

How to Avoid Academic Misconduct in Take Home Open Book Exams



Academic Integrity Matters

Unlike a traditional unseen exam, a Take Home Open Book Exam is not invigilated: there is no-one from HWU watching over you. Nevertheless, it is essential that you practice proper academic and professional conduct, and act with integrity and honesty. This means that you must complete the exam yourself, using your own words and without consulting with anyone else during the exam period.

At HWU we adopt the International Centre for Academic Integrity (ICAI) definition of Academic Integrity: *'a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage'*. Failure to act with integrity during a take home exam demonstrates a lack of these fundamental qualities, qualities that we value highly at HWU, as do your future employers. For your own sake it is vital that you and your peers uphold these values and avoid all types of academic misconduct.

Guidance on how to avoid Academic Misconduct

- 1. Understand Academic Misconduct.** Read the University [Policy on Academic Integrity in Assessment](#). Ensure that you understand the four types of academic misconduct: Plagiarism, Self-Plagiarism, Collusion and Contract Cheating, they all apply equally to Take Home Exams as they do to assessed coursework. It is your responsibility to access, read, and understand this policy – ignorance is not an acceptable excuse.
- 2. Help us to protect the value of your degree.** If you have been approached by someone about, or you know of someone engaged in, an act of potential academic misconduct, please contact in confidence the University Student Conduct Office (conduct@hw.ac.uk) or the Student Advice Hub (advice.hub@hw.ac.uk)
- 3. Revise for the Exam.** Although the exam is open book, you should revise as if it were a closed book exam. As you revise, prepare your revision notes as normal, bookmark relevant articles and book chapters, ensure you understand the theories, concepts, methods, etc. Good preparation and revision, leading to sound knowledge and understanding, will give you the confidence to write in your own words and avoid the pressures that often lead to academic misconduct.
- 4. Avoid unintentional Plagiarism.** In taking the open book exam, you are allowed to consult any notes that you've made during the course, your revision notes and any of the course materials, such as lecture notes and recordings. If you are not diligent then this can result in plagiarism. For example, if the course notes or revision notes you have prepared include sentences extracted from the work of others, e.g., books, journal articles, websites, recorded lecture transcripts, and you have then forgotten that your notes are not entirely written in your own words, then you may end up reproducing the words of others in your exam submission without proper acknowledgement. Even if this is unintentional, this is classified as plagiarism.

5. **Avoid Self-Plagiarism.** In taking the open book exam, you can refer back to any of your previous assessments. Don't be tempted to copy any of your own words from any of your own previous assessment submissions on any course, from any year, or even a different institution; this is self-plagiarism.
6. **Avoid Plagiarism.** In taking the open book exam, you can access any books or articles as well as the internet. Do not copy the words of others from any of these sources. Use your own words. If you feel it is useful to quote the words from a book, article or relevant website, then you must cite the original author and provide the correct reference, following the correct method. This applies equally to essay-based and numeracy-based exams. If in doubt about referencing, then you should go to the '[Skills Hub](#)' and view the resources on citation and referencing.
7. **Avoid Collusion:** Do not discuss the exam questions or answers with anyone else (including on social media and messaging services). Do not share your questions or answers with anyone via any media (including on social media and on messaging services) even if others promise not to copy your work. Even if you have done all the work on your own, if you share all or part of it with others, it will be treated as collusion.
8. **Avoid Contract Cheating.** Do not be tempted to 'google' or search for an exam question online. If you access an online service (e.g. an 'essay mill') to upload a question OR to look at an answer, you run the risk of being detected and therefore suspected of contract cheating, even if you do not copy the answer into your exam submission. Do not seek assistance from anyone else to complete any part of your exam. Whether you pay someone or not, whether there is a contract or not, if you submit the work of a third party as your own then this is contract cheating.
9. **Unable to write the exam? Apply for Mitigating Circumstances:** If you are unable to engage with or write the exam due to events that are no fault of your own you should apply for Mitigating Circumstances (MC). Never resort to cheating, it is far better to take the exam at the next opportunity. You can find full details of the mitigating circumstances that HWU rejects/accepts in this [Mitigation Circumstances Guide](#) and instructions on how to apply for MCs on the [Mitigating Circumstances webpage](#).

Consequences of Academic Misconduct

Please be aware that the University uses sophisticated detection processes, including, but not limited to, Turnitin detection software, website searches and agreements with online services to provide us with upload and download data should our exam questions or similar appear on their websites. University staff use many resources to check that exam submissions do not draw from the work of others in an inappropriate way. If staff suspect that you have colluded with other students, or you have copied from another's work, or you have asked or paid for a third party to help you complete the exam, or any other breach of academic integrity, then this will be investigated and all suspected cases will be taken forward as a potential disciplinary matter through the University's [Disciplinary Procedures](#).

Recent academic misconduct cases have led to exam/assessment results being voided, i.e. a mark of zero is awarded and Invalid Grade (IG) recorded on your transcript (this stays on your HWU record) and expulsion from the University without the opportunity for an award (for the most severe cases). The University's response to evidence of plagiarism can be found on the [Plagiarism webpage](#).