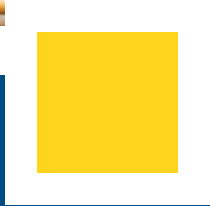
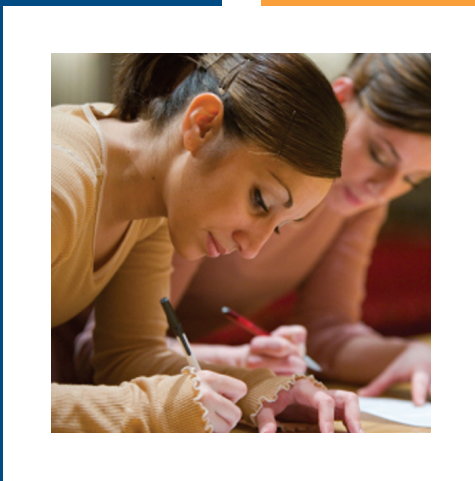
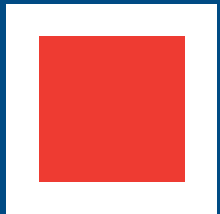


Great Expectations

Clarifying Academic Climate and Conduct Guidelines at NSCC



nscc

Great Expectations

Consistent with NSCC's learning-centered approach, it is clearly in the best interests of all that, early in each student's time at the College, our expectations be presented and discussed with our learners.

ACADEMIC CLIMATE POLICY

Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) is committed to the belief that all students and employees of NSCC have the right and responsibilities to learn and work in a safe environment that is free from discrimination and harassment and that is conducive to learning and teaching. [Academic Policy 4.01]

NSCC is committed to ensuring fair and equitable treatment of all members of its community while maintaining the academic integrity of programs and curriculum, and an academic climate conducive to learning, free from disruptive or inappropriate behaviour. [Academic Policy 8.02]

POLICY ON DISCRIMINATION AND HARASSMENT

NSCC endeavours at all times to provide a supportive working and learning environment and to ensure the equitable treatment of all members of its community. [Human Resources Policy 4.01] Interaction between members of the College is based on the mutual respect, trust, co-operation and understanding inherent in an adult learning community.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The code of conduct determines that all persons accessing NSCC facilities, including employees, students, and the general public, are required to conduct themselves in a manner which does not disrupt the legitimate academic and/or business activities of the College. To support this academic climate, it is expected that all persons will respect the personal and property rights of individuals and of the college, and that all persons will conduct themselves in accordance with the law of the land and all commonly accepted conventions of behaviour. [Academic Policy 4.02]

DISRUPTIVE CONDUCT

NSCC defines disruptive conduct as any behaviour that is prejudicial (a) to the rights of students to benefit from instruction or services provided by the College, (b) to the rights and functions of employees of the College, or (c) to the rights and functions of third parties who are engaged in helping the College achieve its educational objectives.

Behaviours which insult the personal dignity of others (including harassment, discrimination, violence, threat of violence, and/or any other threatening behaviour) are contrary to the values of the Nova Scotia Community College. The College has the authority to take appropriate action in instances of departure from the expected standard of behaviour. [Academic Policy 4.03] The range of such actions includes reprimands, restricted privileges, short term (up to five days) suspension, and dismissal from the College, and possible referral to police agencies for further action.

WHAT DOES ALL THIS MEAN?

It means that we have great expectations of you – about how we interact with each other in the College. Possibly the best informal guideline to follow is to think about the behaviour that is appropriate to professional workplace environments.

Our expectations in this code of conduct apply to all Campus activities, inside and outside the classroom, and include participants in all Campus/College sponsored or sanctioned activities on and off Campus. All members of the College are reminded to think carefully about how they portray themselves or others and/or represent the College in communication and social networking vehicles such as YouTube, Face Book, MySpace, or blogs to which employers and the general public have access.

WHAT IS A “SAFE” ENVIRONMENT?

A safe environment is simply one where everyone can feel safe, one where the above values are honoured and practiced, one that is inclusive of all and where no distinctions are made based on age, race, colour, sex, religion, creed, aboriginal origin, marital status, physical disability, mental disability, source of income, sexual orientation, family status, political belief, affiliation-, or activity [for more information see Human Resources Policy 4.02]. We all thrive in an atmosphere where we are respected and our policy insists on respectful behaviour, regardless of our personal biases.

Most of us can picture the features of a physically safe environment. The socially safe environment is non-threatening. It respects the various comfort levels of its members and it is sensitive to avoid activities that alienate others. It recognizes that words or language, and jokes can hurt as much as a physical assault and cause learners to ‘shut down’ thereby denying them the comfort level they require to fully participate and learn.

HOW SHOULD I ADDRESS INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR IF I ENCOUNTER IT?

