Toronto Metropolitan University

Academic Integrity Office

LIVE DOCUMENT

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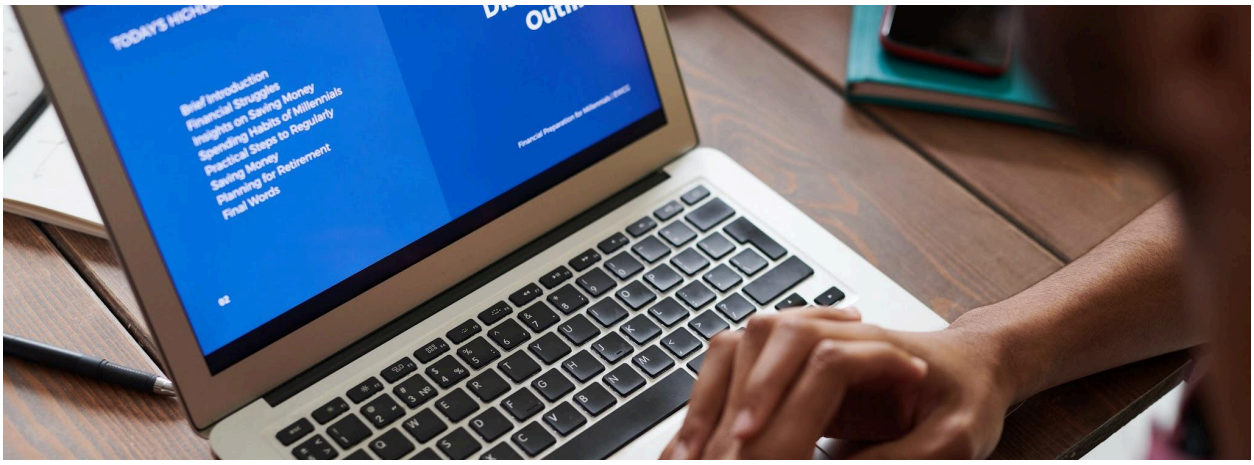
Faculty: The Teaching/Graduate Assistants' (TA/GA) Role in Promoting Academic Integrity



What you'll find in this resource:

Introduction

Preventing Academic Misconduct

Detecting Academic Misconduct

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Introduction

Teaching Assistants (TAs) and Graduate Assistants (GAs) play an important role in promoting Academic Integrity at Toronto Metropolitan University. Whether TA/GAs are leading seminars, marking assignments, evaluating group-work or invigilating exams, they contribute to upholding the standards of excellence expected in our community and by Policy 60: Academic Integrity. Therefore, assistants are expected to know how plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct are defined, recognize when these occur, and follow the appropriate procedures when academic misconduct is suspected.

As a TMU TA/GA, student or faculty you are responsible for familiarizing yourself with TMU Senate Policy 60: Academic Integrity. This policy was revised, effective September 1, 2019, and there are new guidelines for graduate students.

Preventing Academic Misconduct

1. **Be Clear About Academic Integrity Expectations**
   The best approach is to be up-front and clear about Academic Integrity expectations right from the start. Talk to your supervisor and decide how you are going to handle issues before they arise.

2. **Use the Academic Integrity Website**
   TMU's Academic Integrity Office has developed an Academic Integrity website for faculty/instructors/GAs/TAs and students, which contains valuable information along with tutorials and quizzes to assist in understanding the various types of misconduct, how to avoid misconduct and provides many useful resources. For more information see: www.torontomu.ca/academicintegrity

3. **Access Available Services**
   There are excellent support services on campus for GAs/TAs, for example:

   Student Life and Learning Support (SLLS) - comprehensive services, workshops, and online resources specifically geared to academic skill-building (e.g. Writing Support, Math Support, etc.).

   Toronto Metropolitan University Library and Archives (TMUL) - the librarians and the TMUL website are great resources for research, citation and 'how to' videos.

   Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching (CELT) - workshops and resources to assist in developing your teaching practice.

   Centre for Student Development and Counselling (CSDC) - promotes emotional and social well-being, academic success and career development for TMU students.

Detecting Academic Misconduct

According to *Policy 60: Academic Integrity*, Section 3.1, academic misconduct is:

"Any behaviour that undermines the University's ability to evaluate fairly students' academic achievements, or any behaviour that a student knew, or reasonably ought to have known, could gain them or others unearned academic advantage or benefit, counts as academic misconduct."

Academic Integrity Website

The website has information, tools and examples of how to detect academic misconduct. For example, how to use paper properties, Turnitin.com, understanding Paper Mills/Essay-writing Services, etc.

Types of Academic Misconduct (For more information see: Policy 60: Academic Integrity, Section 3.1)

- Plagiarism
- Cheating
- Contract Cheating
- Misrepresentation of Personal Identity or Performance
- Submission of False Information
- Damaging, Tampering, Interfering with the Scholarly Environment
- Contributing to Academic Misconduct
- Unauthorized Use of Intellectual Property
- Misconduct in Re-graded/Re-submitted Work
- Violations of Specific Departmental or Course Requirements
    - *Note:* Please see Applicability to Research-Related Activities (see *Toronto Metropolitan University Senate Policy 60: Academic Integrity*, Appendix A, Section 9 & in the "Graduate Student" section below)

Possible Penalties and Consequences for Academic Misconduct (these are just a few examples, for more information, see Policy 60: Academic Integrity, Section 7**)**

- The minimum penalty for undergraduate or continuing education students is a grade reduction, including a “zero” (0) on the work. [The minimum penalty, on its own, cannot be appealed. However, a finding of academic misconduct regardless of whether the minimum penalty is assigned, can be appealed.]
- A grade of “F” or "FLD" in a course may be assigned.
- Students may be required to participate in the Fundamentals of Academic Integrity Quiz and assigned up to three SLS/RUL/AIO workshops.
- In undergraduate courses, Disciplinary Suspension (DS) may be recommended by the instructor, or may be assigned by the Academic Integrity Council (AIC) or Senate Appeals Committee (SAC).
- In undergraduate or graduate programs, Disciplinary Withdrawal (DW) may be recommended by the original decision maker, and/or the AIC, but can only be assigned by the SAC.
- The SAC may Expel a student from the University.
- A degree, diploma or certificate may be revoked in some circumstances.

