, and I m not sure I get it yet, anyway this is how far I got.” Or: “this derivation was found on the web at ...” Likewise, you should disclose aid that you gave to your peers: “I helped Jimmy with #2 on this assignment.”

In cases of group work, clearly lay out the credit for the parts. For example: “I wrote the introduction and methods, Abdul wrote the data and results sections, and we collaborated equally on the discussion and conclusion sections.”

Giving footnotes and references to published and copyrighted work is critical. Even if what you are doing is not for a grade. Failure to do so can easily lead to (very serious) plagiarism charges.

Likewise, giving references to informal or unusual sources is important: “I looked at a similar lab report from my fraternity’s files (Smith ‘88) before I wrote this.” Or: “I found a solution to this problem on line, and looked at it before attempting the problem on my own.”

IF YOU FULLY DISCLOSE IT IS VERY UNLIKELY THAT YOUR INTENTIONS WILL BE MIS-INTERPRETED. If you accidentally do something that is out of bounds (e.g. you are not allowed to look at posted solutions before you do your homework) it will be caught and corrected quickly ... before any real harm can be done.

It is important to note that full disclosure does not earn you credit for someone else’s work (e.g. simply copying a solution, referencing it as copied will not earn you credit but it may protect you from punishment for academic dishonesty).

(2) KNOW THE RULES (ASK, DON T ASSUME!)

It is always your responsibility to know what is in bounds and what is out of bounds for any given situation. It is important to know that this can change from situation to situation. Different professors have different expectations. Different disciplines have different ways of doing things. Even the same professor might have different objectives (and hence very different rules) for different assignments within the same class! Be aware of this, and if in doubt ASK. Note, following point one can give you some extra protection here. If you accidentally violate a rule but clearly state what you did (e.g. “I talked to Jimmy about this solution ...but unknown to you this was disallowed”) you will diffuse the situation because no one will think you were trying to get away with something. However, breaking the rules may still have consequences.