Good practice guidance for staff on designing assessments to minimise opportunities for academic misconduct as defined in the Academic Misconduct Procedure paragraph 22.

Cheating, plagiarism, contract cheating and collusion have become increasingly widespread throughout the higher education sector and Brunel takes a hard-line where there is evidence of a student committing any type of academic misconduct. Academic Misconduct 'represents a threat to academic standards and academic integrity and in turn to UK Higher Education as a whole. The University has an obligation to ensure that the awards it makes meet nationally agreed standards and that academic integrity is maintained. The most effective approach to reducing or eliminating cheating, contract cheating and plagiarism is through a combination of teaching about academic integrity and designing assessments that minimise opportunities.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide options, suggestions, and advice on designing assessments to minimise the opportunities for academic misconduct. Some of the proposals are only currently possible with particular FLOW types in WISEflow and this is explained in the guidance below. For further information and advice about FLOW software please contact the Digital Education Team wiseflowhelp@brunel.ac.uk).

Assessment method / good teaching practise	Rationale and implementation
Ensure your students know and understand what academic misconduct is and how to avoid it.	• Discuss the importance of academic integrity in your teaching sessions; explain what academic misconduct is and give instructions and tips on how to avoid it. • Embed the LibSmart Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism online module into your programme delivery and ensure students complete it at least annually. • Signpost students to the Academic Skills Service (ASK) and the Academic Liaison Librarians in the Library, both of which can offer academic support to students and ensure students are informed about and understand what cheating, collusion, contract cheating and plagiarism are, as defined in the Academic Misconduct Procedure and Contract Cheating Guidance for Students. • Provide opportunities for students to ask questions about Brunel's expectations around academic integrity and academic misconduct. When students know that they will be held accountable, they are less likely to cheat. • The Module outline should include expectations of authorised and unauthorised sources of academic assistance or collaboration. Staff should take time to discuss these expectations, sharing some concrete examples of authorised support or collaboration.

Ask students to agree to an 'Academic Integrity' statement before or after the online assessment	• Depending on the type of FLOW being used (see further below), start, or end online assessments and exams with a statement which students must agree to which confirms that they understand what academic integrity and academic misconduct are and that they agree they will not knowingly or recklessly commit academic misconduct during the online assessment. There may be some psychological impact on students after reading an 'Academic Integrity' statement right before an exam begins, which may deter students who were thinking about cheating.
	    o With FLOWassign and FLOWhandin, such a statement would be enforceable at the end of the exam before hand-in by a tick button.
	    o With FLOWmulti a message can be displayed at the start of the exam but not at the end, (although bear in mind that students can skip it which mitigates against enforceability).
	• Manually add to the start of the exam or online assessment explicit instructions on what a student can and cannot do. For example, "This assessment is an open-book exam, you may use your book and your notes during the assessment. However, do not share your answers with others during the test. "It is also good to get students to reaffirm that they completed it on their own before they click on submit exam. Similarly, if using FLOWassign or FLOWhandin for submission of assignments, get students to affirm that it is entirely their own work at the hand-in stage.

Break up a single high-stakes exam into a series of mini tests	• Reduce the pressure of big high-stakes exam that amounts to a large proportion of the students' grade by giving them a series of frequent mini tests. This may minimise the urge to cheat as it reduces the value and stress associated with one exam. This does require a minor modification to the Block Outline so Quality (quality-officers@brunel.ac.uk) would need to be consulted.
Make sure the assignment deliverables are unique and specific	• Do not recycle the same assignments or questions within a three-year period, as students may have seen and studied past papers used within that time frame.
Require evidence of the assessment process	• When you require evidence of the assessment process, it is harder for students to find pre-constructed responses. Ask students to submit evidence of their information gathering and planning, or have staged assessment where students submit partially completed work prior to final submission.
Create authentic assessments	• Create assignments and exam questions that focus on personal reflection and self-evaluation and which challenge students to answer open-ended questions about their own learning, as this prompts students to integrate course content into their own experience. It will be more challenging

