As a student at UMass Amherst, you are part of a community of scholars dedicated to original thinking, discovery, research, and writing. Integrity is essential to academic communities, and all of us in this community are therefore held to the highest standards of academic honesty. Students are expected to respect the intellectual property of others, and you have the right to expect such respect for your own intellectual property. The conventions for source attribution can vary among disciplines and cultures. When writing in college courses in the United States, you’re required to represent other people’s work fairly and accurately and use accepted citation styles (e.g., MLA, APA) to give full credit to those sources.

Failure to meet these standards constitutes academic dishonesty. It not only compromises learning; it also violates the fundamental assumptions upon which this community is based. For the University’s definition of “academic dishonesty,” see the document Academic Honesty Policy & Procedure (www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/). The Writing Program requires all students and teachers in Englwr111: Basic Writing and Englwr112: College Writing to become familiar with this statement, including its policies regarding the reporting of academic dishonesty, the types of resolution available, and students’ right to appeal charges of dishonesty.

COMMON TYPES OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY IN WRITING COURSES
The types of academic dishonesty most likely to arise in writing courses are “plagiarism” and “fabrication”:

... copying words or passages verbatim from someone else’s work, or from a source of any kind, without using quotation marks;

... copying words or passages verbatim from a source without giving full and accurate credit to that source and providing full publication or location information using an appropriate citation method;

... summarizing or paraphrasing a source’s words, ideas, opinions, or conclusions without giving full and accurate credit to that source and providing full publication or location information using an appropriate citation method;

... using facts, data, graphs, illustrations, or other material from someone else’s work, or from a source of any kind, without fully acknowledging that use (except where such material is easily found in multiple reference works or can be defined as “common knowledge” in a culture);

... fabricating (i.e., inventing) sources or citations, or falsely attributing to one author or source words or ideas that belong to another author or source;

... copying and pasting material from the Internet into one’s own work without quotation marks and full attribution, even material with no specified author or from a blog, chat room, or other informal venue; and

... handing in work for one course that was handed in for credit for another course without the explicit permission and mutual knowledge of both instructors.

Remember as well that unintentional plagiarism is still plagiarism. Now that you have received this notice, you cannot plead ignorance.
WHEN THERE ARE SIGNS OF POSSIBLE ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Students should be aware that, when teachers encounter possible academic dishonesty (e.g., those without drafts or with late drafts, without works cited pages, or with large departures in style), teachers have a responsibility to examine whether any academic dishonesty has occurred, and student work may be submitted to Turnitin by the instructor for this purpose. Submitted assignments will be included in the UMass Amherst dedicated database of assignments at Turnitin and will be used solely for the purpose of checking for possible plagiarism during the grading process during this term and in the future. Students must provide an electronic copy of their assignment to the instructor for submission to the service when plagiarism is suspected, in order to receive a grade on the assignment and to avoid possible sanctions.

Note also that every instance of academic dishonesty at UMass Amherst must be reported to the Academic Honesty Board. Instructors of first-year writing courses must first consult with the Writing Program’s ombudsperson Pat Zukowski, who will then help them follow the university’s reporting procedures.

LEARN TO PRACTICE ACADEMIC HONESTY

In the Writing Program’s 100-level writing courses, our intention is to help you integrate and cite sources effectively; you’ll practice the conventions for summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, and citing sources—typically using MLA citation format. Be aware that there are several citation formats; make sure that you follow the conventions appropriate for the course you are in by consulting with your instructor. Ask questions if you’re uncertain about how or what to cite.

As for informal help, many writers share their work with colleagues, friends, and editors. In writing classes, students often participate in peer response groups, teacher conferences, and informal meetings with classmates. If someone gives you words, data, or ideas for a paper, you should cite him or her as a source. When others just give you helpful reactions or suggestions, you do not have to acknowledge their help; however, it is gracious to do so, and most writers do.

The larger point is this: Scientists, academics, and indeed almost all writers depend on the work of others as they engage in their own work. Dishonesty destroys trust and undermines the possibility of collegial collaboration. Thus, whenever you use ideas, images, data, or words that are not your own, whether they appear in print, audio, video, or electronic sources, you must acknowledge that use with quotation marks, if needed, and a full citation, and you must list all your sources in a “works cited” page or bibliography. A good, up-to-date handbook will provide you with the knowledge you need to quote and cite properly and avoid inadvertent academic dishonesty. See Chapter 39: Integrating Sources & Avoiding Plagiarism in The EasyWriter Handbook.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Read the Dean of Students’ “Code of Conduct”: [www.umass.edu/dean_students/conduct](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/conduct).
- Read the policies and procedures for reporting and resolving academic dishonesty, “Academic Honesty Policy & Procedure”: [www.umass.edu/dean_students/academic_policy](http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/academic_policy).
- Read the Faculty Senate Ad Hoc Committee on Student Plagiarism, “Preventing Plagiarism: Resources for Students and Instructors”: [http://umass.edu/academichonesty](http://umass.edu/academichonesty).
- Questions or concerns? Contact the Writing Program’s ombudsperson Pat Zukowski (pez@acad.umass.edu) and/or the university’s Ombuds Office (www.umass.edu/ombuds/).