

CPSC 513/601.08 — Assignment Do's and Don't's

Why Do We Have Rules Like This?

The goal of an assignment should be to **demonstrate how well you understand, and are able to apply, material from this course**. You should be demonstrating **your** understanding and ability to use this material, and not someone else's.

Long-term consequences of academic misconduct can include your failure in later courses, further studies, or at various points in your career, because you did not understand material, or figure out how to use it, when you should have. Academic misconduct can also result in damage to the reputation of an academic institution, which can make an degree or diploma from that institution less meaningful, or valuable, for other students.

Things To Do

When working on assignments in this course, **please do the following things:**

- Take the time to **read these rules** carefully.
- **Ask the instructor for clarification of these rules** if they are not clear.
- Feel free to **discuss the problems on this assignment with other students in the class, as well as the instructor for the course**, However, **you should not take notes, pictures or screen shots** of anything about the problems on an assignment during any meetings with other people (besides members of your group or the instructor) in which an assignment is discussed.

If you do not follow this advice, then you should **destroy the material that is described, above**, and **wait several hours before you begin to write a solution for any problem on the assignment**. Indeed, **you should never develop any part of your answer for an assignment problem during, or immediately after this kind of meeting**.

Otherwise there is too big a risk that what you write will not reflect *your* understanding of the material.

A violation of this rule is easier to detect than you might realize and this will be considered to be academic misconduct.

- **Use the library** and other online material that is, already available. However, you must **cite references and mention any conversations with other students that you had about this assignment that was helpful**. If you used this kind of material then your submission should include a “bibliography” (or list of references) which you should be preparing as you work on the assignment — not afterwards.
- Course material has been supplied so that you can consult and use it. You do not need to include information like precisely where you found a definition, technical result, or the description of a process if you found and used this in course notes. However, you should **clearly identify any examples from notes that you modified in order to write up your solution for a problem**. You are plagiarizing the instructor’s material, and committing academic misconduct, if you forget to do this.
- If you are using the services of a tutor, then, consider discussing **problems from lecture presentations, tutorials and additional problems that the instructor provides** with the tutor. If the tutor’s job is to help you to improve your work (so that you improve your grade) then this will make the tutor’s job easier. However, **you should never discuss a problem on an assignment with a tutor when you are working on that assignment**. This can result in situations where the tutor ends up completing the assignment instead of you.
- **Ask the instructor to comment on your work before you submit it**. But please don’t wait until the day the assignment is due for this — because there might be too many requests like this for the instructor to handle, otherwise.¹
- **Start work early**. You might need to think for a while about assigned problems and even make multiple attempts to solve problems (using multiple approaches) before solutions for problems are discovered.
- **Make sure that everyone in your group has seen the entire submission** and has been allowed to question or comment on it. Each member of your group will be expected to understand the entire submission and considered to be “responsible” for all of it.
- **Allow time to revise and rewrite** your written answers. Writing gets easier with practice, but it is not necessarily easy for you, right now.

¹The number of students who take advantage of this is usually small enough for the instructor to be able to give feedback — but this cannot be guaranteed.

Things To Avoid

On the other hand, ***Please note that various things are not allowed!***

- ***Do not ask anyone besides the instructor to interpret these rules for you.*** If you ask somebody else and get information that the instructor disagrees with then you will be out of luck!
- ***Do not discuss an assignment with anyone not associated with this course, in any way that could lead to their helping you complete it*** — including tutors, parents, friends, other students, etc.: ***That is academic misconduct.***
- ***Do not show your written work (including drafts of your submission) to anyone besides the instructor or another student in your group.*** You are either supplying, or receiving, more help than is allowed if you do this! Once again, ***that is academic misconduct.***

Please, note as well, that ***you are committing academic misconduct too*** if you break the above rule by sharing your work with other students, before an assignment is due, even if you think you are helping them by doing so.

Furthermore, you should ***inform the instructor***, by email, as soon as possible if you share this material with other students ***after*** the assignment due date, in case other students have received an extension, and will use your work to commit academic misconduct, without your realizing it! If you fail to do so, and an academic misconduct investigation is required, then ***everyone in your group will get investigated too.***

- ***Do not ask (or, worse yet, pay) anyone to help you complete this assignment for you. Once again, that is academic misconduct*** — indeed, arguably, a more serious form of academic misconduct than the above.
- ***Do not upload assignment or test solutions*** — or any other course material that is provided on D2L solely for students in this course — to any online site, without the knowledge and consent of the instructor.
- ***Do not ask for clarification about this — or assignment requirements — with the TA's:*** They are not paid for this and have been instructed to encourage you to go to the instructor for clarifications, hints, and so on, if these things are needed.
- ***Do not split up an assignment*** among members of your group, with the expectation that you can simply merge your answers together immediately before a submission deadline: That rarely results in a submission receiving high marks, leaves students unprepared for tests and future assignments, and increases the risk that an “academic misconduct” investigation, involving ***every*** group member, may be required.

About ChatGPT

Students now have access to a variety of AI-based tools, including **ChatGPT**.

When this tool is used to generate material for this, and other computer science courses, the material that is produced sometimes does not make any sense.

- Students who understand the course material, reasonably well, and who know how to apply it, will often be able to see that ChatGPT's material does not make any sense. They are capable of producing (and submitting) material that is at least as good, without ChatGPT, as they can with this tool.
- Students who do not understand the course material, as well, might not see this. Including ChatGPT's material in their work might result in something that suggests that their understanding of course material is poorer than it really is.
- Thus the use of ChatGPT or similar tools, when working on assignments in this course, is **strongly discouraged**.
- If you do not follow this recommendation, and use any tool like ChatGPT, then **your submission must include a statement that you did this**. This statement must list every tool, like this, that you used, and it must describe what you used this tool to do (in order to start, complete part of, or improve your submission).

Note: Students sometimes try to use tools like this to improve their writing. The University of Calgary provides **Writing Support** that students should consider instead — in order to be better prepared for later courses, advance studies, and their careers.