

Fall, 2021

Embedding Principles of Restorative Justice in Academic Integrity

Introduction

The purpose of this template is to assist faculty in drafting communications to students regarding academic integrity errors and sanctions that are in alignment with restorative justice principles and that enable the error to become an opportunity for accountability, action, and ultimately, learning. Additional resources for faculty and students regarding Academic integrity can be found here: https://www.umb.edu/academics/academic_integrity

The goals of this approach are to:

- Build/restore trust between the student and faculty member and between student and the University;
- Hold students accountable for the harm that is done to the student, faculty member and campus community when errors in academic integrity occur;
- Create learning moments for students that result in fewer incidents of academic integrity errors;
- Create learning moments for faculty, staff and administrators that result in a deeper understanding of the conditions that lead to academic integrity errors and inform curricular/co-curricular improvements;
- Result in a product that is useful to the student and the campus community.

Template and sample language for academic integrity communications

Explain the Error

Provide information about the act that is in violation of the University academic integrity policy.

Important information to include:

- *A description of the specific assignment or activity and the academic integrity error;*
- *Information about where resources/guidance about academic integrity are located within your course (syllabi, blackboard modules, discussions, etc)*
- *Specific language from the code of conduct about the violation;*

Sample Language

Date

Student Name and UMS number

Email address

Dear [Student Name]:

In reviewing your essay on "...." for ABC 124 this semester (semester/term 202x) I discovered that you did not abide by the University's Academic Honesty Policy. All but four sentences in your paper match paragraphs in the free online paper "...." available at <http://freepapersforyou.com>.

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The syllabus states that, "The academic standards of the University of Massachusetts Boston require that: 'Students may not solicit or use unauthorized material or assistance for their own benefit and may not offer or give such assistance to another student. The honest documentation of the student's written work is absolutely essential.'"

Resources about academic integrity are posted in the Blackboard course site. Additionally, resources about academic integrity were included in the lecture on [date]. We discussed student questions during class, and I sent an email afterward to point to where to find this section in Blackboard. My attendance records indicate that you were present in lecture that day, and all students in the class are aware that classes are recorded and you can access the recordings of the lectures if you wish to review our class meetings.

In this assignment, you submitted material without any acknowledgment that the words in your paper are not your own, thus violating Section I.1 of the Academic Honesty provisions of the University Code of Student Conduct, which prohibits "submitting as one's own an author's published or unpublished work (e.g. material from a journal, Internet site, newspaper, encyclopedia), in whole, in part, or in paraphrase, without fully and properly crediting the author."

Describe the conference or conversation with the student

When we met about this academic integrity error, you explained the circumstances that caused you to make this error, and we discussed the harm caused by this error to you, the class, and me. We agreed that an offense of academic integrity breaks down trust between the two of us, and impacts the class as a whole. We agreed that there should be a consequence for you as a result of this error, and that this is also an important learning moment for both of us. Our discussion will help me to provide guidance to other students who may be in similar circumstances that supports them in making informed decisions that do not violate the code of conduct.

Document the sanction. Important information to include:

- Explain the sanction and how the student will be held accountable;
- Describe what you want the student/faculty to learn from this sanction;
- Describe how this sanction will benefit the community and contribute to reduced incidents of academic integrity errors in the future

Sample Language

I am imposing the following response to this incident: As a consequence, you will receive a grade of zero on the paper and I will report this to university officials. As a method of learning from your error of academic integrity, you will study the following two resources available at <https://umb.libguides.com/c.php?g=805419&p=5847849>

- Tutorial: Why citations matter
- Video: Why citations matter
- Video: Plagiarism

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and you will complete the following quiz available at <https://umb.libguides.com/c.php?g=805419&p=6114257> and you will forward to me the email you receive with the proof that you passed this quiz:

- Academic writing violations

While I am not recommending additional university responses on the basis of this offense, if this charge is deemed serious upon review or if additional offenses have been filed, you may also be subject to university responses imposed directly by the Associate Vice Provost of Undergraduate Studies. Furthermore, to help other students in the class, I also agree to provide an explicit, but not exhaustive, list to students on the Blackboard site for this course of some of the sites that the plagiarism detection software checks against when students submit essays in this course.

If you do not agree with any of this, or wish to discuss it further, you have the right to request to meet with me and/or the department chair, Professor [Chair's Name], in the next 10 business days (virtual meeting or phone call). If there is no change after this 10 day period, I will go forward with course grades including the response described above. For further reference, the Academic Honesty section of the Code of Student Conduct is available online at the following address:

https://www.umb.edu/academics/academic_honesty

The full extent of your rights are explained in it and I recommend that you read this section of the Code of Conduct to make sure you understand your rights and responsibilities in this area.

Sincerely,

[First Name] [Last Name]

[Your title]

[Your Department]

Cc:

Dr. [First Name] [Last Name], Chair, Department of *** (*Faculty member's chair*)

Dr. [First Name] [Last Name], Dean, College of *** (*Faculty member's dean*)

Dr. Karen Ricciardi, Associate Vice Provost for Undergraduate Studies

Mr. John Silveria, Dean of Students

And if appropriate, dean of the college in which the student is enrolled