What is inappropriate collaboration?

Collaboration
Throughout your educational experience, you are encouraged to engage in and benefit from collaboration. At its best, collaboration can lead to greater learning, engagement and development. Unfortunately, it can also be a way to avoid completing work individually when required, and that is when it becomes inappropriate.

Inappropriate Collaboration
There is no single section of the Code of Student Behaviour (“the Code”) dealing with inappropriate collaboration. Depending on the specific facts of a case, applicable sections might include:

- **30.3.2(1) Plagiarism** No Student shall submit the words, ideas, images or data of another person as the Student’s own in any academic writing, essay, thesis, project, assignment, presentation or poster in a course or program of study.

- **30.3.2(2) Cheating (b)** No Student shall represent or attempt to represent him or herself as another or have or attempt to have himself or herself represented by another in the taking of an examination, preparation of a paper or other similar activity. See also misrepresentation in 30.3.6 (4).

- **30.3.2(2) Cheating (c)** No student shall represent another's substantial editorial or compositional assistance on an assignment as the Student's own work.

- **30.3.6(4) Misrepresentation of Facts** No Student shall misrepresent pertinent facts to any member of the University community for the purpose of obtaining academic or other advantage. This includes such acts as the failure to provide pertinent information on an application for admission or the altering of an educational document/transcript. (EXEC 04 MAY 2009)

Defining appropriate collaboration
The line between appropriate and inappropriate collaboration can be confusing. That line is defined by the Instructor on each and every assignment. For example, some assignments must be completed individually. Others are group assignments which require collaboration. Some fall into the grey area in between, and can be perplexing to students who are inclined to work together, especially when Instructors are not explicit about their expectations. If you are at all unsure about how much collaboration is permitted, ask the instructor. Don’t assume you know what is allowed, and be aware that the amount of collaboration permitted may vary from instructor to instructor.

Why is this important?
You receive a grade based on an assessment of your work in each course. Those grades ultimately form your academic record, which is communicated on your transcript. Grades are expected to be an accurate reflection of your performance and mastery of the material. While many workplaces value and expect collaboration, and your Instructors can use assignments to approximate what that might look like in a professional setting, an academic environment only allows for assigning grades to individuals.

It is important to understand when working on group projects that if one student submits plagiarized material for the project, all of the group members may be charged under the Code. Each of you is responsible for any material submitted with your name on it, so all must be vigilant to ensure sources are used and cited properly when engaging in group work.

For more information please contact Student Conduct and Accountability at 780-492-0777, or studentconduct@ualberta.ca.

Please note this publication does not replace or supersede the policies and procedures outlined in the Code of Student Behaviour. In the case of any disagreement, the Code of Student Behaviour takes precedence.