

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN GROUP WORK: Guidelines for Faculty¹

This document has been created by the Senate Academic Integrity Committee and the University Secretariat in response to requests from faculty members and recent appeals of Academic Integrity sanctions involving group work.

Instructors should be familiar with updated Academic Integrity Regulations in the Academic Calendar ([Undergraduate Academic Integrity Regulation 18](#); [Graduate Academic Integrity Regulation 33](#)). Note that when an instructor reports multiple students in an alleged Academic Integrity violation related to group work, Academic Integrity Officers are required “to assess *the individual responsibility* of each student based on the evidence, including the course outline and Instructor’s instructions to students regarding responsibility for and assessment of group work” (AR 18 and 33, emphasis added). Instructors are also reminded to review [Senate Policy 8-1012 on Course Outlines](#).

If group work is included in your course, it is particularly important to clearly explain the basis of assessment and assignment of individual grades for that work. Some students have limited experience handling the more complex issues involved in group assignments, and your guidance is needed. Clear communication about your expectations and how to meet those expectations will help students doing group work to avoid Academic Integrity violations.

¹ This work is a derivative of [Academic Integrity for Group Work](#) developed by the Center for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) at Iowa State University (retrieved on August 18, 2022) and of [Group Project Guidelines](#) developed by University of Rochester (retrieved on August 18, 2022). This work is licensed under [Creative Commons BY-NC-SA 4.0](#). Portions of this work have been modified to ensure references are consistent with the unique policies and regulations of Saint Mary’s University.

General Recommendations

Consider adopting the following proactive approaches in your courses:

- Spell out to students your expectations regarding Academic Integrity standards in their group projects/reports and do so both orally and in writing (i.e., in the course outline and on assignment instructions);
- State clearly if all students in the group will be reported to the AIO for violations of Academic Integrity in their group submissions;
- Consider having students provide a statement that they accept responsibility for the collective work of the group;
- Discuss and/or create an in-class activity on the students' shared responsibilities for Academic Integrity and how they can avoid Academic Integrity violations by their group;
- Have the students in the group submit a collective outline/plan, well before the project is due, outlining the planned contribution of each and how the group will ensure Academic Integrity standards are met;
- Provide opportunities for feedback (including related to Academic Integrity) at the midpoint and end of the group project;
- Provide clear guidelines on what a student should do if Academic Integrity-related issues arise with other students in their group;
- Have each student provide a clear specific statement indicating each individual's contribution to the project (see Appendix);
- Encourage students to engage in some degree of collaboration on all parts of the project, rather than dividing the tasks and simply assembling the pieces into a final report at the end;
- Consider recommending or assigning to students the library's Academic Integrity Foundations course (LIBR 2000)

Alternative: Collaborative Work in Conjunction with Individual Submissions

You might also consider setting up group work so that each student writes up their own report for the project, rather than turning in a single group-written report. This practice allows the instructor to define responsibility more clearly and reduces anxiety for students concerned about their responsibility for others' activities. Instructors should specify which activities are collaborative and which are individual. In addition, instructors should provide a clear statement that sharing and copying individual reports among group members constitutes unauthorized collaboration.

APPENDIX

Sample Course Outline / Assignment Instruction Statements

Group Project with Group Report

This course includes ## group assignments. During these assignments, you will collaborate on tasks x, y, and z. You are permitted and encouraged to share x, y, and z, and you will write your report as a group.

To avoid potential problems with Academic Integrity (and to engage in the project more fully), you should be involved in various aspects of writing the report. You must verify that all researched content is cited correctly and not plagiarized.

During and at the end of the project, I will ask you for feedback on your own and others' contributions to the work, including related to Academic Integrity.

If you feel that problems are developing in your group project, you should come to see me for guidance to group members to set your activities on the right course.

As you are all responsible for the entire assignment, you should ensure the project follows the university's Academic Integrity regulations. If you need help with this task, please ask me.

Collaborative Work in Conjunction with Individual Submissions

This course includes ## collaborative assignments. During these assignments, you will collaborate on tasks x, y, and z. You are permitted and encouraged to share x, y, and z. However, you are required to xxx (e.g., analyze your own data) and write up your assignment individually and in your own words.

Make sure to xxx [insert statement about citations, e.g.]

If you share your individual written assignment with your group members, you risk being reported for the Academic Integrity violation of unauthorized collaboration.

Sample Peer Evaluation Components

Peer Evaluation Form: Academic Integrity Components

1. Describe each person's contribution to the project as a whole [see sample table below]
2. Describe each person's contribution to checking researched content for correct paraphrases, quotations, and citations.
3. Describe your group's process for cross-checking each other's work for alignment with Academic Integrity regulations.
4. Do you have any concerns related to Academic Integrity in this group project?

Table in lieu of open questions 1-2 above

Complete the following table [instructor to adapt as necessary] for all the members of your group, including yourself.

NAME	Literature review	Design	Data collection	Data analysis	Write up	Academic Integrity

1. Literature review: Led, Assisted, Reviewed, No contribution
2. Design: Led, Assisted, Reviewed, No contribution
3. Data Collection: Led, Assisted, Reviewed, No contribution
4. Data Analysis: Led, Assisted, Reviewed, No contribution
5. Write up: Led, Assisted, Reviewed, No contribution
6. Academic Integrity: Led, Assisted, Reviewed, No contribution

Led: Took responsibility for this activity and ensured that it was completed successfully with the support of others.

Assisted: Collaborated with other team members to complete this activity and made specifically identifiable contributions (e.g., summarized a specific paper) or attended specific meetings.

Reviewed: Reviewed material produced by others for academic integrity, written expression, and document flow.

No contribution: Did not contribute to this activity.