Ideally, as long as you feel at ease doing it, we ask that you find a time to quietly let the other person(s) know that an action or behaviour makes you uncomfortable. Most of us would rather hear directly from a peer than from a third party. Keeping an attitude of being open to feedback makes it easier for others to give us feedback. This process also ensures that other people - students and staff - understand our belief in a healthy and safe work environment as promoted by NSCC. Communication is a two-way street. If this problem solving mode does not work, speak to your faculty member or a staff member of the Centre for Student Success (CSS).

HOW DOES NSCC ADDRESS INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR?

As noted above, the College has the authority to take appropriate action in instances of departure

from the expected standard of behaviour. [Academic Policy 4.03] The range of such actions includes reprimands, restricted privileges, and short-term (up to five days) suspension, dismissal from the College, and possible referral to police agencies for further action.

Reprimand - a reprimand will be given to the student in the form of an Incident Report, and a copy placed in the student’s file. This action may be initiated by an Academic Chair, a Team Leader, or other campus administrator, as appropriate.

Restricted Privileges - Restricted privileges will be described in detail, and given to the student in writing. A copy of this statement will be placed in the student’s file, and will also be distributed to any personnel directly affected by such restrictions. An example would be restriction of computer privileges for violation of the Policy on Computer Facilities/Internet Usage. Restricted privileges may be initiated by an Academic Chair, a Team Leader, or other campus administrator, as appropriate.

Suspension - A student may be suspended from a course, a program, or from campus for a period of up to five days. The details of such a suspension will be clearly stated in writing. Anyone who has been asked to leave a campus location would not be able to return to that location until the matter has been resolved. [Academic Policy 4.04]

Criminal Offenses - All offenses while under the jurisdiction of the College and which are subject to the Criminal Code of Canada will be referred directly to the appropriate judicial authorities. This would not, however, exclude the possibility of further action at the Campus or College level.

WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A STUDENT?

As an NSCC student you have the right to see in writing the details of any report that alleges inappropriate behaviour on your part. NSCC uses the Academic/Campus Incident Report Form to document incidents both inside the classroom/lab and on campus in general. This form outlines a process where the student receives a copy of the

report and is invited to discuss it (and the possible implications) with a member of the staff in the CSS. There is always an opportunity for the student to reply to an allegation and state his/her account of the event(s). [Academic Policy 4.04 (3)]

WHAT IF I DON'T AGREE WITH AN INCIDENT REPORT ON ME?

NSSC follows a dispute resolution model focused on mediation. If you disagree with an assessment or believe that a decision affecting you violates published College policy, you may appeal that decision. In all cases the informal procedures must be followed prior to filing a formal appeal. [Academic Policy 8.03] For further information about the academic policies and procedures under which the College operates, or to find out more about the Appeal Policy, contact the CSS at your Campus.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CONDUCTS THAT HAVE OR COULD RESULT IN A REPRIMAND OR MORE SERIOUS ACTION AT NSSC?

The following list is not intended to be exhaustive; rather, it is provided to give an idea of some specific areas where we have expectations:

Any behaviour, verbal or physical, which insults the personal dignity of others – including harassment, discrimination, violence, threat of violence, and/or any other threatening behaviour – are contrary to NSSC philosophy and conventions and are prohibited.

Disturbance: individual or group **conduct detrimental to the learning environment** either in the classroom or at any time and place when under the jurisdiction of the College is prohibited.

General Conduct: Use of **obscene or abusive language**, inappropriate commentary, or otherwise showing disrespect to any member of the College Community is prohibited, both inside and outside the classroom.

Possession, use or sale of **illegal drugs** on College property is prohibited.

The possession or use of **alcoholic beverages** on College property is prohibited except in licensed areas.

Attending Campus when **inebriated or high** is unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action. Staff is under no obligation to provide services in such situations.

Gambling is prohibited on College property.

Smoking in all areas of the College – in Campus buildings and on all College property is prohibited.

Vandalism by any individual or group act leading to the defacement or destruction of College property is prohibited.

Loss of College property through **carelessness or negligence** is an offence. The individual or group responsible for such loss will replace the assessed value of such property.

Among the behaviours which have recently become more and more intrusive are the use of **cell phones, PDAs, iPods, and other such devices** in the lab, shop and classroom setting. Cell phones and other devices should be turned off during class and texting left to non-class times.

Parking: The College endeavours to provide a reasonable amount of parking space for students; however, no attempt has been made to provide parking for every student, and no student may claim a parking space by right. Parking in unauthorized areas may lead to ticketing and/or towing.

WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THESE PROCEDURES?

All faculty and staff are advocates for fair process. One of the roles played by staff in the Centre for Student Success at each campus is to assist students in understanding expectations and procedures at the College. If you want to discuss a specific issue you will find that CSS staff respect confidentiality and are able to help students plan a course of action.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY – WHAT IS IT?

NSCC takes seriously the responsibility to make certain that the marks students achieve are determined fairly and truly represent the knowledge and skill level of the learner. When academic misconduct (such as cheating and plagiarism) occurs it interferes with our ability to meet this responsibility. Academic misconduct undermines the trust placed in us by the public – and as a public institution we are accountable to uphold that trust.

