

HONESTY POLICY VIOLATIONS: BEST PRACTICES FOR NMT FACULTY

“Integrity: Maintaining the highest standards of academic and professional ethics, fairness, and honesty in all endeavors, and being responsible members of the NMT community.” *NMT Core Values, 2015-2020 Strategic Plan*

Discuss honesty policy issues with your students, including:

- Clarification of what constitutes cheating on homework and laboratory exercises. For example, do you permit students to consult on-line resources, such as Chegg homework solutions? Some faculty do, others do not. Let your students know what your policy is. For courses in which different faculty teach different sections, the faculty should agree to a uniform policy.
- Discuss plagiarism of text and computer code assignments. Let students know how easy it is for faculty to detect.
- Students caught plagiarizing almost always say that it was an accident — that they accidentally turned in their notes instead of the actual assignment. Although this is not a convincing excuse, let students know that this is a common excuse and that they should always be sure that they are submitting the correct materials.
- Let students know the consequences of honesty policy violations. Some are still in “high-school mode” and don’t realize how serious it is.
- Include a link to New Mexico Tech’s Responsible Academic Conduct Policies and Procedures, which are detailed in the 2016-17 Student Handbook:
http://www.nmt.edu/sur/docs/NMT_Student_Handbook_2016-17.pdf

Minimize opportunities for cheating

- Design writing assignments that are resistant to plagiarism (i.e., non-standard topics that are unique to your class).
- For exams, either physically separate students so that they cannot surreptitiously see one another’s exams (sometimes this necessitates having some students take the exam in a different room with a TA as proctor), or have two versions of the test.
- Do not recycle old test questions unless you share old test questions with all students.
- Inform students that all cell phones must be put away. They should be left on for Rave notifications, but kept on vibrate. (In the event of a Rave notification most student phones will start vibrating, so it will be noticeable.)
- Be aware that take-home exams are sometimes viewed as group projects in which students closely collaborate on answering the questions. This is not really fair to the students who follow the rules. Assume this will happen and plan accordingly.

Report all serious violations of the honesty policy

- A serious violation is one in which you think it is likely that the student knew they were cheating/plagiarizing.
- If violations are not reported, repeat offenders cannot be detected.
- For courses in which different faculty teach different sections, faculty should agree to a uniform reporting policy, as well as uniform penalties.
- Cases involving undergraduate students are reported to the Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs (Peter Mozley). Those involving graduate students are reported to the Graduate Dean (Lorie Liebrock).