

# PROPER ACADEMIC PRACTICE

*- How to handle sources and avoid  
cheating in exams*



## AVOID CHEATING IN EXAMINATIONS

*SDU requires that you are able to work independently and that exams always reflect **your** efforts. When you hold your exam certificate, the outside world must be ensured that they can count on the value of your education.*

### WHAT IS EXAM CHEATING?

An exam is a test in which you demonstrate your individual qualifications. The exam must give the examiner(s) a sound basis of assessing your performance in a particular field.

If you do something illegal - intentionally or unintentionally - which conceals your performance or if you deliver your performance under other conditions than required, you are cheating.

If you help someone else obtain an undue advantage at an exam, this also counts as cheating. Always consider this if you hand over your exam paper to a fellow student in an exam situation.

### WHY CHEATING IS A SERIOUS VIOLATION

Your exam certificate guarantees that you have the necessary competences and qualifications that appear on your exam certificate.

If you have cheated, not only does your certificate lose its value, but the credibility of all other exam certificates issued by SDU also suffer. This is the reason why cheating in examinations is one of the most unacceptable actions in the academic world.

Cheating in exams can have serious consequences for you; you may be expelled from the university.

It is your own responsibility to be aware of proper academic practice.

Violations are sanctioned consistently after the "Rules Regarding Disciplinary Measures

for Students at the University of Southern Denmark".

## EXAMPLES OF CHEATING IN EXAMS

A number of examples of what constitutes cheating at exams are outlined below.

Please note that these are only examples, and that actions not mentioned here may still be regarded as cheating.

If you have any doubts then ask yourself the following two questions:

### 1. *Does this performance reflect my own qualifications?*

If, for instance, you copy the words of an author who has written something on the topic of your exam paper, the performance will reflect this author's qualifications, and therefore it is the author who is being assessed.

### 2. *Am I adhering to the framework and the conditions?*

If, for instance, you use reference books in connection with an exam where no aids are permitted, the examiner may think that you possess extraordinary trivia knowledge, but it is the reference books that are being assessed, not you.

If you have any doubts about the rules concerning cheating in exams, contact your instructor or your student counselor.

On the last page of this document, you will find additional information about essay writing and source referencing.

## PLAGIARISM/COPYING

It is plagiarism, when "(...) you imitate or copy texts written by other people without citing the source or indicating that the text is a quotation or a summary rewrite."

(Translated quote from Leth Andersen, H., & Tofteskov, J.(2008).Eksamen og ek samensformer: Betydning og bedømmelse. Frederiksberg: Samfundslitteratur. Page 157-158).

Plagiarism is many things, but in an exam situation plagiarism means that you let a text, illustration, a structure or an idea, etc. appear as if it is your own work.

### Principles for quoting:

Direct quotation should be marked as such by using, e.g., quotation marks or italics.

Facts or adopted argumentation should be marked with a note, using exact source references.

All material – from books, the Internet, notes, unprinted material - is to be treated in accordance with the above mentioned rules. Reusing own, previously turned in, assignments should be treated as any other source material.

To use others' text or ideas is not plagiarism as such. It is not plagiarism until the examiner thinks that you are the author.

Therefore, you have to be very careful with elucidating what is your work, and what is the work of others. You have to use quotation marks, source references, and bibliographies - that describe precisely, from where you retrieved the text and the ideas.

It is easy to find texts on the Internet that are interesting and relevant for your assignment. Similar interesting ideas can be found in books, articles, and other exam papers - also in your own previous assignments. However, if you comply with the regulations about source treatment, then the examiner is never in doubt about what your work is, and from where you got your ideas and reflections.

You may use notes that have been written in your study group, but since the notes are not entirely your own, you have to disclose the source, i.e. if you have written notes together with other students, and you include these notes in your assignment without referencing, such action is a case of plagiarism.

If you copy – directly or paraphrase -from another person's assignment, from a previous assignment of your own, from the Internet, or another source without pointing out that you have copied the text, actions like this counts as cheating in exams.

You also have to be careful if you quote from a textbook that is used in your course. You may be inclined to think that your instructor/examiner should know from where you have retrieved your text, your argumentation, or your idea - but you still have to follow the regulations concerning source treatment. A textbook is a source just like all other sources.

There may be gray areas, in which you are uncertain about the necessity of referencing sources. It is possible that some information is such commonplace

knowledge (e.g., Newton's Law or Maslow's hierarchy of needs) that you may refer to such knowledge in your assignment without referencing the source, but if you have any doubts, make a reference to the source.

When you carefully have indicated where the text and the ideas come from, you have not cheated, no matter how much you have quoted in your assignment.

