

PRINCIPLES OF THE BROWN UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY

Academic Code  
Graduate Student edition

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This version of the *Principles of the Brown University Community: Academic Code, Graduate Student edition* is produced specifically for graduate students. The other component of the *Principles of the Brown University Community: [Student Conduct Code](#)* pertains to all students. The content of the graduate student edition of the Academic Code was last updated in 2010-11; it is presented here as a standalone document, as of January 2016.

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## **THE ACADEMIC CODE FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Academic achievement is evaluated on the basis of work that a student produces independently. A student who obtains credit for work, words, or ideas which are not the products of his or her own effort is dishonest. Such dishonesty undermines the integrity of academic standards of the University. Infringement of the Academic Code entails penalties ranging from reprimand to suspension, dismissal or expulsion from the University.

Brown students are expected to tell the truth. Misrepresentation of facts, significant omissions or falsifications in any connection with the academic process (including Change of Course permits, the academic transcript, or applications for training or employment) are violations of the Code. This policy also applies to alumni, insofar as it relates to Brown transcripts and other records of work at Brown.

Misunderstanding the Code will not be accepted as an excuse for dishonest work. If a student has questions on any aspect of the Academic Code as it relates in a particular course or as it may be interpreted in practice, he or she should consult the instructor in the course or one of the associate deans of the Graduate School so as to avoid the serious charge of academic dishonesty.

### **Basic Policy**

A student's name on any exercise (e.g., a theme, report, notebook, performance, computer program, course paper, quiz, or examination) is regarded as assurance that the exercise is the result of the student's own thoughts and study, stated in his or her own words, and produced without assistance, except as quotation marks, references, and footnotes acknowledge the use of printed sources or other outside help. In some instances an instructor or department may authorize students to work jointly in solving problems or completing projects; such efforts must be clearly marked as the results of collaboration. Unless permission is obtained in advance from the instructors of the courses involved, a student may not submit the same exercise in more than one course. Students who perceive the possibility of an overlapping assignment should consult with their instructors before presuming that a single effort will meet the requirements of both courses.

Where collaboration is authorized, students should be very clear as to which parts of any assignment must be performed independently.

### **Offenses Against The Academic Code**

#### **Use of Sources**

In preparing assignments a student often needs or is required to employ outside sources of information or opinion. All such sources should be listed in the bibliography.

Footnote references are required for all specific facts that are not common knowledge and which do not obtain general agreement. New discoveries or debatable opinions must be credited to the source with specific references to edition and page even when the student restates the matter in his or her own words. Inclusion word-for-word of any part, even if only a phrase or sentence, from the written or oral statement of someone else, requires citation in quotation marks and using the appropriate conventions for attribution. Citations should normally include author, title, edition and page. Internet sources require the same level of specific citation, including the URL. Quotations longer than one sentence are generally indented from the text of the essay, without quotation marks, and identified by author, title, edition, page. Paraphrasing or summarizing the contents of another's work is not dishonest if the source or sources are clearly identified (author,

title, edition, page), but such paraphrasing does not constitute independent work and may be rejected by the instructor. Students who have questions about accurate and proper citation methods are expected to consult reference guides as well as course instructors.

### **Laboratory Work and Assignments**

Notebooks, homework, reports of investigations or experiments, and computer code projects must meet the same standards as all other written work. If any of the work is done jointly or if any part of the experiment or analysis is made by anyone other than the writer, acknowledgment of this fact must be made in the report submitted. Obviously, it is dishonest for a student to falsify or invent data.

### **Creative Work**

A piece of work presented as the individual creation of the student is assumed to involve no assistance other than incidental criticism from any other person. A student may not, with honesty, knowingly employ story material, wording or dialogue taken from published works, motion pictures, radios, television programs, websites, lectures or similar sources, without full acknowledgment.

### **Examinations, Quizzes, and Tests**

In writing examinations and quizzes, the student is required to respond entirely on the basis of his or her own memory and capacity, without any assistance whatsoever except as specifically authorized by the instructor.

Examples of cheating on examinations and quizzes include, but are not limited to the following forms: using another individual to take an examination in one's place; bringing into the exam room unauthorized materials from which one gains unfair assistance; appropriating an exam or exam materials without authorization; missing an exam in order to gain an advantage; copying during an examination; engaging in collaboration or unauthorized assistance on take-home examinations; engaging in other actions that undermine equity and reduce the objectivity of evaluation of student work.

### **Signatures**

Forging of signatures on any official document, including forms and letters, is also a serious violation of the Academic Code.

