

USE OF UNFAIR MEANS IN THE ASSESSMENT PROCESS (Non Invigilated Exams): ADVICE TO STUDENTS¹

The University expects its graduates to have acquired certain attributes (see [The Sheffield Graduate](#)²). Many of these relate to good academic practice:

- a critical, analytical and creative thinker;
- an independent learner and researcher;
- information literate and IT literate;
- a flexible team worker;
- an accomplished communicator;
- competent in applying their knowledge and skills;
- professional and adaptable.

Throughout your programme of studies at the University you will learn how to develop these skills and attributes. Your assessed work is the main way in which you demonstrate that you have acquired and can apply them. Using unfair means in the assessment process is dishonest and means that you cannot demonstrate that you have acquired these essential academic skills and attributes.

What constitutes unfair means?

The basic principle underlying the preparation of any piece of academic work is that the work submitted must be your own work. **Plagiarism, submitting bought or commissioned work, double submission (or self-plagiarism), collusion and fabrication of results** are not allowed because they violate this principle (see definitions below). Rules about these forms of cheating apply to all assessed and non-assessed work.

- 1. Plagiarism (either intentional or unintentional)** is using the ideas or work of another person (including experts and fellow or former students) and submitting them as your own. It is considered dishonest and unprofessional. Plagiarism may take the form of cutting and pasting, taking or closely paraphrasing ideas, passages, sections, sentences, paragraphs, drawings, graphs and other graphical material from books, articles, internet sites or any other source and submitting them for assessment without appropriate acknowledgement.
- 2. Submitting bought or commissioned work** (for example from internet sites, essay “banks” or “mills”) is an extremely serious form of plagiarism. This may take the form of buying or commissioning either the whole piece of work or part of it and implies a clear intention to deceive the examiners. The University also takes an extremely serious view of any student who sells, offers to sell or passes on their own assessed work to other students.
- 3. Double submission (or self-plagiarism)** is resubmitting previously submitted work on one or more occasions (without proper acknowledgement). This may take the form of

¹ The Advice to Students on the Use of Unfair Means in the Assessment Process applies to students in the Sheffield-based Faculties. Additional Advice applies to students in the International Faculty (www.city.academic.gr/docs/ifgenspec.pdf).

² <http://www.shef.ac.uk/sheffieldgraduate/>

copying either the whole piece of work or part of it. Normally credit will already have been given for this work.

4. Collusion is where two or more students work together to produce a piece of work, all or part of which is then submitted by each of them as their own individual work. This includes passing on work in any format to another student. Collusion does not occur where students involved in group work are encouraged to work together to produce a single piece of work as part of the assessment process.

5. Fabrication is submitting work (for example, practical or laboratory work) any part of which is untrue, made up, falsified or fabricated in any way. This is regarded as fraudulent and dishonest.

6. Facilitating the use of unfair means is where any student assists a fellow student in using any of the forms of unfair means defined above, for example in submitting bought or commissioned work.

How can I avoid the use of unfair means?

To avoid using unfair means, any work submitted must be your own and must not include the work of any other person, unless it is properly acknowledged and referenced.

As part of your programme of studies you will learn how to reference sources appropriately in order to avoid plagiarism. This is an essential skills that you will need throughout your University career and beyond. You should follow any guidance on the preparation of assessed work given by the academic department setting the assignment.

You are required to **declare that all work submitted is entirely your own work**. Many departments will ask you to attach a declaration form to all pieces of submitted work (including work submitted online). Your department will inform you how to do this.

If you have any concerns about appropriate academic practices or if you are experiencing any personal difficulties which are affecting your work, you should consult your personal tutor, supervisor or another member of staff involved.

The following websites provide additional information on referencing appropriately and avoiding unfair means:

The **Library** provides online information literacy skills tutorials

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/library/services/infoskills>

The **Library** also has information on reference management software

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/library/refmant/refmant>

The **English Language Teaching Centre** operates a **Writing Advisory Service** through which students can make individual appointments to discuss a piece of writing. This is available for all students, both native and non-native speakers of English.

<http://www.shef.ac.uk/eltc/languagesupport/writingadvisory>

What happens if I use unfair means?

Any form of unfair means is treated as a serious academic offence and action may be taken under the Discipline Regulations. For a student registered on a professionally accredited programme of study, action may also be taken under the Fitness to Practise Regulations. Where unfair means is found to have been used, the University may impose penalties ranging from awarding no grade for the piece of work or failure in a PhD examination through to expulsion from the University in extremely serious cases.

Detection of Unfair Means

The University subscribes to a national plagiarism detection service which helps academic staff identify the original source of material submitted by students. This means that academic staff have access to specialist software that searches a database of reference material gathered from professional publications, student essay websites and other work submitted by students. It is also a resource which can help tutors and supervisors to advise students on ways of improving their referencing techniques. Your work is likely to be submitted to this service.

For further information

<https://www.shef.ac.uk/library/services/infoskills>

<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/eltc/languagesupport/writingadvisory>

<https://www.shef.ac.uk/ssid/complaints-and-appeals>