

# Promote Integrity Online

Published 12/7/2020 by [Ashley Ribbel](#)

## Promoting a Culture of Academic Integrity Online

Assessment design can be used to promote academic integrity. Here are a few considerations in your assessment design that can reduce cheating.

1. Use assessments that are designed to provide your students with the opportunity to practice writing and to properly cite. It is important to give them feedback on what they have tried and to let them know explicitly whether they have plagiarised and what they need to do to avoid making the same mistake in future assessments. These assessments should be low-stakes or have no grade value. The important part of these assessments is providing the feedback and can include “best answer” examples of writing that avoids plagiarism.
2. Students will be motivated to learn when the assignments or tasks are relevant and have personal meaning. Students can write about their own subjects, incorporate their own personal experiences and reflections, and be engaged with the content which is less boring to them and reduces the tendency to cheat (Scott, 2017). “Canned” assignments and prompts often provided by textbook publishers may be easier to grade, but should be avoided. Instead, contextualize coursework and assignments to students’ interests and goals. An advantage to changing and building a pool of personalised assessments is having a bank of assessments that can be used for the subsequent times you run the course (Dick et al., 2002). Personalised assignments will reduce source and person-to-person copying.
3. Consider open book and/or open note format for tests and exams. Help students prepare for these exams throughout the course. This will reduce cheating and increase engagement with the content.
4. Build in and require multiple drafts of an assessment. It is more difficult and less likely a student will pay someone to write multiple iterations of an assignment. It is also more likely that you will be able to detect any change in voice or writing style.
5. Engage your students as partners in designing assessments. Giving students more ownership in the learning and assessment process will reduce the likelihood of cheating.

Students can co-create criteria and see first-hand how the assessment is relevant to their future lives and where they are in their learning journey. Try to integrate activities in the curriculum that will allow students to discuss and apply assessment criteria so they are clear on what is expected of them, what active participation means, individual vs group work, how to prepare for assessments, and the process of formative feedback.

6. Building relationships with your students will minimise cheating and promote student engagement. It will also help detect cheating when it occurs. When designing assessments, it is important to always include clear and complete instructions. However, students should also feel comfortable with asking questions, making mistakes, and taking risks.

7. Assignments with short turnaround times are reported to be the most likely to be outsourced (Bretag et al., 2014). Short timeframes make it difficult for students to understand assessment requirements and can increase pressures. As well, students cheating on invigilated exams is more common than outsourcing assignments, but is detected less often by staff. Students report that the reason for cheating on high stakes tasks and exams is that they were perceived to be less relevant to them, more about memorisation and recall of facts rather than learning what they would be using in their future jobs.

#### **References:**

Bretag, T., Mahmud, S., Wallace, M., Walker, R., McGowan, U., East, J., & James, C. (2014). 'Teach us how to do it properly!' An Australian academic integrity student survey. *Studies in Higher Education, 39*(7), 1150-1169.

Dick, M., Sheard, J., Bareiss, C., Carter, J., Joyce, D., Harding, T., & Laxer, C. (2002, June). Addressing student cheating: definitions and solutions. In *ACM SigCSE Bulletin, 35*(2), 172-184.

Scott, S. (2017). From Plagiarism-Plagued to Plagiarism-Proof: Using Anonymized Case Assignments in Intermediate Accounting. *Accounting Perspectives, 16*(4), 247-268.

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As seen in the [Integrity by Design: Improving Academic Integrity through Assessment Design](#) article in the Academic Newsletter.

Learn more in the Academic Newsletter:

- [Let Slip the Dogs of War: The current e-proctoring dilemma](#)
- [Promoting Academic Integrity Online](#)

- Ways to Combat [Contract Cheating](#)
- [Predatory Publishers – What an academic needs to know](#)

To learn about Seneca’s position regarding the use of proctoring solutions for the administration of online and/or recorded student assessments/exams, see [Online Virtual Proctoring at Seneca](#).

Here are some strategies to promote a culture of academic integrity while testing online, focusing on the design of your test:

- Clearly communicate expectations for students on online tests.
- Be explicit about what constitutes collaborative group work and what is individual work.
- Provide clear instructions on how online tests should be taken. Keep the timeframe for accessing the test short, but reasonable.
- Design questions to suit an open-book style of testing.
- Randomize the order of questions.
- Do not repeat tests and exams from previous semesters.
- Be available to answer questions related to the test.
- Debrief online tests/quizzes with students to assess the knowledge of what they have submitted.

[Promoting academic integrity in online courses](#) from the University of Calgary

[“Small Teaching Online: Improving Student Engagement, Learning, and Assessment” by Flower Darby](#) – recorded at Teaching & Learning Day Fall 2020 on Oct. 26, 2020

### **Academic Integrity Declaration**

An Academic Integrity Declaration, or honour statement, is a popular technique to encourage proper behaviour on tests. Evidence indicates that students who sign an academic integrity statement immediately prior to writing a test or exam engage in fewer instances of academic integrity misconduct. An Academic Integrity Declaration, such as the following, can be added to the test instructions:

*By beginning this test, you affirm that you will not give or receive any unauthorized help, and that all work will be your own. You agree to abide by Seneca’s Academic Integrity Policy and*

*you understand any violation of academic integrity will be subject to the penalties outlined in the policy.*

We have more tips and strategies in the [Promoting Academic Integrity Online](#) video.

tags : academic-integrity, academic-integrity-online, assessment, assessment-main, teaching-and-learning, teaching-and-learning-centre