### **Other Offenses Against The Academic Code**

In addition to fraudulent uses of sources as described above, dishonesty includes a number of offenses that circumvent procedures set up to produce a fair grade. The use of services of commercial "research" companies is cheating and a punishable offense. Students are not allowed to base their course work on papers, reports, or other course exercises that have been saved or kept on file from earlier years. Any falsification of records or routines for grading is dishonest, whether before or after graduation. Gaining access to a recommendation (without permission) once rights have been waived is a violation of the Code. Withholding, removing or destroying materials needed by other students for class exercises is as much an offense against the Academic Code as plagiarism. Lying in the course of investigation of an Academic Code case or to the Committee during a hearing is also a violation of the Academic Code.

Students should be scrupulous in learning the principles that govern each new area of computer operations to which they are introduced. Unauthorized collaboration, unauthorized borrowing of someone else's data or programs, and use of the Brown computers or email accounts for unethical purposes are subject to disciplinary or legal action.

## **Procedures**

All cases of suspected academic dishonesty *in the Graduate School shall be referred to the Dean of the Graduate School*. Faculty and students are urged to report their suspicions, so that all members of the University community will feel equally responsible for academic honesty, and so that multiple offenders may be identified.

The person alleging a violation of the Code shall provide copies of the work in question and indicate clearly the nature of the alleged violation in an accompanying narrative. In cases of plagiarism, the person making the charge shall provide copies of original sources, if available, marking plagiarized phrases, sentences, and/or paragraphs, and shall indicate borrowings in the accused's text and in original sources. In the case of an examination, the person making the charge shall provide copies of the examination in question, indicate specifically the grounds for the charge, and explain his or her process of discovery. Other alleged offenses against the Academic Code should be documented with equal thoroughness and in equal detail.

All cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be screened by the designated Associate Dean of the Graduate School in consultation with concerned faculty and expert witnesses if needed. The Associate Dean of the Graduate School will make a decision as to whether a case requires a formal hearing. Such decisions are not considered final or binding and may be changed on the basis of new information or a shift in judgment. Since the Academic Code Standing Committee (see next section for information on "The Standing Committee") relies on precedent, pertinent materials in a case dismissed for insufficient evidence or deemed not to require a formal hearing will remain in the Committee's confidential Academic Code files. *Note: this paragraph was amended following a vote of the May 2013 Graduate Council.*

If, after screening, the Associate Dean decides that a formal hearing is warranted, he or she shall, as soon as possible, notify the accused student in writing of specific charges of dishonesty, the nature of the evidence which would be presented against him or her, the time and place of the hearing, and the range of penalties which may be imposed if academic dishonesty is found.

The accused student will be permitted to have an advisor who should give the student advice on matters of preparation for the hearing, hearing procedures, and possible outcomes. The Associate Dean will provide each accused student with a list of persons from within the university community who, by prior experience and interest, can provide knowledgeable advice. The accused student should be informed that he or she has the right to dispute the evidence against him or her and the right to present evidence and witnesses of his or her own to support his or her case, to examine any witnesses against him or her, and to avoid self-incrimination by declining to answer questions or declining to participate in the proceedings in whole or in part. However, the fact that the accused student declines to participate does not affect the validity of these deliberations, nor does it affect the authority of the University or its representatives to impose penalties if dishonesty is found. The advisor is not permitted to attend the hearing except as a possible witness.

## **The Standing Committee**

Hearings, deliberations, and decisions on penalties, culpability, or innocence shall be made by a Standing Committee, consisting of an Associate Dean of the Graduate School, plus two faculty members to be chosen from a standing pool of eight. Faculty members on the Academic Code Standing Committee should serve staggered terms of four years, with two being elected through the Faculty's regular procedures every year on a rotating basis. Faculty members eligible to serve on the Academic Code Standing Committee shall include all voting members of the Faculty and all Emeritus faculty. In the event that two faculty members are not available at the scheduled time for the Standing Committee hearing, the place of one or more of the faculty members may be filled by an academic dean. No person serving as a student's advisor can also serve as a member of the Academic Code Standing Committee for that hearing. This Committee's procedures are administrative in nature and concern internal University affairs; accordingly, the deliberations of the Standing Committee need not be subject to formal rules of civil procedure or evidence. The meetings/hearings need not be open to the public, the accused does not have a right to legal counsel at the meetings/ hearings, nor shall legal counsel be part of the appeal process.

