

A Student Guide to Avoiding Malpractice in Assessment



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Avoiding Malpractice in Assessment - A Student Guide

We all need to consider how to avoid cheating. This is especially in assessments which you are allowed to do in your own time or at home.

1. Definitions

Malpractice

This means any cheating or disruptive behaviour related to assessment.

Contract Cheating

This is if you pay an online company to do your work and submit it as your own. This includes writing essays and assignments (known as 'essay mills'). Contract cheating also includes getting someone else to do your research or impersonate you in exams. It also applies to asking friends to do work for you. In this case, it may not even involve payment. Online tutoring sites also enable contract cheating. These sites answer questions in real time.

Plagiarism

Copying someone else's assessment work and presenting it as their own. When making use of another person's work, students must acknowledge the source. This includes using material, for example, a direct quotation or a close paraphrase, an unacknowledged summary of a source, direct copying or transcription, without properly acknowledging the source.

Collusion

Copying work from another student with that student's permission, or allowing another student to copy a student's own work, and working collaboratively on an individual assessment task.

Misconduct

Behaviour during an assessment that causes disruption to other students. This behaviour may include talking, shouting, abusive or aggressive behaviour or language, using an unauthorised, digital device.

Offensive content

Content in assessment work that breaches the college's Diversity and Equality and Inclusion Policy, is offensive, vulgar or includes swearing.

Personation

Where a student attempts to assume the identity of another to gain advantage during an assessment.

Unauthorised aids

Possession of any unauthorised materials during an assessment event, for example teaching notes or phone.

Essay mill or assessment mill

A business that allows students to commission work in order to commit academic fraud.

Essay bank or assessment bank

A business that allows students to purchase pre-written work in order to commit academic fraud.

2. Your responsibilities

You are responsible for:

- digitally authenticating any assessment work as your own
- carrying out any recommended action in cases of malpractice
- following the requirements for assessment from the awarding body e.g. SQA
- being aware of the penalties associated with malpractice
- developing your assessment skills e.g. their note-taking, paraphrasing, synthesising and referencing skills
- avoiding sharing physical and digital versions of your work and passwords with other students
- submitting work for assessment that is your own original work

3. What happens if you are suspected of cheating?

The College will investigate and may report this to the awarding body e.g. SQA, City & Guilds, MCA.

4. Student Assessment Malpractice Offences and Disciplinary Action

Assessment malpractice is dealt with using the Student Disciplinary Procedure as follows:

Assessment Malpractice	Disciplinary Action
<p>Collusion: Minor amount copied</p>	<p>No formal action but your work will be marked on the merit of the work that is proven to be yours. Any copied phrases etc will not be marked.</p>
<p>Collusion: Significant amount copied. You shared work with another student. You helped another student to copy work.</p> <p>Offensive content: You used inappropriate, offensive or obscene material in assessment, including vulgarity and swearing.</p> <p>Frivolous content: You producing content unrelated to the assessment.</p>	<p>Written Warning</p>
<p>Plagiarism: Minor amount of plagiarism.</p>	<p>Disciplinary Action: Written Warning (and your work will be marked on the merit of the work that is proven to be yours. Any copied phrases etc will not be marked).</p>

Assessment Malpractice	Disciplinary Action
<p>Misconduct: You refused to leave the exam location when asked</p> <p>Inappropriate behaviour during an assessment that causes disruption to others, including shouting, aggressive behaviour or language, causing a disturbance.</p> <p>Offensive, discriminatory content:</p> <p>Discriminatory, inappropriate, offensive or obscene material in assessment evidence, including vulgarity and swearing that is outside of the context of the assessment.</p> <p>Plagiarism: Significant amount of plagiarism.</p> <p>Unauthorised aids: You brought an unauthorised physical or digital aid or materials to an assessment e.g. phone.</p>	<p>Final Written Warning</p>
<p>Theft or misrepresentation of identity: You stole other students' work. You submitted work from others e.g. from essay mills or essay banks. You asked someone else to pretend to be you, to do an assessment.</p>	<p>Expulsion from College</p>

5. Reasons why Students Cheat and How to Avoid it

It is a habit. I had the opportunity to cheat

1. Be aware that Lecturers may check that the work is really your own by follow-up questions online or face-to-face.
2. Avoid posting information about your assessments on social media, as this can prompt contact from contract cheating companies
3. Be aware that your Lecturer may ask you to submit early drafts of an assessment or discuss your research.

I don't know how to reference, do research or write essays well

Talk to your Lecturer and Academic Advisor. Plan what help and support you need to develop your skills in how to, for example:

- Study effectively
- Stay relevant to the assessment question
- Write evaluatively, critically, academically
- Reference
- Do research

I don't feel confident in my ability to pass

Talk to your classmates and Lecturers about making study teams, study buddies and peer mentors.

I can't ask for help

- If you feel that you have a support need, talk about this in confidence, with your Lecturer, Academic Advisor or Learning Support. This could be a learning need, an issue at home, due to a disability or other circumstances which are affecting your life. You may be entitled to alternative assessment arrangements to help you in the assessment.
- If you need support because English is not your first language, please ask.

I'm not interested in this course. It is too hard for me

If you feel that you are not on the right course, tell your Lecturer as soon as possible. We may be able to transfer you to a more suitable course.

I don't understand the assessment

Talk to your Lecturer about how to unpick assessment questions.

I leave everything until the last minute

- Eliminating choke points by setting a study plan for the year, with assessment deadlines.
- Form a Study Teams with your classmates, to provide peer support to keep to a Study Team Schedule.
- Look through advice on how to stay focused, and maintain flow. Try out some of the ideas. Discuss the best ones with your classmates and Lecturer.

I don't know what isn't allowed and what the consequences are

You are not allowed to use contract cheating companies or essay mills. Contract cheating companies can use bank fraud and blackmail you. Essay mills can pretend to be proofreading or plagiarism-checking services.

I don't know how to use Turnitin

- Turnitin is used as standard by Lecturers and students to check for cheating.
- Turnitin provides a similarity report to show where your work is the same as other people's work.
- If you are submitting work on Turnitin, talk to your Lecturer about how to understand the similarity report.

6. Contribute to this Guide

Your views, tips and advice are important. How can you help other students avoid malpractice? To collaborate on the next update of the Guide, contact fiona.balloch@cityofglasgowcollege.ac.uk