



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL & POLITICAL SCIENCES



STUDENT HANDBOOK 2023-2024

HELLO



from your Head of Department



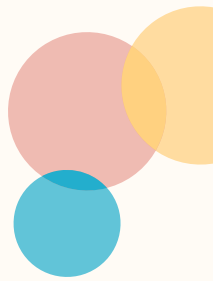
Peter Thomas

Welcome (back) to the Department of Social and Political Sciences! As your lecturers, we are looking forward to helping you to achieve your academic and career goals throughout this academic year and beyond.

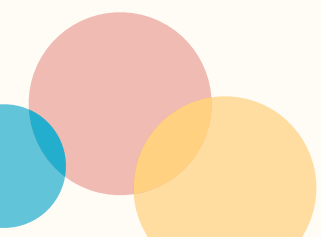
SPS is a dynamic, interdisciplinary community of lecturers, researchers and students, with 80 full time members of staff, almost 1000 students and over 30 programmes of study at both Undergraduate and Postgraduate levels, as well as doctoral programmes, in all of the key disciplines of the contemporary social sciences. Many of our programmes were among the most highly rated in the UK in the 2023 National Student Survey (NSS) when it comes to providing exceptional support for students' learning.

From Anthropology, Communications and Media Studies, Criminal Justice Studies, Criminology, Geography, Global Development, Intelligence and Security Studies, International Relations, and Journalism, to Modern, Military and International History, Political Communication, Politics, and Sociology: whatever your interests, our Department offers you a supportive place to think, to discuss, to dream – and above all, to realise your ambitious goals of self-improvement.

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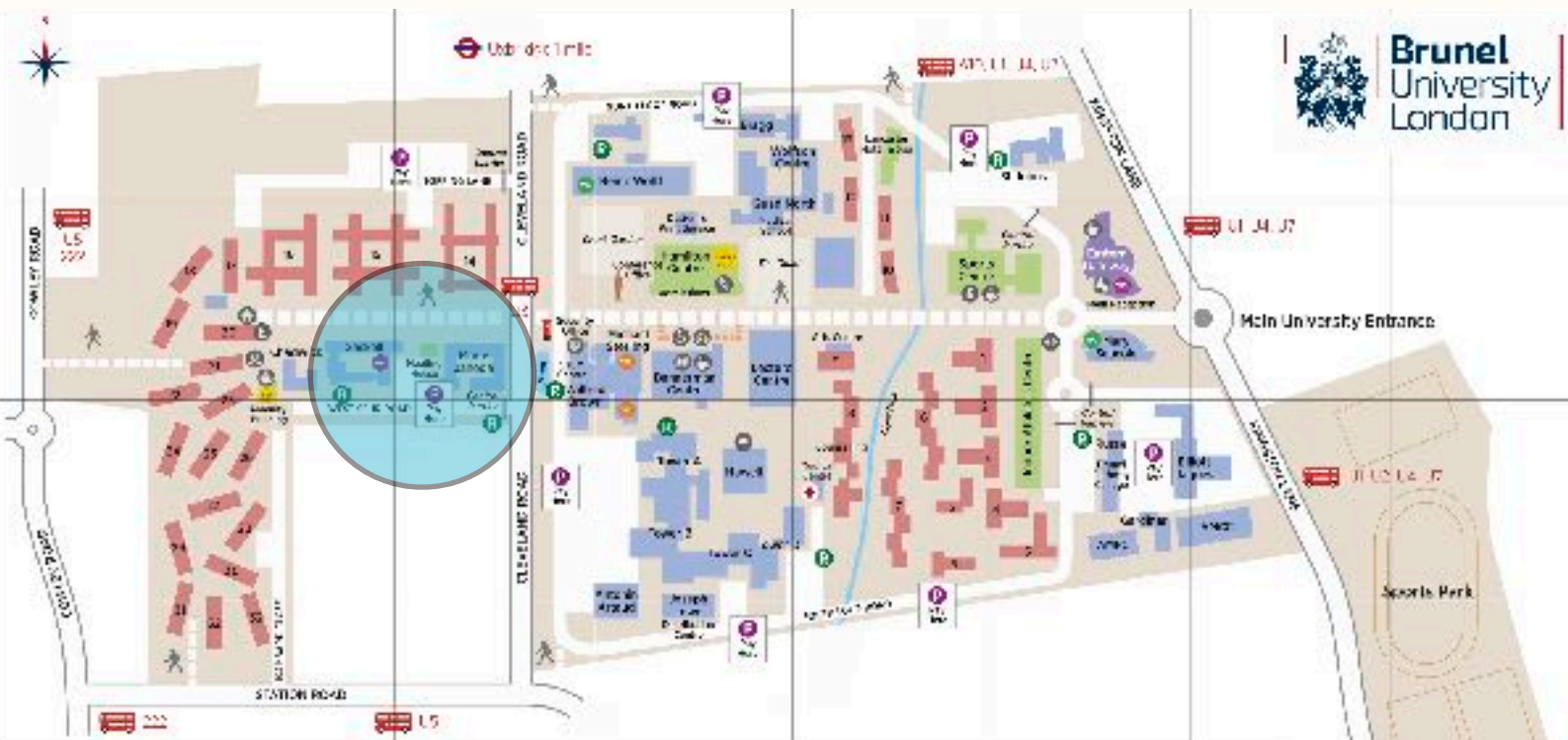


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WHERE

to find your Department?



SPS (Social and Political Sciences) staff are located in the Marie Jahoda and Gaskell buildings.

The Taught Programmes Office (TPO) is in the Gaskell Building. The TPO is your first port of call for many queries about your course.

Information about the TPO and what kind of support they provide can be found here: <https://students.brunel.ac.uk/study/your-tpo>

What's in the NAME?



Marie Jahoda

Marie Jahoda was an Austrian Jew who co-wrote a classic study of the social impact of unemployment. She fled fascist Austria and found asylum in London. Here, she campaigned for refugee welfare, and taught psychology at a college that was to become Brunel University.



