



Essay mills and contract cheating

Open University academic misconduct  
seminar

London

9 May 2018

# Introduction

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QAA

# Our work in academic integrity

What are essay mills, and what is contract cheating?

How is it different to plagiarism?

A broader piece of work on academic integrity

Who is involved in contract cheating?

How many essay mills?

Who owns/runs them?

How many students are cheating?

# What is the QAA's role?

- cheating, including plagiarism, poses a threat to academic standards
- Quality Code B6's Expectation – "... providers operate equitable, valid and reliable processes of assessment"
- we are well-placed in the sector to lead on a matter clearly in the public interest
- asked by UK Government to lead the sector's efforts against contract cheating

# QAA guidance

# Tackling the problem

Background

Education (staff and students)

Prevention

Detection

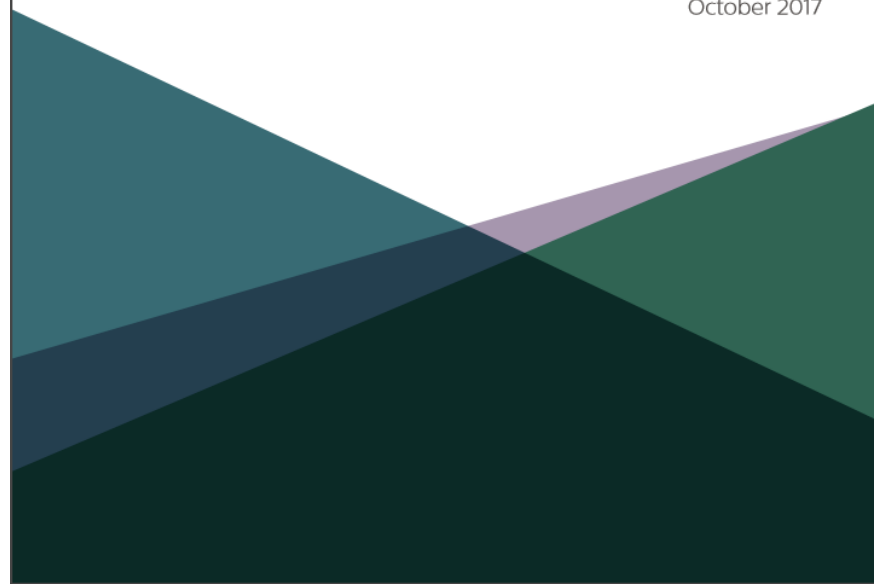
Regulations and policies



## Contracting to Cheat in Higher Education

How to Address Contract Cheating, the Use of  
Third-Party Services and Essay Mills

October 2017



# Tackling the problem

If you are worried about completing your assignment on time or to the required standard, there are lots of people who can help.

"I have no time to write my assignment"

Speak to:

"I don't understand the topic of the assignment"

Speak to:

"I have no interest in the topic of my assignment"

Speak to:

"I'm under so much pressure to succeed I have no choice but to cheat"

Speak to:

"I can't get an appointment to see my tutor"

Speak to:

## WHISTLEBLOWING

If you think a fellow student might be cheating...

Speak to:

**SUPPORT IS HERE FOR YOU, SO DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP.  
PLEASE DON'T CHEAT!**



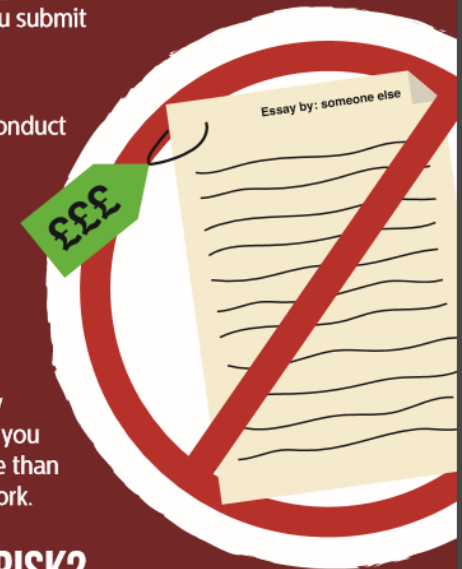
# TEMPTED TO **CHEAT** TO GET YOUR ASSIGNMENT DONE?

Paying an 'essay mill' or getting a friend to write an assignment which you submit as your own work is known as **contract cheating**.

This is serious academic misconduct and you risk:

- **Expulsion** from your institution
- **Damaging** your long-term career prospects
- **Failing** your module

Often the quality of the essay you receive will be poor, and you may end up paying a lot more than intended for sub-standard work.



## SO WHY TAKE THE RISK?

If you are worried about completing your assignment on time, or are tempted to cheat, take a look at our guidance leaflet for advice on who can help. You will also find information on what to do if you think a fellow student might be cheating and the best way to raise any concerns.