## **Decisions and Appeals**

If a graduate student is determined to be in violation by the Standing Committee, a penalty shall be assessed to the offender by the Standing Committee and that decision will be conveyed to the student in a letter from the Committee. The student will be informed in the letter that he or she has the right to appeal any decisions to the Dean of the Graduate School.

The appeal must be in writing and include all materials the appellant considers relevant, including a narrative clearly outlining the grounds of appeal. Appeals will normally be considered only when new information which was not reasonably available at the time of the hearing becomes available or when an allegation of substantial procedural error on the part of the University or the Standing Committee is made. The decision of the Dean in response to this appeal will prevail whether or not the student found in violation has participated in deliberations and hearings, but non-participation after proper notice will not be grounds for overturning a decision, nor will it be grounds for a rehearing. The appellant has five business days in which to appeal the Standing Committee's decision; the five-day period for an appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School will begin to run on the first business day following receipt of the letter from the Standing Committee. Cases that arise after the suspected offender has graduated shall be handled in the same way as cases involving current students, except that the time intervals for notification shall be extended to allow for response from an accused person who is not on campus.

When the Standing Committee determines that the accused did not commit a violation, materials considered in the case, except the original exam or other work, shall be destroyed, and no record of the accusation or the investigation shall appear in the student's file. If the judgment is "insufficient evidence to determine guilt or innocence," no record of the charge or investigation will remain in the student's folder, but some will be kept in the confidential files of the Standing Committee.

A University official or officer alleging a violation of the Code will be sent copies of all written notices mentioned in these procedures, and has the right to appeal to the Dean of the Graduate School, in writing, including all materials he or she considers relevant, within five business days of being informed of the final dispositive action by the Standing Committee.

## Community Values and Benefits

The interests and long-range welfare of the University community are best served if all its members, faculty, students, and staff, feel a commitment to principles upon which the Academic Code is based. Faculty are urged to review the procedures by which they evaluate student work, and to avoid situations and processes that may make it easy for a student to cut corners or obtain unauthorized assistance. Students are urged to consider that the public value of their education depends on the integrity of the grading system, and that academic dishonesty in any form dilutes the value of those grades. If they know of fellow students who are cheating or taking unfair advantage of policies or procedures, they should bring that to the attention of the Standing Committee, anonymously, if they wish.

The Academic Code is not intended to diminish collegiality at Brown. All of us learn from our colleagues; and education is, necessarily, not only a competitive, but also a cooperative enterprise. Simple justice requires, however, that students receive the quantity and quality of academic credit they have earned. Justice of this sort is by no means incompatible with the community values and shared experiences on which a liberal education is based.

## Penalties

The Standing Committee is authorized to enact any penalty it judges to be appropriate. The following are the most common penalties:

**I. Reprimand:** In some cases, in which a first offense has been judged to merit a minor penalty, the student will be allowed to repeat the exercise or complete an alternative assignment, as determined jointly by the instructor of the course and the Dean of the Graduate School a letter of reprimand will be written to the student. A copy of the letter will be placed in the student's academic folder. In exceptional cases, the Standing Committee may vote to remove the letter of reprimand from a student's folder after a specified time pending good behavior. Responsibility for evaluation of the student's work in the course continues to belong to the instructor of the course. The following will normally accompany a reprimand:

1. Permanent record entry in the student's internal academic folder.
2. If the student later requests an institutional letter of support for admission to another graduate or professional school (including within Brown), it will be provided but may refer to the incident.

**II. Loss of credit in the exercise:** For most offenses the least severe penalty will be loss of credit in the exercise. The student may be required to repeat the exercise or complete an alternative assignment, although credit will not be given. The student will be allowed to continue in the course. The following will normally accompany this penalty:

1. Permanent record entry in the student's internal academic folder.
2. If the student later requests an institutional letter of support, it will be provided but may refer to the incident.

**III. Directed No Credit in the course:** When the offense is sufficiently serious to merit failure in the course, the student will be withdrawn from the course immediately following adjudication. The following will normally accompany this penalty:

1. Permanent record entry in the student's internal academic folder.
2. Transcript notation of No Credit in the course and of violation of the Academic Code.
3. Withholding of an institutional letter of support for admission to another graduate or professional school (including within Brown), postdoctoral appointment or employment, or discussion of the offense in the letter. (If the offense occurs after such a letter has already been written, the letter may be withdrawn or supplemented, with appropriate explanation.)

