

Plagiarism, cooperating and cheating (avoiding academic misconduct)

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Avoiding academic misconduct: expectations of all students

What is academic misconduct?

According to the [University's Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct website](#):

Academic misconduct, broadly speaking, is any action which gains, attempts to gain, or assists others in gaining or attempting to gain unfair academic advantage. It includes plagiarism, collusion, contract cheating, and fabrication of data as well as the possession of unauthorised materials during an examination. Every current and former student of the University is expected to understand and abide by rules of behaviour which specifically prohibit academic misconduct.

The range of penalties for academic misconduct in University examinations and coursework includes disqualification from the BA and MEng degrees. Ignorance of the seriousness of academic misconduct will **not** be an acceptable defense.

The University's Golden Rule is that: ***the examiners must be left in no doubt as to which parts of any submission are your own original work and which are not.***

What do you need to do?

To ensure that you understand what constitutes academic misconduct and how to avoid it through good academic practice you are required to read and follow:

- the [University's webpage on student responsibilities](#), which includes the [University's definition of academic misconduct](#);
- the Department's guidance on [distinguishing between cooperation & cheating](#).

We strongly suggest that you familiarise yourself with the rest of the [University's Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct website](#) as it contains a lot of useful information about how to avoid academic misconduct.

If you do not fully understand the information in these documents you must seek clarification at the **earliest opportunity** from your Director of Studies or supervisor.

All work submitted electronically may be subjected to checking for plagiarism using Turnitin text-matching software. You are required to:

- read the [terms and conditions of use for Turnitin text-matching software](#).
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Distinguishing between cooperation & cheating

Coursework marks contribute significantly to your overall Tripos mark. Because this work is not carried out under examination conditions, the distinction between beneficial cooperation and deliberate cheating should be clearly understood.

The following information applies to **all students**. There is also supplementary information for [Part IIB students](#).

Cooperation

It is perfectly acceptable to discuss continuously assessed work with other students, or with demonstrators or supervisors. Such discussions are beneficial and are to be encouraged. Effective use of such discussions can lead to higher marks, always provided that the student has made the main contribution to the work submitted and understands all of it.

Cheating

Cooperation can go too far, however, especially if one student is effectively carried by another or by the demonstrators. For example, while it may well be beneficial for students to discuss a problem in computing, it is unacceptable for two students to submit effectively identical programs. The named author must have made the main contribution to the work submitted and the report must be in his or her own words.

Electronic exchange of lab work is likewise acceptable up to a point. Results obtained jointly in the lab may have only been recorded by one student in a pair, due to time constraints, and it may be more practical to pass these on in electronic format (e.g. for a word-processed report). But analysis of the data, or production of graphs for the write-up, and all written sections of the report **must** be done individually, and may not be exchanged electronically.

Any deliberate attempt to pass off the work of others as being produced by the named author is cheating and constitutes academic misconduct. All suspected cases of Academic Misconduct will be handled by the Director of Undergraduate Education in conjunction with the relevant Chair of Examiners, which may result in the case being referred to the University's Office of Student Conduct, Complaints and Appeals for consideration under the disciplinary regulations.

Sources of guidance on academic integrity, record keeping & referencing

The CUED Library offers advice and training on referencing. See their handout [here](#).

The [Guide to Report Writing](#) provides further guidance:

- [Referencing](#)
- [Integrity, record-keeping and plagiarism](#)

Also see: [University's Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct website](#)

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