

Collaboration:

What you need to know

Collaboration is working with another or receiving assistance from someone (e.g., a classmate, friend, or parent, whether in person or by electronic media) to complete coursework for a grade. It can include:

- Jointly calculating homework problems
- Working in a group on an assignment
- Having another help one rewrite a paper
- Checking homework answers with others
- Sharing sources for a take-home exam
- “Debugging” another’s computer program



Sometimes collaboration may be permitted, at other times it is not. The following information will help you know when it is okay to work with others!

- If working with others or receiving assistance is allowed, any help or collaboration must be given credit and cited.
- Students must comply with the course rules, and may only work together, or receive help, to the extent allowed by the instructor.
- Read the syllabus, review the course website and follow assignment instructions.
- If unsure about the limits, students must seek the instructor’s permission before working with one another.
- Even if the instructor permits collaboration, it is never ethical to copy someone’s work or let them copy yours.
- If your instructor asks whether you worked with anyone on an assignment, always tell the truth.

“Unauthorized Collaboration”

means working with others without specific permission of the instructor on assignments that will be submitted for a grade. This rule applies to in-class or take-home tests, papers, labs, or homework assignments. Students may not collaborate without faculty authorization.

Under Michigan State University policies, all work submitted for a grade must be the student’s own original independent work, unless the instructor permits collaboration, use of sources or outside assistance.

Please note that collaboration may be permitted in one class, and forbidden in another, because faculty have varying teaching strategies and goals. Some assignments may be designed for individual work and others for groups. Students need both types of experiences - working alone and collaborating - to prepare for their chosen fields.

Students charged with academic misconduct for unauthorized collaboration sometimes say they did not know they were in violation. Remember, students must know and follow the standards set by the faculty. If others break those rules, it does not justify unfair or dishonest conduct. Students are asked to report misconduct to their instructors.

Unauthorized collaboration is unfair and undermines the educational goals of the university. If you have questions about course rules, talk with your instructor.

For more information:
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