WHAT CONSTITUTES ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT AT NSCC?

Here's our policy:

5.04 ACADEMIC HONESTY Academic honesty and integrity are highly valued at the College as being essential to students as both learners and as potential members of their chosen occupations. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- (1) Cheating on tests, assignments, or reports;*
- (2) Plagiarism, which is defined as the act of presenting creative and intellectual materials of another as one's own work. This is to be distinguished from collaboration and cooperation on a group assignment;*
- (3) Theft of materials;*
- (4) purchase, sale, or possession of stolen materials;*
- (5) Purchase or sale of materials used for the purpose of misleading or to obtain an unfair advantage;*
- (6) Use of unlicensed software;*

(7) Dishonesty in any way when representing the College as a student of the College.

Are there specific definitions that a student should know?

NSCC doesn't have specific definitions within the policy, but the definitions are pretty much universal. Here's how a sister institution, Red River College in Winnipeg puts it: [note that the Institution is given credit below]

Plagiarism – using words, ideas, data, or product without appropriate acknowledgement, such as copying or presenting the words, ideas, theories of another person as one's own or working jointly on a project and then submitting it as one's own.

Cheating – the use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information, or study aids; or an act of deceit by which a learner attempts to misrepresent academic skills or knowledge; unauthorized copying or collaboration.

Fabrication – intentional misrepresentation or invention of any information, such as falsifying research, inventing or exaggerating data, or listing incorrect or fictitious references.

Collusion – assisting another to commit an act of academic dishonesty, such as paying or bribing someone to acquire a test or assignment, taking a test or doing an assignment for someone else, or allowing someone to do these things for one's own benefit.

Academic Misconduct – the intentional violation of college academic policies, such as tampering with grades; misrepresenting one's identity, or taking part in obtaining or distributing any part of a test or any information about a test. [RRC Policies & Procedures: Academic Integrity, March 2003, pp 1-2]

ARE THERE OTHER ACTIONS THAT FALL UNDER ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT?

Two other main areas learners should be aware of are Copyright infringement and infractions under NSCC's Computer Usage Policy. Both are

covered in the Student Handbook. It is important that students make the effort to be fully aware of all kinds of misconduct. A student who does not understand plagiarism could unknowingly fail to give credit for an information source; unfortunately ignorance is not a great excuse and the consequences are still serious.

IS IT TRUE THAT A STUDENT COULD BE DISMISSED FROM NSCC FOR ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT?

In the direct words of NSCC Policy:
The College considers... academic dishonesty to be a serious offence. Instances of academic dishonesty will result in automatic failure for the piece of work involved. Further disciplinary action may be taken and may range from a formal written warning or temporary suspension for first-time offences to dismissal from the program for repeat offences. [Academic Policy 5:04]

WHAT IS THE PROCESS IF I AM BEING REPORTED FOR PLAGIARISM OR CHEATING OR OTHER ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT?

An NSCC Academic/Campus Incident Report Form is completed by the faculty or staff member involved and includes a recommended action (such as failure of the piece of work). You will be provided with a copy of the completed form and the opportunity and assistance to respond to any allegation. Ultimately, such academic decisions can be appealed. Usually, however, we work co-operatively, through mediation if necessary, to resolve issues. The record of an academic offence stays with you during your time in the College.

PEOPLE DOWNLOAD 'STUFF' FROM THE INTERNET ALL THE TIME – IS THAT PLAGIARISM?

The internet provides invaluable access to a massive world of knowledge. Using this material as a learning tool is fine; the issue is that if you pass off any of the material as yours, or use it in any way – without clearly noting the source – that's dishonest. Ask your faculty for examples of how to

properly cite material from the Internet. You should also know that, thanks to the Internet, there are now powerful search engines that assist faculty in identifying the source of plagiarised material.

WHAT ASSISTANCE CAN MY CAMPUS LIBRARY PROVIDE?

Our NSCC libraries offer a great source of assistance: just ask. For example, the library website presents a general overview on how to do research; shows how to cite with lots of real examples; and, when it comes to plagiarism and just what could be covered www.indiana.edu/~istd/test.html provides terrific information.

SO WHAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE – WHAT DOES NSCC EXPECT FROM ME?

We expect that you will manage your learning life in such a way as to maximize the extraordinary opportunity for learning that being an NSCC student presents. Take charge of your learning – not just to get by, but to excel in your chosen area. If you get behind in your work, or if life circumstances such as family issues, finances, transportation or health problems, to name but a few, are making your life complicated, we expect that you will just ask for help. Staff members are comfortable supporting students who are experiencing difficulties. We can help you find approaches and possible solutions that will enable you to maintain your personal dignity and integrity – really this too is what a Learning College is. See your faculty member, Academic Chair or staff in the Centre for Student Success for advice.