



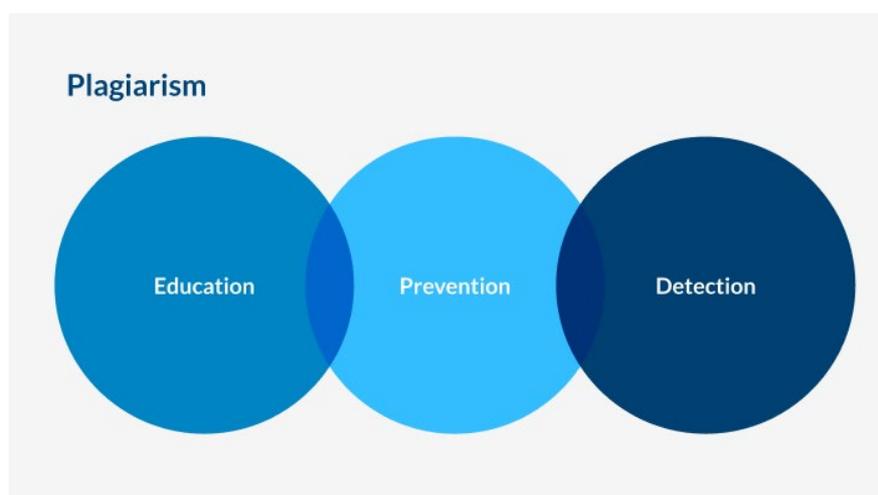
# GUIDANCE ON ACADEMIC INTEGRITY IN ONLINE AND AT-DISTANCE ASSESSMENTS:

## INTRODUCTION

In preparing [alternative assessment methods](#), many of you have expressed concerns around the academic integrity of assessments in the absence of the examination hall environment. Academic Integrity has been defined as:

‘a commitment, even in the face of adversity, to six fundamental values: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and courage. From these values flow principles of behavior that enable academic communities to translate ideals to action’ ([ICAI, 2013](#)).

Academic Integrity focuses on the positive aspects associated with some of the more negative behaviour that are emerging in higher education assessment practices, such as plagiarism and contract cheating. UCD T&L have an existing webpage on ‘[How do I Support my Students’ Academic Integrity?](#)’ which you may find useful. This resource focuses on how you might consider Academic Integrity in the current context where the majority of assessment have moved online. Many of the approaches are a mixture of education (including students’ responsibility), prevention and detection.



The current circumstances are highly unusual and faculty concerns about ensuring academic integrity of alternative assessments are understandable. We also need to work with students to encourage their role in this. [UCD’s regulation \(4.13\)](#) also highlights that a ‘student is responsible for the academic integrity of an

assessment that they submit'. The following strategies are offered to support academic integrity, with particular reference to the current circumstances.

## 1: PROMOTING STUDENTS' UNDERSTANDING OF AND COMMITMENT TO ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Regardless of the alternative assessment that you chose, there are a few approaches to promoting a student's role and responsibility in this area:

- Educate students on what is meant by *Academic Integrity*, be explicit about what this means within the context of your discipline and/or specific assessment task (See Appendix 1).
- If students are working in teams/groups, have them create a Team Code of Ethics (so they'll hold each other accountable) (e.g. [UC San Diego 2020](#)).
- The University has an agreed *Honesty Code* declaration (see Appendix 1) which is intended to remind students of the ethical considerations and expected behaviours when completing assessments, and the consequences of academic misconduct. The *Honesty Code* has been communicated to all students via email and through a global message in Brightspace.
- Module Coordinators may also wish to implement the *Honesty Code* within their module assessments and there are a number of ways of doing this:
  - Use the 'checklist' functionality with 'release condition' in Brightspace to implement the *Honesty Code* (See Appendix 1) whereby the student would be required to accept the checklist item (i.e., the *Honesty Code*) before completing the assignment/quiz. See [Instructions on Setting-up a Checklist with Release Condition](#).
  - For an online quiz, the *Honesty Code* could be presented as the first mandatory question in the quiz that the student must "accept" before proceeding further.
  - For an assignment, the student could be required to paste the text of the *Honesty Code* and their acceptance of same into their assignment submission. The *Honesty Code* text should be provided in the assignment instructions. (Note: this would affect the Urkund score if using Urkund but could be dismissed/allowed for when reviewing submissions).

## 2: CONSIDER THE NATURE OF THE ASSESSMENT TASK

Consider how the assessment task can encourage academic integrity, in either, a) an 'Open-book assignment/Take-home exam' or b) 'Centrally Scheduled Timed Exam'

Consider assessment tasks that allow you to implement some or all of the following strategies:

- Customise the assessment by asking the student to relate the topic/data to their experience or a specific context, using more [authentic assessments](#).
- Frame assessments so that students are required to present a justification for their argument, including a critique of their choice of supporting evidence
- Encourage originality, self-reflection, and individualised responses. For example, asking students: How did you go about answering the question? Where did you find the information? Why did you use chosen resources?

