

# Collaboration on Assignments Policy

Study groups can be a great way to learn, and there will be times that I'll think it's a great idea for you to collaborate with other students in doing your assignments. Make sure that you are in no doubt about when you can work with others and when you cannot. Also be careful that you clearly understand the difference between "working with others" and "copying answers." If you ever have a question about what is allowed, just ask!

**Tests, Quizzes, & Assignments Graded for Accuracy** As you grow as a student and as a person, you need to have an honest awareness of what you know and what you're able to do. To that end, you are never allowed to collaborate with others in any way, in or out of class, on tests, quizzes or assignments graded for accuracy.

**Working with others** When it comes time for higher level thinking such as application of concepts and problem solving, brainstorming and collaborating with others who are learning too can be very helpful.

"What did you get for the second problem?" is a perfectly acceptable question. "I don't get it. How did you know how to start?" can lead to a very productive discussion of how a problem is approached. I think this collaboration between students is a great idea. This is honest and effective work.

**Copying answers** Contrast the previous example to the person who, without really putting any effort into the assignment comes up to a fellow student and says, "Look, I really don't understand and I'm going to fail. Can I see your work?" Or, "I've got the data from the lab, but I've run out of time. Can you send me a copy of the calculations for my lab report?" This person would be turning in an assignment under their name that is not their work. This person is acting dishonestly, and it is a very, very ineffective way to learn.

I'm pretty certain you can tell the difference between these examples. I can, too. Trust me, the points you'll gain by turning in a homework assignment by copying are far less than the points you will lose later on the test because you didn't find out how to do that assignment for yourself. You owe it to yourself to know how an answer is derived, not just what the answer is.

**MOST IMPORTANTLY**, do you remember what God says about sowing and reaping? For whatever reason it might happen, if you sow cheating and dishonesty now, you will reap cheating and dishonesty in a far greater way in your future. It's the law of the harvest!

So then, on ALL ASSIGNMENTS where you worked with others or you got help from someone or used some other resource for help:

1. Before you discuss an assignment with others, or look for help from some other source, I expect you to first make a solid effort at it on your own.
2. I expect you to write up the solution on your own, in your own words, starting from scratch.
3. Write the names of the people you worked with in the margin if it's just one or two problems. (On lab reports, you'll include the name of your lab partners in the header of the lab report.)
4. If you collaborated on most of the assignment, at the end of it, write the names of the people you worked with, or your source. Also include a short statement to the effect that this is your personal work, not just copied. This is what scientists do when they collaborate with others.

Again, collaborating with others can be a really useful way to learn - if it's done correctly. For sure, I wouldn't rely on it as your sole method of studying, and it's not for everyone, but if you can find classmates who are roughly at your level and you can work together, what you can learn from each other can be great. One of the most effective ways to learn something is to teach someone else!