Elizabeth Gaskell

Elizabeth Gaskell was a nineteenth-century novelist known for her portrayals of class and gender in industrialising Britain. Brunel University library contains her novels, including *North and South*, *Cranford*, *Ruth*, *Sylvia's Lovers*, and *Wives and Daughters*.

STAFF ROLES

Role	Division	Name
Head of Department		<u>Peter Thomas</u>
Associate Head		<u>Gareth Dale</u>
SPS Senior Tutors		<u>Will Rollason</u> , <u>Hannah Whittaker</u> & <u>Paul Moody</u>
Directors of Teaching and Learning		<u>Nicola Ansell</u>
		<u>John Macmillan</u>
Divisional Leads	Anthropology, Development & Geography	<u>Eric Hirsch</u>
	Criminology and Criminal Justice Studies	Brian Chappell, <u>Kristian Gustafson</u> , <u>Julie Trebilcock</u>
	Politics & History	<u>Inge Dornan</u>
	Sociology, Communications & Journalism	<u>Hauke Riesch</u>
Divisional Senior Tutors	Anthropology, Development & Geography	<u>James Staples</u>
	Criminology and Criminal Justice Studies	<u>Ebony Reid</u>
	Journalism	<u>Kenn Toft</u>
	Politics & History	<u>Richard Hammond</u> and <u>Hannah Whittaker</u> (term one) <u>Manu Savani</u> (term two)
	Sociology & Communications	<u>Billur Ozgul</u>
Directors of postgraduate taught programmes	Anthropology, Development & Geography	<u>Andrew Beatty</u>
	Politics & History	<u>Richard Hammond</u>
	Sociology, Communications & Journalism	<u>Simon Weaver</u>

Role	Division	Name of Staff
Directors of undergraduate programmes	Anthropology, Development & Geography	<u>Will Rollason</u> and <u>Nicola Ansell</u>
	Journalism	<u>Victor Jatula</u>
	Politics & History	Niall Palmer
	Criminology and Criminal Justice Studies	<u>Julie Trebilcock</u>
	Sociology & Communications	<u>Peter Wilkin</u>
Student Experience Convenors	Anthropology, Development & Geography	<u>Eric Hirsch</u>
	Politics & History	<u>Martin Folly</u>
	Criminology and Criminal Justice Studies	<u>Julie Trebilcock</u> & <u>Matthew Cracknell</u>
	Sociology, Communications & Journalism	<u>Hauke Riesch</u> & <u>Rachel Sharp</u>
Work Placement Convenors	Anthropology, Development & Geography	<u>Maria Kastrinou</u>
	Criminology and Criminal Justice Studies	<u>Matthew Cracknell</u>
	Politics & History	<u>Neveen Abdalla</u>
	Sociology, Communications & Journalism	<u>Rohini Rai</u>
Dissertation Convenors (Undergraduate)	Anthropology, Development & Geography	<u>Peggy Froerer</u>
	Politics & History	<u>Monica Fernandes</u>
	Criminology	<u>Rachel Stuart</u>
	Sociology, Communications & Journalism	<u>Sam Han</u>

Check the Departmental Website for a full list of staff, their research and contact details:

<https://www.brunel.ac.uk/people/cbass/social>

Who do I contact for **SUPPORT?**



Student



Personal Tutor

Each student is allocated a personal tutor to support them throughout their studies.

If you are unsure who your personal tutor is, you can find out by logging into eVision and looking at your tutorial record.

If you encounter an **academic** or **personal difficulty** you should **contact your personal tutor in the first instance** – they are there to assist you and advise who to contact if you need additional support.

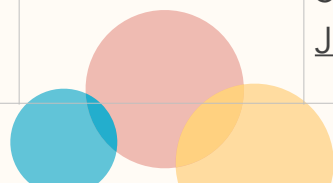
If you have a question that you would prefer not to discuss with your personal tutor, you can contact the **Departmental Senior Tutors** at spsseniortutor@brunel.ac.uk


FURTHER SUPPORT

(Academic)

On academic matters, support can be found from the following people:

What kind of support?	Person to contact	
Timetables, Wiseflow, Brightspace, & Programme Changes	Taught Programmes Office (TPO)	https://students.brunel.ac.uk/brunel-help/
Coursework extensions and Extenuating Circumstances	Divisional Senior Tutor	Anthropology, Development & Geography: James Staples and Ayushman Bhagat
		Criminology: Ebony Reid
		Journalism: Kenn Toft
		Politics & History: Richard Hammond and Hannah Whittaker (term one), Manu Savani (term two)
		Sociology & Communications: Billur Ozgul
Modules and programmes - including module selection and changing modules	Director of Undergraduate Programmes	Anthropology, Development & Geography: Nicola Ansell
		Criminology: Julie Trebilcock
		Journalism: Rachel Sharp
		Politics & History: Niall Palmer
		Sociology, Media & Communications: John Roberts








What kind of support?	Person to contact
Academic writing and referencing	<p>The library offers guidance on finding information for your studies. The Academic Skills Service offers 1-2-1 appointments on study skills, including research, writing and referencing.</p> <p>For more information visit: https://www.brunel.ac.uk/life/library or www.brunel.ac.uk/ask</p> <p>You can also book a 1-2-1 appointment with a Royal Literary Fund Fellow.</p> <p>✉: william.ryan@rlfeducation.org.uk or lois.pryce@rlfeducation.org.uk</p>
Study abroad	<p>Part of your programme can be taken at a university abroad, with credits transferred back to Brunel. For details, visit: https://www.brunel.ac.uk/international/exchanges-and-study-abroad-programmes/brunel-students-abroad</p>
Academic appeals	<p>An appeal is when a student requests a review of a decision of the Board of Examiners. For more information, visit: https://www.brunel.ac.uk/life/supporting-you/student-complaints-conduct-and-appeals/academic-appeals</p>
Repeating, transferring or suspending your studies	<p>For information, go to: https://brunelstudents.com/assets/site_resources/ChangeofPlan.pdf</p>
Tutoring@SPS	<p>All students in SPS have access to the Tutoring@SPS programme on Brightspace, which provides programme-specific materials and activities for you to discuss with your Personal Tutor.</p>

FURTHER SUPPORT (Wellbeing)

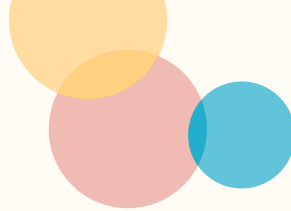
In addition to Departmental support, the University also offers a range of **student wellbeing and support services**. The information in this chart gives an overview of the main sources of support available to you. Many of these services can be accessed via **Brunel Help**.



