

Breaking bad? Contract cheating and the threat to standards

4th November 2015

A/Professor Jon Yorke

Director, Assessment and Quality Learning, Curtin University

Academic integrity

... at the heart of quality and standards

2014



the guardian

News | World | Sport | Comment | Culture | Business | Environment | Science | Travel | T

News > UK news > Crime

Failing student jailed for trying to bribe professor

Yang Li offered University of Bath professor £5,000 in cash to change mark for dissertation, court told

Share 0
Tweet 0
+1 15
in Share 0
Email

Press Association
theguardian.com, Wednesday 24 April 2013 00.37 AEST

2013



The Sydney Morning Herald

National

Can your BANIBE

Investigations | Interactives | Health | Child Abuse Inquiry | Public Service News | World War 1 Centenary

You are here: Home > National > Education >

Students enlist MyMaster website to write essays, assignments

November 12, 2014

Amy McNeillage and Lisa Visentin

Read later

2015



FOUR CORNERS

Investigative journalism at its best

50 YEARS YOUR STORIES. OUR HISTORY ▶

4C Home | Past Episodes | Have Your Say | About Us | Contact Us

Degrees of Deception

Linton Besser and Peter Cronau
20 Apr 2015

Australia has been gripped by a national debate over how to fund our university education. But perhaps there's a more important question: what is it worth?

More

Academic integrity

... at the heart of quality and standards



Australian Government

Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency



TEQSA



Report on Student Academic Integrity and Allegations of Contract Cheating by University Students

<http://www.teqsa.gov.au/news-publications/report-student-academic-integrity-and-allegations-contract-cheating-university>

7th Asia Pacific Conference on Educational Integrity

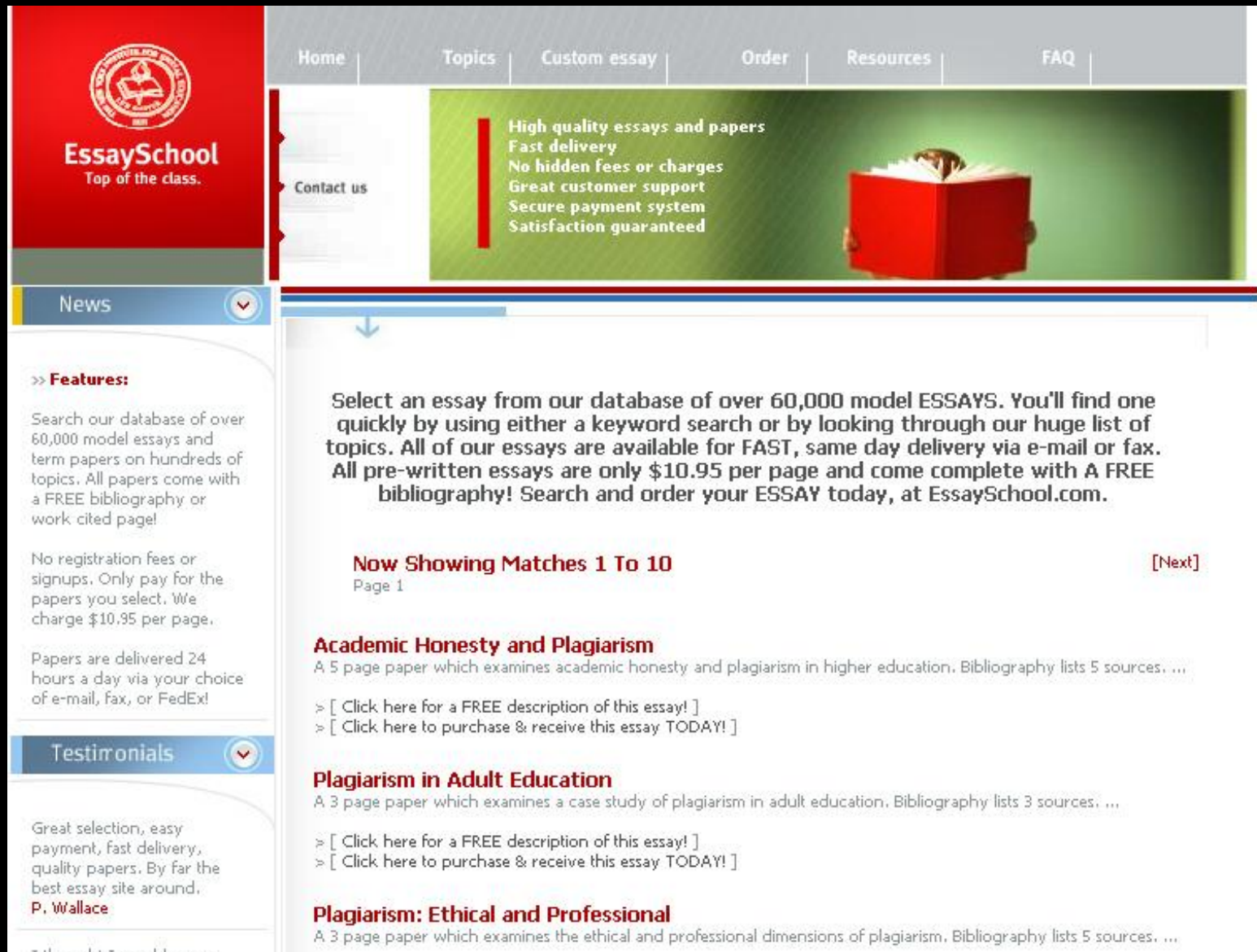
7APCEI: the APFEI biennial conference hosted by Charles Sturt University, 16-18 November 2015

