

Academic integrity

Video transcript

As a student at CDU, you have agreed to uphold academic integrity while engaged in study, research, or work placement. This page outlines what academic integrity is, why it matters, what can happen if you engage in academic misconduct, and how to avoid it.

You've probably heard the term academic integrity before, but what does it actually mean? Well, in simple terms, it is about being honest in your studies. It means doing your own work and giving credit where it's due. Sounds fair, right? But it's not always that simple, so let's break it down.

It's important to act with integrity during your studies because cheating weakens the learning process. Taking shortcuts stops you from truly engaging with the material and growing your critical thinking skills. It also damages the university's reputation and lowers the value of your degree.

Plus, academic misconduct has some serious consequences. A good example of this is the story of Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, a famous German politician. In 2011, he was one of the most powerful people in Germany, the Minister of Defense, and was possibly set to become Chancellor after Angela Merkel. He was well educated, won awards like Politician of the Year, and was a rising star. But things fell apart for him because people learned that he hadn't acted with integrity when he was at university.

Someone checked his writing using software that detects plagiarism and found that large parts were copied from other sources without credit. His university took away his degree, and the scandal was so big that he had to quit his government job. He lost everything he had worked for because of mistakes he made in school. This story shows how serious plagiarism is. It ruined his career years after graduation. It's a reminder that academic misconduct doesn't just affect your grades—it can follow you for life.

Academic misconduct comes in many forms, but here are a few common types: Plagiarism: copying someone else's work or ideas without giving them credit. Cheating: using an unfair advantage during exams or assignments. Fabrication: making up data or research results. Collusion: working with others in a way that isn't permitted.

Don't mistake these for shortcuts; they are more like quicksand, leading to failing grades, academic probation, or even expulsion. Penalties aside, though, if you don't develop your skills, you're cheating yourself in the long run.

Sometimes, it's the pressure to perform, tight deadlines, or feeling overwhelmed with commitments. Other times, students may not even realise they are doing anything wrong, such as forgetting to cite sources correctly, or misunderstanding what's allowed in group projects. However, not understanding the rules is no excuse for breaking them. It's your responsibility to learn what is and isn't allowed.

There are lots of ways to stay on track, but the starting point is to learn as much as you can about academic integrity and its counterpart academic misconduct. Work through the activities on the page below to improve your knowledge and set yourself up for success in your studies. You've got this!

If you would like more help, speak to an Academic and Research Librarian or Language and Learning Advisor.