

## **Collaboration: Respecting University Standards**

### **Collaboration in the University Community**

As a university student, you are expected to represent your work honestly. If an assignment requires that you work independently, you should produce the results alone, without unauthorized assistance from others. Because fair assessment requires that all students work under the same conditions, all must follow the same rules. Collaborating responsibly will foster mutual respect within the academic community at UC Davis.

The university community values the exchange of ideas, and many instructors facilitate this exchange by assigning group projects. These activities require students to collaborate with others in order to practice leadership and cooperation, skills highly valued in the job market. So, each instructor will set the limits for collaboration according to the overall design of the course and the purpose of each assignment.

Collaborating without permission jeopardizes the integrity of your own education. Working with others outside the bounds set by the instructor may lead you to rely on the aid of others and prevent you from exercising your full potential. Unauthorized collaboration may also weaken your ability to develop ideas independently.

The “Code of Academic Conduct” outlines university standards for collaboration:

Unless permitted by the instructor, do not work with others on graded coursework, including in class and take-home tests, papers, or homework assignments. When an instructor specifically informs students that they may collaborate on work required for a course, the extent of the collaboration must not exceed the limits set by the instructor. (“Code of Academic Conduct”)

### ***What is collaboration?***

In “Unauthorized Collaboration: What Students Need To Know,” the Office of Student Judicial Affairs defines collaboration as “working with another or receiving assistance from someone (a classmate, friend, etc.) to complete graded course work.” When you check answers to a homework problem, discuss responses for an exam question, work with others on a lab report, or ask a friend to edit a paper, you are collaborating with others (“Unauthorized Collaboration”).

### ***What is the difference between authorized and unauthorized collaboration?***

In any given course, the instructor is the authority on collaboration. Only he or she can designate when and to what degree you may consult with others. When working on graded assignments, including “in-class or take-home tests, papers, labs, or homework assignments,” the handout “Unauthorized Collaboration” warns, “students may not collaborate without faculty authorization.”

### ***Who is responsible for unauthorized collaboration?***

It takes two or more students to collaborate, and all parties are accountable for collaborating responsibly. If another student asks you for your answer to a homework question and you comply with that request, you have both collaborated. If the instructor did not authorize you to work together, you both have collaborated without authorization.

## ***Common Misunderstandings about Authorized and Unauthorized Collaboration***

### ***When to collaborate***

Students may only work together on graded assignments when the instructor for the course has given them permission to do so. This permission does not transfer to another instructor's section of the same course, to other courses taught by that instructor or even to the same course taught in a different quarter. If other students are working together on a graded assignment, their cooperation should not be interpreted as permission to collaborate.

You must also follow any limitations set by the instructor. If she or he has given permission for you to discuss the first three problem sets with others, but required that you complete the last four on your own, then you are held accountable for following those instructions. Similarly, when participating in a peer review workshop, you should follow the guidelines provided by the instructor and limit your responses accordingly.

### ***Defining authorized assistance***

Students may consult with the instructor or a TA when working on graded assignments. In addition, tutors at the Learning Skills Center (LSC) can help students master the skills needed to complete their own work. No tutor—whether consulted at the LSC or hired independently—should complete problems for students. However, tutors may help students work on similar sample problems. In addition, tutors cannot correct, revise, or complete student work (“Unauthorized Collaboration”).

**Consequences** for violating the Code of Academic Conduct, including cases of unauthorized collaboration, range from **disciplinary sanctions** such as disciplinary probation, deferred separation, suspension, and dismissal, to **educational interventions** such as attending a workshop or writing a paper. In addition, the instructor may impose a grade penalty on any assignment completed with unauthorized assistance. For more information on student discipline, see “The Student Disciplinary System at UC Davis” @ <http://sja.ucdavis.edu/pdf/Integrity1.pdf>

### **Strategies for Success: Responsible Collaboration**

#### **To avoid sanctions for unauthorized collaboration:**

- **don't make assumptions based on observations of others**
- **ask the instructor to clarify the limits for collaboration on each assignment**
- **take advantage of the help available from professors, instructors, teaching assistants**
- **consult the specialists and peer tutors at the Learning Skills Center**
- **refer students who ask for help to the proper sources (the instructor, tutors at the LSC, etc.)**
- **discuss problems and solutions for graded work after the work has been graded**
- **attend subject specific workshops at the Learning Skills Center for help with particular classes like statistics, chemistry, and composition**

### **Works Cited**

“Code of Academic Conduct.” Student Judicial Affairs. University of California, Davis. September 15, 2003. <<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/pdf/CAC.pdf>>.

“The Student Disciplinary System at UC Davis.” Student Judicial Affairs. University of California, Davis. 18 July 2003. <<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/pdf/Integrity1.pdf>>.

“Unauthorized Collaboration: What Students Need To Know.” Student Judicial Affairs. University of California, Davis. September 25, 2003. <<http://sja.ucdavis.edu/collab.htm>>.