

Practical assessment strategies to prevent students from plagiarising

Strategy	What to do	Reason
Integrate and time your assessment tasks appropriately	Spread your assessment tasks over the semester, don't bunch them all at the end, and relate your tasks together so that in completing each task students are acquiring knowledge and skills to apply in the next task (Bloxham & Boyd, 2007). For example, start with a smaller task – an annotated bibliography for up to three journal articles, which helps students to develop knowledge and skill to complete a larger task – an essay.	Reduces students' anxiety and stress due to study workload
Time your assessment tasks appropriately	Check/discuss with colleagues in concurrent core units of study when their assessment tasks are due, and stagger yours (and theirs) accordingly	Reduces students' anxiety and stress due to study workload
Set authentic assessment tasks	Set tasks (essay, exam, etc.) based on real-world scenarios that are relevant to students' future careers.	Students are much less likely to perceive the assessment tasks as trivial and/or irrelevant and so make a genuine effort
Regularly change your assessment questions and/or topics (Bloxham & Boyd, 2007)	Change your questions each time you teach your unit of study, e.g., by setting questions based on recent real-world events, or current/contemporary cases or scenarios (Bloxham & Boyd, 2007; Carroll & Appleton, 2001; James, McInnis & Devlin, 2002)	Students are prevented from copying previous students' work because it is on different topics
Set questions that require students to focus on achieving higher order outcomes such as 'evaluate' or 'create', rather than lower order outcomes such as 'describe' and 'explain' (Carroll & Appleton, 2001)	Avoid: "Explain the effects of obesity on public health" Instead use: "Create a set of five criteria and standards for judging the quality of websites about obesity, and apply your criteria/standards to three websites, one of which is the best and one of which is the worst" (adapted from Designing out plagiarism: A brief guide for busy academics, University of Surrey ¹) Avoid: "Compare and contrast economic theories X and Y" Instead use: "Locate three websites or printed texts that deal with X economic theory, then contrast the views expressed in these sources with the economic situation in country Y, and make recommendations for this country's economic future" (adapted from Carroll, J., & Appleton, J., 2001, <i>Plagiarism: A good practice guide</i>)	Students perceive that the task requires original thought or an original voice. The task is more challenging and students cannot as easily expend the least amount of effort (by copying from readily available material) in obtaining high grades
Require a reflective writing component in an assignment (Bloxham & Boyd, 2007)	Ask students to reflect on their personal experience, e.g., of significant learning moments during their completion of the assignment, or during their fieldwork or practice placement experience (James, McInnis & Devlin, 2002)	Students perceive that the task requires original thought or an original voice
Require students to complete an assignment checklist	Ask students to complete and sign a checklist indicating that they have not plagiarised in their assignment, and attach it to their submission (Le Masurier, 2010). Include questions such as, "If you have paraphrased have you attributed the source in the text? Apart from quotations, are all the words your own?" (p. 7).	Students perceive that academic dishonesty is not condoned by staff, and there are consequences in their unit of study or course if they plagiarise
Change the format of your task	Instead of setting an essay or report, ask students to produce a poster, infographic or video, with the aim of educating other students and/or the general public (How to design assessment tasks to avoid plagiarism , Edith Cowan University).	Students perceive that the task requires original thought and are more likely to perceive it as purposeful rather than trivial. Creative tasks that do not rely solely on writing help students to build confidence in their ability to express an argument using an original voice

¹This task could be preceded by a smaller assessment task in which students learn how to write criteria and standard statements for application in professional contexts.

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