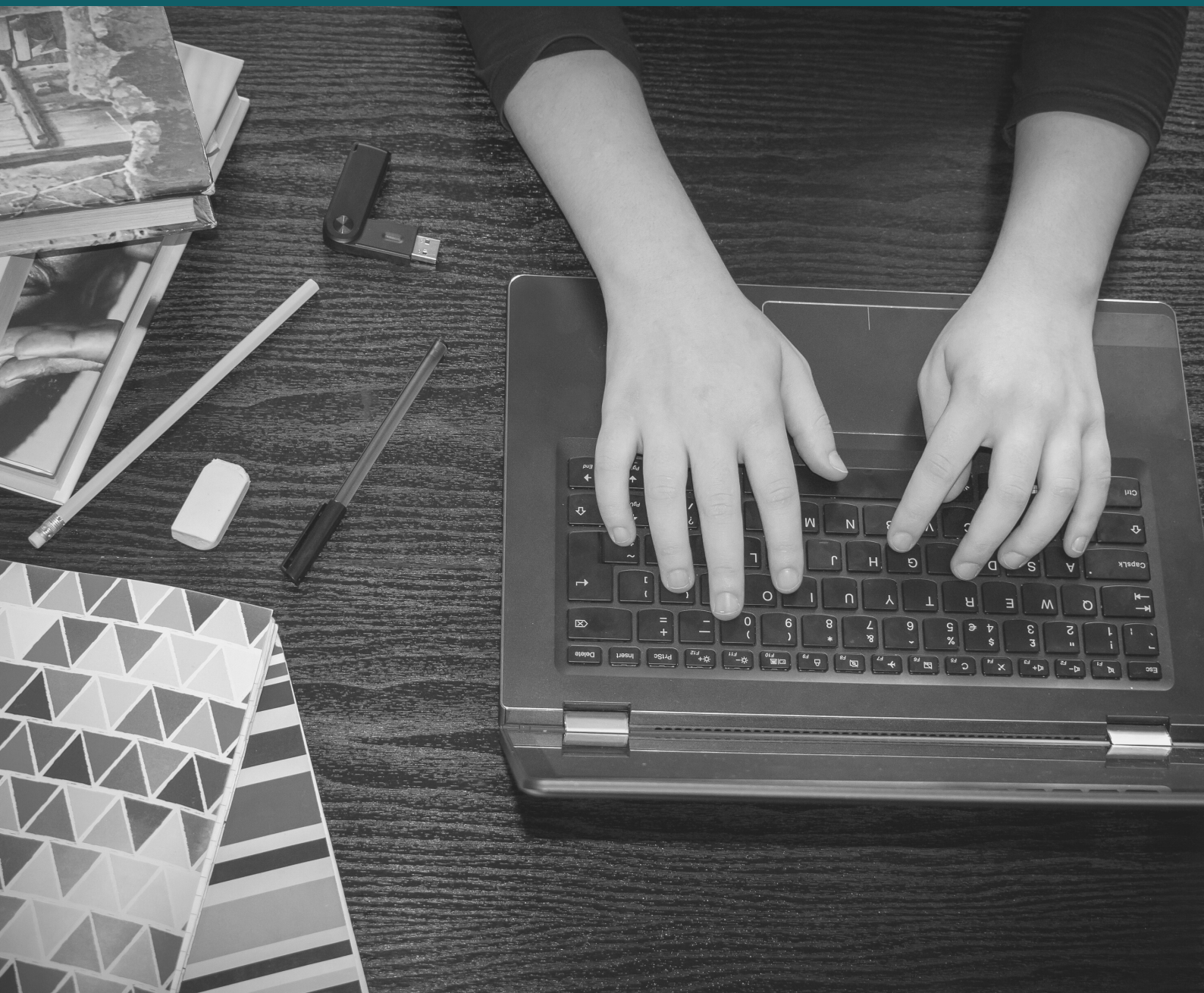


# MOORE ABOUT.. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY



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# ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

## What is academic integrity?



Maintaining academic integrity is a vital part of good scholarly practice. Bringing together many different principles, it means acting ethically and honestly in all aspects of the academic process. Academic integrity underpins every aspect of the research process, from earning ethics approval at the start of the project to ensuring data is dealt with appropriately at its conclusion. It helps to avoid any activities which may leave you open to accusations of academic misconduct.

