

# Communiqué: Academic Integrity in Online Assessment

Assessment can be stressful, both for lecturers and students, especially if it takes place in an unfamiliar environment, such as the online platform. The last thing you want to do is get into trouble because you didn't know or follow the rules. So, what do you need to know about academic integrity and honesty?

## What is academic integrity and why is it important?

It means that your work is your own. It shows what you can do and what you know about the content. We assume that you are at Stellenbosch University to learn. In order for us to determine whether you have learned and have achieved the outcomes of a module or programme, we need to know that the work we are assessing is your own. Honesty and transparency are two of SU's core values, and the University expects its students and staff to act ethically at all times.

## Why should I be academically honest?

The purpose of assessment is to determine whether you have achieved the outcomes of a module or programme. For instance, will you be a reliable doctor or a trustworthy teacher? If you pass your courses by submitting work that is not your own, or share your work for others to pass off as their own, you could endanger yourself and others or damage your own reputation as well as that of the institution and other people. Academic dishonesty also creates a false impression about what you know, and shows that you are not taking responsibility for your own work. It further means that you ignore SU's value of accountability and that you do not meet the University's [graduate attributes of being an engaged citizen and a well-rounded individual](#).

## What is SU's view of academic integrity?

SU views students as adults on a path to responsible citizenship. Therefore, it expects honesty and integrity from its students and staff.

## What is allowed in online assessments and what is not?

The rules for online assessment are the same as for face-to-face assessments. You may present no work that is not your own without acknowledging it as such. The same examination rules apply in the **online environment** as elsewhere; for instance, you may not engage in social media

group chats, take screenshots, send voice notes to peers, collaborate with fellow students for individual assessments, falsify anyone's identity or use another person's work. Familiarise yourself with the rules for each assessment task. **Carefully read** the declaration that you sign before taking a test or when submitting a task, because it will include the rules specific to that test or task. If you are still unsure, ask your lecturer or tutor.

### What is plagiarism?

Plagiarism is a type of academic dishonesty that entails using ideas, material and other intellectual property from someone else's work and presenting it as your own. It includes inappropriate re-using of your own previously presented, marked or published work without proper referencing or the prior consent of your lecturer or supervisor.

### Turnitin is your friend

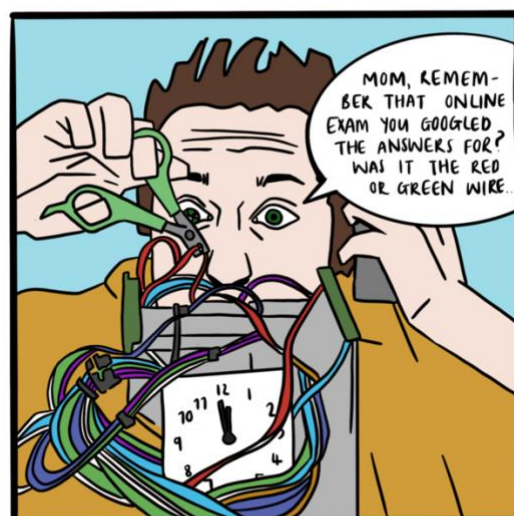
Use Turnitin to help you ensure the integrity of your work. It is easy to plagiarise unintentionally. Turnitin is a text-matching tool that checks for originality and similarity, not for plagiarism in itself. Thus it can help you spot issues in your work you might have overlooked, such as insufficient paraphrasing or overuse of direct quotations. If you are unsure how to paraphrase, [please contact the Language Centre](#) for online language support.

### What could happen if I use work that is not my own?

SU's [Policy on Plagiarism \(in support of Academic Integrity\)](#) states that "allegations of plagiarism are a serious matter" which may have "serious consequences for the person concerned". These consequences could include suspension or expulsion as well as criminal or civil proceedings, or both.

### What does it imply if I click "I agree" on the integrity declaration?

When you click on "I agree", you tell us that you have **read and understood** the rules, which implies that you can be held accountable to the rules and will be unable to claim ignorance.



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# Academic Integrity Checklist for Online Engagement

## Play it safe:

- Avoid sharing your SU log-in details with others.
- Be careful with the way you share information online. If you take screenshots, record or copy any kind of online information – you are taking responsibility for someone else’s intellectual property or private information. You need their explicit permission to share it and you need to credit them appropriately.
- Ask permission before you record any kind of online engagement (whether a webinar, an audio call or text-based communication).
- Remember that all the above pointers apply to your online activities on social media and groups chats, too – not just to SUNLearn.
- Do not hire a third party to complete your academic work for you, whether online or face-to-face.

## Ensure that you can tick all of the following:

- I **collaborated on a group task** and indicated all collaboration in my assignment.
- I did not **share my work** with fellow students, either electronically or by showing or discussing it with them, thus enabling them to pass it off as their own.
- I did not **use another person’s work** and present it as my own.
- I did not **buy or acquire any part of this work** from another person and am not submitting such work as my own.
- I **proofread** my work before submitting it to check for unintentional plagiarism.

## Avoid unintentional plagiarism in your written work:

- I **cited** the sources of information in all formats.
- I provided citations where I **paraphrased**.
- Where I reproduced **exact wording**, I used quotation marks and cited the source.
- I applied a bibliographical **system** to acknowledge the foundations of **my argument**.
- I did not self-plagiarise by reusing **my own, previously submitted work** without citing it and justifying doing so.
- I did not use **someone else’s** work and pass it off as my own.
- Where we **collaborated** on a group task, it is indicated as such.