- Give some choice of topics in the assignment/exam
- Detect for contract cheating, here are some useful tips for [narrative assignments](#).
- Require the student to submit their assessment through the VLE Plagiarism Tool ([Urkund](#))

### 3: MITIGATE AGAINST ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT IN 'CENTRALLY SCHEDULED TIMED EXAMS'

In 'Centrally Scheduled Timed Exams' - for example, an online exam or online quizzes using numerical, short-answer, limited or single-answer type responses - access to resources are usually not permitted, or are highly restricted. The following are some additional strategies to consider in this context:

- Use quiz banks, shuffle and/or randomize the questions and answers so that it is more difficult for students to share answers.
- Limit the time during which a student can complete an online assessment to something that is reasonable, yet prevents their looking up answers, keeping in mind that students with disabilities (and other students) may require additional time.
- Use some open-ended questions, after MCQ types, where student need to justify the reasons for their choice of answer
- Implement an *Honesty Code* within the module assessment and provide students with clear instructions on exam arrangements and what is permitted/not permitted in terms of access to resources or other aid in completing the exam (Appendix 1).

### CONCLUSION

Prevention and detection approaches assist in supporting Academic Integrity. It can also be enhanced by educating students and encouraging their honesty in the assessment process. However, in order to maximise students' Academic Integrity, they need very clear instructions from the module coordinator on the level of access to information that is permitted. Appendix 1 sets out two scenarios where access to resources is quite different and therefore require different instructions for students.

Using a mixture of these strategies and by encouraging students' role and responsibility in this, we hope to enhance students' academic integrity and the integrity of our assessments.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

Bretag, Tracey, Rowena Harper, Michael Burton, Cath Ellis, Philip Newton, Karen van Haeringen, Sonia Saddiqui & Pearl Rozenberg (2018): Contract cheating and assessment design: exploring the relationship, *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, DOI: 10.1080/02602938.2018.1527892

Evering, L.C., Moorman, G. (2012) Rethinking Plagiarism in the Digital Age *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*. 56, 1, p35-44.

### European Network for Academic Integrity

IUA (2020) Academic Integrity in Online Assessment. IUA.

UC San Diego (2020) Academic Integrity Office (2020) [Moving to Remote Assessment With Integrity](#), UC San Diego, Academic Integrity Office. Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

UCD Student Code and guidelines are available at <http://www.ucd.ie/secca/studentconduct/>

## APPENDIX 1: STUDENTS' ACCESS TO RESOURCES FOR DIFFERENT ASSESSMENT APPROACHES AND HONESTY CODE

For clarification to students on their access to resources, there are two overarching assessment approaches. Even within these two approaches, module coordinators may allow different access to materials/aid/sources. The module coordinator must make explicit with student what is permitted and not permitted in relation to access to resources and other aid. Leave no room for doubt:

- Tell students what sources, materials, and people they may and may not consult
- Tell students how to cite those sources
- Tell students explicitly what kind of collaboration is permitted and what is not permitted
- Communicate this to students in writing and post the details in Brightspace
- Consider implementing the *Honesty Code* within the module assessment in Brightspace.

'Open-book assignments /take-home exams'	'Centrally Scheduled Timed Exams'
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Description</b></p> <p>This can be described in different ways, for example, an 'Open book assignment/exam', 'Take-away exam', 'Take-home exam'. It may strongly resemble or be an adapted version of the original exam or assignment. It is best suited to assessment questions that focus on, for example, discussion, application, analysis, student reflection.</p> <p>Regardless of its title the essence of this approach, in relation to access to resources, is that students are permitted to access resources and are encouraged to do so, acknowledging their sources.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Description</b></p> <p>This can be described in different ways, for example, 'timed exam', 'live exam', 'online exam', 'online quiz/MCQ'. These exams are scheduled by UCD Assessment. A minimum of a 4-hour block is assigned, and students will be told that the precise time permitted for the exam will be advised by the Module Coordinator.</p> <p>These are often, but not limited to, short-answer, limited/single-answer or numerical type responses. Access to resources is usually not permitted or highly restricted to certain specific materials or tools.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Module Coordinator should make explicit to students what is permitted and not permitted</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Module Coordinator should make explicit to students what is permitted and not permitted</b></p>
<p><b>Usually permitted</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Internet</li> <li>• Books/Articles/other sources</li> <li>• Module Materials, students' own notes</li> </ul> <p><b>Additional considerations to clarify (examples)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assessment-related conversations with family or others with relevant expertise</li> <li>• Assessment-related conversations with other students/classmates?</li> <li>• Assessment related collaboration with other students/classmates?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Usually NOT permitted</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No Internet</li> <li>• No Books/Articles/ other sources</li> <li>• No Module Materials, students' own notes</li> <li>• No assessment-related conversations or collaboration with family or others with relevant expertise</li> <li>• No assessment-related conversations or collaboration with other students/classmates</li> </ul> <p><b>Maybe Permitted (examples)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discipline specific materials, e.g. datasets, formulae, etc.</li> </ul>

## UCD Honesty Code

As a UCD student, I declare that I have read and understand the following statements:

1. Academic Integrity is the practice of honesty and ethics in scholarship. All students of UCD are expected to engage in their studies with honesty at all times.
2. Academic misconduct includes any action or attempted action that may result in creating an unfair academic advantage, this includes plagiarism, copying, possession of anything other than permitted resources during an examination and collusion with others in an examination.
3. The [UCD Student Code of Conduct](#) and [UCD Student Plagiarism Policy](#) set out the University's regulations and expectations in respect of student behaviour and conduct during examinations. The University's [Student Discipline Procedure](#) outlines the process followed when dealing with allegations of academic misconduct. Any breach of the UCD Student Code of Conduct or the UCD Student Plagiarism Policy may result in disciplinary action being taken under the Student Discipline Procedure.