

Cheating and plagiarism

in assignments,
theses and exams

A close-up, slightly blurred photograph of a desk. In the foreground, a spiral-bound notebook with handwritten notes is open. Behind it, a black stapler sits on the desk. To the right, a yellow and white pen is visible. A bright green sticky note is placed on top of the notebook, with some faint handwriting on it. The background is a dark, teal-colored wall.

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Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) sets high standards for academic education. These standards include a strict policy on cheating.

Cheating is an offence. Anyone who cheats is breaking the rules of the university, and may even be breaking the law. Plagiarism is theft. Plagiarists steal another person's intellectual property for their own benefit.

The term 'fraud' is understood to mean any actions or omissions of a student that make it impossible for the Examiner/Examining Board to form a correct judgment about the student's acquired knowledge, insight, and skills or that of fellow students.

Cases of fraud are reported in writing to the Examination Board of the relevant study programme. Each study programme sets its own policy in this regard. For information on this subject see the Rules and Guidelines of the relevant study programme.

Rules for assignments and theses

Plagiarism

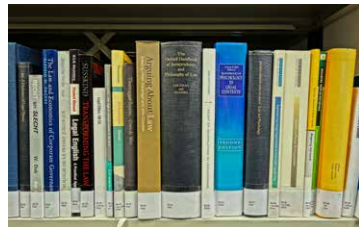
One of the main purposes of writing papers is to learn to formulate clearly reasoned arguments and analyses. You can (and sometimes must) use scientific articles, papers or books to support your arguments, provided you quote the source. It is irrelevant whether you consult these sources in a library or on the Internet. There is of course nothing wrong with using insights expressed in articles or in documents on the Internet to write your paper.

However, there is a huge difference between 'using' and 'copying'. To take text from articles or papers written by others without referring to the source and without using quotation marks, either by 'cutting and pasting' from electronic documents or by literally transcribing passages, is plagiarism, and therefore cheating. EUR has advanced electronic instruments for identifying plagiarism.

Guidelines for source references

Most disciplines have their own style for quoting sources, ranging from a brief reference to very detailed and precise references. The American Psychological Association (APA) has published rules about how references to literature should be presented. See www.eur.nl/ul > training & support > E-course > references and citation > APA. Many journals, including those in other disciplines, follow these rules. Other commonly used styles are the Chicago style (University of Chicago Press), the style of the MLA (Modern Language Association) and the Vancouver style (International Committee of Medical Journal Editors).

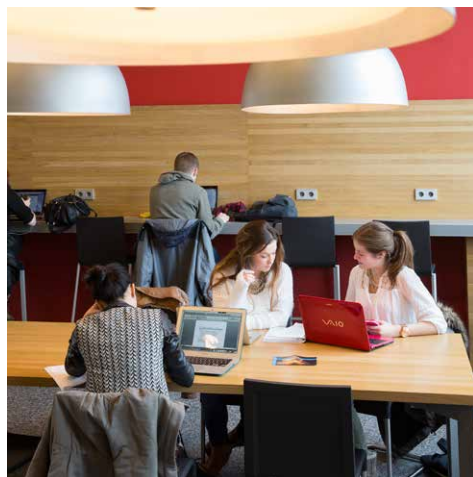
There are a few general guidelines that always apply for properly quoting sources. When you use other people's words or ideas, whether they are those of another student or of a professor, you must always clearly state who said what. It makes no difference whether a piece of text has been taken from another student's paper, from an article in a scientific journal or from a document on the Internet.



Use of digital information

There are some fixed standards for references to information on the Internet or in electronic databanks. You can, for example, also follow the APA's rules for printed publications. Some electronic information should not be included in the list of references, for example e-mails and messages from bulletin boards, chatrooms, etc. These sources should only be mentioned in the text as personal communication (for example: A.P. Lindstrom, personal communication, 28 December 2001).

A reference to a source on the Internet must contain a title or description, a date (if possible a date of publication, but at least the date it was consulted) and an address (usually an URL). Also cite the authors if possible. Many journal articles published electronically are exact copies of the printed version without any change in the lay out or inclusion of additional information. Where the electronic version is precisely the same it is sufficient to simply refer to the journal article with [Electronic version] between square brackets after the title.



If a document is contained in a complex website, for example a university's or a government ministry's, also specify the organisation and department. Other sources – for example films, videos, letters, maps, sound recordings, interviews, columns etc. – should in principle also be cited using the methods just described, whether or not they are taken from the World Wide Web. The most common method is to cite the type of source between square brackets behind the title.

Guidelines and tips

Follow these rules:

- Always place a citation between quotation marks and provide an adequate reference to the source.
- You may not edit or paraphrase other people's words and present them as your own. If you are paraphrasing, state where the paraphrasing begins and where it ends and give the source.
- You may never claim other people's ideas as your own, even if you are presenting them in your own words.