What kind of support?	Person to contact
Staying safe on campus; and harassment or intimidation	<p>If you see, or experience, or wish to receive advice on or to report, harassment or bullying or hate crime, go to https://reportandsupport.brunel.ac.uk</p> <p>If needed, you can contact the on-campus Brunel Security Team:</p> <p>✉: security-operations@brunel.ac.uk</p> <p>☎: 01895 255 786</p> <p>☎: 66943 (from an internal phone)</p>
Medical Centre and GP	All students may register with a GP at the <u>Brunel Medical Centre</u> .

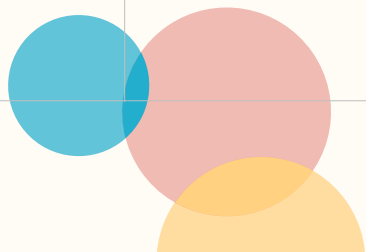


What kind of support?	Person to contact
Mental health and wellbeing	<p>If you experience any mental health struggles, contact Student Support and the Welfare Team. They will help you work things through, and may put you in touch with one of the support services that the university offers, including counselling, art therapy, and others.</p> <p> : studentsupport@brunel.ac.uk</p>
Counselling services	<p>The university offers a counselling and listening service.</p> <p>For more information and to access this support visit: https://students.brunel.ac.uk/brunel-help/</p> <p> : studentsupport@brunel.ac.uk</p>
Disability and Dyslexia service	<p>The university provides a Disability and Dyslexia service. Students who register specific learning difficulties are entitled to reasonable adjustments for their studies and assessments. For more information, visit: https://students.brunel.ac.uk/brunel-help/</p>
Student welfare	<p>The university can provide you with a dedicated welfare officer. For access to this support, visit: https://students.brunel.ac.uk/brunel-help/</p>

What kind of support?	Person to contact
Pregnancy, maternity, paternity and adoption	<p>For advice and support if you are becoming a parent, please visit:</p> <p>https://students.brunel.ac.uk/documents/Policies/2019-20/Student-Pregnancy-Maternity-Paternity-and-Adoption-Policy-Appendix-201920.pdf</p>
Immigration advice	<p>The Student Centre provides a dedicated team to answer immigration enquiries.</p>
Finance and financial hardship	<p>The Union of Brunel Students' Advice and Representation Centre (ARC) can advise on financial matters.</p> <p>For more information visit:</p> <p>http://www.brunelstudents.com/arc/</p> <p>✉: advice@brunel.ac.uk</p> <p>☎: 01895 269 269</p> <p>You can also register for Blackbullion, an online support service for financial queries.</p> <p>For more information visit: https://www.blackbullion.com/</p> <p>If you are experiencing financial hardship, you can apply for a loan from the University Hardship Fund.</p> <p>For more information and to access this support visit:</p> <p>https://students.brunel.ac.uk/brunel-help/</p>



What kind of support?	Person to contact
Housing	<p>The Advice and Representation Centre (ARC) offers accommodation advice. In cases of homelessness, the Student Support and Welfare Team can help by making referrals to external housing support services.</p> <p>For more information visit: https://brunelstudents.com/advice/service/housing/</p> <p>: studentsupport@brunel.ac.uk</p> <p>: 01895 267 045</p>
Activity, connections, and civic engagement	<p>The Union of Brunel Students offers several clubs and societies for you to connect with other students.</p> <p>For more information visit: https://brunelstudents.com/societies/</p> <p>Sport programmes: https://students.brunel.ac.uk/campus/brunel-and-sport/sport-programmes</p> <p>Arts programmes: https://students.brunel.ac.uk/campus/brunel-arts</p> <p>Volunteering: https://students.brunel.ac.uk/career/volunteering</p>



COMMUNITY LIFE 🤝



The Union of Brunel Students has over 100 Societies, including cultural, academic, campaigning, performance, and faith.

<https://brunelstudents.com/>



The **Politics and History Society** will be of particular interest to P&H students.

<https://brunelstudents.com/societies/politics/>



"Your chance to write the news!"

The **Hillingdon Herald** is produced by Brunel journalism students and staff. If you have a story for them, get in touch at

hillingtonherald@gmail.com

Any student from any programme wishing to join the Hillingdon Herald should contact

