How to Avoid Academic Misconduct in Timed Online Coursework (TOC)

Academic Integrity Matters

A final Timed Online Coursework (TOC) is a time limited individual assessment that is scheduled during the Exam and Assessment diet. Unlike a final examination, TOC are not invigilated and you can complete the coursework in a location of your choice, 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 assessment yourself, using your own words and without contracting third party assistance or colluding with anyone else during the assessment 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 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 what is 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 Assessment 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](mailto:conduct@hw.ac.uk)) or the Student Advice Hub ([advice.hub@hw.ac.uk](mailto:advice.hub@hw.ac.uk)).

3. **Prepare for the Assessment.** Although the Timed Online Coursework is open book it is time limited, and therefore you will need to prepare in advance. Good preparation leading to sound knowledge and understanding will give you the confidence to write in your own words and avoid the pressures that so often lead to academic misconduct.

4. **Avoid Plagiarism.** During the time period of the online assessment, 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 assessment. If in doubt about referencing, then you should go to the ‘Skills Hub’ and view the resources on citation and referencing.

5. **Avoid unintentional Plagiarism.** During the assessment, you are allowed to consult any notes that you’ve made during the course, 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 you have
prepared include sentences extracted from the work of others, e.g., books, journal articles, websites, 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 submission without proper acknowledgement. Even if this is unintentional, this is classified as plagiarism.

6. **Avoid Self-Plagiarism.** In taking the online assessment, 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.

7. **Avoid Collusion:** Do not discuss the assessment 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 a question or answer 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 submission. Do not seek assistance from anyone else to complete any part of your assessment. 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 assessment? Apply for Mitigating Circumstances:** If you are unable to engage with the take home assessment 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 assessment at the next opportunity rather than end up with an Invalid Grade (IG) on your degree transcript. 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 assessment questions or similar appear on their websites. University staff use many resources to check that your 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 coursework, 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 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.