Tip 1

Take one of the digital Information Skills courses provided by the University Library (UB). You can find them on the website of the UB (www.eur.nl/ul) under 'training & support'. These courses offer efficient strategies and techniques for searching for and processing scientific information, digital or otherwise. You have free access and you can take the course whenever you like during your studies.

Tip 2

While writing try to keep a record of all the steps you take. Save the results of your searches and save bibliographic information in a document or database program. Software such as RefWorks (see www.refworks.com) can be helpful in this process. Instructions can be found at www.eur.nl/ul > Training & Support > E-courses > RefWorks.

Written Examinations

Basic rules when taking an exam

There are a number of important rules that must be followed when you are sitting exams:

- You must turn off your mobile telephone and put it out of reach.
- Watches are not permitted during the examination. Watches must be stored in a coat/jacket or bag.
- You must be able to show your identity card.
- You may not impersonate another person during an exam or allow someone else to sit the exam for you.
- You may not bring any books or other study materials that are not permitted into the exam with you.
- Cribbing or copying from other students is prohibited. Giving anyone else the opportunity to copy from you is also prohibited.



Cribbing

The possession of a crib sheet is sufficient evidence of cheating, regardless of whether you use it or not. Mobile phones, smart watches or other communication devices must be switched off and out of reach. Study materials such as

calculators and graphing calculators, dictionaries or law books may only be used if it is expressly permitted. You may not bring any other study materials into the exam with you. Dictionaries and law books must not contain any additional information, such as notes or inserts.

Important provisions concerning order during written examinations

- The examination room is equipped with camera surveillance.
- Mobile detection equipment will be used during visits to the toilets.
- In all cases, mobile telephones must be switched off as soon as the student enters the examination room. Furthermore, mobile telephones must remain out of reach throughout the entire examination. The use of mobile telephones and other electronic communications equipment during written examinations is prohibited. Violation of this provision is considered fraud.
- Coats and jackets must be placed on the back of the chair. Bags must be kept closed and out of reach.
- Watches are not permitted during the examination. Watches must be stored in a coat/jacket or bag.
- The student is limited to having the following materials on his desk: a valid proof of identity, writing utensils, food and drink for personal consumption. A number of examinations also permit the use of a simple or graphical calculator, or the use of certain references. The lecturer must indicate this in advance and this must be recorded on the examination's cover page. References that are permitted during an examination must not have any personal annotations.
- Every participant must be able to identify him/herself on the basis of one of the following proofs of identity: university student card, drivers licence, ID card or passport. Students are not permitted to participate in the examination if they cannot show the invigilator one of these identity cards.
- Only paper supplied by the university may be used during the examination. The use of the student's own paper is not permitted.



- Scrap paper, examination questions, answers and other examination-related documents may not be taken from the room during and after the examination.
- During the first hour and final half hour of an examination, no-one shall be allowed to go to the toilets, other than in exceptional (medical) circumstances of which the lecturer or invigilator was informed in advance by the student.
- Each student may visit the toilets once during an examination, whereby in each section no more than one person shall be given permission at any one time. Students must notify the invigilator that they have to visit the toilets and the invigilator's instructions must be fully complied with.
- It must be quiet prior to, during and after the examination in the examination room. All forms of communication are prohibited during the examination, except for communication with the invigilator and the lecturer.
- All students taking an examination must comply with the instructions of the invigilator. If a student fails to comply with an invigilator's instructions or when the invigilator suspects fraud, the invigilator will prepare a written report of the incident. The student(s) in question may finish the examination. The Examination Board will subsequently deliberate on potential sanctioning.

Rules & legal framework

All of your rights and obligations as a student are laid down in the Course and Examination Regulations for each course, in the Rules and Guidelines of the Examination Boards and in the Student Charter. The Rules and Guidelines give the definition of cheating and describe the sanctions that can be imposed.

Cheating and plagiarism are covered by the Higher Education Act and, in serious cases, by the Criminal Code. Plagiarism is also governed by the Copyright Act. If you want to know precisely what the situation is, consult your lecturer and the EUR-website.

What are the sanctions for cheating?

A lecturer who finds that a student is cheating is obliged to report this to the Examining Board. The Board will investigate the charges and

may then impose a sanction which varies from a reprimand to being barred from all exams for up to one year. The minimum sanction is generally that the exam concerned will be declared invalid and a student will be barred from sitting that exam for one year. In serious cases of cheating the executive board may take up a proposal of the Examination Board to irrevocably terminate a student's enrolment in the programme. Being barred from sitting an exam can seriously delay a student's progress. The Examination Board cannot and will not take this into account when imposing a sanction.

EUR's integrity code

EUR's integrity code also includes a section on the prevention of cheating and plagiarism (www.eur.nl/english > about eur > corporate publications > Integrity Code)

Cheating or plagiarism: it won't make you a better student!

Colophon

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