Steven Cohen

VOICE YOUR OPINION

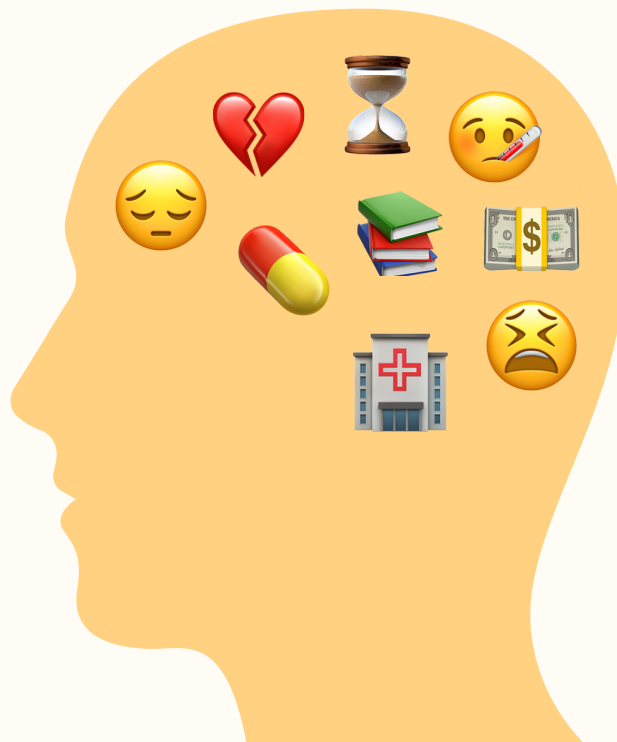
As a student, the feedback that you give on your teaching and learning experience plays a vital role in improving the university experience. Informal feedback is always welcome through conversations with your lecturers or personal tutor. The Union of Brunel Students offers a forum for feedback too. There are also formal mechanisms for feedback, which allow your department and the university to create strategies to improve your time at Brunel. Please see the list below for the opportunities you have to make yourself heard.

Student Experience Committee and Programme Cohort Meetings	Student Experience Committees and Programme Cohort Meetings provide forums for students to raise any issues of concern. They meet regularly and are attended by student representatives who take an active part. To find out who your representative is, contact your division's Student Experience Convenor (see 'Key Staff').
YourVoice	YourVoice module evaluations give you the opportunity to provide feedback on teaching and learning at the module level. Your lecturers use the results to improve teaching and organisation of their modules.
National Student Survey (NSS)	This survey in the second term offers final year undergraduate students the chance to give your views on your learning experience at Brunel. It covers questions of teaching and feedback, access to learning resources, and more.
Informal discussion	Your lecturers and your personal tutor will always be glad to hear feedback informally, on your courses and your university experience. This can be via email or in a one-to-one meeting.

What to do when things DON'T go to

PLAN? ❌

Coursework Extensions and Extenuating Circumstances



There may be times when things go wrong in a way that affects your ability to complete an assessment. Depending on what has happened, you may be able to apply via eVision for extenuating circumstances (ECs) OR a coursework extension (but not both).

ECs and coursework extensions are for significant events that affect your ability to submit work. These events are unavoidable, unexpected and beyond your control.

What happens **NEXT?**



After a Coursework Extension Request

If accepted, the extension is normally granted for 5 working days beyond the set deadline (10 working days for dissertations).

You should apply **at least 48 hours before your deadline**, with evidence to support your claim. You will receive a response within 48 hours.

After an Extenuating Circumstances (EC) Request

The outcome depends on the circumstances, but is likely to be the offer of an uncapped reassessment in the summer resit period.

You can apply up to 5 days after the original deadline, with evidence to support your claim. The decision to accept or reject your request is considered by a monthly EC panel.

If your EC claim is accepted by the EC panel, the outcome is decided by the Board of Examiners, which meets in June.

Full guidance on the extenuating circumstances process and evidence requirements can be found [here](#).

