

Case* #6: Falsified Lab Report

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Allegation: In an individual lab assignment, a student made up information for a lab report after not successfully performing the experiment. The instructor felt that this constituted falsification. According to section 5.16.1 of the university's Academic Calendar, this is defined as: "Falsifying academic records, including tests and examinations, or submitting false credentials for purpose of gaining admission to a program or course, or for any other purpose."

Background: According to the Report on Academic Misconduct, the course instructor found that the student's lab assignment was extremely close to theory and suspected that Student A had not completed the required experiment. The student accused is currently a third year student in a third year course. This is the student's first offence and the assignment is worth 10% of the final grade. Because this assignment is worth less than 25% and is therefore a lesser offence, the instructor dealt with the allegation personally (rather than sending it to the Academic Integrity Committee). The student admitted to falsifying lab results because she did not fully understand the material or how to conduct the experiment.

Decision: The instructor decided to allow the student to re-do the experiment and re-submit the report. The instructor also required the student to go to the Student Learning Centre for extra help.

Rationale: Because it was a first time offence and the student was sincere in her apology and explanation, the professor decided that the student would learn more from having to do the work a second time rather than imposing a grade deduction or failing the assignment. The student was reminded that any subsequent offences would result in a more severe penalty.

*Case studies are based on examples of common problems with academic misconduct. All names and identifying information have been removed.