Implementation Ideas for Instructors

A supplement to the UTEP College of Engineering Honor Code

Every course should have a written policy describing the nature of allowed and disallowed collaboration within the course. The level of allowed collaboration might differ from one assignment type to another (e.g., no collaboration on exams, but significant collaboration allowed and indeed expected on a design project). Students should be reminded of the allowed collaboration policies throughout the term.

To provide students with reinforcement, each assignment might include the relevant honor policy in the handout for every assignment.

Different courses and instructors can have different expectations; do not assume that some level of collaboration is obviously out-of-bounds, because students might be in some other course where that level of collaboration is allowed.

The suggested policy statements below attempt to cover a variety of circumstances. It is unlikely that any one class would use them all; indeed some may be inappropriate for your class. These policies are meant to provide a menu of policies for instructor use. These statements can be modified to suit each instructor's educational goals for a particular assignment, exam or project.

A. General Policy Statement:
Course integrity policies are encouraged to include the following paragraph

All students are presumed to be decent and honorable, and the Honor Code binds all students. Students may not seek to gain an unfair advantage over other students; Students may not consult, look at, or possess the unpublished work of another without their permission; and they must appropriately acknowledge use of another's work. Any violation of course honor policies shall be reported. Each student has a duty to report violations. Questions about the course policy should be directed to course instructors.

1. Exams

Each student must complete the exam solely by her or his own efforts. Questions can be asked only of the course instructors. The exam must be completed within the specified time. Note: Limitations on calculator types, use of notes, books, etc. are also appropriate. Electronic devices will not be in a student's possession during exams without written permission of the instructor.

2. Suggested homework options

a. No collaboration

All homework assignments are to be completed on your own. You may receive help only from the course instructors. At no time may you receive help from someone who is not a current instructor. You may not consult homework solutions from a previous term or another section of the class.

b. Limited collaboration

You may discuss this homework assignment with your fellow students at the conceptual level, but must complete all calculations and write-up, from scrap to final form, on your own. Verbatim copying of another student's work is forbidden. You may not consult homework solutions from a previous term unless they are made available in a publicly accessible form; no unfair advantage can be sought.

c. Extensive collaboration
You may discuss this homework assignment with your fellow students, and complete the work with other students in the class, including working in a group around a common table and discussing problems as you work on them. You must submit individual work that is not a verbatim copy of any other student's work. Do not forget that even when you work in a group, you are individually responsible for the learning that should accompany homework completion.

3. Group Project Work

a. No inter-group collaboration
All group work is to be completed only within your own group. Your group can receive help only from the course instructors. At no time may you receive help from someone who is not a current instructor. You cannot speak with other groups about the problems, conceptually or otherwise, and you may not at anytime look at, borrow, or possess another group's work.

b. Inter-group collaboration allowed
All group work is to be completed only within your own group. You may receive help from the course instructors and you may consult with members of other groups in the course, but you must complete your group's calculation and project write-up on your own.

4. Work Assignments

a. Individual Projects
All programming projects in this course are to be done on your own. We do encourage students to help each other learn the course material. You may give or receive help on any of the concepts covered in lecture or discussion. You are allowed to consult with other students in the current class to help you understand the project specification (i.e. the problem definition).

However, you may not collaborate in any way when constructing your solution - the solution to the project must be generated by you working alone. You are not allowed to work out the programming details of the problems with anyone. You are not allowed to look at or in any way derive advantage from the existence of project specifications or solutions prepared in prior years (e.g. programs written by former students, solutions provided by instructors, project handouts).

If you have any questions as to what constitutes unacceptable collaboration, please talk to the instructor right away. You are expected to exercise reasonable precautions in protecting your own work. Do not leave your work in a publicly accessible directory, and take care when discarding printouts.

b. Group Projects

All projects in this course are to be done only by your own group. While we encourage students to help each other learn the course material, there are limits on assistance you can give or receive.

You may give or receive help on any of the concepts covered in lecture, discussion, or the textbook. You are allowed to consult with other students in the class to help you understand the project specification (the definition of the problem). However, you may not collaborate in any way with people outside your group when constructing your solution; your group working alone must generate the solution to a project. You are not allowed to work out the details of the problems with anyone outside your own group. You are not allowed to derive your solution in any way from prior project solutions. If you worked on the projects in the past (because you are repeating this course or you started but dropped the class in a prior term), you may not re-use work from the prior semester.

If you have any questions as to what constitutes unacceptable collaboration, ask the instructor. You are expected to exercise reasonable precautions in protecting your own work. Don't let other students borrow your accounts, work or computer, don't leave your program in a publicly accessible directory, and take care when discarding printouts.