Reporting Misconduct

Suspicions of Academic Misconduct

Report all suspected instances of academic misconduct to the course instructor as soon as possible. The course instructor will then follow the appropriate procedure. If you are interested in the process, please see the Academic Integrity website.

Examinations and Tests

Policy 60: Academic Integrity refers to specific misconduct categories that may bring students under suspicion before, during and after an examination or test.

Policy 135: Examination Policy is the general policy on issues related to the examination process, student conduct, and invigilation responsibilities.

Policy 61: Student Code of Non-Academic Conduct is the policy that addresses non-academic misconduct, its consequences and remedies.

All students and invigilators need to be aware of what constitutes academic and non-academic misconduct and the consequences and/or penalties involved.

For Graduate Students

Note: This is not a complete list of important information for Graduate students, for more information, please see Policy 60: Academic Integrity.

According to *Policy 60: Academic Integrity,* Section 4.6 provides:
In graduate education it is essential that an environment exists where faculty and students have the utmost regard for academic integrity. Graduate students often engage in research with a large degree of independence. Therefore, they are expected to and must pursue their academic and research activities in a manner that is consistent with the highest standards of ethical and scholarly practice.

Outcomes for Academic Misconduct (please see *Policy 60: Academic Integrity, Section 7* for complete list)

- The minimum penalty for misconduct with respect to work submitted in a course by a graduate student is a grade of “zero” (0) on the work.
- The minimum penalty for misconduct with respect to non-course program requirements by a graduate student is a grade of “D-UNS” [DIsciplinary Unsatisfactory]
- Disciplinary Action (DA) is an academic standing for a graduate student to indicate academic misconduct. A DA will be placed on the academic record and transcript and cannot be removed... While an initial decision maker may recommend a DA for a graduate student, it may only be assigned by the Academic Integrity Council (AIC), the Graduate Admissions Appeals Committee (GAAC) or the Senate Appeals Committee (SAC).
- Disciplinary Action, Suspension (DA-S) is an academic standing for a graduate student where they are removed from a program for a period of up to two (2) years, after which the student can request to re- enroll in the program. A DA-S will be

placed on the academic record and transcript and cannot be removed. When the student will be removed from their program is recommended by the initial decision maker or Graduate Program Director and assigned by the AIC, GAAC or SAC. While an initial decision maker may recommend a DA-S for a graduate student, it may only be assigned by the AIC, GAAC or SAC.

- Disciplinary Withdrawal (DW) is an academic standing where a student is permanently withdrawn from a specific program and fully withdrawn from the University as a whole for a period of at least two (2) years. After serving the specified period, a student assigned a DW may apply to other programs/ certificates at the University. A DW will be placed on the academic record and transcript and cannot be removed.

Progressive Discipline (for more information, please see *Policy 60: Academic Integrity Procedures, Section 7.4*):

A second finding of academic misconduct shall automatically require a penalty hearing regarding DA-S DW, or Expulsion.

Suspicions of Misconduct (for more information, please see *Policy 60: Academic Integrity Procedures, Section 1.5*):

- In recognition of the severity of the potential impact of even a formal suspicion upon students at the graduate level, there is no option of a non-facilitated discussion (NFD) with [graduate] students... Where a group discussion is held it must be a facilitated discussion (FD). If students have been to a group discussion, they may request an individual meeting; however, they may also still be required to attend a group meeting.

- In all cases of suspected misconduct in non-course program requirements, the Vice President Research and Innovation (VPRI) must be notified by the AIO. In the case of graduate student misconduct, the Dean and/or the Vice-Provost and Dean YSGS must also be notified of the suspicion.

- In the case of a student in receipt of tri-agency funding, the VPRI will assign an additional investigator, external (i.e. arms-length) to the university, who will also attend and participate in the FD as an investigator and decision maker and will sign a confidentiality agreement registered with the Office of the Vice President of Research and Innovation (OVPRI).

***Policy 60: Academic Integrity, Appendix A, Section 9, '*Academic Misconduct in Supervised Research Activities' provides:**

"Supervised research" is treated as a separate category and includes academic milestones such as Comprehensive Examinations, Major Research Papers, Research or Thesis Proposals, Theses and Dissertations, as well as the research and associated writing carried out towards any of these at either the undergraduate or graduate level... Suspicions of research misconduct that may have occurred under the auspices of Toronto Metropolitan University, but are in no way directed towards towards academic advantage or benefit, are to be addressed under Policy 118:

Scholarly, Research and Creative Activity (SRC) Integrity rather than Policy 60: Academic Integrity.

Questions or Urgent Requests? Contact:

Academic Integrity Office, Toronto Metropolitan University
https://torontomu.ca/academicintegrity
aio@torontomu.ca