

Detecting Contract Cheating: tips for markers

This guidance is for all staff involved in the marking of student assignments. It has been put together by the University's Contract Cheating Task & Finish Group (2020).

Unusual mistakes

Does this assignment make 'odd' mistakes – not the ones that students are usually making in this course or paper?

Sources

Are the sources cited relevant? Conversely, is a key source neglected? Does it cite irrelevant or peripherally relevant sources from various disciplines? Do in-text citations match the reference list?

Format and formatting

If a particular recognised formatting style is required, is it possibly too perfect? Has the student submitted a PowerPoint presentation when you asked for a Fact Sheet?

Metadata

Right click on the document to access 'properties' and select 'details' to view fields such as Author; Creation Date; Editing Time; Version Number. If properties are blank they may have been wiped to hide anomalies.

Q&A

Does the answer actually address the question? Reflection e.g. on classroom experience or on experience of writing the essay, is inauthentic or inappropriate.

Please note:

Consider the full range of indicators to get an overall impression, rather than focussing on a single indicator. Even the presence of several positive markers should not be seen as evidence of guilt per se, but rather as a prompt to explore the work more closely.

Tone, voice, register

Is the writing style at odds with language typically used in the assignment or in the discipline?

What to do next

Refer to the [Substantiating Contract Cheating Checklist](#) or speak to your local Authorised University Officer.

Sources

Phill Dawson (Deakin University): <http://philldawson.com/>
Substantiating contract cheating: A guide for markers and investigators (UWA)