# Tackling the problem



**STRUGGLING WITH YOUR ACADEMIC WORK?**

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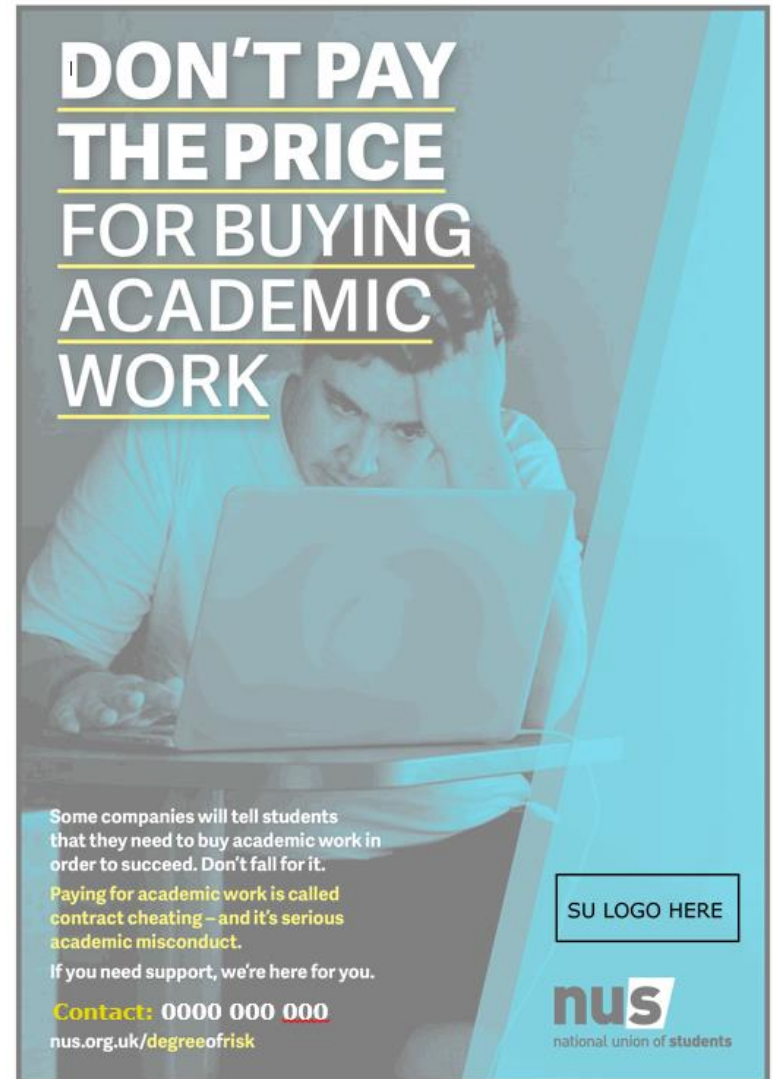
**DON'T BUY IT  
SEEK SUPPORT**

**Paying for academic work is called contract cheating – and it's serious academic misconduct.**

**Don't take the risk.  
Seek support.**

[nus.org.uk/degreeofrisk](https://nus.org.uk/degreeofrisk)

**nus**



**DON'T PAY  
THE PRICE  
FOR BUYING  
ACADEMIC  
WORK**

Some companies will tell students that they need to buy academic work in order to succeed. Don't fall for it.

**Paying for academic work is called contract cheating – and it's serious academic misconduct.**

If you need support, we're here for you.

**Contact: 0000 000 000**  
[nus.org.uk/degreeofrisk](https://nus.org.uk/degreeofrisk)

SU LOGO HERE

**nus**  
national union of students

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## ASA Ruling on All Answers Ltd t/a UK Essays

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Upheld | Internet (on own site) | 21 March 2018

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### Background

Summary of Council decision:

Two issues were investigated, both of which were Upheld

### Ad description

A website for the essay writing service [www.ukessays.com](http://www.ukessays.com), seen on 28 July 2017. The home page featured text that stated "... GUARANTEED GRADE, EVERY TIME We're so confident you'll love the work we produce, we guarantee the final grade of the work. Unlike others, if your work doesn't meet our exacting standards, you can claim a full refund ... LOVED BY CUSTOMERS & THE GLOBAL PRESS UKEssays have lots of press coverage from all over the world confirming that a 2:1 piece of work produced by us met this standard ... We were the first company in the world to offer you guaranteed 2:1 and 1st class work".

#### All Answers Ltd

Venture House  
Cross Street  
Arnold  
Nottingham  
NG5 7BL

Number of complaints: **1**

Complaint Ref: **A17-394574**



Additional information about the service was included on pages titled 'WORLD CLASS GUARANTEES' and 'UK ESSAYS IN THE PRESS'.

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## Students

### Cheating at UK's top universities soars by 40%

Institutions including Oxford and Cambridge under scrutiny as number of academic misconduct cases surges

**Sarah Marsh**

@sloumarsh

Sun 29 Apr 2018 15.42 BST



904



▲ Experts believe students are turning to 'essay-mills' to help them get through their degrees. Photograph: Alamy Stock Photo

The number of students caught cheating at the UK's top universities has shot up

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## The YouTube stars being paid to sell cheating

By Branwen Jeffreys and Edward Main  
BBC Trending

🕒 1 May 2018

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The YouTubers selling cheating: 'Get an A on your paper - and you don't even need to do it'

YouTube stars are being paid to sell academic cheating, a BBC investigation has found.

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The government is under pressure to drop one of its preferred options to manage customs after Brexit.

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### Features



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# What's next?

## Academic integrity

What should we cover? Best practice, dealing with 'threats', both?

What should be the outputs – guidance, training products?

# Sharing practice

Discussion around your experiences of contract cheating and how you generate a positive culture of academic integrity

- Practice
- Process
- Challenges
- Solutions



Any questions?





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