**IV. Suspension** A serious offense may result in the student's suspension from the University for a period of one semester or longer. The following will normally accompany suspension:

1. Permanent record entry in the student's internal academic folder.
2. Withholding of an institutional letter of support for admission to another graduate or professional school (including within Brown), postdoctoral appointment or employment, or discussion of the offense in the letter. (If the offense occurs after such a letter has already been written, the letter may be withdrawn or supplemented, with appropriate explanation.)
3. Transcript notation of Directed No Credit in the course and of violation of the Academic Code.

**V. Dismissal** A student who has been dismissed must earn readmission, by work and/or study away from Brown for at least six months and usually a year or more. The following will normally accompany dismissal:

1. Permanent record entry in the student's internal academic folder.
2. Withholding of an institutional letter of support for admission to another graduate or professional school (including within Brown), postdoctoral appointment or employment, or discussion of the offense in the letter. (If the offense occurs after such a letter has already been written, the letter may be withdrawn or supplemented, with appropriate explanation.)
3. Transcript notation of Directed No Credit in the course and of violation of the Academic Code.

**VI. Expulsion** A very serious offense or multiple offenses may warrant permanent expulsion from the University. The following will normally accompany expulsion:

1. Permanent record entry in the student's internal academic folder.
2. Withholding of an institutional letter of support for admission to another graduate or professional school (including within Brown), postdoctoral appointment or employment, or discussion of the offense in the letter. (If the offense occurs after such a letter has already been written, the letter may be withdrawn by the University with appropriate explanation.)
3. Transcript notation of Directed No Credit in the course(s) and of violation(s) of the Academic Code.

**VII. Revocation of Degree** An offense that is discovered after the awarding of a degree may warrant the revocation of that degree. The following will normally accompany revocation:

1. Permanent record entry in the student's internal academic folder.
2. The withdrawal of any institutional letters of support for admission to another graduate or professional school (including within Brown), postdoctoral appointment or employment.
3. Notification of concerned faculty, including the chair of the student's department and thesis advisor, if any.
4. Notification of external parties who had been informed of the original awarding of the degree.
5. Directed no credit in the course(s).
6. Transcript notation that the degree was revoked for violation of the Academic Code.

## **REGULATIONS REGARDING RESEARCH CONDUCTED AT BROWN UNIVERSITY**

All research conducted at the University—by undergraduate, graduate, and medical students, as well as by faculty, staff, post- doctoral associates, and outside consultants—is governed by the policies and regulations detailed in the Faculty Rules.

Below are short descriptions of some of these policies. Anyone with questions or concerns about research conducted at Brown should refer to the full text of the policies to determine the specific parameters of each policy. These policies are available on the Faculty Governance Web site and that of the Office of the Vice President for Research. If questions arise regarding research policies and/or procedures, please contact the Office of the Vice President for Research at (401) 863-7999.

Graduate students are actively engaged in the development and implementation of Brown's policies and regulations. Most standing committees of the faculty have graduate student members, appointed by the Graduate Student Council. For example, there are four graduate student members on the Graduate Council, the policy-making faculty committee that oversees graduate education at the University. One graduate student also serves on the University Resources Committee (URC), which recommends budget priorities for the University. Students who would like to take an active role in the governance of the University on these or on more specialized faculty committees should make their interests known to the Graduate Student Council.

### **Important Policies of Note:**

**Protection of Human Participants in Research** Any use of human participants in research at Brown requires review and approval of the University's Institutional review Board (IRB).

**Use of Animals in Research and Teaching** Any use of animals in research, teaching, or demonstrations at Brown requires the review and approval of the University's Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC).

**Environmental Health and Safety Policies** There are strict policies and procedures regarding environmental health and safety, including the research use of radiation, hazardous materials or biohazards.

**Dishonesty or Misconduct in Research** Allegations regarding falsification, fabrication, or plagiarism, or other practices that seriously deviate from the ethical principles of the conduct of research should be reported according to the practices described in the University's misconduct policy.

**Patent and Invention and Copyright Policies** Intellectual property created as a result of Brown University research must be reported to the office of Brown Technology Partnerships for evaluation.

## **COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT POLICY**

### **Copyright Law, the Illegal Use of File Sharing Programs, University Policies and Procedures for Handling Violations**

Improper use of copyrighted materials can also constitute infringement of the Academic or Student Conduct Codes.

