

Academic integrity – brief guide for students

Chapter 1 - Introduction

Welcome to this brief guide to academic integrity. By following the chapters, we will briefly consider the nature of academic integrity and explain some key definitions. Academic integrity is fundamental to ensuring the standards, quality, and reputation of any qualifications you gain and for the UK higher education sector. The University takes academic integrity seriously and is signed up to the [UK Academic Integrity Charter](#).

As a student at Wrexham University, you are joining and will be contributing to, an academic community. This brings with it the expectation that you will adopt the values of academic integrity; principles that should guide your learning and academic writing. These include:

- Honesty – you are open about where your ideas come from, and give formal credit;
- Fairness – you submit your own original work and don't attempt to gain an advantage through the use of unfair means;
- Responsibility – you are responsible for your own learning, taking an active role in knowing what is expected of you, and have an understanding of academic requirements;
- Respect – you demonstrate respect for the work of others, acknowledging the work you have used to support your writing.

You can support academic integrity through:

- Clearly acknowledging the information you use through accurate citations and referencing;
- Submitting your own work, in your own words;
- Using information appropriately.

You may have experienced different guidelines or advice at a previous place of study or country and so it is important that you know the expectations of UK higher education and Wrexham University. Departing from these principles of academic integrity could result in claims of academic misconduct, which can be defined as any action taken that can give you or other students an unfair advantage and can include any formal or informal assessment. Students who commit academic misconduct, especially if they deliberately cheat, are at risk of serious consequences. It is important that you are aware that Academic Misconduct can result in your withdrawal from your course. The University has an [Academic Integrity Procedure](#), which explains some of the academic penalties that can be applied.

Key points for students

1. You are responsible for the integrity of your own learning, and of your academic work;
2. Embracing the principles of academic integrity will improve your academic work and give you the best chance to succeed;
3. You will be given sources of support to ensure you are producing work that has academic integrity and to avoid academic misconduct;
4. There are different types of academic misconduct and a thorough understanding of the principles underpinning these is vital;
5. Academic misconduct is never acceptable.



Types of academic misconduct

There are various forms of academic misconduct including, but not limited to:

- Plagiarism
- Collusion
- Fabrication of data/evidence
- Research misconduct
- Contract cheating – use of essay mills and Artificial intelligence (AI)
- Cheating in timed assessments (e.g. exams and in-class tests)
- Re-use of one's own material

These will be briefly described in the following chapters of this workbook. There are also other sources of information and guidance (and more detailed definitions) available via the University student portal:

- [Student Guide to Academic Integrity](#)
- [Academic Integrity Procedure](#)
- Learning skills website - guidance on [Academic Integrity](#)

Chapter 2 - Plagiarism, Collusion and Fabrication of data

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using someone else's work, words, or ideas without acknowledging the original source and submitting them for assessment. This gives the impression that it is your own work, words, or ideas and is classed as academic misconduct, and is unethical. It is good academic practice to acknowledge the source of information that you are using as evidence in your work. The source of information can take many forms and correct referencing ensures that it is properly acknowledged and will also improve your work. Unless providing a specific quote from the original source (which is cited correctly), you should always write in your own words and you should not use paraphrasing to make it look like your own work. Copying and pasting online material is never acceptable. An important academic skill is being able to interpret the work of others and write in your own style and words. The University learning skills website has some useful advice, including:

- [Understanding plagiarism](#)
- [Understanding referencing](#)
- [Understanding paraphrasing](#)

Collusion

Collusion occurs when academic work that is meant to be produced by an individual is produced or shared by more than one person and submitted as if it is only one person's work. Any individual involved with the collusion could face a penalty, even if you produced the work on your own. Failing to secure your own work, including willingly sharing it with others, is an example of collusion.

Collusion can be avoided by not sharing your work with another student, even if they only want to view a copy to help with their own work. Unless you are involved in genuine group work, with terms set and allowed by the academic member of staff, you should always work independently. This also includes the sharing of data, files, and research findings, unless this is part of a group project and is permitted by the academic staff involved.



Plagiarism and collusion - Turnitin software

In addition to the judgment of academic staff marking your work, the University employs software called Turnitin that can match your work to online material and compare it with the work of other students. This produces a similarity score that can identify the sources of plagiarism and collusion. Students have the opportunity to use this software with draft versions of assignments. This can be a useful tool to improve your work and to ensure you are producing independent work that uses your own words. It should not be viewed as a mechanism to simply 'lower your similarity score' or evade accusations of academic misconduct – the similarity score is just a measure and academic staff will make an overall academic judgment on the work. There is no 'safe' similarity score and you should be aware of that. Use of Artificial Intelligence for example, may produce a similarity score of 0% but staff will recognize the signs of AI generated text, such as the departure from your usual style of writing.

Fabrication of data/evidence and Research misconduct

During your studies, you will be involved in academic work that will require the generation and/or collection of data, evidence, observation, and research findings. Fabrication of data is defined as the false production of information, making false claims, or obtaining it without permission from a third party. If you experience problems with obtaining the information you need for your academic work, speak to the academic staff involved. Don't feel tempted to make something up, there will be options and help that can be given.

An important part of academic studies is the development of research skills and conducting research projects. Research should be valid, responsible, and ethical. This means that any proposed research should be reviewed carefully and often requires formal ethical approval. This has the benefit of ensuring that research will be honest and ethical (produced in the safest manner possible). Students must engage with ethical approval procedures and conducting research projects without the appropriate approval can be viewed as research misconduct. Please contact the member of staff supporting you with your research and check what is required.

Chapter 3 - Cheating

Cheating in assessments (examinations or other forms of assessment) is never acceptable and carries significant consequences. As with all forms of Academic Misconduct, it places at risk your academic and future careers.

Contract cheating

Contract cheating involves using a third party to produce a piece of academic work on your behalf. In addition to asking someone you know to write the work, it has become a growing problem thanks to commercial essay mills and the use of artificial intelligence (AI). With both methods, it involves students often paying a lot of money for a service to produce academic work for you to submit.

There are a number of potential consequences of contract cheating:

- The penalties for academic misconduct are severe and it will impact your being able to continue with your academic studies and future career plans;
- Legislation is changing in the UK, with the provision of contract cheating services being viewed as a crime;
- The work produced can be very poor quality;
- It can be very expensive and there are many cases where money is paid and you get nothing in return;
- Contract cheating services sometimes report their customers to Universities themselves if the students using them do not pay for the poorly produced work or contravene the agreement in some other way – this is not worth the risk.

Cheating in timed assessments (e.g. exams and in-class tests)

There are strict rules involved with the conduct of timed assessment, whether that assessment takes place in a controlled University environment or a remote, online assessment. Examples of Academic misconduct in timed assessment (whether it is in person or online) are given, but are not limited to, below:

- Use of any materials not authorised for that examination or test;
- Copying from, sharing of material, or communication with any other person during the examination or test;
- Impersonation of anyone else or allowing yourself to be impersonated;
- Submission of examination/test answers or other academic work produced by a third party.

Conclusion

Please don't let academic integrity and misconduct be a source of worry – the guidance above will help you to produce work that is high quality and has integrity. If you feel that you need more help or don't understand, then please get in touch with your personal tutor, module tutor, or programme leader, or the Learning Skills team in the Library. They will be able to help. In addition, this workbook has signposted other sources of support.