Academic Integrity Matters

Types of Academic Misconduct and steps you can take to avoid cheating

Name
Role
Date
Agenda

1. Types of Academic Misconduct
   1. Plagiarism
   2. Self-Plagiarism
   3. Collusion
   4. Contract Cheating

2. Warning: Copyright Law

3. Why do some students resort to ‘cheating’? Common issues

4. Under pressure? Mitigating Circumstances

5. Tips on how to avoid cheating and links to student guides
Types of Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of taking the ideas, writings or inventions of another person and using these as if they were your own, **whether intentionally or not**. Plagiarism occurs where there is no acknowledgement that the writings, or ideas, belong to or have come from another source.

**Plagiarism is intellectual theft and is a major offence.**

Make sure you understand how to properly reference and acknowledge the work of others:

[Library and Referencing skills](#)
Types of Academic Misconduct: Self-Plagiarism

Self-Plagiarism is the act of reusing work that you have already submitted for assessment at HWU or any other institution. It can involve re-submitting an entire assignment, copying or paraphrasing content, or recycling data, whether intentionally or not.
Collusion is when students work together in a deceitful way to develop a submission for an assessment where such input is not permitted. This includes, but is not limited to, being part of any discussion, or having visibility of, assessment on any social media.

This includes supporting academic misconduct of another student, for example by allowing one’s work to be copied or submitted for assessment by another.
Contract Cheating

Contract cheating is when a student submits work for assessment where they have used one or more of a range of services provided by third parties such that there is reasonable doubt as to whose work the assessment represents.

You do not need to exchange money or hold a contract.

Examples include using online services and forums to receive answers from posted assessment questions.

Contract Cheating is intellectual theft and is a major offence.

Essay mill: An organisation or individual, usually with a web presence, that contracts with students to complete an assignment or assignments for a fee.
Warning: Copyright Law

All Heriot-Watt learning materials are subject to copyright law

- Does not require visibility of the copyright symbol
- Includes: lecture notes & videos, assessments, feedback, experiments, worksheets, tutorials, audio files, etc

If you upload any materials to any public forum, that action in itself can be a disciplinary offense
It may also be subject to legal action under standard copyright law
Why do some students resort to cheating and how can you avoid it?

Common reasons given by students:
1. The opportunity was there!
2. Desire for top grades “At all costs”
3. Time demands and poor time management
4. Pressure – many sources

If pressures are due to circumstances out of your control then there is a University Process to help ..........
Mitigating Circumstances

University level policy to cover any absences from study or assessment.

“Circumstances which, through no fault of the student, mean that the assessment (whether examinations or other types of assessment) has not accurately measured the student’s ability or else could not be completed in a timely manner. Such circumstances are unfair to the student/s and are not an accurate representation of the expected level of performance.”

https://www.hw.ac.uk/students/studies/examinations/mitigating-circumstances.htm
Mitigating Circumstances: Process

Speak to Your Personal Tutor
• And/or student wellbeing, course leader, etc

Complete the online MC Form
• Include and upload copies of evidence

Paperwork is reviewed for validity
• An admin level check for evidence, completeness

MC reviewed by Committee
• Student informed of Accept or Reject decision

The Exam Board agrees mitigation
• How the student’s circumstances will be mitigated
Some tips on avoiding academic misconduct

1. **Do ensure you understand the types of academic misconduct:** Read the University’s [Policy on Academic Integrity in Assessment](#).

2. **Do not seek assistance from anyone else** to complete any part of your assessed work.

3. **Do not be tempted to ‘Google’ or search for an assessment or open-book exam question online.**

4. **Do not share, upload, or post any of your assessed work** (pre or post-submission) via any platform e.g., a third-party website, social media platform, email, etc.

5. **Do improve your study skills.** To avoid engaging in any form of academic misconduct, including contract cheating, the University offers a wide range of [skills development](#) opportunities on campus, and [online](#).

6. **Do brush up on referencing and citation.** Go to the ‘[Skills Hub](#)’ and view the resources on citation and referencing.

**Never allow external pressure to tempt you to cheat in an assessment**

Apply for Mitigating Circumstances when, through no fault of your own, you are unable to engage in your assessment. If you are unable to engage effectively with any assessed work due to events that are no fault of your own, then you should apply for Mitigating Circumstances (MCs).

You can find full details of the circumstances that HWU rejects/accepts for mitigation [HERE](#) and instructions on how to apply for MCs [HERE](#).
Help us to protect the value of your degree.

If you know of anyone engaged in cheating please contact in confidence the University Student Conduct Office (conduct@hw.ac.uk) or the Student Advice Hub (advice.hub@hw.ac.uk)

Any questions or comments

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