www.7apcei.com



Curtin University

'Essay-for-sale' websites are very common



The screenshot shows the EssaySchool website. The header includes navigation links: Home, Topics, Custom essay, Order, Resources, and FAQ. The main banner features a red book icon and lists services: High quality essays and papers, Fast delivery, No hidden fees or charges, Great customer support, Secure payment system, and Satisfaction guaranteed. A sidebar on the left contains a 'News' section with a 'Features' subsection, detailing the database size, pricing, and delivery options. Below the sidebar is a 'Testimonials' section with a quote from P. Wallace. The main content area displays a search result for 'Academic Honesty and Plagiarism' and 'Plagiarism in Adult Education', each with a brief description and links for more information or purchase.

EssaySchool
Top of the class.

Home | Topics | Custom essay | Order | Resources | FAQ

High quality essays and papers
Fast delivery
No hidden fees or charges
Great customer support
Secure payment system
Satisfaction guaranteed

News

>> Features:

Search our database of over 60,000 model essays and term papers on hundreds of topics. All papers come with a FREE bibliography or work cited page!

No registration fees or signups. Only pay for the papers you select. We charge \$10.95 per page.

Papers are delivered 24 hours a day via your choice of e-mail, fax, or FedEx!

Testimonials

Great selection, easy payment, fast delivery, quality papers. By far the best essay site around.
P. Wallace

Select an essay from our database of over 60,000 model ESSAYS. You'll find one quickly by using either a keyword search or by looking through our huge list of topics. All of our essays are available for FAST, same day delivery via e-mail or fax. All pre-written essays are only \$10.95 per page and come complete with A FREE bibliography! Search and order your ESSAY today, at EssaySchool.com.

Now Showing Matches 1 To 10 [Next]

Page 1

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism
A 5 page paper which examines academic honesty and plagiarism in higher education. Bibliography lists 5 sources. ...
> [Click here for a FREE description of this essay!]
> [Click here to purchase & receive this essay TODAY!]

Plagiarism in Adult Education
A 3 page paper which examines a case study of plagiarism in adult education. Bibliography lists 3 sources. ...
> [Click here for a FREE description of this essay!]
> [Click here to purchase & receive this essay TODAY!]

