

Academic Honesty

Introduction

Abdullah Gul University considers any attempt to behave in any way which is academically dishonest to be fraud perpetrated against the university. Such fraud has the result of devaluing not only the university's prestige, but also the efforts of all its community members who are academically scrupulous; any academic dishonesty undermines the worth of the academic qualifications Abdullah Gul University bestows on its graduates, and it undermines the worth of the experience of all academic staff who work at Abdullah Gul University, which has implications for their future employability. It is in the full realization of this that Abdullah Gul University explicitly states its refusal to tolerate Academic Dishonesty. As such, academic dishonesty constitutes, for Abdullah Gul University, an extremely serious disciplinary offence, to be investigated and sanctioned with vigour.

At the same time, AGU acknowledges that the prevention of Academic Dishonesty is made more difficult variously by global developments in technology, by our students' lack of training in academic study skills when in school, and by national limitations in legislation. With particular reference to this third point, not only has there been an explosion of opportunity for academic cheating and technology to aid academic cheats, such as via the Internet, but legislation everywhere struggles to keep up with the way that the world of academic dishonesty has changed beyond recognition in recent years. It will be seen in subsequent sections that there are a range of student practices which, while clearly dishonest, do not appear in YOK regulations.

In spite of this mismatch between the realities of, on the one hand, malpractice and, on the other, of the questionable fitness for purpose of national university regulations, Abdullah Gul University is committed to the teaching, encouragement and policing of academic honesty. The University believes that while it is the obligation of every student and staff member to be academically honest, it is the additional duty of the institution to give clear guidance to all on what is and what is not academically honest behaviour. The aim of this document is to detail the stance of Abdullah Gul University both on ***academic honesty***, which it promotes, and on ***academic dishonesty***, which it actively seeks to prevent or, where it does occur, punish.

This policy document aims to:

1. Clarify the concepts of academic honesty and academic dishonesty;
2. Outline a framework for the provision of measures taken to promote academic honesty;
3. Outline a framework for disciplinary action to be taken in the case of suspected academic dishonesty.

1. Clarification of the notions of '*academic honesty*' and '*academic dishonesty*'

i. Definitions

a. Academic Honesty

Academic honesty, a desired state, is a legal concept whereby any academic submission is the work of the person submitting that work, with any contributions by other parties being tightly constrained, both in scope and manner, and explicitly delineated.

Academic Dishonesty

In contrast to academic honesty, academic dishonesty is any attempt on the part of any individual to submit any academic work which claims to contain more of their own work than is in fact the case. If the writer fails in their academic work to acknowledge

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contributions which were in fact made by others, then they are guilty of lying by omission.

ii. Details of types of academic dishonesty

While the University considers all of the following to be forms of academic dishonesty, it concedes that such a list can never be complete, underlines the need for it to be added to over time, and reserves the right to take legal and disciplinary action against any kind of academic practice that can be argued to be dishonest even if it is not explicitly named on this list:

1. Any attempt to obtain inappropriate information relating to an examination, or other assessment, before the assessment takes place;
2. Cheating in an examination;
3. Helping another student cheat in an examination (even by merely turning a blind eye);
4. Accepting inappropriate help from somebody else in assignments prepared outside class;
5. Supplying inappropriate help to a student for an assignment prepared outside class
6. Benefitting unfairly from other students' work in group reports, group presentations and so on;
7. Allowing other students to benefit unfairly from the work of others in group reports, group presentations and so on;
8. Buying help, making payment for the services of professional essay/assignment/report/thesis writers, online or otherwise;
9. Using information/ideas/opinions from a downloaded and/or printed source without providing accurate acknowledgment of the source of that information, thereby implying that information/ideas/opinions are original, when in fact they belong to others.
10. Self-plagiarism: to present work done and assessed previously to create the impression that the work is new.
11. Inappropriate use of Google Translate-type translation applications;
12. For a student to pretend to be present in class when in fact they are not;

2. Measures taken to educate students in what academic honesty is and how they can avoid it

No student who enters this university will be assumed to know what academic honesty is and how to behave in a manner which is academically honest. This means that there must be a process of education in academic honesty, both the ethical and the legal frameworks, for all students. Furthermore, there is evidence that students may be led into behaving dishonestly when under more time pressure to complete assignments, which suggests that educating students in effective study skills including time management would have the added benefit of reducing the probability of a given student being tempted to behave dishonestly near submission dates for assignments. Elements of the university's strategy for educating students are as follows:

2.1 Orientation

Every student as part of Orientation will attend a compulsory seminar/ information session on Academic Honesty. This information session will be conducted in Turkish for Turkish nationals and in English for international students. At some point in this session, students will receive, in writing as well as orally, an explicit warning of the consequences of academic dishonesty.

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2.2 Academic honesty pledge

As part of registration procedures, for Prep. English separately, and then for each subsequent semester, students will be required to an appropriately worded, legally binding document that commits them either to academically honest practices or to forfeit their good standing in the eyes of the university.

