

CS16 Collaboration Policy

Spring 2009

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In addition to Brown University's rules, CS 16 has its own policy on student collaboration. This document explains the CS 16 collaboration policy in detail and provides specific examples of allowed and forbidden types of collaboration. We expect you to read carefully and understand this document, and to use good judgment in applying it. Please consult Spike or a Head TA in case of doubt as to what is allowed, or if you have a special situation. Note that you may neither give nor receive prohibited kinds of help. Helping someone cheat is just as bad as cheating for yourself. You should also be aware that your computer account may be monitored and your files and email may be examined as part of the investigation of a suspected violation. ***If you violate this policy, you may be subject to disciplinary action by the University.***

In the rest of this document, **CS 16 Staff** means Spike and the CS 16 Teaching Assistants and **course material** means anything covered in the lectures, the slides, the book, and the help sessions. In general, discussion of the course material with anyone is permitted. The collaboration policy for assignments is different for each type of assignment, as indicated below.

Homeworks: You are allowed to discuss any aspect of homeworks with the CS 16 Staff, university-appointed tutors, and other CS16 students. You must thoroughly understand the solutions that you turn in and you must write them individually.

To clarify:

- While writing up your solutions, you may not talk about or discuss them with anyone else.
- While writing up your solutions, you may not consult notes taken during discussion.
- You may not take away any notes of *any kind* written during discussion after that discussion has ended.
- You may not copy solutions that someone else has written up.
- You may not copy solutions written up in previous years

The CS 16 Staff reserves the right to talk to you about the work you hand in, to make sure you fully understand it.

Some examples of situations that are not allowed:

1. You and a friend discuss a solution on a whiteboard. It would be against the collaboration policy if you remained in front of the whiteboard as you wrote up the solutions.
2. You and a friend discuss a solution on paper. It would be against the collaboration policy if you then took those notes home with you and used them to write up the solutions.
3. You are working in the hallway, waiting for TA hours. It would be against the collaboration policy if, while writing up your solutions, you discussed your answers with anyone else.

Collaboration is a great way to learn from and with your peers. However it is equally important that collaboration be educational, and not simply an easy way to get the answer. It is for these reasons that we will be enforcing this collaboration policy.

Exams: During Exams, you may not give or receive assistance from anyone but the CS16 Staff, however they will only answer clarification questions. In preparing for an exam, the rules for homework apply. You are encouraged to work together to prepare for exams.

Programming Assignments: You may discuss programming assignments only with the CS 16 Staff. Discussion of programming assignments with anyone else is forbidden. In particular, the following are examples of forbidden activities:

- Examining another student’s code or allowing anyone to examine your code.
- Helping another student to debug code, or getting debugging help from a student or tutor.
- Getting or giving help in coding or pseudocoding tests for a program.
- Working together to write pseudocode.
- Asking another student questions such as “Should I have a parent reference in Program 2?” or “How do I implement the graph data structure in Program 4?”
- Answering the question “How do I print out my queue in the assignment?” with code, like the following:

```
Position p = S.first();  
while(p!=S.last) {  
  ...  
}
```
- Copying code written for previous years

However, you may still discuss with other students course material related to programming assignments. For example:

1. If the book has pseudocode for an algorithm and a programming assignment asks you to implement that algorithm in Java, you can discuss the pseudocode and the running time of the algorithm, but you are not allowed to discuss the translation of that algorithm from pseudocode to Java code.
2. If the slides have pictures of a data structure and a programming assignment asks you to implement the data structure in Java, you can discuss how the pictures represent the data structure, but you are not allowed to discuss how to implement the data structure by means of Java classes.

The following table summarizes the collaboration policy:

	CS 16 Staff	Tutors/CS 16 Students	Others
course material	Yes	Yes	Yes
homeworks	Yes	Yes	No
exams	Yes	No	No
programs	Yes	No	No

Table 1: Discussions allowed by the CS16 collaboration policy.