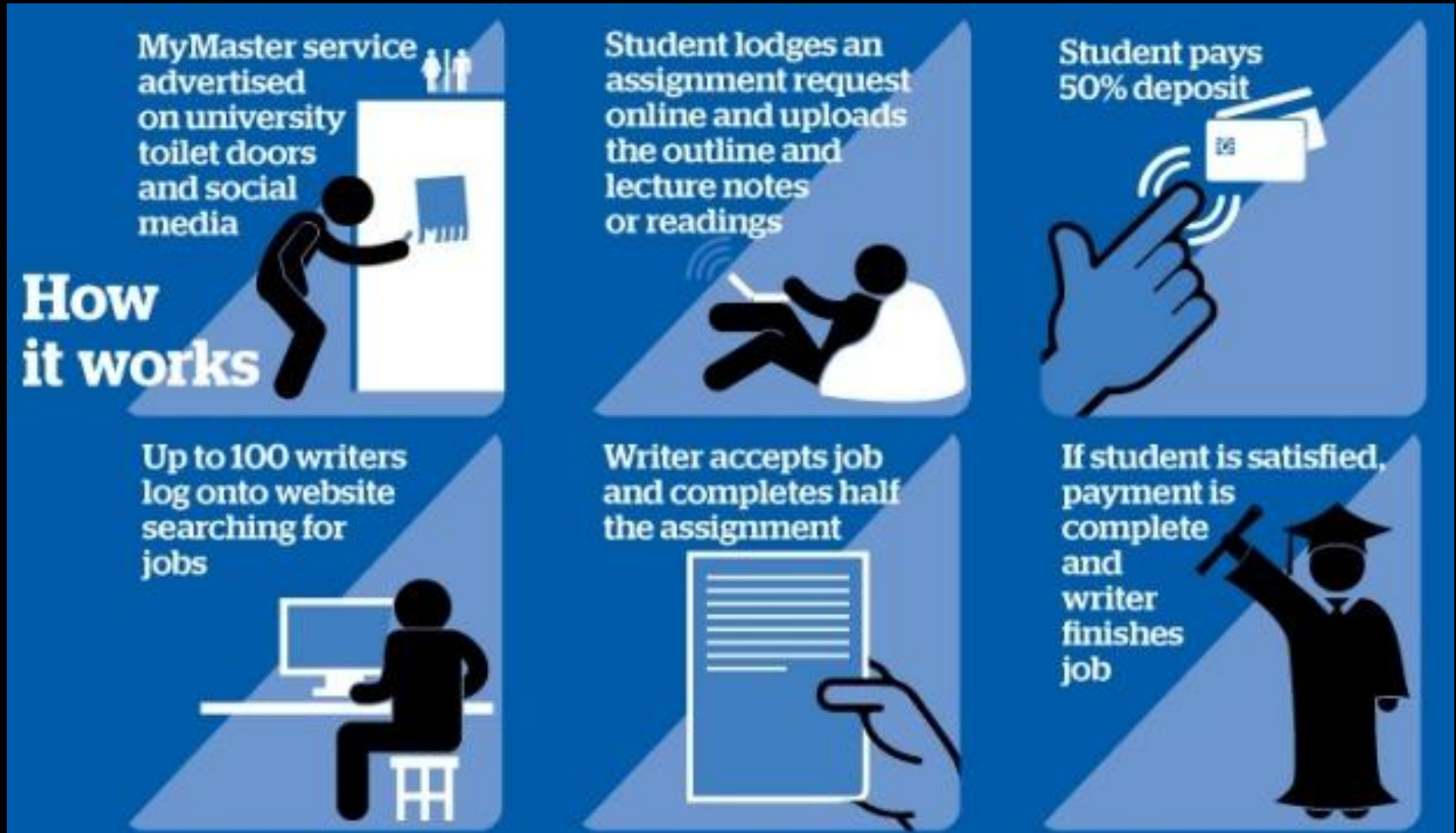
Plagiarism: Ethical and Professional
A 3 page paper which examines the ethical and professional dimensions of plagiarism. Bibliography lists 5 sources. ...

(Reference no longer available – site removed)

Technological disruptions

- Greater use of text matching systems have made simple 'copy and paste' type operations less likely to succeed.
- Internet technologies make it very easy to find a source of support - payment and delivery is simple, and rapid.

Outsourcing is the modern way...



smh.com.au/national/education/students-enlist-mymaster-website-to-write-essays-assignments-20141111-11k0xg.html

Contract cheating – the scale of the problem

Hundreds of online websites, several thousands of requests for whole pieces of work.

