Academic Honesty with Online Learning Tools

Critically thinking about virtual education resources

A collaboration of Writing, Speaking, and Argument & the Academic Honesty Liaison’s office. Updated Spring 2022.
What’s covered

- Definition of plagiarism and other honesty violations
- Evaluating the honesty of online services and tools
  - Purchasing Essays
  - Hiring an Essay Editor
  - Hiring a Translator
  - Using a Translation Software
- Online Editing Software
- Citation Generating Software
- Tutoring Websites
- Academically honest feedback
  - Writing and Speaking Center services
  - Collaborating with peers
- Uncertain?
  - Check with professor or TA
  - Ask the academic honesty liaison
    (honestyliaison@ur.rochester.edu or mywco.com/honesty)
Definition of Academic Honesty

“Academic honesty means acting with truthfulness and sincerity in carrying out all aspects of our individual and collaborative work, maintaining ownership over our work and acknowledging our debt to the work of others.”

(University of Rochester Academic Honesty Policy)

Academic honesty rules exist on three levels—all of AS&E, specific course(s) students take, and specific assignments/projects/exams they have in those courses.

While instructors across AS&E also bear responsibility for clarifying their expectations, students will be held responsible for knowing, following, and asking ahead of time about all three levels.
Definitions

*from University academic policy (section V B. 3).

**from WSAP statement of academic honesty recommendations

Plagiarism*

“the representation of another person’s work as one’s own” includes

- “[T]he misrepresentation of sources used in a work for which the student claims authorship”
- “[T]he use of papers that are purchased and turned in as one’s own work”
- “[T]he submission of written work [. . .] which [has] been copied from the work of other students”

Other Honesty Violations**

When composing, other violations include “unauthorized materials/aid”, such as

- “Having another make direct changes to your work, whether by hand or through a medium such as track changes”
- “Having someone offer more than one or two sentence-level suggestions”
- “Having someone tell you what to compose”
- “Using a service that edits or revises your work”
- Generating citations using technology without understanding or validating accuracy of citations.
“Intent—or lack thereof—should never be taken into account when deciding whether or not an action or set of actions violated the honesty policy. However, fairness dictates that intent may be considered when proposing penalties (for individual instructors) or when applying sanctions (for hearing Boards).

Similarly, neither degrees of (in)experience nor extenuating circumstances should be taken into account when determining whether or not a student or students’ behavior amounted to policy violation. Once the question of responsibility has been addressed, either or both may be considered when deliberating on what outcome(s) are in order. Ignorance of the policy does not excuse actions that violate its requirements.”

(Academic Honesty Policy, Section V)

Anything on the “caution” list of Slide 2 is seen as students’ responsibility to clarify before using it or turning an assignment in.
Evaluating online services
An “academic help” website violates academic honesty if you **purchase an essay someone else writes for you.**

These websites may argue that because the essay is written for you, and therefore has not been copied from another student, it is not plagiarism. They often guarantee confidentiality and appeal to the stresses you face as a busy student.
These services require payment.

They argue that their service is “plagiarism free” or that they run a “plagiarism report” (but the University lists the act of purchasing a paper as an example of plagiarism).

Sites frequently label their service as “collaboration.”
These websites often appeal to the stress of student life. They persuade students that because they’re on a tight deadline, overwhelmed, or struggling, it’s okay to commit plagiarism.

Example from edubirdie.com
Dishonest essay purchasing sites may include but are not limited to:

- A-Writer.com
- Academized.com
- BestDissertations.com
- BestEssay.com
- BestEssays.com
- BestEssayTips.com
- BoomEssays.com
- BuyEssayOnline.com
- ChiefPaper.com
- College-Paper.org
- CleverWritings.com
- CustomWritings.com
- EssayBox.com
- EssayHave.com
- EssayService.com
- Essay-On-Time.com
- ExpertWriting.org
- GetEssayDone.com
- GrabMyEssay.com
- GradeMiners.org
- GradeOnFire.com
- JustDoMyEssay.com
- MyPaperDone.com
- NinjaEssays.com
- PaperFellows.com
- PaperHelp.org
- PapersOwl.com
- Proessaywriting.com
- SameDayEssay.com
- SpeedyPaper.com
- Ultius.com
- WriteMyPaper4Me.org
- WriteMyEssayOnline.com
- WritersPerHour.com
- X-Essays.com
Hiring an editor for your academic work may be considered a violation of the academic honesty policy. These editors do not teach you how to improve your writing skills, but instead directly change your work for you.

