

# CONTRACT CHEATING: A QUICK GUIDE

For more detailed guidance please see the [Contract Cheating Toolkit](#)

## Definitions

'**Contract cheating**' is the practice of commissioning all or part of piece of work by a third-party, or parties, without acknowledging the contribution. It may or may not involve payment. It may occur in coursework assessments or in online examinations or tests.

'**Essay mills**' are businesses contributing to academic assessments on behalf of students, usually in exchange for money. They may masquerade as online 'tutoring' or 'study support' services. Essay mills target students through social media, as well as sending messages direct to students' university email addresses.

## Prevention

### Regular messaging

- At the start of each semester
- Through Academic Advising
- At the start of exams
- Involve students (Reps, Peer Mentors, PASS leaders etc.)

### Teaching & Learning

- Be approachable
- Foster a personalised environment
- Discuss ethics in class e.g. group work, dissertations, projects etc.
- Provide clear feedback

### Assessment

- Keep student workload manageable
- Align assessment with ILOs
- Manage risks through assessment design and use some assessment types with caution
- Share clear rubrics in advance

## Detection

Establishing a case of contract cheating is a matter of looking for various signs and piecing them together. The documents linked on the right will guide you through the process...

Detecting contract cheating:  
**tips for markers**

Substantiating contract cheating

## Action

If you have followed this guidance and think you have a case...

**Refer the case to your school's Authorised University Officer (AUO) or nominee e.g. Academic Malpractice Officer**

Tackling malpractice is fundamental to preserving the **academic integrity and standards** of our degrees, and also plays a crucial role as a **deterrent**.