

Avoiding the Appearance of Academic Dishonesty

All students enrolled in Lally courses have received and have access to information as to what constitutes appropriate and inappropriate academic behavior. This type of information need not be repeated here. However, Lally has experienced several unfortunate incidents in recent semesters, and we need to work harder to avoid any repetition of such events. In addition, and perhaps equally important, we need avoid even the appearance or suspicion of such occurrences. We should be diligent in this respect, if for no other reason, as a courtesy to our classmates and as a show of respect towards our programs of study.

Exams

Exams create anxiety. This is unavoidable. Students worry about their grades, their reputations, job prospects, etc. Students also worry about their performance relative to their classmates (sometimes, unnecessarily) and feel very demoralized when they believe that their classmates deviate from normal test-taking procedures (cheat). It is not necessary for students to actually cheat to demoralize their classmates; the mere appearance of cheating is sufficient to cause problems and heighten anxieties. This is one anxiety that all of us can help mitigate. We can act in a more considerate manner towards our classmates by, whenever possible, adhering to the following:

1. **Do not leave the classroom while the exam is being administered** until you have submitted your papers to the course instructor. An exception to this rule is where a break is permitted between parts of exams, but only after your paperwork for the relevant part has been submitted.
2. **Do not talk to other students during the administration of an exam for any reason.** It does not matter what is being said; students seated far away would not hear what is being said. But any communication between students raises classmates' suspicions and should be avoided at all times.
3. Cellular telephones and other communications devices should never be used or even be visible to any person at any time during the administration of an exam. **Avoid bringing cellular telephones and other prohibited electronic devices** to class if at all possible. If this cannot be avoided, the phone or device should be turned off and closed inside a bag or other container at all times. Students are very sensitive about the possibility that classmates might communicate with others during the administration of an exam.
4. **Do not look at or near your classmates' work during an exam.** While this suggestion seems obvious enough to be unnecessary, many students do this out of habit. In fact, students given different exams are often aware of the differences between their exams and those of their

classmates (even subtle differences) before they complete them. Make every effort of avoiding the appearance looking at or near those of your classmates.

5. Allow as much as space as possible between you and your classmates when sitting for an exam. Obviously, this is very difficult in a crowded room. But, many of us have noticed how it seems more likely that all seats in the back of a classroom are occupied during an exam than seats near the front of the room. Taking seats in the front of the room further away from classmates can be considered an act of courtesy. Even moving seats so as to make additional space might be appropriate when the instructor has not already ordered them for the exam.

6. During an exam, try to sit away from your “friends” and/or other classmates that you normally sit near. Of course, sitting near your friends is by no means a violation of any academic code. And this should not be taken to be an exam requirement. However, this simple courtesy can do quite a lot to put other classmates’ minds at ease.

7. When an exam (or portion thereof) is administered as a closed-book exam, do not engage in any activity that might be construed as accessing books or other printed materials. Reaching into a bag, pocket, desk drawer, etc. has the possibility of being construed as seeking inappropriate materials, even when the intent is entirely innocent. It is best to keep any books, papers and other materials off desks and tables during the administration of exams, unless they are explicitly permitted.

8. Avoid the use of any electronic device during an exam, except as explicitly permitted by the course instructor. This includes computers, calculators (very often, these are permitted for exams requiring computations), translators, dictionaries, PDAs, cell phones, etc. Do not use a cell phone or other communications device as a calculator or even as a clock.

9. Please do not feel offended in the instructor or proctor asks you to move to another seat prior to or before the exam. This should not be taken to be motivated by suspicion, but more as a demonstration that the instructor is trying to keep exam-taking conditions fair and to appear to all that he is taking the issue seriously.

10. There are quite a few other considerations as well, and you can certainly imagine many more. Notes scribbled on a hand, crib sheet, hat visor, etc. should all be avoided for closed-book exams. Perhaps, more importantly, do consider how even a simple act on your part might be misconstrued by someone else, and try to avoid creating a basis for such misconceptions.

The list above should not be construed as necessarily representing any RPI, Lally or even individual instructor policy. However, it is simply in our best interest to make every effort and show every willingness to respect the concerns and anxieties of our classmates, professors and

administrators in the Lally school. All of us know the right thing to do (or at least whom to approach for advice) in exam settings. However, we should be proactive in addressing issues of academic integrity. In addition, we should make effort to appear to be maintaining a high standard of academic integrity. Nonetheless, assume that on any in-class exam, a student will receive the grade of "F" for the course if the instructor has determined that any of the following violations of rules occur. This list is not exhaustive:

1. The student either receives or provides exam-information to or from any other person, other than the course instructor, at any time during the exam is being administered.
2. The student is in possession of a cell phone, computer, personal digital assistant or any other device, electronic or otherwise, capable of communicating or displaying exam-related information, and that device becomes visible or audible to the instructor, to any other student or any person (including the student in possession) during the administration of the exam. Calculators (but not computers that display non-numerical characters) will be permitted if this permission is explicitly stated either on the exam or as announced by the instructor. If a student must bring such a device to the exam, he or she should notify the instructor or proctor (who might deny permission), and maintain that device in a sealed, fully-enclosed non-transparent container that will remain unopened during the administration of the exam. This container shall not be inside any pocket or touching any portion of the student's clothing.
3. During the administration of an exam or part thereof identified as "closed book," the student views, places within his or her view any papers, written materials, calculators, electronic devices, or anything else that does, or might convey information relevant or might be relevant to the exam.
4. During the administration of any exam, the student views (or appears to view) or otherwise obtains (or appears to obtain) information from the exam, papers, materials, calculators or any other item or items in the possession of another student or person except for the instructor or proctor.
5. The student leaves the room in which the exam is being administered for any reason without the explicit permission of the instructor. Students should not ask for such permission except in the event of an emergency. The instructor may explicitly designate times during which departing the room is permitted (e.g., between closed-book and open book portions of exams). Students need not obtain permission to depart the exam room during these explicitly designated times. In addition, the instructor may permit students to leave the exam room in the event of emergency, in some instances when the student is willing to submit the exam (or portion thereof) as being completed and ready to grade.

6. Under no circumstances may a student use any communication device or share any written material with other students during the administration of the exam.

The instructor or proctor may make exceptions to this classroom exam policy at his or her discretion as deemed reasonable to maintain fairness and order and to make exceptions for emergencies, certain disabilities known to appropriate Institute officials, etc.

Papers, Projects, Take Home Exams and other Take Home Assignments

Whereas the guidelines listed above should be taken as advice for students, the guidelines listed below should be taken as policy to be carefully adhered to by all students in all submitted work.

1. Do be aware of and follow all Lally and RPI rules, policies and guidelines concerning all assignments.
2. In all cases, students should carefully cite any work, paper, book, article, Internet site, electronic communication or software, whether published or unpublished, that was consulted or otherwise used as a reference for their own work.
3. Any material that was copied or paraphrased into a student's work must be appropriately footnoted (endnoted or otherwise cited) along with appropriate publication or other details. Sufficient information should be provided in the citation for the instructor or other reader to access the referenced material as easily as possible.
4. Any non-written materials (e.g., oral communication, classmate assistance, television, etc.) must be cited as well. Appropriate style manuals can be consulted for citation style.
5. All projects are to be considered to be independent projects, completed without assistance of others except for the course instructor, except in the case of projects specifically identified as being group projects.
6. Authors of term papers should take great care in ensuring that their papers are well-written and conform to appropriate style and Institute academic honesty guidelines.
7. Groups and their members should not collaborate with other students and groups in the preparation of this case, though, of course, students working together in a group should collaborate with other members of their group.