

Based on responses from 14,086 Australian university students and 1,147 Australian university teaching staff, it is clear that academic staff and students share very different concerns about contract cheating. Most staff (76.5%) reported being moderately to extremely concerned about contract cheating (Bretag & Harper et al., 2018). In contrast, 60% of students were not at all to only moderately concerned about the issue. When the student responses were separated into those who had reported engaging in cheating behaviours and those who had not, there was *no significant difference* between the two groups (Bretag & Harper et al., 2018). It appears that non-cheating students do not recognise the threat that their peer's cheating behaviours pose to the value of their own learning and qualifications.

Scenario

Jian Li is an experienced academic teaching in a final year law course. One day, he receives an email from someone purporting to be a freelance writer who receives and completes students' assessment work. In the email, the writer claims that they have completed an order for a student in Jian's course, and has used the login details provided by the student to submit the assessment via the University's Learning Management System. The writer claims that they have not been paid for the work done for this student. They provides the name and email address of the student, and attaches the work completed for the student to the email. Upon opening the document, it becomes clear to Jian that the piece of work is part of a group project. Jian investigates the case and finds that indeed, the student has cheated. As part of his investigation into the case, Jian calls in all the students in the group. While all of the other students in the group had been aware of this student's cheating behaviour, none had reported their concerns to anyone. From their point of view, it was the student's choice to cheat in that way and that the student was only harming himself.

Points for discussion

1. What are some of the critical issues in this case?
2. How might Jian turn this situation into a teachable moment for this group of students and for the class?
3. Consider the students in the group who did not cheat - did they act with integrity?
4. What else could and should Jian do as a result of this case?

References

- Bretag, T., Harper, R., Burton, M., Ellis, C., Newton, P., Saddiqui, S., Rozenberg, P & van Haeringen, K. (2018). Contract cheating: A survey of Australian university students, *Studies in Higher Education*, 1-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2018.1462788>
- Harper, R., Bretag, T., Ellis, C., Newton, P., Rozenberg, P., Saddiqui, S., & van Haeringen, K. (2018). Contract cheating: a survey of Australian university staff. *Studies in Higher Education*, 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2018.1462789>

Further resources available at www.cheatingandassessment.edu.au/

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