

## Teaching Strategies to Support Academic Integrity Online



As online instructors, we promote & enforce academic integrity through our teaching practices, our technical tools, and our institutional policies (e.g., Mason Honor Code). In this newsletter issue, we will:

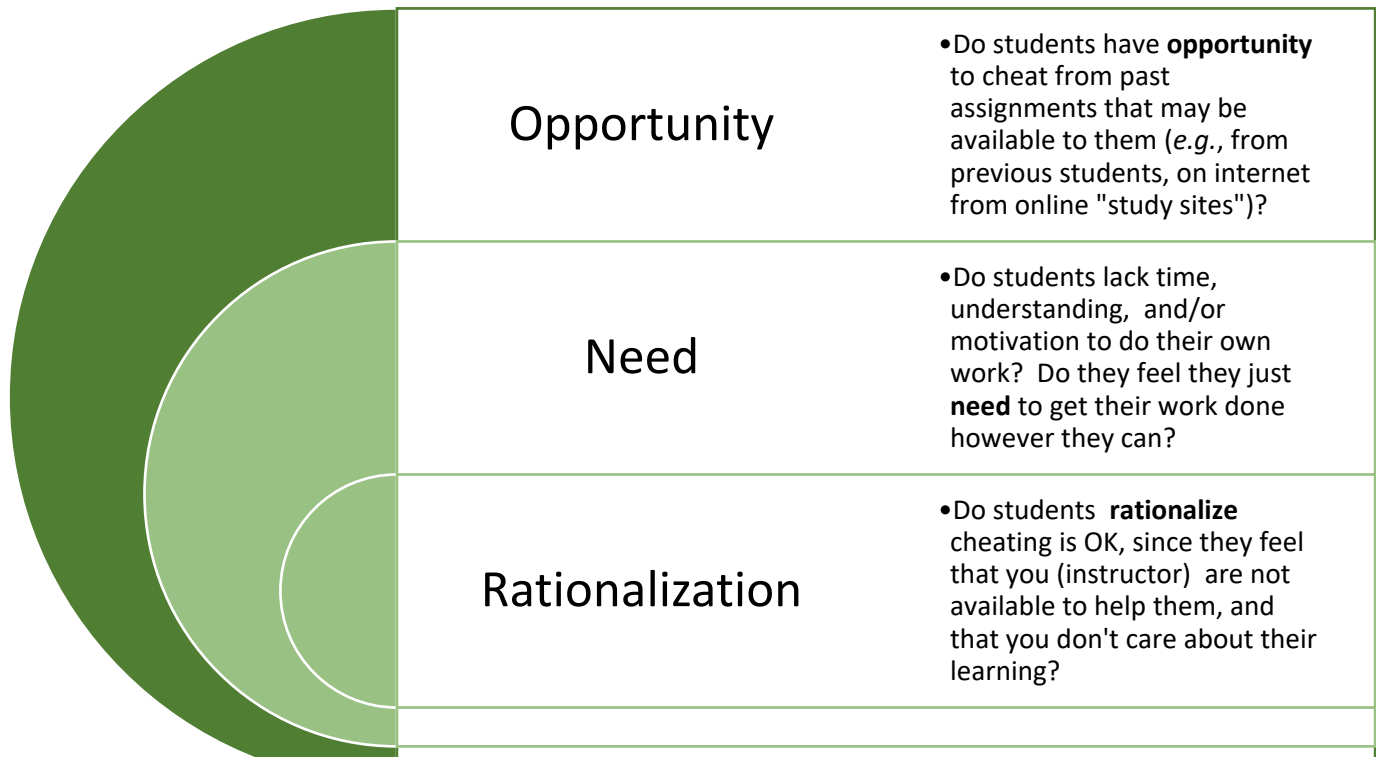
- Consider reasons why students cheat (“[The Cheating Trifecta](#)”).
- Share examples of [teaching strategies](#) to support academic integrity, right from the start of your online course, and throughout the semester.
- Direct you to [Office of Academic Integrity \(OAI\) website](#) for information about Mason’s policies for academic integrity and additional resources.

### Why Do Students Cheat?

Three elements are associated with likelihood of student cheating: **Opportunity**, **Need**, and **Rationalization**. Reflecting on students’ reasons why they cheat may provide you with ideas for teaching strategies for how to reduce cheating in your online course.

### “The Cheating Trifecta”

Adapted from Burlington, C., 2015. [Cheating in Online Courses: the Problem and What to Do About It.](#)



## Strategies to Support Academic Integrity in Your Online Course

Here are some practices to support academic integrity for right from the start of your online course and throughout the semester. Find more tips at [Stearns Center website](#).

**Make Academic Integrity Clear in Your Syllabus.** Include information in your syllabus about the importance of academic integrity. See [Office of Academic Integrity's suggested language](#) to include in your syllabus. Make sure to inform your students of Mason Academic Integrity policies and also course-specific rules for integrity that must be followed. List what materials and resources the students may use during exams and what is expected of them in assignments. Provide clear and detailed rubrics for assignments.

**Have Students Take the Pledge.** Have your students take the [Mason Honor Code pledge](#). Make sure that the pledge has meaning for students. Require students to discuss it first as part of Week 0 or Week 1 activity at the start of the online course, before you ask them to acknowledge or sign it. Have students re-affirm the pledge as part of every major graded assignment and exam.

**Break Up Large Assignments or Projects Into Stages.** Use scaffolding, *i.e.*, breaking up assignments or projects into stages, & stressing the process toward the final product. Guide students through each step, pacing their work & providing them feedback along the way. This will reduce student opportunity, need and rationalization to cheat and plagiarize.

**Reinforce Importance of Academic Honesty for Each Assignment.** Revisit [the Honor Code](#) and reinforce the importance of Academic Integrity for each assignment throughout the course. Provide students with the information, skills and tools that they will need to be successful for each assignment. Discuss common areas of difficulty in the assignments; include tutorials and resources to help students; and direct students to the Writing Center, Mason Libraries and other Mason resources.

## Institutional Policies for Academic Integrity at Mason

Mason's [Office of Academic Integrity \(OAI\)](#) provides detailed information about the Mason Honor Code, as well as resources & strategies to promote academic integrity.

- Read OAI's [Teachable Moments: When to Submit an Academic Integrity Referral](#)
- Review the full text of the [2020-2021 Honor Code](#)
- **Questions?** Please contact Office of Academic Integrity at [oai@gmu.edu](mailto:oai@gmu.edu)
- **Check** with Your Department, Program, College or School. Please consult your Department, Program, College or School to see if there is additional guidance to handle suspected cases of academic dishonesty, *e.g.*, a department or program-specific matrix of sanctions for academic dishonesty.

### Contact Us!

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