


# Avoid cheating in examinations – guidelines for students

Cheating in examinations is an offence that Business Academy Aarhus looks at with the utmost severity because the offence would mean that the Academy's diplomas couldn't be trusted.



## Why is cheating in examinations such a grave offence?

Your diploma is a guarantee issued by the Academy certifying that you possess the skills and qualifications listed in the diploma. This means that the credibility of the diploma is a core concern for Business Academy Aarhus. If your diploma is incorrect because of cheating, it not only devalues your diploma it also undermines the credibility of all diplomas issued by the Academy.

Furthermore, the reputation of your programme will suffer if one can no longer trust that graduates from Business Academy Aarhus are in fact as competent as we claim. This is the reason that cheating in examinations is one of the most unacceptable actions within the sphere of education – and hence an action severely punished by Business Academy Aarhus.

## What is cheating in examinations?

The object of an examination is to provide the examiner with a genuine opportunity to assess the exact performance under specific circumstances. To achieve this, the examiner must be aware down to the smallest detail which part of the performance is due to your personal skills, and the examiner must feel confident that the performance has been delivered in accordance with the framework and the regulations that apply to that particular examination.

This means that an examination is a test in which you demonstrate your individual qualifications in relation to a specific area and you deliver your performance within the stipulated framework and regulations.

If you or any others, by some unauthorised act, prevent the examiner from identifying your particular contribution or if you perform under different regulations than what the examiner assumes, you cheat yourself into receiving an incorrect assessment – and this is cheating in an examination.

Consequently, cheating in an examination is defined as being unauthorised act(s) carried out by yourself or any other people which alter the framework and the regulations for the performance or which render the performance unsuitable for an assessment of your individual qualifications.

## Situations to avoid

Below are some examples of what cheating might involve. Please note that these are only examples, so even if a particular scenario is not mentioned here, it could be cheating anyhow.

If in doubt, ask yourself these two questions:

1. Does my performance reflect my personal qualifications?

If, for instance, you exactly copy what an author has written about the subject of your assignment, you demonstrate the author's qualifications - not your own. The examiner will then award a mark for the author's performance and not yours.

2. Have I stayed within the framework and the regulations?

If, for instance, you look something up in a reference book in an examination where aids are not permitted, the examiner may be led to believe that the knowledge at your fingertips is outstanding; however, the mark will apply to the reference work and not you.

## Contribution

Not only direct cheating in examinations is sanctioned. If you assist others in cheating, this is also illegal.

- An example is if you yourself write the paper in a written examination but then pass the answer(s) on to a fellow student in the examination room. This is contributory cheating, even if the other person chooses not to cheat.

## Plagiarism

A typical case of plagiarism is 'imitating or directly copying a text produced by somebody else without referring to the source and stating that this is a quote or a summarised piece of work' (quote translated from *Eksamen og eksamensformer. Betydning og bedømmelse* by Hanne Leth Andersen and Jens Toftskov. Samfundslitteratur. 2008).

Plagiarism is a diverse concept. In relation to an examination, plagiarism means that you include a piece of text, an illustration, a structure, an idea, etc. in your paper as if it were your own whereas in reality it is not.

In itself using texts and others' ideas is not plagiarism. Things only start to go wrong when the examiner is led to believe that you are the author. This means that you must be very explicit in showing where the text and ideas originate from, using quotation marks, referencing sources and including bibliographies.

The Internet is an easily accessible source of texts that can be relevant for an examination paper. Books, articles and other examination papers can also be relevant. If you follow the rules of how to treat your sources, so that the examiner never doubts where you found the material, there will be no suspicion of cheating.

If you make it absolutely clear when something is not your work, it can never be cheating, no matter how many quotes you include and how much you use the work of others in an examination paper. Whether it would be wise to go to extremes is another matter. You cannot expect high marks if you include an excessive number of quotes.

- If you copy – directly or slightly reworded – from another person's paper or report or from a source you have found on the Internet without stating this, you are guilty of plagiarism.
- If on the contrary you use quotation marks and refer to the source you have used, this is not cheating. On the other hand, the more of another paper or report you use, the greater the risk that your paper will suffer. Only your own text and your use of the sources are assessed.
- You may use notes composed jointly by your study group. Because these notes are not your own but the groups, you must also here state the source clearly. If you write the wording of the joint notes directly into your own paper, this is plagiarism.
- You must also take care when quoting from a textbook used in class. Although you might think that the examiner knows it, you must follow the general rules of using quotation marks and references. The textbook is a source just like any other.
- There are grey areas where you might question the need for references. In some subjects, a model might be regarded as basic knowledge to the point that you can include it in your paper without any further explanation. If in the least doubt, state the sources to be on the safe side.