2.3 As part of coursework

2.3.1 Study skills and time management training. To reduce the risk of students taking academic honesty short cuts because of study pressures and time limitations, there should be university-wide training sessions dedicated to study skills and time management.

2.3.2 Students will be taught appropriate academic conventions in English Writing classes, at all levels from Prep. to English 102.

2.4 Syllabus documents

Syllabus documents for all courses will contain a description of the nature of academic dishonesty with specific regard to the assessment requirements of that course, as well as an explicit warning that academic dishonesty will result in disciplinary procedures and penalties.

2.5 Handbook

In the Student Handbook information will be given both about the nature of academic honesty and about the penalties that can result from academic dishonesty.

2.6 The University Website

On the University Website there should be a portal for academic matters accessible by staff and students only which will contain a clearly marked section about Academic Honesty. In this section of the website, in addition to information published in the Student Handbook and in Course documents (See above) there will also be available clearly annotated samples of inappropriate work to help illustrate a clearer institutional definition of academic dishonesty.

3. Measures taken by instructors to prevent student dishonesty

3.1 Clear statements of intolerance

All course instructors should publicize the University's common statement of intolerance towards academic dishonesty:

- a. In syllabus documents
- b. Out loud when speaking to the class

3.2 Care in in the development of assessment tasks

There should be conscious reduction of the scope for academic dishonesty by means of appropriate design of assessment tasks;

3.2.1 Type of task / question

There should be care taken to ensure that assignment / question types be designed to minimize the risk of academic dishonesty:

- a. Exam questions must consist of tasks requiring longer answers which cannot be copied at a glance;
- b. Take home assignments must be framed in such a way that students see that copying chunks of text from the Internet is not a good strategy because the information thus

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copied will not be addressing the task. In this regard, assignments must have topics that are not only very specific but which also demand a personalized element.

3.2.2 In assignment setting a focus on the individual student

- a. Extra care should be taken in the assessment of student work in group assignments
- b. Group written assignments should be avoided.
- c. Even when group work is encouraged, and organized (which it should be) assessment of student work must be on an individual basis.

3.2.3 (In the evaluation student assignments) a focus on not only the product but also the process.

In assignment evaluation there must be a focus on not only the product but also the process. Elements of this process focus should include:

- a. Intervention by the instructor in the process of topic selection;
- b. Obligatory submission of draft work;
- c. Feedback by the instructor on the draft;
- d. Consideration of the idea of giving drafts a grade.

3.3 Rigour, and perceived rigour, in the following up of suspected student infractions

It is important that, in cases where students are suspected of academic dishonesty, the instructor conscientiously conduct their own enquiry and as appropriate pass on evidence to the University Administration. University should aim to promulgate a perception that all instructors treat cases of academic dishonesty evenly; conversely it is vital to preclude any possible perception among students that some instructors are stricter whereas others are more tolerant.

4. Disciplinary procedures in response to cases of suspected academic dishonesty

4.1 The National Legal Framework

A national framework for disciplinary action in response to allegations of academic dishonesty exists. It clearly states that students and academics can be suspended for a semester if they are caught cheating in an examination (or getting somebody to cheat for them) or if they plagiarize in formal presentations, dissertations or academic publications.

4.2 The Abdullah Gul University regulatory framework

Academic dishonesty is currently dealt with in Sections 38 and 39 of the University's by-laws. (Any person alleged to have been academically dishonest will be formally investigated. During this investigation, the academic grade in question is to be suspended. Students found guilty will receive a ZERO and will be liable to the disciplinary procedures outlined in the national legal framework.)

4.3 Abdullah Gul University procedures for detecting, investigating and punishing academic dishonesty.

AGU will strive constantly to make sure that its procedures for the investigation and punishment of academic dishonesty are as current as and as fit for purpose as they can possibly be. Elements that will need to be covered, elaborated and constantly reviewed in the development of such procedures include the following (not exhaustive) list:

4.3.1 Detection of academic dishonesty

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1. Use of antiplagiarism software
2. Vigilance and awareness
3. Staff education (Professional Development to raise awareness of Academic Dishonesty issues)

4.3.2 Investigating

1. The development, distribution and instruction in the use of detailed instructions to ensure instructor awareness of what to do in the event of suspicion of academic dishonesty.
2. To support the above, the development of detailed forms which will document every suspected case, whether it leads to a concrete disciplinary outcome or not.
3. With aim of at least initiating university-wide uniformity in dealing with cases of suspected academic dishonesty, the University will support the institution of a single academic honesty disciplinary committee.

4.3.3 Disciplinary Action

Procedures for the investigation of academic dishonesty, and the consequences of those procedures must:

1. Meet university-wide requirements of consistency;
2. Have sufficient deterrent value.
3. Be widely published.