

# Strategies for Online Academic Integrity: Plagiarism and Cheating Prevention

## 1 What is it?

Maintaining academic integrity in online courses can be difficult. Several tools and techniques are available to prevent cheating and to secure online instructional materials and assessments. The amount of security provided, cost to students, and automation of these solutions varies. Almost all of these solutions, however, can be seamlessly integrated into online assessments.

## 2 Why is it important?

Academic integrity is obviously important for guaranteeing high-quality learning and program accreditation. Further, with the existence of online question banks and study tools, such as Quizlet, online assessments are increasingly difficult to secure. The tools and techniques discussed in this article provide instructors with methods to detect, deter, and report cheating and plagiarism.

## 3 How to do it?

The most basic way to prevent academic dishonesty is to design assessments that make cheating more difficult. This can include: projects that are highly specific to the course's unique content; specifically authored and tailored exam questions; or writing assignments expecting novel and well-sourced research.

Beyond assessment design, most Learning Management Systems (LMS) have built-in tools to further inhibit cheating. For example, students can be given unique exams using large question banks and randomized blocks of questions. Submitted documents can also be run through plagiarism detection software, like Turnitin and SafeAssign. For

exam security, software can prevent access to outside materials and limit the students' activity as they take their exams.

For higher-stakes assessments, third-party tools can provide additional security through electronic proctoring. These tools often come with a cost to the students, but offer a more robust solution for ensuring student identity and preventing online cheating.

### Tips and Tricks

- Create a question bank when designing an online exam or quiz. The best practice is to have over twice the number of questions in the bank than needed for the quiz. Questions can be deployed in randomized blocks, creating different exams for each student.
- Enable **Turnitin**, Brightspace's plagiarism detection software, in the assignment creation options (see [How to enable Turnitin](#)).
- Be sure to include the academic integrity policy in the course information/Getting Started page on the Learning Management System (e.g., Brightspace, Blackboard) and on the syllabus. Include a detailed description of plagiarism and the plagiarism policy.
- Change key elements of written assignments and projects each time the course is offered. Doing so will prevent previous students from influencing the performance of current students.
- Consider the use of an online proctoring solution, such as Examity or [Proctortrack](#) for high-stakes assessments. Online proctoring validates the student's identity, prevents cheating, and secures the exam by monitoring students through their webcams. Do note, there is an additional cost to students when using online proctoring software.

## 4 Tools

- **Examity for Purdue Instructors:** Examity is a student-paid digital proctoring service. Students pay \$11 for the first hour Live Standard service. Instructors can enable proctoring from within their Brightspace courses. Instructors should contact [TLT@purdue.edu](mailto:TLT@purdue.edu) to use Examity. See the official [Examity website](#) here.
  - **Turnitin:** A web-based plagiarism detector that can be integrated into the LMS (Brightspace and Canvas). Turnitin checks student submissions against a multi-institution database to identify repeated phrases or potentially plagiarised material. Instructors are able to see a report and are often given a potential list of sources for the plagiarised sections of the submission.
  - **Respondus Lockdown Browser:** A tool integrated into the LMS that prevents students from going to external sites during exams. [See official Lockdown Browser website here.](#)
  - **Honor Code Quiz:** Building an Honor Code quiz will enable you to require students to agree to the Honor Code prior to beginning an assessment.
  - **SafeAssign by Blackboard:** An automated plagiarism detection software integrated into Blackboard's assignment folders. The program compares the originality of student work to other students and outside resources and provides instructors with a report. [See the official SafeAssign website here.](#)
  - **Unicheck for Canvas:** An automated tool to detect plagiarism that supports the Canvas Learning Management System. It provides a similarity report by comparing students' papers with databases, scientific journals, and documents in the institution account. [See a tutorial on how to use Unicheck in Canvas.](#)
  - **Paper Rater Plagiarism Checker:** A *free* and simple tool available online that compares written work to billions of online pages in real time. A paid premium service is also available.
- **Plagium:** It is a *free* tool to check for plagiarism. It is recommended to use this only as an informal spot check for suspected plagiarism.

## 5 Additional Resources

- [Quiz Setup in Brightspace](#) at Purdue
- Many schools have student codes in place to further dissuade academic dishonesty. For example, the [Purdue Honor Pledge](#) is a commitment to promote academic integrity at Purdue. Instructors often use this as a basis for their own policies in their online courses.
- **Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL):** Encourage your students to properly cite the work that does not belong to them. The Purdue OWL is an excellent free resource to guide students and instructors alike.
- Include the Indiana University “[How to Recognize Plagiarism: Tutorials and Tests](#)” in your program or class as a resource or a requirement.

## 6 References

- Boettcher, J. & Conrad, R. (2016) *The Online Teaching Survival Guide: Simple and Practical Pedagogical Tips*. San Francisco, Calif.: Jossey-Bass. Paper Rater. (n.d.). Retrieved October 22, 2018, from [https://www.paperrater.com/plagiarism\\_checker](https://www.paperrater.com/plagiarism_checker)
- What is plagiarism? - Plagiarism.org. (n.d.). Retrieved October 22, 2018, from: <https://www.plagiarism.org/article/what-is-plagiarism>