The University of Cambridge defines academic misconduct as "gaining or attempting to gain, or helping others to gain or attempt to gain, an unfair academic advantage in formal University assessment, or any activity likely to undermine the integrity essential to scholarship and research"\*. It's important to note that these guidelines apply whether the breach was intentional or unintentional and researchers need to understand all implications.

\*University of Cambridge definition of academic misconduct.

## Why does it matter?

Academic integrity matters for several reasons. The one that most people immediately think of is the threat of punishment for those acting dishonestly. This can include a range of measures from academic disciplinary action through to the revocation of a qualification.



Being an ethical researcher also helps you to develop essential skills which are in demand both within and outside academia. Tools such as critical thinking and the ability to produce a good piece of writing are much sought after. Perhaps one of the most important things about academic integrity is that it helps to preserve trust in the individual researcher, their qualification and the wider scholarly landscape. Employers want to know that your qualification is backed up by ethical procedures so all researchers have a responsibility to act honorably to maintain integrity.

# HOW CAN I AVOID A PROBLEM?

Educating yourself and asking for help if you need it are the two best ways to avoid any accusations of inappropriate behavior. The University definition outlines seven key areas of academic misconduct that you need to be aware of:



## PLAGIARISM

Probably the most familiar area of academic misconduct to many (hopefully just from hearing about it!), plagiarism means using the work of others in your own work without giving appropriate acknowledgement. Avoiding plagiarism is one of the reasons that academic work must include references to ideas gathered from other people's work, published or otherwise.



## SELF-PLAGIARISM

It's also possible to plagiarise yourself. If work has been submitted for assessment or formal publication elsewhere it needs to be acknowledged as with any other source and you will not be allowed to include an exact copy. You may not be allowed to include it for assessment at all so always check department rules when preparing an assignment.



## CONTRACT CHEATING

Most people know that paying someone else to complete their work for them is wrong but it does happen. Essay mills and other online services may contact you offering to produce anything from an essay to a dissertation for a fee but it's important to ignore them, no matter how tempting it might be. The quality of their work is poor and immediately spotted by the markers.



## COLLUSION

Working in a group is part of academia but you must also take care that the outcomes are not submitted as the work of any one individual. You should also not divide work on an assignment between a group unless specifically asked to do so. You should avoid letting anyone else submit your work as theirs or passing off someone else's work as your own.





## IMPERSONATING/BEING IMPERSONATED

Allowing someone else to sit an exam in your place whilst pretending to be you is definitely cheating! It's rare to see someone attempting this but they are always found out.



## FABRICATION, FALSIFICATION OR MISREPRESENTATION

Falsifying any aspect of the research process such as creating results or deliberately manipulating data to prove a favourable outcome is serious misconduct which undermines the whole research landscape. Even if there is no intent to deceive it can happen as the result of a mistake so it's important to take extra care with data gathering and analysis.



## FAILURE TO MEET LEGAL, ETHICAL OR PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATIONS

The University lays out strict guidelines on ethical and other procedures which need to be followed in all types of academic work. Any research should take care not to harm participants or the environment in any way, plan to do so or conceal any plans to do so. For more information on this area, check local department ethics forms which will go into greater detail on what is expected.

# FURTHER INFORMATION

Maintaining academic integrity and avoiding misconduct doesn't need to be complicated. The University offers a range of help and support. Click on the name of the resource to explore.

- [Cambridge University: Plagiarism and Academic misconduct.](#)  
Official guidance and definition of academic misconduct provided by the University of Cambridge.
- [LibGuides: Good Academic Practice and Avoiding Plagiarism.](#)  
Easy to use summary of plagiarism including a quiz to test your knowledge.
- [CamGuides: Referencing and Avoiding Plagiarism.](#)  
This resource from Cambridge University Libraries covers the essentials of academic referencing.



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