#### **What is copyright?**

Copyright is legal protection of intellectual property, in whatever medium, that is provided for by the laws of the United States to the owners of copyright. Types of works that are covered by copyright law include, but are not limited, to literary, dramatic, musical, artistic, pictorial, graphic, film and multi-media works. Many people understand that printed works such as books and magazine articles are covered by copyright laws but they are not aware that the protection extends to software, digital works, and unpublished works and it covers all forms of a work, including its digital transmission and subsequent use.

#### **What is the current law concerning digital copyright?**

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), signed into law in 1998, recognizes that digital transmission of works adds complexity to the Copyright Law. The DMCA provides non-profit educational institutions with some protections if individual members of the community violate the law. However, for Brown University to maintain this protection we must expeditiously take down or otherwise block access to infringing material, whenever it is brought to our attention and whether or not the individual who is infringing has received notice.

DMCA infractions can result in serious consequences regarding activities of faculty, graduate students, or staff who are performing a teaching or research functions if the university has received more than two notices of infringement against an individual within a three-year period.

Universities and individuals can be subject to the imposition of substantial damages for copyright infringement incidents relating to the use of University network services. In a civil action, the individual infringer may be liable for either actual damages or statutory damages of up to \$30,000 (which may be increased to up to \$150,000 if the court finds the infringement was willful). In addition, individual infringers may be subject to criminal prosecution. Criminal penalties include up to ten years imprisonment depending on the nature of the violation.

#### **Why is this an important issue right now?**

Copyright is an issue of particular seriousness because technology makes it easy to copy and transmit protected works over our networks. While Brown University encourages the free flow of ideas and provides resources such as the network to support this activity, we do so in a manner consistent with all applicable state and federal laws. Brown does not condone the illegal or inappropriate use of material that is subject to copyright protection and covered by state and federal laws.

#### **What kinds of activities violate federal law?**

The following are some examples of copyright infringement that may be found in a university setting:

- Photocopying an entire book (or a large segment of a book) without permission of the publisher
- Downloading and sharing MP3 files of music, videos, and games without permission of the copyright owner
- Using corporate logos without permission
- Placing an electronic copy of a standardized test on the department's web site without permission of the copyright owner
- Enhancing a departmental web site with music that is downloaded or artwork that is scanned from a book, all without attribution or permission of the copyright owners
- Scanning a photograph that has been published and using it without permission or attribution
- Placing a number of full-text articles on a course web page that is not password protected and allowing the web page to be accessible to anyone who can access the Internet
- Downloading licensed software from non-authorized sites without the permission of the copyright or license holder
- Making a movie file or a large segment of a movie available on a web site without permission of the copyright owner

## **GUIDES:**

The following guides, available in the University library system, will prove helpful as students complete written work, mindful of the demands and strict sanctions of the University's Academic Code. Students must not only avoid plagiarism of the works of others but also cite in correct form those sources that have been used properly.

This list includes well-known general guides. The procedure for finding titles focused on particular disciplines is described below. Although a consistently applied style from a standard, general guide is usually acceptable, students are advised to consult with their instructors to determine if a particular style is preferred.

### **General:**

*Chicago Manual of Style*. 14th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1993; Z253.U69 1993; at Rockefeller Library Reference Desk

Turabian, Kate L., *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. 5th ed. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1987 LB2369 T8 1987; at Rockefeller Library Reference Desk (Humanities) Achtert, Walter S. and Joseph

Gibaldi. *MLA Style Manual*. New York, NY: Modern Language Association of America, 1985. PE1478.M57 1984; at Rockefeller Library Reference Desk

Gibaldi, Joseph and Walter S. Achtert. *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. 2nd ed. New York, NY: Modern Language Association of America. 1984.; PE1478.M57 1984; at Rockefeller Library Reference Desk (Social Sciences/Sciences)

American Psychological Association. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 3rd ed. Washington, DC: The Association, 1983; BF76.7.P83 1983; at Sciences Library Reference Desk

CBE Style Manual Committee. *CBE Style Manual: a Guide for Authors, Editors, and Publishers in the Biological Sciences*. 5th ed. Bethesda, MD: Council of Biology Editors, 1983. QH304.C33 1983; at Sciences Library Reference Desk

To find additional, specialized guides, students should search on Josiah, the Brown University Library Online Catalogue, using such subject headings as: [subject name]–Research [subject name]–Authorship [subject name]–Bibliography–Methodology. Guides may also be found by doing an author/ title search on Josiah, using the full name of an appropriate professional society as the author, along with such title words as “manual”, “style” or “writers.” Reference librarians will be pleased to explain how Josiah is used.

[www.brown.edu](http://www.brown.edu)

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