EXAMPLES

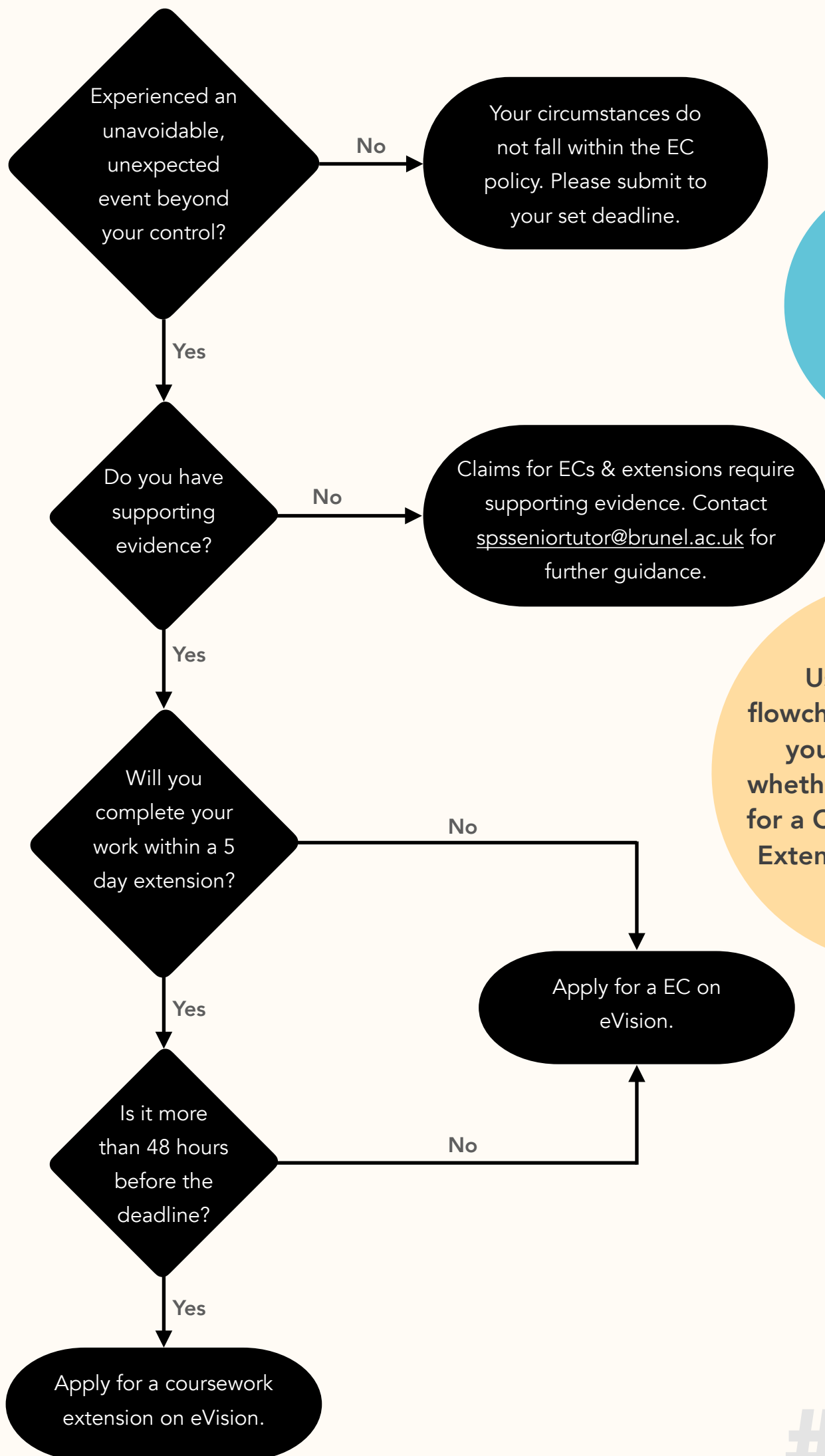
of eligible and non-eligible ECs

✓ Eligible	✗ Non-eligible
Serious illness or injury on the day of a 'live' exam or presentation	Minor illness such as a cough or cold, or short-lived viruses
Extended serious illness for more than 5 days	Mistaking the day or time of an exam or coursework deadline
Death or serious illness of a close relative	General pressure and stress of academic work
Significant domestic or personal problems	Employment, religious observance, holidays or family events
Victim of, or witness to, criminal activity	Personal IT or computer issues



It is very important that you provide evidence to support a request for a coursework extension or an EC.

Talking with your personal tutor and making use of university student wellbeing and support services will make it easier to do this.



Use this flowchart to help you decide whether to apply for a Coursework Extension or an EC.

ASSESSMENT & GOOD PRACTICE



A number of ways of doing things are standard for academic work; they are good practices that are important for you to learn. These include things like the formatting of your work, and ways of indicating what are the origins of the data, information and ideas that you have used to produce your findings.

Failing to follow good practice can lead to **academic misconduct**. The University takes this issue very seriously. Academic misconduct is covered in detail in [Senate Regulation 6](#). Included within this term are a number of things, each of which can incur serious penalties if the regulations are infringed. Amongst these are:

- Plagiarism
- Collusion
- Contract Cheating
- Cheating in Examinations
- Failing to follow ethical principles and requirements in your work

PLAGIARISM

The issue of plagiarism often causes students uncertainty and anxiety. The way to allay anxieties is to inform yourself, and to raise questions with your teachers and your personal tutor.

Plagiarism means passing someone else's work, words, ideas or creations off as your own. It means taking information, data or statistics from a source without saying where it came from – which makes it appear as if you are claiming you created that material. The same applies to images, pictures and diagrams, and to thoughts, ideas and theories. In **some** modules it also applies to use of **all and any websites** that provide AI-generated text or 'paraphrasing services'.



Brunel University defines plagiarism as "the knowing or reckless presentation of another person's work or ideas as one's own, and includes the use of published or unpublished work without **acknowledging the source**".

All students are encouraged to take the online training course on Academic Misconduct. You'll find it at <https://brightspace.brunel.ac.uk/d2l/home/24612>



AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism causes uncertainty because a great deal of the work that we do is based on the work of others - in articles, books, websites etc.

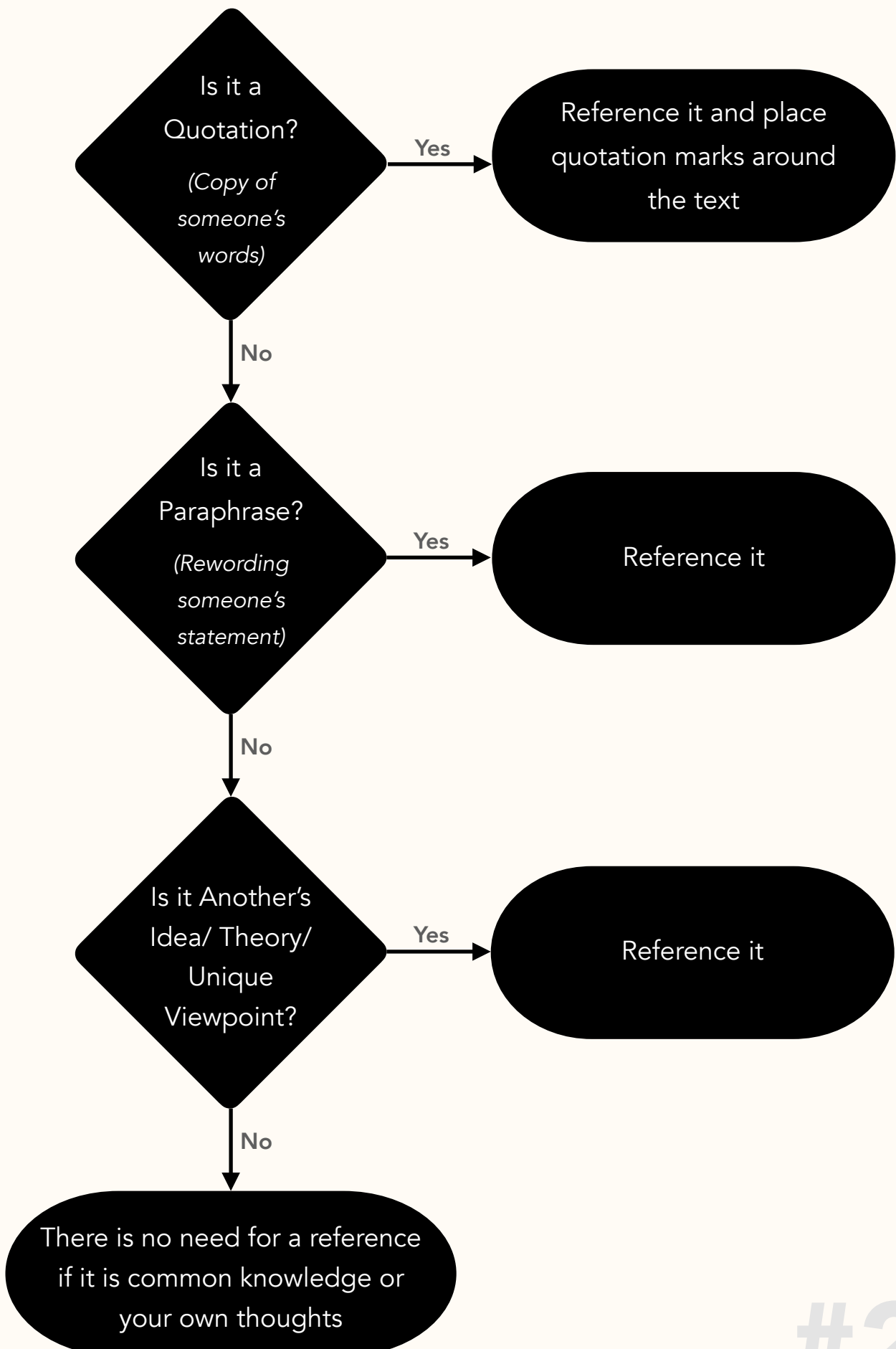
How do we use their findings in our own work if we must not plagiarise?