(Lancaster and Clarke, various dates)

A US professor set himself up as a contract essay writer to test the waters, only to find one of his own assignments out to tender.

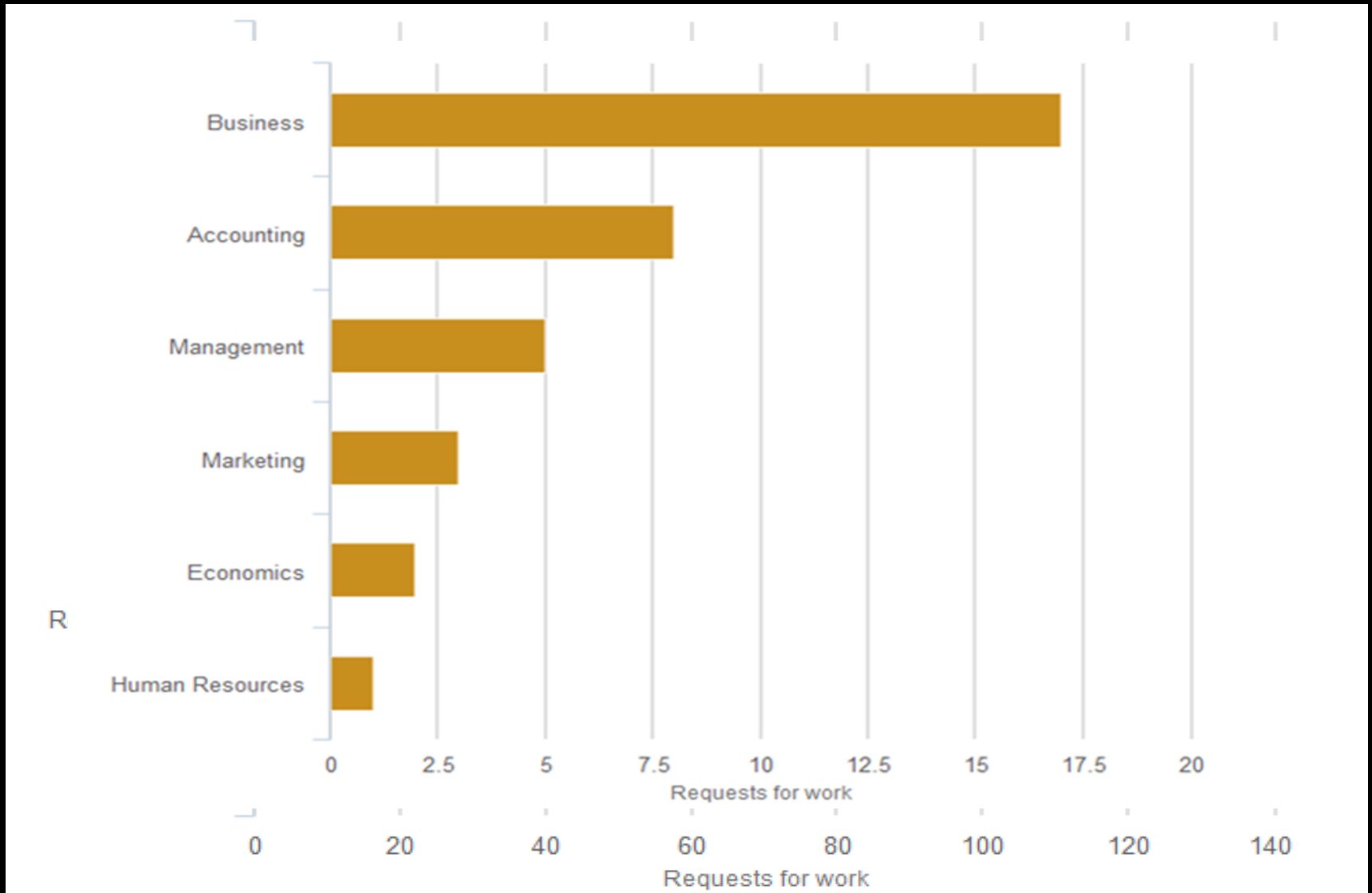
(Times Higher Education, 2013)

Rigby et al. 2015

Contract cheating & the market in essays, Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization 111 (2015) 23–37

- Investigated student demand for essays using hypothetical scenarios.
- 45 of 90 students elected to ‘buy’ an assignment - those predicting poor grades willing to ‘pay’ more.
- Purchase likelihoods and essay valuations declined as the probability of detection and penalty increased.
- “As the market grows the justification that such behavior is necessary to keep up with other cheaters will be reinforced, further fuelling essay market growth.”