## Collaboration

Unless explicitly stated in the exam description you are not allowed to collaborate with others to solve an assignment. If you do so anyway, it amounts to cheating because the examiner is unable to assess how you perform. For example:

- If you submit a group report where students are required to state who is the author of what, it would be cheating if the various chapters of the report were in reality produced by the group as a joint effort. This also applies if you state that the report was produced jointly.

## Help from outside

If you allow another person to help you work with your part of an exam paper or perhaps even the full paper, it is not your personal performance that will be assessed, but somebody else's performance. This is cheating.

When you take a written examination, any contact with other examinees or persons outside the examination room is considered cheating, irrespective of whether the contact is in fact able to help with the paper.

- If you allow a fellow student or a family member to carry out coursework for you, this is cheating. This is applicable whether it concerns all of your coursework or just a small part of it.
- If you send or receive an e-mail whilst doing a written exam, you are in touch with other people – and this is cheating. Irrespective of the contents of the e-mail.

## Impermissible aids

If during an exam you work with the assignment under conditions other than those permitted, the basis of your assessment will be faulty because the examiner will assume that you have abided by the rules and regulations. For instance if there are restrictions imposed on the use of aids – you either may not use aids at all or you may only use certain aids – you are cheating if you violate these restrictions.

- If you are not allowed any form of aids whatsoever, you cannot bring a list of formulae or a dictionary. This is cheating.
- It is also cheating if you have written notes with essential information and use them when doing a written examination where aids are not allowed.
- If you are only allowed the use of a pocket calculator of a specific type, it is cheating if you bring a more sophisticated pocket calculator.

### Repeated use of own coursework

You are not allowed to use your own work again without providing a reference. So if you have already used something in another examination, you must make a clear reference exactly as described previously. Not doing so is cheating.

This is not strictly plagiarism because you produced the material yourself but since you have already used the material in a previous exam, this cannot be included in the assessment of your performance in another examination. You may therefore use it for your paper but it must be clear to the examiner that the material is from an outside source.

### Data forgery

If you have to compile empirical data for a paper, 'inventing' data would be forgery, which is tantamount to cheating. You would not be complying with the examination regulations since part of the assignment is to compile such data and you would be forging the examination paper.

- If you need 40 replies for a statistical sample survey and you only manage to compile 30, do not invent the missing replies yourself. This is cheating.

### Exceeding deadlines

You must observe the deadlines set for an examination. Time is one of the aspects taken into account, so if you manage to continue working on your paper after the examination period has ended, the basis of the assessment would be faulty. Consequently, this is cheating.

- If you sit for a written examination and continue working another 15 minutes during the finishing-off confusion, you would be cheating.
- If you somehow manage to make changes or additions to your paper after having submitted it, this would also be cheating. It is cheating solely for the reason that you had more time than was permitted. The fact that this case might also concern outside help is another matter.

### Prior knowledge of the assignment

If you know the examination question or assignment before the examination and yet take it anyway you would be cheating as this would give you more time to work out your answer than assumed in the examination regulations.

- If for instance you become aware of the examination question or assignment before the exam because of some mistake, you cannot take the examination. This would be cheating, irrespective of whose fault it is. If the Academy is at fault, you will be offered the opportunity to sit for another examination.

### **Incorrect attendance data**

For some programmes, attendance is compulsory. This means that your attendance in class is considered part of the examination. Providing incorrect attendance data would therefore be cheating.

- If you indicate on the attendance roster that you have been present although in fact you were not, this is cheating. This also applies if you get somebody else to do it for you.
- If you tick off the attendance roster incorrectly for a fellow student, you are contributing to cheating.

### **Ask if you are still in doubt**

The details outlined here are typical examples of cheating in examinations. Other situations may, however, occur.

Consequently – if you are in the least doubt about the rules regarding cheating in an examination ask beforehand. Ask your teacher, your supervisor or your examiner.