

Academic Integrity Policy

Responsibilities of Community Members:

MLTS is an academic community whose most fundamental purpose is the pursuit of knowledge. High principles of academic integrity are essential to the function and continued growth of the community. Students and faculty are responsible for adhering to the principles of the Academic Integrity Policy and MLTS will not tolerate any abuse of its stipulations. Students who engage in any of the prohibited actions below may be subject to charges under this Academic Integrity Policy. Those who violate these standards should expect to be sanctioned up to and including dismissal from MLTS. Every member of the MLTS academic community is responsible for upholding the standards of professionalism and ethics declared in this Policy. Community members are expected to promptly report to the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry any situations or circumstances they believe constitute violations of this Academic Integrity Policy. If a student is unsure whether their actions might constitute a violation of academic integrity, they have the responsibility to consult with the instructor in advance about any ambiguities.

Plagiarism & Citation Practices

Plagiarism is using any source in work submitted for evaluation and grading without proper acknowledgment. Sources can be anything ranging from (but not limited to) published and unpublished works, books, articles, sermons, lectures, websites, videos, and even your own previously submitted papers. Plagiarism is an extremely serious offense toward the scholarly community, one that can result in an academic sanction. Ordinarily, instances of plagiarism are discovered by the faculty member who has the authority to confront a student, assess the gravity of the instance, and determine the academic consequences within the course in question, up to and including the assignment of a failing grade. The faculty member must also report all instances of plagiarism to the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry, providing the documentation of the alleged plagiarism and a description of the measures taken by the faculty member, including grade implications. General requirements for the proper acknowledgment of sources of academic work are as follows.

To avoid plagiarizing, you must properly acknowledge your sources through citations. Whenever you quote specific words or phrases, paraphrase an author's original idea, or refer to someone's original work—whether that be research data, a creative work of art, a social media post, etc.—you must properly acknowledge from whom and where those words, ideas, data, facts, etc. came from through a citation. This applies to any work you submit or publish as a student, whether it be a thesis, a course paper, or even a relatively informal discussion post. The house citation and formatting style at MLTS is Chicago Style, which is outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style (CMS)* and the abbreviated version of the CMS, *Turabian's A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (hereafter referred to as *Turabian*). You are required to cite and format your assignments in Chicago Style. You may only use another academic citation and formatting style, such as APA or MLA, with the prior approval of your instructor.

Detailed below are the most salient issues to be aware of when citing resources. For more guidance on when and how to cite a resource, including templates for how to format your Chicago Style citations properly, please refer to the library's Citation Guide at

<https://library.meadville.edu/citations>.

Quotations

Regardless of length, each quotation must be placed in quotation marks or clearly indented beyond the regular margin. Each quotation must be accompanied, within the text or in a footnote, by a precise indication of the source following CMS guidelines. Any sentence or phrase that is not the original work of the student must be acknowledged.

Paraphrasing

Any paraphrased or summarized material must also be specifically cited in a footnote or in the text, and the source must be acknowledged following CMS guidelines. A thorough rewording or rearrangement of an author's text does not relieve one of this responsibility. Occasionally, students maintain that they have read a source long before writing a paper and have unwittingly duplicated some of its phrases or ideas. This is not a valid excuse. The student is responsible for taking adequate notes so that the use of phrasing may be acknowledged.

Borrowed Ideas and Facts

Any ideas or facts that are borrowed should be specifically acknowledged in a footnote or in the text, even if the idea or fact has been further elaborated by the student. This includes but is not limited to ideas or facts that you have read, heard in a lecture, or seen in a video. Occasionally, a student preparing an essay has consulted an essay or body of notes on a similar subject by another student. If the student has done so, they must state the fact and clearly indicate the nature and extent of their obligation. The name and class of the author of an essay or notes that are consulted should be given, and the student should be prepared to show the work consulted to the instructor, if requested to do so. Some ideas, facts, formulas, and other kinds of information that are widely known and considered to be in the "public domain" of common knowledge do not always require citation. The criteria for common knowledge vary among disciplines; students in doubt should consult a faculty member. For more in-depth information on when it is necessary to cite a source and how to go about properly citing a source in Chicago Style, please refer to the Library's Citation Guide (<https://library.meadville.edu/citations>) or else ask a librarian for help.

Self-Plagiarism and Multiple Submissions

If you reproduce your own original phrases, findings, or ideas from an earlier submitted final paper, presentation, or published work into a new paper or presentation, you must cite it according to CMS guidelines. Failure to do so is considered self-plagiarism. Under certain conditions, and with the instructors' permission, the student may be permitted to rewrite an earlier work or to satisfy two academic requirements by producing a single piece of work more extensive than that which would satisfy either requirement on its own. Failure to gain prior permission from the instructors constitutes a breach of academic integrity.

Generative AI/ChatGPT

Artificial Intelligence (AI), like all tools, has its strengths and weaknesses, and can be used for good and bad ends. It is totally acceptable to utilize AI-powered search tools or Generative AI as a sort of reference assistant to do tasks such as summarizing large amounts of text or getting help rewriting a run-on sentence.

