

Quantitative and qualitative findings from both the student and staff surveys indicate that knowing our students is critical for fostering academic integrity in teaching, learning and assessment. Students who have engaged in cheating reported a more negative experience on three teaching and learning items, which together were labelled the **Personalised Teaching and Learning relationship**:

- I have opportunities to approach my lecturers and tutors for assistance
- My lecturers and tutors ensure that I understand what is required in assignments
- I receive sufficient feedback to ensure that I learn from the work I do.



Design assessment to get to know students

Students' qualitative responses also showed clearly that cheating can be rationalised when there is a perceived absence of care or interest from educators or the institution:

*The less personal higher education becomes, the higher the rates of cheating [...] To improve the levels of cheating we must ask why these students are feeling the need to cheat- is there too much pressure and not enough engagement?? [...] **students don't feel valued, and the lecturers don't care about the students so why would they value their learning/work?** (Student 145, non-cheating).*

Building relationships with students not only helps to improve engagement and minimise cheating, it also helps to detect cheating when it occurs. Among staff who have suspected cases of contract cheating, the most common signal (in over 70% of cases) was their knowledge of the student. The most common strategies to prevent cheating were getting to know students, and using formative in-class assessment:

*If you connect with the students and allow them to feel **comfortable with making mistakes/asking questions in non-assessable forums**, then you gain trust. The students feel like they can "risk" being themselves, rather than purchasing/borrowing the previously successful work of others. University is a fragile time for most students ... I also make sure that assessments are set which **require handwritten responses/details (i.e. names)**. I keep their weekly handwritten quizzes and **can easily compare these to the final exam papers** (Staff 293).*

Use authentic, relevant assessment

'Authenticity' on its own is unlikely to minimise contract cheating. An analysis of online requests posted to multiple cheat sites, along with breach reports from two universities, showed that even highly authentic tasks are routinely outsourced. There is some evidence to indicate that while authentic assessment cannot prevent cheating, it may make detection of cheating more likely.

Staff signalled that tasks should not only be authentic to students' future lives, but also to where they are in their learning journey. Some students suggested that discipline areas would benefit from engaging students as partners in designing assessment. This would give students more ownership in the teaching, learning and assessment process.

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

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