REFERENCING

One way is to indicate in your work where you are using someone else's exact words. This is known as quotation and quotation marks are put around the text that is quoted. A reference is then given immediately after the quotation (using in-text citations ['Harvard style'] or a little index number keying to a footnote or endnote). If the idea or data that you are referencing is from a particular page (or pages) of a book or article, make sure to include the page number(s) in your reference.

Coursework should be in your own words, not a string of other people's words. So while you should quote really significant statements, you should express most of the material you use in your own words. But even when you are paraphrasing, you need to give references showing where the ideas or information came from. Your reader can then go and look it up themselves, if they wish.

Should I REFERENCE?



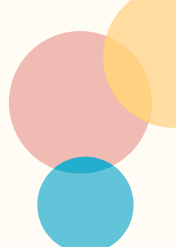


AVOIDING Accidental Plagiarism

Many students worry that they will plagiarise without meaning to actually pretend someone else's work is their own.

The keys to avoiding this are:

- Make sure you always mark quotations properly in your notes.
- Paraphrase by thinking of the meaning of the words and then writing it out yourself, noting the details of where the original thought came from. Do not just change one or two words in a quotation, and do not be tempted to use paraphrasing software as that often produces meaningless sentences and can also trigger the plagiarism detection software that we use.
- Give clear acknowledgement in your writing that you are discussing someone else's view, by writing phrases like 'Cynthia Wang has claimed that...' or 'Yasmin Ali has shown that...' (followed of course by a reference).
- **Do not be shy of giving references.** Academics love to see them and they are a good way of showing off that you have done lots of reading! You should give a reference at the relevant point in your text and list the item of origin in your references list at the end (also known as a Bibliography). **Failure to put a reference in your text at the point you use the material can be plagiarism,** even if you listed the source in your list at the end, as you did not indicate that that specific piece of info was from the source.

- 
- Your references should be genuine: you should have read the item and it should contain what you say it contains. Fake references are often seen as signs of plagiarism, as the student seems to be trying to dissemble as to where the information came from. Remember, your lecturers read widely, and know many of the sources.
 - If you use material from lectures – or quote from lecture slides, you should reference these as you would other items: but first consult your lecturer as to whether it is appropriate for you to use this material. They may prefer you to look at the academic sources (including their own writings) on which the lectures were based.
 - Give yourself enough time when doing assignments, so you have time to think about what you read and express it yourself and are not led to copy and paste because the deadline is half an hour away.
 - Resubmitting or recycling your own work that has already been assessed is a form of plagiarism. Do not be tempted to re-use your old assignments, not even if done somewhere other than Brunel. Our plagiarism detector will pick this up. You can of course discuss things you have discussed before, but you should use fresh material and wording. If you do use a passage from an old assignment, it should be referenced – but actually it's best not to do it at all. An exception is where assignments specify that you can build on a previous one: but whenever this is allowed it is explicitly stated.

Plagiarism can happen not just from reproducing other scholars' work, but also from copying the work of other students.

This also falls under collusion, which we look at next.

GENERATIVE AI

What is generative AI?

Generative AI refers to apps that generate music, images, or text. A well known example is ChatGPT. AI has been incorporated into some search engines, and into Microsoft Office.

The ability to use generative AI is rapidly becoming an important skill that students should be learning at university. However, it does not replace the other skills that are developed in your studies. Therefore, in most programmes it will be used in some of your modules but not in them all.

Can generative AI be used in preparing assessments?

The use of generative AI varies among modules. In some, you may be using it a lot, including for assessed work. In others, you might not be permitted to use AI at all. In the latter cases, if you use AI in submitted work it will be treated as plagiarism and may be referred to the academic misconduct process.