If, however, you wish to reproduce text, images, or other content generated by a GenAI app or tool in one of your assignments, you **MUST** cite it and explain to your instructor/reader how and why you used it. Such citations and explanations must meet Chicago Style requirements (see CMS 14.112 or [see the GenAI tab on the MLTS Citation Guide for specifics](#)). If you are unsure whether or not your intended use of Generative AI is acceptable or not, then you should discuss it with your instructor or consult a librarian at library@meadville.edu.

As a student at MLTS, any work that you submit—whether a paper, sermon, or even something as relatively informal as a discussion post—must be your own work. Just as you cannot plagiarize someone else's words or ideas, you may not use AI to compose writing—whether a full paper, a paragraph, or an original sentence—and submit it under your own name. Failure to cite content generated by AI is plagiarism and violates Meadville Lombard's Academic Integrity policy. If you are tempted to use a GenAI tool to write for you because you don't think you are a good writer, [schedule an appointment with the writing tutor instead!](#) If you are tempted to use a GenAI tool to write for you to meet an assignment deadline, talk to your instructor instead! They will prefer receiving a late assignment that you actually wrote as opposed to an on-time submission written by ChatGPT. AI, as of now, is also an imperfect research tool. Apps like ChatGPT only have access to publicly available content, and therefore not to research that is only available behind password-protected eJournal databases. Most GenAI tools do not show their sources and cannot critically evaluate the quality of sources or authors. Therefore, GenAI is not a substitute for real critical research. If you need help with your research, you are encouraged to email a librarian (library@meadville.edu) for help!

Cheating

Cheating is the use or possession of inappropriate or prohibited materials, information, sources, or aids in any academic exercise. Cheating also includes submitting papers, research results or reports, analyses, and other textual or visual material and media as one's own work when others prepared them.

Submitting material (words, phrases, images, texts, etc.) produced by others, including material produced by a Large Language Model or generative AI tool (such as ChatGPT) or portions thereof in an assignment and presenting it as your own work (that is, presenting it without a citation) is cheating and a violation of academic integrity policy.

False Citation

False citation is deliberately attributing materials to an improper source or citing a source from which the material was not, in fact, derived.

False Submission

False submission is claiming as one's own work done by someone else, with or without that person's knowledge. This includes submitting work using commercial paper services and/or AI.

Facilitation of Dishonesty

Facilitation of dishonesty is giving assistance to acts of academic misconduct/dishonesty. This

includes deliberately or carelessly allowing one's work to be used by other students without prior instructor approval or otherwise aiding others in committing violations of academic integrity.

Unauthorized Access/Assistance/Obtaining unfair advantage

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Forcing or gaining unauthorized access to property, resources, information, or materials
- (electronic or tangible) that belong to another person or MLTS
- Sharing login credentials to MLTS accounts with unauthorized users
- Unauthorized collaboration on assignments
- Keeping books or other resources from other students
- Deliberately impeding the academic progress of others

Falsification of Records and Official Documents

Examples include (but are not limited to):

- Forging signatures
- Falsifying information on an official academic record
- Falsifying information on an official document such as a grade report, drop/add form, or other school documents
- Falsifying medical documentation that has a bearing on-campus access, the excuse of absences or missed assignments, or ADA accommodations

Student's Defense

The only adequate defense for a student accused of an academic integrity violation is that the work in question does not, in fact, constitute a violation. Neither the defense that the student was ignorant of the regulations concerning academic violations nor the defense that the student was “under pressure at the time the violation was committed” is considered an adequate defense.

Seriousness of the Offense

Academic infractions are always considered a serious matter, but will be considered especially serious if:

- (1) The student has submitted a paper from another person or agency.
- (2) The student has, on record, a previous conviction for another serious violation.
- (3) The infraction includes the theft of another student's work—even if the paper or assignment is returned after use or consulted without being removed from the other student's physical location, a public location, or from an electronic online location such as a website where work has been placed.

Process

Ordinarily, violations of academic integrity are discovered by the faculty member who has the authority to confront a student, assess the gravity of the instance, and determine the academic consequences within the course in question, up to and including the assignment of a failing grade. The faculty member must report all violations of academic integrity to the Senior Director of Contextual Ministry, providing the documentation of the alleged violation and a description of the measures taken by the faculty member, including grade implications. The Senior Director of Contextual Ministry will keep the Vice President of Academic and Student Affairs informed in a timely manner of the status of violations of academic integrity.

Penalties

Breaches of these rules shall be handled according to the procedures outlined in the Student Handbook under the section on [Satisfactory Academic Progress](#). If the faculty, in consultation with the VP of Academic and Student Affairs, concludes that the violation of this policy requires action beyond the scope of the individual faculty member in whose class the violation occurred, the penalty for the student will typically be up to a one year's suspension or full dismissal from the school.

Students suspended or dismissed for violations of the Academic Integrity Policy may request that Meadville Lombard reconsider its action by submitting, in writing, an appeal to the school's President explaining any extenuating circumstances previously unavailable, which would warrant a change in the academic action. The student's written request for reconsideration must be received by the President within seven (7) days of the student's notification of suspension or dismissal. The President will review the written appeal and the supporting information of the previous decision. The decision of the President is final.