Essential Guidance for Students on Academic Integrity in Online Examinations

This additional guidance is for the online examinations taken in the academic year 2021/22. It is intended to set out the University's expectations of you in online exams and to help you understand what academic integrity means in this context. This guidance is supplementary to, and not a replacement for, the University Academic Misconduct Policy which you can access here.

As with any formal examination, these online exams are intended to assess your individual performance. Although you may be undertaking these exams remotely and in "open book" conditions, the work submitted for assessment should be entirely your own. The guidance below provides information about how you must approach online exams.

Support

If you have queries or concerns about your online exams, you should raise them as soon as possible with the module convenor or the relevant Assessment Team in Registry & Academic Affairs. Once the exam is underway, module convenors will be unable to respond to enquiries from students, although technical support can be obtained from Digital and Technology Services.

Guidance about the Academic Misconduct Policy and Procedure is also available from Students' Union Advice.

If your performance in online exams is affected by circumstances beyond your control, don't forget that you can submit an Extenuating Circumstances claim. There is also Policy on self-certification for examinations which you may wish to consult if you are unable to take an online examination. Students may self-certificate absence from an examination(s) for a maximum of 2 consecutive calendar days in an examination period, and this includes online exams.

Misconduct

Any instances of plagiarism, collusion or false authorship, as defined below and in the University Academic Misconduct Policy, in an online examination will be regarded as serious academic misconduct. It is not necessary for the University to prove intention to commit academic misconduct to make a finding of academic misconduct.

Plagiarism: representing another person's work or ideas as your own. You could do this by failing to correctly acknowledge others' ideas and work as sources of information in an assignment or neglecting to use quotation marks to indicate where you have directly used someone else's words. This also applies to the use of diagrams, illustrations, numerical and graphical material, calculations etc. in that plagiarism is not limited to text-based sources. It also applies to module materials such as slides, lecture handouts or auto-generated lecture transcripts. There is further guidance about avoiding plagiarism on the University of Nottingham website here.

Schools and Departments will notify you of any local referencing requirements for online exams.

False Authorship: where you are not the author of the work you submit. This may include submitting the work of another student/friend/family member or submitting work that has been produced (in whole or in part) by a third party such as an essay mill website or an online tutoring service such as Chegg. It doesn't matter whether a student pays someone else to write the work or if it is provided free of charge; it is the authorship of an assignment that is contested and the University doesn't need to prove that the work has been paid for to consider false authorship to have occurred.

Collusion: this is defined in the Policy on Academic Misconduct as "cooperation in order to gain an unpermitted advantage. This may occur where you have consciously collaborated on a piece of work, in part or whole, and passed it off as your own individual effort. Collusion also occurs where you authorise another student to use your work, in part or whole, and to submit it as their own."

You need to be aware that working with one or more other students to plan your exam answers would be classed as collusion, even if you go on to complete your exam paper independently after this preparatory work. Remember that in an exam hall setting, you would not be permitted to discuss the paper with other students, therefore, unless you are notified by your School/Department that discussion of the paper is permitted, you should not discuss the examination and your approach to it with other students. Discussions online or in-person are a form of collusion and will be regarded as academic misconduct. This restriction applies for the full duration of the online examination, including any upload time. The requirement not to discuss does not end when one student submits their own answers.

Allowing someone else to copy your work and submit it as their own is also a form of collusion. If you create and provide – directly or indirectly – another student with work to submit in their online exam you could be subject to a fine under the Code of Discipline. This means, for example, that you need to ensure that you keep your laptop locked and secured in a shared household, don't post model answers on University or other websites,

don’t share or discuss examination question and answers, and don’t post information on social media. Exam submissions should clearly define joint and individual work to avoid representing another student’s work as your own.

The University’s Academic Misconduct Policy is published and available to all students. When submitting your assessment, you must ensure that it is your own work and is not in whole or part copied from any other person's work (published or unpublished) and that sources of information are acknowledged appropriately. You must also have not worked with others inappropriately to complete your assessment.

If you are suspected of any academic misconduct, including plagiarism, collusion and false authorship, this will be investigated following the University Academic Misconduct Procedure. There can be significant consequences if you are found to have committed academic misconduct. Information about the penalties that may be imposed can be found here. Confirmed instances of academic misconduct and any penalty awarded may also be referred to in student references (relating to a student’s academic achievement at University) or notified to an accrediting body.