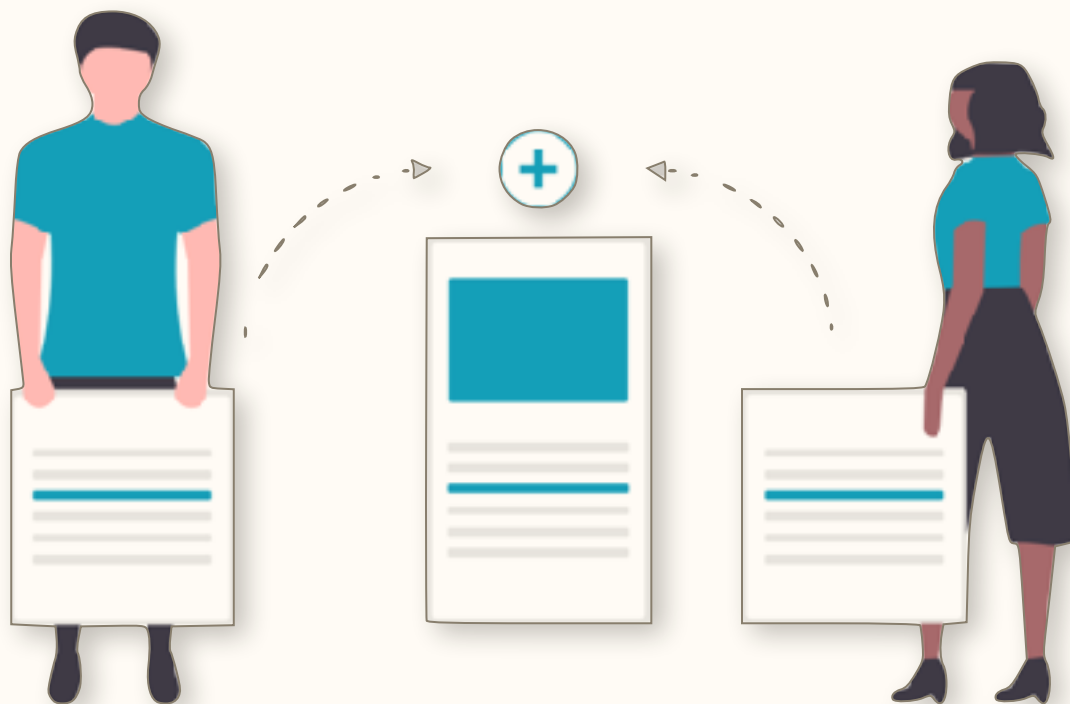
Bear in mind that text generated by AI is frequently inaccurate. In modules where AI is used, double-check the accuracy of any information acquired from AI.

All assignment briefs will clearly signpost whether generative AI is permitted, and the precise nature and form that this may take. If you are unsure whether AI is permitted in a particular assignment, ask your module convenor. They will be happy to clarify.



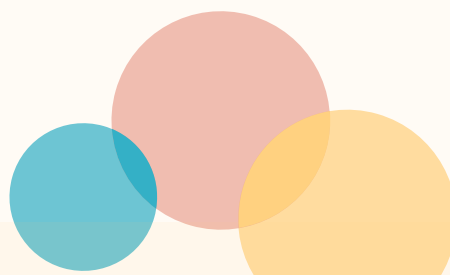
COLLUSION

Collaboration is a vital part of learning, but it stops at the point when individually-assessed work begins. **Collusion** means working with someone else to jointly produce a piece of work that is supposed to be an individual effort, or helping someone else to improve theirs.



Collusion includes showing another student your completed assignment – even if you didn't intend that they gain anything from it. If they then copy your assignment, or parts of it, you may be culpable for collusion, and they for collusion and plagiarism too.

Collusion can occur when one student is struggling with an assignment and asks another for help. Giving advice, or working through materials together, is fine, but the actual assignments must be individual and unique.





AVOIDING Collusion

- Do not show your assignment to another student, or text or email all or parts of it, or make it available online, or leave your laptop unprotected.
- If someone steals your work, you may have to prove that you did not knowingly share it. It is best to avoid having to do this by keeping your work secure. Keep doing this after the deadline: some students may have extensions, or be doing a similar task next year.
- Some assignments involve group work. Their specifications will indicate clearly to what extent students are allowed to share findings etc and how much of the final assignment should consist of individual work. If in any doubt, consult the module tutor.
- Take care if you have been working collaboratively in preparation for an assignment (e.g. by preparing revision notes together). Do not then copy text from your revision notes into your assignment. Your friend may also do exactly the same thing and the result will be two identical papers that look like you have been colluding.

