
Avoid pitfalls at exams

How to avoid cheating on exams in connection with online exams

Did you know that the rules about cheating on exams still apply, even though your exam will be taking place online?



AARHUS UNIVERSITET

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Cheating on exams is an offence which is taken very seriously by the university, because when you cheat, you get credit for skills and competences you haven't actually demonstrated.

WHY IS CHEATING ON EXAMS A SERIOUS OFFENCE?

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

If you cheat, your exam certificate loses its value and the university's reputation suffers.

This is why cheating on exams is considered a very serious violation of the university's disciplinary rules. This has major consequences for you as a student.

How is cheating defined?

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

If you – intentionally or unintentionally – do something that gives you an unfair advantage, you are cheating your way to a grade you don't deserve.

It's also cheating to help someone else gain an unfair advantage.

So remember this if you are ever tempted to share your exam paper with a fellow student in an exam situation.

Examples of cheating at exams

A number of examples of cheating 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 on cheating, 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."

J. Eksamen og eksamensformer: Betydning og bedømmelse. Frederiksberg: Social literature. Page 157-158).

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

Using material produced or conceived by others does not in itself constitute plagiarism. Plagiarism occurs when the examiner can get the impression that you are the author of the material. This means that you must be very careful to 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 the group's, not yours alone, you must clearly state the source in this case as well.

If you incorporate the group's joint notes into your own exam paper without indicating that this is what you have done, this counts as plagiarism, which is cheating. Be careful about using material used in your class in your paper. Although you may think that your examiner already knows where the material comes from, you still need to follow the correct procedure for source references. The course syllabus, slides, notes and so on are sources just like any other.

When citing a secondary source, please remember that you must always cite to the source material you have used yourself, and not the primary material your secondary source refers to.

PRINCIPLES FOR HANDLING SOURCES:

Direct quotes must be marked accurately, for example with quotation marks, indentation or italics. You must provide an accurate source reference when using other people's facts, results and argumentation.

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 fields have different traditions for proper source referencing.

Make sure you are familiar with the standards that apply to your field.

Reusing your own material

If you reuse material produced and used by you at another exam, you must clearly state your source, precisely as described in the section on plagiarism. Failure to do so is a form of cheating.

Cooperation

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

If the form of examination requires that an individual exam paper is produced, you must write the paper yourself. This means that you are not allowed to collaborate with your fellow students during the exam.

So you are not allowed to share good advice and ideas about your exam papers, and you are not allowed to exchange exam papers in the exam situation.

In case of a group paper in which you are asked to indicate which members of the group have written specific passages, you also have to write the passages identified as yours yourself.

If an exam paper is the joint product of more than one student and identification of individual contributions is not a requirement, it is the group's joint responsibility to ensure compliance with the rules.

Of course, having someone else complete or partially write an exam paper for you is also cheating.

Unauthorised contact during written on-site exams

Due to the coronavirus outbreak, no written on-site exams will be held. These exams will be offered online instead. But even though your exam will now take place at home, you must still comply with the rules that apply to contact with others for the exam in question.

Aids permitted

You are allowed to use aids for all written and oral exams unless otherwise indicated in the description of a specific exam.

Falsifying data

If your exam paper involves collecting empirical data, making up your own data or manipulate data counts as cheating.

Exceeding deadlines

You must comply with the deadline for the exam. Time is a factor in grading, so continuing to work on your paper after the exam has ended counts as cheating.

Advance knowledge of the exam assignment

If you gain unauthorised knowledge about the exam assignment in advance and you still sit the exam, this counts as 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 your participation in class counts as part of the exam, and the submission of incorrect information about attendance is a form of cheating. This applies regardless of whether you provide incorrect information about yourself or others.

Disciplinary action

If you cheat on an exam or help someone else cheat, this can have serious consequences for you. You may receive a warning, or in the worst case, you may be permanently expelled from the university. The punishment you receive depends on an assessment of the seriousness of the infraction. You can find more information about disciplinary actions here:

Cheating is not a solution

If you cheat, you will be held responsible, regardless of whether or not you do so intentionally. As a student, you have a responsibility to know the rules for cheating on exams. Intentional or not: cheating will be punished, every time.

If you are tempted to cheat because you're under a lot of personal, academic familiar pressure, just don't. Find another solution. Contact the Student Counsellors' Office, the university chaplain, the Counselling and Support Unit, your fellow students, friends or family.

And after the exam, try to figure out how you can make sure the situation doesn't repeat itself. Ask for help, and find another way.

Find out where to get help here:

au.dk/disciplinærregler

trivsel.au.dk

