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# AVOID PITFALLS **AT EXAMS**

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A GUIDE FOR STUDENTS ON HOW TO AVOID CHEATING AT EXAMS

Did you know that you can be expelled if you use other people's texts or theories without citing the source?



AARHUS UNIVERSITY



## AVOID PITFALLS AT EXAMS

Cheating at exams is an offence which is taken very seriously by the university, because it means that you get credit for skills and competences which you have not really demonstrated.

### WHY IS CHEATING AT EXAMS A SERIOUS OFFENCE?

Your exam certificate is a guarantee which the university issues to certify that you possess the competences and qualifications in the certificate. When you hold an exam certificate, other people must be able to count on the value of your education.

If you have been cheating, your exam certificate will lose its value and the university's reputation will suffer.

This is why cheating at exams is considered to be a very serious violation of the university's disciplinary rules and will have serious consequences for you.

### WHAT CONSTITUTES CHEATING AT EXAMS?

An exam is a test at which you demonstrate your individual qualifications within the framework and on the conditions laid down by the university for the relevant exam.

If you do something at an exam which improves your conditions compared to the conditions which you would otherwise have and whether you do this intentionally

or unintentionally, you are cheating to get a wrong assessment.

If you help someone else obtain an undue advantage at an exam, this also constitutes cheating. Always consider this if you hand over your exam paper to a fellow student in an exam situation.

### EXAMPLES OF CHEATING AT EXAMS

A number of examples of what constitutes cheating at exams are outlined below. Please note that these are only examples, and that acts not mentioned here may still constitute cheating.

If you have any doubts about the rules concerning cheating at exams, ask your lecturer, your student counsellor or your examiner for advice before you submit your exam paper.

#### Plagiarism

Plagiarism is when "(...) you imitate or copy texts written by other people without citing the source or indicating that the text is a quotation or a summary rewrite."

(Translated quote from Leth Andersen, H., & Tofteskov, J.(2008).Eksamen og ek-

samensformer: Betydning og bedømmelse. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur. Page 157-158).

Plagiarism is a complex concept. In the context of an exam, plagiarism means that you give the impression that a text, an illustration, a structure, an idea etc is your own work, when in fact it is not.

Using texts, ideas etc produced or conceived by others does not in itself constitute plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when the examiner is led to believe that you are the source of the text etc. You must therefore be very careful and clearly indicate where the text and the ideas come from.

You may use notes which have been written jointly by your study group. But because

the notes are not yours, but the group's, you must clearly state the source in this case as well.

If you write the group's joint notes into your own exam paper without indicating that this is what you have done, it is a case of plagiarism and thus cheating at exams.

Be careful if you use teaching material for your paper. Although you think that the examiner knows the material, you must comply with the general principles for handling sources. The course syllabus, slides, notes etc are sources like all other sources.

Please note that you must always refer to the source material, you have used yourself and not the material which your source refers to.

#### **PRINCIPLES FOR HANDLING SOURCES:**

Direct quotes must be marked accurately using e.g. quotation marks, indentation or italics.

Other people's facts, results and argumentation must have an accurate source reference.

All material, from books, the internet, notes and unprinted material etc must be handled in accordance with the rules above.

The principles also apply when reusing text from your own exam papers.

If you are in doubt about whether a source reference is required or not, always include the source reference.

Different academic environments have different traditions for proper source referencing. It is therefore important that you look into the matter and find out what is applicable in your case.

### Reusing your own material

If you reuse texts etc. produced and used by you at another exam, you must clearly state your source, exactly as described in the section on plagiarism. Failing to do so is cheating.

### Cooperation

In teaching contexts, cooperation is often encouraged e.g. in groups. It is important to understand that an exam which requires an individual performance is a different matter.

If the method of evaluation requires that an individual exam paper is produced, you must produce the paper yourself. Please note that this also applies to a group paper where an indication of who has written what is required.

If an exam paper is written jointly by more than one student and individualisation is not a requirement, it is the group's joint responsibility to ensure compliance with the rules concerning cheating at exams.

Of course it also constitutes cheating if you let someone else complete or partially complete an exam paper for you.

### Unauthorised contact

In connection with on-site written exams, any contact with other examinees or persons outside the exam room is regarded as cheating, regardless of whether the person involved is helping you or not.

If you produce your exam paper in connec-

tion with an on-site exam and share your paper with your fellow students afterwards e.g. by using file sharing systems such as Dropbox, this is considered aiding and abetting cheating at exams.

It is also considered cheating, if you send or receive an email on your PC during an on-site written exam regardless of the contents of the email.

### Materials/aids not permitted

If no materials/aids are permitted, you cannot bring for example a collection of formulas or a dictionary. This constitutes cheating regardless of whether you use them or not.

If no materials/aids are permitted and you bring notes to an on-site written exam and use them, this also constitutes cheating.

If you are only allowed to use a specific type of calculator, it also constitutes cheating to bring another type of calculator.

### Falsifying data

If your exam paper involves collecting empirical data, it constitutes cheating to make up your own data or manipulate data.

### Exceeding deadlines

You must comply with the deadlines stipulated for the exam. Time is a factor in the assessment so if you continue to work on your paper after the exam has ended, it constitutes cheating.

### Advance knowledge of the exam assignment

If you know about the exam assignment in advance without proper authorisation and you still sit the exam, you are cheating.

If an error occurs and you become acquainted with the exam assignment before the exam, you may not participate in the exam. This would constitute cheating, no matter whose fault it is. If the fault lies with the university, you will be offered a new chance to sit the exam.

### Incorrect attendance information

For some courses, attendance is compulsory. This means that attendance is regarded as part of the exam. Providing incorrect information about attendance therefore constitutes cheating. This applies regardless of whether you provide incorrect information about yourself or others.

### SANCTIONS

If you cheat or contribute to cheating at an exam, it may have severe consequences for you. The possible sanctions range from a warning to permanent expulsion from the university. The sanction depends on an overall assessment of the severity of the offence. You can find more information about sanctions here:

 [au.dk/disciplinary-rules](https://au.dk/disciplinary-rules)

### CHEATING AT EXAMS IS NOT A SOLUTION

Whether you cheat intentionally or unintentionally, you will be held accountable. As a student, it is your responsibility to be familiar with the rules concerning cheating at exams. All cases concerning cheating will lead to sanctions regardless of whether the cheating was intentional or not.

If you consider cheating because of personal, study-related, family-related or other reasons, don't do it. Find another solution. Contact the Student Counsellors' Office, the university chaplain, the Counselling and Support Unit, your fellow students, friends or family. After the exam, consider what you can do to avoid the same situation in the future. Ask for help and find another way.

Find help and contact information here:

 [studentwelfare.au.dk](https://studentwelfare.au.dk)

Read more about how to avoid pitfalls at exams here

 [au.dk/cheating-at-exams](https://au.dk/cheating-at-exams)

 [library.au.dk/reference-management](https://library.au.dk/reference-management)