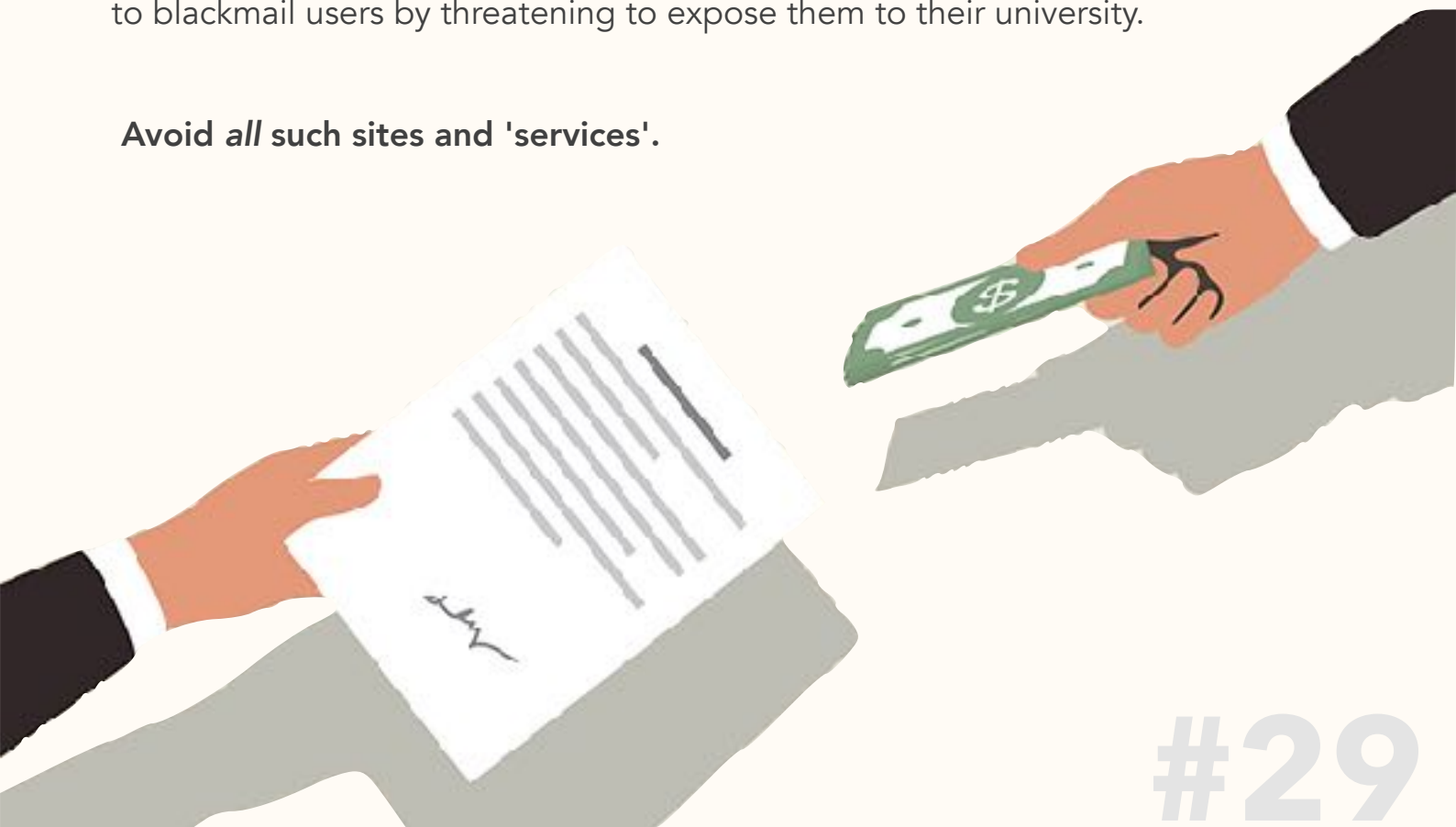
CONTRACT CHEATING

Getting someone else to do your assignment for you is called 'contract cheating'. It is a very serious offence and even a first offence **can lead to expulsion from the university**.

Many sites on the internet offer 'services' to students that basically mean someone else has done the work that you try to gain grades for. Some disguise this as 'expanding your references', 'correcting your grammar' or even just 'proof-reading'. In fact, **any** writing of your work by someone else can fall under the category of contract cheating, whether you have paid for it or not. Do not pay attention to claims by these sites that what they offer is not cheating.

Quite apart from being immoral and exposing you to heavy punishment, usage of websites that promise to do the work for you has no quality control – research has shown that often the material produced by such sites is rubbish that leads to a Fail. You will not get your money back. There are also cases of sites then trying to blackmail users by threatening to expose them to their university.

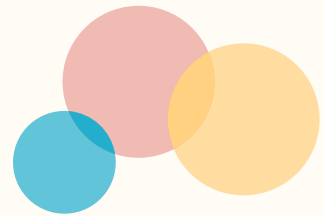
Avoid *all* such sites and 'services'.



EXAMS & ETHICS

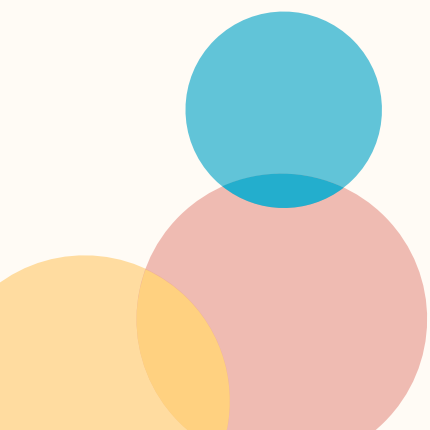
Cheating in Examinations

Examinations, including online examinations, have precise instructions as to what you can and cannot do. Breaching these is regarded as cheating and is very serious. It can include carrying notes, asking someone else for the answers, sharing materials online or by social media during an examination, copying someone else's work.



Following ethical principles in your research

All research projects in the University must keep to ethical standards of research practice, to protect the researcher and the rights and safety of anyone who is an object of the research. A research project (such as a dissertation) that is likely to involve such issues must have ethical approval from the university before research begins. Guidelines on ethical matters will be given in briefings for all research projects. The Brunel Research Ethics portal is at BREO.brunel.ac.uk



CHECKLIST

to avoid Academic Misconduct

Avoiding plagiarism at all stages:



Reading and note taking:

- Where exactly did the information come from?
- Can I express its meaning in my own words?



Drafting:

- Have I embedded references in the text as I write?
- Have I prepared an up-to-date list of references?



Proof-reading:

- Have I referenced all ideas and arguments that weren't my own idea?
- Have I checked that all my quotations are accurate and properly indicated with quotation marks and reference, with page numbers where possible?
- Did I copy and paste at all? If so, go back and reword, or make sure there are quotation marks.
- Have I checked that the references in my text and those in my Reference List/Bibliography match?
- Is my work in a secure place and not accessible to others?

THE FUTURE

& the of work

Master's programmes at Brunel	In SPS and across Brunel University the full range of opportunities for Master's study is on offer. For further info: https://www.brunel.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-study
Kicking off your career	The Professional Development Centre (PDC) offers a wide range of support, including career advice, help with CVs, job applications and interviews; graduate jobs; part-time work; placements and internships. For more: https://students.brunel.ac.uk/career/advice-from-our-career-consultants
Career-focused mentoring	You can attend careers sessions with alumni students and sign up to be mentored by a graduate student working in your chosen career. For more: https://www.brunel.ac.uk/study/schools-and-colleges/widening-access/our-mentoring-programmmes/What-is-mentoring
Work experience and volunteering	Brunel can introduce you to a wide range of work-related opportunities including placements, internships & volunteering. Find out more here: https://www.brunel.ac.uk/pdc/volunteers:
Keeping in touch	Whether for networking, or staying in touch with old acquaintances, or keeping in the loop with Brunel alumni events, you'll find out more here: https://www.brunel.ac.uk/alumni/Brunel-Alumni/Your-alumni-network