STUDENT COLLABORATION VS COLLUSION

DEFINITION

The Conference Board of Canada (2020) specifies working with others on projects and tasks as part of its employability skills list. Group projects, tasks, and assignments can be a good way to help students develop these skills. However, misunderstandings have arisen with who is able to work together, and how or if they can do so.

In ACC’s Policy A25, collaboration and collusion are either mentioned explicitly or implicitly several times. In general, collaboration in this context means working together when allowed, supposed, or directed to do so. Examples for ACC students have included group members completing projects assigned by their instructors together, or students forming study groups to prepare for tests or exams. Collusion, on the other hand, is not mentioned in ACC’s current Policy A25, but is best understood to mean the opposite: working together when not allowed, supposed, or directed to do so. Examples at ACC have included students working together on assignments that were given individually, or giving test answers to other students.

Related examples from ACC’s Policy A25 include the following:

» "Students who knowingly or negligently assist other students to be academically dishonest even though there is no benefit to themselves" (Assiniboine Community College, 2013).

» "Examples of facilitating academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to: A student allowing other students to use their assignment to do their own assignment. A student allowing other students to look at their work during a test or exam" (Assiniboine Community College, 2013).

» "Working with another student on a laboratory or other homework assignment when such work is prohibited" (Assiniboine Community College, 2013).

» "Acting to facilitate copying during a test or exam" (Assiniboine Community College, 2013).

» "Collaborating before a test or exam to develop methods of exchanging information and implementation thereof" (Assiniboine Community College, 2013).

» "Unauthorized collaboration between/among students" (Assiniboine Community College, 2013).
The Learning Commons has compiled and delivered extensive research on ways to reduce academic misconduct, including collusion. Below is an abbreviated list. For further details, talk with your instructor or contact Josh Seeland at seelandjl@assiniboine.net.

There are many ways for students to collaborate with integrity, including:

» discuss collaboration, collusion, and academic integrity with your instructor and classmates
» ask for clear guidelines around collaboration from your instructor
» ask for examples of what students can and should do in group work (Sutton & Taylor, 2011)
» collaborate only with classmates specified by your instructor, and only in the manner which your instructor specifies
» complete assessments which are assigned individually on your own
» ask for help from ACC support staff, including your Student Success Advisor, the Learning Curve, and the Library

REFERENCES

