The Teaching/Graduate Assistant's Role in Promoting Academic Integrity (AI)

Teaching assistants and graduate assistants can play an important role in promoting AI: whether marking assignments, evaluating group-work, or invigilating exams, assistants contribute to up-holding the standards of excellence expected at Ryerson. Therefore, assistants should know how to define plagiarism and other forms of academic misconduct, recognize when these occur, and follow the appropriate procedures.

Preventing Academic Misconduct:

The best approach is to be up-front and clear about AI right from the start. Talk to your supervisor and decide how you are going to handle issues before they arise. You can: inform students about how they can ensure the academic integrity of their work; refer students to the AI website (www.ryerson.ca/ai) for more information about their responsibilities; and make students aware that all instances of academic misconduct will be reported to the course instructor.

Student Guide to Avoiding Academic Misconduct

Basic Principles:

- Intellectual freedom and honesty are essential to the sharing and development of knowledge. All members of the Ryerson community must exhibit integrity in their teaching, learning, research, evaluation, and personal behaviour. As a Ryerson student, faculty or TA/GA, you are responsible for familiarizing yourself with the Student Code of Academic Conduct which can be found at www.ryerson.ca/senate/policies/pol60.pdf

- Ryerson has developed an **Academic Integrity website** for faculty and students, which contains valuable information along with tutorials and quizzes to help you learn about various types of misconduct, how to avoid misconduct and resources available to assist you. See www.ryerson.ca/ai.

- Ryerson has established an **Academic Integrity Office**. If you have any questions about academic integrity, are concerned with the academic integrity of a particular situation, or would like to consult about a suspicion or a charge of academic misconduct, either e-mail aio@ryerson.ca or call 416-979-5000 ext. 3273.

Academic misconduct is defined as:

- Plagiarism
- Cheating
- Misrepresentation of personal identity or performance
- Submission of false information
- Damaging or Tampering with the Scholarly Environment
- Contributing to Academic Misconduct
- Unauthorized Copying or Use of Copyrighted Materials
- Violations of Departmental Policies on Professional Behaviour

Possible Penalties and consequences for academic misconduct:

- The minimum penalty for academic misconduct at Ryerson is a grade reduction, including a zero on the work to be assigned by the instructor. The minimum penalty, on its own, cannot be appealed. However, a finding of academic misconduct regardless of whether the minimum penalty is assigned, is subject to appeal.

- A grade of "F" in a course may be assigned by the instructor.
- Students may be required to participate in the Academic Integrity Tutorial in conjunction with another penalty.
- In undergraduate courses, Disciplinary Suspension (DS) may be recommended by the instructor, or may be assigned by the Academic Integrity Council or Senate Appeals Committee.
- In undergraduate or graduate programs, Disciplinary Withdrawal (DW) may be recommended by the instructor, or the Academic Integrity Council and can only be assigned by the Senate Appeals Committee.
- The Senate Appeals Committee may Expel a student from the University.
- In some circumstances a degree, diploma or certificate may be rescinded.

Resources available to assist students in avoiding academic misconduct:

- **Educational Workshops**
  Students can be assigned or referred to take educational workshops on a wide range of topics. Visit the link below to see the most current list of workshops available:

  http://www.ryerson.ca/studentlearningsupport/index.html

Detecting Plagiarism:

While some cases of plagiarism are easy to detect, others prove more difficult to identify. The following are cues that may signal the student paper should be examined closely or investigated further:

10 Cues That A Paper May Be Plagiarized

1. Citation styles and bibliographic citations are inconsistent and mixed or non-existent. **1** The style guide used is not the one used for the course. **2**

2. The paper is clearly written at a level beyond the student's usual abilities and may include advanced vocabulary, jargon or combined formal and informal language. **1**, **3**

3. The paper contains a mix of Canadian, American and British spellings (tire/tyre for example) or regionalisms. **1**, **3**

4. Inconsistencies from one submitted assignment to another, for example, the second essay is far superior. **3**

5. The references used throughout the paper are dated (all more than five years old, for example.) Such cases may indicate that the paper was purchased through an essay writing service or written by another student. **1** An excessive number of inactive web sites may also indicate that the paper is old.

6. References are made to tables, diagrams, pieces of text or citations when none of this content exists in the paper. **1, 2**

7. References are made to obscure journals or books not readily available in local libraries. **1** (Be cautious here, however. Through its electronic databases, the Ryerson Library and other universities throughout Ontario subscribe to thousands of international journals that may be obscure.) Check the **Ryerson Library Journal List**.

8. The topic of the paper is inconsistent with the one assigned, or with course content. **1**

9. Parts of the paper are inconsistent with each other and the writing style changes from section to section. **1**

10. When asked, the student cannot produce any research notes for the paper or summarize the main points in the paper. **1**

Sources:

1. Harris, R.A. (2001). *The plagiarism handbook*. Los Angeles. Pyrczak.

2. University of Alberta. (2005). *Detecting Plagiarism*. Retrieved August 1, 2005 from http://www.library.ualberta.ca/guides/plagiarism/detecting/index.cfm

3. University of British Columbia, Faculty of Arts. (2005). *Detecting Plagiarism*. Retrieved July 16, 2005 from http://www.arts.ubc.ca/Ethics_Scenarios.91.0.html

Tools for Detecting Plagiarism

Listed below are some tools you can use to help detect plagiarism, track down the origin of the questionable paper, or locate information contained within the paper:

· *Paper Properties*
· *Internet Search Engines*
· *Online reference sources*
· *Electronic Databases and Full-text Electronic Journals*
· *Online samples from Paper Mills/Essay-writing Services*
· *Plagiarism Detection Software*

Reporting Academic Misconduct:

Before making any accusations, report all suspected instances of academic misconduct to the course instructor as soon as possible. The course instructor will then follow the appropriate procedure. If you notice a student cheating on an exam, immediately let your fellow invigilators

know and report this to the course instructor. Students must be allowed to finish their exam but any unauthorized material must be removed before they can continue. If necessary and feasible, the student should be moved if they were communicating with others.

If you have additional questions, you may wish to consult with the department Chair, or Ryerson's Academic Integrity Office, **aio@ryerson.ca** or 416-979-5000, ext. 3273.