



Academic Integrity for International Students

CROSS-CULTURAL INSIGHTS

Grading at Curtis and Course Credit – Because grading structures differ from culture to culture, you may not understand **the term** “GPA” – *grade point average* and how the GPA is calculated. Similarly, you may be unfamiliar with course credits, how the number of course credits for a particular class is determined. Speak with your teacher to find out how they grade. To better understand your overall Grade Point Average, make an appointment to speak with the Registrar, Darin Kelly. Mr. Kelly can help you understand the letter system in comparison to using numbers for grades.

Interacting with Your Teachers – Back home, your relationship with your instructor might be more formal than what you will likely experience here in the U.S. You might be more accustomed to taking notes and dictation of what your teacher lectures or explains what you need to know rather than taking questions and engaging you in conversation. This might feel strange at first but in time you will be able to engage in informal dialog with teachers and meet in social settings with ease and comfort. It is very common for students to make appointments with teachers to meet and talk about assignments, papers, tests, or any aspects of the course, **so don't be shy**.

Study Groups and Working Together – Learning is not a competition. Here in the U.S. students are encouraged to work on projects together, study in groups, and collaborate. In so doing, students gain a deeper, shared understanding. In general, students perform better on tests when they study together.

What is a syllabus? The *syllabus* outlines and describes the subjects you will cover in the course. The teacher provides all students with a syllabus and it usually includes a description of the course, information on tests, papers, grading, dates, attendance, and basically everything that is expected of you. Ask your teacher to spend a few minutes with you to go over the syllabus to help you make certain that you understand the expectations for the course.

Academic Integrity - Read over the syllabus especially the reference to *academic integrity* and *academic honesty* in the class. If you are not sure of the meaning ask your teacher for clarification. Discuss the meaning of plagiarism, cheating, or aiding another student in academic dishonesty. Make sure you understand the consequences and sanctions for academic dishonesty. Read the Curtis Student Code of Conduct. Ask your teacher, the Dean, another student, or a member of the Library Staff. We are here to help you.

Writing, Citing, Paraphrasing – In some cultures to *paraphrase* or *cite* and include sources is considered disrespectful. Paraphrasing might be difficult at first but with time and helpful resources

this writing style will become easier for you. Again, ask for help. When writing papers it is critical that you understand the importance of academic citing – what does it mean to cite? Citing is a quote from a book, article, or an author that acts as evidence or giving credit to the person who said or wrote the passage. You may come from a cultural background where paraphrasing is considered disrespectful. In other cultures, citing word-for-word without mentioning sources might indicate a level of respect to the author whereas changing the author’s text may be judged as disrespectful.

Make sure you know the teacher’s required citation style. First check the syllabus and if you’re not sure, ask the teacher. If you are assigned a paper to write it is good idea to **share what you’ve written** with your teacher in the early stages of your writing. Teachers are most willing to give you feedback and offer encouragement. Their guidance is beneficial to ensure your clear understanding of the assignment. Most important, they can help you with paraphrasing and citing your sources to avoid the potential for plagiarism.

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Curtis Student Code of Conduct - provides detailed information on the Academic Honesty Policy. It also covers the processes, procedures, and sanctions for violations of the policy including *plagiarism, cheating, and receiving and/or providing unauthorized assistance on exams, essays, composition projects, or harmony, counterpoint, or solfege homework*. Take time to read and take responsibility for understanding the Code of Conduct. The Code is also available online on the Curtis Portal.

Rock Resource Center - The Library Staff will provide you with suggestions and citation resources and will help with instruction and guidance on paraphrasing. They can assist you with writing papers, grammar, and explain the various citation standards as well, such as *Chicago style, MLA, APA*, etc.

English as a Second Language (ESL) and Cultural Differences – If you need assistance with writing in English and understanding the cultural nuances when writing in the language of a culture other than your own our ESL instructor, Ms. Mei Lu is on campus every weekday. Check with Ms. Lu to arrange for a mutually convenient time to meet. She is happy to help you. You do not need to be enrolled in Ms. Lu’s ESL classes to ask and receive her assistance.