	to ask a friend or "Google" the answer when the questions require students to explain, analyse, infer, create, compose, evaluate, and authentically demonstrate their mastery of module content. • If possible or appropriate, ask students to draw on their knowledge from other modules too within the assignment. This will encourage original thought and synthesis and discourage cheating. • Require that students have to include a certain number of sources from module recommended reading lists (books/journals) when undertaking their work.
Randomise and vary questions	• Investigate options for using a variety of questions and randomise the answer order for applicable questions. • Use varied question types. Refrain from having an exam with all multiple choice or true and false questions and include open-ended questions. It is more difficult for students to give the same response as their friends verbatim for open-ended questions, and students would be forced to explain their responses using specific details and supporting narratives that are unique to their own understanding of the course materials.
Change test question sequence and offer different versions of the same test.	• In the test settings, have the order of test questions be different for each exam along with the order of answer choices for each test question. Students are tech savvy and may attempt to employ screen sharing technologies in an effort to take the exam at the same time as their classmates and share answers. • It is recommended to have many different versions of the same test so that in the event that students are taking the test in the same physical space, it will be less likely for them to have all of the same questions.
Set-up the exam to show one question at a time	• For some assessments, it may be possible and appropriate to choose the test setting that only allows one question to appear on the screen at a time. This avoids students quickly looking over all of the test questions and having multiple tabs open to research answers to questions, or even having family and friends responsible for a certain set of questions. It also means that students cannot speak to a friend and then go back to previous questions in Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) and change their answer. • This sort of assessment design may be most appropriate in short exams where there are only a few questions, or where the questions naturally build on each other such that the answer to the preceding question is relevant to the next question and answer.

	• Consideration should be given to the appropriateness of using this assessment technique for very lengthy MCQs, and in circumstances where students are specifically encouraged to check and review their exam answers. • Should this method of assessment design be chosen, clear guidance and advice would need to be given to students well ahead of the exams that they must answer the questions numerically in the order that they appear in the exam and that they will not be able to go back to questions and add to their answers once they have moved onto the next question. Clear instructions about this would also need to be given at the beginning of the assessment. This is particularly important for our neurodivergent students who may process and approach information in a different way and who may already require exam adjustments, such as extra time.
Use Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)	• A large bank of questions that can be rotated is desirable when using MCQs. • Rotation of the answer for each question should be employed (i.e. the correct answer is randomised from the same stem question). • Questions should be of sufficient complexity to prevent easy recall.
Utilise the functionality of WISEflow to design varied assessments	• **Similarity Report –** software to check free text for plagiarism (Ouriginal – formerly Urkund available on FLOWassign and FLOWlock exams only. • **Enforceable Originality Confirmation** tick box on the cover sheet at the end of the exam where students must agree the work is their own before they hand in (FLOWassign and FLOWhandin only). • **Video or Audio Submission** as an alternative for written text. Perhaps as a supplement to written assessment. • **FLOWlock** – Recommended for on-campus exams to ensure no other applications are accessed. Requires installation and invigilator supervision for any issues. • **Whitelisting** – controlled access to external resources e.g. publications, applications in an otherwise locked exam environment. • **Facial Recognition** used to verify identity of person taking the exam. May be suitable for external accrediting body requirement but not a plagiarism deterrent. • **FLOWcombine** – different FLOW types in one exam environment e.g. Essay and MCQ. Enables a similarity report on the essay section. • **Further Information on FLOW types here.**

This good practice guidance has been based on the following publications / sources of information, which also provide additional reading:

- JISC report on 'Digital assessment in higher education'
- QAA Paper Assessing with integrity in digital delivery
- QAA Guidance: Contracting to cheat in Higher Education: How to address Essay Mills and Contract Cheating
- Designing online assessments to minimise cheating | Towards Open Learning (wordpress.com)
- Fourteen Simple Strategies to Reduce Cheating on Online Examinations | Faculty Focus
- Minimising Plagiarism and Cheating - Teaching & Learning | University of Tasmania (utas.edu.au)
- Ten Course Design Strategies to Minimize Cheating - Ecampus Course Development and Training (oregonstate.edu)