

While grading Problem Set #2, we found that 4 students copied old homework solutions from previous students, with identical phrases, paragraphs, computer code, and errors. The students downloaded homework from Coursehero & Github, and turned it in as their own work.

Checks of Problem Set #1 turned up similar cheating.

This prompted us to start systematically checking code submitted to Rosalind. A large number of students downloaded previously solved Rosalind homework problems from Github and submitted other people's code verbatim as their own work.



What is Academic Dishonesty?

In promoting a high standard of academic integrity, the University broadly defines academic dishonesty—basically, all conduct that violates this standard, including *any act designed to give an unfair or undeserved academic advantage*, such as:

- Cheating
- [Plagiarism](#)
- [Unauthorized Collaboration / Collusion](#)
- Falsifying Academic Records
- Misrepresenting Facts (e.g., providing false information to postpone an exam, obtain an extended deadline for an assignment, or even gain an unearned financial benefit)
- Any other acts (or attempted acts) that violate the basic standard of academic integrity (e.g., [multiple submissions](#)—submitting essentially the same written assignment for two courses without authorization to do so)

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint_what_is.php


THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
Student Judicial Services
Office of the Dean of Students

Plagiarism

[← back to Academic Integrity](#)

Plagiarism is another serious violation of academic integrity. In simplest terms, this occurs if you represent *as your own work* any material that was obtained from another source, regardless how or where you acquired it.

- Plagiarism can occur with *all* types of media—scholarly or non-academic, published or unpublished—written publications, Internet sources, oral presentations, illustrations, computer code, scientific data or analyses, music, art, and other forms of expression. (See [Section 11-402\(d\)](#) of the *Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities* for the University's official definition of plagiarism.)
- Borrowed material from written works can include entire papers, one or more paragraphs, single phrases, or any other excerpts from a variety of sources such as books, journal articles, magazines, downloaded Internet documents, purchased papers from commercial writing services, papers obtained from other students (including homework assignments), etc.
- As a general rule, the use of any borrowed material results in plagiarism if the original source is not properly acknowledged. So you can be held accountable for plagiarizing material in either a final submission of an assignment *or* a draft that is being submitted to an instructor for review, comments, and/or approval.

Using *verbatim* material (e.g., exact words) without proper attribution (or credit) constitutes the most blatant form of plagiarism. However, other types of material can be plagiarized as well, such as *ideas* drawn from an original source or even its *structure* (e.g., sentence construction or line of argument).

- Improper or insufficient paraphrasing often accounts for this type of plagiarism. (See additional information on [paraphrasing](#).)

UT Links

- [Undergraduate Writing Center](#)
- [Honor Code](#)
- [UT-Austin Academic Integrity: A Brief Guide to Avoiding Plagiarism \(PDF\)](#)

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint_whatish.php


THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
Student Judicial Services
Office of the Dean of Students

“Plagiarism ... occurs if you represent *as your own work* any material that was obtained from another source, regardless how or where you acquired it.

Plagiarism can occur with *all* types of media—scholarly or non-academic, published or unpublished—written publications, Internet sources, oral presentations, illustrations, computer code, scientific data or analyses, music, art, and other forms of expression.

Borrowed material from written works can include entire papers, one or more paragraphs, single phrases, or any other excerpts from a variety of sources such as books, journal articles, magazines, downloaded Internet documents, purchased papers from commercial writing services, papers obtained from other students (including homework assignments), etc.”

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint_whatish.php



“Using *verbatim* material (e.g., exact words) without proper attribution (or credit) constitutes the most blatant form of plagiarism. However, other types of material can be plagiarized as well, such as *ideas* drawn from an original source or even its *structure* (e.g., sentence construction or line of argument).

Plagiarism can be committed intentionally *or* unintentionally.

By merely changing a few words or rearranging several words or sentences, you are *not* paraphrasing. Making minor revisions to borrowed text amounts to plagiarism.

Remember, your instructors should be able to clearly identify which materials (e.g., words and ideas) are your own *and* which originated with other sources.”

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint_whatish.php



Plagiarism & Unauthorized Collaboration

Plagiarism and unauthorized collaboration are often committed jointly.

By submitting *as your own work* any unattributed material that you obtained from other sources (including the contributions of another student who assisted you in preparing a homework assignment), you have committed plagiarism. And if the instructor did not authorize students to work together on the assignment, you have also engaged in unauthorized collaboration. Both violations contribute to the same fundamental deception—representing material obtained from another source as your own work.

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint_plag_collab.php



“By submitting *as your own work* any unattributed material that you obtained from other sources, you have committed plagiarism.”

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint_plag_collab.php

To be completely clear about it

Copying homework solutions from other students or internet sources is cheating, collusion, and/or plagiarism.

To be completely clear about it

Software and computer code are legally considered in the same framework as other written works. Copying code directly without attribution is plagiarism.

To be completely clear about it

You can use the internet to get ideas, programming suggestions and syntax, but downloading completed answers to assigned questions and submitting these as your own work is cheating/plagiarism.

Copying entire programs verbatim from marked repositories offering Rosalind homework solutions (when your instructions were to work independently) is cheating and plagiarism.

To be completely clear about it

Downloading or otherwise obtaining solutions to homework problems from previous students and turning these in as your own work is cheating, collusion, and/or plagiarism.

To be completely clear about it

The syllabus is unambiguous:

"Students are welcome to discuss ideas and problems with each other, but **all programs, Rosalind homework, and written solutions should be performed independently.**"

To be completely clear about it

Also, because Coursehero and equivalent sites often require either a paid subscription or uploading course materials in exchange for downloading, students using these sites most likely either directly purchased or exchanged equivalent goods in return for the material they plagiarized.



Consequences of Academic Dishonesty Can Be Severe!

You may see or hear of other students engaging in some form of academic dishonesty. If so, do not assume that this misconduct is tolerated. Such violations are, in fact, regarded very seriously, often resulting in severe consequences.

Grade-related penalties are routinely assessed ("F" in the course is not uncommon), but students can also be suspended or even permanently expelled from the University for scholastic dishonesty.

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acadint_conseq.php

What are the consequences for you?

We are conducting a full audit of Rosalind code by all students. Students found to have submitted complete programs from github or other online repositories of Rosalind solutions will receive zero credit specifically for those problems.

If you did this, but only this, consider this a warning and a painful but not fatal lesson.
There will be no further action taken.

What are the consequences for you?

Students who cheated on the problem sets will receive failing grades in the class and will be reported to student judicial services, where they will be investigated. The report will become part of their permanent record, and the students may be considered for potential expulsion.

The University Honor Code

http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/spot_honorcode.php