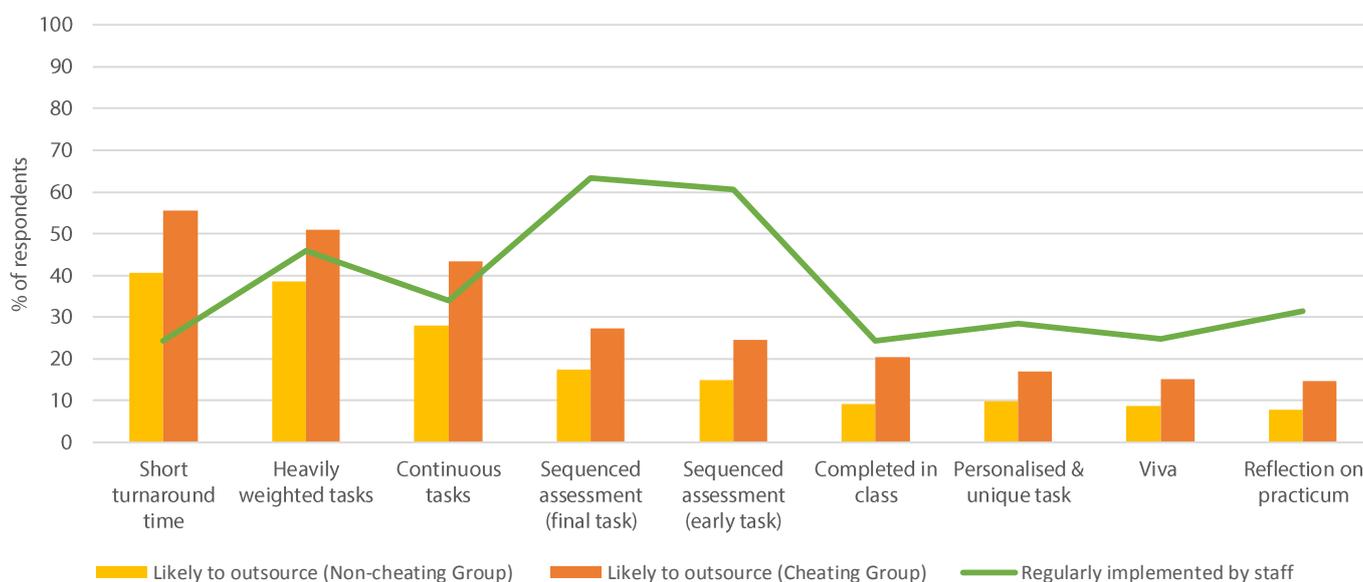**contract cheating and assessment design**

Managing risk for different assessment types

Students were asked to rate the likelihood that a student would consider getting someone else to complete a range of assessment types for them. Staff were provided the same range of assessment types and asked how often each assessment type is used in their courses. Based on responses from 14,086 students and 1,147 staff, it was found that none of the assessment types investigated were immune from a likelihood of contract cheating. However, some assessment types were far more likely to be outsourced than others. Unfortunately, the assessments that students reported were least likely to be outsourced are used infrequently by staff. While no assessment types are *inherently* good or bad, all carry academic integrity challenges and advantages that need to be considered in design and implementation. The advice below outlines the challenges and advantages of a range of assessment tasks (including some that were highlighted by data elsewhere in the study), and how they can be managed to foster academic integrity.

Legend: ▮ Likely to outsource (Non-cheating Group) ▮ Likely to outsource (Cheating Group) ━ Regularly implemented by staff

1. Short turnaround time

Risk The assessment most likely to prompt considerations of outsourcing. Other research shows these tasks are also commonly outsourced to paid services. Unreasonable pressure to expect all students to understand assessment requirements in a short timeframe.

Value May be more authentic than an invigilated exam. May replicate certain workplace conditions that are relevant for future practice.

Strategy Provide early, low-stakes practice and feedback on similar/practice tasks. Allow peer collaboration if appropriate. Follow up the submission with a viva, to check that outsourcing has not occurred.

2. Heavily weighted assessment

Risk The second most likely assessment type to prompt considerations of outsourcing. Amplifies the pressure to pass. Often comes in the form of invigilated exams, which are the site of a considerable amount of undetected cheating.

Value Concentrates effort (for students and staff) on a single meaningful task. High-stakes tasks may be authentic in some contexts.

Strategy Provide ample prior practice and feedback opportunities. Break the task up into sequential components, submitted over time for feedback and monitoring of progress. Minimise the impact of failure on progression (e.g. supplementary assessment).

3. Continuous assessment

Risk Engaging in weekly learning for marks can be seen as trivial. Integrity issues also depend on format (e.g. online quizzes have different issues from in-class tasks, *see below).

Value Promote regular engagement, and provide regular feedback for students and staff. Good for getting to know each student.

Strategy Ensure weighting and task conditions support a primarily formative purpose: practice, sharing and feedback.

4. In-class assessment

Risk Inflexible (requires attendance). Inauthentic. Logistically difficult to invigilate. Can create exam-type pressure (depending on weighting).

Value Get to know students' capabilities. Good for formative peer and tutor feedback. Less likely to be outsourced.

Strategy Have a primary purpose: formative or summative? Practice, sharing and feedback? Or verification of learning? Set weighting and conditions accordingly.

5. Personalised and unique

Risk May discourage positive forms of peer learning. Not always scalable for large cohorts (e.g. can be time-consuming).

Value Reduces the degree of collusion possible. Students perceive that cheating is more easily detected. Students can feel more engaged.

Strategy Clarify why tasks are individualised. Clarify what students can collaborate on, and what they cannot.

6. Vivas

Risk Logistically difficult. . Not always scalable for large cohorts (e.g. can be time-consuming). Can create exam-type pressure.

Value Assess verbal skills more authentically than a presentation. Add to variety of assessment. Less likely to be outsourced.

Strategy Have a primary purpose: Practice, sharing, feedback? Or verification of learning? Set weighting and conditions accordingly.

7. Reflection on a practicum

Risk Students see value only in the experience, not in the reflection. Reflective writing is typically not taught, and difficult to mark.

Value Can assess what was *learned* (not just what was done), and evaluative judgement. Less likely to be outsourced.

Strategy Teach reflection as a genre. Make marking criteria clear, and aligned to course objectives. Consider oral rather than written.

*Online quizzes

Risk Collusion is commonplace, and nearly impossible to avoid. Students see them as trivial and rationalise cheating to complete them.

Value They can encourage engagement, incremental learning, and offer regular feedback. Can be cheap and efficient.

Strategy Make them formative and voluntary – for learning, not assessment. Give them a clear purpose (e.g. apply learning soon after the quiz).

* Student reports of cheating in quizzes *more than doubled* staff reports of detection. In addition, students' qualitative responses discussed cheating in online quizzes more than any other topic. Despite this, many staff reported *increased* use of online quizzes (partly because they are cheap and expedient). But, well aware of the prevalence of cheating, staff also expressed concerns about the impact of online quizzes on academic integrity.

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*. doi:10.1080/03075079.2018.1462788

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