

Ethics and Assessment: a message to all FSET students, a warning to some

Cheating in assessment is taken very, very seriously by the Faculty.

Plagiarism

Cheating by claiming other people's work as your own is plagiarism. This is all too easy to do by "cutting and pasting" from the Internet. Be warned: it is as easy for us to find downloaded material as it was for you; we have Turnitin software that does it automatically.

"Cut and paste" is plagiarism unless it is within quotation marks and with references, but even then it will not earn you any credit; you need to explain the work of others. You may not be able to express the ideas as well as in the original, but you should express in your own words because **only then** will we know if you have understood what you have submitted.

Taking the original material and changing a few words or the order of the sentences is not "in your own words". To be safe you should make notes of the material you have read. And then write your assignment from these notes.

Penalties for any form of cheating including plagiarism may include zero for the whole unit, suspension or exclusion for serious or repeat cases.

What does exclusion mean?

For the period of exclusion, usually from six months to two years, students are not allowed to study in their program, and so will have to explain to their family why they are no longer doing so. While they are allowed to apply for entry to other programs during the exclusion period, both here and in other institutions, you can imagine how likely it is that they will be accepted, or accepted back into their original program after the exclusion period. Exclusion can have significant negative impact on your choice of career. It is also acutely embarrassing.

You are never safe

You may imagine that once you have the assessment graded and the degree awarded you are safe. Not so, not once the assessment is on record. And it does not matter how influential you have become.

- In 2002 the Vice Chancellor of Monash University, Professor David Robinson, was forced to resign because of plagiarism in books he had published some 20 years previously and a subsequent third offence.
- In 2011 Julian Bondy, Deputy Dean Global Studies, Social Science and Planning at RMIT resigned after plagiarism allegation of his 2001 PhD; the PhD was revoked.
- In 2011 the German Defence Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg was found guilty of plagiarism in his 2006 PhD thesis submitted to the University of Bayreuth, and was forced to resign.
- In 2013 the German Education Minister Annette Schavan was stripped of her 1980 PhD from the Heinrich Heine University because of plagiarism, and was forced to resign.
- In 2012 Hungary's President Pal Schmitt was stripped of his 1992 doctorate because of plagiarism, and was forced to resign.
- In 2012 a highly esteemed member of the Parahyangan University in Indonesia, Professor Anak Agung Banyu Perwita, was forced to resign because of plagiarism.
- In 2012 nine Deakin University students were found guilty of plagiarism through buying essays over the internet and were expelled.
- In 2012 a Harvard University professor noticed similarities on a take-home examination for approximately 125 students that showed the students had worked together, even though they were instructed to work alone. More than a half of the students were suspended for a period of two to four terms.

- In 2013 the Taiwanese Defence Minister Andrew Yang resigned because of plagiarism in a paper published in 2007.

The ethical graduate

The Faculty is insistent that our graduates cannot claim they know things they do not, or can do things they cannot. If we cannot train graduates to have a strong ethical awareness then we have failed. For students to have the mind set that sometimes it is acceptable to cheat means that this will be carried into their professional lives: the consequences of a graduate lying and cheating are too terrible to contemplate.

You earn the right to call yourself a graduate by virtue of hard work. How do you think a student who does all things honestly feels when he or she knows that others are taking advantage by cheating? It undermines the profession into which you will graduate. It is unfair; it is shameful.

Responsibility

Staff will be vigilant in looking for cheating, and taking action. But you need to play a part. If you see cheating, speak out. You keep quiet and nothing changes.

For students who cheat because they cannot pass the units otherwise, study something else. You may end up with a piece of paper but you know you will not really have earned the right to call yourself a graduate.

A fellow student asks to “borrow” your completed assignment to “see if they are on the right track.” Don’t do it. There have been many cases where the student then submits the assignment unchanged as their own. Discuss ideas with them but never hand over documentation.

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