MyMaster – November 2014



Contract cheating – surprisingly low costs

The cost		
DIPLOMA	PASS	CREDIT
500 words	\$80	\$100
1500 words	\$210	\$270
3000 words	\$420	\$550
BACHELOR'S DEGREE		
500 words	\$80	\$100
1500 words	\$225	\$290
3000 words	\$450	\$585
MASTER'S DEGREE		
500 words	\$90	\$120
1500 words	\$240	\$310
3000 words	\$480	\$620

The fee is doubled for a 24-hour urgent order and tripled for a 12-hour order.
Students can negotiate a price for a distinction or high distinction

smh.com.au/national/education/students-enlist-mymaster-website-to-write-essays-assignments-20141111-11k0xg.html

It is startlingly easy to outsource your work



	Bids		Time to first bid	
writing an Academic assignment	13	Academic Writing	25 secs	\$83 USD

Source: freelancer.com

Setting up your account < 5 minutes

Getting replies/help = within an hour

Assignment complete = within hours/days

Locally – ‘Gumtree’ (and eBay, etc.)

Hi,

I can do your uni assignments for DBMS, MS Access, SQL, Web Designing, HTML, EPOS screen designing, Adobe Photoshop, Adobe Dreamweaver, Powerpoint Presentations, MS Office, essay writing and also give important strategies on how to attempt the IELTS test to get around 7 - 8 bands GUARANTEE.

Email me the assignment, due date and your contact number. I will get back to you in few hours. Contact me via sms or Email only.

from perth.gumtree.com.au



Some offer tutoring support, which then unfolds...

Spoonfeedme!



ACC1000

Principles of Accounting and Finance

Monash University, Australia

[About course](#)

Sign Up

Videos

Cheat sheet

Notes

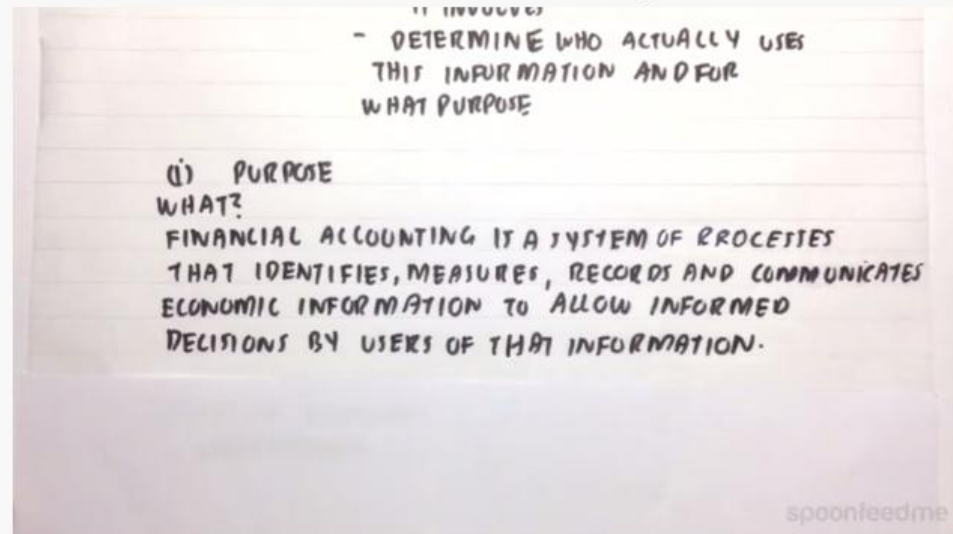
1. Accounting in Action

- | | | |
|--|------|-------|
| 1. Introduction to Financial Accounting | FREE | 5:58 |
| 2. Introduction to Purpose of Financial Statements | FREE | 4:58 |
| 3. The Definition and Recognition of Components in a Balance Sheet | FREE | 11:13 |
| 4. The Definition and Recognition of Components in an Income Statement | | 7:38 |
| 5. The Qualitative Characteristics of Financial Statements | | 8:09 |
| 6. Sustainability Reporting | | 9:52 |

