



# Academic Misconduct Guide

## How to spot Academic Misconduct

### WHAT ARE THE WARNING SIGNS THAT A STUDENT MAY HAVE USED MATERIAL THEY DID NOT AUTHOR?

- **Standard of written English** is significantly higher than previous work/student's spoken English
- **Work is similar to or the same as** that submitted by another student
- **A high or low 'similarity' index on Turnitin:** Turnitin cannot identify some forms of copied, purchased or reused material, and sometimes gives false positives. In general a high or very low similarity index is worth investigating.
- **Mixed writing style:** if a student's general standard of written English is low, but some phrases stick out as being unusually elegant, or using unusual words/technical terms correctly, this may mean that these phrases have been directly taken from someone else's work.
- **Poor referencing:** if a student tends to write long paragraphs and provide one or two references at the end in brackets, this may mean they have failed to indicate which material in the paragraph is original and which is taken from elsewhere.
- **Strange phraseology:** if words are used incorrectly in a slightly bizarre way, this may mean that a student has passed source material through a paraphrasing tool – for example, the word 'castigations' instead of 'disciplines', or 'cops' instead of 'police'.
- **Changes in formatting:** strange capitalisation, font style or font size can be signs that text has been cut and pasted from elsewhere. Images of text within an assessment may also be another sign.
- **Changes in tense:** this can also be an indication that the text has been taken from another source or another writer has worked on the document.
- **Unreferenced facts, ideas, interpretations or definitions:** if the student refers to knowledge or interpretations of texts which were not presented in the lectures or tutorials, and does not reference their sources, this suggests they have taken ideas from somewhere else without crediting the source.

### ARE THERE WARNING SIGNS FOR CONTRACT CHEATING?

There are signs that might suggest a student has submitted work that is not their own and they may have purchased, or had someone else write all or part of the paper. This is called *contract cheating*. It can be hard to detect, but some warning signs might include:

- An assessment task presented in a **highly 'professional' format** which is not required for the task and/or which is unusual for UOW (e.g. including a title page and/or table of contents).
- Work which **does not relate** closely to class discussions or the approach taken in the subject, or lacks examples relevant to topic or assessment material.
- A **reference list** in the wrong style, listing unfamiliar sources, and/or including a very large number of references, references that are very old or are not cited in text.
- **Document properties** (with online submissions) showing an 'author' for the document who is not the student.

For more resources on detecting contract cheating, visit the Academic Integrity Portal:

<https://www.uow.edu.au/about/governance/academic-integrity/teachers/>