TO MAINTAIN HONESTY, THE WRITER NEEDS TO CONTROL WHAT THEY SAY AND HOW THEY SAY IT.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY ‘EDIT’?

- spelling
- grammar
- correct your English
- word choice
- flow improvements
- consistency
- run-on sentences
- sentence fragments
- punctuation

Editors will find and FIX all of the types of issues listed above. Once we check your essay and you download your editor’s copy, you’ll see your edited paper along with comments on the side meant to guide you through additional improvements.

We also offer additional services: extra comments, critiques, formatting, and extra essay checking/ESL editing.

Click here to see what your essay editor will do for you.
These sites may include but are not limited to:

- Chegg
- Eangel.me
- EditMyEssay.com
- EduBirdie.com
- Fiverr.com
- GradeMiners.com
- ProWritingAid.com
- SameDayEssay.com
- WriteSmartly.com
- WritersPerHour.com
Hiring a translator for your work is considered a general honesty policy violation ("receiving, using, or having access to unauthorized aid"). Additionally, it may be considered plagiarism (another person’s writing being represented as your own).
Using protranslate to translate an academic assignment submission is an honesty policy violation ("receiving, using, or having access to unauthorized aid").
Using translation software **may be considered an honesty policy violation** ("receiving, using, or having access to unauthorized aid").

**CHECK WITH YOUR INSTRUCTORS ABOUT WHAT OTHER PERMITTED RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE TO HELP YOU**
Daytranslations.com is a software that makes direct changes to your work, which would be represented as your own.
Students often utilize grammar-checking websites (e.g. Grammarly, Microsoft Word grammar checker, etc.).

**TO USE THESE EFFECTIVELY, THE WRITER MUST UNDERSTAND THE RECOMMENDED CHANGES AND MAKE INFORMED DECISIONS.**

These websites are generally acceptable when used effectively, but they remain unreliable. They may miss errors or make recommendations that misrepresent the writer’s meaning.
These sites may include but are not limited to:

- BibMe.org
- EasyBib.com
- GingerSoftware.com
- GradeMiners.com
- GradeProof.com
- Grammar.com
- Grammarix.com
- Grammarly.com
- GrammarCheck.net
- HemingwayApp.com
- LanguageTool.org
- OnlineCorrection.com
- PolishMyWriting.com
- Scribens.com
- SlickWrite.com
- Typely.com
- WhiteSmoke.com
Citation-Generating software (e.g., Zotero, RefWorks, EndNote, Mendeley and Zotero) is a tool that is often taught by both librarians and professors. **THE WRITER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR UNDERSTANDING THE CITATION AND VALIDATING ITS ACCURACY.**

These websites are acceptable when used effectively, but they remain **unreliable**. The student is responsible for the accuracy of the references generated in accordance with the citation manual they are using, and they should understand each citation component (journal name, authors, DOI, etc.)
Some online tutoring services are honest: they help you through the writing process, but you do the work.

**HOWEVER, SOME SERVICES MAY CROSS THE LINE INTO DISHONESTY: THEY OFTEN DO THE WORK FOR YOU.**

The tutors at the Writing and Speaking Center have been trained to maintain academic honesty, support the University of Rochester community specifically, *and* their services are free.
These sites may include but are not limited to:

- Babylon-Software.com
- Baidu.com
- DayTranslations.com
- Free-Website-Translation.com
- GingerSoftware.com
- Google Translate
- Lexicool.com
- Protranslate.net
- Reverso.net
Academically Honest Feedback
Collaborate with peers

If you choose to collaborate or receive feedback from a peer, friend, or family member, refer to the Writing, Speaking, and Argument Program’s guidelines for an honest review process.
Go to the Writing and Speaking Center

The Writing Fellows and Writing Consultants are trained to be academically honest, which online services cannot guarantee. You can schedule a one-on-one meeting with a fellow or consultant on an as-needed basis, or you can request a weekly meeting with a consultant (email wsap@ur.rochester.edu).

You can also upload a paper and receive detailed feedback about your specific questions and concerns with Write-On.
If you have any questions, you can talk to your professor or to the Academic Honesty Liaison (honestyliaison@ur.rochester.edu).