2. Transaction Analysis and Recording Process

- 3. Revisiting the Recording Process
- 4. Adjusting the Accounts
- 5. Preparing the Financial Statements
- 6. Financial Statement Analysis
- 7. Management Accounting and Performance Management

1.1 Introduction to Financial Accounting



thinkswap.com – notes/assignment sharing



Sign In



Learn from Australia's largest student driven document library

HOW IT WORKS SIGN UP

SHARING NEVER FELT SO GOOD

Thinkswap is a student community where comprehensive study notes and study guides can be downloaded and shared with other students. We have a simple exchange system that allows you to benefit from the expertise of past students, whilst contributing to the success of future students.

Higher education standards

New HE standards scheduled for 2017 onwards:

1.4(3) Methods of assessment ... **are capable of confirming** that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment.

5.2(2) **Preventative action** is taken to mitigate foreseeable risks to academic and research integrity.

5.3(4) Review and improvement activities include regular **external referencing** of the success of student cohorts against comparable courses of study, including ... assessment methods and grading of student achievement.

Can technology help?

Only so far.

- Hard to distinguish between:
own work | scaffolded work | **others work**
- Turnitin is very good at matching copied works.
Detecting contract cheating? Sometimes.
- Automatic grade profiling / writing analysis is difficult to perform and experimental at best.
- Check known sites / Google Alerts / Keywords

Amusing ways we reveal ourselves

1. Student submitted a personal reflection, but the marker spotted references to a staff member who had left a year ago.
2. Student submitted an application for a hardship loan, which included a copy of bank statements. These included many transactions with 'customessays.co.uk'
3. Student accidentally submitted (as part of the essay) the entire email transcript of the transaction with the ghost writer.

Possible solutions?

- Face to face methods - viva
- More examinations? (but...)
- Linked test (a version on the above)
- Teamwork
- Refreshed assessment tasks – localize?
- Specific to an experience – individualize?
- Require personal reflection on task
- Public space for assessment – blog, etc.

Policy questions to consider

- Education and preventative activities
 - (Staff, students)
- Examinations (desirable?)
- Cost of viva / interviews (workload model?)
- Anonymous marking
- Hurdle requirements (must pass each part)
- How contract cheating is handled
 - (same as plagiarism? Differently?)

Zero tolerance?

There are students being caught at Leeds purchasing essays through several of the online sources mentioned above.

Where this is reported by a department to the University (Office of Academic Appeals & Regulation) and the allegation is upheld, such **students invariably face exclusion from the University, even for a first offence.**

lts.leeds.ac.uk/bulletin/issue18/page3.php

Editing – a very grey area

margin comments - tracked changes - sections

Coventry, UK

Students should retain copy of original version, and may be required to attend a *viva voce* examination.

Deakin, AU

Coursework students are advised not to hire an editor for any purpose, and under no circumstances should any Deakin student hire an editor to do a significant edit of their work.

A closing thought

Are our methods of assessment **capable of confirming** that all specified learning outcomes are achieved and that grades awarded reflect the level of student attainment?

Bet you didn't know that...

- Professors cannot academically sanction you for academic misconduct without reporting you to the Academic Integrity Office.
- Anywhere between 50-80 students per year are suspended or dismissed from the University for academic integrity violations.
- You can get suspended or dismissed from the University for plagiarism (copying and pasting the words and ideas of others).
- If you're sanctioned for academic misconduct, the lowered grade remains on your transcript and stays calculated in your GPA, even if you retake the class.
- When you apply for graduate, law, or medical school, you may have to indicate that you've been disciplined for academic misconduct.
- If you're reported for a second policy violation, you may be dismissed from the University of California.

<https://students.ucsd.edu/academics/academic-integrity/facts.html>