



Unauthorised Academic File Sharing - Guidance for UCD Faculty

Across the sector, university teaching materials including academic lecture notes, assessment tasks, answers and responses (“**UCD Academic Material**”) are increasingly being discovered on document sharing websites (“**File Sharing Sites**”). Under the [UCD Academic Integrity Policy](#) file sharing is not permitted and is specifically identified as a serious form of academic misconduct. Furthermore, such activity is a breach of copyright. It is important that faculty are careful in safeguarding their own copyright, and where they use third party material that it is appropriately acknowledged. Incidents of file sharing of UCD Academic Material can be reported as an alleged breach of the [Student Code of Conduct](#) and the Academic Integrity Policy under the [Student Discipline Procedure](#).

Where a student who has uploaded material is identifiable faculty may report the matter by submitting a [Student Misconduct Incident Report](#) Form to student.conduct@ucd.ie. The relevant form and a [Guide to Completing the Student Misconduct Incident Report](#) is available at the following webpage: <https://www.ucd.ie/secca/studentconduct>.

This document provides guidance on how to protect copyright and supports colleagues to start the process of removing UCD Academic Material from File Sharing Sites.

1. Be clear with students

Students should be made aware of the implications of sharing UCD Academic Materials on such File Sharing Sites. Guidelines for Students are provided [here](#). You may wish to include a notice in your module on Brightspace such as:

“My lectures and course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, tests, outlines, and similar materials, are protected by copyright. I am the exclusive owner of copyright in those materials I create. You may take notes and make copies of course materials for your own use, but you may not allow others to reproduce or distribute lecture notes, course materials, case studies publicly without my express written consent.”

2. Use a copyright notice

A copyright notice can be included on your materials. The form of the notice should contain the word copyright or the © symbol, the year the materials were created (multiple years may be listed when new material is added in different years) and the name of the faculty member. You may want to add statements such as “All rights reserved” or “Authorisation is given to students enrolled in the course to reproduce this material exclusively for their own personal use.” You may also want to include your email address and indicate that permission requests should be directed in writing via email to you. You can also warn students that sharing copyrighted course materials on a commercial website that they are violating [UCD’s Academic Integrity Policy](#). Further guidance on issues relating to copyright can be found on the UCD Library Guides: [Copyright Basics](#) and on the UCD Teaching and Learning webpage on [how to support your students’ academic integrity literacy](#).

3. Assessment

It is important that faculty refresh assessment strategies regularly so that previous assessments available on these sites in effect become redundant. UCD Teaching and Learning offer a range of resources and support on designing, developing and reviewing your [assessment and feedback approaches](#) which are available to all faculty in UCD.

4. Filtering tools

Many of File Sharing Sites contain filtering tools. [Course Hero has provided guidance](#) indicating that its tool will generally prevent the upload of documents that contain the following statement “**This content is protected and may not be shared, uploaded, or distributed.**” Inclusion of this statement in your materials, in the header or footer of course materials, will help to protect your documents from being uploaded onto some File Sharing Sites.