## **COOPERATION**

If the course description says that the assignment must be solved individually, it is allowed to discuss academic issues with your fellow students, but the assignment must be your own as to reflections and wording. If you have prepared text passages with a fellow student, you are not allowed to use these passages in your paper, as if you prepared them individually.

## COMPLICITY

If you help someone else obtain an undue advantage at an exam, this also counts as cheating. Always consider this if you hand over your exam paper to a fellow student in an exam situation. You can put yourself in a gray area, if you pass on your written assignment – as inspiration – to a fellow student, who uses this assignment to a greater or lesser extent without displaying source information. The examiner cannot see who originally produced the assignment.

## EXTERNAL HELP

In connection with on-site written exams, it also counts as cheating if you have contact with other examinees or persons outside the exam room, regardless of whether the person involved is helping you or not.

If you in an on-site written exam share your paper with your fellow students afterwards e.g. by using file sharing systems such as Dropbox, this is considered aiding and abetting cheating in exams.

It is also considered cheating, if you

send or receive an email on your PC during an on-site written exam regardless of the contents of the email.

## NOT PERMITTED TESTING AIDS

If no materials/aids are permitted, you cannot bring for example a collection of formulas or a dictionary. It counts as cheating regardless of whether you use them or not.

If no materials/aids are permitted and you bring notes to an on-site written exam and use them, this also counts as cheating.

If you are only allowed to use a specific type of calculator, it also counts as cheating to bring another type of calculator.

You are not allowed to bring notes or Post-it notes. Likewise, you are not allowed to have written "words of wisdom" on your arms.

If you are allowed to bring testing aids, be sure to treat the sources, you use, just like all other source material, i.e. you have to quote and refer correctly.

## **FALSIFYING DATA**

If you collect empirical data, it will be falsification, if you "invent" data.

Thus, if you need 100 answers, and you have only succeeded in collecting 90, inventing the last 10 answers is cheating.

## **EXCEEDING DEADLINES**

You must comply with the deadlines stipulated for the exam. Time is a factor in the assessment so if you continue to work on your paper after the exam has ended, it counts as cheating.

Further; it is also cheating If you somehow manage to make changes or additions after having submitted your paper.

## **KNOWING THE EXAM QUESTIONS**

If you have any knowledge of the exam questions/answers prior to the actual exam, and you still participate in the exam, such action is exam cheating.

## **INCORRECT ATTENDANCE INFORMATION**

For some courses, attendance is compulsory. This means that attendance is regarded as part of the exam. Providing incorrect information about attendance therefore counts as cheating. This applies regardless of whether you provide incorrect information about yourself or others.

## **VIOLATION**

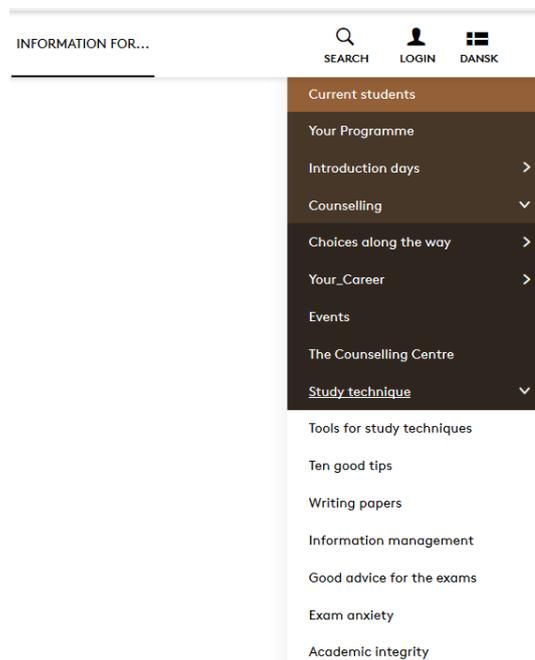
Violation of the academic regulations is treated after the "Rules Regarding Disciplinary Measures for Students at the University of Southern Denmark".

At the suspicion of examination cheating, the case is reported to the Vice-Chancellor and a meeting with attendance of the Head of Studies, representatives from Registrar's Office and the student is held. After the meeting a recommendation to the Vice-Chancellor regarding imposition of a possible sanction is made.

## USEFUL LINKS

**Study Technique (academic integrity, essay writing, information handling):**

<http://www.sdu.dk/> - Click on – *Information for Current student – Counseling – Study technique*



### The UB Test:

Is your academic information handling sufficient? Take the UB Test <http://www.ubtesten.dk/>



Regulations Regarding Disciplinary Measures <http://www.sdu.dk/> - Click on - *Information for Current students - Examination – regulations and good advice*

